

[Nigel J Ashton](#)

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Taking Friends For Granted: The Carter Administration, Jordan, and the Camp David
Accords, 1977–80

At the 1978 Camp David summit, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat negotiated two framework documents intended to open the way to broader peace in the Middle East. While the Egyptian-Israeli framework paved the way to the signature of a bilateral peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in March 1979, the other framework document, for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, proved to be stillborn. Its fate was decided by another leader who was not present but whose country was assigned key responsibilities in the document: King Hussein of Jordan. Indeed, what is most striking about the *Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David* is the extent of the responsibilities it assigned to a country not a party to its negotiation. Jordan was referred to fourteen times in section A of the document dealing with the central question of transitional arrangements for the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, compared to only nine references to Egypt, one of the actual signatories of the document. Nor were the references to Jordan token. The document required Jordan to participate in negotiations for “the resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects,” to “agree on the modalities for establishing the elected self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza,” to participate in joint patrols with Israeli forces and the manning of control posts “to assure the security of the borders,” and “to conclude a peace treaty” with Israel by the end of a five-year transitional period.¹ These fundamental obligations would have impinged on Jordanian

¹ “A Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David,” quoted from William B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington, DC, 1986), Appendix G, 376–83.

sovereignty had the framework document been enacted. The question arises as to why the Carter administration brokered the agreement in the absence of the Jordanian head of state? In diplomacy, taking friends for granted can be a perilous approach.

Camp David was not the first or last summit at which great powers would dispose of the future of smaller powers without reference to their wishes. But the Carter administration's failure to bring Jordan along was a low point in its diplomacy. Although the broader Camp David framework agreement foundered on Jordan's refusal to take up the responsibilities assigned to it, the role of relations with Jordan is curiously underdeveloped in the historiography of the Carter administration's Middle East policy.² William B. Quandt, in his seminal study, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, is one of the few historians to consider Jordan before and after Camp David and his verdict on the administration's approach is highly critical: "Carter," he wrote, "basically seemed to share Sadat's view that the reaction of the other Arabs did not much matter. They would simply have to accept the new facts. This was a serious misjudgment." While Quandt argues that Hussein's "overt support" for Camp

² Among the limited number of works to address this theme are Adam M. Garfinkle, "Negotiating by Proxy: Jordanian Foreign Policy and US Options in the Middle East," *Orbis* 24 (1981): 847–80; Emile Sahliyeh, "Jordan and the Palestinians," in *The Middle East Ten Years after Camp David*, ed. William B. Quandt, (Washington, DC, 1988). Discussion in the broader literature on the Carter administration's foreign policy and Camp David is almost completely absent. Isolated references can be found in Betty Glad, *An Outsider in the White House: Jimmy Carter, His Advisors, and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY, 2009), 160; Daniel Strieff, *Jimmy Carter and the Middle East: The Politics of Presidential Diplomacy* (Basingstoke, 2015), 92, 134; Scott Kaufman, *Plans Unraveled: The Foreign Policy of the Carter Administration* (De Kalb, IL, 2008), 80, 84.

David was probably unattainable, his “tacit endorsement” could have been gained. “But,” he laments, “we never made the necessary effort, nor did Sadat.”³ Quandt’s use of the first person underlines that this observation is both that of a historian and of a National Security Council staffer reporting on the Arab-Israeli conflict directly to President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski.⁴ Several broader studies of the reign of King Hussein and of U.S.-Jordanian relations have taken similarly negative views of the Carter administration’s approach.⁵

In a recent, positive assessment of the administration’s achievements at Camp David, Jeremy Pressman represents Hussein as a key proponent of what he terms the most negative assessment of Camp David: that it was “an American-Israeli conspiracy to prevent Palestinian self-determination and ensure Israeli control of the West Bank.” Pressman cites Hussein’s comments that Camp David was a “fig leaf,” which provided “sugarcoating” for the Begin Plan, amounting to permanent Israeli occupation of the West Bank.⁶ Much of Pressman’s subsequent analysis is devoted to challenging this claim by showing that the Carter administration sincerely sought Palestinian self-determination, an end to Israeli settlement-building, and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. But is it accurate to represent

³ Quandt, *Camp David*, 312.

⁴ Quandt, *Camp David*, xi.

⁵ Nigel Ashton, *King Hussein of Jordan: A Political Life* (New Haven, 2008), 193–209; Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in Peace and War* (London, 2007), 391–406; Madiha Rashid al-Madfai, *Jordan, the United States and the Middle East Peace Process* (Cambridge, 1993), 46–61.

⁶ Jeremy Pressman, “Explaining the Carter Administration’s Israeli-Palestinian Solution,” *Diplomatic History* 37 (2013): 1121.

Hussein's response to Camp David as little more than that of an ill-informed conspiracy theorist, who should instead have trusted the good intentions of the framers of the document? This question will be explored here first by setting U.S.-Jordanian relations over the peace process in a longer-term context, and then by exploring in detail the bilateral discussions during the Carter administration. The breakdown in U.S.-Jordanian relations over Camp David was a result of Hussein's well-founded mistrust of U.S. intentions. While this mistrust had longer-term origins, it was considerably exacerbated by the Carter administration's conduct. Although Hussein was wrong to suggest a formal American-Israeli conspiracy over the Camp David accords, he was right that they exposed the shallowness of Carter's commitment to a comprehensive peace in the region. By devolving responsibility to Jordan to implement the framework, Carter sought to maintain the appearance of progress toward ending the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, knowing that the Begin government had no intention of withdrawing. He chose the immediate political gain represented by an Egyptian-Israeli agreement, rather than the hard political course of pursuing Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. Hussein was primed for this outcome by his previous experience of U.S. policy, and his refusal to cooperate exposed the deception at the heart of the Camp David framework. In outlining this argument, this article draws on the array of declassified U.S. primary sources now available, together with Jordanian sources drawn from the Royal Hashemite Archives. As a third point of reference British government primary sources have also been used. Because the British had excellent connections in Washington and a history of close relations with Jordan, both parties often used them as a sounding board.

On the Jordanian side, the focus here will be to a large extent on the personal role of King Hussein. While Hussein had to consider reactions to the Camp David summit within Jordan, especially among the East Bank elite, he was the key decisionmaker framing Jordanian policy. Indeed, key elements of the peace process, such as the extensive covert

contacts with Israeli leaders, were his almost exclusive preserve although he sometimes took trusted confidantes, such as Zeid Rifai, the Jordanian Prime Minister between 1973 and 1976, to meetings with the Israelis.⁷ On the U.S. side, the cast of decisionmakers was considerably larger, but during the Camp David process, Carter's role loomed unusually large. He engaged to an exceptional extent in the detailed diplomacy of peacemaking. Thus, personal relations between Hussein and Carter mattered to an unusual degree in U.S.-Jordanian relations between 1977 and 1980.

Hussein's public persona was one of polished manners, charm, and good humor. He was a fluent English-speaker whose measured delivery reflected his careful choice of words. But his easy manner concealed a core determination to defend what he saw as the dignity of his throne and his own conception of Arab nationalism. He was thus considerably less malleable than first impressions might have suggested. Carter meanwhile combined his own surface charm with what his friend and adviser, Charles Hughes Kirbo, privately described as "a short fuse" and "a streak of obstinacy" tending to make him intolerant of dissenting

⁷ For further discussion of Jordanian-Israeli relations, see Alexander Bligh, *The Political Legacy of King Hussein* (Brighton, 2002); Adam Garfinkle, *Israel and Jordan in the Shadow of War: Functional Ties and Futile Diplomacy in a Small Place* (New York, 1992); Yehuda Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan and the Peace Process* (Syracuse, 1997); Joseph Nevo, *King Hussein and the Evolution of Jordan's Perception of a Political Settlement with Israel, 1967–1988* (Brighton, 2006); Avi Raz, *The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War* (New Haven, 2012).

opinions.⁸ While the charm might flow in discussions between the two men in good times, their deeper character traits contained potential for discord.

Over dinner with British Prime Minister James Callaghan on February 22, 1978, Hussein returned repeatedly to a theme he called “Resolution 242 syndrome.” “He was deeply afraid,” he told Callaghan, “of a re-run of the Resolution 242 saga.” Elaborating further, he explained that, “it was essential to know what the end result would be . . . He recalled with some bitterness the letters he had received from President Johnson and President Nixon telling him what Resolution 242 really meant.”⁹ As these comments make clear, the diplomacy surrounding the negotiation and implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, passed on November 22, 1967, formed Hussein’s first essential point of reference for the Camp David process a decade later. This is unsurprising. Resolution 242 laid the foundation for the post–1967 peace process in the shape of a “land for peace” formula.¹⁰ So, the resolution coupled a call for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from

⁸ Telegram from Ambassador Peter Ramsbotham, Embassy Washington, to Foreign Secretary David Owen, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (hereafter FCO), no. 946, March 3, 1977, PREM16/1485, The National Archives of the UK (hereafter TNA).

⁹ Note of a Conversation at the Prime Minister’s Dinner for King Hussein of Jordan at 10 Downing Street, February 22, 1978, PREM16/1732, TNA.

¹⁰ For further discussion of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, see Nigel Ashton, “Searching for a Just and Lasting Peace? Anglo-American Relations and the Road to United Nations Security Council Resolution 242,” *The International History Review* 38 (2016): 24–44; Sydney D. Bailey, *The Making of Resolution 242* (Dordrecht, 1985); David McDowall, “Clarity or Ambiguity? The Withdrawal Clause of UN Security Council Resolution 242,” *International Affairs* 90 (2014): 1367–81.

territories occupied in the recent conflict” with the “termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.”¹¹

But Hussein’s reference to a Resolution 242 “syndrome” or “saga” requires further explanation. In essence, the “saga” from Hussein’s perspective was made up of three elements—the negotiation, the interpretation, and the implementation of the resolution—in which the United States played a central role. In terms of negotiation, between the end of the June war and the intensive discussions in November 1967 resulting in the passage of Resolution 242, the United States had backtracked from a position calling for territorial integrity for all states in the region to one accommodating the Israeli opposition to full withdrawal.¹² The key reason why Hussein did not subscribe to the draft resolution sponsored by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Arthur Goldberg during the first week of November 1967 was the mistrust that this erosion of the U.S. position had engendered. Even a formal commitment delivered via Goldberg to the effect that “the U.S. is prepared to support a return of the West Bank to Jordan with minor boundary rectifications,” and would use its maximum efforts to bring this result about, did not entice Hussein to support the U.S. draft.¹³

¹¹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, quoted from Arthur Lall, *The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967* (New York, 1968), 308–9.

¹² Memorandum, Battle to Rusk, November 5, 1967, #8a, folder “Jordan: Informal Working Visit of Hussein 11/6-9/67 [1 of 2],” Country File, National Security File (hereafter NSF), box 148, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library (hereafter LBJ Library).

¹³ The only formal record of the text of this commitment is contained in a subsequent telegram sent after Hussein asked for it to be repeated to him a year later: State Department to

Nevertheless, this U.S. commitment was the precursor to Hussein's acceptance of the text of Resolution 242 as sponsored by the British government. After the resolution passed unanimously in the Security Council on November 22, 1967, what mattered to Hussein was what the United States would do to secure Israeli withdrawal and the return of the West Bank to Jordan, thus honoring its commitment. The answer from his perspective was very little. While Hussein, at considerable personal risk, entered into a covert process of negotiation with Israeli leaders, the Johnson administration did not follow up by supporting the return of the West Bank to Jordan.¹⁴ No significant pressure was exerted on Israel. By the time Hussein requested the formal restatement of this U.S. commitment a year later, he had already lost faith in the intentions of the United States to implement Resolution 242.¹⁵ This, then, was the "Resolution 242 saga" in Hussein's mind.

Nor was the Resolution 242 saga the only lingering controversy in U.S.-Jordanian relations. During the September 1970 confrontation between the Hashemite regime and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), although the Nixon administration offered Hussein public support, it dithered in private in the face of Hussein's repeated entreaties for military intervention.¹⁶ The crisis confirmed a pattern established during the Resolution 242 saga of

Embassy Tel Aviv, November 30, 1968, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), 1964–68, vol. XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967, ed. Harriet D. Schwar (Washington, DC, 2004), doc. 506.

¹⁴ For further discussion of Hussein's covert diplomacy during this period, see Raz, *The Bride and the Dowry*; Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, 278–310.

¹⁵ State Department to Tel Aviv, November 30, 1968, *FRUS*, vol. XIX, doc. 506.

¹⁶ For further discussion of the U.S. role in the September 1970 crisis, see Nigel Ashton, "Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role in the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan," *The International*

the United States offering words not actions in support of its commitments. After the crisis, in March 1972, Hussein proposed his own plan, the United Arab Kingdom (UAK), a federation of the East Bank and West Bank under his ultimate authority, as a way of breaking the deadlock over the occupied territories.¹⁷ The pattern was repeated. Washington offered a public welcome for the proposal but took no action to restart the peace process. The reaction from the Arab states, meanwhile, was negative, with Egypt under its new leader President Anwar Sadat severing diplomatic relations with Jordan over the plan. While Sadat presented his decision as a defense of Palestinian national rights, Hussein saw it as an opportunistic maneuver on Sadat's part designed to enhance his credentials as Nasser's successor. The roots of the tensions that would emerge between the two men over the Camp David process were thus already apparent.¹⁸

In contrast to June 1967, Hussein largely kept Jordan on the sidelines during the October 1973 war despite pressure from Syria and Egypt to engage his forces. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who had earlier commended Hussein's statesmanship in keeping Jordan out of the conflict, wrote to him again on October 19, 1973 promising that, in the

History Review 28 (2006): 94–118; Douglas Little, "A Puppet in Search of a Puppeteer: The United States, King Hussein and Jordan, 1953–1970," *The International History Review* 17 (1995): 512–44.

¹⁷ For the text of the plan, see Letter, Hussein to Nixon, March 13, 1972, White House Central File, Subject File, Countries, box 46, folder CO76, Jordan 1/1/71, Richard Nixon Presidential Papers, Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California (hereafter RNPP).

¹⁸ Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom* (Washington, DC, 1999), 207.

aftermath of the war, the United States would work toward a fundamental settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁹ “In such a settlement,” Kissinger promised, “it is inconceivable that the interests of Jordan . . . would not be fully protected. I give you a formal assurance to this effect.”²⁰ But despite this formal assurance, Kissinger’s step-by-step diplomacy, resulting in disengagement agreements on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts, was complemented by what amounted to side-step diplomacy on the Jordanian front. Given Israel’s refusal to countenance withdrawal from the West Bank, Kissinger concentrated his efforts elsewhere. So, the U.S. assurance that Jordan’s interests would be fully protected amounted once again to words rather than action.

The impasse resulted in a decision at the summit meeting of Arab Heads of State at Rabat in October 1974 confirming “the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent national authority under the command of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people in any Palestinian territory that is liberated.”²¹ The Rabat resolution substituted the PLO for Jordan as the Arab representative in any negotiation with Israel over the West Bank. Given that there was no prospect of Israel negotiating with the PLO, the Ford administration hastened to underline its support for a continuing Jordanian role. Kissinger formalized the U.S. position through a Memorandum of Agreement with the Israeli government stating that the U.S. would not recognize or negotiate with the PLO until it recognized Israel’s right to exist and accepted UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and

¹⁹ Telegram, State Department to Embassy Amman, October 9, 1973, NSC, Country File, Middle East, box 618, folder Jordan vol. IX, Jan–Oct. 1973, RNPP.

²⁰ Telegram, State Department to Embassy Amman, October 19, 1973, NSC, Country File, Middle East, box 618, folder Jordan vol. IX, Jan–Oct. 1973, RNPP.

²¹ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom*, 210.

338.²² But Rabat still crystallized the central problem of Palestinian representation in the peace process. Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, and King Hussein were rivals for the allegiance of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Hussein's claim was based on Jordan's rule over the West Bank between 1948 and 1967, the Union of the Two Banks passed by the Jordanian Parliament in April 1950, and his continuing authority over the substantial Palestinian population in Jordan. Arafat's claim was based on the PLO's credentials as the national movement of all Palestinians whether in the occupied territories or in the diaspora. While the immediate legacy of Rabat was Hussein's public recognition of the PLO claim, in private he told Western interlocutors that in the event of an Israeli agreement to full withdrawal, he would be willing to set the Rabat resolution to one side and negotiate over the future of the West Bank.²³

Hussein's acceptance of the Rabat resolution reflected his frustration with U.S. policy. He believed it was the lack of progress in the peace process that had opened the way to Rabat. This frustration was deepened by a further controversy highlighting another source of tension in bilateral relations. Jordan's attempt to buy Hawk surface-to-air missiles from the United States during 1975 provided a striking indication of the strength of the pro-Israel lobby in the U.S. Congress. A deal for the sale of the missiles to Jordan was eventually struck, but Hussein

²² Memorandum of Agreement between the Governments of Israel and the United States: The Geneva Conference, September 1, 1975, *FRUS*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, ed. Adam M. Howard (Washington, DC, 2011), doc. 227.

²³ Memorandum of conversation (hereafter Memcon), Ford-Hussein, March 31, 1976, National Security Advisor's Files (hereafter NSA): Memoranda of Conversations, box 18, folder March 30, 1976- Jordanian King Hussein, Gerald R. Ford Papers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, (hereafter GRFP).

was forced to accept the humiliating provision that the batteries would be deprived of their mobility and concreted into fixed positions. This would make them easy targets for Israeli air strikes. As Hussein wrote to Kissinger, “how can the U.S. Government maintain its credibility and continue to be able to play an effective role in the Arab world if its pledges, promises and commitments, all made seriously and in good faith are not lived up to because of Israel’s friends in the Congress who seem to run the show there?”²⁴

It was against this unpromising backdrop that the Carter administration took office in January 1977. Two concerns growing out of his previous experiences preoccupied Hussein by this stage. The first was that Egypt’s President Sadat was not fully committed to a multilateral approach and might instead decide to pursue a bilateral deal with Israel along the lines of the Sinai II agreement brokered by Kissinger in September 1975.²⁵ This concern reflected the lack of trust between Hussein and Sadat dating back to Sadat’s opportunistic severing of diplomatic relations with Jordan over the UAK Plan in 1972. The second was that Jordan might be made the scapegoat for any concessions the Arab side was required to make over the West Bank as part of a renewed effort to move the peace process forward.²⁶ As U.S. officials

²⁴ Telegram, Hussein to Kissinger, July 23, 1975, NSA Country File Middle East/South Asia, box 22, folder Jordan – State Dept telegrams to SecState Nodis (11), GRFP.

²⁵ Embassy Amman to State Department, March 14, 1977, document 1977AMMAN01472, Access to Archival Databases, Central Foreign Policy File, 1973–78, Record Group 59, United States National Archives (hereafter USNA), <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43> (accessed June 11 2015) (hereafter CFPF, 1973–78, USNA).

²⁶ Embassy Amman to State Department, January 16, 1977, document 1977AMMAN00275, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA; Embassy Amman to State Department, January 22, 1977, document 1977AMMAN00410, *ibid.*

privately acknowledged, “the King’s general attitude is that if there must be any major concessions, he would like to have the PLO take the blame for them.”²⁷

From the outset it was apparent that Carter wanted progress in the peace process during his first year in office.²⁸ Secretary of State Cyrus Vance embarked on a tour of the region in mid-February 1977 to sound out the attitudes of Arab and Israeli leaders to the reconvening the Geneva Middle East Peace Conference, which had met and adjourned in December 1973. But before Vance reached Jordan on February 18, 1977 two events took place that would have a significant impact on Hussein’s position. The first was a private tragedy. On the evening of February 9, Hussein’s third wife, Queen Alia, was killed when the royal helicopter crashed in bad weather on the return journey from a visit to a hospital at Tafila in southern Jordan. Alia’s death was huge personal blow for Hussein and for months afterwards he retreated into a shell of anguish and grief. But, as he later confided to Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders, there was another dimension to Alia’s death. Hussein told Saunders about the series of covert meetings he had held with Israeli leaders across the decade since the 1967 war. In his most sensitive and intimate observation of all “he said that in a sense his previous wife (Queen Alya) met her death (in a night helicopter crash) as a result of this effort because it was necessary to do extensive night flying in [the] royal helicopter to provide a cover for the use of [the] helicopter for night meetings with [the]

²⁷ Minutes of a Policy Review Committee Meeting, April 19, 1977, *FRUS*, 1977–1980, vol. VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977–August 1978, ed. Adam M. Howard, (Washington, DC, 2013), doc. 28.

²⁸ Quandt, *Camp David*, 40.

Israelis.”²⁹ Given the weather conditions on the day of her death, it would have been advisable for Alia to travel back by road from Tafila were it not for the standing instructions to use the royal helicopter for night travel wherever possible. Hussein thus blamed himself, and his covert peacemaking efforts, for his wife’s death.

Just over a week after Alia’s death, on the day of Vance’s arrival in Jordan, a story by Bob Woodward, “CIA Paid Millions to Jordan’s King Hussein,” broke in *The Washington Post*.³⁰ It claimed that the CIA had made large, secret, annual payments to Hussein across a period of twenty years, and that Carter had ordered the payments stopped once he learned of them. It went on to claim that Hussein had needed money to “support his lifestyle,” that “Hussein himself had provided intelligence to the CIA,” and that “Hussein’s decisions have often been highly compatible with U.S. and Israeli interests.” The net effect of the story was to cast Hussein in the role of a spendthrift CIA lackey. The CIA Station Chief between 1963 and 1971, Jack O’Connell, named by Woodward in a follow-up article the next day, poured scorn in his memoirs on the claims that the payments were for personal use, or that they

²⁹ The sensitivity of this report is indicated by its handling restrictions: Embassy Jidda to State Department, October 18, 1978, “to INR McAfee only: please hand carry to NEA/Crawford for transmittal Eyes Only to Brzezinski for President from Saunders”, *FRUS*, 1977–80, vol. IX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, August 1978–December 1980, ed. Alexander R. Wieland (Washington, DC, 2014), doc. 86.

³⁰ “CIA Paid Millions to Jordan’s King Hussein,” February 18, 1977, *The Washington Post*, section A1.

served to buy Hussein's allegiance.³¹ Nor was it true that Carter saw the payments as improper. On the contrary, he wrote to Hussein describing the *Post* story as "misleading" and confirming that he saw "nothing illegal and improper in your relationship with us."³² It is perhaps no coincidence that Carter also chose this moment to pen a personal letter of condolence to Hussein for the death of Queen Alia.³³ But the damage was done. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy "insisted that after the recent revelation of CIA assistance to Hussein, no one can sign any paper with the King."³⁴

Vance speculated when he met Hussein that "it was his guess that the information had been leaked from a very low level and he did not know the reason for this. The King could be sure this did not reflect US Government views." Since the payments had been reported the previous year to the Intelligence Oversight Board, the timing of the leak to Woodward was significant. Not only did it seriously compromise Hussein's position just as the new administration began a push for peace negotiations, it also led him to question the foundations of his relationship with the United States.³⁵

³¹ "White House Reviewing Intelligence Operations," February 19, 1977, *The Washington Post*, section A1; Jack O'Connell with Vernon Loeb, *King's Counsel: A Memoir of War, Espionage, and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York, 2011), 136–39.

³² Letter, Carter to Hussein, March 12, 1977, President Carter File, Royal Hashemite Archives, Basman Palace, Amman, Jordan (hereafter RHA).

³³ Hand-written letter, Carter to Hussein, February 20, 1977, *ibid.*

³⁴ Telegram, Embassy Cairo to State Department, March 26, 1977, document 1977CAIRO05157, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

³⁵ Telegram, Embassy Amman to Liaison Office Riyadh, Memcon on U.S.-Jordanian meeting, February 19, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 12.

Nevertheless, when Hussein paid an official visit to Washington, D.C. in late April, the atmosphere was relatively positive, with Hussein singling out for praise Carter's dedication to the peace process.³⁶ In a meeting with Carter on April 25, Hussein observed that "I feel more happy and at ease on this visit than on any previous one." Carter was generous in his response: "if all leaders were like you it would be possible to have a permanent peace. You are strong and gracious and have a constructive attitude toward peace."³⁷ But the substantive obstacles to reconvening the Geneva Conference remained significant. First, the May 1977 elections in Israel soon produced a political earthquake: the defeat of the ruling Labor Party by Menachem Begin's Likud Party. Begin was ideologically committed to holding on to the West Bank and accelerating the pace of settlement-building in the occupied territories, so the prospects for negotiations appeared dim. Even if the Arabs could be persuaded to negotiate with the new Israeli government, there was a second significant problem over the composition of the Arab delegation. Would the Arabs attend the Geneva Conference as separate national delegations, or as one unified Arab delegation? If the former, how would the question of Palestinian representation be resolved? If the latter, how would negotiations over bilateral issues, such as Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai or the Golan Heights, be conducted?

The third problem was that of reconciling the differences in policy between the United States and Soviet Union, the original co-sponsors of the Geneva conference. The Soviet

³⁶ For a perceptive summary of Hussein's mood ahead of his visit to Washington by Ambassador Pickering, see Embassy Amman to State Department, April 15, 1977, document 1977AMMAN02145, CFPF, 1973-78, USNA.

³⁷ Memcon, President's meeting with King Hussein of Jordan, April 25, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 30.

Union took a harder line over Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories than the United States, although the original Soviet support for Resolution 242 showed that there was some flexibility in Moscow's position.

Finally, the problems posed by inter-Arab rivalries, especially between President Sadat of Egypt and President Asad of Syria, but also between Sadat and Hussein, would have to be overcome. Suspicion between Sadat and Asad ran deep. Asad believed Sadat had betrayed him both during the October 1973 war and also during the subsequent U.S.-sponsored peace process. He expected Sadat to abandon the multilateral process and pursue a further bilateral Egyptian-Israeli deal as soon as the opportunity presented itself. His suspicion proved well founded. Hussein shared some of Asad's suspicion of Sadat's intentions. Jordanian-Egyptian relations had been distant and tense for most of Sadat's presidency and were not helped by the personal dislike between the two men. Sadat had little respect for monarchy as an institution and regarded Hussein as an empire-builder who sought to extend his control over the West Bank for selfish dynastic reasons.³⁸

The initial indications regarding the position of the new Likud government were not positive. Vance told British Prime Minister Callaghan with some irony that, "as regards the West Bank, Mr Begin had started by saying 'No' and his position had progressively hardened."³⁹ Hussein was also pessimistic about the prospects for progress in the wake of Begin's victory.⁴⁰ The new Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, did indicate some possible flexibility in the government's approach over the crucial issue of Palestinian representation within an Arab delegation to Geneva. He also arranged a further covert meeting with Hussein

³⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston, 1982), 219.

³⁹ Memorandum, Callaghan-Vance meeting, August 13, 1977, PREM16/1371, TNA.

⁴⁰ Vance to Carter/Brzezinski, August 5, 1977, *FRUS*, 1977–1980, vol. VIII, doc. 71.

in London on August 22, 1977. But the meeting did not produce any breakthrough and Hussein later characterized it as a failure.⁴¹

The issue of Palestinian representation was crucial because it crystallized the questions of Palestinian nationalism and self-determination. No party, whether Jordan, Israel, or the United States, was willing to countenance an unfettered exercise in Palestinian self-determination in the occupied territories, but there were considerable differences of emphasis between their positions. Israel wanted to conduct bilateral negotiations with Jordan over the administration of the West Bank and opposed the creation of any Palestinian entity, let alone a state. Jordan advocated Palestinian self-determination in principle, but in practice continued to favor the UAK Plan of 1972, with any Palestinian entity created in the occupied territories being linked in a federal structure to Jordan. Meanwhile Carter indicated his personal sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians when, in answer to a question at a town hall meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts on March 16, 1977, he replied that “there has to be a homeland provided for the Palestinian refugees who have suffered for many, many years.”⁴² Exactly what this commitment meant in practice remained a moot point.⁴³

⁴¹ Avi Shlaim, “His Royal Shyness: King Hussein and Israel,” *The New York Review of Books*, July 15 1999, 17.

⁴² Quandt, *Camp David*, 48.

⁴³ For further discussion of Carter’s views regarding Palestinian rights, see Darren J. McDonald, “Blessed are the Policy Makers: Jimmy Carter’s Faith-Based Approach to the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” *Diplomatic History* 39 (2015): 452–76; Victor V. Nemchenok, “‘These People Have an Irrevocable Right to Self-Government’: United States Policy and the Palestinian Question, 1977–1979,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 20 (2009): 595–618; Pressman, “Explaining the Carter Administration’s Israeli-Palestinian Solution,” 1124–26.

The challenges were such that by the end of the summer, the Carter administration had retreated from any attempt at substantive negotiation ahead of re-convening the Geneva Conference, and had lowered its sights instead “to simply getting to Geneva and avoiding an immediate breakdown.”⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the letters exchanged by Carter and Hussein during summer 1977 do give a sense of momentum building toward a reconvening of the conference.⁴⁵ On the issue of Palestinian representation, the gap between the Israeli and Jordanian positions was bridgeable. Neither party favored formal PLO representation at Geneva although both accepted that in practice any Palestinian delegates from the occupied territories would have links to the PLO. Dayan told Carter during a meeting on September 19 that even an open admission from a Palestinian delegate that he was a PLO member would not mean the collapse of the conference “if everything else goes right.”⁴⁶ Chief of the Jordanian Royal Court Abdul Hamid Sharaf told Vance on September 24, that Jordan was “open-minded about the ways of handling the Palestinian representation problem.”⁴⁷

It would have been possible, then, to finesse the issue of Palestinian representation at Geneva. In this regard, it was Sadat’s opposition to participating in a single Arab delegation

⁴⁴ Comments by Under Secretary of State Philip Habib to Foreign Secretary David Owen, October 17, 1977, PREM16/1371, TNA.

⁴⁵ Carter to Hussein, July 30, 1977, President Carter File, RHA; Carter to Hussein, August 16, 1977, *ibid*; Hussein to Carter, August 16 1977, *ibid*.

⁴⁶ Meeting of Foreign Minister Dayan with President Carter, September 19, 1977, Brzezinski Papers, Geographic File, box 13, folder—Negotiations (9/75-9/77), Jimmy Carter Library (hereafter JCL).

⁴⁷ Memcon, Vance-Sharaf, September 24, 1977, *FRUS*, 1977–1980, vol. VIII, doc. 112.

that proved the bigger obstacle.⁴⁸ At any rate, Carter had no complaints about the Jordanian approach, telling Sharaf that “your government has been most cooperative and constructive.”⁴⁹ Jordan’s flexibility was mirrored by signs of progress on the Israeli side. On October 5, Quandt notified Brzezinski that Dayan had taken a significant step by agreeing to drop his insistence that Palestinians should be buried in national delegations.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the issuing on October 1 of an unprecedented joint Statement on the Middle East by Vance and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko had removed another obstacle to the re-convening of Geneva. This statement went beyond Resolution 242 in calling for “the resolution of the Palestinian question including ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.” It affirmed that the Geneva Conference framework was “the only right and effective way for achieving a fundamental solution to all aspects of the Middle East problem,” and called on all parties to “facilitate in every way the resumption of the work of the conference not later than December 1977.”⁵¹ The joint statement was an exceptional example of U.S.-Soviet cooperation, which stood in contrast to the approach of the Ford or Nixon administrations.⁵² Nevertheless, the considerable domestic political backlash against the statement, orchestrated

⁴⁸ Memcon, Vance-Sadat, August 1, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 63.

⁴⁹ Memcon, Carter-Sharaf, September 28, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 116.

⁵⁰ Memorandum, Quandt to Brzezinski, October 5, 1977, Brzezinski Papers, Geographic File, box 13, folder Middle East Negotiations (10/77-12/77), JCL.

⁵¹ Text of Joint Statement quoted from Vance’s Delegation to Certain Diplomatic Posts, October 1, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 120.

⁵² Kissinger had seen the December 1973 Geneva Conference as an elaborate charade intended to lock the Soviet Union out of the Middle East peace process (author’s interview with Henry Kissinger, New York, June 2, 2003, interview in author’s possession).

in large measure by supporters of Israel, meant that the administration was soon forced into a partial retreat, issuing a joint statement with Israel on October 5 to the effect that acceptance of the U.S.-Soviet communiqué was not a precondition for participation in the reconvened Geneva Conference.⁵³

Despite this setback, the correspondence between Carter and Hussein reflected an increased sense of optimism that the Geneva Conference might now be reconvened. On October 15, Hussein received a letter from Carter stating, “we have reached the point where the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference is a distinct possibility.”⁵⁴ Writing in response on October 26, Hussein paid tribute to Carter’s commitment to a just settlement and his personal involvement in the process.⁵⁵ On October 30, Carter wrote to Hussein once again, praising his constructive approach and expressing his strong belief that “we are now at a critical juncture in the efforts my administration has been making since taking office nine months ago to chart a course that will lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”⁵⁶ It was at this juncture that Sadat decided to cut across the multilateral Geneva approach and instead take a dramatic unilateral initiative. On November 19 he flew to Jerusalem to speak before the Israeli Knesset.

Sadat’s impatience had been building for some time. On October 28, the U.S. Ambassador in Cairo, Hermann Eilts, reported that Sadat had reiterated forcefully that he was

⁵³ Strieff, *Jimmy Carter and the Middle East*, 59–78; Raymond Cohen. “Israel and the Soviet-American Statement of October 1, 1977: The Limits of Patron-Client Influence.” *Orbis* 22 (1978): 613–33.

⁵⁴ Letter, Carter to Hussein, October 15, 1977, President Carter File, RHA.

⁵⁵ Letter, Hussein to Carter, October 26, 1977, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Letter, Carter to Hussein, October 30, 1977, *ibid.*

“fed up with the procedural debate” about Geneva.⁵⁷ As Hussein shuttled around the region trying to reconcile differences between Asad and Sadat, Sadat broke ranks.⁵⁸ In a top secret approach to Carter, he proposed a peace conference in the Arab sector of Jerusalem during December 1977, purportedly to prepare for a meeting of the Geneva Conference by June 1978.⁵⁹ Because Sadat must have known there was no chance that Asad or Hussein would attend a conference in Israeli-occupied territory, the letter was a transparent ploy to derail the multilateral Geneva process. In a response steeped in unconscious irony in view of what would follow, Carter replied to Sadat in precisely those terms: “after serious reflection,” he wrote, “I must tell you that this public announcement may seriously complicate, rather than facilitate, the search for peace in the Middle East.”⁶⁰

Regardless of Carter’s warning, Sadat plowed ahead, declaring before the Egyptian People’s Assembly on November 9 that he would be willing to “go to the Knesset itself” to insist on Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian rights.⁶¹ In view of Sadat’s apparent willingness to

⁵⁷ Telegram, Embassy Cairo to State Department, October 28, 1977, document

1977CAIRO17863, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

⁵⁸ For further discussion of Hussein’s shuttle diplomacy, see State Department to Various Posts, November 3, 1977, document 1977STATE263805, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA; State Department to various Posts, November 7, 1977, document 1977STATE266341, *ibid*; Embassy Amman to State Department, November 9, 1977, document 1977AMMAN08247, *ibid*.

⁵⁹ Embassy Cairo to State Department, November 3, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 141.

⁶⁰ State Department to Embassy Cairo, November 5, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII doc. 142; Quandt, *Camp David*, 144–45.

⁶¹ Embassy Cairo to State Department, November 9, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 144.

break the Arab taboo over openly setting foot on Israeli soil, Carter now changed tack, commending his “courageous stand” and commitment to peace.⁶² The high drama of Sadat’s arrival in Jerusalem on November 19 promoted a sense of euphoria in Israel. In Jordan, the reaction was very different. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who had developed a close working relationship with Hussein, reported to Washington on “one of the toughest conversations I have ever had with him.”⁶³ Describing Hussein’s sense of “unmitigated bitterness and gloom,” Pickering went on to detail the King’s belief that Sadat had undercut his efforts to bring Syria and Egypt to Geneva together and had “betrayed every sacred principle of Arab unity in dealing with the Israelis by going to Jerusalem.” Hussein was convinced, Pickering wrote, that Sadat would now “strike off on his own with Israel” and that “this is what the Israelis have in mind.” Although he subsequently described Sadat’s move as “courageous,” Hussein believed in private that it was a fundamental transgression.⁶⁴ He subsequently told National Security Adviser Brzezinski that: “the visit to Jerusalem under occupation had great religious significance. My grandfather is buried there . . . We lost Jerusalem in 1967 under Egyptian command . . . The Sadat visit was a very, very big shock.”⁶⁵

⁶² State Department to Embassy Cairo, November 12, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 146.

⁶³ Embassy Amman to State Department, November 20, 1977, document 1977AMMAN08605, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

⁶⁴ King Hussein’s interview for BBC *Panorama* program, recorded January 21, 1978, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), MEA-78-16, F2, vol. V, January 24, 1978.

⁶⁵ Brzezinski, meeting with King Hussein, March 18, 1979, (7)NSA Brzezinski, Subject File, box 33, folder Memcons Brzezinski, 3-6/79, JCL.

It subsequently became an article of faith for Hussein that “the real peace was derailed by Sadat. We were close to Geneva. We were all getting ready to go.”⁶⁶ No doubt this was too rosy an interpretation of the stage reached in negotiations over reconvening the Geneva conference. Difficulties remained, particularly in securing Syrian attendance. But there was a kernel of truth in Hussein’s central point: that Sadat’s visit undermined the multilateral peace process meaning that the opportunity to pursue a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East at this juncture had now been sacrificed.

Sadat’s visit was also a decisive juncture for U.S. policy and hence for U.S.-Jordanian relations. Although the Carter administration initially sought ways to reconcile Sadat’s initiative with the Geneva process, it soon became directly engaged in sustaining the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. While the administration continued to profess its commitment to the implementation of resolution 242 and the resolution of the Palestinian problem, in practice achieving an Egyptian-Israeli agreement became the clear priority of U.S. diplomacy. Although the pursuit of an Egyptian-Israeli peace deal was presented by the Carter administration as the essential precursor to a comprehensive peace, in fact it involved bypassing U.S. commitments regarding the implementation of resolution 242 in favor of consolidating the United States’ bilateral relationship with Egypt. For Hussein, who was primed by his experiences a decade earlier, the U.S. failure to insist on the full implementation of resolution 242 was a tragic case of history repeating itself. Worse still, a bilateral deal between Egypt and Israel would only make future Israeli withdrawal even more unlikely, because Israel would no longer be faced with a united Arab front. This, then, was the root cause of the parting of the ways between Carter and Hussein. It was a fundamental disagreement about the path to comprehensive peace in the region.

⁶⁶ Brzezinski, meeting with King Hussein, March 18, 1979, JCL.

That the breach in U.S.-Jordanian relations would become so deep was not immediately apparent in the wake of Sadat's visit. Hussein trod a delicate line, recognizing Sadat's courage, but expressing surprise at his failure to consult his fellow Arabs. As he told Vance on December 12, his fundamental concern was that Sadat might now pursue a separate settlement with Israel.⁶⁷ Vance for his part initially expressed some understanding of the "very awkward" position Hussein now faced.⁶⁸ During a meeting with Carter in Tehran on New Year's Day 1978, Hussein argued that he was doing all he could to support Sadat.⁶⁹ That this would be the last meeting between the two leaders until Hussein's visit to Washington in June 1980, two and a half years later, testified to Amman and Washington's parting of ways. Already significant differences were evident in their responses to the so-called "Begin Plan" for Palestinian administrative autonomy in the occupied territories. While Carter hailed Begin's proposal as a "serious and good step forward," Hussein saw it as a dead end, a device to entrench the Israeli occupation with Jordanian cooperation.⁷⁰ As the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations ground to a halt in January 1978, Hussein expressed deep, public skepticism that peace could be achieved: "I've done so much, I've hoped so much, my whole inclination, my whole feeling has been for peace, for a better future for the generations to come. All my efforts, my dreams—they are shattered."⁷¹ Privately, U.S. officials now described his position

⁶⁷ Memcon, Vance-Hussein, December 12, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 172.

⁶⁸ Memorandum, Vance to Carter, November 25, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 158.

⁶⁹ Memcon, Carter-Hussein, January 1, 1978, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 182.

⁷⁰ Memcon, Carter-Begin, December 17, 1977, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 178.

⁷¹ King Hussein interview for BBC *Panorama* program, January 21, 1978, FBIS, MEA-78-16, F3, vol. V, January 24, 1978.

as “very negative,” noting that that there was not much difference in practice between his approach and that of President Asad of Syria.⁷²

To underline both his continuing commitment to the peace process and his doubts about the direction it had taken, Hussein wrote to Carter on March 13, 1978, stressing his two fundamental concerns: “for the present peace negotiations to progress and expand there must be some concrete indication shown by Israel that the negotiations would ultimately result in Israeli withdrawal and a just settlement of the Palestinian question based on the right of self-determination.” But Hussein did not believe that the Begin government would be willing to make these commitments. “There are many signs,” he wrote, “that the Israeli leadership will not show the necessary historic vision to respond positively to President Sadat’s initiative.”⁷³ These twin principles were Hussein’s minimum requirement for engaging in the Egyptian-Israeli peace process and he reiterated them on numerous occasions to U.S. interlocutors.⁷⁴ His aim was to persuade Carter that the Israeli position over the West Bank could not be finessed but would have to be confronted by his administration.

The passages Hussein chose to underline in Carter’s reply to his letter are indicative of his concerns. “It is my hope that the process which we have begun will lead to broader negotiations which Jordan will be able to join . . . Knowing the strength of the bonds between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the West Bank, it has always been our view that final arrangements should provide for the restoration of ties between the two, and for the inclusion

⁷² “US comments on Arab/Israel Peace negotiations,” memorandum by M. S. Weir, February 20, 1978, PREM16/1732, TNA.

⁷³ Letter, Hussein to Carter, March 13, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

⁷⁴ Hussein had already made these principles clear to Carter at Tehran. See Memcon, Carter-Hussein, January 1, 1978, *FRUS*, vol. VIII, doc. 182.

of Gaza in this framework as well . . . The United States has, likewise, taken the position that the Palestinian people must participate in determination of their own future.”⁷⁵

One vital element of the negotiations was out of the Carter administration’s hands. Despite repeated pleas, U.S. officials were unable to persuade Sadat to coordinate his approach with Hussein.⁷⁶ The letters the two leaders exchanged between Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem and the Camp David summit provide a clear indication of the declining state of their relations.⁷⁷ By the time Carter issued his invitation in August to Sadat and Begin to attend a summit at Camp David early the following month, the Hussein-Sadat relationship had reached a low ebb. In a relatively short letter, Sadat claimed he had only accepted the invitation to the summit because he thought it would provide the best venue to put Begin under pressure regarding withdrawal from the occupied territories. He also stressed his intention to try to divide Israel from the United States.⁷⁸ In reply Hussein advocated a joint Arab peacemaking effort involving the Palestinians and warned of the danger that the summit might only produce a “declaration of principles which would cover Israel’s negative position in vague terms.” His concluding declaration of confidence in Sadat’s “deep Arab nationalism” reads more like a warning than a profession of faith.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Letter, Carter to Hussein [with annotations], March 18, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

⁷⁶ Telegram, Vance to Eilts, February 17, 1978, document 1978STATE042976, CFPF, 1973-78, USNA; Letter, Carter to Hussein, May 13, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

⁷⁷ Letter, Sadat to Hussein, December 28, 1978, Egypt File, RHA; Letter, Hussein to Sadat, January 12, 1978, *ibid*; Letter, Sadat to Hussein, April 28, 1978, *ibid*.

⁷⁸ Letter, Sadat to Hussein, August 16, 1978, Egypt File, RHA.

⁷⁹ Letter, Hussein to Sadat, August 23, 1978, Egypt File, RHA.

The decline in Jordanian-Egyptian relations leading up to Camp David paralleled the trajectory of U.S.-Jordanian relations. Hussein's refrain during this period concerned what he termed an "erosion" of the U.S. position. His point was that the United States had put on record its interpretation of Resolution 242 as requiring Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank with only minor boundary rectifications. Now, as part of the Egyptian-Israeli negotiating process, the Carter administration accepted an interim arrangement for the West Bank that would not specify withdrawal as its goal. When Ambassador Atherton visited Amman on August 12, he reported: "Hussein spoke more frankly than I have ever heard him of his apprehension that the US appeared to be pulling back from its position on [the] meaning of Resolution 242 conveyed to him over the years since 1967. He said at one point that these past months have been 'the most distressing of my life.'"⁸⁰

Given the pivotal role the Carter administration expected Jordan to play in arrangements for the West Bank, and the difficulties already evident in bilateral relations, it is extraordinary that there was so little consultation with Amman before and during the Camp David summit. The difficulty was recognized. A State Department planning paper stated that "our problem in the area is confidence: it is acute in Jordan . . . Hussein quite frankly tells us he sees an erosion in our position." Arab leaders wanted the administration to "stop trying to find schemes for getting around Israel's refusal to make the commitment to withdraw . . . and start trying to find ways to get the Israelis to change their position." This shift was essential "if we are to have any chance of ever getting Hussein to join the negotiations."⁸¹

⁸⁰ Telegram, Embassy Amman to State Department, August 12, 1978, document 1978AMMAN06532, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

⁸¹ "Planning for Camp David," paper prepared in Department of State [drafted by David A. Korn], undated, *FRUS*, vol. IX, doc. 6.

Before the summit Carter and Hussein did exchange letters, with Carter writing on August 15, 1978 to explain his decision to call the meeting. Hussein once again highlighted what he saw as key sections of the text in his private files. Carter wrote that: “insofar as our efforts at Camp David are concerned, we will be guided by our views on a just and lasting peace which we have consistently conveyed to you over the months past.”⁸² Hussein’s reply, sent on August 27, focused on this section, noting that he was particularly grateful for “your assurance that your efforts at Camp David will be guided by your views on a just and lasting peace which have been the subject of our talks and contacts since the beginning.” But he went on to issue a warning about what might result: “it is feared here in Jordan that the inability to achieve . . . genuine progress in the talks, as a result of Israel’s proven intransigence, might prompt the participants to issue a vague and uncommitting document of principles aimed at de-emphasizing the differences and inviting other participants.”⁸³ It would be “unfair and unrealistic” to expect Jordan to shift its stand on principle in these circumstances. In discussion with Deputy Chief of Mission Roscoe Suddarth, Royal Court Chief Sharaf underlined that only a clear declaration that Israel would end the occupation would allow Jordan’s engagement in negotiations.⁸⁴ A hint of the domestic pressures contributing to Hussein’s position was provided by Suddarth’s judgment that should he be maneuvered into entering the negotiations on uncertain terms, it was likely that both Prime Minister Mudar Badran and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Zeid bin Shaker would resign their

⁸² Letter, Carter to Hussein [with annotations], August 15, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

⁸³ Letter, Hussein to Carter, August 27, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

⁸⁴ Telegram, Embassy Amman to State Department, August 28, 1978, document 1978AMMAN06942, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

posts.⁸⁵ While neither played a leading role in shaping Jordan's foreign policy, both were significant figures in domestic politics, whose support Hussein could ill afford to sacrifice.

In a reply to Hussein delivered on September 3, Carter emphasized his determination to spare no effort to achieve progress at Camp David, and his hope that a framework could be developed, based on Resolution 242, making it possible "to move to a new and broadened phase of negotiations in which Your Majesty would have an important role to play."⁸⁶ But Carter's annotations on his Camp David briefing book were indicative of his frame of mind. In addition to "communications with Hussein," he wrote that "Jordan's timidity could block progress."⁸⁷

Carter's reference to communications with Hussein appears ironic in view of what subsequently took place. The State Department went to some lengths to ascertain Hussein's likely whereabouts during the summit to ensure that he could be contacted if Carter saw fit.⁸⁸ It transpired that he would be in London from September 4 onward to attend the Farnborough air show. Full contact details were supplied by the Amman embassy. Hussein coupled his visit to the air show with another meeting with British Prime Minister James Callaghan at 4:30

⁸⁵ Telegram, Embassy Amman to State Department, August 29, 1978, document 1978AMMAN06976, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

⁸⁶ Letter, Carter to Hussein, September 3, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

⁸⁷ Vance to Carter, "Study Papers for the Camp David talks," undated [August–September 1978], Vertical File, box 8(1), folder Camp David Study Papers, JCL; Quandt, *Camp David*, 219–20.

⁸⁸ Telegram, State Department to Embassies Amman and London, September 1, 1978, document 1978STATE223230, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA; Embassy Amman to State Department, September 2, 1978, document 1978AMMAN7020, *ibid.*

p.m. on September 13. Beforehand, on September 12, Callaghan contacted Carter via the telex hotline between the Cabinet Office and the White House to ask whether there was any message he could pass to Hussein regarding the summit.⁸⁹ No response arrived from Washington before the meeting, leaving Hussein to admit that “he was not well informed about the progress of the Camp David talks.”⁹⁰ To compound matters, a message from National Security Adviser Brzezinski did finally arrive that evening after the meeting, stating that “if the Prime Minister had any further contact with King Hussein, the President would be very grateful for any further flexibility that Hussein could be brought to show.” The Prime Minister’s Private Secretary Bryan Cartledge annotated a question mark next to the words “further flexibility” and commented, “Prime Minister, Not very helpful!” Callaghan’s reply was even pithier: “NO,” he wrote.⁹¹

Part of the explanation for the failure to consult Hussein was the chaotic nature of the Camp David proceedings. After losing his initial hope that bringing Sadat and Begin together might produce a breakthrough, Carter spent much of his time simply trying to prevent a breakdown. Given the difficulties posed by the issue of Israeli settlements in the Sinai, it is no surprise that discussion of the West Bank was pushed down the agenda. Sadat’s disengagement left Carter administration officials in the paradoxical position of negotiating with Israel on behalf of the Palestinians. Begin’s adamant refusal to accept that the withdrawal clause of Resolution 242 referred to the West Bank, meant that the crucial

⁸⁹ Telex, Callaghan to Carter, T.190/78, September 12, 1978, PREM16/1759, TNA.

⁹⁰ Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and King Hussein of Jordan, 1630, September 13, 1978, PREM16/1759, TNA.

⁹¹ Telegram, Embassy Washington to FCO, immediate, no. 3617, 2350Z September 13, 1978, PREM16/1759, TNA.

paragraph 1(c) of the agreement was fudged, leaving the question of the final status of the territories to be determined through negotiation among the parties concerned, including Jordan.⁹² The outcome was thus what Hussein had feared. The administration had placed securing the prize of an Egyptian-Israeli agreement ahead of honoring U.S. commitments over the West Bank.

After the summit, Carter phoned Hussein. His presentation of the Camp David agreements is best described as an exercise in salesmanship. It was not an exercise in candor. According to Carter, “first of all, the Israelis accept the proposition that, in the West Bank, Resolution 242 applies in all its parts, all its principles and all its provisions.”⁹³ This was not true. The Israeli delegation had stuck to its refusal to accept that Resolution 242 applied to the final status negotiations for the West Bank. Instead, the Camp David agreement dodged the issue by splitting the negotiations into two tracks, one over the future status of the West Bank and the other over a bilateral Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty. The use of the term “the negotiations” allowed Israel to claim that Resolution 242 applied only to the bilateral negotiations with Jordan and not to the final status negotiations over the West Bank.⁹⁴ Secondly, Carter claimed, “the Israeli military occupation will be concluded immediately as soon as a self-government can be set up in the West Bank/Gaza.” But Begin had not agreed to abolish the Israeli military government, only to “withdraw” it. Subsequently it emerged that this meant merely a physical relocation of the military government that would continue to

⁹² Quandt, *Camp David*, 242–47.

⁹³ President’s Telephone Conversation with King Hussein of Jordan, 12.37-12.47pm, September 18, 1978, *FRUS*, vol. IX, doc. 52.

⁹⁴ Quandt, *Camp David*, 244–45.

exercise control over any self-governing authority the Palestinians might elect.⁹⁵ Thirdly, Carter claimed, “there will be no new settlements in the West Bank or Gaza Strip during the time of the negotiations and any additional settlements would be as determined by the negotiations themselves.” But this was also not true. According to Quandt, “Carter knew that he did not have a clear-cut agreement with Begin on the question of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.”⁹⁶ Although he could not have known just how far Carter’s presentation diverged from the reality behind the Camp David agreements, Hussein was well advised to stall and deflect Carter’s insistent requests for his engagement in the process.

In addition to his phone call, Carter sent two letters to Hussein. The first was a formal, type-written exegesis of the Camp David agreements.⁹⁷ The second was a personal, hand-written letter whose tone was half-pleading and half-threatening. On the one hand Carter warned that “a failure of our effort because of lack of support from other responsible and moderate leaders of the Arab nations would certainly lead to the strengthening of irresponsible and radical elements.”⁹⁸ On the other, he pleaded that “I need your strong personal support.” It was the threatening element of the letter that most struck Prime Minister Mudar Badran.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Quandt, *Camp David*, 256.

⁹⁶ Quandt, *Camp David*, 253.

⁹⁷ Letter, Carter to Hussein, September 18, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

⁹⁸ Hand-written letter, Carter to Hussein, September 19, 1978, *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Author’s interview with Mudar Badran, Amman, May 20, 2001 (interview in author’s possession). A CIA report also noted that the president’s letters and telephone call amounted to an “implied threat” in Hussein’s mind (Report prepared in the CIA, undated, *FRUS*, vol. IX, document 73).

The Jordanian Cabinet headed by Badran issued a statement on September 19 critical of the Camp David accords.¹⁰⁰ Hussein continued to stall. During a meeting with Vance in Amman on September 20, he confined himself to posing questions about the Camp David agreements, requesting formal, written U.S. answers.¹⁰¹ In a press conference, Hussein commented, “there is a lot of vagueness that needs to be cleared up.”¹⁰² Continuity in U.S.-Jordanian relations was not helped by the unfortunate timing of the handover to a new U.S. Ambassador in Amman, Nicholas Veliotis, who took up his post on September 17, the day the Camp David agreements were signed. But it is doubtful whether this change in representation made much difference to the subsequent precipitous decline in bilateral relations. Already some administration officials were acknowledging privately that relations with Jordan had been mishandled. Ambassador Atherton told U.K. Ambassador Moberly that Hussein was “very sore” about the Camp David agreements having laid down a specific role for Jordan without Jordanian participation, and acknowledged that “this section of the agreements might have been more tactfully phrased.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Telegram, State Department to Observer Mission in the Sinai, September 20, 1978, *FRUS*, vol. IX, doc. 57; Embassy Amman to State Department, September 19, 1978, document 1978AMMAN07354, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

¹⁰¹ Memcon, Vance-Hussein, September 20, 1978, *FRUS*, vol. IX, doc. 58. The text of the Jordanian questions and American answers can be found in Quandt, *Camp David*, appendix H, 388–96. See also Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America’s Foreign Policy* (New York, 1983), 229–31.

¹⁰² King Hussein’s Press Conference, September 23, 1978, FBIS, MEA-78-188, F4, vol. V, September 27, 1978.

¹⁰³ Telegram, Embassy Amman to FCO, no. 353, September 28, 1978, PREM16/1759, TNA.

Sadat now also made his own belated effort to win Hussein's support for the Camp David agreements, through a letter sent on September 28. Unsurprisingly he attempted to put a positive gloss on what had been achieved over the Palestinian question, arguing that the agreement would have positive consequences "if we use it rightly." Sadat's gloss had a lot in common with Carter's: he claimed Israel had been forced to acknowledge the applicability of Resolution 242 to the West Bank and Gaza and that the agreement would stop the "cancer-like spread of Israeli settlements."¹⁰⁴ But Hussein was unconvinced. He told Atherton that relations with Egypt were "now at almost their lowest ebb ever."¹⁰⁵

Hussein's reply to Sadat spelled out the fundamental difference in their interpretations of the Camp David agreements. He warned of the dangers of Egypt concluding a separate peace with Israel and criticized the lack of any link between the two Camp David documents. The framework for comprehensive peace was vague and omitted crucial issues such as sovereignty over the West Bank and the fate of Jerusalem, matters no Arab leader could treat lightly. The transitional agreement for the West Bank was "useless" because Israel would continue its *real politik* by changing facts on the ground. The only way forward was for the Arabs to stay united and act as one bloc.¹⁰⁶

The delivery of the U.S. answers to Hussein's questions by Assistant Secretary Hal Saunders on October 16 did not improve the position. Hussein told Saunders he would not be ready to make a decision on whether to join the peace process until after the summit of Arab

¹⁰⁴ Letter, Sadat to Hussein, September 28, 1978, Egypt File, RHA.

¹⁰⁵ Telegram, Embassy Amman to FCO, no. 353, September 28, 1978, PREM16/1759, TNA.

¹⁰⁶ Letter, Hussein to Sadat, October 14, 1978, Egypt File, RHA.

leaders due to meet in Baghdad at the beginning of November.¹⁰⁷ In fact, Hussein did not wait for the outcome of the Baghdad summit to make his decision. Instead, Carter's failure to secure a clear, written commitment from Begin at Camp David regarding future settlement-building in the West Bank now proved decisive. On October 26, Begin coupled an announcement of the Israeli cabinet's approval of a draft peace treaty with Egypt, with an announcement that the cabinet had also decided to "thicken" a number of West Bank settlements through the addition of housing for several hundred extra families.¹⁰⁸ From Hussein's perspective, this provided tangible evidence that the Camp David agreements did not mean the end of settlement-building despite the claims made by Carter and Sadat. Apart from protestations, the Carter administration did nothing to press Begin to revoke the move.

In a letter sent to Carter on October 31, Hussein now expressed his fundamental concerns about the agreements. The drafts of the letter show how the tone of his rejection was strengthened through a series of annotations on the original text, dated October 30. The sentence "there are some fundamental questions in our minds regarding the results of the Camp David agreements" in the October 30 draft became "*from the very beginning there were* some fundamental questions in our minds regarding the results of the Camp David agreements" in the final text. In the same vein, the sentence "allow me now to summarize to you our views here regarding the Camp David agreements and their chances of development into an acceptable and viable basis for future peace efforts" became "allow me to summarize to you our views here regarding the Camp David agreements and *what we regard as a viable basis for future peace efforts*" in the final text. The effect of these changes was clear. Hussein

¹⁰⁷ Telegrams, Embassy Jidda to State Department, October 18, 1978, *FRUS*, vol. IX, docs. 85 and 86.

¹⁰⁸ Quandt, *Camp David*, 276–77.

did not believe that the Camp David framework could provide the basis for future negotiations. As far as he was concerned it was “time for a return to a collective context for the peace efforts.”¹⁰⁹

The ensuing Baghdad summit witnessed concerted criticism of Sadat, the threat of Egypt’s isolation, and the removal of the headquarters of the Arab League from Cairo should he sign a separate peace treaty with Israel. It also witnessed the beginnings of a new, closer relationship between Jordan and Iraq, founded on King Hussein’s burgeoning friendship with Iraqi Vice-President Saddam Hussein. In conversation with Ambassador Veliotis, the King commended the “maturity that responsibility had brought to the Iraqi leadership.”¹¹⁰ From Washington, matters looked different. According to Carter, “all of us were angered when Hussein subsequently became a spokesman for the most radical Arabs.”¹¹¹ When Hussein wrote to Carter again on December 29, further explaining Jordan’s stance, and offering to visit Washington “whenever you deem the time and circumstances appropriate,” Carter’s private response was dismissive. On the letter he annotated the words “Cy and Zbig. I am not interested in any visit by Hussein. No need to answer this for a while. JC.”¹¹²

An indication of the other pressures Jordan might now experience came during a visit by Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd to Amman on December 3–4, 1978. In addition to underlining Congress’s support for Camp David, Byrd warned that Jordan’s stance might

¹⁰⁹ Letter, Hussein to Carter, October 31, 1978, Egypt File, RHA, [*Italics added*].

¹¹⁰ Telegram, Embassy Amman to State Department, November 20, 1978, document 1978AMMAN08820, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

¹¹¹ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York, 1982), 410.

¹¹² Letter, Hussein to Carter, December 29, 1978, President Carter File, RHA. For Carter’s annotation see, *FRUS*, vol. IX, footnote 1, doc. 157.

have significant effects on bilateral relations.¹¹³ The same theme was taken up by Vance who expressed his concern to Veliotis that Hussein might not understand the negative impact in Washington of his shift from a passive stance to active opposition to the Camp David accords.¹¹⁴ While the threat remained implicit, the U.K. Ambassador in Amman reported that “it is clear that rightly or wrongly he [King Hussein] feels that in the course of the American effort to persuade him to join negotiations on the West Bank on the basis of the Camp David framework, he was subjected to a threat to withdraw financial support.”¹¹⁵

If bilateral relations were tense around the turn of the year, matters worsened considerably during March 1979 as the protracted negotiations to conclude an Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty concluded. Having staked his dwindling personal prestige on securing a deal, Carter was not about to have it derailed by former friends and allies. “There are those . . . determined to undercut this achievement because it does not offer full and immediate solutions for all the problems of the Middle East, particularly for the Palestinians,” he wrote to Hussein. But in fact an Egyptian-Israeli agreement was the “indispensable first step toward peace.”¹¹⁶ In conversation with Assistant Secretary Saunders and Under Secretary Newsom, the British diplomat Anthony Parsons was struck by their combination of realism—“they made clear they were under no illusions about the future: Begin’s objective was to detach Egypt from the conflict and he had no intention of allowing genuine progress over the West

¹¹³ Telegram, Embassy Amman to State Department, December 5, 1978, document 1978AMMAN09127, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA.

¹¹⁴ Telegram, State Department to Embassy Amman, December 28, 1978, document 1978STATE325611, CFPF, 1973–78, USNA .

¹¹⁵ Telegram, Embassy Amman to FCO, no. 436, December 4, 1978, PREM16/2169, TNA.

¹¹⁶ Letter, Carter to Hussein, March 14, 1978, President Carter File, RHA.

Bank”—and determination—“they made no bones about the powerful reaction there would be on the part of the administration and Congress toward any Arab ‘moderate’ state which set out to undercut the treaty.”¹¹⁷ The private comments of his officials thus exposed as hollow Carter’s claim that a bilateral deal was the essential first step to comprehensive peace. The fact was that the administration was focused purely on securing the immediate political dividend afforded by an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

A seriously mishandled stopover by Brzezinski in Amman on March 18 now brought matters to a head. The visit was intended to impress on Hussein the need to support the forthcoming Egyptian-Israeli treaty, but all it did was render further damage to bilateral relations. Both Jordanian and U.S. officials subsequently admitted privately that the talks had gone badly. The publication of an interview with Hussein accusing the Americans of adopting “arm-twisting tactics,” and stating that he could not think why Brzezinski had come to Amman, confirmed the damage done.¹¹⁸ The meeting was a dialogue of the deaf. Hussein spoke of his pain that he and Carter had “lost touch with each other. From a good beginning, we went our different ways.” Then he tried to explain the transgression Sadat had made when he visited Jerusalem, against Islam and against Arab nationalism. “The real peace was derailed by Sadat,” he lamented. It was difficult to see how the United States could play the role of mediator, when it was “so committed to the support of the Zionists.” “At times like this, Jordan becomes an embarrassment,” he concluded.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Telegram, Embassy Washington to FCO, no. 796, March 15, 1979, PREM16/2170, TNA.

¹¹⁸ Telegram, Embassy Amman to FCO, no. 100, March 26, 1979, *ibid*.

¹¹⁹ Memcon, Hussein-Brzezinski, March 18, 1979, (7)NSA Brzezinski, Subject File, box 33, folder Memcons Brzezinski, 3-6/79, JCL. See also Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977–81* (London, 1983), 286.

In public Hussein was an outspoken critic of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty. “The Egyptians regard other Arabs as a herd of sheep for whom Egypt chooses the course they are expected to follow unquestioningly,” he commented bitterly. As for relations with the United States, “if they consider us to be a problem in pursuing their policy, then I imagine we shall continue to be one.”¹²⁰ In fact, bilateral relations had now reached their nadir and toward the end of 1979, a tentative improvement began, helped by regional developments. Hussein expressed both his strong sympathy for Carter during the Iranian hostage crisis and his firm opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.¹²¹ In these circumstances, the United States needed all the friends it could muster. In December, both Vance and Brzezinski recommended to Carter that he should determine Jordan was acting in good faith in the peace process. Without his endorsement almost all U.S. military assistance to Jordan would have to stop immediately under the terms of the International Security Assistance Act of 1979. In spite of the “differences over Camp David and the King’s ill advised intemperance earlier this year,” Brzezinski wrote, “the fundamental relationship is very important to U.S. interests.” Carter evidently found it much more difficult to let bygones be bygones. On Brzezinski’s memo he wrote: “it is a very close call, & difficult for me—but OK this time.”¹²²

¹²⁰ Hussein interview with *al-Hawadith*, FBIS, MEA-079-073, F1-4, vol. V, April 13, 1979.

¹²¹ Letter, Hussein to Carter, November 29, 1979, President Carter File, RHA; Letter, Hussein to Carter, December 30, 1979, *ibid*.

¹²² Memorandum, Brzezinski to Carter, December 20, 1979, (7)NSA, Brzezinski Subject File, box 50, folder Presidential Determinations, 8/79-5/80, JCL. For Vance’s recommendation see Vance to Carter, December 5, 1979, *ibid*.



Caption: President Carter and King Hussein at the White House, June 17 1980, courtesy: Jimmy Carter Library

The much-postponed official visit by Hussein to Washington finally took place in June 1980. There was a public effort by both sides to put a positive gloss on relations, helped by the fact that Hussein was accompanied by his fourth wife, the American-born Lisa Halaby, making her first visit back to Washington as Queen Noor of Jordan. Carter began his toast at the official dinner by paying tribute both to her and to the strength of the bilateral relationship.¹²³ But despite the public display of closeness, the business sessions revealed

¹²³ First Lady's Press Office, Press Clips, State Dinners, box 43, folder King Hussein of Jordan, June 17, 1980, JCL.

continuing differences. Both Hussein and Carter unburdened themselves in private of their bitterness about Camp David. In response to Hussein's plaintive questions: "How did things go wrong? How did it reach this point?" Carter managed a half-apology: "perhaps it was a mistake to go so far with Camp David without Jordan . . . If we made a mistake, it was not deliberate." But, he explained, "to be candid, he had felt Jordan had led the public condemnation of Camp David, even more than Iraq and Syria. He had had a grievance. Maybe he had expected too much; or assumed at Camp David to speak for Jordan. He (the president) has no criticism left: he understands better now."¹²⁴ After a visit by Hussein to the National Air and Space Museum, the following day Carter even promised him a flight in the newly-designed Space Shuttle, although he did note: "there is the problem of heat damage. He would be glad for His Majesty to go up in it sometime. We would try it out well, first."¹²⁵

That the rupture in bilateral relations would not fully be repaired while Carter remained president was reflected in Hussein's reaction to the outcome of the November 1980 presidential election. In a letter to vice president-elect George H. W. Bush, Hussein wrote of the moment he heard the result on Voice of America radio: "I recognized the voice of President Carter and within seconds realized that he was conceding defeat. It was a beautiful dawn to a new morning—a beautiful dawn to a fresh beginning and a new era, as I wrote to congratulate President-elect Ronald Reagan."¹²⁶

Regarding U.S.-Jordanian relations during the Carter administration, then, Hussein's twin questions put to Carter during his visit to Washington in June 1980—"how did things go wrong, how did it reach this point?"—can be posed by way of conclusion. The first key

¹²⁴ Memcon, Carter-Hussein, June 17, 1980, *FRUS*, vol. IX, doc. 378.

¹²⁵ Memcon, Carter-Hussein, June 18, 1980, *FRUS*, vol. IX, doc. 379.

¹²⁶ Letter, Hussein to Bush, November 7, 1980, President Reagan File, RHA.

problem was beyond Carter's power to remedy. The course of bilateral relations since the 1967 war, and the failure of successive administrations to implement the United States' interpretation of Resolution 242's withdrawal clause, left a legacy of skepticism and mistrust on Hussein's part. This was the "Resolution 242 syndrome" of which he frequently spoke. But the fundamental shift in the Carter administration's approach away from the multilateral Geneva framework toward a bilateral deal between Israel and Egypt after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem was the second, key reason for the breakdown in relations. In this respect, the conclusions reached here differ significantly from those drawn by Jeremy Pressman in his analysis of the Carter administration's approach to peacemaking. The administration's protestations of support for a Palestinian homeland, for Palestinian self-determination, for Israeli withdrawal and for an end to Israeli settlement-building were no more than hollow words. When the time came for action, for example over settlements in the wake of Camp David, there was no serious attempt at enforcement. Instead, there was an attempt to foist responsibility for securing all of these outcomes onto a country not even represented at Camp David: Jordan. When Hussein refused to cooperate, Carter chose to blame him for the failure to enact the framework for comprehensive peace agreed at Camp David.

The Egyptian-Israeli deal brokered by Carter at Camp David did have the positive effect of opening the way to a peace treaty between those two countries. But it also had pernicious consequences. With Egypt removed from the military equation, the Begin government had a freer hand to pursue its goal of redrawing the map of the region and settling the Palestinian question by force. The full-scale invasion of Lebanon launched in June 1982 resulted in huge loss of life and suffering but did not settle the Palestinian question. Likewise, Egypt's isolation in the Arab world as a result of Sadat's signature of the peace treaty opened the way for Iraq to play a greater role in inter-Arab politics during the 1980s and thereby indirectly set the stage for Saddam Hussein's subsequent military campaigns. The breakdown

in relations between the United States and Jordan also drove Jordan into the arms of Iraq in its search for budget security. Although U.S. policy toward the Palestinian question would come full circle and return, through the Reagan Plan of September 1982, to the promotion of the Jordanian role in the occupied territories, still from the Jordanian perspective the damage done by Camp David to U.S. credibility as an arbiter in the Arab-Israeli conflict was lasting.