Strategy Research Project

JORDAN'S STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

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USAWC CLASS OF 2011

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*
04-03-2011

2. REPORT TYPE
Strategy Research Project

3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Jordan's Strategic Requirements and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)
Colonel Khaled Al Sharah
Jordanian Army

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
Dr. W. Andrew Terrill
Strategic Studies Institute

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army War College
122 Forbes Avenue
Carlisle, PA 17013

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution A: Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
Only a work of the United States Government is not subject to copyright. The author is not an employee of the United States Government. Consequently, this document may be protected by copyright.

14. ABSTRACT
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15. SUBJECT TERMS
Palestinian

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
UNCLASSIFED	UNCLASSIFED	UNCLASSIFED	UNLIMITED	20	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Khaled Al Sharah

TITLE: Jordan's Strategic Requirements and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 04 March 2011 WORD COUNT: 3,934 PAGES: 20

KEY TERMS: Palestinian

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Jordan has a strategic vision for the Middle East Region based on three pillars - peace, security and prosperity. Its geostrategic location, interaction and proximity to other regional •countries and positive relations with the Global Community have postured Jordan to shape events to advance this strategic vision over the next decade. This Strategy Research Project will identify and examine two key strategic requirements that Jordan must satisfy to achieve its regional strategic vision - requirements that can only be satisfied through the realization of an Arab-Israeli Peace Agreement.

JORDAN'S STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

Background

Before the establishment of Israel as state and at the end of 19th century, Palestine was part of Ottoman Empire, in which the Arabs in Ottoman Palestine saw themselves as part of the overall Arab territories under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. During that period, the local disputes were on the basis of religious background and not on national background.[1] The period of the British Mandate of Palestine was between 1917-1948. It was in 1917 that the British government began to look to the Zionist movement as possible ally in the World War I. As a result of that approach, the United Kingdom put forward the Balfour Declaration which favored Palestine as a Jewish homeland. During this period there was significant Jewish immigration from Europe which altered the demographic balance while both parties were under British rule and under a single political entity, called Palestine in English.[2]

The years 1948-1967 were also important. The period between the declaration of the State of Israel, (May1948), and the Six-Day War (June 1967), was an era in which the parties resided in three separate political entities, the state of Israel, the Gaza Strip which was controlled by Egypt, and the West Bank which was annexed to Jordan. In the June 1967 War the Israelis attacked and seized the West Bank from Jordan, Golan Heights from Syria, and Sinai from Egypt, and a number of Palestinians became refugees in Arab countries. At this time UN resolution 242 was issued which called all parties to cease conflict, and Israel to withdraw from territories which it occupied. After that, resistance began from Palestinians struggling against Israeli occupation in West Bank, internally and from Jordan, which finally turned to conflict between Jordan and

Palestinian's resistance inside Jordan which was called civil war.[3] In October 1973 Egypt and Syria launched an attack to regain the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, almost won, but finally Israel repelled them.

Between 1973 and 1993, one of the main events in the conflict was the 1974 recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) by the Arab League as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Another milestone occurred in March 1979 with the peace treaty signed between Egypt and Israel under supervision of the United States (resulting from the 1978 Camp David talks). The PLO stayed away from these negotiations, and in the late 1970's the PLO's resistance activities were shifted to southern of Lebanon to fight against Israel. In 1987 a new Palestinian uprising was unleashed which was called *intifada* (Palestinian protests and peaceful revolt against Israel in the West Bank and Gaza). In 1988 King Hussein of Jordan announced that all legal and administrative ties to the west bank in favor to the PLO.[4] It's good here to mention that this decision was accepted by the PLO. As a result of *intifada,* and the 1991 Gulf War, the conflict developed into a new situation in which there were peace negotiation in Madrid, and Oslo, 1991 under the joint presidency of President George H.W. Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. In 1993 a peace agreement was reached between PLO and Israel and in 1994 a peace treaty was signed between Jordan and Israel as well.[5] Between 1994 and 2010, the situation was back and forth. No independent Palestinian state was established, nor was another solution to the Palestinian issue generated. The case stayed fluid. The Palestinian issue is one of the most important conflicts in the region that becomes more serious as the focus of an

ongoing historical hemorrhage. This issue is still at a standstill without solution, regardless what has been done so far at the international, regional and local level.

Jordan is one of the Arab countries which is most involved with the issue of Palestinian statehood. The issue of Palestinian state represents a strategic path for Jordan, because it threatens its existence as a political entity and people, especially in the face of Israeli calls to consider Jordan as an alternative homeland for Palestinians. Jordan always works to create opportunities and support peace initiatives moves through the tireless and effective with stakeholders, particularly the U.S.., until the return of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people through the adoption of Jordan's supportive position and committed for the Palestinian people to self- determination through the establishment of an independent state on Palestinian land.

Palestinian - Israeli peace frame work agreement, was agreed to by the parties after the *intifada* which began in 1987, and as a result of the Gulf War in 1991. Israel, the United States and the international community, found themselves in position whereby there was no other way to move forward that talking peace. According to Azmi Shuaibi, who was a minister in Palestinian Authority, "the Intifada affected the idea of Palestinians, that they are not weak, they are strong, but they are not strong enough to destroy Israel, they began to look to negotiation to find solution, we must talk with Israelis, before that people want to talk with Americans, but now we can talk with Israelis".[6]

The first conference for the peace talk held between parties in Madrid in 1991, followed by formal agreement on the Palestinian track is the Oslo agreement 1993, which was held secretly in Oslo (Norway) and published by some media before the

announcement of it officially, signed in Washington on 13 September 1993. The main actors were Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, PLO leader Yasser Arafat, with the mediation of the United States and Russia. The core of the agreement was (to have two states live in peaceful way beside each others) Israel to begin withdraw from Gaza and Jericho first, then followed by election in West Bank and Gaza Strip for 5 years, and completing this process step by step, both side recognized their states, and to control the violence and security issues in their states.[7] It was good start for both sides, with most willing to achieve peace, although some objected in both sides, with violence. Yitzhak Rabin had strong personality to oppose those who wanted to halt or reverse the peace process, but unfortunately Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in 1996. He was followed as Prime Minister by Shimon Peres of the Labor Party, who tried to complete the mission of turning some major West Bank cities over to the PLO regardless the violence in West Bank and Gaza. In the same year a new election took place in Israel. The Likud party won under the leadership of Benyamin Netanyahu, who was never committed to peace agreement with PLO.[8] With the new Israeli's leadership in place, the peace process became semi-frozen, because of their strategy security for peace. Even during the subsequent period of Prime Minister Ehud Barak leadership, the process was not going well. As researcher of it is situation, it seems to the author that after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin the peace process was almost stopped, because only he was fully convinced and committed to giving the Palestinians their land. That was the only way to solve this crisis at that time or in the future, and even then there were many opponents to him from his party and from Israeli community. After his assassination there was no serious efforts from Israel's prime

ministers to do so, I think they are afraid to face the fate which Yitzhak Rabin faced.

The Peace Talks between 2000 - 2010, and, the Role of the United States

The United States played very important role in peace negotiations between two parties, beginning from The Middle- East Peace Summit at Camp David of July 2000, as an attempt to negotiate a "final status settlement," then Taba Summit (2001) Road Map for Peace, Arab Peace Initiative in 2002. Ultimately, all of them were an unsuccessful

The administration of President George W. Bush took office in January 2001 with a radically different conception of the problems plaguing the Middle East from that of the Clinton administration, even before the September 2001 terrorist attacks that would prompt the Bush Doctrine of preemptive action and the spread of democracy. Senior officials made clear they did not share their predecessors' sense that the Arab-Israeli conflict was central and that U.S. diplomacy was crucial.

In June 2002 President Bush gave a speech announcing two major developments addressing U.S. policy on the Palestine issue. First, he announced the United States' explicit support for the creation of an independent Palestine state. Second, he made clear that the United States would no longer deal with Arafat and called on Palestine voters to "elect new leader, leaders not compromised by terrorism" and to "build a practicing democracy, built on tolerance and liberty." He stressed the need for reform of Palestinian institutions in order to promote democracy and fight corruption and terrorism.[9]

U.S. efforts to manipulate Palestinian politics from 2002 to 2004 were mild, however, compared with such efforts after the 2006 legislative election. After the death of Arafat in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas took over. Much ink has been spilled over whether

Bush should have encouraged Abbas to fulfill his 2005 pledge to hold legislative election as soon as possible. Observe also have regretted that the United States did not insist that Abbas require Hamas to meet certain condition in order to participate, such as accepting Israel's right to exit, pledging to accept agreements signed with Israel, and renouncing the use of terrorism.

During 2006 and into early 2007, relations between Hamas and Fatah deteriorated and violent clashes increased. In early February, Saudi Arabia brokered the Mecca agreement, which called for political pluralism in the Palestinian territories[10]. The agreement created a dilemma for the United States its response was ambivalent. Washington expressed courteous appreciation for Saudi Arabians efforts and delayed passing judgment on the agreement until the government was formed. It became clear once the government was formed and its platform announced in March 2007 that the United States would not deal with it. Hamas preemptively attacked Fatah forces in June 2007 leading to a bloody week long battle for Gaza according to the international Red Cross more than 500 people were injured and 116 killed. [11] When the fighting ended Hamas was in possession of Gaza Abbas retained control of the West Bank. The United States spearheaded a new negotiating Process inviting Abbas Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to Annapolis, Maryland, in November 2007 to inaugurate what turned out to be a year's worth of serious, detailed talks. But before long Olmert was forced out of office on corruption charges, announcing his departure in July 2008 and remaining in office as a lame duck until March 2009. The Bush administration finished its second term not with a breakthrough in peace negotiation but with a three-week Gaza war between Israel and Hamas in early 2009.

In 2009 President Barak Obama came into effect promising to be “immediately engaged in the Middle East peace process,” appointing former senator George Mitchell as a senior envoy on his second day in office later that year, after several bruising rounds of public difference with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the U.S. administration lowered its sight from attempt to restart direct negotiations to “proximity talks” in which Mitchell would shuttle between the parties in the hope of returning direct talks. Abbas, frustrated by U.S.. backtracking after Netanyahu refused to freeze settlement construction in September 2009, had said he could not engage in direct talks without a freeze.

To conclude the role of USA in the peace process, has done good effort to support PLO, and to push the process forward with both parties, to provide suitable climate for talking, although there were some deficiencies, first unlimited support for Israel, second USA ignored the winning of Hamas in 2006 elections, this is against democracy systems, and against the willing of Palestinians as a majority, third, there is significant influence from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in shaping USA politics toward the interests of Israel, (AIPAC’s real mission and great success, Liz Shrayer, AIPAC’s political director from 1983 to 1994, said ‘ derives from its capacity to define what it means to be pro- Israel’ and to galvanize the support, primarily in congress and in the Jewish community). [12]

Role of International Community include UN

The UN played a humble role in the conflict, just monitoring, coordinating talks, and observing the crises, with a positive role of providing humanitarian aid for refugees, according to international intervention, “task force on Palestinian reform”, formed in July

2002 of representatives from the Quartet (USA, UN, EU, and Russia), started to work together for peace talks. In 2006, the Quartet laid out three principles that should govern donors to Palestinians government, (non–violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements including the Road Map). When Hamas took over Gaza Strip, the EU announced that it would not deal with Hamas.[13] However, the EU and Russia were closer to the Palestinians than the United States but were not so effective in making progress in either peace talks or financial aid.

What are Both Sides (Israelis – Palestinians) Inspire to Achieve, and, Suspended issues

The Oslo agreement 1993, was that Israeli troops would withdraw in stages from the West Bank and Gaza, which a "Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority" would be set up for a five-year transitional period, leading to a permanent settlement based on UN resolutions 242 and 338. The Palestinians want to have their country establish within the borders that existed before the June 1967 War. They want their capital to be the eastern part of Jerusalem, with compromising the refugees and settlements on the two parties' agreement.[14] On other hand, Israeli claim for sustainable peace with conditions, they call them the principles for peace, recognition of Israel as state of the Jewish people , no refugees to come back to Israel, permanent peace no further claims after signing the agreement, and security, demilitarization of any future Palestinian state.[15]

Jerusalem. The ancient city of Jerusalem has changed hands many times, its religious significance exerting a powerful pull on Jewish, Christian and Muslim conquerors, More than 40 years ago, Israel's army captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the June 1967 War, from the Jewish perspective 1967 brought the

"reunification" of the holy city, restoring a divine plan after centuries of interruption, because of the very measures taken to make Jerusalem Israel's "eternal and indivisible" capital.[16] Within days Israel had annexed east Jerusalem, drawn new, greatly expanded municipal boundaries (that cut out some heavily populated Palestinian areas) and demolished an entire Arab quarter of the city in front of the Western Wall, one of the holiest sites in Judaism, years of rampant development followed, increasing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem, it became a fortress - defended not by walls and ramparts, but by a ring of settlements, blocks of flats and highways. Israel has allowed the Palestinians of East Jerusalem to remain, but it has hemmed them in, squeezed them, and left them in no doubt the city is no longer theirs. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers have been allowed, or encouraged, to move to the occupied east of the city - an area the Palestinians hope to establish as the capital of their future state. At the same time, Palestinians from outside the city - in the West Bank and Gaza - are rigorously excluded by a ring of roadblocks and Israeli military checkpoints.

The other main obstacles and suspended are the borders, and settlement, the Palestinians found themselves enclosed with walls, and checkpoints, with no access to Gaza, and Jordan, settlements are illegal under international law, but Israel disputes this and has pressed ahead with its activity despite signing various agreements to curb settlement growth, more than 430,000 settlers live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Settlements have separate civil infrastructure to surrounding Palestinians areas and are protected by a vast military infrastructure.[17]

Refugees. Refugees are also an obstacle to peace that is highly complicated. More than 60 years after the establishment of Israel, there is no Arab-Israeli issue that remains as utterly divisive as the fate of Palestinian refugees, demography - the need to have a large majority of Jews to sustain a Jewish state - has certainly been a key concern for Israel since its foundation. With the justification of not wanting to jeopardize its Jewish majority, Israel has kept Palestinian refugees and their descendants out of negotiations on a settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but for most Palestinians, their fate remains an open wound, unless there is a Middle East peace deal that acknowledges and makes reparation for what happened to the refugees. Israel has deployed a number of arguments to justify blocking the return of Palestinian refugees, such as saying that it is the only Jewish state, the refuge of Jews from around the world, while there are 22 Arab countries where they could go. Un Resolution 194 asserts the refugees' unconditional right of return to live at peace in their old homes or to receive compensation for their losses, according to UNRWA, estimated Palestinians refugees from 1947- 2008, 4.62 million living in neighbors Arabian countries.[18]

Likely Scenarios, what their Implications on Jordan security

First scenario, establishing two states, according to UN resolutions, 242, 338, living beside each others, with bilateral understanding on refugees issues, and exchange lands to solve settlements, and demography, east Jerusalem to be capital for Palestinians, giving them access to Jordan and Gaza Strip, allowing Palestinians state to arm their state to control any violence activities, and to improve economy. This option requires serious commitment of the United States first, and then the international community, particularly the Security Council states, to act and put pressure on Israel to comply with UN resolutions, and involve the use of sanctions against Israel instead of

supporting it. On the Palestinian side they have to control any violence. Arabian countries should force Hamas to comply with these demands as well. . How this option impacts Jordanian national security, this potion would bring the tensions down between Jordan and Israel, solve demography problem with Palestinians around (40%) [19]of Jordanian population are Palestinians, will promise good future of economy for Jordan, Israeli in Middle East and, Arabian country.

Second scenario, to have half solutions, lookalikes what Israel wants in current peace talking, having two state, Israel very strong and dominates almost everything , Jerusalem unified Israeli's capital, very weak Palestinians without an armed state, no refugees back, no access to Jordan, big wall cutting their cities and towns. This option will be worse than no Palestinian state, because this would create instability, would not solve most issues like borders, refugees, even the new state would not able to control violence, weak Palestinians state will be not enough to secure borders and improve its economy. Jordan would suffer because security on his border and demography issue will be stand the same, economy situation could be improved if it's have compensations for refugees who live in Jordan, the whole region could be good environment for non state actors, and terrorism.

Third scenario, the situation remains as current, no solutions, wasting the times to gain more settlements for Israel, putting more pressure on PLO, and Hamas, delegations hanging around between UN, USA, and EU, with a lot of promises, this situation will not last forever, it's would lead to the terror, violence, hating, poverty, and more non state actors, and will not achieve any security and stability neither for Israel nor to Jordan, USA, and the whole middle east.

Predictions for the Future

It is not easy to predict the future for this crises, but seems to be situation will be almost without action from Israelis side, means, Israel will keep wasting time, giving promises, because they own a lot of power in Middle East, they are always dealing with others from power logic, standing on super power behind them USA, and other big western allies, from previous experience Israel will not give any right back, unless to be forced to do so, they did give Sinai back, because Egypt was strong country, so that Israel was eager to back Sinai. If Israel had willing to give the West Bank back to Palestinians, it would have done that since 1994, we have to read the history very well, 17 years from 1994-2011 were not enough to finish peace negotiations, and to execute UN resolutions, that was enough time to do so, no need to discuss UN resolutions, they were clear, but they don't have willing to do so. To conclude this Israel will remain on the story (security, terrorism), unless USA changed its policy toward Israel, putting pressure on Israel, or suspends the unlimited support for Israel, accompany with this conditions, there will be violence, Israel will not have security and stability, terrorism would increase, and none state actors as well.

Conclusions

Palestinians crises is the major issue in middle east, and very important on the international level, Israel had no willing to complete peace process , particular after Yitzhak Rabin assassination, peace requires strong country and leader, the rift between Hamas and Fatah was hindering the process, USA, international community, and Arabian countries could not contain and encourage Hamas at the beginning, they claimed it's terrorists organization, even it was legitimate government according to 2006 elections, they pushed Hamas to follow Iran, and to behave in not accepted ways.

21st century is not like 20 century, Israel in last century was attacking and occupying some Arabian countries so easily, now situation different, Israel could not defeat Hezbollah in 2006, this should be considers from Israel and USA, Globalization impacts this century too much, anyone where ever, can see what is Israeli's soldier doing in Gaza and west bank, smuggling weapons easy, even proliferation of MWD, I assume the world fed up from Israeli's measurements and action in Palestine.

From Arabian point of view, USA interests should be with Arabian countries not just with Israel, Israeli's policy caused instability in middle east, like conditions in west bank, creating some terrorist and none actors state like Hamas, and Hezbollah, continuing this policy would create some terror in the future, and jeopardize the whole middle east, and create violence would not end in one country, like what happening in Iraq and Afghanistan, people in middle east can't tolerate Israeli's mentality (castles mentality), we estimate the situations in Arabian street are boiling, most people are not satisfy with USA, Israel, and even their government's policies toward what happen in Palestine, finally I want to say if these conditions for any long more, it could be lead to a big explosions inside and outside Palestine, and then would not be stopped easily.

Recommendations

If we are serious about solving this crises, we shall stop all current negotiations, because they are useless, take the file to UN, put pressure from USA and Security Council against Israel, implement First scenario, which is establishing two states, according to UN resolutions, 242, 338, living beside each others, with bilateral understanding on refugees issues, exchange lands to solve settlements, and demography, east Jerusalem to be capital for Palestinians, giving them access to Jordan and Gaza strip, allowing Palestinians state to arm their state to control any

violence activities, and to improve their economy. Then Arabian countries will bring Hamas to the Arabian line and away from Iran. Hezbollah will be neglected and lose all support. Then we can live as brothers, and sons of Ibrahim in the same region without wars and terrorism.

Endnotes

[1] T. G. Fraser, *The Arab – Israeli Conflict*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p 2.

[2] Fraser, 7,8.

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[4] Terrill, p 52, 53, 54.

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