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SPECIAL REPORT

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IRAQ AND ITS NEIGHBORS

Scott Lasensky

Jordan and Iraq

Between Cooperation and Crisis

Summary

- Jordan wants a strong, stable, moderate, and unified Iraq. Having wrestled with the dilemmas of an assertive Iraq for many years, Jordan—like Iraq's other neighbors—now faces a myriad of challenges presented by a weak Iraq. The kingdom, for years a linchpin in the U.S. strategy to promote peace and stability in the region, is now less secure in the wake of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. Jordanian leaders worry that Iraq is becoming a haven for terrorist groups, a fear dramatically heightened by the November 2005 suicide bombings in Amman. Jordan also has an interest in the development of an Iraq that does not inspire radical Islamist politics in Jordan. Moreover, the kingdom is anxious about growing Iranian involvement in Iraqi politics, and—more broadly—increasing Iranian and Shiite influence in the region.
- Despite periodic crises of confidence and lingering Iraqi resentment over Jordan's close ties with Saddam Hussein, the two countries have managed to forge deep ties; in fact, Jordan has taken the lead among Arab states. In the face of repeated attacks and threats, Jordan has maintained a strong diplomatic presence in Baghdad. The kingdom has also played a positive, if modest, role in stabilization and reconstruction efforts.
- The economic impact of the Iraq crisis in Jordan has been mixed. Jordan has benefited greatly from serving as a "gateway" to Iraq for governments, aid workers, contractors, and businesspeople; its real estate and banking sectors are booming, and it stands to reap more benefits from increased trade and transport should the situation in Iraq improve. However, with the fall of Saddam Hussein, Jordan lost the sizable oil subsidies and customary shipments it received from Iraq. One of Jordan's principal economic interests in the new Iraq is securing future energy assistance.

About the Report

Iraq's neighbors are playing a major role—both positive and negative—in the stabilization and reconstruction of "the new Iraq." As part of the Institute's "Iraq and Its Neighbors" initiative, a group of leading specialists on the geopolitics of the region is assessing the interests and influence of the countries surrounding Iraq and the impact on U.S. bilateral relations with these countries. The Institute is also sponsoring dialogue between Iraqi national security and foreign policy officials and their counterparts from the neighboring countries. Scott Lasensky's report on Jordan is the fourth in a series of special reports by the U.S. Institute of Peace on "Iraq and Its Neighbors." Jon Alterman's report on Kuwait and the Gulf States and Steve Simon's study on Syria will be published in the coming months. Peter Pavilionis is the editor of the series. For more information about the "Iraq and Its Neighbors" project, go to http://www.usip.org/iraq/neighbors/index.html.

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- Unlike many of Iraq's other neighbors, Jordan can claim only modest influence over developments in Iraq. The kingdom does have notable intelligence capabilities vis-à-vis Iraq, and it reportedly helped the United States track down and kill Al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Although some Jordanians highlight cross-border tribal and family connections with Iraqi Sunni Arabs, they pale in comparison to those of Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Jordan's most significant means of influence is its hosting of a large and ever-changing Iraqi expatriate community, composed mostly, but not solely, of Sunni Arabs.
- Jordan's relationship with the United States remains strong. Viewing Jordan as a reliable and friendly government is nothing new in Washington, but what is new is the determination of King Abdullah to make a strategic relationship with the United States a centerpiece of Jordan's foreign policy. Although the kingdom's behind-the-scenes support for the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq widened the credibility gap with the public, King Abdullah is willing to pay the cost for his close alliance with the United States in order to pursue what he sees as Jordan's larger interests.
- For Jordan, "the Palestinian Question" looms larger than Iraq. Given their support for U.S. policy in Iraq and their contributions to the global campaign against terrorism, along with the country's central role in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, Jordan's leaders have been disappointed with what they see as U.S. inaction on the Middle East peace process. Moreover, given the turmoil in both Iraq and the Palestinian territories, Jordan must contend with the twin prospects of "state" failure to its east and west.

Introduction

Jordan, the only neighbor with close ties to both Iraq and the U.S. before the war, now faces a more threatening national security environment as it clings to its privileged relationship with Washington and settles into an uneasy relationship with Iraq's new political elite. For its part, Jordan has played a positive, if modest, role in Iraq. Having long repaired the breach with Washington over the kingdom's "neutral" stance in the 1990–91 Gulf War, Jordan and the U.S. maintain robust cooperation over Iraq. "There was never an issue, thus never a conversation, to convince the king to be [privately] supportive of the Iraq war," said a former senior U.S. diplomat. "The king was very clear that he believed there to be only one superpower and only one country that could be influential in the Middle East."[1] Despite its public opposition, as the U.S. went to war against Saddam Hussein, it had Jordan's support.

In terms of core objectives—a stable, free, and unified Iraq, at peace with its neighbors, free from Islamist terror groups, with an open economy, the rule of law and protection for minorities—the U.S. and Jordan are in agreement. American-Jordanian cooperation on Iraq, if properly managed, is likely to continue unchanged, even if the situation in Iraq worsens. But Jordan has paid a high price: Post-Saddam Iraq is destabilizing the kingdom. "Iraq was not the source of terrorism [before the U.S. invasion]," said former prime minister Taher Masri after the Amman bombings, "but now it has become exactly that."[2] Moreover, the threat of increased violence and terrorism is joined by new economic vulnerabilities brought on by the U.S. war against Saddam Hussein.

U.S.-Jordanian cooperation has co-existed alongside wide divergences on a range of day-to-day policy questions, not to mention growing tensions and suspicions between the Hashemites and the new Iraqi leadership. Areas of divergence and tension between Amman and Washington relate principally to the Palestinian question, the marginalization of Sunnis, the role of Iran and ascendance of Iraqi Shiites, energy security, and Saddam-era debt. These differences have been frequently aired in public, though less so since the establishment of the first permanent Iraqi government.[3] Jordan also worries about Washington's staying power. The kingdom's nightmare scenario would be a precipitous American withdrawal, leaving Jordan caught between escalating Iraqi civil strife and

worsening Israeli-Palestinian violence. Areas of divergence between Jordan and Iraq are similar, but they hinge mostly on security. Iraq's Shiite leaders accuse the kingdom of taking too soft a position on the insurgency. Jordan vehemently rejects such charges and itself fears the export of terrorism and instability from Iraq.

For Jordan, the crisis in Iraq has highlighted a growing credibility gap between the ruling elite and the public. This credibility gap feeds into Jordanian attitudes about U.S. policy, which rank among the least favorable in the Arab and Muslim world.[4] For example, only 9 percent of Jordanians thought that military force against Saddam Hussein was justified.[5] This worsening credibility gap at home, and between the Jordanian public and the U.S., has not gone completely unnoticed in Washington; it is one reason why the U.S. is sometimes restrained in what it asks of Jordan. It may also explain why, at times, Jordanian leaders publicly accentuate their disagreements with the U.S.

Still, the bottom line for U.S. policymakers is that disagreements with Jordan and between Jordan and Iraq are manageable. Jordanian-American cooperation on Iraq will remain strong and Jordan will continue to play a positive, if modest, role. In terms of its sheer weight—that is, population, military capabilities, and economic power—Jordan is not in a position to play a pivotal role in Iraq.

But looking at raw power is just one measure. There are less obvious, harder to quantify ways in which Jordan will continue to be important to the future of the new Iraq. The kingdom has provided a reliable gateway through which governments, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate in Iraq. Jordan's political support, especially in regional forums, is important to the U.S., particularly given that American influence in the region is waning. For much of the time since the fall of Saddam Hussein, Jordan has been the only Arab state to maintain full diplomatic engagement with Iraq. Beyond Iraq, Jordan remains one of America's most reliable partners on a wide range of issues, from counterterrorism and Arab-Israeli peacemaking, to military and intelligence cooperation.[6]

Jordan's Interests: Security and Stability

Jordan's interests in Iraq center on two broad concerns: the kingdom's endemic security and economic vulnerabilities, and the delicate balance of political forces at home. These two sources of anxiety, external vulnerability and a divided society, have both been aggravated by U.S. intervention in Iraq.

A Stable Iraq Equals a Secure Jordan

What Jordan wants is a "strong Iraq," said a Jordanian official, "stable, moderate, and unified—an Iraq that takes care of the needs of its people." Stressing Jordan's deep anxiety about Iraq's breaking apart, he added that "Jordan can't afford to have more than one Iraq to its east."[7] The kingdom is too vulnerable—economically, politically, and in terms of security—to insulate itself should events in Iraq worsen. In many ways, Jordan's future is tied to Iraq's.

Jordan wants to see Iraq with a strong central government where no sectarian group is marginalized, particularly the Sunni Arabs. The kingdom fears the emergence of separate or quasi-independent regions, assuming this would lead to more instability and even less control by Iraqis over their borders. The November 2005 triple suicide bombings in Amman, and the Aqaba missile attack that preceded it, demonstrated the growing threat of violence and terrorism spilling over from Iraq.[8] The planning and execution of both the hotel bombings, which killed 57 people, and the Aqaba attack that targeted a U.S. naval vessel bore Iraqi fingerprints.

Even with the June 2006 killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (himself a Jordanian), who was responsible for numerous attacks against Jordan, the threat of spillover is unlikely to dissipate until the Iraqi government is able to exercise effective control at home and

over its borders. On this score, Jordan's fears are also America's concerns. Previous plots have been aimed at both Jordanian and American targets in the kingdom. The 2002 assassination of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Amman was intended as a strike against both countries.

Unlike the case with some other neighbors, there are no past or present unresolved territorial questions between Jordan and Iraq. Nor does the kingdom seek influence over a particular region or political group in Iraq. "The preservation of [Iraq's] unity and stability is an obligation of all the neighbors," said former foreign minister Marwan Muasher, adding that democracy will not bring stability to Iraq unless it is "coupled with respect for minority rights."[9] Sunni-dominated Jordan is anxious about the future of the Sunni minority in Iraq and has consistently and publicly advised the U.S. to take further steps to ensure that the Sunni community does not feel threatened. Jordan did not support the Sunni boycott of the January 2005 Iraqi elections, but the kingdom does lend its voice to support the complaints of Iraqi Sunnis that they are being marginalized.

Jordan fears instability and violence to its east. This may explain King Abdullah's comment in mid-2004 that post-Saddam Iraq could use a strongman. "I would say that the profile [of a leader for post-Saddam Iraq] would be somebody from inside, somebody who's very strong . . . somebody with a military background who has experience of being a tough guy."[10] Since the January 2005 election, the king has not repeated this position in public, but worsening violence in Iraq has certainly reinforced the view among Jordanians.

Iranian influence in Iraq is another top worry for Jordan: Anxiety about Iran is common both within official circles and among critics of the government. This fear relates to the larger Arab-Iranian and Sunni-Shia divides in the region, Jordan's own fears about political Islam, Iran's post-1979 attempts to export its Islamic revolution, and Iran's continued support for Palestinian rejectionist groups, like Hamas, that pose a challenge to Jordan's peace with Israel.

Anxiety about Iran may explain the king's oft-quoted warning of a new crescent of Shia influence that could destabilize the region and alter the balance of power. "Even Saudi Arabia is not immune," said Abdullah, ". . . [from] the possibility of a Shiite-Sunni conflict . . . out of the borders of Iraq."[11] Abdullah has reportedly raised the specter of a widening arc of Shia power in discussions with American leaders, though he has toned down such rhetoric in public after it elicited hostile reactions from the new Iraqi leadership and from Iran.

Domestic Politics: Keeping the Peace at Home

Jordan's interest in a stable Iraq relates not only to traditional national security concerns but also to internal dynamics. Jordan, perennially anxious about instability and turbulence on its borders, also needs to avoid a situation where events in Iraq might upset the delicate balance of political, social, and economic forces at home. Because of its high Palestinian population (50–70 percent by various independent estimates), and with anti-American sentiment particularly high among Palestinians, Jordan has had to contend with a large, restive internal constituency that opposed the removal of Saddam and "wants to see the Americans suffer" in Iraq, in the words of a former advisor to the late King Hussein.[12] In many respects, the Palestinian factor—both the situation west of the Jordan River and the role of Palestinians within Jordan—looms larger than Iraq. The same can be said for Islamism in Jordan. The Hamas victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections resonates far more strongly in Jordanian politics than does Iraqi Islamist politics. To be sure, from a security perspective the Jordanian regime worries about Zarqawi-style Salafist radicalism emanating from Iraq, but politically Hamas poses a much greater challenge—to Jordan's peace with Israel and to the balance between secular and religious forces at home.

In response to unrest and opposition activity directed at both foreign and domestic policy, the king has taken a variety of heavy-handed measures at home. Following public

protests in March 2003, the government banned most demonstrations. Moreover, the Jordanian government has tightened limits on the media and has leaned on them not to report on U.S. military activities in Jordan. In September 2004, the government also clamped down on the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the largest Islamist party in parliament, arresting a number of prominent leaders.[13] Tensions with the IAF have continued to escalate. In August 2006, IAF parliamentarians were jailed for "inciting sectarianism" by visiting Zarqawi's family in Jordan after his death and for referring to him as a "martyr." The IAF threatened to boycott sessions of parliament if the MPs were not pardoned.[14]

Since 2003, the government has also tried to change the law governing professional associations and restrict their ability to express political views. The associations have become a hotbed of anti-American sentiment and protest against normalization with Israel. The new policies were condemned both by groups outside Jordan, like Human Rights Watch, and by opposition parties at home. IAF leader Hamzah Mansur said it amounted to an "assassination" of the associations.[15] It was a clear attempt to constrain public space at a time when Jordanians feel the overall pace of political reform has moved backward.[16]

Although aware of the intense public opposition to U.S. actions in Iraq, and faced with a growing chorus of reform advocates, the king appears confident and willing to pay the costs of a widening credibility gap in order to pursue what he sees as Jordan's larger interests. Given the increased threats facing Jordan, King Abdullah's consolidation of authority and power is likely to continue. Offering the premiership to General Marouf Bakhit, an East Bank stalwart and former ambassador to Israel, reflects this trend.

Jordan is a Sunni Arab state, and one issue on which both the king and the public are united appears to be "Sunni solidarity." The one group in Iraq toward which most Jordanians feel some affinity is the Arab Sunnis; it is both an enduring source of identity and a legacy of the Saddam years when Arab Sunnis controlled Iraq and maintained extensive links in Jordan. The king is using the Sunni card to bolster support at home and also to improve Jordan's standing in the Arab world.

Energy, Trade, and the Economy

The extent to which the situation in Iraq leads to major economic disruptions, the more Jordanian leaders feel the heat at home. Fuel price increases in 2005, a direct result of the war, were a major source of public dissatisfaction with the government of then–prime minister Adnan Badran. So far, Jordan's ability to secure alternative energy guarantees, together with the trade and real estate boom that followed the fall of Saddam Hussein, have prevented any serious economic upheavals. But Jordanians worry about the steadily increasing cost of fuel and whether the benefits of serving as a "gateway" to Iraq can be sustained over the long term. Should real domestic unrest bubble to the surface, it is more likely to be in response to economic factors rather than foreign policy decisions, as with the bread riots in 1989 and 1996.

Oil has always been an important consideration in Jordan's relations with Iraq. Since the 1980s, not only was Iraq one of the largest players in Jordan's economy, but also Saddam single-handedly guaranteed most of Jordan's energy needs at below-market prices. Oil lay at the heart of Jordan's late 1990s trade boom with Iraq. At the time, the Clinton administration turned a blind eye, seeing it as an unavoidable trade-off in order to maintain the larger international sanctions regime. Although Jordanians detested Saddam's brutality toward his own people, Baghdad was a generous benefactor. Jordan now has a major stake in either restoring or replacing that munificence.

In a bid for greater influence with Amman, Iraq sold oil to Jordan at below market prices after the UN Oil-for-Food Program was established in Iraq; in 2000, with prices around $30 a barrel, Jordan received Iraqi oil at $9.50 a barrel. Moreover, Iraq allowed Jordan, a country without domestic energy resources, to pay for the subsidized oil with consumer goods. Through the UN program, Iraq was able to steer preferential contracts

JORDAN'S ECONOMY 2000–2007		
YEAR	GDP (IN $ BILLIONS)	GDP % GROWTH
2000	8.4	4.2
2001	8.9	4.2
2002	9.6	5
2003	10.2	3.2
2004	11.5	6
2005	12.9	6.1
2006 (est.)		5.7
2007 (est.)		5.1

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Jordan*, various years

to Jordan, and some Jordanian firms were essentially given monopolies. Exports to Iraq reached $420 million in 2001, nearly a quarter of Jordan's exports.[17] The system amounted to an annual grant, in real terms, of approximately $400–600 million a year.[18] According to some estimates, the benefit was even higher—$500 million to $1 billion annually.[19]

In the post-Saddam era, Jordan has been able to secure its oil needs from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates—quite a turn of events considering the chilly relations after the 1990–91 Gulf War. Throughout 2004, Saudi Arabia remained the principal guarantor of Jordan's oil needs, supplying 50,000 barrels per day as a grant. Amman is trying to negotiate further short-term concessionary deals, but the generosity of the Gulf States is beginning to wane, and the prospect of an end to subsidized oil is real. The U.S. has encouraged the Gulf States to assist Jordan, but the negotiations have been managed largely by Jordanians on a bilateral level.[20]

The future of Jordan's oil supplies is the subject of debate among Jordanians. Some acknowledge that the Saddam-era benefits are a thing of the past. Jordan should not expect a future Iraqi government to restore the Saddam-era "deals." Moreover, it would be unrealistic to expect that the ongoing subsidies from the Gulf neighbors will continue indefinitely. "[T]his is not sustainable," Muasher has said regarding the high economic growth rates accruing from oil subsidies; pressed on the subject, he conceded that "we need to move to a situation where we can do it on our own."[21]

Yet although some Jordanians say the country will have to adjust to market forces, others see preferential energy benefits as an entitlement. In August 2006, Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit visited Baghdad and secured an Iraqi commitment to supply 10,000 barrels of oil per day at a slightly discounted price. If this arrangement holds it is more indicative of an easing of the strained relationship between Baghdad and Amman than a sign that the Saddam-era deals can be restored. With rising world energy prices, pressure is mounting on the government to further reduce fuel subsidies. Jordan's large current account deficit in 2006 stems largely from this "one-two punch" of high energy prices and diminishing energy assistance. By comparison, Jordan's position is the reverse of another small neighbor that has cooperated on post-Saddam Iraq—Kuwait. Increasingly, oil wealth has allowed Kuwait to weather the storm of the war and its aftermath.

So far, Jordan's worst-case fears about energy security have not materialized. Similarly, early concerns about the country's economic position have since faded. In the three years following the war, Jordan has enjoyed robust growth. Not only has Jordanian trade with Iraq remained strong, but also much of the Iraqi-Jordanian commercial relationship has now shifted to Jordan's private sector.[22] Furthermore, the "gateway" role that Jordan has played has done much to compensate for the drop in tourism. (Ironically, the "gateway" benefits are an outgrowth of continuing instability in Iraq.) Some Jordanian businesses have also expanded into neighboring states.[23] The "Iraq effect" is also creating a boom in Jordanian real estate, as Iraqis look for a safe haven and as more and more multinationals and NGOs base their Iraq operations out of Jordan. Even the used car market has been surging since the war. The kingdom's relaxed rules on financial transactions have also led to a surge in Iraqi assets in Jordan's growing banking sector, though the lack of transparency worries Iraqi and American authorities.

Trade with the U.S. has also helped Jordan offset its economic dependence on Iraq. Just several years after the 2001 ratification of the Jordan-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, Jordanian exports to the U.S. now top $1 billion annually—a fifty-fold increase compared to a decade ago. Jordan is also receiving increased foreign direct investment from the Arab world. Kuwait, which in the early 1990s treated Jordan like a pariah because of its pro-Iraq position in the 1990–91 Gulf War, is now the second-largest foreign investor in the kingdom behind France. Yet the rosy post-Saddam economic figures will not relieve all of Jordan's concerns; with nearly half its population under the age of 15, Jordan will need much stronger economic growth to provide jobs for its burgeoning workforce.

Jordan's Interests: Unchanged or Newfound?

For the most part, Jordan's interests vis-à-vis Iraq have not changed substantially over time, even after Operation Iraqi Freedom. Jordan's need for support from major powers, its obsession with stability (internal and external), a rejection of Islamist politics, energy insecurity, the Palestinian question, and the kingdom's systemic economic vulnerabilities remain as they were before 2003. Moreover, Jordan's reliance on a strategic relationship with the U.S. is unchanged. Unlike the case with other neighbors, such as Syria or Iran, the use of U.S. military force to overthrow Saddam Hussein did not lead Jordanian leaders to worry that it could happen to them.

But in two arenas, terrorism and Sunni politics, Jordan's interests have been upended. In the past, challenges posed by Iraq stemmed from Baghdad's strength. But in the post-Saddam era, it is Iraq's weakness that threatens Jordan. It is one of the great ironies of the U.S.-led invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime that the new Iraq poses a serious threat to long-standing American allies like Jordan. Moreover, a Shia-led, Iranian-allied Iraq means that Jordan sees itself on the front line of the Arab-Iranian and Sunni-Shia regional divides. To the extent that Jordanian and Iraqi elites once shared a worldview—pro-modernization, secular Arab, anti-Iran—their perspectives now diverge. This fault line is partially mitigated by Iraq's Arab identity. Still, the shifting balance has raised new anxieties for Jordan that are unlikely to be put to rest easily.

Given recent steps to curtail political activity, as well as the king's effective control over parliament (particularly on foreign policy, budget, and electoral issues), some might argue that the regime worries democracy in Iraq will increase pressure on the Hashemites to cede control. The democracy factor is undoubtedly a source of some concern, but more so over the long term. In the short term, particularly against the backdrop of the November 2005 bombings and the continuing threat of terrorism, both the regime and the public are much more concerned about stability than democracy.

Constraints on Foreign Policy Objectives

U.S. actions in Iraq have placed constraints on Jordan's other foreign policy objectives, the most glaring being the Palestinian question. The situation in Iraq has steadily increased pressure on the Jordanian government to improve relations between Israel and the Palestinians. "The Jordanian government calculated that there was significant potential benefit to Jordan in supporting the U.S. [behind the scenes] in the Iraq war," said a former senior U.S. diplomat, "because if you can get the U.S. to participate in the peace process, that relieves tensions in Jordan and thus bolsters Jordanian stability."[24]

After the war began, the kingdom was effective in urging the U.S. to move forward with a new peace initiative—the Bush administration's Road Map for Peace—which bore some Jordanian fingerprints. Then, Yasser Arafat's death, an informal Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire and the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza gave Jordan some breathing room, enough to return its ambassador to Tel Aviv (withdrawn since 2000). But Israeli-Palestinian relations remain profoundly unstable. The election of Hamas in January 2006 has made Jordan uneasy, and as Israeli unilateralism further displaces the Road Map, Jordan's position is undermined. Jordan tried to revive the Arab League initiative in early 2005 but failed to gather support. The mood among Jordanian officials is of increasing desperation. With both Iraq and Palestine mired in chaos and instability, not to mention Israeli-Lebanese fighting, Jordan finds its maneuverability tightly constrained.

Jordan's Influence in Iraq: Positive but Modest

Unlike many of Iraq's other neighbors, Jordan can claim only modest influence on developments in Iraq. Turkey has had a military presence in northern Iraq and has long been

a vital gateway for Iraqi oil exports. Iran has close ties with key figures in the new Iraqi leadership and an extensive network of ties throughout the Shiite community. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were for many years major financial backers of Iraq, for which the debt issue gives them leverage today.[25] Moreover, Iraq has influence with its fellow Arab oil producers, and vice-versa; Syria has some influence, as it makes common cause with Iraqis opposed to the U.S. occupation. Syria also played host to Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki for nearly twenty years. But Jordan—lacking military or economic prowess, political or ideological ambitions, and adventurism—is not in a position to exert great influence over events in Iraq. In fact, if one considers the period before Saddam's fall, the more interesting pursuit is gauging Iraqi influence in Jordan—which Saddam actively pursued through government-to-government assistance, privileged trade protocols, and attempts to buy influence with the Jordanian media and civil society.[26]

But Jordan's influence is not totally absent. The kingdom serves as a "gateway" to Iraq, a role it began during the Iran-Iraq War and maintained throughout the 1990–2003 sanctions period (principally via its Red Sea port of Aqaba and the land route).[27] Amman and Aqaba are key pass-through points for a good deal of traffic going in and out of Iraq. Government officials, aid workers, contractors, and businesspeople—Iraqi and non-Iraqi—have come to rely on Jordan's position as a stable and reliable gateway. Should this be closed down, it would prove costly not only for Jordan, but also for Iraq.

In the security realm, Jordan has played host to a major international training facility for Iraqi police recruits. The kingdom has also run training programs and exchanges for several thousand Iraqi Army officers, with the hope that these efforts will contribute to tamping down the insurgency and restoring stability. Although opposed to putting troops on the ground, Jordan is seeking to influence the new Iraqi security services (and please Washington) by hosting these training programs. But given the enormity of Iraq's security needs, the Jordanian programs—which average just a few weeks—have had limited impact on the ground.[28] Jordan also plays a modest role on humanitarian issues, as evidenced by its involvement in resolving a number of hostage taking cases. Jordan also operated a large field hospital in Falluja. The kingdom has also assisted in training journalists and civil servants.

In terms of U.S. military planning, the kingdom's contributions have been valuable but not decisive. "Jordan went from marginal to semi-important with the disappearance of the Turkish front," said one former senior U.S. official.[29] The extent to which U.S. military forces have been operating out of Jordan is a closely guarded secret, and the Jordanian media is pressured not to report on the U.S. troop presence. During the war, the government acknowledged the presence of a small number of U.S. troops, ostensibly to operate Patriot antimissile batteries (a defensive measure). Independent estimates put the true figure at around 5,000 U.S. and coalition forces in Jordan at the time of the war.[30] As U.S. military planners sought to keep Saddam Hussein guessing about invasion routes, Jordan again played a valuable role. Fearing a major U.S. invasion force from Jordan, Saddam reportedly overruled some of his own generals and allocated defenses toward blunting an invasion from the west.[31]

Some Jordanians argue that the kingdom, lacking the capability to influence events on the ground, is still able to exert some influence by providing counsel to Washington. Jordanians increasingly feel that the Bush administration is listening to—though not always acting on—their advice. Off the record, Jordanians will say that the United States (and Iraq) would be in a much better position today if they had listened to Jordan's advice not to disband the army, to contain Iranian influence, and to avoid an accelerated timetable for elections.

Military and Security

Jordan has not provided direct or indirect support to any paramilitary groups in Iraq, nor does the Jordanian military operate in Iraq. Jordan has provided assistance to train

Iraqi security forces in Jordan, but it has stated repeatedly that it will not send police or peacekeeping forces—unless requested by the Iraqi government or as part of a joint Arab force. The kingdom has also sold defense equipment to the new Iraqi security forces. Jordan's intelligence service, widely considered the most professional in the Arab world, does have a presence in Iraq.[32]

Jordan and Iraq do have a long history of military cooperation in the period before 1990, particularly in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Iraqis fought alongside Jordanians in the 1948 and 1967 wars, and Iraq positioned aircraft in Jordan for safekeeping during its war with Iran.[33] Although there are Jordanians participating in the insurgency, Zarqawi having been the most prominent, none appear to be doing so with the acquiescence of the Jordanian government.[34] Moreover, the number of Jordanian militants in Iraq is relatively low.[35]

On the training side, Jordan is one of the few states in the region that has taken on a major role in training members of the new Iraqi security services. The police trainees are generally new and inexperienced recruits. They receive an intensive, but short training course in Jordan that is funded by the U.S. The Iraqi military officers are much more experienced than the police recruits, and Jordan's outreach to the Iraqi military is patterned after the U.S. Defense Department's International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program—from which many Jordanian officers themselves have graduated. (Next to Turkey, Jordan has the highest IMET participation rates.)

But Jordan's capacity for training is limited. In terms of potential peacekeeping or stability forces in Iraq, Jordan has firmly and publicly stated that it will not send forces. (The king was very clear about this during the May 2004 World Economic Forum in Jordan.) Yet there have been reports that Jordanian Special Forces have participated in targeted counterterrorism operations inside Iraq in conjunction with U.S. forces. This position is in line with U.S. and Iraqi views against intervention by the neighbors. That said, if invited and part of a larger Arab or regional force, Jordan might participate.

Shared History

Jordan and Iraq have similar postcolonial histories, but these historical connections afford little if any influence in the post-Saddam era. In fact, Baghdad's Hashemite heritage could be a political liability for Jordan if not managed properly. Both states had their borders defined by the British, who installed Hashemite ruling families in Amman and Baghdad after World War I. While the Hashemites retained power in Jordan, they could not hold on in Iraq, where a violent coup wiped out the royal family in the late 1950s—just a few months after signing a confederation agreement with Jordan.[36] Despite this colonial connection, historically the two countries have not been closely linked, with Jordan oriented toward Palestine and the Levant. In recent years, gossip swirled around the idea of reviving the Hashemite connection, particularly following the appearance of Jordan's Prince Hassan at a high profile meeting of Iraqi opposition figures in London before Operation Iraqi Freedom.[37] Although some Jordanians interviewed for this report would not rule out a future political role in Iraq for a Hashemite (should Iraqis ask for such), most dismissed a priori any notion that members of Jordan's ruling family would play a role in Iraq's future.[38]

Economics

For more than two decades, Jordan and Iraq have enjoyed close economic relations. During the years of UN sanctions, mutual dependence reached its peak, but the balance of economic influence rested more with Iraq than Jordan. Although not a short distance, the Baghdad-Amman and Baghdad-Aqaba land routes became well-worn beginning with the Iraq-Iran War. The two countries have discussed major upgrades to roads and pipelines,

Iraqis in Jordan

Like Syria and Iran, Jordan has played host to a large Iraqi expatriate community since the Iran-Iraq War. Although Syria and Iran were known as safe havens for Iraqi oppositionists, Jordan—which maintained strong ties with with Saddam Hussein—played host to a much less politically active Iraqi community: Iraqis in Jordan tended to be secular, mostly Sunni, and Arab nationalist in orientation, which fit well with Jordan's own national identity. Like Jordanians themselves, Iraqis in Jordan may not have favored Saddam Hussein but were staunch supporters of Iraq in its war with Iran. After Iraq's defeat in the 1990–91 Gulf War and the ensuing UN sanctions, the Iraqi expatriate community swelled to several hundred thousand. During much of the 1990s, Jordan was Iraq's principal outlet to the West.

In the post-Saddam period, Iraqis have flooded into Jordan in numbers that far exceed both the earlier population flows and the current movements of Iraqis into Syria and other neighboring countries. Accurate figures are hard to come by and estimates vary considerably. What is certain is that the numbers have grown steadily since the fall of Saddam Hussein, particularly since the outbreak of large-scale sectarian violence. In recent years, various sources put the figure anywhere between 450,000 and 800,000—possibly even as high as one million. In mid-2006, a senior Jordanian official cited the 800,000 figure, but stressed that the government tends to rely on low estimates. Several unofficial sources said the common assumption among the political elite in Jordan is that the Iraqi community numbers at least one million. Factoring in constant cross-border migration and repatriation, it is possible that several million Iraqis have spent at least some time in Jordan over the years.

Given Jordan's most recent population estimate of 5.9 million, the Iraqi refugee community amounts to a major human flood—and a possible threat. The community is mostly Sunni Arabs, who feel at home in Jordan (as in Syria), given their Arab nationalist perspective. Since the November 2005 Amman suicide bombings, however, Iraqis have grown increasingly unwelcome in Jordan. Not only are Iraqis becoming associated with violent, radical, jihadist Islam, but some economic tensions have emerged, from access to healthcare and affordable housing to employment and education. An unmistakable feature of the new Iraqi expatriate community in Jordan is the presence of a large segment of the Sunni Arab leadership, from ex-Baathist military elites to tribal leaders from Anbar province to Islamists groups like the Muslim Scholars Association.

Tensions aside, as the West's "gateway" to Iraq and the preferred destination for Iraqi expatriates, Jordan remains a critical link between Iraq, the region, and the international community.

Sources: Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Carriers of Conflict," *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 2006; UN High Commissioner for Refugees; U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; World Factbook 2006

but planning has repeatedly been delayed. Jordan's international airport remains a critical air link for Iraq. Theoretically, Jordan could close these land and air routes and inflict damage on Iraq, but in light of Jordan's own political and economic vulnerabilities, such a scenario seems remote. In terms of experience on the ground, Jordanian businesses have an advantage over their counterparts from the other neighbors.

Religious, Cultural, and Humanitarian Links

Some Jordanians point to cross-border tribal and family connections with the Sunnis of western Iraq, citing these links as a source of influence, but this appears more imagined than real. Granted, there is a strong measure of Sunni solidarity between Jordan and the Iraqi Sunni community, but this falls short of the entrenched cross-border ties between the Kurds of Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq; Iranian and Iraqi Shiites; or even the cross-border, tribal ties between Syria and Iraq, where the border is considerably longer and ties between populations are more deeply rooted. Moreover, even if Jordan could claim strong links, its ties with Washington would be a liability. "The strategic nature of American-Jordanian relations," writes a Jordanian analyst, "has not helped Amman win the confidence and support of broad sectors of Sunni Arabs dispersed among extremist fundamentalist and nationalist movements."[39]

Jordan has also tried to use its humanitarian efforts, like the field hospital in Falluja, to reach out to Iraqi Sunni leaders. But the political impact has been marginal at best.[40] Jordan may have ties with various strata of the Iraqi Sunni community, but it seems to enjoy little influence when it comes to mediating between Iraqi factions.

Expatriates

Jordan has played host to a large and ever-changing expatriate Iraqi community. During the 1990–91 Gulf War and the subsequent UN sanctions regime, Iraqi refugees swelled the population of Jordan by some 300,000–350,000, including members of Saddam Hussein's family.[41] In the aftermath of the U.S.-led coalition's invasion in 2003, the number of Iraqis in Jordan rose dramatically. In the post-Saddam period, various estimates put the figure anywhere between 450,000 and 800,000—possibly even as high as one million (see sidebar this page); the UN High Commissioner for Refugees puts the current figure at 700,000 (see graphic opposite page).[42] The Iraqi expatriate community is one way in which Jordan has tried to build bridges between Iraqi ethnic communities on both sides of the border and encourage Iraqi Sunnis to participate in the Iraqi political process. But the expatriate issue is also a source of tension: Iraqi leaders worry about a "brain drain," and Jordanian officials worry about a growing source of Islamist militancy streaming across the country's borders. Moreover, the Maliki government wants Jordan to extradite Saddam's eldest daughter, Raghad, who is accused of bankrolling the insurgency, but Jordan's decision to host her remains firm.

Iraq's Neighbors

Jordan has sought to expand its influence by acting as an organizer and convener of Iraq's neighbors, but it has a mixed record of success on this score. More often than not, when there is sufficient common cause to convene at a high level, larger powers vie for leadership. A November 2004 summit on Iraq was held in Egypt, not Jordan; before the war, Turkey played a more prominent role bringing together Iraq's neighbors. Jordan did host a January 2005 foreign ministers meeting ahead of the Iraqi elections, but the Iranian foreign minister stayed away in protest of the king's negative comments about Shia influence. Jordan also hosted three meetings of the World Economic Forum (2003, 2004, 2005), where Iraq-related diplomatic activity occurred on the sidelines; the meetings were also an early forum for Iraq's new leaders to interact with their regional and global coun-

terparts. The kingdom also hosted an international donors conference in July 2005, where the neighbors and the international community discussed Iraqi aid.[43]

Compatibility with U.S. Interests—Present and Future

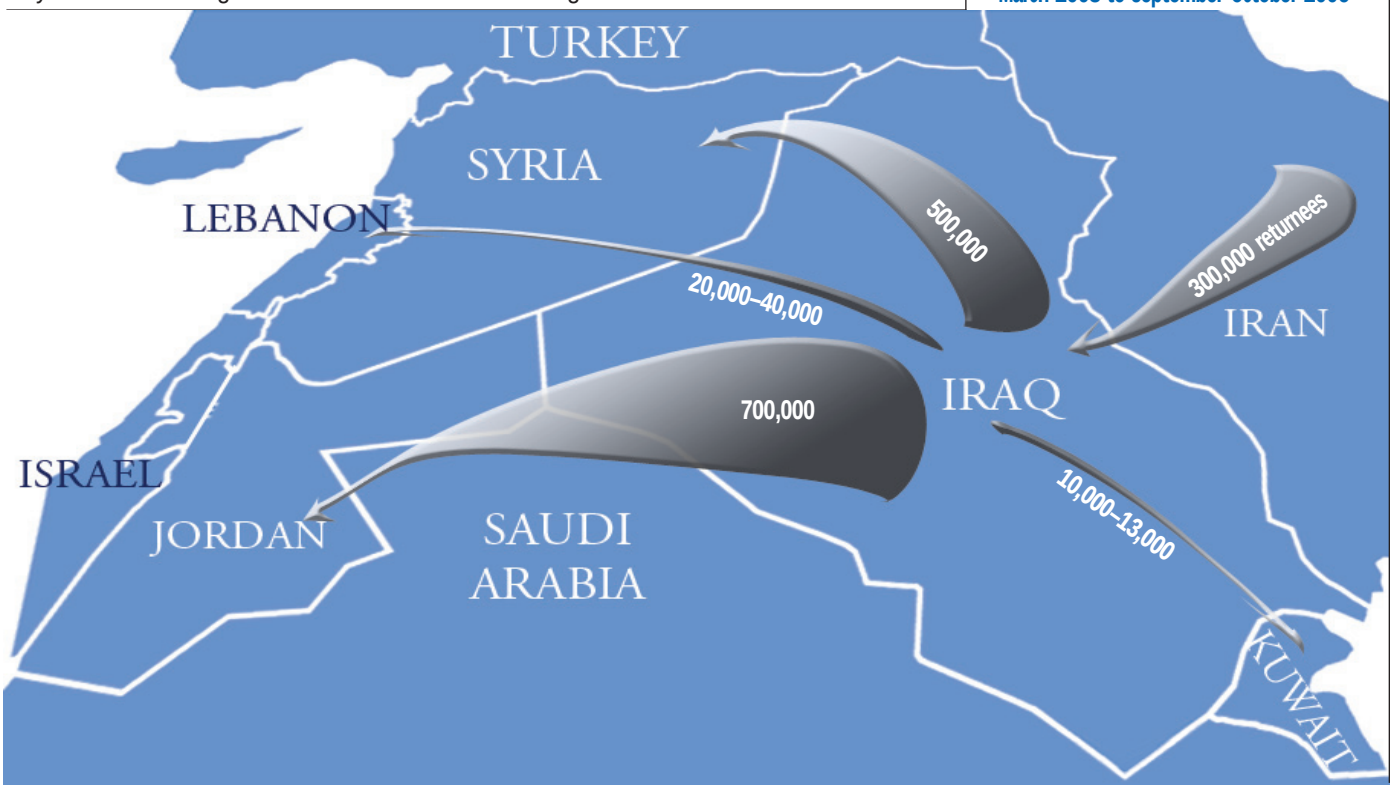
In practice, the Jordanian position on Iraq has been highly compatible with U.S. interests, and that foundation is firm. There is little chance Jordan will change course on Iraq or seek to disrupt U.S. or Iraqi policies. Under the surface, however, there remain a number of disagreements that could worsen over time.

First, there is Jordan's strategic partnership with Washington. Jordan is a state beset with deep vulnerabilities in both its economy and its geostrategic position in the regional balance of power. The West, and the United States specifically, has long been a prominent part of Jordan's strategy for addressing its endemic vulnerabilities. Jordan was able to maintain its strategic relationship with Washington and also preserve its close ties with Saddam Hussein, but it was the United States—not Saddam Hussein's Iraq—that enjoyed an unprecedented place of privilege in Jordan's national security strategy. Since the mid-1990s, following the peace treaty with Israel, Jordan has made a determined effort to upgrade its ties with Washington and build a strategic framework based on close cooperation in security and trade—a relationship whereby Jordan relies on the U.S. to guarantee its security, lest it get trampled in an increasingly turbulent region.

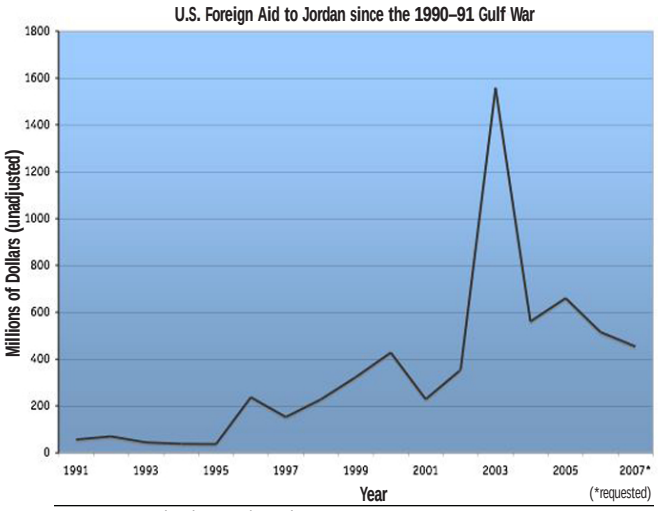
Viewing Jordan as a reliable and friendly government is nothing new in Washington, but what is new is the determination of Jordan's present leader to make a strategic relationship with the U.S. a centerpiece of the country's foreign policy. King Abdullah is managing Jordan's Iraq policy in such a way that reinforces Jordan's strategic alliance with Washington. Abdullah also wants Jordan to hold a privileged place in Washington and is sensitive to the relative position of other Arab states, such as Egypt, that are also closely aligned with the U.S.[44]

Second, Jordanian leaders took a lesson from history: The costs that came with standing by Iraq in the 1990–91 Gulf War were unacceptable in retrospect, so this time around, not only did Jordan seek guarantees from the U.S. and its regional allies to offset the costs of

Iraqi Refugees in Neighboring Countries, March 2003 to September-October 2006



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



Source: Congressional Research Service

Operation Iraqi Freedom, but it also heavily considered the positions of regional investors, such as Kuwait, which it could not afford to alienate.

Third, there is the Palestinian dimension. The Palestinian issue looms much larger than Iraq in Jordanian politics. Already under constraints imposed by the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process in 2000 and the surging violence between Israelis and Palestinians that followed, Jordan believed U.S. actions in Iraq would be joined by positive movement on the Palestinian question. Although this was not the primary calculation that produced Jordanian cooperation in U.S. policy on Iraq, it was an important element in Jordanian decision making—and once Saddam was ousted, Jordanian leaders lobbied the U.S. very hard for more dramatic steps on the peace process. Former U.S. National Security Council analyst Flynt Leverett described King Abdullah's position on the eve of the war as follows: "We are going to support you in Iraq, we assume you are going to take military action, we will do everything we can to support you. But we need more cover on the Palestinian issue, we need a road map."[45]

Fourth, Jordan's cooperation is also tied to Washington's use of positive economic and military inducements. This strategy is not new: More than a decade ago, in the aftermath of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty, the Clinton administration convinced Congress to cancel hundreds of millions of dollars of Jordanian debt. Arab-Israeli peace, together with counterterrorism priorities, led to a steep rise in annual foreign aid to Jordan. Then, after 9/11, the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement—signed under Clinton but still awaiting Senate approval—was quickly ratified. Bilateral trade has boomed. In addition, as the U.S. went to war against Saddam in early 2003, Washington put forward an expansive new aid package for Jordan. Unlike Turkey, which also received U.S. aid pledges, Jordan did not put the question of cooperation before its parliament. In 2003, U.S. aid to Jordan hit a high-water mark. Aid alone was not responsible for Jordan's cooperation, but it did provide a powerful statement of support to the kingdom and reassured Abdullah at a moment when he was anxious about the economic dislocations of war. Since Saddam Hussein's ouster, bilateral foreign aid to Jordan has remained at high levels, averaging about $500 million annually.

As Jordan pursues what is an unpopular policy at home, foreign aid has allowed the king to make the case that he is putting "Jordan First"—a slogan favored by the Hashemites. Using foreign aid to bolster regime stability is a long-standing Jordanian strategy.[46] Increased U.S. aid is the tangible manifestation of America's commitment to the stability and well-being of Jordan. It is also a sign of Jordan's relative importance to U.S. strategic goals in the region, from Arab-Israeli peacemaking to counterterrorism to rebuilding Iraq. Thus it is little surprise that aid to Jordan has risen so dramatically since 2001.

Jordan's cooperation on Iraq has also been reinforced by the course of events. All things considered, said former foreign minister Marwan Muasher in late 2004, "we haven't done too bad."[47] Despite all the instability brought on by war, Jordan has been able to maintain high growth rates (between 3 percent and 6 percent). In other words, Jordan has a vested economic interest in post-Saddam Iraq. The threat of terrorism continues to loom large, but Jordan has managed to do remarkably well economically since the fall of Saddam. The fact that Jordan's worst case scenarios—interrupted energy supplies, a surge in unemployment, economic contractions—did not materialize has helped to reinforce the decision to cooperate with Washington.

Specific Areas of Concern

The following areas of concern will dominate the Jordanian-Iraqi relationship in years to come. These issues, from terrorism and Iran to mutual mistrust and economic relations,

require patient diplomacy and a renewed spirit of mutual cooperation. The United States also has a large stake in the amelioration of these concerns.

Spillover of violence and terrorism. Jordan, lacking economic or strategic power, is uniquely vulnerable to Iraq's increasing chaos, instability, and sectarian strife. If Iraq moves toward full-scale civil war, Jordan will almost certainly experience a surge in violence. The November 2005 Amman suicide bombings, as well as earlier plots and attacks, highlighted a combination of flashpoints, including the large and fluid Iraqi exile community, lax Iraqi border control, violent opposition to the U.S. occupation, and opposition to Jordan's strategic relationship with Washington. Even if Jordan's highly regarded intelligence services continue to perform effectively, even the best counterterrorism capability is no substitute for a functional Iraqi state that can patrol its borders effectively and maintain public order. Nor can it compensate for the destabilizing effects of the U.S. occupation, which is a magnet for the Iraqi insurgency. Jordan is caught between its fundamental reliance on U.S. security guarantees and the negative externalities caused by the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the decline of American influence in the region.

Sunni marginalization and the role of Iran. Jordan worries about the marginalization of Iraq's Sunni community and the possibility that Iraq is drifting deeper into Iranian control. The first alarm was sounded early after the fall of Saddam, when Jordan opposed the widespread U.S. de-Baathification campaign. As a result, the kingdom has tried to play a bridge-building role: "We are working to try to reach out to the Sunni community in Iraq and to convince them that they are part and parcel of the future of Iraq," King Abdullah said in mid-2005.[48] At the diplomatic level, the kingdom supports the Arab League's reconciliation initiative and encourages Sunnis to join the political process—albeit with modest results so far. But Jordan's fear of growing Iranian influence and a concomitant rise in Shiite power in Iraq is becoming more and more pronounced. Jordan's concern, reflective of a broader concern in the Arab world, will remain a source of tension with Iraq.

When it comes to Iraq's problems, Jordanians are quick to blame Washington. "[The Bush administration] should not have disbanded the army," said a senior Jordanian official.[49] On this point, Jordanian officials—including the king—have spoken out strongly and consistently. Former foreign minister Marwan Muasher called on the United States to reinstate the Iraqi Army—presumably with its former Sunni ranks and command.[50] Many Jordanians believe that the disbanding of the army has not only contributed to the security vacuum but also drastically marginalized the Iraqi Sunni community. The initial U.S. reliance on expatriate Iraqi opposition figures—many of whom were Shiite, virulently anti-Saddam, and bent on de-Baathification, such as Ahmed Chalabi—further exacerbated the situation. Jordanians were particularly troubled by the early role of Chalabi, who was convicted in Jordan of massive bank fraud and remains a much-reviled figure among Jordanian political leaders.

Mutual mistrust and the crisis of confidence with Baghdad. Mutual mistrust between Jordan and Iraq has worsened steadily since early 2005, and could lead to an enduring bilateral crisis of confidence. Given the close Hashemite-Saddam relationship, and the fact that Iraq's new leadership is drawn heavily from Shia exiles persecuted by Saddam, the rift is not surprising. There was evidence of a nascent division even before the January and December 2005 elections. King Abdullah's warnings about a Shia "crescent" in late 2004 were not well received by members of the United Iraqi Alliance, who swept the election and now lead Iraq's first permanent, post-Saddam government. Moreover, given that some insurgents are themselves Jordanian, a belief has developed among some Iraqi Shiites that the Jordanian government is complicit in exporting Zarqawi-style radicalism.[51] At its worst, Shiite public opinion in Iraq views the Jordanian government as complicit in exporting Zarqawi-style radicalism; and at best, Iraq's new political elite worries that Amman has been too permissive toward support for the insurgency.

The most dramatic incident to stoke the Iraqi-Jordanian crisis of confidence was the February 2005 bombing in Hilla, Iraq. The attack, reportedly carried out by a Jordanian,

killed more than 120 Iraqis, mainly Shia. An obituary published in Jordan hailed the alleged bomber—Raed al-Banna, a Jordanian—as a "martyr." The al-Banna case led to an outcry in Iraq, with Shiite leaders leveling harsh criticisms against Jordan. For months, accusations were hurled at Amman. "We are sorry to say that until now, a high number of the figures of the [former] regime and those who supervise terrorist groups are based in Jordan," said Laith Kubba, spokesman for interim Iraqi prime minister Ibrahim Jaafari.[52]

After the Hilla bombing, demonstrators attacked the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad. The Iraqi demonstrations, followed by the withdrawal of ambassadors and mutual recriminations, signaled a steep decline in relations. Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim said Jordan was exporting "terrorists" to Iraq. It was weeks before formal diplomatic relations returned to normal.[53] The Amman bombings later that year fueled mistrust in the other direction, given that the bombers were Iraqi.

Visible signs of the breach remain, such as the refusal of some Iraqi Shia leaders to travel to Jordan for conferences and meetings. Speaking at a June 2005 meeting of interior ministers from the neighboring states, former Iraqi interior minister Bayan Jabr singled out Jordan and Syria for not doing enough to stem the tide of foreign fighters. Iraqis have also been rankled by Jordanian columnists, many of whom they accuse of giving far more attention to anti-American tirades than to condemning Arab-on-Arab violence in Iraq. There is also lingering Iraqi resentment rooted in a belief that members of the Jordanian establishment profited from Saddam Hussein's regime while average Iraqis suffered. Remarkably, the heart of the relationship—trade, transport, security training, and the "gateway"—appears largely untouched by the breach over Hilla and the Amman hotel bombings. Visits by Iraqi president Jalal Talabani and Jordanian prime minister Marouf Bakhit have healed some wounds on a day-to-day basis, but the crisis of confidence remains; part of the problem is that Jordanian elites are exposed to the large (and largely disaffected) Iraqi exile community. Left unattended, this crisis could develop into a more serious breach.

Economics: Sustainable growth, transparency, and debt. Trade and economic matters generate positive cooperation between Jordan and Iraq, but they are also a source of discord. Iraq relies on trade and transport routes via Jordan, bilateral trade is robust, and Jordan is a convenient safe haven for Iraqis to park their assets—illicit or otherwise. Stories of Iraqis using cash to purchase multimillion-dollar properties in Amman are all too common. More important, though, Iraq's new leaders worry that former regime figures are using Jordan as a base to support the insurgency. "The family of Saddam is there with a huge wealth. [Jordanian] law is allowing them to support political activities," said Kubba in mid-2005, adding that "they are attempting to revive the Baath Party. This is unacceptable and hostile from an Iraqi viewpoint."[54] Jordanian authorities reject such charges. Iraqi criticism could stem from a "blame others" tactic. But the financial ledger is murky, and full compliance is difficult to ascertain;[55] the lack of transparency is noticeable. At least in terms of Saddam-era assets, U.S. officials interviewed for this report said Jordan has generally complied with U.S. and Iraqi requests to trace and return assets. Even though Jordan enjoys certain added economic benefits as a result of instability in Iraq, these benefits are unsustainable and potentially damaging to the Jordanian economy over the long term. The run-up in real estate is the best example of this mixed blessing; the real estate boom is having a vastly disparate impact on the Jordanian economy and contributing to an ever-widening income gap.

The pre-2003 economic balance sheet is also a source of discord. Jordan claims it is owed close to $1 billion in Iraqi commercial debt. The kingdom has worked tirelessly to ensure that its debt is not lumped into the larger multilateral debt process—Jordanian officials call the debt "exceptional" and say it should be handled on a separate ledger. They also complain that the U.S. is not fully supporting Amman in securing these funds. The kingdom has also lobbied creditor nations to reduce Iraqi debt by offering more reconstruction contracts to neighbors like Jordan.[56] But the debt issue is complex. For example,

without the Saddam-era concessions the balance sheet might look very different. If Jordan is intent on pressing the issue, the U.S. and other debtor nations should press Jordan to be more forthcoming in opening up the kingdom's Saddam-era ledgers.[57]

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As noted earlier, U.S. actions in Iraq have further increased pressure on the Jordanian government to improve the situation in the Palestinian territories—which has also created some tension with the United States. Although Amman was pleased with the 2003 U.S. endorsement of the "Road Map" peace plan—for which Jordians claim some credit—the glaring lack of progress is a growing sore point for Amman. If the Aqaba Summit in June 2003—where President Bush presided and pledged to "ride herd" over the parties—was a high point for Jordan, the April 2004 Bush-Sharon exchange of letters was a low point.[58] Jordanian officials point with some pride to the May 2004 U.S. letter of assurances to King Abdullah, but what is heard more often is despair over unending Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the failure of mediation efforts. Jordanians are frustrated with the U.S. and the international community, and increasingly anxious about the lack of progress in implementing the Road Map. The dramatic escalation of violence in both Gaza and Lebanon in the summer of 2006 has further exposed Jordan's peace with Israel and the kingdom's moderate approach to regional peacemaking efforts. The hope that U.S. actions in Iraq would create a positive externality and relieve pressure on Jordan regarding the Palestinian issue has turned into a major disappointment.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

When it comes to Iraq and the Middle East, there are those who argue that Jordan is on the wrong side of the equation.[59] "Abdullah works against U.S. interests in Iraq and elsewhere while pretending otherwise," wrote Jim Hoagland in the *Washington Post*.[60] This critique goes further, particularly on governance: "In short, Jordan has degenerated into the kind of despotic kleptocracy the Bush administration says it will no longer tolerate," said former *Wall Street Journal* Middle East correspondent Stephen Glain. "But tolerate it the White House does."[61] But as this report suggests, such characterizations are off the mark. Although not without points of friction, on the whole Jordan continues to make positive contributions to post-Saddam Iraq. Without Jordan, the U.S. would face a much more difficult setting in Iraq and in the region. The kingdom, more vulnerable than the other neighbors, has every interest in continuing to cooperate with the U.S. and Iraq.

Among Iraq's neighbors, Jordan may not be pivotal, but neither is it peripheral. Ties could be improved in a number of ways. First and foremost, Jordan and Iraq need to overcome the crisis of confidence that has plagued their relationship. Some degree of mistrust and a lack of confidence was to be expected, given the recent history of Jordanian-Iraqi relations and the oppositionist background of Iraq's new leadership.[62] That said, Jordanian leaders must go further in projecting a positive message to Iraq. King Abdullah has already tempered his inflammatory rhetoric about Shiites following the January 2005 election, but Jordanian leaders can do more to set an example for their own media and for the larger realm of public discourse in the Arab world. What Jordanian leaders should not do—and what outsiders should not encourage—is a media clampdown. Such a step would be counterproductive and would only work against the larger agenda of reform and political change. American and Iraqi leaders have every reason to expect Jordanian leaders to set a better example.

In both word and deed, Jordan's message to Iraq needs to reinforce the notion of Iraq for all Iraqis and refrain from framing bilateral or regional relations in a sectarian context. On this issue, Washington could deliver stronger messages to Amman and demonstrate less tolerance for the kingdom's Arab and/or Sunni posturing—which inevitably comes at the expense of the Iraqi government's legitimacy at home and its credibility in the region. Admittedly, the more the new Iraqi leadership is able to bridge the internal divide and

raise the level of inclusiveness with Iraqi Sunnis, the easier it will be for neighbors like Jordan to line up behind Iraq's new political order.

Beyond rhetoric, the crisis of confidence can also be addressed by increasing interactions between Jordanians and Iraqis at every level. Not only are Jordanians and the new Iraqi leadership separated by a troubled past, but the ongoing insurgency further isolates an already suspicious and insular political class in Baghdad. On this score, Jordan has begun to take positive steps, such as the spring 2005 meetings between Iraqi and Jordanian journalists.[63] But much more needs to be done. The U.S. should encourage and even underwrite more such interactions, but it should also keep in mind that the proper role for outside parties is to facilitate from the sidelines; the more Jordanians come into contact and are familiar with the new Iraqi political class, the easier it will be to deal with future crises.

Confidence could also be restored through small but symbolically important practical measures. A joint Iraqi-Jordanian military commission—with or without a U.S. presence—could be charged with releasing periodic reports about border security. Such a step would speak directly to Iraqi fears that Jordan is exporting Zarqawi-style terrorists, though admittedly it would not address the question of insurgents entering via other borders. A similar commission, or jointly sponsored independent audit, on trade and financial transactions would also help restore confidence.

Over the short term, the U.S. should continue to address Jordan's economic and security needs. Washington should also continue to encourage other key regional powers to do the same, especially on energy security. As Jordan looks for further supplemental aid—and even new U.S. weapons systems—Washington should be forthcoming but selective, because there is little prospect the kingdom will change its present course on Iraq or other regional issues.

Over the long term, if the situation in Iraq stabilizes, energy prices fall, and Jordan's economy continues to grow, some U.S. assistance to Jordan (at an all-time high in recent years) could be curtailed. At a minimum, the architecture of U.S. assistance and trade benefits should be reformulated to make a broader impact on larger segments of society, rather than channeling so much economic assistance through the government, not too mention the large military assistance program. The Qualified Industrial Zones initiative and the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement represent a positive move in this direction, but more can be done with U.S. bilateral assistance programs. A different emphasis from Washington could induce Jordanians to relax controls on the NGO sector, which remain onerous. Changing the architecture of economic assistance would also help address a shortcoming in U.S. policy on governance. When merited, the U.S. should speak as frankly to Jordan as it does to other Arab states.

For Americans, at a moment when Washington has declared its commitment to democratic change in the broader Middle East, Jordan's democratic deficit should raise concern but not fire alarms. The "Jordanian exception," as some call it, undermines the broader U.S. effort to support reform in the Arab world. The problem is made all the more acute by Jordan's own boastings about political reform. "The gap between Jordan's lofty democratic rhetoric and its erratically democratic record has grown wide in recent years," Rami Khouri wrote in May 2005 in the *Beirut Daily Star*.[64]

But as is often the case with foreign policy, the U.S.-Jordanian relationship involves a diverse agenda with trade-offs. The long-standing argument for the "Jordanian exception" rests on striking a balance between promoting reform without destabilizing the regime at home. This line of reasoning has been further entrenched by the September 11 attacks and the war in Iraq—events that reinforced Jordan's "strategic" value. The logic behind this argument may hold for the time being, but it could ultimately be self-defeating: Too much U.S. restraint on reform and good governance undermines American credibility in Jordan—and across the Arab world. Moreover, more progress on reform in Jordan could have a tremendous demonstration effect throughout the Arab world.

Notes

1. Author's interviews with a former senior U.S. diplomat, September 2, 2004 and May 24, 2005, Washington, D.C.

2. Masri quote in Ashraf Khalil, Ranya Kadri, and Josh Meyer, "Suicide Attacks Kill at Least 57 at 3 Hotels in Jordan's Capital," *Los Angeles Times*, November 10, 2005. For another argument about why U.S. action in Iraq has destabilized Jordan, see Oraib al-Rantawi, "Fearing Iraq's Instability, Jordan Seeks Its Unity," *Beirut Daily Star*, December 27, 2005.

3. Typical of the earlier pubic criticism, see "Jordan's King Says Iraq Elections Impossible in Current Chaos," Associated Press, September 29, 2004.

4. For example, an overwhelming majority of Jordanians (70 percent) believe that suicide attacks against American targets in Iraq are justified. For three years running, Jordan has registered some of the highest anti-American views of any country in the Muslim world. See the Pew survey report, *A Year after Iraq War: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, March 2003), http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=206.

5. Survey data from "U.S. Standing in the Middle East Faces Serious Crisis" (Amman: University of Jordan, Center for Strategic Studies, April 2004).

6. The full extent of U.S.-Jordanian cooperation is not made public. For further details, see William M. Arkin, "Keeping Secrets in Jordan," *Washington Post*, November 18, 2005.

7. Author's interview with Royal Court official, September 12, 2004, Amman.

8. Jordan is no stranger to terrorism. The kingdom has uncovered numerous plans for spectacular attacks, like the millennium plot and the 2004 plan to blow up Jordan's intelligence headquarters; see Desmond Butler and Judith Miller, "Police in Jordan Kill 4 It Says Plotted Against It and the U.S." *New York Times,* April 21, 2004. In 2003, Jordan suffered a devastating attack on its embassy in Amman, suspected to be the work of Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, who was killed in a U.S. air raid north of Baghdad in June. In 2002, U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley was assassinated in Amman.

9. Marwan Muasher, transcript of remarks at the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy forum on "A View from Jordan: Iraq, the Peace Process, and Arab Reform," Washington, D.C., September 30, 2004, www. brookings.edu/fp/saban/events/muasher20040930.pdf, p. 9.

10. Alan Cowell, "Old Iraq Army Could Provide a Leader, Jordan's King Says," *New York Times,* May 18, 2004.

11. See Robin Wright and Peter Baker, "Iraq, Jordan See Threat to Election from Iran; Leaders Warn Against Forming Religious States," *Washington Post,* December 8, 2004.

12. Author's interview with a former general in the Jordanian military and adviser to King Hussein, September 13, 2004, Amman.

13. Scott Wilson, "Jordan Acts to Curb a Rising Chorus of Critics," *Washington Post,* September 30, 2004. The government even cracked down on parliamentarians and Islamists who offered words of praise for Zarqawi after his death.

14. "Jordan's Largest Political Party Boycotts Lower House Sessions," Deutsche Press-Agentur, August 21, 2006.

15. "Jordan: Draft Bill Would Muzzle Civil Society," *Human Rights Watch,* April 7, 2005. See also Stephen Glain, "Letter From Jordan: Kingdom of Corruption," *The Nation,* May 30, 2005; and Samer Abu Libdeh and David Keys, *Terror Attacks Highlight Case for Reform in Jordan.* Washington Institute for Near East Policy *PolicyWatch*, no. 1053 (November 18, 2005), http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2404.

16. See Rami Khouri, "Democratic Jordan: Enticing but Still Not a Done Deal," *Beirut Daily Star,* May 25, 2005.

17. See Hassan Fattah, "Amman Dispatch: After the Fall," *The New Republic,* May 19, 2003, 12.

18. See David Schenker, *Dancing with Saddam: The Strategic Tango of Jordanian-Iraqi Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003), 3–41.

19. Fattah, "Amman Dispatch," 12.

20. Interviews with a U.S. State Department official, November 2004 and March 30, 2005, Washington, D.C.

21. Muasher, transcript, pp. 29 and 21.

22. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, 16 percent of all Jordanian exports go to Iraq, second only to the United States (24 percent); Economist Intelligence Unit, *Jordan: 2006 Country Report,* June 2006.

23. One area in which Jordan holds a comparative advantage over its Arab neighbors is banking and financial services. Jordan's Housing Bank for Trade and Finance has already moved into Syria and Iraq; other financial firms are not far behind. See Rupert Wright, "Jordan Makes Best Of It Despite Regional Turmoil," *Financial Times* (London), January 1, 2004.

24. Author's interviews with a former senior U.S. diplomat, September 2, 2004 and May 24, 2005, Washington, D.C.

25. See the previous reports in the "Iraq and Its Neighbors" series: Henri J. Barkey, *Turkey and Iraq: The Perils (and Prospects) of Proximity*. Special Report, no. 141 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, July 2005); Geoffrey Kemp, *Iran and Iraq: The Shia Connection, Soft Power, and the Nuclear Factor.* Special Report, no. 156 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, November 2005); and Joseph McMillan, *Saudi Arabia and Iraq: Oil, Religion, and an Enduring Rivalry*. Special Report, no. 157 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, January 2006). See also the project's background memorandums, "Iraq and Its Neighbors: Implications for U.S. Policy," Washington, D.C., U.S. Institute of Peace, November 17, 2004, www.usip.org/iraq/neighbors_memo.pdf.

26. See Schenker, *Dancing with Saddam*, particularly chapter 3.

27. Jordan was a staunch supporter of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Support for Iraq also fueled Jordan's economic boom during the 1980s.

28. As of late 2006, the police training facility in Jordan remains open but no longer accepts Iraqi recruits. For a critique of the training program, see Paula Broadwell, "Iraq's Doomed Police Training," *Boston Globe,* August 30, 2005.

29. Author's interviews with a former senior U.S. diplomat, May 24, 2005, Washington, D.C.

30. See William M. Arkin, *Code Names: Deciphering U.S. Military Plans, Programs, and Operations in the 9/11 World* (Hanover, N.H.: Steerforth Press, 2005); see also Arkin, "Keeping Secrets in Jordan."

31. See Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 345–47. According to his own account, General Raad Hamdani warned Saddam Hussein and high-level leaders that a U.S. attack from the south was imminent, yet he was overruled. Saddam and his advisers were convinced the attack from the south was a feint and the real attack was coming from the west.

32. Jordanian intelligence reportedly shared information with the U.S. that led to the killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in June 2006. See Borzou Daragahi and Josh Meyer, "'We Knew Him': Jordanian Spies Infiltrated Iraq to Find Zarqawi," *Los Angeles Times,* June 13, 2006.

33. Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948–1991* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 150, 186, 314, 346–48; see also Schenker, *Dancing with Saddam.*

34. See Middle East Media Research Institute, *Al-Hayat Inquiry: The City of Al-Zarqaa in Jordan—Breeding Ground of Jordan's Salafi Jihad Movement*. Special Dispatch Series, no. 848 (Washington, D.C.: MEMRI, January 17, 2005).

35. See International Crisis Group, *Jordan's 9/11: Dealing With Jihadi Islamism*. Middle East Report, no. 47 (Amman/Brussels: ICG, November 23, 2005),13–14.

36. See Adnan Abu Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 84–86; and Robert B. Satloff, *From Abdullah to Hussein: Jordan in Transition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 19–40.

37. Mukul Devichand, "Unlikely Rebels," *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), weekly edition, no. 595 (July 18–24, 2002).

38. The strongest claimant by bloodline to the Iraqi Hashemite throne is Prince Raad, a Jordanian member of the royal family who, at one point, supported the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. A much more prominent claimant, Sharif Ali bin Ali Hussein, was long active in the Iraqi-exile opposition; he ran in the January 2005 Iraqi elections on the constitutional monarchy slate but failed to gain any seats in the parliament. See Nicholas Pelham, "Royal House Hopes to Bridge Iraqi Divisions," *Financial Times* (London), April 14, 2003; and Jeffrey Gettleman, "The King is Dead (Has Been for 46 Years) but Two Iraqis Hope: Long Live the King!" *New York Times,* January 28, 2005.

39. Rantawi, "Fearing Iraq's Instability, Jordan Seeks Its Unity."

40. Author's interviews with a former senior U.S. diplomat, September 2, 2004 and May 24, 2005, Washington, D.C.

41. Jordan has a long history of providing safe haven for Iraqi exiles, including survivors of Iraq's Hashemite royal family. In the mid-1990s, Saddam Hussein's two sons-in-law, Kamil Hasan and Saddam al-Majid, defected to Jordan and were granted asylum by King Hussein. But the two later returned to Iraq and were assassinated. At the time of the U.S. invasion in March 2003, Saddam Hussein's daughters fled to Jordan. With King Abdullah's consent, they continue to reside in Amman. Raghad, the eldest daughter, has taken a high-profile role in her father's Amman-based legal defense team; see Randa Habib, "Jordan

Stands by Saddam's Daughter Despite Iraq Extradition Call," Agence France-Presse, July 3, 2006. Both daughters are reportedly living quite comfortably.

42. The figures at the high end of the range came from the author's interview with a senior Jordanian official, August 30, 2006.

43. James Glanz, "Iraqis Press Donors for Billions More in Reconstruction Aid," *New York Times,* July 19, 2005.

44. U.S.-Jordanian cooperation on security matters is far-reaching. There are reports that Jordan has participated in the CIA's rendition program for suspected terrorists. According to a report by Amnesty International, Jordanian security agents have tortured U.S. terror subjects to obtain confessions; see Amnesty International, *Jordan: "Your Confessions Are Ready for You to Sign." Detention and Torture of Political Suspects.* MDE 16/005/2006 (New York: Amnesty International, July 2006)

45. See the Public Broadcasting Service documentary, "Elusive Peace: Israel and the Arabs"; originally aired October 10–24, 2005 (released on DVD January 2006).

46. See Laurie Brand, *Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations: The Political Economy of Alliance Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); and Markus Bouillon, "Walking the Tightrope: Jordanian Foreign Policy from the Gulf Crisis to the Peace Process and Beyond," in *Jordan in Transition,* ed. George Joffe (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 1–22.

47. Muasher, transcript, 21.

48. King Abdullah, interview by Lally Weymouth in, "In the End, 'Iraq Will Succeed,'" *Washington Post,* May 22, 2005.

49. Author's interview with senior Jordanian Foreign Ministry official, September 13, 2004, Amman.

50. Muasher, transcript, p. 8.

51. See Middle East Media Research Institute, *Al-Hayat Inquiry*. For more background on Jordanians and the Iraqi insurgency, see James Glanz, "In Jordanian Case, Hints of Iraq Jihad Networks," *New York Times,* July 29, 2005; and Nir Rosen, "Iraq's Jordanian Jihadis," *The New York Times Magazine,* February 19, 2006, and idem, "Thinking Like a Jihadist: Iraq's Jordanian Connection," *World Policy Journal* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 1–16.

52. Kubba quote in "Iraq Wants Jordan to Extradite Ex-Regime Figures Behind Insurgency," Agence France-Press, August 21, 2005.

53. See Dexter Filkins, "Tortuous Trail: From a Bombing in Iraq to Fury at a Family in Jordan," *New York Times,* March 15, 2005; Steve Negus, "Iraq Spat Deepens as Jordan Evacuates Embassy," *Financial Times* (London), March 22, 2005; Nimrod Raphaeli, "Iraqi-Jordanian Tension Over the Most Lethal Suicide Bombing in Iraq," Middle East Research Institute, March 29, 2005, www.intelligence.org.il/eng/memri/apr_a_05.htm; and Rawya Rageh, "Iraq, Jordan at Odds over Border Security," Associated Press, March 21, 2005. The editor of the Jordanian paper that broke the story was forced to resign.

54. Kubba in "Iraq Wants Jordan to Extradite Ex-Regime Figures Behind Insurgency."

55. Interviews with Jordanian intellectuals and former government officials, September 22–25, 2005, Athens.

56. See "Jordan Calls for Reconstruction Contracts to Lessen Iraq Debt," Agence France-Presse, September 13, 2004.

57. The debt issue was reportedly raised during Prime Minister Bakhit's August 2006 visit to Baghdad. A Jordanian official suggested to the author that one way to resolve the issue would be to "swap" the Iraqi commercial debt with the frozen assets of Iraq's al-Rafidayn Bank held by Jordan, which, like the debt, totals approximately $1 billion.

58. See David Sanger, "Middle East Mediator: Big New Test for Bush," *New York Times,* June 5, 2003. The Bush administration's Road Map for Peace can be found at www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/22520.htm, and the Bush-Sharon correspondence can be found at www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Reference+Documents/Exchange+of+letters+Sharon-Bush+14-Apr-2004.htm.

59. See Jim Hoagland, "Playing Both Sides in Jordan," *Washington Post,* March 27, 2005; Glain, "Letter From Jordan"; and Jon Leyne, "Jordan Fears Loss of U.S. Favor," BBC News, April 25, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4472833.stm.

60. Hoagland, "Playing Both Sides in Jordan."

61. Glain, "Letter from Jordan."

62. See Phebe Marr, *Who Are Iraq's New Leaders? What Do They Want?* Special Report, no. 160 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, March 2006).

63. See "Jalalatuhu yaltaqi 'adadan min abraz mumathili wasa'il al-'i'lam al-'iraqiya " *Al-Dustor* (Amman), April 5, 2005.

64. See Khouri, "Democratic Jordan."

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