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Hashemite succession and the Stability of Jordan

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Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi: This roundtable meeting, our fifth this month, is right on time, considering that the 'topic of the day' is the Hashemite succession and the stability of Jordan. We invited Professor Asher Susser from the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University as an expert on Jordan to speak today. I am delighted to welcome him once again to PASSIA. Dr. Rosemary Hollis of the Middle East Program of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London and I will serve as discussants. All of you are invited to raise questions and ideas.

I would like to introduce this session by saying that the Palestinian concerns during this transitional phase focus not only on whether there is a crisis in Jordan or Israel, but also on the internal problems of today. The Palestinians, are at a crossroads in terms of land, people, leadership, and rights, which is why academics are invited to assess the decision makers and mobilize public opinion, all in the name of doing what is best for the Palestinians. PASSIA has undertaken a responsibility in this context, and continues to host meetings and publish their proceedings, making more people aware of what is going on in the region that is of importance to Palestine and the Palestinians.

Jordan has always been very important for Palestinians. Unfortunately, while there are Israeli experts on Jordan, there are very few Palestinian experts on the same topic. In fact, there are hardly any Palestinian experts on anything nowadays, due to the fact that the burdens of occupation and an endless transition phase have forced them to deal with so many different issues. It is for this reason, amongst others, that PASSIA undertakes this initiative, hoping that through such meetings, in addition to the other

PASSIA projects, we can promote further understanding of the issues that affect us all in one way.

Presentation

Prof. Asher Susser: It is rather hard for me to talk about something that is still in the making. It reminds me of a story of a person who came to Israel for a few days and was asked by his Israeli host, "How long did you come for?" "Two days," replied the man. "What did you come to do?" asked his host. "I came to write a book," said the man. His host then asked him what the book was going to be called, and the man answered, "Israel yesterday, today and tomorrow." We are dealing here with the immediate, and that is never an easy task.

First of all, I would like to share my understanding of what has taken place and the reasons behind it, but whilst making it clear that I do not believe that we will ever know all the reasons. Having done that, I will then talk a little about the issue of succession in Jordan and explain why I think that it has a very good chance of passing through this transition phase in a stable and orderly fashion.

Until very recently, Crown Prince Hassan was, as King Hussein himself used to say, 'the apple of his eye'. This was clear in early 1997, when King Hussein sacked Prime Minister Kabariti because of a clash with the Crown Prince in one of the most humiliating public letters that I have ever seen the King issue. One of Kabariti's arguments was – and he made this known – that he regarded the King and no other as his *marja'yyeh*, his source of authority, which the King regarded as an insult to Crown Prince Hassan. Even as recently as in August 1998, the King issued a statement whilst abroad dismissing rumors of a replacement as nonsense. It is not, therefore, a surprise that the removal of Crown Prince Hassan came as a shock to many people in Jordan and elsewhere. I can assure you that as someone who has followed Jordanian affairs for a very long time, I did not believe that this was going to happen.

Why did this happen? I would base my analysis entirely on the words of the King himself, either those spoken during his CNN interview or those written in his letter to Crown Prince Hassan, rather than any kind of rumor. First, the question of Hassan's wielding of authority during the King's absence was clearly an issue, and my interpretation is that Crown Prince Hassan was aware of this. There are those in Jordan and elsewhere who have been saying for years that perhaps Hassan was simply not cut out to be a king, and I think that Hassan saw the last six months as an opportunity to establish, or assert his authority and show that he could be a king in his own right. He apparently did not consult the King as much as he was expected to, especially on sensitive issues, such as the army and the whole question of the replacement of the Chief of Staff. I do not believe that Hassan's intention was to undermine the King, but this is probably how King Hussein understood it.

The second factor is the rift concerning the succession issue, which was initially not over Hassan's place, but over who would follow Hassan: the King's son Hamza, or Hassan's own son, Rashid. Hassan obviously preferred that he be followed by his own son, and the King made it clear in his letter that his brother had repeatedly refused to commit himself to the agreement over the succession until becoming king himself.

The tension between the two families, all the gossiping and backbiting and a subsequent deterioration in the relationship between the two men have also been put forward as a reason for the King's decision.

Very recently, Hussein realized that his life was coming to an end and that he had no choice but to make a quick and decisive decision, taking into account, perhaps, all the above factors and also - and this comes from the Arabic press; I personally do not know whether it is true or not - that the USA was arguing that replacing Hassan would be the right thing to do because of his reputed unsuitability. The decision, therefore, could not be delayed.

When the decision was finally made, it had the appropriate shock effect on the Jordanian public's sense of stable continuity. The Jordanians were felt to have a great advantage in comparison to many other Arab states as they 'knew' who would be next, which was always a source of comfort. Even if there were reservations about Hassan, he was a known, a person who was highly respected for his intellect, his experience, and his international reputation and who, given the chance, could one day prove to be a great king. After the initial shock, people seem to be getting used to the idea that Abdallah will follow his father, and in this respect, Hassan's graceful, if not majestic acceptance of his removal is of great importance. I would not exclude the possibility that later, in the interest of the dynasty and Jordan, Hassan will not only accept his fate, but in due course will help Abdallah.

Much has been said about Abdallah's family origins and the fact that his mother was English. Quite honestly, I do not think that this is of any consequence. Toni Gardener was indeed English, but she converted to Islam before marrying King Hussein; therefore, Abdallah was born to two Moslem parents. We are talking about a regime based on primogeniture, meaning that the origin of the wife is not that crucial, and Hussein's standing was never affected because he married an English woman. He then went on to marry an American wife, a Christian with only one Arab parent, so if one wants to pick and choose, Hamza, the son of Hussein and Noor, does not come from better parents than Abdallah.

Not only did King Hussein marry Toni Gardener, but also when Abdallah was born he became Crown Prince and remained so until 1965, when Hassan reached the age of 18. The fact that Abdallah was passed over at the age of three had nothing to do with his mother, but everything to do with the political instability of that period. These were the days of considerable inter-Arab disputes. In 1960, for example, the Prime Minister had been killed along with tens of other people, and the King believed that he had

escaped death only by arriving late for a meeting. The King, believing that his life was in danger, then set about the task of appointing an adult heir.

Why is Abdallah preferred to Hamza? I do not think it has anything to do with their mothers, but quite a bit to do with the fact that Abdallah is 37 whereas Hamza is only 18. More importantly, Abdallah has excellent connections in the army; he is a military man, a career officer, a general, a commander of the special forces, and this is extremely important in a country where stability is the backbone of the regime. Neither Hassan nor Hamza compares favorably with Abdallah in terms of their relationship with the security establishment.

We know very little about Abdallah as a political person. He has been out of the limelight for so many years, but it has been said that as far as his character goes, he is very much like his father in terms of his intelligence and his personal charm. Nevertheless, he lacks political experience.

The major part of my analysis is that Jordan's stability should not be attributed solely to the king's personality, though his personality, political activism and various talents are obviously of great importance. Jordan has been blessed with two great kings, Abdallah and Hussein, and their contribution to the making of a stable Jordan is obviously very significant. Having said that, Jordan is not a one-man show. I say this with a measure of conviction, very much as a consequence of a book I wrote years ago, *The Political Biography of Wasfi At-Tal*. At-Tal was perhaps Jordan's greatest Prime Minister. In writing this biography, what struck me all along was the crucial importance of the people next to the King, those who help him in managing the state. A lot of the analysis about Jordan and its future is based on looking at the country as if it were a one-man show, as if everything rests on the personality of the King. King Hussein is one of the greatest leaders in the Middle East and one of the greatest leaders in the world, but when he came to the throne in 1953, still not 18 years old, he was dismissed by his contemporaries as a non-entity, and it took him many years to earn the reputation that he enjoys today. Worthy of mention in this respect is that when the Iraqi Hashemites were overthrown in July 1958, Anthony Nutting, the former British minister of state for foreign affairs, observed, "However much one may admire the courage of this lonely young king [Hussein], it is difficult to avoid the conclusion [that] his days are numbered."

So there are other factors to bear in mind, of which the three that follow are the most important:

The cohesion of the political elite, from the civilians, the military, and the ministers – the dozens and dozens of people who are considered the King's men and who manage the country with him - is a crucial factor.

The loyalty of the armed forces and the security establishment, which is very much a function of the more cohesive of the elite.

The external interest in Jordan's stability; Jordan is much more important than its size, numbers, and economic and military power would suggest. Jordan is one of the most crucial components of the state structure of the region, being of great importance for the region - Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria - and also Europe and the USA.

Between 1951 and 1953, there was no king, Talal having been struck down with a mental illness, but even throughout this period when the monarchy was weak, everything went very smoothly, despite predictions that Jordan was going to be divided by its neighbors: by Iraq, which was still Hashemite, and by Syria and Saudi Arabia together. The Iraqis did approach the Jordanians seeking unity, but their offer was rejected. In short, the Jordanians were not, and are still not interested in being taken over by the Palestinians, Iraqis, Syrians, or anyone else for that matter.

If we look at the present situation, we can see that there are many senior and experienced politicians in Jordan, in addition to the family itself – there are many princes today, unlike in Hussein's time - who are capable of coaching Abdallah through the transition. Abdallah is not on his own, but certainly, the main asset that he has is the loyalty of the armed forces, in addition to the continuity of the external interest, which remains as great as it ever was.

With regard to the country's domestic security, it is unlikely that Jordan, the rule of which is characterized by cohesiveness in the face of subversion, is facing any real threats.

If any possible opponents exist, I would say they are as follows:

Islamists: They are powerful, but they have traditionally adopted an extremely cautious attitude and believe that the monarch has religious legitimacy. I would be very surprised if they challenge the monarchy now.

Palestinians: Their opposition rests on Black September, which happened 28 years ago. In spite of suspicions that the Palestinian Authority, the PLO and the Hashemite regime do not have the same political interests, the Palestinians in Jordan are happy to live as Jordanians, enjoy stability and their control over the economy, and have little interest in destabilizing it. They are not to be seen as a threat against the Hashemite regime.

Power struggle within the elite: The worst case scenario would involve a power struggle breaking out within the elite and filtering down to the army. At present, this does not seem very likely, but were it to occur, no external friend would be able to overcome a domestic explosion in Jordan. The Jordanians are themselves their worst enemies.

Jordan's real problems are not related to the succession but are to be found elsewhere, such as in the fact that the economic growth has fallen behind population growth. The Jordanians have a great interest in the final status negotiations, and must be prepared to play their hand, bearing in mind that the issues to be discussed – Jerusalem, the refugees, borders, settlements, and water, etc - are directly related to the Jordanians

themselves. If Jordan goes through a difficult transition, it will find it more difficult to deal with these issues, but I believe that there is every chance that Jordan will pass through a smooth, stable succession.

Discussant I:

Dr. Rosemary Hollis, Head of the Middle East Program, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London

Dr. Rosemary Hollis: I am rather struck by the fact that the points brought up by Prof. Susser, the elements named as a key to the stability of Jordan are the more traditional elements. We used to hear a lot about Prince Hassan and the advantages that he could bring to the monarchy: his potential to develop the economy, to restructure it and make Jordan a different sort of entity, his intellectualism, his interfaith dialogues, how he was in the business of outreach and how he was going to take Jordan into a new era. And yet, in reviewing the elements of stability and potential challenges to them, Prof. Susser has put forward the idea that there are some important, very old fashioned traditional bases of stability in Jordan, such as the army, the continuity of the monarchy, and the King's men and the cohesion amongst them.

With regard to the role played by foreigners *vis-à-vis* the stability of Jordan, this would appear to involve a lot of cash; Madeleine Albright was almost indecent in her haste to fly to Jordan and give the Jordanians more money, and I would not mind if the discussion explored the possibility that there is some truth to the rumor that the Americans suggested to the King that he replace Hassan.

When you [Prof. Susser] talked about the weakness of Jordan in the economic sector, it did strike me that Jordan, with so few natural resources and with such a difficult economy, would experience great difficulty in improving it.

I see the stability of Jordan as very much the reinforcement of the patronage system, which would fit it with what you [Prof. Susser] have said about the cohesion of the King's men and the fact that the cohesive elites know where their interests lie. The biggest danger is if they suddenly throw that away, which really does not suggest that there will be a radical restructuring of the political economic system.

The other thing that occurs to me is that if the personality of the king is not that crucial, then it would not matter whether the King was Hassan or Abdallah, and yet we were told that Prince Hassan has a problem in terms of commanding the usual sources of respect, in terms of having the right chemistry with the army. In a sense Prince Hassan has had it from all directions, having been suspected by the Palestinians and by his own people.

When I consider what has happened to Prince Hassan over the last couple of weeks, it all seems extremely unfair. Apparently, King Hussein had impossible expectations of his brother, because on the one hand he wanted him to be his man, to do his work, to be

his loyal brother, and yet, when the King was forced to face his imminent death, Prince Hassan found himself in trouble for trying to reinforce his own power base. Over the last two years, on visits to Jordan, I have heard some members of the cohesive elite puzzle over what King Hussein himself was doing, and I have heard them interpret the way Prince Hassan was handling certain crises as more satisfactory. When the King announced that he was going to be absent for a long time, what was Hassan supposed to do? Was he supposed to run the show or was he supposed to keep running back and forth to the King? It seems to me that Prince Hassan got a 'bum deal'. Having said that, I am struck by the fact that the qualities that Prince Abdallah will bring to the throne of Jordan do seem to reinforce the traditional elements of stability in Jordan, as described by Prof. Susser. While Prince Hassan has the worst of all worlds in some respects, Prince Abdallah has the best of all worlds, because he is young, fresh, and unknown, yet at the same time represents the very elements of continuity.

Discussant II

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA, Jerusalem

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi: Why is it a shock? I think because Prince Hassan was not a usual prince. The man established so many things; in spite of the fact that for 34 years it was taken for granted that he was the legitimate successor. He did his homework, he did his best, and he turned out to be unlike any other prince in the region, sitting waiting for the throne to come to him. He established a strong political address – being next to the King in authority – and so many organizations, and he involved himself in so many activities; he is intellectual, scientific, and he surrounded himself with educated people and trained them in the Royal Court as the King's men and future ministers. People all over the world referred to Crown Prince Hassan as the intellectual address in Jordan, and if you go to Amman as a journalist, a professional or as a politician the only way you are going to find out what is going on is to visit Crown Prince Hassan; nobody else can tell you what you need to know on any subject but him. If the King had dismissed any other prince, it would not be so much of a shock.

There are several issues that I would like to mention very briefly:

1. The relationship between King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan:

There are two schools of thought. According to one, the King never intended to allow Hassan to become king and used and manipulated him until he felt the mission was accomplished and it was time to name another successor. The second school of thought says no, on the contrary, the King has been supporting Crown Prince Hassan and has endorsed his decisions, but recently, watching him rule and govern as a *de facto* king, he saw some mistakes that he could not ignore, some of which were mentioned very clearly in the King's letter.

The King wrote that Hassan refused to form the Royal Hashemite Council and to accept the King's decision as to who should follow him [Hassan]. The other point was that

Hassan crossed the red line with his intention to clean two major institutions: the army and the diplomatic core, which are major pillars of the state, and which the King will not allow anybody under any circumstances to mess with without his consent. As for the third point, this has to do with personal relations. According to one hypothetical scenario, the King replaced Hassan because he could not accept all the rumors being spread about his wife and children and held Hassan partially responsible for the bad feelings between the two families. According to the other scenario, Prince Abdallah visited his father in the US and told him, "I am 37 years old, and I did exactly what you wanted me to do - I went to the army, prepared myself, got married, settled down - and now when I look at the region I see that Qaddafi's son is succeeding him, Hafez's son is succeeding him, all the Gulf leaders are preparing their sons to follow them, so what about me? Am I not your son? Over the last six months my uncle has given me nothing - no delegation, no authority, no mandate, nothing at all - and I ask you: What future do I have as your son?" On the other hand, however, Crown Prince Hassan had always been loyal and obeying to his brother, the king, to whom he used to refer as his father and whose word he used to accept as the law.

2. The seven pillars of the Jordanian state:

Jordan is not a one-man show, and it has a total of seven pillars. These are as follows:

The Royal Palace: The Royal Palace has always been the King's house, and whether the King has been present or absent, Hassan was only one advisor amongst others who governed it. It is always the King's men who are present there, and all governments have to consult with these powerful advisors and consider their judgement and ideas.

The army: The Jordanian army was established before the emirate in 1921. It is the main establishment, or the King's tool to rule. It is the rehabilitation institute for tribes and Jordanians where their loyalty to the throne is strengthened.

The Bedouins: The Jordanian tribes have been partners with the King in ruling.

The government: The King always gave the government the necessary mandate, duties, responsibility, and chance to govern with his guidance.

The parliament: We have not been seeing a strong parliament, but it has been the address for legitimacy.

The intelligence apparatus: A major institute to maintain security and stability.

Civil society: This has always been Crown Prince Hassan's forum: the institutions, the bankers, the businessmen, and the professionals.

When we compare Prince Abdallah and Crown Prince Hassan with regard to their involvement in the seven pillars, we discover that Crown Prince Hassan has not been governing the seven pillars in Jordan, although he sometimes tried to put his men in the

palace and government. Abdallah, on the other hand, has the potential to govern the Royal Palace, the army, the Bedouins, and the intelligence. Four major pillars out of seven are his, and I do not expect it will be long before he is controlling the other three as well.

3. The future of Abdallah:

I do not see anything frightening with regard to the future of the new Crown Prince, Abdallah, since I see him governing the seven major pillars of Jordan, assisted by two well-educated princes, Talal and Ghazi as well as his uncle, Hassan.

4. States in the region:

We have seen Syria, Egypt, the Saudis and the Gulf countries, in addition to the PNA, all sending congratulatory letters and trying to open new chapters, especially the Saudis and the Gulf Countries. Even Egyptian President Mubarak sent a cable of congratulations and his son to pass on his congratulations.

5. Palestinians in Jordan:

Especially over the last two years, Palestinians have been asking questions, particularly with regard to the refugees, such as "What future do we have? If Arafat succeeds in building a Palestinian state, our aspirations are there; meanwhile, we cannot afford to lose what we have established in Jordan, we are Jordanians, and we would like to maintain our rights in Jordan under any circumstances and are not willing to lose them because of the unknown battle of Arafat for a Palestinian state or the unknown future of the state of Jordan." The Palestinians in Jordan cannot antagonize the regime or the *mukhabarat* or become opponents to the new change at the palace, thereby possibly losing their right to travel and open factories, so they are going to keep quiet, and put their faith, for the time being anyway, in the as yet unproven abilities of Prince Abdallah.

6. Palestinians in the Occupied Territories:

For Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, the matter is very serious, because for the last 34 years, the final status issues were all carefully studied by Crown Prince Hassan, but now suddenly and without warning, he is no longer there; all this information and analysis might vanish. Can we guarantee they will be transferred to Abdallah and he will follow the same lines, or are we going to start from zero point? One of the leaders of the Palestinian opposition told me last week, "If Arafat is smart enough, he will go immediately to Amman and say, 'On 4 May 1999, we will announce a Palestinian state and on 5 May 1999, we will declare a confederation.'" I laughed and told him, "The King is not interested; why should he get involved in the Palestinian mess?" Why should Arafat put all his eggs in the unfamiliar Jordanian hand, realizing that we know very little about Abdallah or his intentions? Who will be Abdallah's men and advisors, and what will be their agenda? For the Palestinian leadership, it is a rather tricky situation. Things

are somewhat different with regard to the Palestinian elite and the Palestinian businessmen, as they will see in this an opportunity to strengthen their ties with the Jordanians.

7. The United States:

Concerning the position of the United States, its statement of support of the new change was addressed to the Jordanians only, telling them we are here to back you, we are here for the stability of the regime, we are adding a supplement to the Wye Memorandum, we have given you another \$100 million and are prepared to give you more to help the Jordanian economy. This is a very clear message, designed to build trust and confidence amongst the Jordanians, who will believe that nothing bad will happen for as long as they have the backing and support of the US. They know that without a strong economy, there will not be stability in Jordan.

European countries that have come to know Crown Prince Hassan very well accepted him as a future king, but of course, they will have to abide by the King's decision.

8. The army and the political elite:

I agree that they will not change their loyalty. They consider the King's word to be the law.

9. Israel:

Netanyahu called for a meeting with all the security apparatuses to discuss the future of Jordan. One wonders, does he have a hidden agenda for Abdallah, bearing in mind that he is not interested in seeing the transition phase accomplished nor in Arafat as a partner and will refuse to recognize the Palestinian state? Are we going back to the old Likud thesis, according to which the Palestinian home is in Jordan? What if Netanyahu is re-elected; he is not a partner for peace? He is dangerous, not according to my point of view, but also according to the point of view of many Israeli circles, and the threat for Jordan and the Palestinians will continue to be the right wing in Israel.

Discussion

Prof. Susser: I will start with Netanyahu and his hidden agenda. Those Israelis who said that Netanyahu is dangerous meant he is dangerous for Israel. As for the Jordan-Palestine agenda, it is true that this was the Likud agenda, but one has to put such issues in their historical perspective. The idea of Jordan-Palestine is an old one that was connected with the idea of Greater Israel, the idea that since all of Palestine is Eretz Israel, there will be no partition and thus, Palestine is in Jordan. Whatever one might say about Netanyahu, what his government has done, whether it wanted to or not,

is to put an end to this idea. The whole logic of the Likud has changed, so to go to the pre-peace formulas of the Likud and judge them out of context is making a big mistake.

Sharon was the spokesman for Jordan-Palestine yet today he is, I believe, the most favored interlocutor on the Jordanian side of the river, simply because he has changed his mind about the whole thing and he delivers. Israel has already withdrawn from some of the territory and committed itself to withdrawing from other areas, so the whole idea of Greater Israel has gone out of the window. Everybody knows that.

What does make sense is the Israeli interest in Jordanian stability, because Israel is about to enter final status negotiations with the Palestinians. In fact, Israel has always been interested in Jordanian stability and it is in Israel's interest for the Palestinians to establish a state that will not be a threat to Israel or Jordan. Other players have hidden agendas: the Palestinians, for example. As for the Iraqis praising Hussein's decision and then bringing up all the stuff about Abdallah's mother, that is very typical of the Iraqi Government.

What agenda does Arafat have? I agree with Dr. Abdul Hadi that it is impossible for the Palestinians to keep quiet about the refugees, but if they want to talk about the refugees who are Jordanian citizens, they will face problems with the Jordanian Government.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: But we do not have a Palestinian Likud saying "this bank is ours and that bank is ours too."

Prof. Susser: Not at the moment, nor, I hope, in the future. What you are saying, as I understand it, is that on the one hand, the Palestinians, like others, have a hidden agenda, but on the other hand you are saying, that there is no need for the Jordanians to suspect the Palestinians of having a hidden agenda.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: Correct me if I am wrong, but the secular Palestinian opposition from the PFLP, for example, as well as Palestinian religious opposition. Hamas and Islamic Jihad are very interested today in the idea of confederation with Jordan. Arafat, on the other hand, cannot go to Amman empty-handed. For him Jordan after King Hussein is a new chapter; his starting point, for all reasons, is to call for confederation now, a political cart in the face of Israelis, a confidence cart for Palestinians in Jordan, and his own cart, before the new Jordanian elite establish an anti-Palestinian position.

Prof. Susser: I don't know. I do not believe that the Jordanians would accept the idea of a confederation without knowing exactly what kind of Palestinian state is to be established. They will not commit themselves to an unknown Palestinian entity.

With regard to Dr. Hollis's viewpoint concerning the unfairness of what has happened to Hassan, I agree completely. After all, he has taken the King's place for the past six months and did, or so we all thought, a good job. Why should he be punished for doing what he was asked to do? Well, perhaps he was punished for the things that Dr. Hollis mentioned; for example, because he was going to take Jordan to a new era, establish a

new kind of political order, the sort of things that perhaps many in Jordan were not really interested in.

Maybe the Jordanian monarchy is a kind of antiquated rule, but who are we to criticize? This is something for the Jordanians to decide. In the Arab World, countries such as Iraq are desperate to create monarchies; Saddam is desperate to have his own son succeed him, as is Assad, which means that as far as the great revolutionaries of the 1950s and 1960s are concerned, the future lies in monarchies.

Dr. Hollis: I was not saying what a pity that Jordan shouldn't become more of a democracy, but how interesting it is that you made such a convincing case that the stability of Jordan depends on pillars that have little to do with what the jargon about a modernized state.

Prof. Susser: I think that the Jordanians, finding themselves having to choose between the jargon and Jordan, have chosen Jordan. I would repeat that the personality of the king is not the only factor. Jordan did have a king who was virtually unfit to govern but it did not make a difference; Jordan survived, and he was replaced by Hussein. Hassan's chemistry with the army, or rather his lack of chemistry, does, however, make a difference, because if the king has no chemistry with the power structure, then there is a problem.

General Discussion

Question: What about the fact that the will of the people – democracy and real elections – is missing from these pillars. Could this contribute to the destabilization of Jordan?

Prof. Susser: With regard to the elections, we cannot make comparisons with Scandinavian countries, only the neighboring countries. In the past, Jordanians looked at Abdul Nasser as their savior, but in 1967 that changed, and today if they look at themselves, they find they are much better off than their neighbors are. Jordan is a liberal, decent, stable fair regime, which sometimes treats its opposition ruthlessly, but it is not like Iraq or Saudi Arabia and it is unrealistic to expect Jordan to become a total democracy. If Palestinians in Jordan were asked whether they would choose to live under the monarchy or under Arafat's leadership, they would choose the monarchy.

Comment: We should also consider the fact that King Hussein played a major role in moving the peace process forward and that Abdallah still has a long way to go before he is able to play a similar role.

Prof. Susser: It will take a long time for Abdallah to become Hussein, and even then, he will not totally fill the space; but there again, Hassan might not have been able to either. I am sure, however, that Abdallah will work very hard to fill the gap.

Question: Why is it that it is only now that we are hearing all these reasons why Hassan might not be a good successor?

Prof. Susser: I cannot answer this question. Analysts make mistakes all the time. I do not believe that the King did not want Hassan from the beginning. Even Hassan was extremely surprised by the decision.

Question: How much influence did the United States have on the King's decision, and could it be that Queen Noor was trying to secure her power through her son Hamza?

Prof. Susser: I am not a great believer in conspiracy theories, but perhaps there is something to this; *Al-Watan Al-Arabi* published something along that line. Many people spoke of Hassan's unsuitability over the years, and perhaps the idea that Hassan was going to restructure the country was the decisive factor.

Question: Why, I wonder, did the King not name Abdallah his successor as soon as he sent the letter to Hassan?

Prof. Susser: I think that the King knew what he was going to do when he came back but that, for various reasons – perhaps he was simply feeling too unwell – he was unable to do things as quickly as he wanted to, or chose to delay the announcement.

Question: How long is the monarchy going to last? What role will Hassan play in the future?

Prof. Susser: I do not know. In 1958 when the Hashemite Monarchy was overthrown in Iraq, many people thought that the days of the King of Jordan were numbered, but the monarch is still very much there.

With regard to Hassan's role, he was trying to introduce new patterns of political behavior in Jordan but that, perhaps, is what cost him the throne. The Jordanian constitution has a place of prominence for political parties, for free press, for free organizations, etc., and is a very liberal constitution, but it is one that is undoubtedly based on the monarchy. Jordan's monarchy will never democratize itself completely because the rules are set by the king and any democratization goes from the top down. It is a question of achieving a balance