

Jordan

Issues and Perspectives

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Jordan sees no room for double standards in post-Gulf war era (continued from page 1)

dispute and assure the legitimate rights of all concerned parties."

Jordan feels the participation of the chosen representatives of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), is essential, because any other representative fostered or chosen by outside parties would not be authentic, and would not have the credibility to negotiate a genuine peace. "The Palestinians and the PLO should not be judged on where they stood in the Gulf war or on other issues, but rather on the central matter of their established legitimacy in representing Palestinians," officials argue.

In this respect, the PLO is a credible and constructive party because it has repeatedly stressed its willingness to negotiate on the basis of 242 and 338, they say, adding that Jordan will never take the place of the PLO in peace negotiations. In mid-March, His Majesty King Hussein emphasized that "Jordan should not be, cannot be, and will not be a substitute for the Palestinians themselves as the major aggrieved party

prominence" in such an effort.

"The lessons of the Gulf war are fresh in our minds," one senior official said in an interview, "and the main lesson is that when the world really wants to implement U.N. resolutions it can do so despite any local or regional opposition. If we are hypocritical in applying resolutions related to the Palestine issue and to the Gulf, the United Nations itself would suffer significant long-term damage in Arab and Third World eyes."

Comprehensive, regional approach required

Jordan also believes that diplomatic efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict are the urgent first step in dealing with a range of other issues which have a direct bearing on stability and security in the Middle East. As Crown Prince Hassan said in a recent interview: "Security is a broad term, and I think it is based on political, economic and social satisfaction, as well as on a military ability to interdict inter-state conflict."

Jordan sees no room for double standards in post-Gulf war era

International legitimacy, U.N. resolutions must be core of M.E. peace efforts

The next year provides a genuine opportunity to achieve long-term peace and stability in the Middle East, according to Jordanian officials -- but only if we draw the appropriate lessons from the Gulf war. The main lesson is that regional political disputes could be resolved on the basis of international legitimacy and U.N. resolutions, if we resist the temptation to engage in power politics and to form expedient political axes.

This is the dominant view among Jordanian officials, members of parliament and political analysts, who stress that the seven months of political confrontation and war in the Gulf have created "new political expectations" which cannot be easily evaded. Foremost among these, officials say, is the need for the United States and the U.N. Security Council to implement U.N. resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict with the same determination and vehemence which were shown in implementing resolutions on the Gulf crisis.

Jordan was quick to acknowledge the positive tone and content of President George Bush's March 6 comments about the need to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute on the basis of U.N. Security

Council resolutions 242 and 338, whose central principle is the exchange of occupied land for peace. Several Jordanian officials, including the Crown Prince and the foreign minister, welcomed Washington's recognition that the rights of all concerned, including Palestinian political rights, should be achieved through international legitimacy, as represented by U.N. resolutions.

Foreign Minister Taher Masri told the Lower House of Parliament in mid-March: "We welcome this American commitment and consider it a positive step on the road to solving the Palestinian problem and applying international legitimacy, and an important step towards reaching a just, durable and comprehensive solution in the region."

However, Jordanian officials stress that the mechanism to implement the relevant U.N. resolutions should be carefully agreed upon in order to assure that the intent of resolutions 242 and 338 is achieved. They warn about trying to move ahead on the basis of expedient new axes in the region which may try to separate the core Palestine issue from the wider Arab-Israeli conflict which it has spawned, such as a regional conference, confidence-building measures, or a "two-track" approach comprising simultaneous Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli talks. Ideas that conform to the resolution of the conflict on the basis of U.N. resolutions are acceptable, in Amman's eyes, and the five permanent members of the Security Council are the ideal party to provide a reference point for such international legitimacy.

Accordingly, Jordan believes an international conference under the aegis of the



Foreign Minister Taher Masri

five permanent council members is the best forum for achieving a genuine and durable peace. An international conference called by the five permanent council members would provide the negotiating parties with a clear and resolute reference for their talks. Jordan believes the influence and weight of the permanent members are required to prod a peace process, otherwise regional power disparities would keep the area in its present deadlock for many years.

"The international conference suggested before 1990 may have reflected the reality of the Cold War, when each superpower backed a different side in the Arab-Israeli conflict," explains one senior official closely involved in Jordan's diplomatic strategy. "The international conference proposal today is different, and more feasible, because the international political environment has changed. Now, having worked together effectively and collectively in the Gulf, the five permanent Security Council members can provide the legal reference point for talks to resolve the Arab-Israeli
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