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JORDAN

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in western Asia is one of nine sovereign Arab States with which the United States has direct relations.¹ Geographically it occupies a central position in that vast area from the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea known as the Middle East—the security of which is important to the interests of the free world and the United States.

Jordan, completely independent since 1948, is about the size of Indiana. Most of its more than one million inhabitants are Arab-speaking Moslems, but there is a long-established Christian minority among them.

The Government is a constitutional monarchy with an appointed Senate and elected House of Deputies. Young King Hussein, the present head of state, is the grandson of modern Jordan's first monarch, King Abdullah, who was assassinated 4 years ago while emerging from prayer in a Jerusalem mosque.

The greater part of the country stretches east and south from the Jordan River Valley in a wide V, taking in the entire former British Mandate of Transjordan. West of the Jordan River, the Kingdom encompasses a significant portion of the Holy Land. Under control of Jordan, but desig-

nated by resolution of the United Nations for internationalization, is a portion of Jerusalem and its environs, including all of the Old City and Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus.

This land with its rich tradition has for centuries provided an important link in the trade between the East and the West. Other ties with Europe go back to the spread of Christianity. Formerly a part of the Ottoman Empire (1516-1918), the country made substantial progress toward independence and modernization with British help.

Jordan is bounded on the north by Syria, on the east and south by Iraq and Saudi Arabia—all Arab countries and members of the Arab League, together with Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, and Yemen. On the west Jordan is bounded by Israel, still unrecognized by any of the Arab States.

The exact location of the Jordan-Israel border has not been finally determined. The present demarcation line, approximately 350 miles long, was established by the Armistice Agreement of 1949. There has been no permanent settlement between Arab and Israeli forces since the partition of Palestine, and this demarcation line remains sealed against virtually all traffic. For over 5 years there has been an armistice, but there has been no trade, no transit of goods, no diplomatic exchange with Israel. Continual border disputes

¹ The others are Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Muscat and Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. There is no exchange of missions with Muscat, but treaty relations have existed since 1833.

and other difficulties complicate Jordan's present position—just as they threaten the security and progress of the area as a whole.

U. S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Poverty is widespread among the peoples of the Middle East. The United States would like to see them achieve the greatest degree of political and economic self-development. In addition, free-world security is the sum of the political and economic health of the free nations—including the entire key area of the Middle East.

The unresolved internal quarrel between the Arab countries and Israel is weakening the area to the detriment of the security of the free world. This is among the chief reasons why the United States hopes for a definitive and just peace between the parties.

In the development of our relations with the newly independent nations in this part of the world, we have pursued, and will continue to pursue, a policy of impartial friendship. We are deeply cognizant of the great intellectual and spiritual debt which Western civilization owes to western Asia.

More specifically our basic objectives are to promote and encourage:

Peace among the states themselves.

Better understanding between the Arab world and the Western nations.

Government stability, maintenance of law and order, and a general rise in living standards.

Growth of democracy, not necessarily in our own pattern, but in a form which recognizes the same basic principle of individual freedom.

Regional defense measures against aggression.

Many problems besetting the new Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are the result of the Palestinian conflict. Open warfare broke out between the Arabs and Israelis on May 15, 1948, immediately following the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine. The United Nations had announced a plan for the partition of the country into separate Arab and Jewish states. Jerusalem and its environs were slated for territorial internationalization.

Many Zionist groups wanted still more territory than the plan proposed. Others of Jewish faith, both in and out of Palestine, voiced objections to partition on the grounds that it was not

necessary to achieve independence as a separate political unit in order to preserve identities that are essentially spiritual. However, most Zionist leaders acquiesced in the plan because it gave them the long-sought opportunity of founding a nation in the area. The Arabs, on the other hand, were unanimous in their opposition; they regarded the establishment of Israel as a threat to the territorial integrity of land that had been inhabited predominantly by Arabs for over a thousand years.

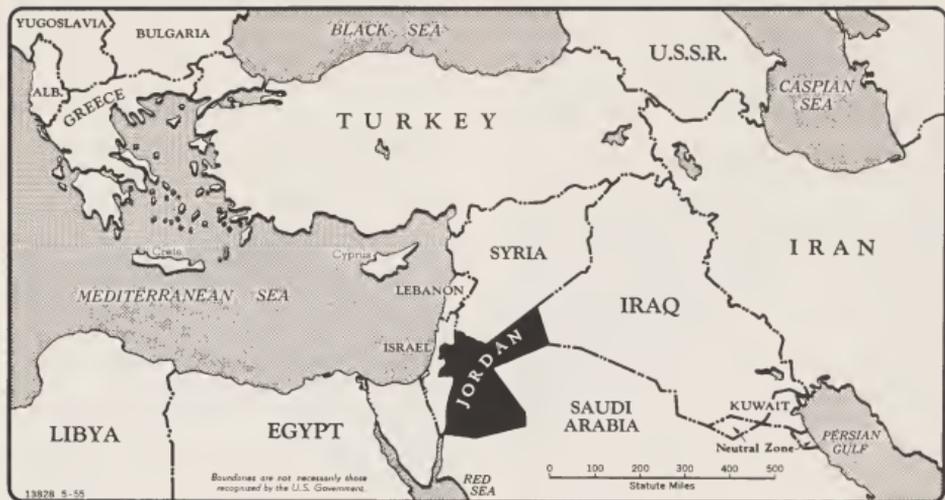
As the deadline for the expiration of the mandate drew near, the British prepared to withdraw their forces. Tensions between the two groups continued to mount. Israel proclaimed its independence on May 14, 1948, and within a few hours units of the Arab Legion together with other Arab forces engaged Israeli troops at many points along the U. N.'s proposed border and in Jerusalem.

The United Nations took action to halt the conflict but months of patient negotiation were necessary to work out mutually acceptable armistice terms. Jordan became the third Arab State to sign an armistice with Israel, following Egypt and Lebanon and preceding Syria. These agreements, which are still in effect, halted the organized fighting. Among other things the agreements provided armistice lines drawn for the most part to separate territory held by the opposing armies, and they set up the U. N. Mixed Armistice Commissions to see that the terms of the armistice were kept.

The task of resolving the larger issues that partition and war left in their wake was assigned to the U. N. Palestine Conciliation Commission. Despite 5 years of effort, this group has been unable to suggest a formula for a lasting peace agreeable to both sides. Consequently, there remain unsettled such serious questions as the future of almost 900,000 Arabs—about half of whom are now in Jordan—who left their homes in Israel during the fighting, the establishment of friendly relations and the resumption of trade, the status of Jerusalem, as well as the location of permanent boundary lines.

JORDAN TODAY

Although there are other Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, in Syria, and along the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip on the Mediterranean coast, nowhere is the problem quite so acute as it is in



Jordan. The plight of many of these unfortunate people was described by Secretary of State Dulles when he visited the area in 1953:

“ . . . They mostly exist in makeshift camps, with few facilities either for health, work, or recreation. Within these camps the inmates rot away, spiritually and physically. Even the Grim Reaper offers no solution, for as the older die, infants are born to inherit their parents’ bitter fate.”

In addition, like other nations in the Middle East, Jordan itself has inherited a legacy of severe economic and social problems. It has few means by which to raise the living standards of its people. Many are without schooling and medical care. In some countries where oil is adding to national wealth, great strides for economic betterment are possible. In Jordan, however, there is a dearth of natural resources, including a scarcity of life-giving water itself.

Moreover, the nation has been faced with the hard task of uniting two distinct geographical sections under a single rule. When the territories now constituting Jordan passed under the protection of Great Britain at the end of the First World War, Transjordan—the country across the river—was put under the leadership of Abdullah, a Hashemite prince from the Arabian Hejaz. After the portions west of the Jordan River and Dead

Sea were united with Transjordan, the entire area became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and in 1949 was recognized as such by the United States.

The territory of Jordan totals about 36,715 square miles. Nearly five-sixths of the land lies east of the Jordan River. A fertile strip 30 miles wide at the Syrian border runs south, tapering off into arid wastes before reaching the Saudi Arabian frontier. Barren hills, mountains, and vast unpopulated desert areas make up the remainder of the area east of the Jordan. West of the river are some 2,165 square miles formerly included in the Palestinian Mandate.

The People

The strong nationalistic feeling which has played so large a part in shaping the modern Middle East has a distinctive Arab flavor in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The people think of themselves as belonging to an Arab nation transcending boundaries. They call their small, British-trained army the Arab Legion. They continue to identify many of their aims and aspirations with those of other Arab peoples. Thus the complexion of the Kingdom results from a series of political events, rather than from an attempt to carve a national boundary around a particular ethnic group.

The East Bank Jordanians are largely descended from Arabian Bedouin tribes. The Palestinians, on the West Bank, are of mixed origin, stemming from heterogeneous groups that settled in and about the Jordan Valley countless generations ago.

No systematic attempt has been made to take an accurate census of the region since the time of Augustus Caesar. General estimates place the population of Jordan at around 1,372,000. Again in round numbers, 400,000 are former Transjordanians, most of whom still live on the East Bank; another 400,000 are West Bank residents who became Jordanians with the annexation of that part of the country; and 100,000 are refugees from Israel who have established themselves in Jordan and are supporting themselves. The remaining 472,000 are other Arab Palestinians who lost their homes in Israel as a result of the conflict in Palestine and are still classed by the United Nations as refugees in need of international assistance.

Excluding the refugees, the greater portion of the people—about 450,000—live in towns; 385,000 are settled villagers, and 65,000 are nomadic. Most of the entire population is dependent on agriculture for a living.

Capital of the Hashemite Kingdom and largest city on the East Bank is Amman, grown in the last 10 years from a modest village to a city of approximately 100,000 people. The old portion of Amman, the ancient Greek city of Philadelphia and before that the stronghold of the biblical Ammonites, includes a "suq" or open-stalled Oriental bazaar. In the new part Amman has a department store, the King's palaces, a number of Government buildings, and many streets of modern homes.

Irbid, As Salt, Al Karak, and At Tafilah, towns of some 20,000 to 50,000 people, are also situated on the East Bank, as are Ma'an, southern terminus of the country's main rail line, and Petra, "the rose red city" of solid rock, once an important caravan trading station. Al'Aqabah, situated on an arm of the Red Sea, is the country's only port. West Bank cities include:

... Hebron (about 25,000), which contains shrines of both Moslems and Jews, where David lived and where Abraham is said to have established his family tomb.

... Bethlehem, where Christian pilgrims come

by thousands to worship at the Church of the Nativity.

... Jerusalem, Holy City of Star, Cross, and Crescent, known to the Arabs as Al Quds.

... Nablus, capital of Samaria, now a center of Arab nationalism.

... Tul Karm, near the Israel border.

... Jericho, moon god city captured by Joshua from the Canaanites.

Jerusalem, with a population of perhaps 100,000 in its Arab sector, and Bethlehem are in a zone slated by United Nations resolution for internationalization.

The overwhelming majority of the people in Jordan are Moslems. Islam is the state religion and Arabic the national language.

Less than a tenth are Christians (including 29,000 of the refugees). These Christians have lived for generations in close association with the holy places or in other centers where the Christian hold was strong, first under Byzantium and later through the Crusades. The Christians are mostly Arabs of the Eastern Orthodox faiths, although there are Roman Catholics and Anglicans among them. The way of life of the Christian Bedouins, of whom there are a few, is scarcely distinguishable from that of Moslem nomads.

Most of the Jews living on the West Bank prior to partition have gone to Israel. There is a small group of Samaritans, numbering no more than 300 today, whose ritual is based on early Hebraic tradition but who split with Judaism before the birth of Christ.

Another important minority is composed of Circassian Moslems whose ancestors emigrated from the Russian Caucasus nearly a century ago.

The Land

Throughout the hilly part of the country the climate is generally Mediterranean, except that the summers are not quite so hot and the winters are cooler. Snow is not unusual in the higher altitudes. The West Bank has a better rainfall than the East. In the lower Jordan Valley, as in the outlying desert regions, rainfall is slight and summer heat intense.

The Jordan River which gives the country its name, together with the Yarmuk River tributary, is the principal stream. Although small as rivers go, the potential of the Jordan-Yarmuk as the

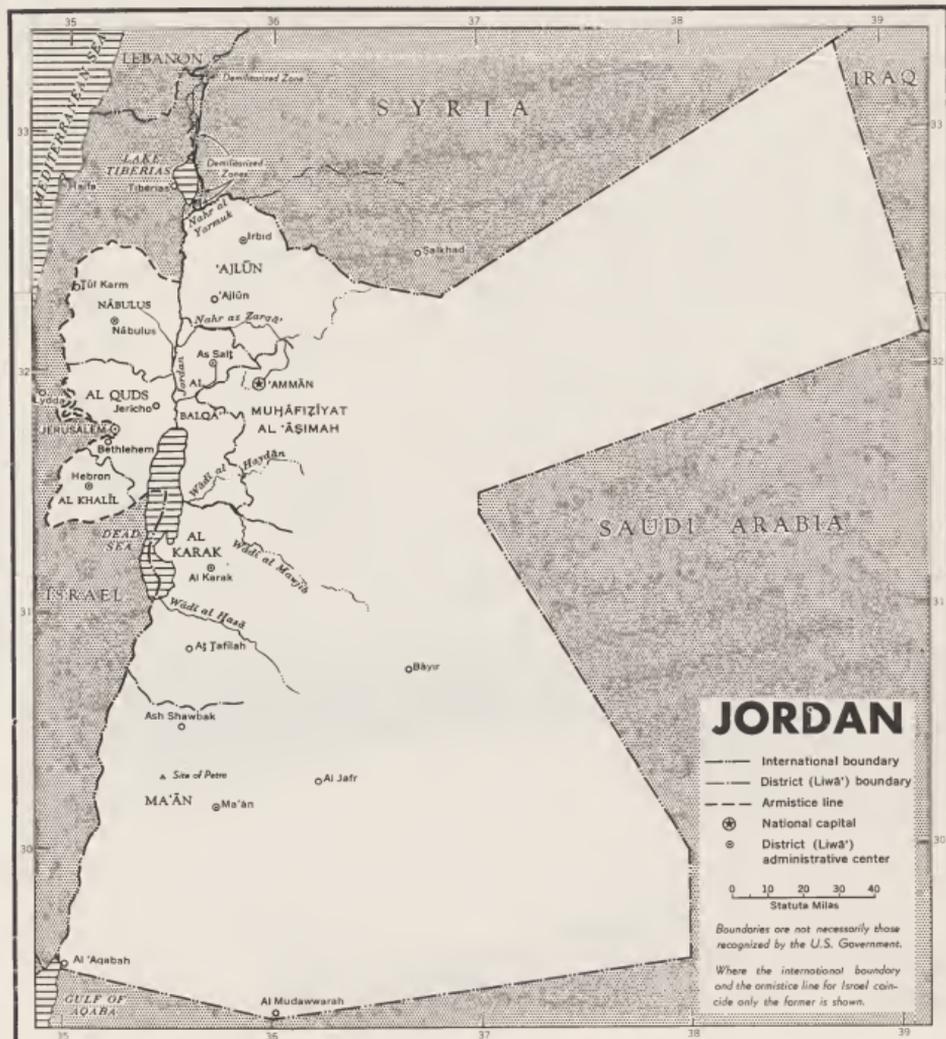
country's only source for much-needed irrigation and hydroelectric power gives it an importance far beyond its size.

Agriculture and Trade

About 80 percent of the arable land of Jordan is under cultivation. The East Bank's fertile

strip, having suffered little from erosion and over-cropping, is in good condition. The West Bank, in contrast, is a severely denuded region. Yet the people living there, driven by desperation to make their stony soil productive, are careful farmers, and some excellent samples of terraced agriculture may be observed in that section.

In some cases the truce line cuts Arab villages



off from lands once tilled by hard-working farmers, forcing them into an existence of idleness and semistarvation. Subsistence farmers on the East Bank have been driven further into poverty by the inflated prices resulting first from war and then from the increase and dislocation of populations.

Jordan's chief crops are wheat, barley, millet, maize, and sesame; beans, tobacco, and animal fodder; figs, grapes, and olives. A small oasis around Jericho is known for its citrus groves. Fresh fruits and vegetables are the only steady export, most of them going to Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. Raw wool is exported only when the world price is high.

Today cereal imports are required for Jordan unless crop yields are especially abundant. Cotton piece goods, sugar, and coffee also figure among the imports, the total value of which far exceeds that of the exports.

In the days of the mandate most of Jordan's

exports and imports went through the port of Haifa, less than 50 miles from the northwest border. Today the costs of transportation have risen, since most of the goods must now be moved farther over land—mainly through Beirut, Lebanon.

The main railroad extends some 280 miles through central Jordan, linking Ma'an in the south with the Syrian capital of Damascus. Originally constructed by the world Moslem community to connect Mecca and Medina with the rest of the Islamic world, it was partially destroyed during the campaigns of Lawrence of Arabia in the First World War, and the part below Ma'an was never rebuilt.

British administration gave the country some 1,400 miles of hardtop roads, and the Jordanian road network is well maintained and being expanded with assistance from the United States and the United Kingdom.

Oil lines passing from Iraq to the coast provide

In the valley of the Jordan where the river flows past barren tableland on its way to the Dead Sea. The adoption of a unified plan for the development of the Jordan-Yarmuk system would lead to maximum use of the area's limited water resources.





Arab refugee women and children lining up to receive food in a camp near Hebron where about 6,000 refugees are now living. Many of these people are given temporary care through the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, but a permanent solution to their plight is one of the unsolved problems of the area.

the country with a transit fee and offer some employment at pumping stations.

Prospects for intensive agricultural development in the Jordan Valley, using waters of the Jordan and Yarmuk for irrigation, are bright; but an agreed division of the waters between Israel and the Arab States, must precede the full

development of this great natural resource. The soil and the climate are good; all that is lacking is water and the economic means to bring it to the land.

Next to farming and herding, the tourist trade holds promise of becoming one of Jordan's most productive activities. Already the country at

tracts thousands of foreign visitors each year. However, the individual tourist is permitted to travel in only one direction between Israel and the shrines of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, with a few exceptions, during the Christmas and Easter seasons, and this restriction has kept down the number of potential foreign tourists.

Jordan has two airfields, at Amman and at Jerusalem, and local service is available between cities in the area. However, international air travel in the region is hampered by national regulations which prevent planes from or to Arab States from using airspace over Israel and which forbid planes previously touching ground in Israel to land in Arab States.

Jordan's chief economic and social problem is unemployment, which is due, in large measure, to its lack of resources. Aside from the refugee population, there are many people out of work. Before the Palestine conflict, many Jordanians, particularly Arabs from Jerusalem, used to find work in Haifa and other Mediterranean ports.

The country has neither coal deposits nor oil and, as far as has been determined, no workable metals. The Dead Sea contains potash and bromine; phosphates are worked at Rosafa, and another deposit has been located near the rail line at Hasa. Processing and transportation difficulties, however, are at present hindering the export of these chemicals.

The Government

Head of the Government of Jordan is the King. Principal authority is vested by the constitution in a National Assembly consisting of a Chamber of Deputies of 40 members elected by the people and a Senate, also of 40 members, appointed by the King. Executive responsibilities are discharged by the Prime Minister, whom the King appoints to head a Council answering to the National Assembly.

Jordan has no political parties in the usual sense. In the last election, in October 1954, candidates supporting the Government's program won a majority of the seats in the Chamber. There is a scattered representation of minority groups, one of which is the Communist "National Front," which won two seats in the last election.

There is little danger of a direct Communist takeover in Jordan. However, when a Communist-controlled minority unites with extreme

nationalist groups, it is able to play upon the dissatisfaction and unrest existing within the country and so delay constructive solutions for Jordan's many problems.

It is interesting to note that Jordan's application for membership in the United Nations has thrice been vetoed by the U. S. S. R.

JORDAN'S TIES ABROAD

Jordan's strongest ties abroad are with Great Britain and with the Arab League.

Under the mandate the country was in large part dependent upon British support. And it is British support today that helps sustain much of Jordan's economy.

Jordan's army, the small but well-equipped Arab Legion, is maintained by British subsidy under the command of a British-born general. A military alliance with Great Britain provides for mutual assistance in the event of war or the threat of war. Great Britain also maintains air units in the country and has full privileges of transit.

The United States, Great Britain, and France joined in a declaration of May 25, 1950, affirming their "unalterable opposition to force or threat of force" by any of the states in the area, or any attempt to violate frontiers or the armistice lines laid down by the 1949 armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab States.

In his lifetime Jordan's first King, Emir Abdullah, worked for closer relationships among the several Arab States, particularly among those countries forming what has been termed the Fertile Crescent. This area, stretching from the head of the Persian Gulf up through Iraq's Tigris-Euphrates Valley to the Mediterranean coast of Syria and Lebanon, takes in Jordan's fertile strip in its final swing.

While it was usually possible for Abdullah to work closely with his relatives in Iraq, his plans were resented in republican Syria and Lebanon. In addition, the Saudis, who had driven the Hashemites out of Arabia when the kingdom of Saudi Arabia was consolidated in 1924, feared a resurgence of Hashemite power in the area.

Egypt, the largest and most powerful member of the Arab League, maintains close relations with Saudi Arabia. Like the latter, it has pursued foreign policies which have operated to discourage

the growth of competing Arab power to the north.

Such conflicts of national interests within the Arab League have created problems in the realization of united action on matters relating to stability and defense of the area as a whole.

Abdullah, however, foresaw that Jordan alone could not be a viable state. He not only sought to strengthen economic ties with his Arab neighbors, but he looked forward to establishing peaceful relations with Israel. His moves in this direction aroused great resentment, especially among the embittered Arab refugees. Abdullah was assassinated in 1951. The country rallied from the blow and today both the East and West Banks are united in their support of the Crown.

PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT

In 1952 Jordan set up a special governmental board to plan and supervise programs for its economic development. These programs depend heavily on foreign assistance. The most substantial help continues to come from Great Britain in the form of interest-free loans, grants, and military subsidies. United States aid for the fiscal years 1951 through 1955 slightly exceeded \$26 million, of which \$13 million was for development projects, about \$11 million for technical assistance, and over \$2 million in the form of wheat for famine relief. The United Nations refugee

A general view of Amman, the capital of Jordan. In the foreground, a refugee family has set up its tent. Legend has it that on the hill at distant right David's captain, Urriah, the Hittite, met his death fighting against the Ammonites.



program, to which the United States is the largest contributor, involves expenditure for food, shelter, health, and education of some \$15 million annually. The American Ford Foundation and other private sources have made limited donations, principally to aid in the much-needed extension and improvement of the school system. There are also several well-established religious charita-

ble organizations, including the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the Lutherans.

The economic needs of the country call for projects which create work as well as serve long-range development plans. Consequently, the Development Board has undertaken such work as the extension of roads, modernization of existing irrigation systems, reforestation, sanitary projects

Small quantities of water are drawn to the surface by means of this crude wooden windlass. It is probably the only watering place for miles around in this arid stretch of Jordan.



in overcrowded settlements, improvement of port facilities at Al'Aqabah, and establishment of model farms and agricultural research centers. Further plans of the board call for loans to rebuild destitute frontier villages, to expand activities of various cooperative societies, and to stimulate local crafts and industries in the Arab sector of Jerusalem.

United States technical assistance experts work closely with the Development Board on these and other projects—in the fields of health, education, water conservation, and the tourist trade.

From the first the Jordan Government has shown a willingness to accept the refugees as brothers, granting them citizenship and cooperating in plans for their rehabilitation. While many cling passionately to claims for repatriation, experienced observers have said that most of the refugees would actually prefer to stay in Jordan provided they could have adequate compensation for abandoned lands and property and aid in getting a fresh start. However, until more arable land can be made available, it is doubtful if Jordan can absorb these refugees. Jordan's great hope lies in irrigation development from the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers.

Sharing the Waters of the Jordan

Unified development of the Jordan River system may lead to the irrigation of 125,000 acres of land in the valley alone, providing a direct livelihood there for over 100,000 more people. Jordan power also can be used to establish a number of small industrial plants, thereby absorbing

many more now destitute people in light industries and related trades.

The river and the streams which feed it run through Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, as well as Jordan. In 1953 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, interested in providing work projects and additional land for refugees, asked the American Tennessee Valley Authority to draw up a plan for the full development of the Jordan's resources. With the active support of President Eisenhower, who sent Ambassador Eric Johnston into the area, this proposal became the basis for negotiations with the four countries involved.

Unified development of the Jordan is economically feasible as well as humanely necessary. Total cost of a TVA-type plan for the entire watershed is estimated at about \$120 million. The increased yields of the valley in Jordan alone may easily be worth as much as \$40 million a year. Once a plan is agreed on, many of the refugees can be put to work on Jordan development projects. The United Nations, which has already allocated an initial sum for development surveys, will provide additional funds for construction as soon as agreements can be reached. In less than 3 years after work commences the first families can move to their new land.

Even though the signing of a formal treaty of peace between Jordan and Israel may be a still-distant hope, it now appears possible to solve the problems of Jordan's water needs without such a treaty. In any event, the United States will continue its efforts toward an equitable sharing of the disputed waters and their development for the benefit of the peoples concerned.

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