

JORDAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL: THE SIGNATURE OF JORDAN-ISRAEL PEACE TREATY 1994

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Abstract

After the establishment of Jewish home in Palestine, the relations among Israel and other Arab countries were in tension, moreover with Jordan, a country that shares land border with Israel. During the period after the announcement of independence of Israel in 1948, several Arab-Israeli Wars broke out, and Jordan involved in those wars. The relations between Jordan and Israel was getting worse during and after the wars. But then, in 1994, Jordan signed a peace agreement with Israel. The objective of this research is to analyze Jordan reasons behind the signature of Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty 1994. As the findings, this research proves that the reasons behind the signature of Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty 1994 were the devastating economic condition of Jordan and also the support that came from Jordan citizen to establish the peace and rebuild its economy.

Keywords: Jordan foreign policy, peace agreement, national interest, economic condition, media campaign

Background

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Israel are neighbouring countries located in Middle Eastern area. The area of those countries are separated only by the Jordan River. While Jordan is located on the east bank of Jordan River, the Israel who shared territory with Palestine is located on the west bank of Jordan River. Although their location are close to each other, the relation of both countries were not always in a good path. There were dynamics in their relation since the establishment of Jewish home in Palestine.

The establishment of Jewish home by the Balfour Declaration in Palestine triggered some big events for the surrounding area such as UN Partition Plan 1947, 1948 Arab-Israeli War and also 1967 Arab-Israeli War or as known as Six Days War. Both of the wars involve some Arab countries such as Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. They thought that the Balfour Declaration hurted the previous agreement between Arab countries and The British (i.e McMahon-Hussein Correspondence 1915) in which The British stated the willingness to recognize the independence of the unified Arab state in the Hejaz and the Levant under the rule of the Hashemites.

In May 1948, coalitions of Arab nations (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and other belligerents) invaded the former Palestine territory following the declaration of independence of Israel. Many sides became the belligerent in this conflict such as the former Palestinian mandate by Arab armies from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. Saudi Arabia also sent a formation with Egyptian as their commander. This war known as the first Arab-Israeli War (Sutherland, 2012).

There were three Arab-Israeli War, but Jordan directly involved only in the first Arab-Israeli War, or 1948 War and the the third Arab-Israeli War, or 1967 War. 1967 War lasted only for six days and brought victory for Israel. It was the opposite result of 1948 War where Israel lost the war and lost some of its places at the same time.

The conflicting condition that happened in surrounding area of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is the opposite of Jordan vision. Jordan needs peace and stability in order to survive in the region since Jordan relied on other surrounding countries. The dependance was seen when the Gulf War happened and Jordan was significantly affected.

In 1994, Jordan decided that it was needed to conduct a process of peace negotiations with Israel, and produce what so-called Israel-Jordan peace treaty, or officially “Treaty of Peace Between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan”. The decision of Jordan to make a peace agreement with Israel obviously caused public reaction in the surrounding Arab countries. The peace agreement were considered as a betrayal towards Palestine and the rest of Arab world who fought for Palestine in years before. This research will analyze Jordan reason behind the signature of Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty 1994.

1948 War

1948 War occurred one day after the establishment of the State of Israel, 15 May 1948, and lasted on 10 March 1949. Five coalition of Arab nations which consisted of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan marched troops to invade the newly established state. The Lebanese and Syrian troops attacked the northern part of the region. Syrian troops precisely attacked Tzemach in the north-east. The southern part was attacked by Egyptian army precisely along the Gaza strip and Kfar Darom. Iraqi troops attacked Kibbutz Gesher near the Naharayim Bridge. And Jordanian Legion attacked Jerusalem.

After series of battle and months of war, the conflicting parties, Israel and coalition of five Arab countries, agreed to conduct separate armistice agreement. The armistice agreement was not only for Arab countries that invaded Israel but it also had direct border with Israel. The countries that conducted the armistice agreement were Israel-Egypt, Israel-Syria, Israel-Lebanon, and Israel-Jordan. The other Arab countries who sent troops and invaded Israel that did not have direct border with Israel did not conduct armistice agreement with Israel (Isseroff, 2008).

The armistice agreement between Jordan and Israel was supposed to bring peace into both of them. But in fact, both Jordan and Israel did several violation towards the armistice agreement. Although there are several violations did by both sides, the armistice lines between Israeli forces and Jordanian forces could survive until the 1967 War (United Nations Security Council, 1953).

1967 War

Eventhough the war broke out in the middle of 1967, the root of it was actually there since years before. The relations among Israel and other Arab countries were never really settled in peace since 1948 War. It was proven by the occurence of 1956 War and also the other minor conflicts. The tension grew high again when in 1963 Israel announced their intention of the diversion of the Jordan River (Wolf, 2000).

In the beginning of 1967, the tension was already high. The rise of *fedayeen* was increasing the number of terrors toward Israel. Besides the *fedayeen*, Israel also received number of terrors from Syria. Israeli, at usual, did not stay silent with terrors that approached them. Aside from attacking the village of Samu in the end of 1966, Israel also shot down six MiG 21 fighters which belonged to Syria in Golan Height and Damascus in April 1967. The action taken by Israel successfully made Soviet Union believed that Israel was going to invade Syria (Hart, 2015).

1967 War resulted in the great loss for Jordan. Thus, it was obviously affected Jordanian policy towards Israel at the time. With the change in their policy, Jordan's priority has changed into regaining what had been lost in the war, precisely the West Bank and Jerusalem. But, Jordan faced another problem. The battle of Karame on 1968 had increased the popularity of PLO and Jordan needed to deal with the challenge of managing the PLO's militant factions.

Theory of Foreign Policy Decision-Making

The formulation of foreign policy according to William D. Coplin is affected by three important aspects. They are domestic politics, military and economic capabilities, and international context. First, domestic politics can be understood as internal political dynamic of a state. In domestic politics, there are four types of policy influencers, bureaucratic influencer, partisan influencer, interest influencer, and mass influencer. These policy influencers reciprocally affecting decision maker in formulating foreign policy.

Second, military and economic capabilities. According to the model of foreign policy decision-making, military and economic capabilities of a state could be shaped or affected by the international context. And the last, international context which is international conditions or also believed by Coplin as the result of another states policy which influence or affect the domestic politics and or military and economic capabilities of the state.

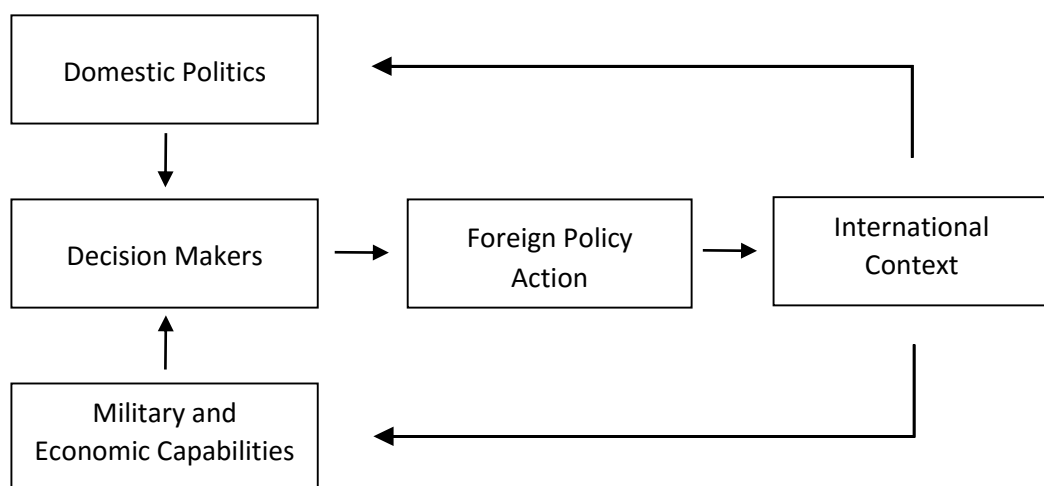


Figure 1. Foreign Policy Decision-Making by William D. Coplin (Coplin, 2003).

Jordan Reasons behind the Signature of Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty 1994

Based on the brief explanation about the concept of national interest and theory of foreign policy decision-making above, the author found several reasons behind the signature of Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty 1994.

1. Devastating Economic Condition of Jordan due to the Gulf War

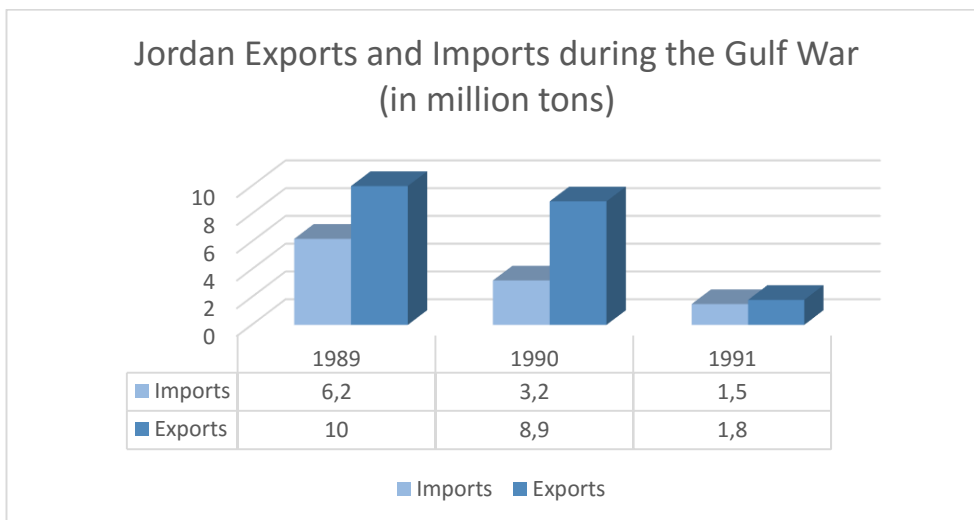
Linking back to the theory of foreign policy decision-making by William D. Coplin, the Gulf War could be defined as one of the important aspect that affect the formulation of the peace treaty which is international context, since Gulf War is international condition and or the product of other states policy which was affected Jordan.

The Gulf War or also known as Operation Desert Storm that happened in 1990-1991 gave Jordan a really big impact although Jordan did not directly involved in the war. It began when Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, accused Kuwait and United Arab Emirates for overproducing their oil. Saddam Hussein called this act as an economic warfare against Iraq. Besides accusing Kuwait and UAE for overproducing their oil, Iraq also accused Kuwait for drilling oil over Kuwait's border into Rumaila oil field which belonged to Iraq. For those accusation, Iraq warned Kuwait of military action.

The Gulf War ended with resolution 686 passed by UNSC. The resolution obliged Iraq to accept sanctions and payment of reparations for war damages. UNSC also continued to press Iraq with resolution 687 about establishing United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to control Iraq's suspected chemical and biological weapon capabilities. Before resolution 686 and 687, UNSC had already

imposed trade embargo for Iraq in resolution 661. The situation of Iraq put Jordan in more devastated situation. Because of the sanctions, Jordan loss Iraq as their biggest trading partner (Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, t.thn.)

The sanctions imposed on Iraq affected Jordan directly since Iraq had been the biggest trading partner of Jordan for the past ten years before the Gulf War broke out. The reciprocal relations between Jordan and Iraq was essential for both parties. During the war between Iraq and Iran in 1980s, it was crystal clear that their reciprocal cooperation was needed by each of them. Jordan’s economy (trade, agriculture, and industry) was all important for Iraq, while for Jordan, cheap oil, grants, and low-interest loans from Iraq really boosted the economic growth of Jordan. So far, Iraq remains the biggest supplier of cheap oil and also the largest market for Jordanian products. And all of them devastated Jordan economy after the sanctions for Iraq came into force.



Source: Data retrieved from <http://www.rubincenter.org/2002/06/swaidan-and-nica-2002-06-07/>

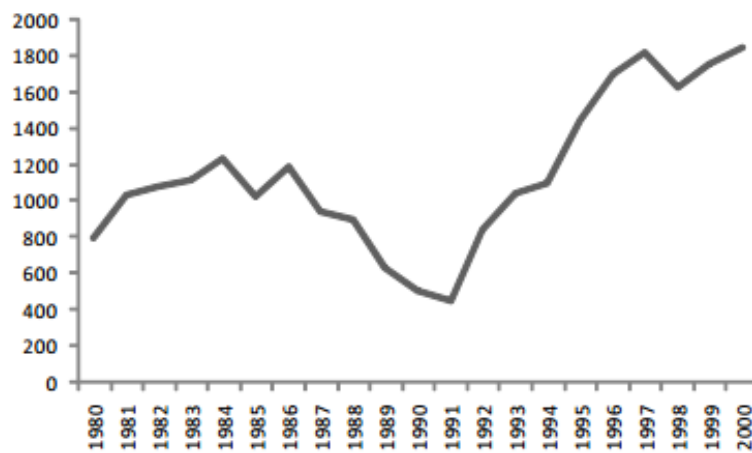
From the chart above, it can be seen that the amount of exports and imports of Jordan was rapidly decreasing during the Gulf War. The Gulf War affected not only Jordan exports and imports but also the number of shipping visits. The amount of ships arrived at Aqaba, the only port of Jordan for trade, decreased from 2583 to 2075 during 1988-1991 (Nica, 2002).

The exports and imports of Jordan was not the only thing affected by the Gulf War. Economic relations with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia was also deteriorated. Jordan position in the Gulf War affected the relations with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Jordan coalition with Iraq resulted in the prohibition of import of Jordanian products imposed by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Both countries also shut Jordan out of the most important Gulf markets. Besides shutting down markets for Jordan products, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other rich Gulf countries cut off the financial support for Jordan. Before the Gulf War, Jordan annually received US \$600 million from rich Gulf countries as financial aid. Again, it was added to the list of Jordan's misery as the effect of Gulf War.

The economic condition of Jordan was getting even worse with the flow of massive refugees fled from Iraq to Jordan during the Gulf War. According to Mudhar Badran, Jordan Prime Minister at the time, there are five types of people who passed through and or returned to Jordan. Two of five types are 30.000 Iraqi refugees who fled Iraq and eventually settled in Jordan, and 1 million refugees during the last five months of 1990. The big number of refugees who fled to Jordan made its economy even worse. Jordan already lost so much in their economy and yet, the government still needed to spend over US \$60 million with UN only

reimbursed US \$12 million, in order to help refugees who fled to Jordan due to the Gulf War (Nica, 2002).

The Gulf War was not only impacted in the flow of refugees coming to Jordan for settlement. The other effect of Gulf War involved Jordanian expatriats who worked in gulf countries. Jordanian expatriats who worked in the gulf countries got expelled as the respond from gulf countries towards Jordan coalition with Iraq. Jordanian expatriats had been contributing in building Jordan economy with the remittances that they sent to Jordan. Thus, the return of Jordanian expatriats obviously decreased the amount of remittances inflow to Jordan.



Source: (Foad, 2009)

The decrease of remittance inflow to Jordan could be seen through the chart above, although it is not merely the inflows of remittance to Jordan from Gulf countries. The chart shows the total inflows of remittance to Jordan, including the remittance from expatriats from gulf countrie. Although the chart does not only show the remittance from gulf countries, it is still shown in the chart that 1991 was the year when Jordan remittances hit the lowest level, and it was due to the Gulf

War that affected the inflow of remittances inflow to Jordan. Official statistics reported that in the mid 1980s Jordan received over US \$1,2 billion remittances every year. But then, due to the Gulf War, remittances decreased significantly to only US \$460 million in 1991.

For all countries affected by the Gulf War besides Kuwait and Iraq, Jordan so far lost the most and suffered from the biggest GNP's decrease. The significant decrease of GNP was the result of some impacts of the Gulf War such as sanctions on Iraq and lost of remittances from expatriates. The highest GNP other than Jordan affected by the Gulf War is around 10%, while Gulf War effect on Jordan's GNP hit the number of around 31%.

Linking the event to the concept of national interest and theory of foreign policy decision-making by William D. Coplin where both of national interest and foreign policy decision-making should be interconnected, it is then obvious that Jordan national interest played significant role in the formulation of the peace treaty. The devastating economy, or in the model of foreign policy decision-making is economic capabilities of Jordan, was affected by the Gulf War as the international context. And according to the theory, economic capabilities that in this case already affected by the international context would influence the decision maker in formulating the foreign policy.

2. Support from Jordan Citizen

In the theory of foreign policy decision-making, besides international context and military economic capabilities, there is also domestic politics that can affect the decision maker in formulating the foreign policy. In the case of Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty 1994, the type of policy influencer that shape the domestic politics of Jordan are first, partisan influencer where government relied on the support of loyalist tribal groups in the parliamentary election to pass the bill of the treaty. Second, mass influencer where the mass media positively blew up the news about the peace treaty in order to frame the public opinion into supporting the decision of the government to sign peace treaty with Israel.

In 1992, Jordanian government officially legalized political parties after beng banned since 1957. After legalized political parties in 1992, the government also changed the electoral system into one man one vote (The National, 2010). This decision was aimed to clear the way for government to pass the bill of peace treaty so it could be easily ratified. This change believed to be a favor for loyalist tribal groups or pro-government groups.

There were ten political groups joined the 1993 parliamentary election. They are Islamic Action Front, Jordan National Alliance Party, Al-Ahd Party, Al-Yakatha Party, Al-Mustakbal Party, Jordan Arab Baath Party, Jordan Arab National Democratic Party, Jordan Communist Party, Jordan Democratic People's Party, and the Independents. However, among those parties, there is only one dominant party, which was Islamic Action Front. Unfortunately, IAF did not support the peace treaty. Thus, the government ensure the support by changing the electoral system

into one man one vote. One man one vote system believed to be a favor for independent candidates. Independent candidates came from tribal groups in Jordan. And people tend to vote candidate based on their tribes. It was proven when the election done and independent candidates won 50 seats from total 80 seats in Jordan parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1993).

Although political groups already knew about the agenda of peace with Israel, the idea of Jordan-Israel peace treaty 1994 massively heard by public through Washington Declaration. Washington Declaration which was signed by King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel on 25 July 1994 was the hallmark of the new phase of relations between Jordan and Israel. The Washington Declaration was the way for Jordan and Israel to finally signed the peace treaty several months after (Sciolino, 1994).

The Washington Declaration triggered reactions from mass media. The shocking decision of Jordanian government created curious atmosphere for the media to report more about the issue. Jordanian government was alarmed by the situation, they thought that they could use the media to gain public support towards the agreement. The strategy of Jordanian government to gain public support was through media campaign with four major arguments:

- a. The peace treaty was the most realistic and best option for Jordan at the moment in order to escape the devastating effect of the Gulf War.
- b. The treaty would give Jordan back the territories they had lost to Israel during the wars and battles in the past.

- c. The treaty would provide multilateral cooperations for Jordan in order to solve some issues such as refugees and economic cooperation.
- d. The treaty would give Jordan much benefits in term of economy, so that they could bounce back from their bad economic condition after the Gulf War (Lucas, 2001).

The mass media campaign seemed to be successfull in framing the public opinion to support the signature of Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty 1994. It was proven by series of public opinion polls held by Center for Strategic Studies University of Jordan. CSS held public opinion polls about the reaction of people around Jordan towards the Washington Declaration and the peace process of Jordan and Israel.

Center for Strategic Studies conducted the public opinion polls on 18-20 August 1994 by doing 1172 interviews to people aged 19 and above in all around Jordan. The result of the polls stated that about 80,2% from the sample surveyed by the CSS supported the Washington Declaration, 14,1% disagreed, and 5,7% were unsure whether to agree or disagree towards the declaration (Center for Strategic Studies University of Jordan, 1994).

Jordanians seemed to get the message of the media campaign that promote about better economic condition for Jordan if they signed the peace agreement with Israel, thus they hoped for the better economic condition of Jordan as the result of the peace treaty (Lucas R. E., 2005). Another polls conducted by the CSS showed that around 82,8% of people surveyed hoped and believed for better economic

condition for Jordan if they signed the peace agreement. The detailed result can be seen in the table below.

Table 1 People Opinion on the Effect of the Peace Agreement towards Jordan

Economic Condition

The economy of the state will get better	82,8%
The economy of the state will stay the same	5,4%
The economy of the state will get worse	6,6%
Do not know	5,2%
	100%

Source: (Center for Strategic Studies University of Jordan, 1994)

King Hussein was well known for his sensitivity to the public opinion. The King was a leader who wanted his rule to be the manifestation of the popular demand (Humaidan, 2013). Thus, the result of polls that showed the support from Jordanian to conduct peace treaty with Israel in order to recover its economic condition, affected King Hussein as the decision maker to realize the popular demand by conducting peace treaty with Israel.

Conclusion

After series of wars and conflicts between Jordan and Israel, Jordan formally conducted peace agreement with Israel in 1994. According to the concept of national interest and the theory of foreign policy decision-making, there were some aspects or reasons behind the decision of Jordan to sign peace agreement with Israel. Jordan itself formulated the peace agreement as an act to achieve its national interest. According to the theory of foreign policy decision-making, domestic politics,

economy and military capabilities, and international context are aspects that can influence the decision maker to formulate foreign policy.

Thus, according to the theory, the first reason of Jordan decision to sign peace agreement with Israel was the devastating economic condition of Jordan as the effect of the Gulf War 1991. As the effect of Gulf War 1991, Jordan lost its biggest trading partner and supplier for cheap oil, Iraq. The UN imposed sanctions and trade embargo for Iraq, thus Jordan exports and imports deteriorated. Jordan exports and imports fell dramatically due to the Gulf War.

In the theory of foreign policy decision-making, besides international context and economy-military capabilities, there were domestic politics. Here, the support from political groups and Jordanian was considered as the domestic politics that affected King Hussein as decision maker in formulating the peace treaty as Jordan foreign policy. As explained before, King Hussein was very sensitive of public opinion. He wanted his rule to be the manifestation of popular demand.

Mass media campaigned and reported positively towards the idea of peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. Intensive campaign of the media shaped the public opinion into supporting the decision of Jordan government to sign peace agreement with Israel. The people got the point of mass media campaign that the peace agreement was the best way for Jordan to recover its economy. The treaty was believed by political groups and the Jordanian to bring economic benefits for Jordan which was very needed at the time. The people agreed to the idea of economic benefits and started to support the government for peace agreement. It was proven by some polling done in order to know the percentage of people who supported the

agreement. It turned out that majority of people surveyed supported the agreement. Thus, the popular demand of the people became the other reason of decision maker to sign peace agreement with Israel.

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