

Black September, 1964-1970

The Leading Role of Egypt's President Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir in Jordan's Civil War

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INTRODUCTION

In September 1970, a total of five planes were hijacked by a radical militant Palestinian group based out of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; over five hundred people were held hostage and, with the detonation of the vacant aircraft, millions of dollars of equipment was destroyed. This brazen attack was not an act of war perpetrated by foreign state actors against an international enemy. Rather, the 1970 hijackings were the climax of a long-running political conflict within the state of Jordan. The ongoing internal aggression which culminated to this explosive event was carried out by a Palestinian movement against what was, by Israeli-Palestinian conflict standards, officially a pro-Palestinian regime. It is therefore significant that an Arab versus Arab civil war took place, as the Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan would have seemed more likely to have been united in their struggle against Israel. Yet, with full-scale conflict initiated by the Palestinian hijackers, a domestic war known as Black September occurred in Jordan.

Palestinians have lived in large numbers in Jordanian territory ever since the 1948 Nakba War with Israel. During this conflict, about seven hundred thousand Palestinian Arabs fled their homes, with the majority moving to the Jordanian controlled West Bank and the Kingdom of Jordan. The people in these territories were conferred citizenship by King Abdullah.¹ Palestinians are what Christopher Dobson calls “the Jews of the Arab world.” As a clever and technical-minded people, they were welcomed into Jordan by King Abdullah in order to become the civil servants and technicians needed to run the country.² Within two decades, however, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) would rise up militarily against the Hashemite Monarchy.

The crescendo to civil war in the Hashemite Kingdom begs the question: Between the

widespread introduction of Palestinian opposition movements in Jordan in 1968 and the civil war in September 1970, what changed in the policies, actions, and/or structures of the Jordanian government and the PLO that instigated such a quick shift in their relationship? In addition, what outside forces influenced Hashemite action or reaction towards the PLO? Determining which factors caused this rivalry to begin relatively benign and then become a full civil war within a short period of time is not only important in understanding the historical events of this Middle Eastern area, but is a question widely applicable to all countries, as nearly all leaders and powers have opposition parties and groups.

In this study, I argue that King Husayn of Jordan (r. 1952-1999) was originally against the PLO movement in Jordan, as its existence was a challenge to Husayn's authority. Yet, Husayn originally felt bound to support the Palestinian movement due to its anti-Israel sentiment, putting him under a powerful constraint to endorse the PLO and assist in its struggle.³ The pressure from the mounting pre-1967 War situation instigated fear within Husayn, motivating him to seek alliance with Egypt. In doing so, the Johnson administration attributed "Husayn's relative youth and history of moderation" as the reason for his being a "naïve participant who...easily [became] manipulated by the elder, devious Nasir of Egypt" (r. 1952-1970).⁴ Next, I argue how the success of the Battle of Karameh as a propaganda tool for the PLO made it difficult for Husayn to openly oppose it, allowing for a growing presence of militant Palestinians on the Jordan River's East Bank. Nasir's support of the PLO and Husayn's attempt to balance with Egypt was the main contributing factor in the growing capabilities of the PLO within Jordan, as both Yasir 'Arafat and King Husayn "relied upon close cooperation with Nasir" for success.⁵ Finally, I argue how Palestinian aggression within Jordan increased over time in reaction to Jordan and Egypt progressing in their relationships with the United States and Israel.

In response to this Palestinian aggression, Husayn's ability and justification to act against the PLO was strengthened as Nasir's grip weakened.

From the beginning, King Husayn was fundamentally opposed to the PLO guerrilla movement. It was the support and influence of Egypt's president, Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir, for the PLO which shaped Husayn's swaying support in order to balance his goals for the PLO with those of Nasir. When the goals or methods of Nasir shifted, Husayn undertook strategic reactionary measures in pursuit of his own goal of eradicating the PLO and restoring order to the Hashemite Kingdom. In this, I argue that it was not the goal of Husayn regarding the PLO that changed over time, but the opportunity to act according to the ebb and flow of Nasir's oscillating support. This reactionary position is significant, as both Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat, the leaders of these opposing sides, felt it necessary to act in relation to the current inclinations of the Egyptian president. And, after the sudden death of Nasir, each side was free to act upon their truer impulses without Egypt's foreign regulation.

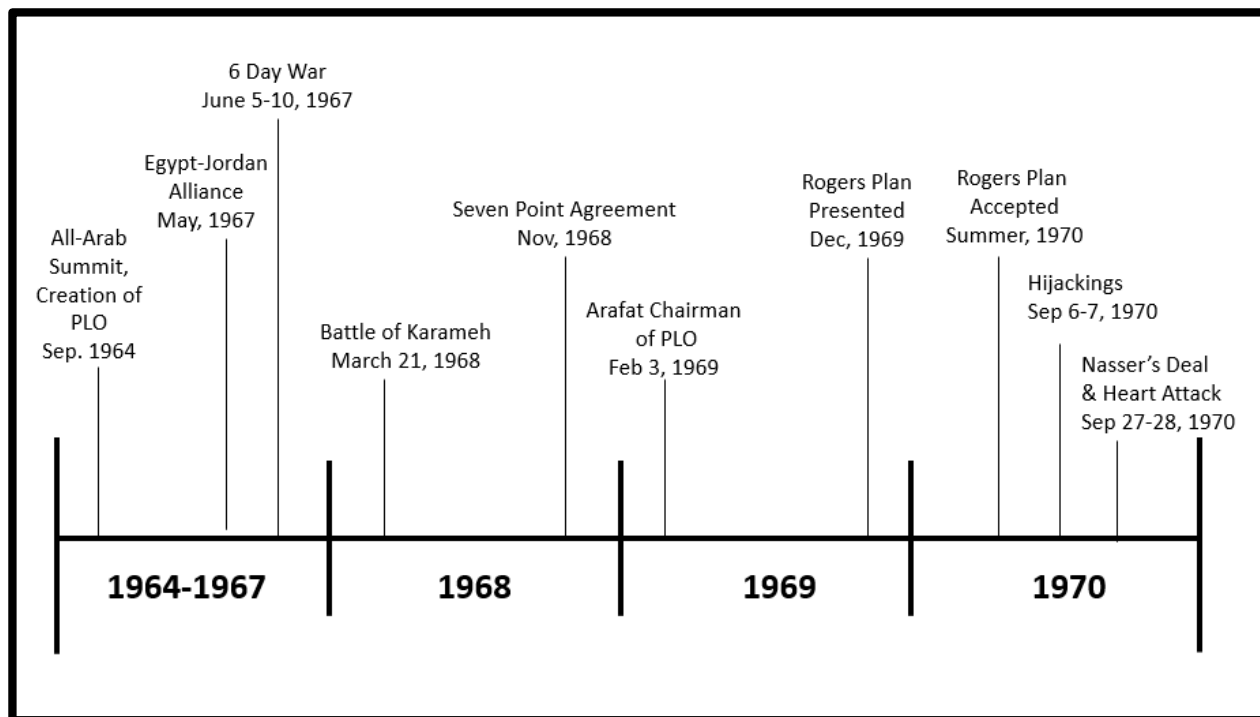
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The events surrounding Black September began in 1964 when an all-Arab Summit initiated the creation of the PLO. This movement sought to achieve the liberation of the Palestinian homeland from Israel, leading up to the Six-Day War in 1967. Fearing the coming war, King Husayn of Jordan initiated an alliance with Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir of Egypt. Unbeknownst to King Husayn at the time, this alliance bound him into a situation which would greatly influence his country. With the considerable influx of Palestinians that migrated to Jordan during the 1967 War, the Palestinian movement achieved growing support, causing King Husayn to fear losing control of his country. In early 1968, a battle at Karamah against Israel

strengthened the Palestinian movement. Israel's goal of destroying a Palestinian fighters' camp located near this border town was successful, yet the resilience of the Palestinian fighters, the high casualties on the Israeli side, and the continued freedom of Yasir 'Arafat became a major recruitment tool for the Palestinians. This battle's lore and prestige also attracted the support of President Nasir for 'Arafat's Palestinian group, Fatah. Nasir's initial draw to the Palestinian movement was due to his failure in the 1967 War. This failure killed all hope for his pan-Arab movement, which sought the unification of the countries in the modern Middle East and North Africa. After the 1967 defeat, Nasir and other Arab leaders believed that an organized army may not be the best vehicle for attack; rather, they sought out guerrilla action and terrorism.⁶ Bolstered now by the support of President Nasir, Fatah and other Palestinian groups successfully entrenched themselves further into the Hashemite Kingdom. Husayn's attempts to work with the Palestinians, like the Seven-Point Agreement aimed to grant some sovereign rights to Palestinians within his kingdom, ultimately backfired, allowing the Palestinians to create a state within a state in Jordan.

In 1969, Yasir 'Arafat became chairman of the PLO, invigorating international Arab support. However, Nasir and Husayn's consideration of accepting a ceasefire agreement with Israel, the US-initiated Rogers Peace Plan, caused harsh retaliation from Palestinian factions who feared that the opportunity to achieve their goal of liberating the Palestinian homeland was quickly shrinking. By the summer of 1970, Nasir had officially accepted the Peace Plan, prompting the extreme action of the Black September plane hijackings and a civil war in Jordan that killed four thousand PLO members and at least three thousand Jordanians.⁷ President Nasir brokered a peace deal between Jordan and the Palestinians on September 27, and suffered a

deadly heart attack on September 28. This caused an immediate failure of the negotiations, with King Husayn pushing the PLO out of Jordan the following year.



Existing theories all recognize the unique situation that was Black September, yet they weigh the events and individuals with contrasting importance. Mamdouh Nofal regards Yasir ‘Arafat as the main “political player” in the rise of this civil war.⁸ Though ‘Arafat was arguably a strong leader and pivotal in the progression of the Palestinian movement, especially towards the induction of civil war violence, his role would have remained insignificant if not for the economic support received by Nasir. Therefore, Nasir was the main instigator. Yet, placing more importance on events than characters, M. Andrew Terrill argues that the Battle of Karameh was the most significant aspect, legitimizing the Palestinian group through the national myth it established.⁹ But it was not until after Nasir’s public acceptance of Fatah that the Palestinian movement was largely legitimized in the wider Arab world.¹⁰ And though Nasir was influenced into taking this step due to the success of the Battle of Karameh, the legitimacy did not come

from the battle itself, but through his publicly announced support. Nigel Ashton's theory argues that King Husayn was the one "pulling the strings" throughout the conflict, focusing his writing on Husayn's interactions with the Palestinians, and mentioning Husayn's relationship with Nasir only in passing.¹¹ Ashton only basically mentions the irreconcilable views of Husayn and Nasir, but clearly finds Nasir's role to be the least influential of the three main players. Though he illustrates Husayn's pursuit of negotiations with the United States and Israel, he downplays the influence of Nasir in inhibiting this pursuit. Viewing Husayn as the main political player and voice of influence in the events of this period fails to demonstrate why, immediately after the death of Nasir, the actions of Husayn and the PLO changed and generated the civil war known as Black September. Therefore, Nasir's influence over both the PLO and Husayn was central to the major events of the conflict.

HUSAYN'S FEAR INITIATES ALLIANCE WITH NASIR (1964 – 1967)

In January 1964, Egyptian President Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir held the first all-Arab summit in Cairo, instructing Ahmad Shukeiri, who was serving as Palestine's representative to the Arab League, to lay the foundation for the Palestinians to fulfill their role in "the liberation of [their] homeland and [their] self-determination."¹² Four months later, 422 Palestinian activists in East Jerusalem established the PLO. The Second Arab summit meeting, held September 1964 in Alexandria, decided to provide the PLO with military support; Egypt supplied money, offered training by Egyptian army instructors, and provided arms from Egyptian arsenals.¹³ Nasir's assistance in breathing life into the PLO was pivotal from the very beginning.

Fatah, another Palestinian liberation movement founded in part by Yasir 'Arafat in 1958, saw the PLO's creation as an instrument designed only to fulfill Nasir's personal agenda.

Shukeiri quickly held meetings with ‘Arafat in order to convince him to establish coordination between the PLO and Fatah; ‘Arafat quickly dismissed the idea. As an attempt to overshadow the PLO, Fatah launched their armed struggle against Israel in early 1965. According to Israeli sources, Palestinian groups conducted 113 sabotage and terrorist attacks by the outbreak of the Six-Day War in June 1967, though Fatah claimed they alone carried out three hundred.¹⁴ As most of these guerrilla operations were launched from Jordan, the East Bank turned into a springboard for terror attacks against Israel. Nasir, who initially disapproved of Fatah, quickly acquired interest in ‘Arafat and his clearly stated objective: “a popular war as the only means of liberating Palestine.”¹⁵ At this time, Fatah was sponsored by the Ba’ath Party in Damascus, which had seized power in Syria in February of 1966. By spring of 1967, Shukeiri continued his attempts to absorb Fatah into Nasir’s PLO, though ‘Arafat was more interested in an eventual takeover. He instead decided to wait it out.

By May 1967, Husayn worried the attacks launched against Israel from Jordanian territory would provide a pretext for Israel to seize the West Bank. In a speech given on June 14, 1966, Husayn declared that “all hopes have vanished for the possibility of cooperation with this organization [the PLO].”¹⁶ In the months before the 1967 War, Husayn became less inclined to seek compromise with the Palestinians, eventually abandoning efforts altogether before the outbreak of the war, as both sides had become too polarized. Husayn was now dealing with two growing conflicts and sought assistance where possible. Despite reassurance from US Ambassador Findley Burns that the United States remained committed to the “territorial integrity of Jordan”, Husayn welcomed Egypt’s mobilization against Israel and moved towards an alliance with Nasir. Nasir immediately accepted the Egyptian-Jordanian Mutual Defense Treaty, signed on May 30, stipulating that Jordan’s forces would be placed under the command of Egyptian

General Abdul Moneim Riad.¹⁷ This action clearly illustrates the aspect of Husayn's personality that would continually get him into domestic and international trouble: his fear of conflict and continual reliance on others to take action. The Johnson administration was outraged that "Husayn had run to Cairo and kissed Nasir on the nose," and this move had far greater implications for Nasir's influence over Jordan than Husayn could have foreseen.¹⁸

The Six-Day War in June 1967 between Israel and the alliance of neighboring Arab states resulted in the crushing defeat of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan; Israel now occupied the West Bank, Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula.¹⁹ Due to the war, three hundred thousand West Bank evacuees added to the already high Palestinian population in Jordan's East Bank. Palestinians now constituted over fifty percent of Jordan's population.²⁰ With the massive reconfiguring of the Hashemite population, Jordan still attempted to maintain its pre-1967 "traditional leadership" in order to avoid any radical changes to the area, but this became impossible under the actions of 'Arafat's growing Fatah movement.²¹ After the war, Ahmad Shukeiri resigned as head of the PLO and was replaced by Yahaya Hamuda, a left-wing member of the executive committee. As Hamuda was essentially a figure with no real power base, Nasir instead seemed more inclined to embrace Fatah as the "frontrunner of the Palestinian national struggle."²² Fatah's continued efforts and connection to Nasir quickly "caught the imagination of Palestinian onlookers."²³ Catching Nasir's initial interest brought a nearly immediate legitimacy to the movement which was recognized and embraced at this time by a growing number of curious Palestinians.

Husayn was now stuck with the *fedayeen*, Palestinian guerrilla groups who were based in Jordan, "who struck at Israel, and Israel itself, which struck back."²⁴ As with before the war, the Jordanian regime's attitude towards the Palestinian guerrilla armed struggle remained antagonistic in the wake of the war. On September 4, 1967, soon after Fatah had resumed

operations outside of the East Bank, King Husayn expressed his opposition to the *fedayeen*, fearing their attacks would increase Israeli retribution.²⁵ By this time, Husayn recognized the importance of seeking a stronger alliance with the United States for the survival of his regime. During his postwar interaction with the United States, he held the premise that Israel was there to stay, and he had no intention or illusion of fighting Israel for the sake of eliminating it.²⁶ Husayn was not convinced that allowing Palestinian organizations to use Jordanian territory to launch anti-Israeli attacks as a means to put pressure on Israel would achieve the return of the West Bank of his kingdom. Husayn wanted to remove the Palestinians by force before they became too strong, but was hesitant due to the possible massacre of civilians and the differing perceptions of such an action to outside nations.²⁷ Yet, for his part, ‘Arafat had no intention of limiting his role to one prescribed by the monarch; he sought to launch a larger conflict against the state of Israel.²⁸

Husayn, ‘Arafat, and Nasir each had different goals regarding Israel and the surrounding territories. Due to Jordan’s large Palestinian population, King Husayn had sought to reconcile Hashemite rule with Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank since the early 1960s, yet, fearing any conflict of loyalty for his Palestinian subjects, his refusal for a “United Kingdom of Palestine and Jordan” within the region generated animosity.²⁹ Nasir and Husayn were both willing to consider accepting the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 on November 22, 1967, which called for the return of occupied territory for peace. Unfortunately for Husayn, Nasir intended to pursue all avenues and simultaneously retained influence over the PLO by supporting ‘Arafat’s guerilla attacks, seeking to acquire every personal benefit possible out of its armed actions to liberate the Palestinian homeland.³⁰

Following the 1967 war, Fatah set up its primary base near the town of Karamah in

Jordan with an attendant refugee camp in the Jordan Valley. From this base, Fatah sought to infiltrate the Israeli-occupied West Bank, which it did with limited success. The negative impact of its presence there reached its peak when an Israeli school bus ran over a mine, killing two teachers and injuring a number of students.³¹ President Johnson immediately wrote to King Husayn, admonishing him to get these “terrorist activities” under control: “I appeal to you for a maximum effort to...maintain an environment in which such violence cannot occur.”³² This message came three hours after Israel began its initial siege in reaction to Fatah’s continual attacks. Husayn had, in fact, attempted to halt Israeli retaliation for Fatah’s action; sending a secret message to Israel by way of the US State Department, he expressed grief at the bombing and asked for information that would help him track down the perpetrators.³³ This effort, though, was fruitless. Israel ignored Husayn’s attempts and instead attacked.

NASIR’S SUPPORT OFFERS PLO INCREASING VICTORIES (1968)

On March 21, 1968, fifteen thousand Israeli troops entered Jordan at the border town of Karameh, facing off against an essentially equal Jordanian force in addition to approximately three hundred Palestinian fighters.³⁴ Despite the limited role of the Palestinian guerrillas in this skirmish, this fifteen hour battle became a pivotal event in creating a new Palestinian political identity.³⁵ The battle created a “central political myth” for the Palestinians and their supporters.³⁶ Leonard Thompson, in his work, *The Political Mythology of Apartheid*, describes a political myth as “a tale told about the past to legitimize or discredit a regime.”³⁷ Following the battle, the Palestinian version of the events became so embedded within the Palestinian movement that the role of the Jordanian troops was “often severely minimized” in order to maximize the role of the Palestinian guerrillas.³⁸ Yasir ‘Arafat himself fled the battle in its early stages, yet he quickly

turned the success into an effective sales pitch for mass recruitment to the Palestinian commandos' efforts. Prior to the battle, Fatah only had about two thousand men within its organization; following the battle, its numbers swelled to over ten thousand fighters by 1970.³⁹

Before the Battle of Karamah, Palestinian defiance to Jordanian authority occurred regularly. After the battle, it became not only much more brazen, but widely supported.⁴⁰ In response to this propaganda success, popular support from Egypt and other Arab governments for the Palestinians put pressure on Husayn to reverse his position and allow the *fedayeen* commando organizations to establish training camps, participate in open recruitment around Jordan, and launch operations into Israeli-controlled territories.⁴¹ Though this success gave the resistance a large boost and King Husayn felt obliged to offer more tolerance and freedom towards the activities of the *fedayeen* in Jordan, this short time would be the only post-Karamah period he would consider leniency towards their efforts.⁴² Yet, this tolerance did not undermine Husayn's overarching goal of maintaining order and direct control of his kingdom; rather, it represents one of many experiences where foreign pressure, especially from Arab countries, forced his hand. As time moved forward, and as impending conflict with the Palestinians grew closer, King Husayn's hands were tied by the efforts and preferences of Nasir.

Nasir's embracement of Fatah as the frontrunner of the Palestinian national struggle led to a meeting in April 1968 with 'Arafat.⁴³ Both men had lofty goals for the meeting, with 'Arafat hoping for "official pan-Arab recognition" of Fatah in order to establish its preeminence, and Nasir hoping to regain much of his lost prestige following his defeat in the Six-Day War.⁴⁴ Nasir not only brought legitimacy to the Fatah movement, but a sense of practicality. Nasir insisted that 'Arafat and Fatah create a realistic plan to define what they could actually achieve in the near future in order to foster greater international support. In contrast to Shukeiri, whose plan

had been to “drive Israel into the sea,” Fatah, under Nasir, asserted that liberating Palestine would not mean expelling or annihilating the entire Jewish population, but rather the destruction of Israel as a political entity and the establishment of a democratic multi-denominational entity in its place.⁴⁵

Yet, this attitude was clearly a propaganda device. The PLO’s insistence that after its success, the citizens of the state of Israel would become citizens in the new Arab Palestine was false. The founding document of the Palestinian National Covenant, which was revised in July 1968 to reflect the more militant motivation of Fatah and the guerrilla organizations, explicitly states that *only* the Jews “who were normally resident in Palestine up to the beginning of the Zionist invasion are Palestinians.”⁴⁶ Despite this, the legitimacy that Nasir’s support brought to the Fatah movement from other Arab states propelled the movement forward. Immediately after his meeting with ‘Arafat, Nasir publicly announced his support for Fatah and his readiness to support and arm the resistance movement. In addition, with Nasir’s blessing, Fatah and other guerrilla groups joined the Palestinian National Council and, within just a few months, Fatah, with its charismatic leader and outspoken support by Nasir, gained control over the system.⁴⁷

The powerful recruitment tool of the Battle of Karamah and the legitimacy added by Nasir’s support made 1968 the “Golden Era” of the Palestinian resistance movement.⁴⁸ However, a commando presence inside a state proved to be a strongly destabilizing political element. For King Husayn, the support that this commando movement had from a fellow Arab regime made the situation even more precarious. In a population already divided between Jordanians and Palestinians, the added PLO presence posed a legitimate, long-term challenge to the Hashemite regime’s existence and the state’s integrity.⁴⁹

It is clear to see the predicament of King Husayn following the Battle of Karamah and

Nasir's support of Fatah. Just prior to these events, on February 19, 1968, Jordan undertook a campaign to eradicate the guerrilla organizations from the East Bank. In retaliation, on that same day, Fatah issued a statement that they would not permit "anyone or any regime" to prevent their anti-Israeli operations.⁵⁰ Attempting to gain wider support, King Husayn said in an interview with the Jordanian News Agency, al-Dustour: "I regard it as a crime that any quarter should send so-called commandos to engage in activities which...can only assist the enemy in his attempts to break the spirit of resistance to the temporary occupation...Inasmuch as I am opposed to such methods, it is my duty – and the duty of every citizen and every Arab – to resist them with all my power."⁵¹ Though the events of Karameh and the support of Nasir might have changed the minds of others, King Husayn still felt the same post-Karameh. Because the Palestinians composed such a large portion of the population, Husayn was determined to control the movement of the commandos and remove their hold over the Palestinian population. Each attack against Israel which was carried out by Fatah provoked "massive Israeli reprisals against Jordanian towns, villages, and vital installations."⁵²

Nasir's connection to Fatah brought more restrictive implications to King Husayn's ability to act within his own state. Nasir's position following the Six-Day War was that only a military conflict could bring about a favorable outcome for the Arabs, which directly contrasted the views of Husayn. In an April 6th meeting with Nasir, Husayn asked Nasir how he intended to use military force to assist Jordan in regaining the West Bank, since Israel, in its current military superiority, "dictated the time and place of military action."⁵³ The military action that Nasir implied was more than just his own state's military power; Fatah was carrying out armed attacks for him. But at the same time, with Husayn pressing for a diplomatic solution and seeking to persuade the Egyptians to participate in direct negotiations with Israel, Nasir finally agreed to a

meeting between Arab and Israeli representatives in New York. Unfortunately, the peace talks reached an impasse when the UN special envoy, Gunnar Jarring, explained that Israel's approval of UN Resolution 242 did not guarantee acceptance of its implementation; rather, Israel saw it as a framework for beginning negotiations. And, when President Johnson refused to provide a written guarantee of its implementation to Husayn, peace talks ceased.⁵⁴

These failed negotiations put Nasir and Husayn in an interesting dilemma. The *fedayeen* continued to gather strength after 1967, especially after the Battle of Karamah, and were becoming a threat to Jordan's objectives. At the same time, Nasir faced a situation where, through Fatah, he sought to regain his reputation which was greatly impacted by his loss in the Six-Day War. Both the Egyptian and the Jordanian governments hoped that the *fedayeen* operations would exert useful pressure on Israel, convincing it to bring desirable concessions to the negotiation table. Yet, Husayn was more convinced that a workable diplomatic settlement with Israel needed to be achieved before it became too late. Nasir, less inclined to seek victory through discussion, relented to the previous attempt of negotiations without advertising the fact that he was doing so to the *fedayeen*. In his rationale, if he was able to achieve an agreement that was acceptable to the goals of the *fedayeen*, he would be a hero; if not, he still had the Fatah movement to pursue his objective.⁵⁵ This two-prong covert technique enacted by Nasir greatly contrasted the efforts of Husayn, who sought continually for the help of the United States in negotiations with Israel. Nasir deployed minimal diplomacy while simultaneously supporting the guerrilla *fedayeen*, justifying its implementation with trying to see which technique would achieve the most desirable outcome.

By November 1968, major clashes between the growing Palestinian guerrillas and the Jordanian monarch began as tension built up between the Palestinians who demanded freedom of

operation within the kingdom⁵⁶ and the military forces that remained loyal to the monarchy.⁵⁷ The PLO's claim of being the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and challenging the legitimacy of Husayn limited the king's options.⁵⁸ Because the PLO's strategy put Husayn in this predicament, he could neither ignore the growing popular support for the *fedayeen* nor could he afford to alienate his own army, as its loyalty was the "guarantor of his throne."⁵⁹ It became important for Husayn to close the divide between his throne and the Palestinians. As such, he stressed that "Palestinians and Jordanians were united in the struggle against Israel" and offered concessions towards the Palestinians.⁶⁰

This same month, Husayn offered a seven-point agreement between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the PLO, which both sides signed. Through this action, Husayn was attempting to let the Palestinians work freely. With a circulating slogan of "no victor and no vanquished," Husayn unintentionally coddled the Palestinian mindset; this, in turn, led to them essentially creating a state within a state.⁶¹ The agreement determined that the Palestinian guerrilla movements were forbidden to walk around cities armed and in uniform, to stop and search civilians, and to compete with the Jordanian Army for recruits. Additionally, they were required to carry identification papers and have Jordanian license plates. Finally, it said that all disputes between Palestinian organizations and the Jordanian government must be settled in a joint council. Yet, Husayn's attempt with this plan, which sought to impose limitations on the organization while still granting it rights, had the opposite effect. Many of the Palestinian organizations took on more extreme recruiting and tactical means in order to attract new recruits under these newly imposed conditions. And though 'Arafat's Fatah movement was distinct within the PLO, a lack of official central authority in the many Palestinian organizations caused a continual splintering of groups, often with each trying to become more radical than the rest in

order to acquire a larger support base.

In his book, *Arafat's War*, Efraim Karsh says that “whenever the PLO has managed to gain a firm foothold in an Arab state, it is only a matter of time before Arafat’s calling cards of violence, destruction, and death follow.”⁶² After this unsuccessful attempt to curb Palestinian power, which only increased Palestinian separation from the Hashemite Kingdom, the road to civil war took on an accelerated pace. By the end of 1968, the Palestinian organizations represented “a political force parallel to that of the Hashemite monarchy.”⁶³

NASIR’S MOVE TOWARDS COMPROMISE INSTIGATES PLO EXTREMISM (1969)

The *fedayeen* presence was bound to become a contentious domestic issue, especially as a result of the growing strength of Palestinian resistance after 1968 and the legitimate fears of King Husayn regarding the implications of guerrilla activity at Jordan’s border.⁶⁴ As the presence and power of the *fedayeen* grew, they established a “state within a state” in Jordan, creating autonomous governmental institutions in military, political, and social spheres. The Palestinians set up their own police forces, courts, and roadblocks. In addition, they levied illegal taxes, arrested and punished people, and often roamed the streets of Amman attacking soldiers and policemen. Dubbing the Wahadat refugee camp near Amman as the Republic of Palestine, the Palestinian flag above its entrance illustrated just how strong the *fedayeen* had become. Entire areas were now inaccessible to Jordanian authorities.⁶⁵

During the Golden Era of the Palestinian movement from 1968 to the end of 1969, no fewer than five hundred violent clashes occurred between the Palestinian guerrillas and the Jordanian army and security forces. Palestinians kidnapped unfriendly Jordanian journalists and Arab diplomats, attacked government institutions, and publicly “insulted the Jordanian flag” in

front of Jordanian subjects. Crime and thuggish practices flourished; acts of rape, vandalism, and theft were common. Stories such as “the *fedayeen* kill[ing] a [Jordanian] soldier, behead[ing] him, and play[ing] soccer with his head in the area where he used to live” were not uncommon.⁶⁶ This period of internal conflict was furthermore threatening to Husayn, as the external operations launched against Israel always increased the risk of international war.

It is important to note that King Husayn “in his heart of hearts wanted a compromise with Israel.”⁶⁷ He understood the many risks and consequences involved in the inter-state conflict. As shown through Husayn’s previous attempts at negotiations, Nasir’s Egypt continually stole the show, dictating what would be allowed. As Nasir tightened his grip around Jordanian internal matters due to his support of Fatah and organizations in the PLO, his dictates regarding the responses of the Hashemite monarchy to the Palestinian movements would play a key role. In fact, it seems that the ensuing chaos within Jordan and the level of autonomy the Palestinians were able to reach could almost entirely be attributed to Nasir’s support of ‘Arafat. In order to try and contain the Palestinians within the limited options given to him, and potentially incite them to support Jordanian negotiations with Israel, Husayn offered to grant the Palestinians local autonomy of the West Bank after it was returned to Jordanian control.⁶⁸ These efforts proved unsuccessful, as the guerrilla movements continued to place obstacles in the way of peaceful solutions. However, major disorder occurred only after Nasir’s eventual movement away from supporting the Palestinians and his acceptance of a future peace agreement.

On February 3, 1969, Yasir ‘Arafat became the third chairman of the PLO’s executive committee, replacing Yahaya Hamuda.⁶⁹ This fifth session of the Palestinian National Council was held in Cairo in the presence of Nasir. ‘Arafat’s election to this office initiated a new invigoration in the Palestinian movement.⁷⁰ The following June, the PLO announced its intention

to carry out a “liberation tax” on Palestinians throughout the world, and several Arab governments even cooperated by imposing the collection of the tax on all the Palestinians employed within their countries, demonstrating the increased legitimacy the Palestinians had achieved throughout the Arab nations.⁷¹ Together, ‘Arafat and Nasir led this attempt to reorganize the PLO. However, these efforts did not last long. Despite the reorganization attempts, the PLO was continually plagued with internal disputes and inter-organizational rivalries. It was this same Arab factionalism within the PLO that had made the enforcement and accountability of the Seven-Point Agreement impossible to control between the Hashemite Kingdom and the *fedayeen*. Now, the PLO internal rivalries created new issues. Fatah was seen as the stable faction free of internal bickering; yet, the negative actions of the other organization members weakened the overall movement. Achieving cooperation within the PLO’s factions was vital in achieving not only legitimacy, but physical strength and large scale capability.

The introduction of the Rogers Plan at the conclusion of 1969 led to drastic fragmentation within all parties. The plan, proposed on December 9, 1969 by United States Secretary of State William P. Rogers, sought to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and the ongoing War of Attrition which had continued since the Six-Day War in 1967. In a speech given at an Adult Education Conference in Washington, Rogers stated that “the United States decided it had a responsibility to play a direct role in seeking a solution” to these conflicts and that “[its] policy is and will continue to be a balanced one” due to “friendly ties with both Arabs and Israelis.” The language of the plan called for “withdrawal from occupied territories, the non-acquisition of territory by war, and the establishment of secure and recognized boundaries.”⁷² Though it would not be accepted by Israel and Egypt until June of 1970 in what is sometimes referred to as the second Rogers Plan, the uncertainty the plan’s existence proved to be in the life of the Palestinian

movement plunged it into “the most dangerous crisis in its short history.” Unfortunately for the movement, this also came at the time when, at the peak of its military strength, it was “rent by deep-seated divisions among its main component groups.”⁷³

The reality proved to be that the “new” Palestinians were not immune to the old “Arab ailment” of factionalism.⁷⁴ Though the overall resistance movement always had Fatah as its consistent backbone, constituting much of the most important bloc, the rivalries and disputes which plagued the PLO meant that it could not achieve cooperation from within its own body. The fear of a peaceful compromise, due to the threat it entailed for Palestinians seeking armed conflict with Israel to achieve their goal, initiated more desperate actions. Extreme groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), used tactics including hijackings and bombings against markets, theaters, and airplanes. These violent methods dissatisfied mainstream PLO operations and separated these extreme groups from active participation,⁷⁵ so much so that when the PLO commando groups formed the Palestine Armed Struggle Command, the PFLP was purposely left out.⁷⁶ Once Nasir, through his consideration and eventual acceptance of a peace plan, illustrated that his support could easily swing aside from the PLO in order to serve his own purposes, all hell broke loose within its ranks.

The movement of Nasir away from the PLO’s operations and his acceptance of the peace plan provided Husayn with the opportunity to initiate stricter action towards the PLO. Though Nasir had not entirely abandoned his relationship with the organization, his softening and redirection allowed Husayn the freedom of action he needed. Due to the long-held support of the PLO by Nasir in the years previous, its deeply embedded presence in Jordan would not be removable without drastic action. Though Nasir’s commitment to the PLO had weakened, Husayn’s actions regarding it would still not be independent of Nasir’s influence.

LACK OF NASIR'S SUPPORT PUSHES PLO FACTIONS TO CIVIL WAR (1970)

The beginning of 1970 is best characterized by the disunity and ideological diversity of the organizations within the PLO: "Each commando group continued to carry out its own operations and to put out its own military communiqués." A decline in the credibility of these groups also led to a decline in recruits and overall support: "While a year earlier the *fedayeen* had enjoyed the wholehearted support of almost all social strata, now only the refugee population and the poorer elements in the towns remained loyal to the resistance movement."⁷⁷ The extent of the internal fractioning of the movement excelled when Nasir began to move away from armed resistance towards an acceptance of American peace plans, illustrating Nasir's role as a puppeteer.

In February 1970, King Husayn went to Cairo to meet with President Nasir to get support, or at least approval, to pursue a tougher policy in dealing with the PLO guerrillas: "Abd al-Nasir was willing to use his influence to force the guerrillas to relieve pressure on the Jordanian regime."⁷⁸ When King Husayn returned to Jordan, he issued new regulations requiring the *fedayeen* to carry identification cards, banning carrying weapons, and prohibiting demonstrations. The *fedayeen* reacted sharply, forcing King Husayn to have to cancel these regulations and offer concessions towards the guerrillas. Had Nasir been willing to assist Husayn more in this effort, Husayn may have been more successful in hindering the impending breakdown in Jordan. Yet, Husayn still felt obligated to seek Nasir's permission before initiating any action within his own state.

In the summer of 1970, Nasir accepted the American peace plan, known as the second Rogers Plan, along with its immediate implementation of a ceasefire. The *fedayeen* saw this as a

deliberate act against the sovereignty of Arab states and individuals. Now through this diplomatic avenue, Nasir was certain to oppose any attempts to alter the situation in Jordan, due to the United States' relationship with Jordan. In essence, the Palestinians saw that they had lost the ability to rely on the support of Nasir. The Palestinians feared a definitive peace settlement with Israel, convinced that it would be the final surrender of Palestinian national rights.⁷⁹ As the PLO's current distrust of Nasir was contrasted by its confidence in its strength in Jordan, the PLO decided that it needed to impede the peace settlements at all costs. 'Arafat's Fatah spoke out against Nasir, who responded by closing down PLO broadcasting stations in Cairo and expelling the radical Palestinians from his country.⁸⁰

At first, it is difficult to comprehend how Fatah felt confident making such a drastic reaction towards Nasir, as his support brought the legitimacy and supplies the movement desperately needed. It appears that the role of Nasir, at least to Fatah, was much less significant during this later period. This is further illustrated by an Iraqi delegation coming to Amman in May, promising 'Arafat that if he mounted a coup against the Hashemite government, he would be supported.⁸¹ And though Nasir's support was minimal at this point, it seems clear that the foreign Iraqi power would have not gained the level of interest and confidence in the PLO to make such an offer without the initial legitimacy and growth brought to the movement years earlier by Nasir's stance. Husayn called for a four-power statement of condemnation of this Iraqi offer from the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, which was received. Yet, the confidence of 'Arafat and the members of other PLO factions was still piqued. By August, the *fedayeen* "made no secret" that they sought to seize power in Jordan, with the more extreme PFLP even calling openly for the overthrow of the monarchy.⁸²

During an emergency session of the Palestine National Council on August 27-28, held in

Amman, the PLO could not decide on a unified strategy to achieve its goal. The extreme-left organizations, like the PFLP, sought more immediate and drastic action including the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy.⁸³ However, the majority of the organizations affiliated with the PLO, including Fatah, favored a more “wait-and-see” attitude despite their bitter denunciation of Cairo’s actions.⁸⁴ Both the PLO and the Hashemite government felt forced into positions where they had to act. At the same time the more extreme factions within the PLO were increasing in their terrorist attacks, Husayn and Nasir were getting closer with the United States to brokering a ceasefire agreement in the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition, bringing the two Arab rulers closer to pursuing peace settlements with Israel itself.⁸⁵

Without the full support of Nasir and with the ongoing splits within the PLO movement, it became increasingly impossible for PLO Chairman ‘Arafat to restrain the more extreme actors.⁸⁶ Moderate Palestinian actions were further undercut by the PFLP’s hijacking of four civilian aircraft on September 6; two of the planes were flown to Dawson’s Field, near Zarqa, Jordan, a third was flown to Cairo, and a fourth hijacking attempt happened unsuccessfully on a flight from Amsterdam to New York. On September 9, a fifth plane was hijacked and flown to Dawson’s field. The PFLP held the five hundred hostages, including US and British citizens, as a means of displaying “Husayn’s impotence” to the world.⁸⁷ ‘Arafat did not endorse this, yet without the full support of Nasir, he had to effectively play the middle. The Jordanian army had fifty-five thousand troops and better equipment, while the PLO had a disjointed fifteen thousand fighters with light weapons.⁸⁸ Although Yasir ‘Arafat did not come out openly against Husayn, he also did not attempt to stop the radical organizations. This strategy, though generally effective, did not always work for him; when ‘Arafat did not condemn the hijackings, international protests arose against the Palestinians. Husayn took advantage of this, realizing that

the international community would now be more sympathetic towards strong action against the Palestinian organizations, and that Nasir, who was now working to promote the Rogers Plan, would be less supportive of the PLO.

On September 16, 1970, Husayn declared martial law, announcing that he was setting up a military government in order to restore law, order, and security. Fighting ensued within twenty-four hours as the Jordanian Army surrounded the Palestinian locations of operation. 'Arafat attempted to speak with the king, but this effort was denied.⁸⁹ A new situation emerged in Jordan as Nasir's influence had temporarily weakened for the PLO and King Husayn found the motivation to act quickly and directly. Without Egypt's overshadowing impact, Husayn's goal of eradicating the influence of the PLO could be more readily addressed. Henry Kissinger notes that King Husayn worried that if his government backed down during this crisis, the PLO's weak civilian government would allow for Israel to "feel compelled to seize more territory in Jordan."⁹⁰ At the same time, Israel was actually trying to preserve the "Jordanian Option," whereby it could return control of most of the West Bank territories to Jordan while annexing a portion as part of a peace treaty. In order to do so, Israel needed Husayn to be in control of his country.⁹¹ Therefore, Husayn acted swiftly when presented the opportunity.

Husayn's military government initiated the civil war which raged until September 25 when the warring factions worked out a ceasefire. The Jordanian government only accepted the ceasefire after applied pressure from President Nasir, who stated that "King Husayn and the Palestinian resistance had by necessity to co-exist, since the liquidation of the resistance would have rendered it impossible for King Husayn to rule, while the fall of the throne would have provoked American intervention."⁹² In a secret message to Husayn on September 26, Nasir said, "I want you to know honestly that we will not allow liquidation of the Palestinian

resistance...No one can liquidate it, and instead of fighting the enemy, we will find ourselves involved in an Arab civil war.”⁹³ True to form, Nasir had implanted himself once again in a position to influence Husayn’s rule in Jordan and his relationship with the PLO.

On September 27, a fourteen-point agreement was made in Cairo at a summit between King Husayn and Yasir ‘Arafat calling for a ceasefire. Husayn’s willingness to fly to Cairo for the meeting was courageous, given his current isolation in the Arab world. But, as well as courageous, this move once again demonstrates just how important Nasir was to both sides of this conflict. And, without strong allies at the table, Husayn was forced to accept terms brokered by Nasir which “both Western and Israeli commentators initially judged to be more favorable to Arafat.” This was true because, as well as the ceasefire, it gave the *fedayeen* the advantage in their ability to reenter the city and rebuild their bases.⁹⁴

Nasir’s role clearly favored the Palestinians once again. The united opposition Husayn experienced from the Arab world at the summit in support of the Palestinians clearly distinguished him as the loser in this conflict as of September 27. Yet, on September 28, the day after brokering the deal, Nasir died of a heart attack. Without Nasir, ‘Arafat’s role as the authority head of the PLO was now weakened.⁹⁵ With Nasir’s death, neither Husayn nor the Palestinians wished to carry out the agreement they had signed in Cairo. Husayn wanted all the PLO fighters to leave Jordan.⁹⁶ Therefore, ignoring the deal which would have continued to allow the PLO to have a role in Jordan, King Husayn resumed his campaign against the PLO, continuing the fighting to mid-June 1971 when the PLO was eventually forced to flee Jordan and relocate in southern Lebanon. This was one last gift from Nasir to the PLO from beyond the grave, as he had brokered the Cairo and Melkart Agreements in 1969 regarding the presence of the PLO in Lebanon, establishing a “state within a state” in Lebanon where Palestinian residents

had the right “to join the Palestinian revolution through armed struggle.”⁹⁷

Max Boot describes King Husayn and his troops during this war as “ruthless”, causing so much terror in some of ‘Arafat’s men that they sought refuge in Israel.⁹⁸ Once Husayn was unleashed to deal with the crisis in the manner he deemed most appropriate, without the influence of Nasir to dictate what he could do, swift and successful action was undertaken. This conflict also helped Jordan to achieve a distinct identity, which had been previously overshadowed and challenged by the influence of the Egyptian President and the Palestinian organizations. As well, the action of Husayn against the Palestinian organizations impressed Western powers, including Israel and the United States, with President Nixon sending over \$10 million in aid. By July 1971, Husayn declared the threat to Jordanian sovereignty eradicated.⁹⁹

CONCLUSION

The actions of King Husayn were consistently reactionary, dependent upon the current attitude and relationship of Nasir with the PLO. Husayn’s alliance with Nasir, formed previous to the 1967 War, established not only a partnership, but as Husayn would find out in subsequent years, a leader-subordinate complex which would dictate the future of Husayn’s kingdom. Though Husayn offered concession toward the Palestinian cause following the success of the Battle of Karameh in 1968, his hesitations regarding the PLO’s potential to spark further conflict with Israel and its acquisition of power over sectors of his country remained the same. As time went on, Husayn felt more freely able to react to the PLO as Nasir’s support and relationship to the PLO waned. Likewise, the legitimacy of ‘Arafat’s movement, especially to other Arab countries, was dependent upon Nasir’s support. The Egyptian posture was crucial, and Nasir spent the last days of his life marshalling sufficient pressure on Amman to obtain a ceasefire

which would safeguard the integrity of the *fedayeen* as a political and military factor.¹⁰⁰ This history, too, has clearly not been forgotten. Reflected in the current Syrian refugee crisis, Jordan's policy of "non-admittance of Palestinians" declared in 2013 strongly contrasts the lack of restrictions for Syrian nationals.¹⁰¹

The history of Jordan would be much different without the influence and interference of Nasir. Following the failure of the Seven-Point Agreement in November 1968, Husayn sought to become much more concerted in opposition towards the Palestinian organizations. Yet, his ability to act depended on what Nasir was willing to dictate. Additionally, the process of outside negotiations with the United States and Israel, which Husayn continually sought after, also depended upon Nasir. Without his overarching figure, Husayn's attempts to eradicate the PLO would most likely have begun far before September 1970. Because Husayn was Nasir's acknowledged ally in international diplomacy matters regarding Israel, the overall appearance of this alliance connoted cooperation in pursuit of peace. Yet, the reality was that, to Nasir, Husayn was only another piece on a strategy board of differing techniques, with Nasir often intentionally sabotaging negotiations. Without Nasir's interference, Husayn would have enjoyed a closer relationship with the United States, allowing for more effective negotiations and support. Instead, Harrison Symmes, Ambassador to Jordan from 1967-1970, said that following Husayn's move towards Nasir, senior policymakers referred to Husayn as "that little devil" who "had broken faith with us."¹⁰²

In early 1970, when the heads of Egypt and Jordan worked towards the prospect of a peaceful solution with Israel, the Palestinians accelerated their efforts to deter such a solution. Instead, Palestinian organizations sought a showdown with the Hashemite regime. Without Nasir to delay and build the conflict, this showdown would have happened much sooner when the

Palestinian groups were much smaller, if at all.¹⁰³ Husayn's ultimate victory in the civil war enabled him to consolidate his power in Jordan and focus on the West Bank. During this same time, he was trying to be accepted as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, posing the idea that, without Nasir, Husayn may have had the opportunity to support the PLO.¹⁰⁴ This would have caused the structure of the organization, its leadership, and its methods to potentially look completely different. From its early stages, the PLO was dependent upon the Egyptian leader's support to gain legitimacy and thrive, allowing him to shape much of it. Yet, as Nasir's support waned, the PLO moved on from being an "obsequious pro-Egyptian organization" to something that appeared nothing like the more independent organization of later years.¹⁰⁵

A counterfactual reality where Nasir's influence over the PLO did not exist would have yielded an illegitimate organization with minimal opportunity to act. Almost immediately after the death of Nasir, the significance of the Battle of Karameh was forgotten, and many Palestinians resigned themselves to the idea that they were to be like the Jews, a nation without a country.¹⁰⁶ In this way, Nasir himself seems connected to the major achievements of the PLO, working as the sustaining force for its significance. Interestingly, the PLO was entirely dependent upon outside support for legitimacy. When the influence of Nasir began to dwindle, the Palestinians became desperate for assistance. In May of 1970, the promise that Iraq made to support the Palestinians with the twelve thousand man Iraqi contingent stationed in northern Jordan was ignored.¹⁰⁷ And in the case of Syria, which did come to the PLO's aid by bringing three hundred tanks into the country, it did so only in a camouflaged manner, not committing the government's military to the side of the guerrillas.¹⁰⁸

Almost immediately following the introduction of the Rogers Plan, the plague of Arab

factionalism took its toll on the PLO. The Palestinians' opportunity to liberate their homeland, demonstrably through militaristic means, appeared to be shrinking. Following the perceived betrayal of Nasir to the PLO by pulling support and pursuing peace, Nasir's death immediately moved its cause to secondary importance in the Arab world.¹⁰⁹ The loss of a powerful state supporting its actions caused the PLO to split almost immediately, denigrating the organization into a conflict for power, often hijacked by the more extreme groups. The lack of a powerful, authoritative figurehead who was respected by the wider Arab world initiated the splintering effect, as each smaller group attempted to act in whatever way it deemed most likely to bring success. Had Nasir never supported the PLO or Fatah, this fractioning would have happened much earlier, potentially causing the Palestinian movements to never gain sufficient support or a unified motion. And, as stated previously, even if it had begun to gain traction, Husayn, most likely with the aid of the United States and recognition from Israel, would have been able to quash the PLO much earlier.

One of the greatest failures of Nasir was the fluidity in which he fostered relationships with both 'Arafat and Husayn, especially towards the end of his life. Whereas previously, it had "always been clear on which side of an issue [Nasir's] commitment lay," the convoluted dance which Nasir played with 'Arafat and Husayn led to his eventual demise.¹¹⁰ In fact, the "supreme irony" of Nasir's career was that he spent one of the final acts of his life brokering the deal which shielded "his old enemy Husayn, at the expense of his old clients the Palestinians."¹¹¹ Back and forth movement in any political leader, especially regarding foreign policy issues, is often dangerous and will not only make a constituency nervous, but fellow world leaders as well. Whether relationships exist with these authorities at this time or not, the effect of quick and indiscernible movement is often costly to individual and political goals.

Nasir's self-inflicted necessity of having to maintain some level of control over the PLO and Husayn created a major ambiguity in his own position. He was seen by some in the Arab world as the only hope for the liberation of Palestine from the Zionists, as well as the only Arab leader potentially capable of achieving peace with Israel. Therefore, regarding peace negotiations with Israel, his relationship with Husayn, and his support of PLO actions, Nasir created an impossible situation.¹¹² This put him at a crossroads and, under the strain of the situation, he succumbed to a heart attack the day after the Cairo conference had ended.¹¹³ 'Arafat, as well, had talent when it came to performing a balancing act, which Rashid Khalidi says may have even been 'Arafat's "greatest skill."¹¹⁴ Nasir and 'Arafat could easily justify these constant leaps from one goal and alliance to the next as necessary for combating Arab factionalism and achieving more important goals. Yet in both cases, these individuals exhausted the support and patience of many leaders, Arab and otherwise.

When some of the Palestinian organizations, like the PFLP, decided to act more brashly in the summer of 1970, it was because they realized that Nasir's progression towards negotiations would include the preservation of Husayn's regime in Jordan.¹¹⁵ The PLO recognized the amount of influence that Nasir had in a country outside his own. When a ruler like Husayn loses control of his country and its advancement depends upon the influence of another whose agenda may not be in their favor, only a few outcomes are possible. One outcome is adapting and attempting to work within the new set bounds, reflected by the actions of Husayn who did so by either not recognizing the full leverage Nasir had over his country or by making a conscious choice to concede in order to hopefully maintain support from stronger Western powers. The other outcome is fighting to gain what control you can, as reflected by the PFLP after Nasir began to sever ties with the organization. Though its conflict was with the Jordanian

monarchy, the later actions of the PLO were much more in reaction to a loss of control within the organization and an attempt to gain it back wherever it could, which in this case was in Jordanian territory.

Today, Jordan has the strongest relationship with the United States and Israel of all the Arab countries. Reflecting King Husayn's goals for negotiations to solve conflict, the Jordanian Embassy's webpage from 2016 states "Jordan will continue working with the Obama administration to re-launch the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians with the U.S. continuing to play the lead role."¹¹⁶ Vocal support such as this has played to Jordan's benefit in gaining and maintaining relationships with the United States' administration, as Jordan receives an average of \$650 million a year in foreign aid.¹¹⁷ In 1983, King Husayn issued a statement on the End of Negotiations with the PLO, citing that "Jordan accepted the political option as one of the basic options that may lead to the recovery of Arab territories," but that "a confederal relationship between Jordan and Palestine" is important so that "both Jordanians and Palestinians shall remain one family."¹¹⁸ Yet, relations between the Palestinians and Jordanians in this confederation remain rocky. Between one-third and one-half of the country's population are now of Palestinian descent, yet Palestinians remain highly underrepresented in government, are limited by quota systems for university admissions, and are more likely to be abused as detainees.¹¹⁹ It appears that much of the underlying dissonance between the Jordanians and Palestinians remains strong within the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. But for now, maintaining the status quo of hoping to one day find a solution, as is the status quo for many Middle Eastern conflicts, may be the best version of peace possible. Reflective of Husayn's own reactionary responses, "efforts to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations with a goal of reaching a

‘final solution’ to the Palestinian cause usually raise the tension in Jordanian-Palestinian relations, while that tension declines when negotiations stall.”¹²⁰

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- ¹²⁰ Al-Fdeilat, "il-`alaqat il-`ardinia il-filastiniya: zuwaj yushirr' il-khyana," Al-Assafir, Published March 12, 2014, <http://arabi.assafir.com/Article/2501>.

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