

# MEMO

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## **Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty: A Beacon of Stability, Opportunity and Hope**

Oct. 26 marks the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the 1994 *Treaty of Peace Between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*. After decades of conflict, the historic agreement ushered in a new era of cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbor, resolved border and water disagreements and opened the door to tourism and trade. Since then, Jordan, Israel and the United States have worked closely together to promote regional security, including to reduce recent violence in Jerusalem and maintain the status quo on the Temple Mount. Today, the accord remains indispensable to Israel's security and serves as an important foundation for regional stability and peace.

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### **A Historic Moment in Middle East Relations**

- On Oct. 26, 1994, Jordan and Israel put 46 years of war behind them to sign a bilateral peace treaty, the second between an Arab nation and the Jewish State. King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin met at the Arava border crossing to sign the historic document in the presence of U.S. President Bill Clinton and 4,500 guests.
- Talks between the two countries initially began at the Madrid Conference in 1991, and continued for almost two years before culminating with the signing of the Israeli-Jordan Common Agenda on Sept. 13, 1993. This set the blueprint for the final peace treaty.
- In the agreement, Jordan and Israel settled border and water disputes, promised broad cooperation in trade and tourism, and pledged that neither would allow its territory to be used as a staging area for a third country to stage military strikes against the other.
- The accord opened the door for unprecedented U.S. economic and military assistance to Jordan. This aid allowed Jordan to reinforce its position as a pro-Western country and a strategic U.S. ally. From 1993 to 2014, annual U.S. economic support grew from \$35 million to \$700 million and support for the Jordanian military grew from \$9 million to \$300 million.
- Israelis overwhelmingly supported the agreement. Despite retaliatory rocket attacks by Hezbollah from Lebanon, Israelis took their radios and mobile televisions with them to their bomb shelters to ensure that they would still witness the history signing ceremony.

### **“This is Peace with Dignity, this is Peace with Commitment”**

- In the peace treaty, Jordan and Israel defined their international boundaries including territorial waters and airspace. Israel made substantive concessions, recognizing Jordanian sovereignty over 115 square miles of disputed land in exchange for Jordan agreeing to lease or sell one square mile to Israeli farmers. Both sides declined foreign monitors on their common

border. As King Hussein stated at the signing ceremony, “This is peace with dignity. This is peace with commitment. This is our gift to our peoples and the generations to come.”

- Jordan and Israel agreed that the Temple Mount would remain under Jordanian custodianship. Today, Jordan administers the site and secures worship for Muslims; non-Muslims are allowed on the compound, but barred from prayer or other forms of religious worship.
- The two countries agreed on allocations of water from the Jordan and Yarmouk Rivers and from groundwater in the Arava desert. Israel also agreed to transfer 13.2 billion gallons of water annually from northern Israel to Jordan.
- Peace between Israel and Jordan paved the way for bilateral trade. In 1996, America designated Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) on Jordanian territory that would allow goods co-produced in Jordan and Israel to enter the United States duty free. America designated thirteen such zones between 1996 and 2000, providing employment for tens of thousands of Jordanians and accounting for 90 percent of Jordanian exports to the United States.
- As a result of the agreement, tourism has grown in Jordan. Today, over 200,000 Israelis visit Jordan each year. To meet this demand, 24 flights per week connect Israel’s Ben Gurion and Sde Dov airports with Jordan’s Queen Alia Airport.

### **The Treaty Today: Enduring Cooperation**

- In February 2015, Jordan and Israel agreed to construct a pipeline from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea to counter the latter’s depletion. As part of the agreement, a desalination plant will also be built in the Gulf of Aqaba. This plant will provide at least 21.1 billion gallons of fresh water annually to both Israel and Jordan.
- In April 2015, Israel approved a 15-year \$500 million agreement to supply natural gas from the Tamar field in the Mediterranean Sea to two Jordanian companies. This is in addition to a “nonbinding letter of intent” worth up to \$15 billion signed between the two parties in September 2014 to supply Jordan with natural gas from the larger Leviathan field.
- Despite ongoing tensions over the Temple Mount and calls from Jordanians to cancel the peace treaty, the two countries have remained committed to the agreement. In 2014, faced with such demands, Jordanian Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour reasserted Jordan’s commitment to peace and to the treaty.
- On Oct. 24, 2015, in response to the current violence in Jerusalem, Jordan and Israel agreed on steps to defuse tensions surrounding the Temple Mount. These include the installation of 24-hour surveillance cameras on the holy site and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issuing a statement once again reaffirming Israel’s commitment to maintaining the status quo.
- The United States should maintain its strong support for the treaty and continue to support Israel and Jordan as they address shared security threats, promote regional stability, pursue greater economic and political cooperation, and work for enduring peace.

