
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

THE INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

IMES CAPSTONE PAPER SERIES

JORDAN'S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY
&
US-JORDANIAN COOPERATION

DALIA BSEISO
CHELSI DILDINE

MAY 2010

THE INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

COPYRIGHT OF THE AUTHORS, 2010

Jordan's Counterterrorism Strategy & U.S.-Jordanian Cooperation

With God's blessing, we are confident that we are moving in the right direction. I place the security of my country and my people before my own personal security. We fear no one and no one intimidates us. Our security apparatuses are astutely aware. They are well qualified and well trained, and work tirelessly to ensure the security of Jordan and its people. We are proud of them, and our people know very well that there are those who wish to undermine and weaken our country. The plans of these terrorist parties and groups have been exposed, and their conspiracies thwarted due to the strength of our internal front [and] the loyalty of Jordanians to their country and their nation. We are proud of the brave Jordanian stance and the ability of Jordanians to confront terrorist attempts that have sought to frighten secure citizens.

-- King Abdullah II

Effective Counterterrorism and a Strong Partnership

The General Intelligence Department (GID) of Jordan is considered one of the most effective intelligence organizations in the Middle East. Commonly known as the Mukhabarat, the GID was established in 1964 and has cultivated a name for itself through its work both within Jordan and abroad. The GID has forestalled or prevented various plans to disrupt the governments of King Abdullah II and his father, King Hussein, and keeps the government informed on opposition groups within Jordan. Within the last decade, however, the GID has become especially valued by the Jordanian monarch and by the United States for its highly regarded abilities in counterterrorism. GID agents can and do infiltrate terrorist organizations, cultivate expansive source networks, utilize decades of experience, and cooperate extensively with the US, making them an invaluable partner.

Jordan's much-valued counterterrorism strategy consists of intelligence, security training, financial legislation, treaties and conventions, legal actions, and media.¹

Furthermore, Jordan rigorously pursues a strategy of religious de-radicalization,

¹ "Jordan and Terrorism." *General Intelligence Department Website*. Accessed May 5, 2010. <<http://www.gid.gov.jo/en/terrorism.html>>.

promoting moderate religious views and practices and actively teaching peaceful Islam to the religious extremists who find themselves within Jordan's detention system.

Jordanian-US cooperation in striving to reach counterterrorism goals is not only essential to the funding, equipping, and training of the Jordanians, but is also essential to the US in regards to information-sharing, training, and on-the-ground cooperation.

According to Juan Carlos Zarate, former deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser for combating terrorism from 2005 to 2009, "The American-Jordanian counterterrorism relationship has always been based on the fundamental perception of common enemies – namely, violent Islamic extremism – that threaten both countries and stability in the Levant. There are few relationships that are as strong, multifaceted, and important to the United States." The extent of cooperation and the value of the US-Jordanian relationship, however, is a double-edged sword. It facilitates high security performances from both parties, but also increases the security threats for Jordan. The relationship between the US and Jordan is unique in that it produces high-caliber counterterrorism organizations, but it is also unique in the tenuous nature of its exposure to the public eye.

The National Security Threat of Terrorism

Although terrorism has become a primary focus of US national security and international media only within the last decade, the warfare tactic of terrorism has been utilized for centuries. Generally a tactic used by the weaker of two opponents, terrorism can multiply the impact of a movement's violent efforts by, as its name implies, spreading fear and terror among its target population. Although each institution and

scholar who focuses on the issue of terrorism has a slightly different definition, in basic terms, terrorism is an act that deliberately instills and utilizes fear within a civilian target through the use of violence or the threat of the use of violence for the purpose of obtaining a political demand.² Through the fear created by their violence or threats of violence, terrorists strive to increase their power, influence, and control in order to bring about changes that they otherwise do not have the ability to control.

Counterterrorism to Protect National Interests

Logically, counterterrorism is the effort to detect, disrupt, and destroy terrorist threats. Counterterrorism efforts span a broad range of activities, most visibly, utilization of police and military power in order to protect the homeland by seeking out and destroying terrorists. Just as valuable within counterterrorism operations, however, are the judicial processes that limit the abilities of terrorist sponsors or supporters to effectively deliver assistance. Also, media censorship and propaganda can be utilized to reduce the recruitment abilities of terrorist organizations, and information-dispersal can inform the public about terrorists and terrorism threats in order to solicit the aid of an aware population. Financial support of terrorist groups can be choked off or tracked in order to discover who is involved in a terrorism threat or to isolate a terrorist organization from its monetary backing. And, of course, surveillance is an essential part of a counterterrorism effort, monitoring, researching, and assessing potential terrorist threats.

Terrorist Threats to Jordan and the United States

² Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998. pg 40.

Jordan's location and history have made it an especially valuable security partner to the US but have also contributed to it being especially at risk as a target of many terrorist organizations. Furthermore, Jordan's partnership with the United States amplifies its danger from terrorist groups that resent the relationship.

Bordering Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Syria, and Saudi Arabia during an era of prolific international terrorism has figured largely in Jordan's counterterrorism burden. For example, throughout the US war in Iraq, Jordan has intercepted potential insurgents trying to enter Iraq through the Jordanian border. Its security forces have imprisoned people trying to recruit foreign fighters for the insurgency in Iraq and who were planning actions that would have endangered Jordanian security. Jordan also has convicted men of storing weapons for Hamas and Al-Qaeda within Jordanian territory.³

Most recently, a roadside bomb – the first to be used in Jordan – targeted an Israeli Embassy convoy traveling from Amman to Israel. Although the method of attack was new for within Jordan's borders, the intention has been problematic for decades. In addition to the targeting of foreigners on Jordanian soil, Jordan has suffered several losses through assassinations of Jordanians. King Abdullah bin al-Hussein I was assassinated by a radical Palestinian in 1951; Prime Minister Haza'a al-Majali and 10 other senior officials of the Jordanian government were killed in a bomb attack in 1960; and Prime Minister Wasfi al-Tal was assassinated by the Black September unit of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1971. In 2005, Jordan suffered its most destructive terrorist attack coordinated by al-Qaeda's Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Three hotels were hit

³ "Country Reports: Middle East and North Africa Overview." *Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism*. April 30, 2009. <<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122433.htm>>.

by coordinated bomb attacks, killing 57 people and wounding over 100, many of whom were part of a wedding party at the Radisson Hotel.

Losses have been great, but the successes claimed by Jordan's counterterrorism efforts speak to the true extent of the danger that terrorism poses to the Kingdom and to the skill and experience of Jordan's intelligence and security apparatuses. According to the GID website, the GID has detected and shut down numerous terrorist threats, including the Mohammad Army in 1989, Bay'at Al-Imam Organization in 1994, Khader Abu Hoshier in 1999, Jund-el-Sham in 2000, Jordanian Afghans in 2001, Reform and Defiance Movement in 1998, and Al-Jayousi Group in 2004.⁴ Furthermore, at the turn of the millennium, Jordanian intelligence disrupted a terrorist plot associated with al-Qaeda. The foiled plot included bombing the Radisson Hotel in Amman and opening fire on tourists at religious sites.⁵ In order to prevent successful terrorist attacks in the future, both the Mukhabarat and the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs treat each attack as a learning opportunity, and as one more obstacle to overcome in their efforts toward security.

The relationship with the United States supplements Jordan's impressive counterterrorism abilities, mutually strengthening Jordan's efforts and US security. Through this relationship, Jordan receives finances, supplies, and training, and the US receives information, intelligence support, and training as well. The Jordanian counterterrorism strategy upon which its tactical strengths are built includes an expansive network of informants, intelligence-gathering skills, anti-terrorism legislation, joint training practices, and extensive deradicalization endeavors.

⁴ "Jordan and Terrorism." *General Intelligence Department Website*.
<<http://www.gid.gov.jo/en/terrorism.html>>.

⁵ Kinzer, Stephen. "Jordan Links Terrorist Plot to bin Laden." *The New York Times*. February 4, 2000.
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/04/world/jordan-links-terrorist-plot-to-bin-laden.html?pagewanted=1>>.

Jordan's Counterterrorism Efforts

Although Jordan has had to protect itself from terrorism for decades, the threat has become glaringly acute in recent years. In Jordan, terrorism is seen as an enemy of the country and its people, an enemy of Arabs, an enemy of mankind, and an enemy of Islam. Embracing the rhetoric of the Bush Administration, Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh recently stated that “in the global war on terror and terrorism, Jordan is at the forefront, and we’re there as part of that global network, and we’re also there to protect our national interest.”⁶ Therefore, Jordan’s position has been consistent in denouncing and condemning all uses of terrorism. With security and stability as its top priorities, Jordan touts a zero tolerance policy toward terrorists.⁷

Jordan has taken concrete steps in fighting terrorism at the national legislative level and through implementing practical security measures and joining international conventions and treaties on combating terrorism.⁸ For example, Jordan enacted a new anti-terrorism law in 2006 and introduced stricter border controls. Also, all banks operating in Jordan are required to comply with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.⁹

Given the rapid political, economic, and social changes within the Arab and Islamic communities, the region is less stable than desired. Dealing with these

⁶ U.S. Department of State. *Remarks With Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh After Their Meeting*. 8 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/134972.htm>>.

⁷ “Jordan and The War on Terrorism.” *Embassy of Jordan (Bucharest, Romania)*. <http://www.jordanembassy.ro/foreignpolicy/jordan_war_on_terrorism.htm>.

⁸ “Foreign Policy Positions – Campaign against Terrorism.” *Embassy of Jordan (Washington, D.C.)*. <<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/aboutjordan/fp7.shtml>>.

⁹ United Nations. Department of Public Information – News and Media Division. *United States tells Assembly’s Legal Committee Anti-Terrorism Efforts Must Stress Prevention of Global Expansion, Address Legitimate Grievances*. 11 Oct. 2007.

<<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gal3319.doc.htm>>.

developments has become one of the biggest challenges for the Middle East, particularly in consideration of the emergence of terrorism and its impact on Arab societies and on the image of Islam – a religion that most Muslims believe calls for tolerance and non-violence.

Terrorism continues to pose a serious security concern for all countries in the region, as they each seek to combat it in various ways. These countries condemn and denounce terrorism, stressing that it is the most dangerous criminal phenomenon of all and that it is no longer possible for any country in the world to be immune to it. Security from terrorism is very difficult for any country to achieve without cooperation in a bilateral and a multilateral framework, regardless of its military strength or human resources. Therefore, mutually beneficial cooperation and coordination among concerned states is a vital aspect of Jordan's counterterrorism strategy.¹⁰

Jordan is the target of terrorist operations that aim at its security and stability. From this position, the country has suffered the loss of dozens of innocent lives and countless injuries of civilians. Jordan is determined to continue to fight terrorist organizations and pursue their networks wherever they exist in order to protect its security and the safety of its citizens. With its limited resources and capabilities, Jordan nonetheless seriously and determinedly seeks to address criminal and terrorist actions and is constantly taking executive and legislative measures to do so.

Jordan is determined not to allow the use of Jordanian territory as a launching point for any terrorist operations. Jordan maintains that it will continue in the fight against terrorism and terrorists, not only as a measure to defend the country and its

¹⁰ "Opening Session of the Meeting of Arab Interior Ministers in Tunisia." *Alrai Newspaper* [Amman] 17 Mar. 2010: 2. Print.

citizens, but also to defend the image of tolerant Islam and to contribute to achieving international peace and security.

The security and stability of each country is very closely linked to regional security in the whole Middle East. What happens at the regional level directly affects the security of all Middle Eastern countries. Jordan is interested in strengthening cooperation and enhancing coordination with all neighboring countries to serve the interests of the region. At the forefront of Jordan's security concerns is the Palestinian issue. According to Jordan's assessment, peace and stability in the Middle East cannot be achieved without the Palestinian people receiving a just settlement of the conflict. Jordan places great importance on reaching a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which it believes would lead to stability in the region and would help remove support from terrorist organizations.

Terrorism and terrorist organizations, just like other types of organized crime, have benefited greatly from technological advances. Plotting for terrorist acts has become more complicated, with the planners physically located in one country, the execution of the plot in another country, and financing coming from yet another country. Therefore, cross-border cooperation and intelligence-sharing are crucial to counterterrorism efforts.¹¹

Jordan's basic concept of national security is maintaining independence and protecting against threats to the well-being of Jordanians. Moreover, its security strategy is revolves around the individual, his rights, the quality of his life, and maintaining a

¹¹ "Al-Bakhit: It is the right of the State and its security apparatus to pursue terrorists and foil their plans." *Addustour Newspaper* [Amman] 28 Mar. 2010. Web. <http://www.addustour.com/ViewTopic.aspx?ac=%5CLocalAndGover%5C2010%5C03%5CLocalAndGover_issue899_day28_id223770.htm>.

balance of personal security, border security, internal security, and external security. Jordan strives to utilize both soft and hard power tools to achieve these goals.

Most security efforts are not visible to the Jordanian people, and there is little appreciation for these efforts mostly due to the public's limited knowledge of such efforts. For example, Jordanians were surprised by the exposed intelligence operation in Afghanistan and shocked by the news that Jordan was involved in the war. This led a great number of Jordanians to believe that Jordan was fighting battles that were not its own, even though Jordan's counterterrorism strategy is focused on protecting Jordanian interests.¹² The people were unaware of Jordan's involvement and uninformed of the security benefits of that involvement.

According to officials from the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jordan submits regular reports to the UN Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) in accordance with Resolution 1373. These are periodical reports, seven of which have been submitted thus far specifying what has been done in various areas related to counterterrorism. They are a collective effort among several agencies, which include the General Intelligence Department (GID), Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of the Interior (MOI), Public Security Directorate (PSD), Justice Department, and Customs.

Jordan is a very small country in size, but its impact and effect is significant. Border security is very important for Jordan, particularly to prevent infiltration attempts from neighboring countries. Furthermore, there are concerns about human-trafficking leading to recruitment into terrorist organizations and about weapons trafficking to and

¹² "Al-Bakhit: It is the right of the State and its security apparatus to pursue terrorists and foil their plans." *Addustour Newspaper* [Amman] 28 Mar. 2010. Web. <http://www.addustour.com/ViewTopic.aspx?ac=%5CLocalAndGover%5C2010%5C03%5CLocalAndGover_issue899_day28_id223770.htm>

from neighboring countries. Technical implementation, funding, border security, sleeper cells, customs, and intelligence are also each important to Jordanian security.

Jordan's Counterterrorism Strategy

Intelligence & Security Training

Within Jordan, Al-Qaeda and external actors are seen as the most important terrorist threats to Jordanian security. Jordan's strategy in fighting terrorism is one that is preventive and preemptive. The country has achieved a strategic victory in facing incoming terrorism threats, as well as in reducing the threat of new regional terrorist organizations. The goals of domestic terrorism are mainly to destabilize the security and stability of the country and cause subversion. Therefore, countering terrorism is seen as a national duty of every citizen.

Terrorism is a form of extremism, often religious extremism, but even though perpetrators use Islam by performing such acts in the name of the religion, according to the Jordanian government, terrorism should not be referred to as "radical Islam." An essential component of Jordan's strategy to effectively counter terrorism is highlighting what Jordan refers to as true Islam through the Amman Message. The Amman Message, which was initiated a few years ago by King Abdullah II, strives to explain what Jordan considers to be the true spirit of Islam.

According to the Amman Message, dialogue and civil relations among people should govern relations among nations, cultures, and civilization – not violence. In order to give this statement more religious authority, King Abdullah II sent three questions to twenty four of the most senior religious scholars around the world representing all the

branches and schools of Islam. The questions were, “Who is a Muslim? Is it permissible to declare someone an apostate (*takfir*)? Who has the right to undertake issuing fatwas (legal rulings)?”¹³ Based on the fatwas provided by these religious scholars, King Abdullah II convened an international Islamic conference of 200 of the world’s leading Islamic scholars from 50 countries in Amman in 2005. These scholars unanimously issued a ruling on three fundamental issues, which later became known as the Three Points of the Amman Message. More than 500 leading Muslim scholars worldwide endorsed the Amman Message and its Three Points, which Jordan points out is the first time in more than a thousand years that the *Ummah* has formally and specifically come to a mutual inter-recognition. Such a ruling is religiously legally binding to Muslims because the Prophet said, “My Ummah will not agree upon an error.”¹⁴

The Amman Message is very important as it also strives to render the opinions of radical fundamentalists and terrorists illegitimate. As George Yeo, the Foreign Minister of Singapore, declared in the 60th Session of the U.N. General Assembly in reference to the Amman Message, “Without this clarification, the war against terrorism would be much harder to fight.”¹⁵

General Intelligence Department

¹³ “The Amman Message started as a detailed statement released the eve of the 27th of Ramadan 1425 AH / 9th November 2004 CE by H.M. King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein in Amman, Jordan. It sought to declare what Islam is and what it is not, and what actions represent it and what actions do not. Its goal was to clarify to the modern world the true nature of Islam and the nature of true Islam.”
<<http://www.ammanmessage.com/>>.

¹⁴ *The Official Website of The Amman Message* <<http://www.ammanmessage.com/>>.

¹⁵ *The Official Website of The Amman Message* <<http://www.ammanmessage.com/>>.

As mentioned above, Jordan views terrorism as defying the teachings of Islam and strives to eradicate the ill-informed connection between Islam and terrorism.¹⁶ According to the Amman Message, ignorance about Islam is a primary motive for the perpetration of terrorist acts. Therefore, Jordan counters terrorism through delivering the Amman Message and increasing cooperation and sharing of information in order to try to disrupt terrorist plots before they are carried out.

Moreover, Jordan provides excellent counterterrorism training in various fields at its numerous state-of-the-art facilities and training centers. The training syllabus includes a wide range of courses that teach surveillance, intelligence gathering, and workshops on how to recruit informants. Such training is essential in producing capable agents that are proficient at detecting terrorist and radical tendencies, even before such acts take place. Training programs are revised and updated regularly to ensure compatibility with new advances around the world, as well as to address the specific needs and threats at the time. This provides well-rounded, all-encompassing training. The intelligence resources at use are both technical and human; however, there is a heavy reliance on the human element, as the most useful sources of information in this delicate and secretive work are human rather than technical. There have been many attempts foiled through excellent intelligence work and Jordanian commitment to counterterrorism. For example, the human element of intelligence was crucial in providing critical information that helped foil the Al-Jayousi Group's attempt to attack the Mukhabarat Headquarters with explosive-laden trucks in 2004.

¹⁶ "Jordan and The War on Terrorism." *Embassy of Jordan (Bucharest, Romania)*. <http://www.jordanembassy.ro/foreignpolicy/jordan_war_on_terrorism.htm>.

When it comes to accusations of human rights abuses of prisoners and detainees, the Mukhabarat have very clear and strict guidelines and standard operating procedures. They are required to perform a supervised full medical check of anyone who is detained in their facilities. Also, Red Cross representatives conduct regular visits to check on the conditions and treatment of prisoners. When it comes to other law enforcement agencies and prisoner abuse issues, these are considered individual acts, not a systematic policy. Moreover, abuse carried out by individuals is condemned and those individuals are prosecuted.

A Mutually Beneficial Relationship

In mid-2009, King Abdullah II inaugurated the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center, a regional counterterrorism training center, at a ceremony attended by General David Petraeus. The 200 million dollar center was partly funded by the United States and aims to unify counterterrorism policy and practices across the world in accordance with the US counterterrorism vision and training methods. The joint effort is headed by American Major General G.L. Harrell as General Director of the Center. The Center has a capacity to train up to 600 trainees in one class, and some of the training exercises include rescuing hostages and escorting dignitaries. The Center places at the trainees' disposal several field positions, including miniature models of cities and mountain villages, commercial centers, embassies and factories, in addition to an airport to train how to free hijacked planes. As Jordan's Army Chief General Khaled Sarairah

stated, “the center is a true example of Jordanian-US partnership to fight all types of terrorism.”¹⁷

Disrupting Terrorist Financing

The Anti Money Laundering Unit was established in 2007, and currently is not involved with terrorism financing at any level and only deals with money laundering. The unit is not capable of dealing with issues of financing of terrorism at this stage and is unable to confiscate assets of such groups. Some of the obstacles the unit is facing include the need for staffing, training, budget, and independence. The situation is very difficult because most of the limited resources are going towards addressing these issues, diverting the unit’s attention from day-to-day operations.

Jordan’s evaluation in the Middle East North Africa Financial Action Task Force’s (MENAFATF) most recent report is very low, partly because the AML Law of 2007 does not deal with the issue of terrorist financing. Jordan has taken several measures to rectify the situation and address the issues indicated in the MENAFATF report, and a draft amendment of the Law was finalized in January 2010. Some of the issues and obstacles that the AML Unit is facing are due to ambiguity regarding the independence of the unit since currently it is housed in the Central Bank of Jordan. The draft amendment identified the specific obligations of the unit, pushed for the imposition of strict penalties on violators, specified the power and authority that the unit could exercise, and included countering terrorist financing as part of its responsibilities.

¹⁷ Vermeulen, Mathias. “Petraeus attends launch of Jordan anti-terror centre.” Web log post. *The Lift – Legal Issues in the Fight against Terrorism*. 31 May 2009. Web. <<http://legalift.wordpress.com/2009/05/20/al-jazeera-tv-reports-on-jordanian-saudi-anti-terrorism-centres/>>.

Central Bank

There is a technical assistance program based on an agreement between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the United States. Part of the assistance money is allocated for purposes of terrorist financing training for various law enforcement agencies, Customs, General Intelligence Department, Public Security Directorate, and others. The CBJ has direct contacts with the US Embassy in Amman and deals specifically with the Office of Technical Assistance, as well as with the US Department of the Treasury. Because part of the funding goes towards establishing an independent AML Unit, various procurement issues will be also addressed, such as finding a suitable space for new offices, proper and up-to-date security systems, IT, telecom, furnishing, and so forth. In addition, various agencies will undergo appropriate training, and a study trip is planned to the Lebanese Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

Media

Jordan's work against terrorism is not limited to the security aspect, but is connected to cultural and intellectual issues as well in order to fight the type of society that produces terrorism. Jordan has worked over the past years to fight terrorism, both intellectually and culturally, through a number of initiatives, such as the Amman Message. Jordan intends to continue to fight terrorism through presenting what it sees as the true image of Islam and its values. Naturally, the media plays a great role in fighting terrorist thinking and in strengthening the community against it. Therefore, according to Jordanian policy, the media should put stronger efforts toward confronting attempts by

terrorists to mislead the minds of the younger generations and distort the image of Islam.¹⁸

There is no official spokesperson for the Mukhabarat, mainly due to the sensitive nature of the job, as well as the necessity for agents to remain anonymous. Whenever needed, information is provided to the public through the official spokesperson of the government, the Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications.

The recent tragic attack on a joint operation in Khost led to the exposure of the Jordanian presence abroad and Jordan's cooperation with other countries and agencies. This sparked increased threats against Jordan and against the Mukhabarat, which was negatively portrayed by terrorists. Extremists justified attacking anyone who works for or with the Mukhabarat because of their cooperation with the West. However, even though the incident in Khost hurt Jordanian security greatly, Jordan's security establishment believes that security and intellectual methods, in addition to international cooperation, will continue to help in combating terrorism. Therefore, Jordan plans to further increase its presence abroad in Afghanistan to assist the Afghans, to combat terrorist organizations, and to continue to defend Jordan's national interests. Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh recently stated that "there is a Jordanian presence in Afghanistan. It's been there for many years. . . a humanitarian presence, a logistical presence, and intelligence operations to protect our own citizens and to prevent terrorists from carrying out their heinous crimes. And information is power, they used to say, but sharing

¹⁸ "His Majesty King Abdullah's interview with chief editors of The Jordan Times, Al Rai, Ad Dustour, Al Arab Al Yawm and Al Ghad." *Embassy of Jordan (Washington, D.C.)*. 25 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/jib/speeches/hmka/hmka03252010.htm>>.

information is also power, and I think that sharing information between like minded countries is just as effective in combating terror than – as combating terror directly.”¹⁹

US-Jordanian Counterterrorism Cooperation

Although Israel’s Mossad is widely considered to be the United State’s most important intelligence partner in the Middle East, the argument can be made that the GID actually fills that role in regards to counterterrorism efforts. US-Jordanian security relations are extremely close and beneficial for both parties. Jordan receives a great deal of financing from the US that helps the GID to build and maintain its network of sources and infiltrate organizations to which the US does not have access. The GID can obtain information from members of a society that Jordanians are a part of, can communicate in, and understand in a way that the US is not able to do. This combination has created a mutually beneficial relationship that has helped to protect Jordanian and US interests against the threat of terrorism. According to Mr. Zarate, “Despite the lack of American popularity among Jordanians, the Jordanian government has invested its credibility and capital into a special relationship with the United States. This has grown stronger over time, as the threats from violent extremists have crept into Jordan from abroad and regional and Jordanian stability has been threatened.”

The nature of this close and valuable relationship, however, makes understanding its extent a challenging undertaking. According to various US State Department officials to whom we spoke, the US-Jordanian relationship is extremely close, but few officials are willing to expand on the details of the relationship due to its discreet nature.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of State. *Remarks With Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh After Their Meeting*. 8 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/134972.htm>>.

Intelligence Sharing and Operation Cooperation

Many of the above mentioned terrorist threats against Jordan are threats from within Jordan's borders. The GID keeps "a very tight grip on internal security and briefing the Government on opposition movements within the kingdom, it has forestalled or intercepted a number of plots to destabilize the country." In recent years, however, its mission abroad "is of growing importance and is the key to Western attempts to penetrate Arab jihadist networks. It has a special anti-terrorism task force to gather information on groups working across the Middle East."²⁰ According to an *L.A. Times* interview with former CIA employee Michael Scheuer, "Jordan is at the top of our list of foreign partners. We have similar agendas, and they are willing to help any way they can." Scheuer also said that the GID is as effective an intelligence apparatus as the Mossad and, as an Arab organization, is better at fighting mainly Arab organizations. According to Scheuer, "the GID. . . has a wider reach [within the Middle East] than the Mossad."²¹ Because Jordan has been dealing with terrorist groups and plots for decades, its counterterrorism organizations are aware of and can assess the root causes of terrorism, including political, social, and economic motivations.

Playing a central role in Western efforts to penetrate jihadist networks, the GID utilizes a counterterrorism force that is able to collect intelligence on organizations throughout the region. Its most laudable triumph in this capacity was its role in the locating and killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2006. Zarqawi, a Jordanian national, was a top al-Qaeda official in Iraq and was behind the beheadings of a number of

²⁰ Binyon, Michael. "Western ally Jordan boasted of having best spies in Arab world." *The Times*. January 6, 2010. <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/afghanistan/article6977026.ece>>.

²¹ Silverstein, Ken. "U.S., Jordan Forge Closer Ties in Covert War on Terrorism." *Los Angeles Times*. November 11, 2005. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2005/nov/11/world/fg-gid11/6>>.

Westerners in that country as well as the 2005 hotel bombings in Amman. His death by a US missile strike was enabled by intelligence corroborated by the GID.

Protecting its borders, its citizens, and the stability of the region as a whole, Jordan has played a key and aggressive role in the efforts to thwart al-Qaeda. Jordan's regional counterterrorism efforts are not strictly in response to US interests, as Jordan views radical organizations such as al-Qaeda as serious threats to its own security as well. However, by working so closely with the United States in its security efforts, Jordan has become more of a target for extremist groups in the region.

The recently exposed joint US-Jordanian intelligence operation in Afghanistan provided a rare glimpse into the extent of the relationship, but it also exemplified the dangers of the relationship to Jordan. The GID recruited Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi, a Jordanian doctor who frequented extremist websites. Balawi supposedly infiltrated al-Qaeda and was scheduled to share information with the CIA office along the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Instead, he detonated a suicide vest, killing seven CIA officers and contractors, a GID intelligence officer, and a driver. Although this devastating news headline primarily informed readers of a horrifically failed intelligence operation in Afghanistan, it also told the public a great deal about US-Jordanian security relations.

Not only was a Jordanian agent killed in the operation, but according to the Mukhabarat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mukhabarat received a flood of threats and a wave of anger from the Jordanian population over the closeness that this failed operation exposed. In fact, the media lauded that the Jordanian intelligence officer was a relative of the king, indicating the importance of the security relationship to the

monarch. The covert character of the US-Jordan relationship is not only one of professional necessity, but one that protects Jordan's government from the disapproval of its peers and citizens. A former CIA officer told the *New York Times* that, "Like most of these Middle Eastern family businesses, Jordan's policies run counter to its public opinion."²²

Security Agreements

The US has given billions of dollars to Jordan's security budget, including its counterterrorism efforts. Included in the money's uses are equipping and training security forces. Jordan and the US also exchange and share counterterrorism training. Furthermore, in addition to participating in US counterterrorism training exercises, Jordan helps to train Palestinian, Iraqi, and Afghan security forces in counterterrorism, greatly aiding the stability of the region and the security of US allies.

As is common between allies, the US and Jordan have security agreements that include cooperation in preventing terrorist organizations from obtaining nuclear materials. These types of agreements are important to the security relationship, but the US and Jordan also share less conventional partnerships that aid their counterterrorism efforts.

For example, both Jordan and the United States maintain that solving the Israeli-Palestinian issue would help to bring about stability and security in the region. To that end, Jordan plays an important role in fostering peace talks between the two parties. Furthermore, Jordan is one of only two Arab nations that have normalized relations with

²² Greenway, H.D.S. "A Jihadist's Destiny." *The New York Times*. January 13, 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/14/opinion/14iht-edgreenway.html>>.

Israel. Its position on Israel's and Palestine's border and being surrounded by Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia makes Jordan's relationships with the US and its ally Israel especially important in striving for the security and stability of the region. Unlike the US, Jordan is in a position to talk with Hamas, helping to coordinate security apparatuses with Palestine. This line of communication greatly helps Jordan to contribute to the stability of its region.

Another controversial arrangement between the US and Jordan is the practice of renditions. Many sources, including the US Department of State, have accused Jordan of practicing torture, but despite these allegations, the United States occasionally sends detainees to Jordan to be interrogated. Jordan, as an Arab country, is better equipped to interrogate Arab detainees, leading the US to hand over such prisoners to Jordan when necessary. Although the accusations of the use of torture persist, interviews with those connected to the interrogation process indicate that torture is not systematically used by Jordanian interrogators.

The Relationship

Obviously, in regards to counterterrorism cooperation especially, the US-Jordanian relationship has a good deal to do with the intelligence community, but the sensitive nature of such a security relationship is not the only reason that US State Department officials prefer not to discuss the details of the US-Jordanian relationship. In addition to the expected sensitivities of a security relationship and intelligence cooperation, Jordan's monarch and security apparatuses also must balance its American relations with the anti-American sentiments within its society. According to a Pew poll,

although the number was down twenty percent from 2002, in 2007, twenty three percent of Jordanians believed that suicide bombing is often or sometimes justified.²³

Furthermore, twenty percent of Jordanians expressed a lot or some confidence in Osama bin Laden to do the right thing in global affairs in 2007.²⁴ After the exposure of the joint US-Jordanian intelligence operation in Afghanistan, the GID was the target of many threats from the Jordanian people who do not support cooperation with the US. The dislike of the United States that is prevalent within Jordan has to be taken into account when either government publicly acts toward the other.

Backlash from within Jordan is not the only threat to Jordanian security and stability from the extent of the US-Jordanian relationship. As a US ally, Jordan is a target of the same threats as those aimed at the US, namely, al-Qaeda and its affiliates, as was demonstrated in 2005 by the hotel bombings in Amman. The willingness of Jordan to undertake this extra exposure to terrorism due to its relationship with the US speaks to the great benefit that Jordan receives from the relationship.

Despite the value of the security aspect of the relationship, many Americans point out that the US government has something of an obligation to the promotion of reform and democracy among its allies, meaning that the US often emphasizes its desire to see such progress in Jordan. When King Abdullah gives a speech that emphasizes such reforms or objectives within Jordan, this is helpful on the US side of the relationship, just as not highlighting the importance of the relationship by US officials is helpful on the Jordanian side.

²³ “Global Opinion Trends 2002-2007: A Rising Tide Lifts Mood in the Developing World Sharp Decline in Support for Suicide Bombing in Muslim Countries.” *The Pew Global Project Attitudes*. July 24, 2007. <<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=257>>. pg 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.* pg 7.

Although US officials emphasize the importance of reforms on the US agenda regarding its relations with Jordan, they also focus on the sovereignty and freedom of choice of the Jordanians to maintain their current governmental system. According to a former State Department official, this system is beneficial to the security concerns of both the US and the Jordanian monarch, leaving the impression that emphasis on Jordanian sovereignty in its choice of government is a somewhat convenient excuse for not prioritizing reform on the US agenda.

Although US diplomatic relations with all of its allies fluctuate according to the international environment and countless other factors, the security relationship between the US and Jordan has been consistent. According to interviews given by current and former US intelligence officials to the *Washington Post*, the special security relationship between the US and Jordan has been strong for at least thirty years and has strengthened to the point that the CIA liaison officer to Jordan is granted complete, unescorted access to GID's highly secure headquarters in Amman.²⁵

At the ceremony marking the inauguration of the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center, General David Petraeus said that “we can’t achieve our shared goals and protect ourselves from our common threats without strong cooperation with each other.”²⁶ The successes, failures, and threats shared by the US and Jordan, as well as the steady history of cooperation, indicate a long-lasting and close relationship between the two allies for the foreseeable future.

²⁵ Warrick, Joby. “Jordan Emerges as Key CIA Counterterrorism Ally.” *The Washington Post*. January 4, 2010. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/03/AR2010010302063.html>>.

²⁶ Vermeulen, Mathias. “Petraeus attends launch of Jordan anti-terror centre.” Web log post. *The Lift – Legal Issues in the Fight against Terrorism*. 31 May 2009. Web. <<http://legalift.wordpress.com/2009/05/20/al-jazeera-tv-reports-on-jordanian-saudi-anti-terrorism-centres/>>.

Bibliography

“Al-Bakhit: It is the right of the State and its security apparatus to pursue terrorists and foil their plans.” *Addustour Newspaper* [Amman] 28 Mar. 2010. Web.

“Country Reports: Middle East and North Africa Overview.” *Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism*. April 30, 2009.
<<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122433.htm>>.

“Foreign Policy Positions – Campaign against Terrorism.” *Embassy of Jordan* (Washington, D.C.).

<<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/aboutjordan/fp7.shtml>>.

“Global Opinion Trends 2002-2007: A Rising Tide Lifts Mood in the Developing World Sharp Decline in Support for Suicide Bombing in Muslim Countries.” *The Pew Global Project Attitudes*. July 24, 2007. <<http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/257.pdf>>.

Greenway, H.D.S. “A Jihadist’s Destiny.” *The New York Times*. January 13, 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/14/opinion/14iht-edgreenway.html>>.

“His Majesty King Abdullah’s interview with chief editors of The Jordan Times, Al Rai, Ad Dustour, Al Arab Al Yawm and Al Ghad.” *Embassy of Jordan (Washington, D.C.)*. 25 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/jib/speeches/hmka/hmka03252010.htm>>.

Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998.

“Jordan and Terrorism.” *General Intelligence Department Website*. <<http://www.gid.gov.jo/en/terrorism.html>>.

“Jordan and The War on Terrorism.” *Embassy of Jordan (Bucharest, Romania)*. <http://www.jordanembassy.ro/foreignpolicy/jordan_war_on_terrorism.htm>.

“Opening Session of the Meeting of Arab Interior Ministers in Tunisia.” *Alrai Newspaper* [Amman] 17 Mar. 2010: 2. Print.

Kinzer, Stephen. “Jordan Links Terrorist Plot to bin Laden.” *The New York Times*. February 4, 2000. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/04/world/jordan-links-terrorist-plot-to-bin-laden.html?pagewanted=1>>.

Silverstein, Ken. “U.S., Jordan Forge Closer Ties in Covert War on Terrorism.” *Los Angeles Times*. November 11, 2005. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2005/nov/11/world/fg-gid11/6>>.

The Official Website of The Amman Message <<http://www.ammanmessage.com/>>.

United Nations. Department of Public Information – News and Media Division. *United States tells Assembly’s Legal Committee Anti-Terrorism Efforts Must Stress Prevention of Global Expansion, Address Legitimate Grievances*. 11 Oct. 2007. <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gal3319.doc.htm>>.

U.S. Department of State. *Remarks With Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh After Their Meeting*. 8 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/134972.htm>>.

Vermeulen, Mathias. “Petraeus attends launch of Jordan anti-terror centre.” Web log post. *The Lift – Legal Issues in the Fight against Terrorism*. 31 May 2009. Web.

<<http://legalift.wordpress.com/2009/05/20/al-jazeera-tv-reports-on-jordanian-saudi-anti-terrorism-centres/>>.

Warrick, Joby. "Jordan Emerges as Key CIA Counterterrorism Ally." *The Washington Post*. January 4, 2010. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/03/AR2010010302063.html>>.