

"Blessed are the Peace Makers."

The Honorable James Baker, Secretary of State of the United States of America, the Honorable Boris Pankin, Foreign Minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Distinguished Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Edward Brunner, the Distinguished Head of the European Community Delegation, Mr. van den Broek, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Distinguished Observer from the Gulf Cooperation Council, His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Bisharah, the Distinguished Observer from the Maghreb Cooperation Council, His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Amamu, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with sincere appreciation that I thank the governments of the United States of America and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics for co-sponsoring this historic Conference. For us this occasion represents what we must strive to make, the final turning point, from a drift towards ultimate disaster for our peoples, our region, and possibly the world, to a new era of a properly constructed true peace, hope, and life. All the parties to this most chronic and tragic conflict need your continued interest and support, together with the rest of the world, so that we may attain the just peace that the peoples of the region need and deserve.

We also salute His Majesty King Juan Carlos, the guardian of Spanish democracy, as well as Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, the Spanish government and people, for hosting the conference in Madrid. We thank them for their gracious hospitality and warm welcome.

This is an historic moment. The challenges and the issues before us are momentous. In his speech before the National Congress in Amman on 12th October 1991, His Majesty King Hussein identified the essence of the challenge when he spoke of the possibilities of true peace and its implications for the future of the children of Abraham, father of both Jews and Arabs alike. It is worthy of note that Spain seeks to honor Arabs and Jews in 1992 in the context of the contributions of the Andalus and Sepharad. Together they generously contributed to a rich civilization, the fruits of which not only Spain, but the world and humanity, have since appreciated.

It is not impossible to hope that this Conference will herald the dawn of a new era to rectify the mis takes of the past. Perhaps the possibility of joint contribution is again at hand. Everyone must remember that God has "created mankind as nations and tribes so that they may know each other. The most noble of you, in the sight of Allah, is the most pious" (The Holy Koran, Sura 49/13). And if this Conference does anything, it must end Israel's self-righteous attitude to live by its own rules alone. This Conference is also about the credibility of international law, the United Nations Charter, and human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jordan comes to this Conference in good faith. Our vision is not merely an end to hostility another truce but a comprehensive, just, and permanent peace. Our region has known nothing but instability and violence since the turn of the century. It is about time that it enjoys peace.

What is needed is not only sight but vision - vision to stand on top of the hill, not in the valley, so as to enable ourselves to look into the future and to evaluate the consequences of the absence of peace. For far too long, the peoples of the region have been locked in the groove of their own historical animosities, suspicions, and acrimony.

That is why we in Jordan register our appreciation for the endeavor of President Bush, as well as the support of President Gorbachev. It is our hope that the personal interest and support of both will remain, even increase, throughout the negotiations.

We come to this Conference standing on strong moral grounds, buttressed by a record of moderation and wise vision since the creation of our state in modern times. The most tragic conflict which we are now addressing is one of the oldest on the agenda of the United Nations, and though it may appear regional, its international dimensions are many and obvious. It is especially so against the background of the Gulf crisis in that it severely tests the credibility of the United Nations and that of the five permanent members of the Security Council. It was in the wake of the Gulf crisis that President Bush undertook to work seriously toward its resolution. We also appreciate the Soviet co-sponsorship of the effort as well as the support of the European Community.

We take heart that this whole enterprise is firmly anchored in international legitimacy as embodied in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 based on the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force, and providing for the exchange of land for peace. While it was true that most Arabs, out of a sense of outrage and feelings of injustice and betrayal, have refused since 1947 to contemplate accommodation, there were others in the Arab world who were willing to be counted for peace. Over the decades of the thirties, forties, and beyond, indeed until the present moment, the arena was abandoned to the radicals. In the clash of ideas, visions, and armies that have ensued since then, reason, often humanity itself, was pushed beyond the frontiers of choice. The situation deteriorated to the condition of a primitive state of nature, where brute force replaced civilized behavior, where might replaced right.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which I have the honor to represent, has been, since the outset of this conflict, on the side of every effort to seriously solve it peacefully. King Hussein was actively involved in the formulation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, a foundation of this Conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we have an historic opportunity for peace in a land that has not tasted it for a long time. We must remember that the extremists and the rejectionists who speak in absolute terms are still lurking in the wings. It is from there that they issue their often repeated clichés and venomous threats.

Inasmuch as peace is a good in itself, an inherent value, it is also a battle against the absolutist ideologues invoking ancient hatreds. Many think that the situation should not be resolved but left to future generations to deal with. Those of vision, however, see it differently. Considering the immediacy of the need to reach a settlement at this particular

moment of world history with its inter dependence between peoples and nations, King Hussein said:

...We must be involved in the drive for peace because it concerns our present and future ...otherwise, the outcome, God forbid, will be ominous dangers. ...

It is for this reason that it is important to emphasize transcending the present in the search for the future. To continue to be locked in the mental straitjacket of absolutist ideologies means that there will never be a way out of the shackles of hatred.

We take to heart and with respect the words of President Bush in his 6th of March, 1991 address before the American Congress, when he said:

...I expressed my hope that out of the horrors of war might come new momentum for peace. We have learned in the modern age, geography cannot guarantee security and security does not come from military power alone.

...By now, it should be plain to all parties that peace-making in the Middle East requires compromise. ...

Peace cannot, indeed must not, reflect the military balance of the belligerents now. It should, essentially, reflect the hope of a better future that will end, once and for all, our living in the midst of conflicting tragedies. It should bring us all in step with a new world that will shatter the shadows, the misery, and the fog that engulfs our lives. It was Albert Einstein who said: "...Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding. ..."

It should not be a peace at any price but an honorable peace with which we and future generations can live: a durable peace which is the product of negotiations. It must be the outcome of mutual understanding and accommodation between the parties to the conflict without sacrificing rights or deviating from the principles of international law.

Jordan's position rests on the very simple yet direct assumption that in the end, nothing is true but the truth; that a moral and just stand is ultimately more powerful than brute force. Although the world, and the Israelis themselves, know and are aware of our innocence of the crimes against the Jewish people, Israel's indignant outrage has not induced a sense of balanced justice. It has become our fate in Jordan to live with, as well as to suffer, and to contain the powerful forces of extremism. The Nazis and others unleashed the passions of injured Zionism for which the Palestinians and Jordan have paid the price. God only knows the price we continue to pay for the sins of others. It has come to pass that our land, our culture, our people, even our very souls, as well as everything we hold dear and sacred, continue to be plundered and distorted to accommodate new realities and manufactured facts, brutally created on the ground.

And so it is that we not only ask what to do, but also welcome the present effort. The question is the more agonizing as we in the Arab world, and in Jordan in particular, contemplate our situation. In Jordan three times in four decades, we had to make room for large waves of destitute and bewildered refugees forced out of their lands and homes. We are aware, as are our people, that in the nature of things a negotiated settlement does not

represent total justice. Yet, with our traditional Jordanian moderation, rational approach, and consideration of our vision of the future, we have made consensus and balance a cornerstone of our political thesis since 1967. In the words of King Hussein:

...Peace is essential to us in leading a normal life. ...We have made it a symbol for a better life for future generations. ...Peace has become a national objective. ...

That is why we think that the formula of land for peace rings more meaningfully true than any other principle or slogan. The echo of the drums of war reverberates in the heart and soul of the region. Is it not time that we, now on the threshold of the twenty-first century, bring peace to our peoples?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jordan enters this process from a position of moral strength, secure in the knowledge that reasonable men can reach reasonable solutions; that justice must ultimately prevail; that peace is indeed the master of all judgments, and its logic necessitates accommodation, not belligerency. Otherwise, we may truly become one-dimensional with neither soul nor spirit, driven by the primeval instincts of the political jungle, leading us to perish in perils of our own making.

We should shed the psychology of fear, get out of the shadow, and realize that states, too, like people, sometimes commit suicide because of their fear of life. More land is not more security. Occupation is against every legal principle, and the shape it has taken in the Arab occupied territories contravenes the United Nations Charter and the Fourth Geneva Convention. The building of settlements and the expropriation of land are both in clear contravention of the rules of international law.

The justice that Jordan seeks requires resort to law; law that governs the actions of men, freeing them to live secure in a stable, ordered, and institutionalized universe. That alone can assure the proper division of labor and resources, and that alone can guarantee not only survival, but freedom and security. The technology of war has far out-distanced our true appreciation of its destructiveness and danger. Otherwise, how can we continue to contemplate our security in terms of missiles, nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons? Our mission must transcend the issues of mere survival to become the search for a new future.

That is why His Majesty King Hussein, in his nationwide speech of 12th October, 1991, solicited the help and support of the international community in this process:

Our cause is not only between us and Israel but also between the world and Israel ...between the supremacy of international law ...and the flouting of it. ...The whole world rejects what Israel's leadership is saying because it contravenes international legitimacy. ...Indeed, a relatively growing segment of Israelis are not too far from this world view. ...

The King added that our world today is "peace-oriented" and that the Arabs and the rest of the world will come together in their mutual desire and interests to find a peaceful solution.

That is one of the bases of the Jordanian position: a search for peace secure in the support of the entire Arab world, indeed, the whole world community, and in particular, the Palestinians. We and the Palestinians have a just cause which must be addressed and resolved with equity and fairness.

Our second basis for entering this peace process is our expectation that there will be no asymmetry or double standards.

The third basis of the Jordanian approach is that our cause and that of our Palestinian brethren is intricately linked by ties of history, culture, religion, language, demography, geography, as well as human suffering and national aspirations. King Hussein said:

We would have preferred an independent Palestinian delegation, though we have no objection to providing an umbrella for our Palestinian brethren, since we are keenly aware that both Jordanians and Palestinians are besieged as the parties directly and adversely effected by the continuation of the status quo of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Fourth, the peace we seek must be based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The objective is real peace. We must emphasize that our understanding of Resolution 242 is that it is based on the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the exchange of land for peace. The deliberations preceding its adoption and in which Jordan participated were based on that principle. Our position is firmly based on United Nations resolutions and international law. We are aware that Israel's creation was the result of United Nations Resolution 181 of 29th November, 1947. It is in accordance with the strength of these resolutions as well as the general principles of international law that Jordan demands the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Jordanian, Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese lands.

The three dimensions of the Jordanian position the Jordanian, Palestinian, and regional are founded on international law. Resolution 242 is a valid international instrument unanimously agreed upon by the international community. It is binding on all member states of the United Nations in accordance with Article 25 of the United Nations Charter.

Arab sovereignty must be restored in Arab Jerusalem. In the context of peace, Jerusalem will represent the essence and symbol of peace between the followers of the three great monotheistic religions. It is God's will that has made the historic city important to them all.

The illegal settlements should be removed and not augmented; the issue of Palestinian refugees and that of the displaced must be solved in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Palestinian people must be allowed to exercise their right of self-determination in their ancestral home land. The fulfillment of these demands is a question of the credibility of United Nations resolutions. Let me speak plainly Jordan has never been Palestine and will not be so. Withdrawal from Lebanon and the application of United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 is also an essential prerequisite for the establishment of a regional peace.

Fifth, the peace we seek as a result of negotiations is a permanent one, a just and comprehensive peace - peace that will focus on region-wide issues such as arms control and

regional security, water, the environment, the fate of the Palestinian refugees and the displaced, and the economic balance among the peoples of the area through joint development programs. Peace must mean security for all, protected by all in their hearts and souls, because it is founded on justice and honor.

Sixth, our position is also predicated on our vision of a better future that will replace the present bitterness and frustration and, in the words of King Hussein:

...enable us to transform the realities into positive forces that will take us from despair to hope, from confrontation and the four decades of suffering, anxiety, and pain that accompanied it, and which left an imprint on our lives, to peace and its promise of security, stability, opportunities, and prosperity for all; from the no-war, no-peace situation and its real dangers, to a condition of certainty and ease which will enhance the creativity and hopes of the younger generation. ...

We seek a real peace where men, women, and children do not have to cower behind fortresses. Our quest is for an honorable peace that would enable our peoples to tear down the walls of fear and hatred, as people tore down the Berlin Wall. We want our peoples to welcome a new dawn and to enjoy the warmth of a new day, rather than the long night of darkness, which has been their fortune until now.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our hope that the world appreciates and supports our position, based as it is on our liberal and peaceful Jordanian experiment in socio-economic and political development. An experiment that deserves support as it continues the Jordanian tradition of democratization, institutionalization, and the transition to political pluralism. The test, indeed the challenge of peace, is both domestic and global in that it severely exacerbates our current economic crisis, as we are compelled to absorb a third wave of returnees in the wake of the Gulf crisis.

We hope that this Peace Conference will work toward the solution of all these momentous problems leading not only to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab occupied lands, including Arab Jerusalem, but also to the delineation of Israel's permanent borders and finally real peace.

We have taken a bold step which commits us to innovative thinking that will bring peace and prosperity to the region. The parties to the conflict suffer from too many recollections of their wounded cultures. Somehow we must endeavor to bring about the change needed. We cannot continue to inhabit two different universes in this small space of land with its limited resources. Already there is too much ideological rigidity that continues to be an obstacle to sensible and rational life. For those who continue to think in absolute terms, we must emphasize that, while history may have time, men are mortal; that not only our civilizations need their wounds to be healed, but the very land, scarred by the march of armies to the drums of war, needs mending as well. There exists a limit to force and this may be the moment to heal not only the mental agony, but also to remove the physical trenches dug deep in the land. This requires patience, vision, perseverance, and wisdom deeper than mere intelligence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is fitting to end this statement with a verse from the Holy Koran. "Let not a people's enmity towards you incite you to act contrary to justice; be always just, that is closest to righteousness" (The Koran, Sura 5:8).