

HIS MAJESTY, KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN (1935-1999) PEACEMAKER

"He dedicated the final years of his life to the promise not only of coexistence, but of partnership between the Arab world and Israel."

—President Clinton



Remarks of President Clinton • Washington, D.C. • February 7, 1999

Today the world mourns the loss of one of its great leaders, King Hussein of Jordan. I mourn the loss of a partner and friend. He was a magnificent man, and like so many, I loved and

We remember him piloting his plane, traveling wherever his cause took him; flying at night in the years when courage and stealth were required just to speak to one's enemies; soaring in

During the Wye Summit, when the talks were not going so well, he came out within a few short minutes and changed the tenor of the meeting.

admitted him.

King Hussein once wrote, "I believe we must live with courage and will. I must do so because, regardless of any difficulties I face, when the time comes for me to lose my life, I would at least have done my best." He did far better than that.

A humble man and a king; a leader whose nobility came not from his title, but his character; a man who believed that we are all God's children, bound to live together in mutual respect and tolerance.

King Hussein was ennobled. Many times his life was threatened, but each brush with mortality ennobled him. He learned that God only gives us a limited number of opportunities and that we must make the most of them. Surely, he did.

As he survived, Jordan survived. He grew in wisdom, and so did Jordan. He grew in stature, and so did Jordan. He won the respect and admiration of the entire world, and so did his beloved Jordan.

We remember his voice, each word slowly said, followed by a pause, a moment for silent reflection, as if he were reminding us that it is wise to think before we speak, to speak before we act. His manner was as strong and calming as his message.

the sunlight above Jerusalem when the peace he forged with Israel made that possible again.

He once said, "The beauty of flying high in the skies will always, to me, symbolize freedom." King Hussein lived his life on a higher plain. With the aviator's gift of seeing beyond the low-flying obstacles of hatred and mistrust that heartbreak and loss place in all our paths. He spent his life fighting for the dignified aspirations of his people and all Arab people. He worked all his life to build friendship between the Jordanian and American people. He dedicated the final years of his life to the promise not only of coexistence, but of partnership between the Arab world and Israel.

Indeed, he understood what must be clear now to anyone who has flown above the Middle East and seen in one panorama at sunset the lights of Amman and Tel Aviv and Damascus shining in the sky, that in the relationship among peoples who share this small, sacred corner of Earth, one thing, and only one, is predestined — all are bound to be neighbors; the question is not whether they will live side by side, but how. God willing, soon all will see what he saw and preached. There can be no peace, no dignity, no security of any of Abraham's children until there is peace, dignity and security for all of them.

Though man with fighting for his own life, he gave life to the process many felt was failing. The smallest man in the room that day was the largest; the frailest was the strongest. The man with the least time remaining reminded us we are working not only for ourselves, but for all eternity.

To Queen Noor, I extend the heartfelt condolences of the American people. At times such as these, words are inadequate. But the friendship that joins Jordan and the United States, for which your marriage stood and your love still stands, that will never fail. You are a daughter of America, and a Queen of Jordan. You have made two nations very proud. Hillary and I cherish the wonderful times we shared with you and His Majesty, and today we say to you, and indeed to all the King's large and loving family, our prayers are with you.

We say to his son, the new King Abdullah, we wish you well. Our prayers are with you, as you assume the mantle of your father and grandfather. And to the people of Jordan, again we say, we extend the hand of friendship and partnership.

The Koran teaches, you belong to God and you return to him. Today, my friend is in Paradise and God has welcomed home a good and faithful servant.



King Abdullah

We join President Clinton and the American people in expressing our profound sorrow and condolences to King Abdullah, Queen Noor, the family of King Hussein and all the people of Jordan. We are deeply grateful for the many opportunities we have had over the last twelve years to personally meet and consult with His Majesty, King Hussein. We will miss him, and the world will miss his wisdom and good judgment. We wish King Abdullah strength and wisdom in continuing his father's pursuit of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace for all people in the Middle East.



President Clinton

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