

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan constitutes the southern part of Great Syria, which also includes present Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. The present kingdom of Jordan comprises both former Transjordan and a part of Palestine incorporated into the kingdom in 1950. This part will be referred to as the West Bank of Jordan. The former Transjordan received its independence from Britain in 1946 and was declared a kingdom with King Abdullah as its first king.

Jordan has a very important strategic position. It is situated between Africa and Asia. In the Arab World, Jordan provides the link between several Arab countries. It is bounded on the south and east by Saudi Arabia, on the northeast by Iraq, on the north by Syria, and on the west by the occupied part of Palestine.

The area is approximately 37,000 square miles (about the size of the state of Indiana). About 2,165 square miles of this area is the West Bank which was a part of former Palestine. In 1947 before the incorporation of the West Bank, the population of Jordan was 400,000 persons, and the population of the West Bank was 400,000. In 1948, 450,000 Palestinians sought refuge in Jordan after they had

been expelled from their homes as a result of Israeli occupation (1:3-10). In the year 1961, the population of Jordan reached 1,706,226 according to the census taken that year. The latest estimates set the number to exceed two millions.

Great social and economic impacts resulted from the merging of the West Bank with Transjordan. The Palestinians who possess more skills and education helped accelerate the process of economic development. They provided needed teachers for schools at all levels and also they provided skilled people in most professions. From a social point of view, the Palestinians possess more sophisticated culture than the people in Transjordan. As a result, a rapid development in the social system occurred and this in turn helped reduce resistance to the process of economic development. This economic development spread all over the country because the refugees who entered Jordan spread all over the region and started working with the citizens in Transjordan. This close contact helped change the way of life for the people of the East Bank.

The climate of Jordan resembles that of the Mediterranean basin. Winter temperatures do not usually go below the freezing level. Summer temperatures usually stay below 93° F.

Certain areas in Jordan deviate from the normal temperatures of the country. Ajlun's mountains and Ramallah are usually cool and pleasant in the summer while it is very hot in the Jordan valley. Winter temperatures are very equable in the winter resorts of Aqaba and the Jordan valley (Jericho). Humidity is very low in most areas.

Most of the land is very arid. Only a small portion is good for cultivation. About seven-eighths of the population live in the northwestern region which constitutes one-eighth of the country. In this region rainfall reaches 200 to 600 mm. annually. In the eastern and southern parts of the country, the amount of rainfall declines to a low level. The rainy season starts in October and ends in March or April.

As for natural resources, Jordan could be considered poor. Except for phosphates and chemicals of the Dead Sea, no other resources have proved to be economically feasible for exploitation. Oil and coal have not been discovered. A search for oil is still under way. The main chemicals of the Dead Sea are potassium chloride, magnesium bromide, sodium chloride, magnesium chloride, and calcium chloride. Unfortunately, exploitation of these chemicals which exist in large quantities has not started yet, although a major enterprise has been established, but lack of funds and the war of 1967 have delayed the work on the project at the present time.