AMMAN — “Isolation,” the young man cried, his voice shaking. “I solution—
voice shaking. “Isolation
if only we were isolated!”

The appeal was un-
expected from a nation so iso-
lated already as to have no friends on its borders and
almost none elsewhere in
the Arab world.

What the young man
meant—he was an impor-
tant Jordanian government
personage—was soon ap-
parent. It was a fanciful
way that Jordan could be left
alone, freed from the other Arab states that sit on
its back like an Incubus.
The Jordanian govern-
ment, the nation’s Establish-
ment—it men of affairs, it small businessmen and traders, even
its peasants—want peace so bad they can taste it. But in that objective,
the government and its King
are quasi-prisoners, the war-
ers being the Palestinians who constitute more than half of its citizens and the
governments of the Arab
states around it. King Hus-
sein cannot make peace alone—nominally. Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who considers himself guardian of Islam’s holy places, will
sanction no settlement that
leaves Israel in possession
of Jerusalem.

SYRIA awaits any excuse to effect a revolution in Jordan. I raq, uncertain
which way to jump, keeps a
division of troops in Jordan and Hussein cannot remove them. And on the other side
Israel sits President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, shaky at home but able,
if the pretext is half-
way valid, to rouse Jordan’s
Palestinians to revolt, or at
least enough of them to
do the trick. For the time
being, and within limits, Hussein is master of his
own house. His army, police and the Bedouins are fiercely
loyal to him. He suc-
cessfully weathered what
began to look like a threat. Arab embassies from
Abu-Dhabi to Damascus appeared as a Com-
mando force to back him up. Ayatollah Khomeini, if not
well and bloodied the Is-
raeli line at the Fedayeen
Center of Kanatir was
attacked by March 21. By all
reliable reports, Hussein has now brought the
campaign under control. But he was
to do it by halfway dioxid.
He was powerless to extinguish it, much as he would have liked to. It is almost
universally agreed that the
internal political situation
in Iraq is totally incapable of
Hussein to make a peace—if he
can get it—within the terms
of the Nov. 22, 1977, United N ations resolution. He
would agree to democratize the
West Bank when it is returned to him. All
the other substantive issues be-
tween Jordan and Israel are
relatively easily solved ex-
cept Jerusalem. He cannot
get away with a peace that
left the city in Israeli hands, but he could with one that
represented an
internationalized city, even
though the government,
the “Establishment” and probably the majority on
the rank and file, including the
Palestinians, want a real
peace and a final one. But
does he dare negotiate directly with the Israelis or enter a
formal peace treaty
with them as long as Nasser says no. Government figures and
foreign observers are
almost sure that there is a now a chance, perhaps the last good one,
for Nasser and Hussein to agree
They think that there is
never a majority among the
Palestinians who are
allied with a paralyzation of
20 years, with a captivity to the dom-
fighters and politicians and the ideology of professional
nationalists.

BUT THESE sources are
also convinced that time is
running out, that prospects
grow gloomier by the day.
For whatever its reasons, Israel’s refusal to
show for his appeals for
pursuit of a negotiated set-
tlement. “It will take an act
of enormous political cou-
rage to make a m erate
tlement even to a
Cabinet Minister declared
in an interview.” And tomor-
to, the moderate need have a chance. Israel, all
agree, has the power to
make Hussein and his go-

ment weaker. But Israel
is badly mistaken, according
to the consensus here. It
believes that that weakening will
make the King decide to
to more favorable terms for
Israel—because if he at-
tempts it, he will be over-
thrown, or worse. In that
event, what kind of a govern-
ment would follow? A for-
mer Cabinet Minister makes a forecast of a united front
of “the left of the left and the
right of the right”—the
Communists and the ex-

Hussein’s Time Grows Short
To Make a Peace With Israel