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Jordan on the brink: Muslim Brothers mobilize for King Abdullah's overthrow

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Jordanian riot police

Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood has given King Abdullah II notice that he has until October to bow to their demand to transform the Hashemite Kingdom into a constitutional monarchy or face Arab Spring street pressure for his abdication.

debkafile's Middle East sources report that Israeli and Saudi intelligence watchers are becoming increasingly concerned about the approaching climax of the conflict in Amman between Islamists and

the throne .

For Israel, an upheaval in Jordan bodes the tightening of the Islamist noose around its borders – Egypt and Libya to the south and Syria to the north, with unpredictable consequences with regard to Jordan's Palestinian population.

Saudi Arabia, already threatened by Iranian aggression, fears the oil kingdom may be next in line if its northern neighbor is crushed under the marching feet of the "Arab Spring."

The oil kingdom's royal rulers are reported to have belatedly woken up to the peril and are in a panic. They realize that their preoccupation with helping Syrian rebels overthrow Bashar Assad misdirected their attention from the enemies lurking at their own door. Thousands of articles in the Arab press in the past year have predicted that after the Muslim Brotherhood seizes power in Damascus, Amman would be next in its sights followed by Riyadh.

The latest **DEBKA-Net-Weekly** of Sept. 21 analyzed the plight closing in on the Jordanian monarch and outlined three of his options:

1. He could bow to the main Muslim Brotherhood's demand by submitting to the kingdom's transition to a constitutional monarchy and the transfer of executive power to an MB-led government by means of the electoral reforms for which the Brothers have been pushing for years. In Jordan as in Egypt, the Brothers hope for a two-third majority in a free election.
2. He could stand up to the Brotherhood's demands and order his security, intelligence and military forces to crack down on the opposition. This course carries the risk of plunging Jordan into the carnage of civil war among the diverse segments of the population. The biggest dangers come from the Bedouin tribes, whose traditional allegiance to the Hashemite throne has weakened in recent years, and the Palestinians who form 60 percent of the population.
3. He could seek to negotiate a compromise through various brokers. Our sources report that several attempts at mediation have been ventured of late, but got nowhere because the Muslim Brotherhood sent its most radical leaders to the table and they left very little margin for compromise.

According to sources at the royal court, Abdullah will very soon meet with MB leaders for a personal appeal for calm after years of heated debate. Most observers believe that he has left it too late and by now the Muslim Brotherhood has got the bit between its teeth.

Indeed, according to an internal memorandum leaked to the *Al-Hayat* newspaper, the MB has already set a date for mass demonstrations against the King to start on Oct. 10 and ordered its members to go to work at once to mobilize at least 50,000 demonstrators for daily protests against the king and the royal family until he bows to their will.

The memorandum states: "Every member must be dedicated to communicate with his relatives,

close friends, acquaintances, fellow employees and various Islamic groups and patriots...” It calls for the formation of “hotbeds to... focus on the participation of groups affiliated with universities, schools and women’s organizations.” Protesters are also advised on tactics for overcoming a security crackdown.

Jordan’s Muslim Brotherhood has therefore moved forward from opposition propaganda, debating and political pressure to activism against the throne.

Both Jordanian camps are anxiously watching to see which way the wind blows in the White House.

President Barack Obama has a balancing act to resolve: On the one hand, the Jordanian king has long been a staunch American ally and friend, its mainstay in many regional crises. On the other, Obama regards the Muslim Brotherhood as the linchpin of his external policy of outreach to the Muslim world.

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