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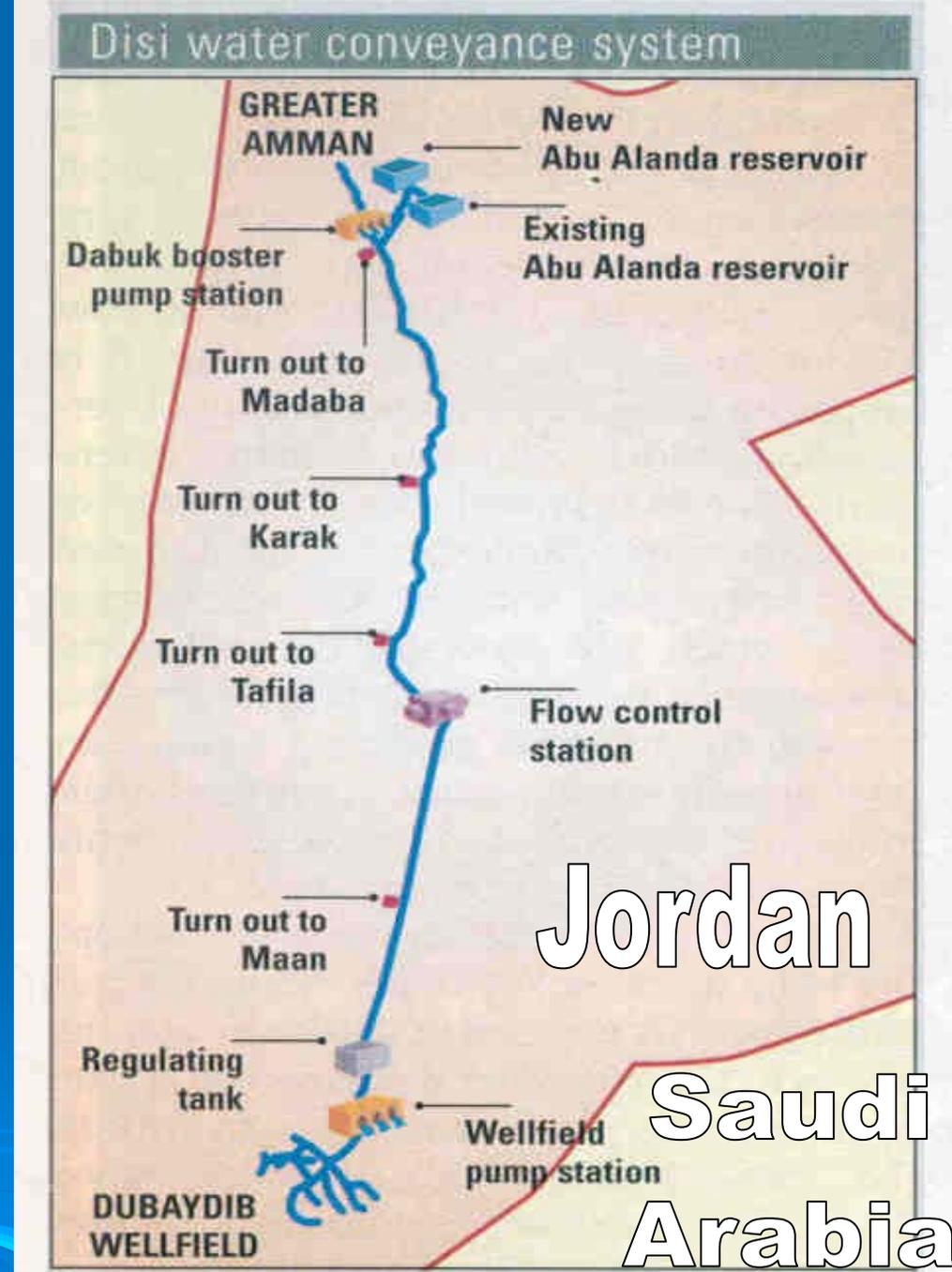
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The securitization of the Disi Aquifer: a silent conflict between Jordan and Saudi Arabia



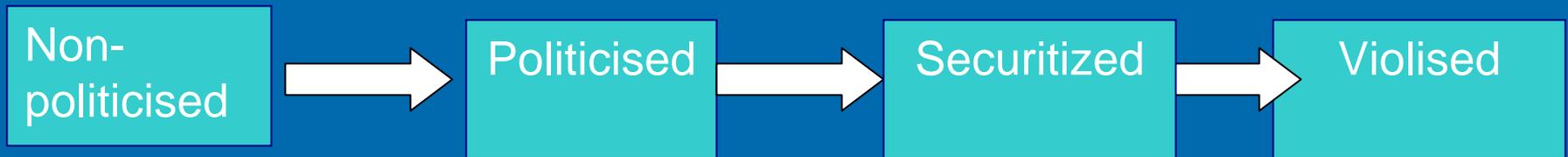
Disi is

- A shared groundwater basin
- A non renewable aquifer
- A project with a heavy environmental impact
- Far from Amman and consequently costly



Our theoretical tools

➤ The securitization continuum



- The Sanctioned discourse
- The hydraulic mission concept
- The concept of “non violent conflict”
- Silence as a method of control & power
- Prior use concept

Why Disi?

- Jordan is one of the countries located within Israel's hegemonic area
- As a consequence of this ,Jordan chose the option to embark on a conflict with Saudi Arabia than opening a new bargaining process with Israel
- Disi is therefore an effect of dominance depending on the Israeli "hydro-Hegemon status"

The politicization phase

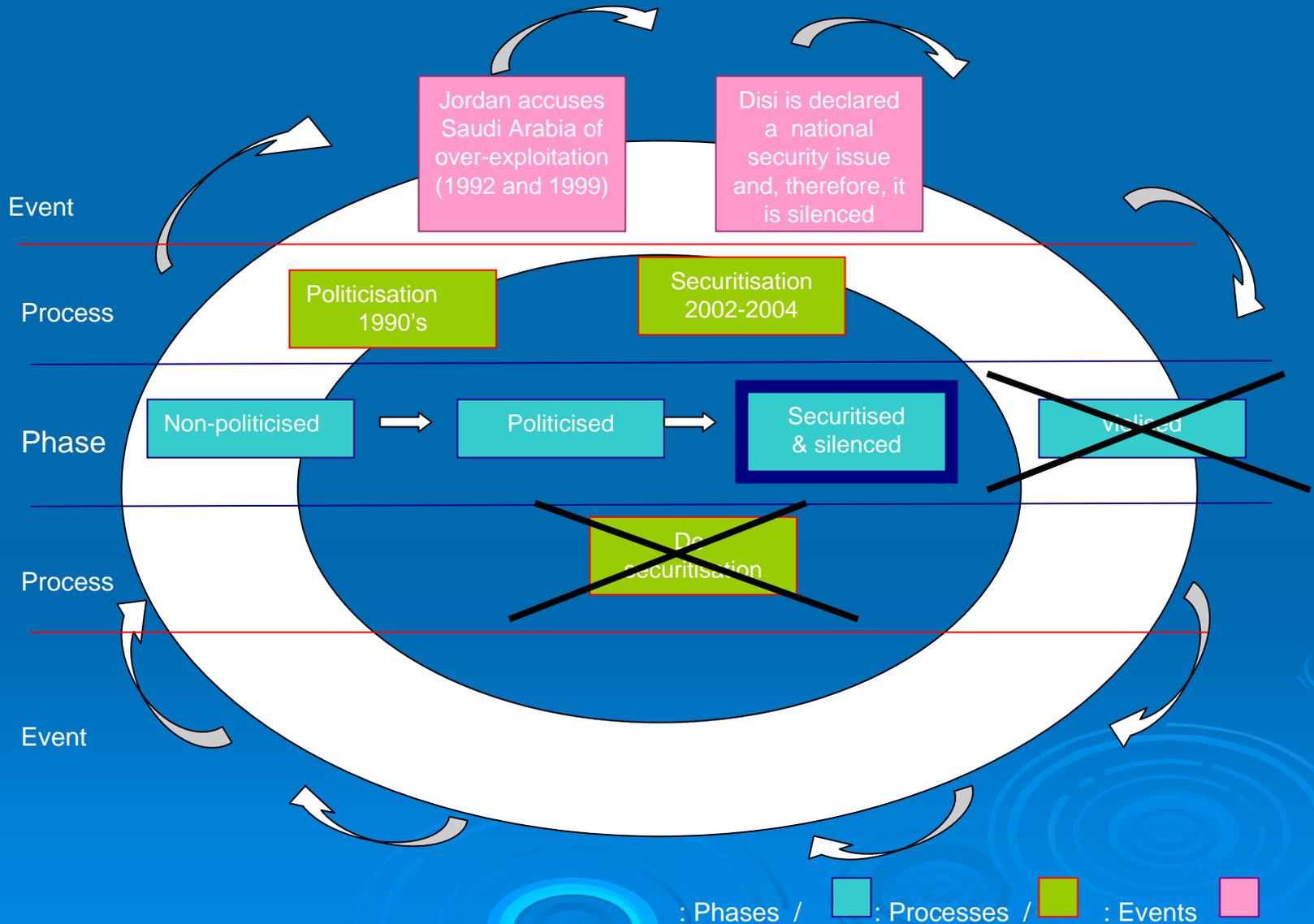
- Disi was discovered in 1984 and until the 1990s geological and hydro-chemical surveys were the only studies available on the subject
- During the 1990s the Disi aquifer was targeted as a short-term solution by Jordan, due to the political unfeasibility of bigger projects at a regional level (Unity Dam, Red-Dead Canal)
- Disi starts to be considered as an international political issue. A “groundwater conflict” and a “pumping race” with Saudi Arabia is feared (Shapland 1997)

The securitization phase

“ An issue may be securitised by the performance of the speech act of inscribing that issue with meaning as part of the security politics ” Neumann 1998

- Jordan accuses Saudi Arabia of over-exploitation in 1992 and 1999, with no official reply from the Saudi Government
- In 2002 the Minister of Water and Irrigation declared that Disi was part of the National Security Issue. As such, the project was set by the Ministry of Water as a first priority for 2002
- Between 2002 and 2004 the accessibility to the environmental feasibility studies has been blocked
- The data regarding the renewability of the aquifer, its capacity and the proposed pumping rate have been secreted.

The narrative and the securitisation continuum of Disi project



Why a silenced securitization?

- A silenced securitization is useful in the case you prepare yourself to exploit the principle of “prior use”.
- This principle of a water agreement, a amount of water to the same times.  Securitized & silenced the past
- A state tries to pump more water than usual in order to claim a major quantity of the resource, in case it will face a bargaining process that will lead to an agreement with a co-riparian state.

Conclusions

- Disi can be put in the list of non-violent conflicts running over shared waters
- Disi project is currently being securitized by the Jordanian Government
- The conflict is being silenced by both Jordan and Saudi Arabia
- A silence as a method of control and power is here suggested as a tool for future analysis in the field of water conflicts

THE FUTURE

Whishing well: waiting for desecuritisation?

“Desecuritisation of water resource management is a healthy manifestation, because it opens up the discourse and allows a wider range of roleplayers to become involved in the resolution of the core problem. This tends to foster institutional development and manifest as a win-win outcome, which is inherently more conducive to economic growth and hence positive peace”. (Turton 2003).

Thank you !

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