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# **The foreign policy of Jordan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict**

## **Introduction**

On 24 February 2022 the Russian army initiated a full-scale aggression against the Ukrainian state. Without a doubt it is one of the most shocking events in world politics. Waging a war in Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was beyond imagination of most politicians and commentators. Russian authorities managed to concentrate a big army, before the eyes of the whole world, and then to strike. Nevertheless, until the very end most people did not believe that the situation would end up in aggression. This lack of faith had rational reasons. There were, of course, commentators believing in the good will of Russia, but this type of naivety characterised only a minority. Most commentators were convinced that a total Russian attack was too risky for Moscow, in political and economic terms. In this case one can speak of a complete lack of understanding of the way of thinking of both sides. Western politicians and observers were convinced that despite all the differences, with regard to basic issues Russians think the same as they do. They were supposed to be guided by the

state and society economic interests. They were also supposed to value, after all, international cooperation. Meanwhile, Russian elites despise the economic approach to foreign affairs and also fully accept isolation, whereas the welfare of Russian society for the authorities in Moscow is completely irrelevant when it comes to military issues. What is more, the society itself fully accepts this line of thinking of the authorities. A certain justification of the observers may be the fact that the attack of 24 February 2022 did bring Russia significant political and economic losses. From the perspective of western observers the losses surpass any benefits.

The actions Vladimir Putin's government result from a complete disregard towards European and American politicians and societies. One must admit that the disregard of Russian elites towards Western Europe turned out to be justified. After a year of war Germany and France showed weakness and their role in global politics underwent further decline. The European Union as a whole again turned out to be a politically minor force. Fortunately, the disregard toward American elites presented by Moscow turned out to be excessive. Additionally, the Russian assessment of Ukraine and the countries of central Europe turned out to be wrong.

The attack of 24 February 2022 was supposed to be a coup, the aim of which was quick overthrowing of pro-western Ukrainian authorities and to establish a pro-Russian government. It was also thought that the Ukrainian society would, at least passively, accept the results of the aggression as it felt a part of the Russian nation. This is the prerequisite to understand further events. Russia, surprisingly, did not plan a long-lasting war, but a brutal and spectacular coup. One may compare it to the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, although the comparison is a bit distant. After the failure of the abovementioned plan the government of Putin did not hold back, but began a long-lasting war. A seemingly impossible situation occurred – in Europe there began a regular war between two countries. The conflict is bigger than the war that broke out after the collapse of Yugoslavia. The war between Russia with Ukraine resonates not only locally, but it also affects the global situation.

A long-lasting war was not a plan of Russia; however, when it became reality Moscow escalated the conflict. Regarding the efforts of the USA to oppose its imperial plans Russia attempted to engage all overt and potential antagonists of Washington around the world. From its perspective an ideal situation would be to create an active, anti-American coalition supporting Moscow, also in its fight in Ukraine. Considering that perspective a vital issue is the attitude of Middle Eastern states, in particular the 'Arab world.' As it is commonly known, it is in the Middle East where Russia has the greatest

possibilities to gain overt allies. Iran, in fact, became a participant in the aggression. The government in Damascus also fully supports Moscow in the conflict. Thus, the area of Levant suffered very severely from the effects of the Dnieper area conflict.

The following text presents the situation of Jordan in the world changed by Russian aggression. Jordan is a pro-western Arab monarchy. It comprises a good example of the effects that the war between Russia and Ukraine exerts on such states. It is necessary to analyze the political situation with which the authorities in Amman have to deal with after 24 February 2022. The question that arises is whether the Jordan monarchy undertook any political actions in the new reality and how it generally has been reacting to this crisis. The second issue are economic results of the war from the perspective of the authorities in Amman. A discussion on this topic requires a revision of the general situation of the Jordanian monarchy that results from the late modern period.

Due to the fact that the topic is, literally, contemporary, it is not possible to use reliable documents in the analysis or to rely on relevant monographies. The following text, apart from the historical part, is based on commonly available news; to a large extent it comprises a personal reflection of the author concerning the abovementioned issues.

## The Hashemiite Kingdom of Jordan

The future Jordan was established as the Emirate of Transjordan in 1921 as a result of talks between Prince Abdullah, elder son of King Hijaz Hussein, and the British Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill. As a result of the agreement, the British handed over civil and police authority to the prince over the lands east of the Jordan, which formally belonged to Palestine, which was their mandate territory. Transjordan, of course, was not independent. Abdullah recognized British suzerainty and his country was a British protectorate until 1946.<sup>1</sup>

Transjordan was only created by the political will of London. Its own people did not seek to form this state. The very organization of a separate statehood was possible thanks to British subsidies. A separate elite in Amman, both at the court and in administration, was shaped in close cooperation with Great Britain. Until the end of his life, Abd Allah I himself hoped that his loyalty to London would allow him to seize the throne in Damascus and

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<sup>1</sup> M.C. Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the making of Jordan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 52–53.

unite Syria with Transjordan.<sup>2</sup> The most important element of this cooperation, however, was the establishment of the emirate's professional army (the Arab Legion) consisting of several thousand members during World War II. It was created by British officer John Bagot Glubb. Previously, this force was a small police unit. It was only during the war that Glubb persuaded London to create a professional emirate army. Formally, the commander-in-chief was the monarch, however, the de facto role was filled by Glubb. This army was almost entirely financed by London. In return, senior positions in the Arab Legion were filled by the British. The armed forces became the most important state institution and at the same time the main tool of London's influence on Amman.<sup>3</sup>

The army created by Glubb was a professional formation, employing even the illiterate. People from the Bedouin tribes were especially valued. There were no incentives for educated Arabs. Recruits had to serve from a simple soldier and could reach the position of an officer after many years. At the same time, the pan-Arab ideology had little influence on the soldiers. The only ideology that was promoted was loyalty to the monarch and the Hashemite family. Partly thanks to this, Amman avoided a phenomenon so typical of the 'Arab world' in the years 1949–1970 – military coups. Even after the Arabization of the command, the officer corps remained weakly politicized.<sup>4</sup>

In 1956, Glubb and British officers were removed from the kingdom, but the army maintained a strong relationship with the West, mainly (from 1957) with the USA. The army, expanded to tens of thousands of men, remains dependent on foreign subsidies.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, these armed forces allowed the state, which gained formal independence in 1946, to take part in the first Arab-Israeli war. As a result, the kingdom took control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1948. From then on, two-thirds of its population were Palestinians. The old people of Transjordan passively accepted the foreign policy of the court. The new subjects were reluctant to having any ties with the West, and were even hypersensitive to any rumors about talks with

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<sup>2</sup> Abd Allah Ibn al-Husajn, *The memoir of King Abdullah of Transjordan*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1950, p. 203; J.B. Glubb, *Britain and The Arabs. A Study of Fifty Years 1908 to 1958*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959, pp. 50–60.

<sup>3</sup> M.C. Wilson, *op. cit.*, s. 217; J.B. Glubb, *The Story Of The Arab Legion*, London: Da Capo Press, 1948, p. 350 and 359–360; P.J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and Military in Jordan: A study of the Arab Legion 1921–1957*, London: Taylor and Francis, 1967, pp. 73–74.

<sup>4</sup> P.J. Vatikiotis, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> J. Lunt, *The Arab Legion*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 138.

Israel. The hostility of the Palestinians was the main internal problem of the monarchy, which was called Jordan only after 1948.<sup>6</sup>

The next decades of Jordan's history were characterized by periodic clashes between the Palestinian-backed left-wing opposition and the court and army. In 1951, the first king of Jordan, Abdullah, was assassinated in Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup> His grandson Hussein I, who reigned from 1953 to 1999, maintained a generally pro-Western option in foreign policy, but three times he risked actions contrary to the will of his protectors. In 1956, he broke off cooperation with the British and appointed a pro-Naser government. However, already in 1957 he suppressed the left-wing opposition and became associated with the USA. In 1967, the king made an alliance with Egypt and sided with it in the war against Israel. This decision turned out to be a fatal mistake. Israel smashed the Jordanian army and occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This loss turned out to be irreversible.<sup>8</sup> In 1970, the existence of the monarchy was threatened by armed Palestinian groups. In September 1970, a civil war broke out in Jordan. As a result, the government army defeated and expelled the Palestinian militants from the country.<sup>9</sup> For 20 years, the monarchy was unthreatened, and Hussein I pursued a pro-Western policy. However, in 1990 he made another volt. After Iraq attacked Kuwait, the king did not support the US. He demanded that the conflict within the 'Arab world' be resolved through talks. His stance was considered pro-Iraqi, and the oil monarchies cut Jordan off from subsidies and expelled its citizens. Hussein I gained popularity among the Palestinians, but the country was in danger of economic disaster.<sup>10</sup>

In order to get out of the impasse, the king established talks with Israel and rebuilt good relations with the West. In 1994, Jordan broke the peace treaty with Israel and was the second Arab state after Egypt to recognize the existence of this state.<sup>11</sup> These important decisions marked the full return of the kingdom to cooperation with the Anglo-Saxons, and it was also the last major decision of the monarch. King Hussein I died in 1999.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> M.C. Wilson, *op. cit.*, s. 198; J.G. Sparrow, *Modern Jordan*, London: Routledge, 1961, p. 15; P. Robins, *History of Jordan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 70.

<sup>7</sup> M.C. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–209.

<sup>8</sup> P. Robins, *op. cit.*, pp. 120–124.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130–132; K. Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, London–New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998, pp. 240–241.

<sup>10</sup> J. Zdanowski, *Historia Bliskiego Wschodu w XX wieku*, Wrocław: Ossolineum 2010, p. 462; U. Dann, *King Hussein's Solidarity with Saddam Husayn*, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1990, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> P. Robins, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

## The reign of Abdullah II

During the reign of King Hussein I, Jordan basically pursued a policy of cooperation with the USA, despite officially declared neutrality. Hussein, however, was able to take risky steps and temporarily associate himself with anti-Western Arab leaders. His successor Abdullah II broke with these pretenses and became involved with US policy without any understatement. This may be due to the fact that the new king is deeply rooted in Anglo-Saxon culture. It should be recalled that Abdullah II is the son of Hussein and his second British wife, Mrs. Toni Gardiner. At the beginning of his reign, he was even accused of speaking better English than Arabic. The new monarch, unlike his father, is also characterized by a reluctance to make sudden decisions.<sup>13</sup>

Abd Allah II's reign, which has already lasted more than twenty years, is overshadowed by two threats. The first is the danger of Islamic terrorism. This is especially true of the rise of Sunni jihadism. The second is mass exile. The conflicts in Iraq and Syria have led to a massive influx of refugees into Jordan. The Kingdom incurs significant economic costs for this.

The primary goal of the Jordanian system of power is to maintain a stable monarchy. The security of the state in fact means keeping power in the hands of the Hashemite family and securing the position of the current monarch. In the times of Abd Allah II, who has been associated with the army and secret services for a long time and initially not very liked by the masses, this is even more obvious. Security understood in this way, based on cooperation with the Anglo-Saxon powers and on an agreement with Israel, is at odds with the moods of a large part of society. How consistently Abd Allah II implements this option is evidenced by the fact that in 2003, when the US invaded Iraq, Amman supported Washington's move. This was despite the fact that neither the court nor the king was in favor of this step. Jordanian elites have had good relations with Saddam Hussein's regime for years. What is more, they correctly predicted the catastrophic consequences of the American move. Despite this, the king decided that for the Hashemites there was no other option than to maintain close relations with the US, even when Washington pursued wrong policies.<sup>14</sup>

As predicted, the occupation of Iraq brought mainly problems to Jordan, and also to the Americans. The rise of the anti-American guerilla in Iraq has given great new strength to the Islamic movement, both Sunni and Shia. The complete destabilization of the neighboring country also threatened to backfire

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.193 and 200.

<sup>14</sup> B. Milton-Edwards, P. Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: A Hashemite Legacy*, London–New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 120.

on the authorities in Amman, and yet they still have problems related to the conflict in Palestine. In 2008, it was estimated that there were over 700,000 refugees from Iraq in Jordan. Earlier in 2005, terrorists associated with al-Qaeda in Iraq carried out several bomb attacks in Amman, killing dozens of people. The leader of the organization was a Jordanian, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The threat of such attacks has become a permanent element of the situation in Jordan after 2004.<sup>15</sup>

The destabilization of Iraq by the attack of US forces, however, led to even worse consequences from Amman's point of view. In Iraq, the dominance of Sunni Arabs, existing since the creation of a separate state there, has collapsed. Shia politicians took power. This marked a dramatic increase in Iran's influence in Iraq. At the same time, the Shi'ite Hezbollah movement has become a veritable state within a state in Lebanon. In fact, his army is stronger than the government army. As the government in Damascus is dominated by Alawite Shiites, the Jordanian authorities began to feel something of a strategic encirclement. As early as 2004, King Abdullah II began talking about the creation of a 'Shia crescent' that stretches from Iran through Iraq to Syria and Lebanon. The king also spoke in 2005 about the threat to Arab countries from Iran's influence. Jordan's elite may indeed have felt threatened. In the changed situation, Iran, and even more Lebanese Hezbollah, have become very popular among Palestinian youth. They managed to overcome the barrier separating Shiites and Sunnis in this environment. Faced with these threats, the Jordanian monarchy stepped up police measures. At the same time, the alliance with Saudi Arabia was strengthened. It should be added that this alliance results from a common perception of threats. It exists despite the longstanding animosity between Hashemites and Saudis. The Jordanian authorities also continued the policy of cooperation with the Anglo-Saxons, despite the fact that the 2003 US attack was rightly pointed out as the cause of the threat.<sup>16</sup>

In 2011, the events of the so-called 'Arab Spring' occurred. In Jordan they were peaceful. They manifested themselves in small demonstrations of the opposition. However, in neighboring Syria, they led to a bloody, still unfinished civil war. The country has de facto disintegrated. The civil war in Syria, which was supposed to be a nation's struggle against Bashar Assad's dictatorship, at least in the West's imagination, has to a large extent become a series of clashes on a religiously divided background. The armed groups of Sunni fundamentalists have become the core of the opposition. In turn, the ineffective government army was replaced by units of Shiite fundamentalists. A large army of Hezbollah and even

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121 and 128.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Revolutionary Guard troops from Iran were fighting in Syria. The government in Damascus also received support from Russia. This situation was predictable. Syria was allied with the USSR for decades. Russia of Putin upheld this alliance. The US and Western Europe have clearly declared their willingness to overthrow the Assad dictatorship and the BASS party. Russia, Iran and Shia groups defended the Syrian government. In retrospect, it should be noted that this situation has strengthened the Moscow-Tehran axis. Moreover, the actions of Russia and Iran were consistent and successful, the Assad government survived. US actions have been inconsistent and unreliable. The situation in Syria has undoubtedly strengthened the Russian leader's contempt for Western politicians.<sup>17</sup>

The civil war in Syria is a multifaceted subject that is impossible to describe within the framework of this text. However, it is important to note the problem faced by the Jordanian government. As a permanent ally of the US and Great Britain, it was a supporter of the overthrow of the Assad government. If Washington decided to attack Syria as it did Iraq, Amman would undoubtedly accompany the ally. However, the US did not attack, but supported the armed opposition. Some units hostile to the regime were created, armed and trained in Jordan. In 2014–2015, these groups appeared in the southern suburbs of Damascus and the Golan Heights. Ultimately, however, the Syrian government overcame this threat. Jordan has been flooded by another wave of refugees. It had to appeal for new international aid to sustain over 1 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees. The relations with Damascus, which had always been tense, were completely broken and nothing was gained.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, there was the case of the completely incalculable so-called Islamic State. On June 6, 2014, troops of this organization entered Mosul. Within a few days, they captured Iraq's second largest city. In a matter of weeks, the Islamists took over most of northern Iraq. They also controlled a large part of northern Syria. This organization, thus, created a territorial state, obviously not in the light of international law, but de facto. In this territory, the Islamists used a policy of terror. The Islamic State represented an extreme form of Sunni fundamentalism. Its actions were clearly intended to shock the West. It is difficult today to explain the reasons for the rapid success of these extremists in 2014–2015. The information that is difficult to verify indicates that Sunni elites, e.g. in Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Qatar wanted to stop the expansion of Iran's influence. This extreme organization could initially be seen as a tool to achieve this goal. However, this organization almost immediately

<sup>17</sup> F. Pichon, *Syria. Porażka strategii Zachodu*, trans. G. Majcher, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, 2015, pp. 7–8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

crossed any boundaries that Sunni leaders could tolerate, including the court in Amman. If the Islamic State limited itself to fighting the Assad government or the authorities in Baghdad, it could be tolerated. However, the Islamists proclaimed their leader the Caliph of the Muslims. If this declaration were to be accepted even for a moment, Abd Allah II's Hashemite background or the title of guardian of the holy cities borne by Saudi kings would lose all meaning. At the time of this proclamation, the Islamic State was at odds with the conservative Arab monarchies, as if the conflict with the Shiites was not hard enough.<sup>19</sup>

In such a complicated situation, Abd Allah II pursued the traditional policy of close cooperation with the US. Because Washington formed a coalition against the Islamic State, Jordan joined it. The activities of this coalition in 2014 were limited to bombing Islamist territories. Several Jordanian aircraft participated in this action. Finally, in 2014, one Jordanian plane was shot down (or crashed); its pilot, Maatha al-Qassasba, fell into the hands of the Islamists. The Islamic State may have been playing this card when negotiating the release of the pilot. Meanwhile, the Islamists, in accordance with their strategy of shocking the world with images of terror, burned him alive in January 2015, and in February showed the recordings. Some specialists suspect that the recording of the execution was faked to evoke horror, and the pilot was killed in a different way. Jordan responded with increased airstrikes against Islamic State positions. King Abdullah II was said to have personally participated in these attacks. All in all, this act of bestiality strengthened the position of the king and the rulers of Jordan, and deprived the fanatics of all support. In 2016, the Islamists, operating in the deserts of Syria and Western Iraq, were approaching the borders of Jordan, but they did not achieve a lasting success.<sup>20</sup>

And here a paradoxical situation arose. Against the background of the activities of Sunni Islamists from Mosul, even the conflict with Iran has temporarily receded into the background. There was also no doubt that it was Iran and the Shiite forces armed by it that dealt decisive blows to the Islamic State. Russia's intervention in Syria and its cooperation with Iran also contributed to this. US forces also intervened against the Islamists. However, the aviation of Russia and the USA did not cooperate with each other and sometimes even bombed each other's agents. The authorities in Amman remained in the US camp, at the same time having to look with dejection at the ineffectiveness of the ally.

<sup>19</sup> P. Cockburn, *Państwo Islamskie*, trans. M. Bielik, Warszawa: PWN, 2015, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> "VP/HR – Execution of Muath al-Kasasbeh", *European Parliament*, 11.02.2015, [www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-002205\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-002205_EN.html) [accessed: 21.03.2023].

## War in Ukraine

Jordan, as indicated above, is deeply involved in the events in Syria, but at the same time it was not interested in the problem of Russia's relations with Ukraine. Unexpectedly, these issues became surprisingly close. For the Russian leader, the intervention in Syria could even become a political and military training ground for future actions. In Syria, he found out that he could act in a risky way against the US; after all there were almost clashes between the special forces of the two superpowers. The inefficiency of Washington, which lost the case of Syria, despite having all the advantages on its side, must have strengthened Putin's will to act. For Moscow's decision to invade Ukraine, the conflict in Syria and the behavior of the Americans could have important and underestimated consequences. In Moscow's calculations, the other superpower has lost some credibility.

The Jordanian authorities, like the leadership of many smaller countries, unexpectedly faced the consequences of a conflict that originally did not interest them. This happened at a time when the political structure of the region was clearly deregulated. The most important fact seems to be that the US policy of 2001–2021 led to a disruption of Washington's relations with its former allies in the Middle East. No new ally was gained. Anyway, it is difficult to talk about US policy towards the region. The presidencies of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden have seen four different policies and constant changes in fundamentals. Relations with Turkey can be cited as an example of Washington's 'achievements' during this period. In view of the important changes in Ankara and the consolidation of the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his party, The US did not find any methods of cooperation. On the contrary, the biggest rupture in mutual relations in decades has been allowed. Ankara has started to promote the idea of its strategic 'autonomy,' although fortunately it has not severed allied ties. Putin's Russia, on the other hand, took full advantage of the situation and greatly improved its relations with Turkey, while maintaining a close alliance with Iran. This is worth noting.<sup>21</sup>

The previous pages showed how deep are the ties between Jordan and the Anglo-Saxon countries, currently with the USA. King Abdullah II is a vivid example of a pro-American leader for the Arab world. And yet, even in this case, the Americans managed to weaken the unions. This resulted from Washington's fundamental disregard for the political interests of the weaker partner. King Abdullah II supported the US on Iraq and had nothing but problems as a result.

<sup>21</sup> K. Smoleń, *Geostrategiczne położenie Turcji w XXI wieku*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2020, p. 76.

He also supported them on the issue of Syria, and at times it threatened armed clashes. If the US invaded Syria like Iraq, he would become a participant in the action. Meanwhile, Washington led to a complete severance of relations with Damascus, and then left its partner alone with all the problems arising from the situation in Syria. This disregard for the weaker partner came to a head under the presidency of Trump. Then a typical accident happened. In May 2017, the US president, in a conversation with Dmitry Lavrov, allegedly provided him with important information about the Islamic State. Apparently, he did it to show off his knowledge. The problem was that this was top-secret information provided by Jordanian intelligence. They were handed over on the condition of non-disclosure, even to US partners. Trump did not care at all. His behavior must be considered pure stupidity. It should be added that this information is unofficial and given in the publications as guesses.<sup>22</sup>

Regardless of whether everything in this story was true or not, it well reflected the way Trump behaved. Under the circumstances, even the Jordanian regime had to regard the US as an irresponsible partner. Most of all, they understood that they had to deal with problems on their own. Already in 2018, when the Syrian rebels operating from Jordan finally lost, Amman accepted the de facto resumption of border traffic. However, in 2021, the normalization on the Amman-Damascus line deepened. On September 30, 2021, the full restoration of border traffic between Jordan and Syria was officially announced. The Nasir-Jaber border crossing has been opened. On October 3, 2021, Jordanian Airlines resumed direct flights to Damascus. Moreover, representatives of Jordan and Lebanon called on Washington to ease the sanctions imposed on Syria. However, a spokesman for the State Department wrote that the US does not want to normalize relations with the Assad regime and does not encourage other countries to do so. Following this statement, Jordan's move became moderately anti-American. It was the biggest crack between the USA and Jordan during the reign of Abdullah II. It may be added here that also in September, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt signed an agreement to transport Egyptian natural gas to Lebanon via a pipeline through Jordan and Syria (existing but inactive for years).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> O. Górczyński, "Trump zdradził swoich sojuszników Ameryki. Konsekwencje będą wielkie", *Wirtualna Polska*, 16.05.2017, <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/trump-zdradzil-swoich-sojusznikow-ameryki-konsekwencje-beda-wielkie-6123233566713473a> [accessed: 21.03.2023].

<sup>23</sup> "Jordania i Syria wznawiają ruch graniczny", *TVN24 Biznes*, 30.09.2021, <https://tvn24.pl/biznes/ze-swiata/jordania-i-syria-wznowily-ruch-graniczny-rzecznik-departamentu-usa-komentuje-5433650> [accessed: 21.03.2023].

Jordan became an example of a conservative Arab state that had previously been closely cooperating with the US, which, as a result of Washington's actions, abandoned its previous policy and started acting independently. Of course, Jordan conducts such activities with moderation, but even for Amman it has become impossible to adhere to Washington's directives. Similar symptoms apply to the policies of Saudi Arabia, Qatar or Abu Dhabi, which of course have much greater resources.

Against this background, the role of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine can be properly assessed. Over the past dozen or so years, Putin's Russia has conducted a very good policy in the Middle East. It has managed to strengthen its alliance with Iran and Syria. What is even more interesting, however, has improved its relations with Turkey and Egypt. At the same time, relations between the Arab monarchies and the US were rather deteriorating. The example of Jordan, until now absolutely faithful to Washington's policy, is an extremely significant case here. Russia was not the initiator of this situation; it was the US that ignored Amman's interests for many years. Russia did not even benefit from the situation, so far, but in the perspective of this type of circumstances gave it the chance of new advantages. A special opportunity for Moscow's policy was created by the so-called Ankara's 'neo-Ottoman' policy. Potentially, Jordan could be a partner not so much to Russia as to Turkey. This finesse game, given the level of incompetence displayed by the US, could have completely destroyed Washington's dominance in the Middle East. The problem was that this type of activity had to continue for decades. Moreover, Russia could not pose a threat to its neighbors. Meanwhile, it turned out that all this finesse was intended to prepare a brutal attack. The government of Putin did not want to continue its long-term policy. He dreamed of changing the entire international order in a few days with one blow. It failed. Moscow's entire game was largely wasted. The Russian attack and its failure in 2022 is an unexpected political 'gift' for the US. Thanks to this, Washington was able to partially rebuild its influence with its former allies. In the case of Jordan, it must be added that it does not oppose US policy in Central and Eastern Europe. Already in January this year, information appeared about the plan to transfer to Ukraine about 400 Jordanian Challenger 1 tanks. These tanks are obsolete, so they would be renovated in Germany. The tanks would be bought from Amman. Again, it is impossible to say whether the thing is real, or rather someone in Amman dreams of getting rid of the hardware ballast and making money on it. There was no doubt, however, that at least on the issue of Russia's war with Ukraine, Washington and Amman returned to close relations. Is the thing real, or rather someone in Amman dreams of getting rid of the

equipment ballast and earning money on it. There was no doubt, however, that at least on the issue of Russia's war with Ukraine, Washington and Amman returned to close relations.<sup>24</sup>

## Conclusion

Russia in the times of President Vladimir Putin sought to rebuild its position as a world power- this has never been a secret. The problem was whether this program was real. Also important was the question of how far Moscow could go to achieve this goal. After 2000, most countries in Europe and Asia preferred to forget about Russia's aggressive nature. Against the backdrop of Moscow's weakness, US policy was particularly aggressive, inept and short-sighted. Russia was no longer feared as a potential aggressor and was perceived as a real economic and political partner. In the Near and Middle East, Moscow has effectively supported its policy with Iran and its Shiite partners. In Syria, this axis successfully defended the dictatorship of Assad and the BASS party. Even in Iraq, where the US completely changed the political system, Russia's successes in relations with Iran and Syria were partly due to relations dating back to the times of the USSR. However, after 2000, Moscow also clearly improved its contacts with Turkey. The USA, on the other hand, effectively compromised itself politically. Even its former partners began to see Washington as an unreliable partner. President Trump's actions sometimes cannot be perceived in terms of any policy at all. Jordan, one of the oldest US allies in the region, had to make its policy on Syria independent of its ally's disregard for its interests. Potentially, there was a possibility of a gradual disintegration of the American sphere of influence in the region. Apart from Russia, the policy of China (PRC) also contributes to this. There was also, perhaps, a chance to create a group of conservative countries in the region around Turkey, which have become independent of US directives.

Jordan could be such a partner, and Turkey's cooperation with Qatar during its conflict with the Saudis was a fact. These prospects were favorable for Russia. These opportunities were lost by Russia's attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Moscow revealed its aggressive nature, its actions crossed the boundaries accepted in politics. The inept USA has again become a potential defender. As far as the Middle East is concerned, this aggression has put

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<sup>24</sup> A. Świerkowski, "Niemcy wyremontują jordańskie Challengesy dla Ukrainy?", *Defence24*, 27.01.2023, <https://defence24.pl/przemysl/niemcy-wyremontuja-jordanskie-challengesy-dla-ukrainy-komentarz> [accessed: 21.03.2023].

Turkey in a difficult position. Ankara is trying to maintain independence and an equal distance between Moscow and Washington. However, it undoubtedly does not care about the conquest of Ukraine by Russia. Jordan, which may have been moving away from its American protector, will rather maintain the old type of relations with Washington in the new situation. Once again, it should be recalled that for Putin, Russia's attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022 was supposed to be a historic breakthrough that would change the balance in the world in a few weeks and break NATO and US influence in Central Europe. The attack was supposed to lead to a change of power in Kiev, exchange of elites and bringing Ukraine to the position of Belarus. In the Middle East, in Syria, he became convinced of the ineffectiveness of US forces. The attack was, therefore, to additionally discredit the Americans and to demonstrate their passivity. The transformation of the conflict into a war lasting over a year broke these plans.

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## Abstract

On 24 February 2022 Russian forces attacked Ukraine. This attack started a war that had been going on for a year. However, before the attack the authorities in Moscow had for many years been pursuing the policy of weakening American influences. It turned out to be effective in the Middle East; Russia consolidated its alliance with Iran and supported Syrian authorities. Simultaneously, unsuccessful policy of the USA led to weakening Washington alliances, even with such pro-American countries as Jordan. The article presents the relationship of the Hashemite monarchy with the USA and the relationship crisis. The attack of Russia on Ukraine spoiled the so far effective policy of Russia, made it weaker on the international stage, and enabled the USA to revive former alliances.

**Key words:** Russia, Ukraine, war, Jordan, Abd Allah II