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JORDAN: ARAB SPRING SYNDROME AND ACUTE CHALLENGE FROM THE ISLAMIC STATE

The primary purpose of the article is to indicate some specifics of military-political factors affecting the Middle East countries, and particularly the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan within the 2nd decade of the current millennium. Two tendencies have been discovered, which had made an impact on development of the Monarchy, following the events of the Arab Spring. Jordanian participation has been shown in its respond to the new challenges posted by Islamic state threats.

Key words: reforms, constitutional monarchy, the Arab Spring, Islamists parties, economic advantages, reasonability.

Raising of problem. Political and military situation in the Middle East region remains an actual topic for more than a half of century. Latest research works show new loops of ongoing confrontation in this long-troubled region with a disturbing trend towards certain extension of the conflict area and reshuffle of major players. The main idea of the article is to highlight Jordan, as one of the mediators in the region and to describe its progress within the period of 2011–2015. This Middle Eastern monarchy and its regional policy remains an actual subject which has been studied by political scientists specialized in international relations within a long period of time.

Analysis of the last researches. Jordanian developments following the «Arab Sprig» events have been effectively scrutinized by the Middle East team at Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The team is represented by Tally Helfont [4; 5; 6], the Director of FPRI's Middle East Program, whose studies concern regional balance of power, Jordan and Persian Gulf States, and related U. S. policy; Samuel Helfont [4; 5] from Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, whose research work focuses on international policies of the Middle East; Andrew Spath [16] from the American University School of International Service, Washington DC, whose research interests involve comparative politics, specializing in the Middle East, peculiarly the Levant. Certain recent developments in different layers of the Jordanian society have been studied by Irish scientist Beverley Milton-Ewards [13; 14] from Queen's University Belfast. Ukrainian scientists including Stan-

islav Troyan [17] from Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine, Alla Zakharchenko [18] from Odessa Mechnikov National University, Yuliia Gergel [3] from Kyiv Slavonic University have studied closely the «Arab Spring» situation regarding Ukrainian position. And finally experienced Russian researchers Alexander Krylov [9] from Moscow State Institute of International Relations and Alexander Demchenko [2] from Institute of Oriental Studies revealed some precise details on the subject concerning Jordan and related circumstances.

The aim of the article is to mark out Jordan among the Arab neighbours for its mediator's role in the region and rational policies facing violent events of 2011–2015.

At the beginning of February 2015 international community was shocked by the brutal murder of young Jordanian F-16 pilot, captured by Islamic State (IS) extremists. Militants of so-called Caliphate are well-known for posting the videos over Internet with explicit scenes of mass hostages' executions. «The pilot was captured when his plane came down near Raqqa, Syria, during a mission against IS in December 2014» [10]. This time they mercilessly killed an inhabitant of a small town of Karak, which is situated 140 km to the south from Amman, capital of Jordan.

Analyzing this case in spotlight of ideological, military and political aspects a question arises: «Why does IS concentrate its efforts on fighting religious branches inside Islam instead of attracting foreigners to Islam?» To cover this question the author would like to refer to the prequel of «Neo-caliphate epic» and to find out, what role does the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan play in the Middle East escalation in the second decade of the current century?

The Arab world has been considered for a continued period of time as a region turning aside from the total advance of globalization and modernization. For all that the education progress and the access to new technologies, e.g. Internet, have been always alerting the society to some political and economic deficiency in the said countries. Even the mineral wealth available (especially that of oil resources primarily in the Persian Gulf), added by some cautious reforms claimed to raise the living standards, has given no anticipated feedback, particularly, among the young generation.

A retrospective glance brings us to Mohamed Bouazizi, a young Tunisian greengrocer, who set himself on fire as a political protest. Nobody knew that the action would awake the democrats and opposition to support their movements throughout Tunisia and finally would sweep off the 23 year stay-in regime of Ben Ali. Furthermore the protest movement spread over to neighbour Algeria and ignited domestic unrest in Egypt and Jordan in January 2011. The February wave of riots and internal conflicts put an end to the 30 year rule of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and rolled over Bahrain, Syria, and Libya.

The Arab Spring considerably upset the strategic balance of power in the Middle East. All the countries have been divided in two categories: these, who wanted more democratic transformations of their societies and those, who wanted to keep stable economic situation. The tendency hasn't bypassed Jordan. The Hashemite Kingdom has found itself between two counterparties: on one side, it was the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)

led by Saudi Arabia, on the other side, they were motive forces of the Arab Spring, which urged to political reforms in such countries as Egypt, Syria, and Libya, where the reforms were carried out at the cost of stability.

The revolutionary process in the Arab world hasn't only triggered nationalist political parties to the motion, but has activated a certain review and transformation of international ties in the region. The Spring has put apart the political actors throughout the whole parties of the conflict, where each player tried to adjust a new regional order to his own interest. The collapsed regimes in Egypt and Tunisia were considered as a foothold for a moderate Sunnite alliance, which felt some inclination towards the USA and simultaneously a pressure and thread of the Iranian aspiration to the regional hegemony. Besides the Islamists' and Democrats' political parties were urging to the cardinal reforms. The leaders of the moderate Sunnite alliance, which included Saudi Arabia, Persian Gulf countries and Jordan, were caught by sudden American support of protest movements, which swept off Mubarak's and Ben Ali's regimes in Egypt and Tunisia accordingly. The last countries have secured their positions due to the political and military components in order to face the challenges related to the Arab Spring.

As opposed to the prosperous neighbours of the Persian Gulf Jordan is poor and its political and cultural trends are showing favour to the countries of the Mediterranean basin. Thus the whirlwind of the Arab Spring took in Egypt, Syria and other Mediterranean countries reacted with greater force as it was in the most Persian Gulf countries (neither did Bahrain probably). Accordingly Jordan appeared between two confrontation powers: on one side, they were Sunnite monarchies of the Persian Gulf trying to keep their regional policy and economic stability and to maintain the Jordanian regime by the invitation to join the GCC. On other side, it was the pressure of immediate political reforms related to the Arab Spring and widely spread throughout the whole Mediterranean basin. And unexpectedly a small Arabian monarchy of Jordan transferred into a key battlefield between the seekers for a more democracy and the defenders of status quo.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy formally. The lower house of the parliament is elected by the Jordanians and the upper house (which has more real power) is assigned by the King, and which is to be approved by the lower house at a later date. Jordan has been enjoying certain stability during a few last decades and the King, Abdullah II, while ascending the Throne, was considered as a key initiator for Jordanian modernization. In 2001 a NGO King Abdulla II Fund for the Development (KAFD) was established and its main goals were declared as «to improve living standards in the Kingdom's governorates by implementing social, educational and economic programmes aimed at distributing sustainable development gains through partnership with the private sector and civil society institutions» [8]. Anyway the initiatives widely announced at the beginning of his ascension «Jordan First — 2002», «National Agenda — 2005», «We are all Jordan — 2006», and «National Dialogue Commission 2011» have all failed to make a significant impact on Jordan's political and economic landscape» [4].

An extra complication related to ethnic and social diversity has arisen resulted by the division of the society into inhibitors of the Eastern Bank (who have their historical roots at the eastern bank of the Jordan River) and the Western Bank or Jordanians of Palestinian origin. By estimation dispersed from 55 % to 70 %, inhibitors of Palestinian origin dominate the private sector, whereas inhibitors of the Eastern Bank show a stable tendency to overfill institutional facilities related to the culture, security and the Army of course.

Jordanians of Palestinian origin were traditionally considered as aboriginal Jordanians i.e. «not quite real» so less loyal to the state and monarchy. There is a certain concern that any real democratic transformation may force native Jordanians to retreat from their political power in favour of Palestinian Jordanians and somehow upset the active political balance trended previously to the monarchy towards more radical Palestinian centrism. Ideological palette of the Jordanian society has also made its substantial impact on the political landscape's shaping. The Tribalism traditions have always been treated with diligent respect on both sides of the Jordanian political spectrum. The most organized opposition is represented by Islamists's factions where the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic Action Front (IAF) remains the biggest and the most active faction of the Jordanian parliament. Unlike prevailing Arab countries the Muslim Brotherhood is politically integrated within Jordanian society and «the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic Action Front (IAF) ...has historically played the role of the loyal opposition» [16].

In spite of the fact that the leaders of Islamist party are represented by Jordanian high-society families, which come from the Eastern Bank, the promotion of Palestinian interests (inside Jordan and in the Western Bank areas) has become a key-note for this organization. At the same time the average IAF members are Jordanians of Palestinian origin, who used to live in refugee camps. Thus the populist slogans of the priority activities and the attempts of spacing the Muslim Brotherhood from their Palestinian basis has turned this Islamist party into the most powerful demander of political reforms and put their supporters into front rows during the Arab Spring events.

It was July 2011 when back of Friday prayers thousands of Jordanians started their weekly sit-down strikes demanding political and economic reforms following the demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt. Youngsters' unemployment, corruption and social-economic stagnation have called out Jordanians, as it has been with their colleagues from Tunisia and Egypt. «There have been no open calls for overthrowing the monarchy and almost everyone agrees on the need to avoid the chaos that has accompanied the uprisings in neighbouring countries» [5]. The social protests, demanding prime-minister's resignation and calling for more freedoms, turned into clashes with security forces and so-called «loyal monarchists» in the downtown of Amman.

Apropos it was May 2010, prior to the events of the Arab Spring, when the National committee of military veterans, unifying approx. 140 thousands of military veterans from the Eastern Bank, released their appeal to the King, calling His Majesty to put end to the corruption, to stop unpopular economic reforms and it was particularly noteworthy that they drew the attention to

indirect influence made by the Jordanians of Palestinian origin on traditional standard of life in Jordan. In much the same way 36 key persons of Jordanian tribes published in February 2011 (since the beginning of the Arab Spring) a very critical statement on the monarchy. The Jordanian sheikhs pointed out in their statement that the crisis was arising because of overwhelming corruption of certain «power centres». As opposed to the demands of Islamists and Liberals to delegate certain competences to Palestinian population in Jordan the statement made some implicit references to the Queen Rania and other influential Palestinians. The document requested to elect the Government and not to assign it by the King and categorically rejected any privatization of public assets, which looked like a plundering of the country.

Coming back to summer 2011 it is worthy to note that the demonstrations and violent clashes with security forces have taken place not only in Amman the capital, but in the areas where the Tribalism positions have been always strong, particularly in *Ma'an*, *Karak*, *Irbid*, and *Tefilah*. The activists of Youth- and Left-wing movements and the Muslim brothers have seized the opportunity of new waves of protests and they have used to join the Friday demonstrations and to fill them with new demands i.e. «resignation of the government, dismissal of the parliament, and amendments to the constitution due to the direct elections of prime-minister».

The bloody events in Syria and Yemen have become a certain deterrent to growing movements and taking the Jordanians to the streets. Another deterrent to be understood was that the Jordanian events haven't affected the institute of monarchy and H. M. the King Abdulla II. The intermediate role of the King Abdulla II, his active contacts to tribal leaders and spectacular roadshows with the corrupted officials and the heads of Jordanian local authorities have served to avoid the most of destabilizing elements associated with the Arab Spring. To cool things down and to calm the protestors «Jordan's King Abdullah II announced sweeping reforms in a nationally televised address Sunday, promising to establish a parliamentary majority government — a key demand of protesters calling for changes to the regime» [1].

One more deterrent aspect was that a certain category of Jordanian population believed that the solution lay in the promoting alternative models of reforms, inter alia, economic transformations related to the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). According the IRI (International Republican Institute) poll conducted in July 2012 which analyzed Jordanians' attitude towards the valid direction of the monarchy's development in economic, social and political areas: «Jordanians are divided over the direction in which their country is headed, with 43 percent believing Jordan is headed in the right direction, and 45 percent saying the country is headed in the wrong direction» [11].

It is also noteworthy that their attitudes' split in October 2009 was «More than half of Jordanians believe their country is going in the right direction while less than a third believes things are going in the wrong direction» [12].

A clear majority of the Jordanians welcome the idea of joining the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council because they associate Jordanian membership with

a possible inflow of money and neither with desperate need for political and democratic reforms. The said membership also presumes not only the attraction of increased investments but the creation of jobs for young unemployed Jordanians.

The growing politicization and militarization of Persian Gulf countries progressively increases the demand for human resources that can't or won't be supplied by these countries. In this regard Jordan, having confirmed reputation as a supplier of qualified personnel to the armed forces, may reinforce so called «Arabian Peninsula Shield» by its servicemen and promote GCC's transformation into an independent military power of the region. Therefore the most of Jordanians have a positive attitude towards the possible membership in the Persian Gulf Council and except a certain enhancement of their financial and material well-being and primarily an access to the jobs in different sectors for Jordanian specialists.

In early 2015 the Jordanian participation in US-coalition fighting the Islamic State (IS) took on a new dimension upon a brutal murder of Jordanian Royal Air Force pilot Lt Muath al Kasasbeh who was burned to death by IS jihadist militants after his F-16 Falcon aircraft fighter crashed down in Syria. «This murder seems to have galvanized Jordanian society as well, even softening some of those who criticized the King for embroiling the Kingdom in the U. S.-led war that would provoke such a backlash» [6].

Family of the murdered air force lieutenant and his countrymen played a certain role of changing the Jordanians attitude towards exclusion from a participation in the war contra fellow Muslims and support for military operations against IS militants. The King Abdullah II has visited Karak town personally to extend his condolences to Muath family and the F-16s after massive bombing of IS jihadists' bases on their way to home base have flown over their combat fellow's town and saluted him by waving the wings. As a proportionate response Jordan executed two Iraqi jihadists, sentenced to death penalty, and reported of killing 55 Islamic State militants during the mentioned airstrike. Soon the international media reported that the United Arab Emirates provided additional F-16 aircraft fighters to be used by Jordanian pilots during the airstrikes on the IS jihadist positions.

Prior to the Muath's murder the King of Jordan said during his meeting with the US senators in December 2014 that his country will conduct merciless war against the terrorists on their territory. The monarch implicated the air strikes of Jordanian Royal Air Force neither less than the participation in ground force military operations of the coalition in Syrian and Iraqi territories. The risks of the invading Islamic State may threaten the very foundations of the monarchy. The key topic discussed with the US President Barak Obama on early Dec 2014 was US increased support to the Hashemite Kingdom facing increased flow of refugees from Syria, Islamic State militants and economy troubles. There is a fear that «Islamic State fighters could covertly slip into Jordan by hiding among the millions of refugees who have poured over the border from Syria, escaping that country's brutal civil war» [15]. This concern is very serious for the fundamentals of the Kingdom and

has aroused a real headache for the last generations of Hashemite monarchs. The Jordanian officials have to take into account new realities of IS militants warfare and the fact that «the state now perceives Jordanian Islamism as influencing and being influenced by the experiences of jihadist forces in Iraq and Syria which impacts for home grown terrorist threats» [13].

Thus the Jordan cannot carry alone that heavy burden of hosting the refugees from its troublesome neighbours. International organizations as well as «the UN refugee agency says Jordan is host to more than 600,000 Syrians, who compete for goods and services with Jordanians and hundreds of thousands of Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. The US has so far given Jordan \$ 268 m to assist the Syrian refugees» [7].

It is worth noting that the US economic and military aid to the Hashemite Kingdom has been already nearly doubled since 2011.

Conclusions. The dualistic monarchies (Jordan, Morocco) display more invulnerable stability and adaptability during the Arab Spring turnover, compared with fragile quasi-democracy republic regimes in Northern Africa. Jordanian population in their majority feels the urgency of vital reforms but demonstrate their aversion to provocative demonstration of the Left and Muslim opposition in favour of phantom wellbeing if getting a full ally of the prosperous Persian Gulf monarchies. A new wave of Syrian immigrants, escaping from the IS reality of harassment and intimidation, differs from those of Iraqis refugees following the Gulf wars, who were financially more sustainable and who succeeded of pushing aside small and medium business Jordanian entrepreneurs. A new spiral of rivalry is triggered between different layers of Palestinians, reinforced by West Bank's and even Gaza Strip's migrants, and so called old Jordanians of famous families, supported by Bedouins tribes. A new thread of bringing Islamic State ideology may galvanize the Jordanian society and create tensions among the communities as it did before.

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ЙОРДАНІЯ: СИНДРОМ «АРАБСЬКОЇ ВЕСНИ» ТА СУЧАСНІ ВИКЛИКИ ІСЛАМСЬКОЇ ДЕРЖАВИ

Анотація

У статті показані нові аспекти протистояння у регіоні Близького Сходу. Автор розглядає Йорданію в якості одного з посередників у регіоні та аналізує прогрес її регіональної міжнародної політики у період 2011–2015 років. У статті здійснено аналіз подій «арабської весни». Автор вказує, що революційні події в регіоні зсунули стратегічний баланс сил. Всі країни були розділені на дві категорії: прихильників більш демократичних перетворень та прихильників стабільної економічної ситуації. Хашимітське королівство опинилося між двома сторонами: з одного боку, це була Рада з питань співробітництва арабських держав Перської затоки (GCC) під керівництвом Саудівської Аравії, а з іншого боку, були рушійні сили «арабської весни», які закликали до політичних реформ. Йорданія перетворилася на поле бою між шукачами більшої демократії та захисниками статус-кво. Ускладненням автор називає етносоціальне різноманіття королівства (населення Сходу, що має історичне коріння на східному березі річки Йордан, та населення Заходу — йорданці палестинського походження). Автор зазначає, що існує стурбованість тим, що будь-яка демократична трансформація може змусити корінних жителів Йорданії відступити від своєї політичної влади на користь палестинських йорданців і організованої опозиції, яка представлена фракціями ісламістів, де Ісламський фронт мусульманського братства (МАФ) залишається найбільшою та найактивнішою фракцією парламенту Йорданії. На відміну від інших арабських країн, мусульманське братство є політично інтегрованим в йорданському суспільстві, і Ісламський фронт ісламського діяння мусульманського братства (IAF) історично відіграв роль лояльної опозиції. Нові спіралі суперництва між верствами палестинців, посилені мігрантами, і так званих «старих морданів», підтримуються бедуїнськими племенами. Автор доводить, що дуалістичні монархії (Йорданія, Марокко) демонструють більшу стабільність під час «арабської весни» порівняно з республіканськими режимами квазі-демократії в Північній Африці. Йорданське населення відчуває важливість реформ, але демонструє своє неприйняття провокаційної демонстрації лівих і мусульманських опозицій на користь фантомного добробуту, якщо стати повним союзником процвітаючої монархії Перської затоки. Нова тема залучення ісламської державної ідеології може посилити йорданське суспільство та створити напруженість між громадами, як це було раніше.

Ключові слова: реформи, конституційна монархія, «арабська весна», ісламістські партії, економічні переваги, доцільність.

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Аннотация

В статье показаны новые петли противостояния в регионе Ближнего Востока. Автор анализирует прогресс Иордании в ее региональной международной политике в период 2011–2015 годов. В статье осуществлен анализ событий «арабской весны». Автор указывает, что революционные события в регионе нарушили стратегический баланс сил. Все страны были разделены на две категории: сторонников демократических преобразований и сторонников экономической стабильности. Хашимитское королевство оказалось между двумя сторонами: с одной стороны, это был Совет по сотрудничеству арабских государств Персидского залива (GCC) под руководством Саудовской Аравии, а с другой стороны, действовали силы «арабской весны», призывающие к реформам. Иордания превратилась в поле боя между искателями большей демократии и защитниками статус-кво. Осложняющим фактором автор называет этносоциальное многообразие королевства (население Востока, имеет корни на восточном берегу реки Иордан и население Запада — иорданцы палестинского происхождения). Автор отмечает обеспокоенность тем, что демократическая трансформация может заставить коренных жителей Иордании отступить от своей политической власти в пользу палестинских иорданцев и организованной оппозиции, которая представлена фракциями исламистов, где Исламский фронт мусульманского братства (МАФ) остается крупнейшей и активной фракцией парламента Иордании. В отличие от других арабских стран, мусульманское братство политически интегрировано в иорданском обществе, и Исламский фронт исламского действия мусульманского братства (IAF) исторически играет роль лояльной оппозиции. Новые спирали соперничества между слоями палестинцев, усиленных мигрантами, и так называемых «старых» иорданцев, поддержаны бедуинскими племенами. Автор доказывает, что дуалистические монархии (Иордания, Марокко) демонстрируют большую стабильность во время «арабской весны» по сравнению с республиканскими режимами квази-демократии в Северной Африке. Иорданское население осознаёт важность реформ, но демонстрирует неприятие провокационной демонстрации левых и мусульманских оппозиций в пользу фантомного благосостояния в союзе с процветающей монархией Персидского залива. Усиление исламской государственной идеологии может создать напряженность между общинами.

Ключевые слова: реформы, конституционная монархия, «арабская весна», исламистские партии, экономические преимущества, целесообразность.