

BARTOSZ WRÓBLEWSKI

John Bagot – A Friend of Arabs or Agent of Imperialism?

Abstract

It is difficult to give an unambiguous answer for the question presented in the title. J.B. Glubb considered himself to be a friend of Arabs and the Arab issue. At the same time he was a loyal officer of the British Army. He did not see any contradiction in this. J.B. Glubb began his work in the Transjordan Emirate in 1931. In the beginning he commanded the border guard made of Bedouins and since 1939 the whole army of Transjordan, namely the Arab Legion. During World War II he considerably developed these armed forces. In 1946 Transjordan gained independence. Despite this J.B. Glubb maintained his command over the Arab Army until 1956. In 1948 he commanded the army during the conflict with Israel that was coming into being. During his military service he attempted to care about the interests of the House of Hashimites. Basically, he associated the Arab issue with the interests of this house. He believed that it was possible to permanently combine Arab interests viewed in that perspective with the influence of the British in the Middle East. Such reasoning turned out to be an absolute misconception. The officer was becoming more and more hated by a large part of Arabs. For many he was a symbol of being enslaved by the British. His reasoning of the Arab issue was becoming an anachronism. Eventually, he became a nuisance also for the Hashimites. Therefore, in march 1956 young king Husayn took the command from him and removed him from Jordan. Despite such ending of his military and political career one must admit that he was one of more interesting figures of the late British Empire.

Keywords: Glubb, Hashimites, Arabs, Arab Legion, Jordan, England

The question posed in the title is, obviously, a provocation and the further description of the career of J.B. Glubb should make readers aware of how inaccurate in relation to his person are such statements as a friend of Arabs or British agent. John Bagot Glubb

himself considered himself an ally of the Arab matter, but at the same time loyalty towards the Great Britain was for him an axiom. He did not see any contradiction in such attitude. The final period of his career coincided with the time, when the prestige of the British Empire imploded. The commander of the Jordan forces did not want to accept this fact. Unfortunately for him, the external world changed so much that his private system of loyalty and understanding of politics became something weird and anachronistic. He was always, however, quite an unusual British officer with original approach to tasks that he was supposed to do. In the 50s of the 20th century the assessment of his role in the Middle East was quite unambiguous. In the Arab world the propaganda in most countries used to present him as an agent of British imperialism, so as a harmful figure. In the Great Britain he was often considered as an outstanding person, but due to the fact that he served the Empire. Such image preserved, but in fact the actions of this officer were motivated by slightly more complex reasons.

The following text aims not to write a biography of John Bagot Glubb. It would require a much longer study. One should, however, point out to several aspects of his career. The point is not only about his actions, but to present the context in which they took place. It indicates that the political situation in which he fulfilled his concepts was in fact changeable and unambiguous. Even the basic fact that J.B. Glubb was a British patriot and an officer with many year experience and at the same time a commander of the army of a formally independent Arab country seems today to be something bizarre, but it was not so in the 40s of the 20th century. In order to bring closer this quite extraordinary situation one should indicate several important moments in the activity of J.B. Glubb as the commander of the Jordan army. One should explain how important role this officer played in the very process of creating Hashimite's military forces called then the Arab Legion. It is also connected to his political and social concepts, that he wanted to realize in relation to organising the new army. Regarding other issues one should also point out his role in the period of the conflict in Palestine in years 1946–1948 as well as political struggle concerning accession of Jordan to the Bagdad Treaty. Apart from that one should describe the mechanism of his conflict with Panarabic opposition, especially after 1952.

The commander of the Jordan army was a vivid and extraordinary figure. He was sometimes compared to Thomas Edward Lawrence – the famous Lawrence from Arabia. Today the second one is more remembered, mainly thanks to films. It should be emphasised that both figures were very different in terms of character. One needs just to mention the fact that Th.E. Lawrence tried to look like Arabs; J.B. Glubb never pretended, he always used to wear the officer uniform. Despite striking differences they, however, both represented the same idea that relied on connecting the British affairs with strengthening the importance of the house of Hashimites. The dynasty was to perform, according to this idea, at least partial unification of the Arab world and should base the stability of its authority on political and economic collaboration with the Great Britain. Whereas Th.E. Lawrence was acting in the time when all engagements seemed possible, J.B. Glubb acted in different reality that was generally hostile to such ideas. It should be mentioned

that the commander of the Jordan forces was basically a realist. Even if he had some broad ideas of solving problems of the Middle East he usually did not present them in public. He was aware of what resources he had at his disposal and knew about material limitations.

The commander of the Jordan forces played an important role in several historical events, which is noteworthy as today those events are often omitted or forgotten. At the same time his fame is often completely exaggerated. He was said to be even a proconsul of the British Empire in Jordan, or even in the whole region of Levant. Such perspective turned out to be completely inaccurate and resulted from the then propaganda-struggle. J.B. Glubb was, however, connected in a characteristic way with both Hashimite's elites in Amman as well as military elites in London. His position was extraordinary, which is noteworthy, but it often resulted not from his personal features but rather the character of Jordan connections with the British protector. On one hand one may state that without the person of J.B. Glubb Jordan would be under similar domination of London, but on the other hand one must admit that this officer managed to give it a special form.

Presenting several important aspects of the activity of J.B. Glubb in the Hashimite country in years 1939–1956 should make readers aware that simple interpretation schemes cannot reflect the then-reality. This concerns not only subjective feelings of the commander himself, but the objective historic situation, in which he was to act. J.B. Glubb himself was convinced that he acted in the interest of Arabs and, at the same time, he himself formulated what is meant by that. In many issues it is possible to notice anachronism in his way of thinking. It is easy because he was generally quite honest in his statements. Simultaneously, from the perspective of 60 years the accuracy of his predictions may be surprising. Anyway, he was surprisingly inconsistent and the reality many times scuppered his plans.

The source base of this text are British documents gathered in the National Archives in London, especially Foreign Office and War Office collections. Moreover, it is possible to use works written by J.B. Glubb himself. Some of them have a form of diaries. The reminiscences entitled *A Soldier with Arabs* from years 1946–1956 are almost a document. J.B. Glubb wrote this book (that was dedicated to his own role in the Arab Legion) in 1956 just after the exile from Jordan. Additionally there are many academic works concerning events from years 1946–1956 that enrich the description and sometimes correct some opinions of the people involved.

In order to get to know the important part of the history of the Middle East it is important to highlight several aspects of actions of the interesting figure which J.B. Glubb was. Thanks to that it will be possible to admit that the same man could be both an ally of the Arab interest (the way he understood it) and not really an agent, but rather a patriot of the British Empire. What is even more important, it will be possible to remind the specific aspects of the political situation and the historical period, which caused that such behaviour was possible. It will also be possible to indicate the fact that many of the mistakes made in this period resulted from fairly objective reasons rather than lack of knowledge among the policy makers.

Creation of Transjordan

The Emirate of Transjordan, which only after joining the West Bank in 1950 began to be called the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, came into being in 1921. The establishment of this monarchy resulted from the political game of the British and the Hashimites. There was no social movement that strived to separate the land of Transjordan and grant it with a state status. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 the Arab lands were in a state of political vacuum. The establishment of Transjordan was one of the actions undertaken *ad hoc* by the British, that aimed to harness the disarray they in fact caused.

During the World War I London managed to gain the support of the aristocratic family of Hashimites that had ruled for hundreds of years in the land of Al-Hijaz and the saint cities of Islam – Mecca and Medina. Since 1516 the family acknowledged the supremacy of the Osman, but in 1916 their leader, sharif Husayn¹ and his sons Abd Allah and Faysal led the uprising against the Turks. The uprising took place mainly in Al-Hijaz and Transjordan in the desert areas. The British in the so-called MacMahon – Husayn correspondence promised the Hashimites to bring most of the Arab lands of the Osman Empire under their authority. It was in the time of warfare that Husayn, Sharif of Mecca proclaimed himself the king of the Arabs. The countries of entente recognized his title, but limited it only to Al-Hijaz. After ending the conflict collaboration of the two forces was continued. In Damascus a provisional government was formed. 8th March 1920 in that city the formation of the independent Kingdom of Syria was proclaimed. The monarchy was supposed to cover the area of the present Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Palestine. Prince Faysal, son of the king Husayn, was proclaimed the ruler. The project was rejected by the French. The British, despite some pro-Hashimite leaning, did not defend the case of Faysal².

In April 1920 the Great Britain and France concluded in San Remo an agreement concerning the division of Arab lands. The agreement specified statements of the pact made by the powers in 1916 (Sykes-Picot agreement). In San Remo it was agreed that both Lebanon and Syria would be in French sphere of influence. Great Britain was supposed to control Mesopotamia together with the area of Mosul as well as Palestine and Transjordan. The French did not wish to have in their sphere of influence a Hashimite government with Pan-Arabic ambitions. 24 July 1920 the French army defeated weak Arab militia and seized Damascus. The victors removed Prince Faysal from Syria, thus eliminating there the Hashimite power³.

The French actions made the situation more complex also in the British sphere of influence. In the area of Transjordan there appeared vacuum of power. The British did not want to involve their own forces. The Hashimites felt obviously disappointed and they took some counteractions. Prince Abd Allah came to Mecca with military forces of

¹ Randall Baker, *King Hussain and the Kingdom of Hejaz*, The Oleander Press, Cambridge–New York 1979, pp. 2–4.

² Danuta Madeyska, *Liban*, Trio, Warszawa 2003, pp. 29, 38–39.

³ Bartosz Wróblewski, *Jordania*, Trio, Warszawa 2011, p. 42.

several hundred men. 2 March 1921 he came into Amman and was generally sincerely welcomed by notables of bigger cities. The prince officially proclaimed that he shall take control over this area in the name of his father, King Husayn and brother Faysal. He also announced to take fight against French occupation of Syria. In reality, however, he was ready to negotiate.

At the same time in Egypt and Palestine the new secretary of colonies, Winston Churchill, was present. He decided to settle the problems of the region by returning to collaboration with the Hashimites. First, in result of the conference in Cairo on 12 March 1921 the Kingdom of Iraq was established. The crown of this country was offered to Faysal. 27 March 1921 W. Churchill participated in talks with Abd Allah in Jerusalem. As a result it was decided to establish on the East Bank the Emirate of Transjordan with the capital in Amman. Abd Allah was announced the Emir, but his position initially resembled the function of a governor on behalf of the British. The Emir agreed not to provoke the French. Later he claimed that W. Churchill promised him to make them leave Damascus within half a year⁴.

In this way the lands of Transjordan were separated and given a status of a separate monarchy. Obviously, the establishment of factual control of Amman over the whole country took several more years. The legal status of the country was still not clear. One should add that conquering Syria by the French had a very strong impact on the ideas of permanent dominance of the Hashimites in the area of the Middle East. Despite that there was still a group of British activists that though of fostering the dominance of London by patronizing the authority of this family.

The sons of the king Husain received thrones of disproportional rank. Faysal became the king of Iraq and it fulfilled his ambitions to a large extent, whereas Abd Allah, who was older, was ruling the desert area of Transjordan. According to quite optimistic data in 1922 in his Emirate there lived about 130 thousand settlers and 100 thousand Bedouins. Amman was assumed to have this year from 2,5 to 5 thousand inhabitants and the biggest city Salt about 20 thousand. This data are sufficient to realize weakness of the Sharif authority. In reality his budget was based on British donations. It should be emphasized, however, that Transjordan never fulfilled the ambitions of Abd Allah. Considering that his brother took power in Iraq he announced that it is him who should have the throne of Syria. Even in the twenties the Emir considered himself the king of Great Syria, which was supposed to cover the area of virtually the whole region of Levant, thus the present area of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan. Sharif Abd Allah did not abandon this idea till the end of his life. At the same time when he was ruling in Amman he supported peace and collaboration with the British and did not risk hostile actions against the French⁵.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 46–47.

⁵ Mary C. Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the making of Jordan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, p. 56.

The position of the Hashimite family generally deteriorated in result of fights in the Arab Peninsula. There occurred sudden expansion of the Saudi family led by Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud. King Husayn was not able to stop actions of his rival. What is even worse, after abolition of the caliph office in Turkey 3 March 1924 king Husayn and Emir Abd Allah made a risky decision and 6 March 1924 Husayn was proclaimed as the successor of the prophet. This announcement happened in ash-Shuna by the Jordan river in the area of Transjordan and was supported by Abd Allah. The proclamation of king Husayn as the caliph of all the Muslims was recognized nowhere but in Al-Hijaz and Transjordan. The British were strongly against this action. What was even worse, the forces of the Saudi attacked Al-Hijaz and in September 1924 they seized At-Ta'if and in December Mecca. King Husayn had to abdicate. His next son took the throne but after a year he had to leave Al-Hijaz together with the family. The holy cities of Islam together with the province were under the rule of Ibn Saud. What is more, he took the title of the king of Al-Hijaz and received approval of that fact by the British. Therefore, he became the leader of a formally independent state. At the same time both Faysal and Abd Allah ruled in British protectorates⁶.

In the changed situation Abd Allah had to resign from more ambitious plans, but he did not renounce the idea of the Great Syria. In years 1925–1946 his cooperation with London was full and relied on full subordination towards the protector. In return the British organized Transjordan into poor, but functioning country. In years 1925 and 1927 its territory was enlarged by joining the province of Ma'an and port in Akaba as well as Wadi as-Sirhan territory that connected the emirate to Iraq (up to this moment these lands belonged to Al-Hijaz). In 1928 Transjordan concluded a treaty with the Great Britain, in which the protector recognized its separate state status and established Abd Allah as a hereditary monarch of this territory. The following year a parliament was established in Amman and the emir gave the country a constitutional status. Therefore, separateness of Transjordan was based on solid base⁷.

An issue of the emir having independent military forces remained a very important point. The problem seemed in early thirties definitely bad. Abd Allah did not have, in reality, military forces and there was not a possibility to create such forces

The Arab Legion – An Untypical Army

Officially, the emir of Transjordan controlled some military forces. In contemporary Jordan, army forces are called Al Jeish al Arabi which means: the Arab Army. This name was first used in Amman already in 1923. It was a way to officially state that this is a legacy of the insurgent army from years 1916–1918. However, the official ideology had a little to do with the reality. Abd Allah brought a few hundreds soldiers

⁶ Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, pp. 45–46.

⁷ B. Wróblewski, *Jordania...*, p. 62.

from Al-Hijaz but he was not able to maintain even such small army forces. What is more, he sent a large part of those forces to his brother in 1924 to protect Al-Hijaz from the House of Saud. That campaign ended in defeat. Because of that, the emir was left mostly with police/army troops maintained by the British Treasury. Those troops forced the local people to accept the authority of the emir and to pay taxes, and this, according to London, was supposed to be their sole role. Behind the grand name, which was changed in English into the Arab Legion, stood a troop that numbered only 750 people in 1922. Even the attacks of Ibn Saud's warriors were repelled by the tribal militia of Banu Sahr confederation – the largest union of Bedouins in Transjordan, which was in a close alliance with the emir⁸.

In 1926 the Arab Legion numbered over 1000 soldiers. Its commander, a British officer Friedrich Gerald Peake, aimed to give it a more military nature. However, in the same year the British government refused to fund the expansion of the formation. What is more, it forced to reduce the army. The quantitative force of the Arab Legion stabilized and theoretically numbered 855 people. The little number of machine guns and cannons they had was taken away. Since then, as a part of the protectorate of Transjordan, there was supposed to exist a police force, including mounted police, armed with rifles. Its tasks were limited to keeping the internal order. Even the surveillance of borders was entrusted to a different unit, the so called Transjordan Frontier Force, which was subjected to the Jerusalem's government and – on the organizational level – had nothing in common with the court in Amman⁹.

In the late 20s and early 30s of the twentieth century, it turned out that the Frontier Force was completely unable to keep the order on the desert borderland of Transjordan. Since in 1927 the emirate was expanded in the south, and at the same time Ibn Saud strengthened his rule in the north of Al-Hijaz, as a result a new inter-Arab border was created, which cut across the lands of many Bedouin tribes, for example the land of the Howaitat confederation. The border existed only on the maps, as at first nobody respected it on the land. What is even worse, the House of Saud, especially their warriors motivated by Wahhabism ideology, sought the expansions towards the north. In such conditions, the inconsiderable forces subjected to Jerusalem, which imposed the adherence to the artificial dividing line, became resented across the board and were simply ineffective¹⁰.

In such circumstances, captain John Bagot Glubb began his career. This British officer born in 1897 came from a family with long military tradition. He served in engineering armies and spent the whole First World War on the Western Front. Until the end of the war he had no connection to the Arab world. After the victory he wanted to continue his military career so he volunteered for active duty in Iraq in 1920. During his stay on the Iraqi desert, J.B. Glubb became very interested in the lives of Arab nomads. It could even be said that he became fascinated by the Bedouin way of live and tradition. In

⁸ Godfrey Lias, *Glubb's Legion by Godfrey Lias*, Evans Brothers, London 1956, pp. 71–72.

⁹ Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and The Military in Jordan. A Study of The Arab Legion 1921–1957*, Routledge, London 1967, pp. 69–70.

¹⁰ James Lunt, *The Arab Legion*, Constable, London 1999, p. 28.

the 20s he learnt Arabic and familiarized himself with the nomads' practices. His superiors held his experience in such high esteem that in 1928 British mandatory authorities in Baghdad appointed him as Inspector of Administration on Southern Desert. This post enabled him to create a small but successful, and what is important – recruited only from among Bedouins, border protection unit. J.B. Glubb was its commander till 1930. He was in charge of countering attacks from Wahhabit groups. During that time, he perfected his working methods on desert and cooperation with tribes. In 1930 Arab authorities in Baghdad reduced the military personnel because of the incoming conclusion of the mandate. J.B. Glubb had to leave his post in Iraq but at the same time he was enabled to enter Transjordan. In 1931 he relocated there in order to perform very similar duties to the ones he did on the desertic borderland of Iraq and lands belonging to the House of Saud¹¹.

J.B. Glubb moved to Amman in December 1930 and was given a post of the inspector of desertic area. He managed to convince the British resident in Amman, Henry Cox, to change the whole policy towards desertic area of Transjordan and Bedouin tribes. The matter was mostly connected with the southern region which was troubled by Wahhabit's attacks and the stance of the tribal confederation of Howaitat, which dominated the area, was uncertain. J.B. Glubb convinced the policymakers that they should remove from the border the hated Border Protection Forces. The duty to protect the borders should be given to the paid tribal militia and, at the same time, they should create an efficient border protection unit that would consist of local Bedouin volunteers. J.B. Glubb himself went to the south and started to form such a unit. The new unit was called the Desert Patrol. The recruitment was very difficult and lasted a long time. J.B. Glubb was visiting nomads' camps and tried to make a positive impression about his idea on the elders of the tribes. He wrote a very detailed description of the beginnings of his formation and also described many almost anthropological details concerning Bedouins' customs. Without getting into details it could be stated that at the end of 1931 the Desert Patrol hired 90 people, and its total number of available posts was supposed to be around 100. The commander also had good relations with the elders of many tribes, which may have been even more important than the recruitment. Of course, it was also possible because J.B. Glubb had lots of money when it came to Transjordan¹².

In its actions the Desert Patrol submitted to the customs of nomads. What was being guarded was not the linear border, but the general order in the border area. When it was necessary, they went to the Saudis' territories. It was mostly connected with the desire to get back the stolen herds on the emirate's territory. They also often negotiated with border governors of the Saudis or the elders of the tribes that were under their control. When J.B. Glubb accepted that the complaints made by the people of the Saudis' territories were justified, he paid them damages. In contrary to the worries of the British officials, such

¹¹ James Lunt, *Glubb Pasha. A Biography Lieutenant-General Sir John Bagot Glubb. Commander of the Arab Legion 1939–1956*, Harvill, London 1984, pp. 14, 18–19; J. Lunt, *The Arab...*, pp. 30–31.

¹² J. Lunt, *The Arab...*, pp. 35–36, 42; G. Lias, *Glubb's Legion...*, p. 83; J.B. Glubb, *The Story of The Arab Legion*, Hodder & Stoughton, London 1948, pp. 78–79, 92–93.

behavior did not cause a flood of complaints from the Saudis. In fact, it was accepted by both sides of the artificial border. In two years a relative peace appeared on the desertic border. The commander in his memoir loyally claimed that although the control over the tribal sallies was the Patrol's achievement, the cessation of the Wahhabits' attack was thanks to Ibn Saud's policy. At that time, he checked the uprising of the most fanatical group, the so called Ihwans. Those societies were destroyed or submitted to the court. Thanks to that, they stopped causing chaos on the borders with neighboring countries¹³.

The Desert Patrol turned out to be a success and because of that its commander could keep expanding it. In a few years the unit numbered over 200 people. In the whole Arab Legion it was the unit which was armed the most. Most of the soldiers were armed with rifles and they mounted camels, but J.B. Glubb equipped this unit also with off-roaders, radio stations and a few machine guns¹⁴.

The Arab Legion remained a generally lightly armed police. This situation was changed by the external events. In 1936 riots broke out in Palestine, which transformed into Arab uprising carried out with the hit-and-run tactics. By the end of the 30s it turned out that the Arab Legion was too weak to prevent the regular crossing of Arab guerillas from Syria to Palestine. It was quite late when British administration agreed to expand the Transjordan's forces. This task was also entrusted to J.B. Glubb. It was completely in accordance with the officer's plans. He wanted the Legion to become a real and strong army. However, from 1938 to 1939 he had to limit himself to create the Desertic Mechanized Infantry. This unit numbered only 350 people but was equipped with off-roaders and transport trucks. The automobiles were equipped with machine guns. The unit was supposed to perform quick actions on the desertic areas. J.B. Glubb also ensured that the forces had good communication devices. In accordance with his concept, the new formation hired mainly Bedouins and mostly the members of this group became the soldiers of the mechanized force¹⁵.

Even for such a little force the new armament was expensive. In 1937 a grant for the Arab Legion took from British tax payers 19 thousand pounds, and in 1939 it rose to about 236 thousand pounds. J.B. Glubb used this money to manufacture first armored vehicles for his formation. It could be generally stated that British authorities accepted the arguments made by the commander of the Mechanized Infantry. He promised that Transjordan soldiers would not create a political threat to London and, in fact, in years 1938-1939 they carried out operations against Arab guerillas without complaints. For British military men and some of the officials J.B. Glubb became an authority in the field of relations with Arab tribes. As a result of those changes, when in March of 1939 the current commander of the Arab Legion, F.G. Peake retired, his post was automatically given to J.B. Glubb¹⁶.

¹³ G. Lias, *Glubb's Legion...*, pp. 101–103.

¹⁴ J. Lunt, *The Arab...*, pp. 52–54.

¹⁵ B. Wróblewski, *Legion Arabski (1921–1957)*, MADO, Toruń 2009, pp. 50–51.

¹⁶ J. Lunt, *The Arab...*, p. 59.

In 1939 in accordance with the report presented by J.B. Glubb, the Arab Legion numbered 1941 soldiers and officers. However, some of them were reservists. The permanent force – soldiers that were on duty at a given moment – numbered over 1100 people. It is necessary to remember that behind the name of the Arab Legion there was also the military and local police. The permanent force mostly included the military police (darak) that numbered 410 mounted soldiers and 213 foot soldiers. This force did not have a big battle value, and from the Legion's list also the Prison Service (98 people) was paid. The units of the Desert Patrol numbered about 200 people but some of them were paid from different sources as supernumerary soldiers (e.g. the unit that guarded the pipelines was paid by oil companies). The Mechanized Infantry was expanded by J.B. Glubb in some part into so called supplementary units. In theory, such soldiers were hired for half a year but the commander ensured that the hiring process was permanent. A true army training was for the soldiers of the Desertic Mechanized Infantry (formally 350 people) and parts of other units of the old Desert Patrol. The new commander based the reorganization of the army on those groups¹⁷.

A real expansion of the Transjordan army, in fact, was made because of the Second World War. At first, British authorities did not plan to expand it any time soon. From the numbers presented above it is visible that even in the time of the uprising in Palestine, the army strength of the formations remained limited. The situation changed when France was defeated and Italy joined the war. In the summer of 1940 British Middle East was in a trap between Italian Libya and Syria with the government in Vichy. Suddenly, every soldiers became important. And once again, J.B. Glubb managed to convince British policymakers, including Anthony Eden, that the Arab Legion could be quickly expanded and, what is more, it could be very useful in battles on the desert. Moreover, in May and July of 1941 a small unit of the Mechanized Infantry (about 350 people) participated in two British campaigns in the Middle East. In May 1941 it actively participated in the overthrow of the pro-German government of Iraq, and in June 1919 it participated in battles with the French in Syria. From the military point of view, both campaigns were marginal, but from the political point of view they became a priority operations for the British Empire. After those events, Transjordan forces were generally recognized for their operations on Arab territories. The victory in those local campaigns allowed to stabilize British dominance in the Arab world till the end of the war¹⁸.

After 1941 the Arab Legion received a very generous help from British forces, and J.B. Glubb started to expand it in accordance with his own military and ideological plans. In fact, in years 1942–1945 a completely new army was created. When one writes about the Arab Legion or the Transjordan Army, they need to remember that regardless of the older traditions, it became a real military force at that time. In 1945 the Arab Legion hired about 9 thousand people. Like before, 900 of those were the police officers and the prison service. However, it is necessary to remind that in 1938 this part of the

¹⁷ NA.CO 831/54/14 Arab Legion History ETC By Major J.B. Glubb, pp. 7, 13–14.

¹⁸ J.B. Glubb, *Britain and The Arabs. A Study of Fifty Years 1908 to 1958*, London 1959, pp. 238–239, 241–242.

formation posed as a majority. In 1945 it was only the margin in comparison to the quite big if it comes to the capability of a professional army of the Arab world at that time. Its basic strength was the regiments of army vehicles and the motorized infantry, which hired 3 thousand soldiers. The units had not only manual arms, but also 10 army vehicles, 250 trucks equipped in machine guns, batteries of medium size cannons 75 mm (8 cannons) and a bigger number of mountain guns of lighter caliber. Those forces were not suitable for head-on battles against modernized opponent. They did not have tanks or planes but that was not their purpose. The Legion was supposed to be a unit that carried out operations on desert, the outskirts of enemy territories or even deep inside its territory as a kind of special force. Because of that, soldiers that were recruited for the post were often Bedouins. Aside from that, there were also 2 thousand lightly armed infantry in so called garrison companies, which were supposed to guard certain objects. Simultaneously, J.B. Glubb expanded the Desert Patrol to 500 people. From those forces he could easily replenish the motorized infantry. There were also created engineering, repairing and medical units, which – together with the official staff – added another 500 people. In all, the military section of the Legion numbered about 6 thousand people. There is also a need to add 2 thousand recruits undergoing training¹⁹.

Because of the commander's initiative a new efficient army was created. Its strength and armament was often smaller than it seemed, but even so the change was revolutionary. Of course, the whole process was funded by Great Britain. According to the data from 1945 the costs of maintenance of the formation grew from 236 thousand pounds in 1939 to 1 million 200 thousand pounds in 1945. And those were only the costs of maintenance without including the costs of received equipment. The future of the formation became an important political matter for the whole region²⁰.

Aside from the expansion of the army, J.B. Glubb carried out a certain recruitment strategy that was in accordance with his understanding of the Arab society and its relation to London. He introduced a rule that Arab intelligentsia did not receive any favors while joining the army. A promotion to an officer rank had to be preceded by service as a common soldier, and through all the following military ranks. He was willing to hire Bedouins as soldiers, and not only from Transjordan but also from the whole Arab world. The Legion in 1945 was a bit like Bedouin foreign legion. After all, the army easily accepted the local people, farmers and residents of small towns. Lack of education, namely analphabetism, was not an obstacle. The soldiers were being taught reading during the service, and it supposedly brought great results. But the recruitment itself did not require any education. In such a way J.B. Glubb created an Arab army with elite mechanized units dominated by young Bedouins. In his army, Arabs held the posts of soldiers and non-commissioned officers, but almost the whole officer corps of higher ranks consisted of the British. Some of them were hired by the emir, others were temporarily delegated from the British army. In such an army there were no pan-Arab

¹⁹ P.J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and...*, pp. 73–75.

²⁰ Maan Abu Nowar, *The Struggle for Independence 1939–1947*, Ithaca Press, Reading 2001, pp. 259, 303.

statements, and generally they were avoiding talking about politics. On the other hand, allegiance to the throne and the Hashimites was an axiom²¹.

Those moves made by J.B. Glubb were the result of a few entangled with one another reasons. Just like many of the military men of the time, he believed in the existence of unchangeable qualities of certain ethnic groups. And so he believed that there are groups that are pugnacious by nature. Like in India such a group were believed to be the Gurkhas, for J.B. Glubb Bedouins had a similar role in the Arab world. At the same time, he believed that Arab modernized intelligentsia was harmful for the stability of the country. From a practical point of view, his beliefs held a lot of truth. Syria's and Iraq's armies, in which well-educated Arabs were quickly promoted for the commanders' posts, fell into the factionalism illness. But it is necessary to underline that for J.B. Glubb this matter was connected to deeper ideologies. This officer somewhat liked Arabs but viewed them in a specific way. He believed that Bedouins were, in his own words, the core of the Arab race. And the people who lived in large cities or on the outskirts of Levant were in his opinion an ethnic mix and Arab only in language. He believed that too much influence of Levant on the Arab politics was corruptive. Because of that, he wanted to have an army that had mostly pure Bedouin element for the good of the British Empire, but also for the good of the Hashimites. It is possible that he believed that such a tool would help the family in the future to unite the Arab territories of Iraq, Syria, Transjordan and Palestine. It is also necessary to mention that according to his vision of Arab territories, there was no place for Egypt. The Arab union was supposed to be carried out by Hashimites and the educated bellowers (he called this group with a Turkish name: *effendi*) could only serve as an obstacle²².

The catastrophe in Palestine

J.B. Glubb admitted in his memoir that the Palestine matter mostly destroyed the political set-up, which he believed to be optimal for Great Britain and for the development of Arabs. He also honestly said that when it came to Transjordan, he believed that the optimal situation was the conditions from 1946–1948, before the conflict on the west of Jordan destroyed the perfect, in his opinion, situation. It is necessary to remind that already in the second half of 1945 the new British government – the Labour Party – decided to grant Transjordan a formal independence. After a few months of negotiations, on 22 March 1946, Great Britain and Transjordan signed an alliance treaty. From that moment, Transjordan became independent *de jure*. To underline this fact, Abd Allah became proclaimed as a king. At the same time, the treaty left the British with so many privileges, especially military ones, that it made the independence of the weaker partner a questionable matter. The British army, for example, had not only a right to have

²¹ B. Wróblewski, *Legion...*, p. 78.

²² P.J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and...*, p. 77.

their bases on the kingdom's territories but also could freely move around it. But it is needed to mention that London in exchange paid all the costs of the rapidly expanding Transjordan's army. The importance of those matters in 1946 still was not fully understood by the policymakers. In London, they wanted to see only the merits of the new situation, and the Legion so far was practically a part of the British army. In 1946 it mainly was stationed in Palestine, where it performed police function. However, the situation was about to change quickly and dramatically²³.

It is important to once again point out that the commander of the Arab Legion, after the years, highlighted the advantages of the situation of 1946. The country which he served became an independent kingdom connected to London. He and Abd Allah agreed that it was necessary to keep the close alliance with Great Britain. The government in Amman was absolutistic but clearly patriarchal and free from desire for plight. It could be added that it was made easier because of the slenderness of opposition. The parliament existed but did not matter a lot in the practice of ruling the country. The monarch kept on his court somewhat elevated but not extravagant style (the material resources did not allow prodigality). Abd Allah took care about some religious dimension of his rule. According to J.B. Glubb the etiquette on the court resembled the one used by the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid at the beginning of XX century, which the king was familiar with (of course, it was a downgraded version of it). So it was a fully traditional Arab monarchy but without the Saudis' bigotry. And what is important, he could consider it to be a country dominated by a proper Bedouin element of the Arab community²⁴.

In the meantime, in 1946 the conflict in Palestine escalated again. This time, the Jewish side performed terroristic actions. What is more, USA approved of the claims made by the Zionist movement. Although, British government kept claiming that it is necessary to pursue a fulfillment of the plan to create a two-nation country in Palestine, for the majority of politicians it became clear that such a postulate became non-viable. Among the government's advisors in the matter of the conflict, there was also the voice of J.B. Glubb who had quite unequivocal postulates.

In 1946 the officer sent many memorials addressed to various ministries in London, in which he presented his views on the matter of solving the Palestine conflict in an optimal way for the Empire's interests. Generally, the major ideas of those propositions are well included in his writing from 13 July 1946 addressed to the Ministry for War to marshal Montgomery. J.B. Glubb with military bluntness rejected the postulate of a two-nation country, which was since 1939 a basics of the British policy towards Palestine. He rationally insisted that standing stubbornly with such an idea could result in Great Britain being attacked from both sides. He also highlighted that a compromise between Arab and Jewish (Zionist) nationalists is absolutely impossible and a belief in its arise is a wishful thinking. As a practical solution to the existing problem he saw a division of Palestine into Jewish territory and Arab territory thanks to an arbitrary law carried

²³ M.A. Nowar, *The Struggle...*, pp. 187–188, 191.

²⁴ J.B. Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs*, Hodder & Stoughton, London 1957, pp. 27, 50–51.

out forcefully by British units without involving the UN or the USA. When it came to territorial demarking, he referred to the proposal made by Lord Peal's commission from 1937. According to him, Jews got even less territory. He wanted to give them the coastal plain, Israel Valley and a large portion of Galilee (without the Accra segment in the north). And this small region would be able to claim independence and accept any number of Jewish refugees on its own responsibility. The remaining territory of Palestine that was dominated by Arabs, was supposed to be joined with Transjordan in one monarchy. The author added that it would allow the British army to keep its right to operate under the old mandate thanks to the contract already signed with Transjordan²⁵.

Generally, the proposal presented to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was very similar. J.B. Glubb felt that the matter was serious and he called for quick action and not caring about the public attacks coming from the USA or France. He believed that once the division was made, it would remain but at first it would cause a propagandistic storm. The unification of the majority of Palestine with Transjordan was supposed to become the main warrant of maintaining the British dominance in the region. On the other hand, the Zionist movement considered J.B. Glubb to be a foreign object in the Arab world and the main threat for the British army in the region. It is necessary to point out that in 1946 it cannot be said that he believed Zionists to be a military danger. He saw in their movement mainly a political threat. The military potential of the Jews in comparison to the Arab's was not analyzed in those writings²⁶.

Between 1945 and 1947 Abd Allah pursued a union between Transjordan and Syria. Of course, he wanted to get on the throne in Damascus. Because of the refusal of the majority of politicians in Syria, his plans turned out to be utopic. Regardless of that, the monarch was stubborn in his plans and isolated his court in the Arab League. The British with J.B. Glubb tried to draw his attention to the problem in Palestine in order to tear him away from the obsessively exploited topic of Syria. At the end of 1947 it became clear that the government of E. Bevin really wants to withdraw the British from Palestine. It was a final step that convinced the monarch to take care of the problem, and J.B. Glubb played a very important role in those events²⁷.

In the first months of 1947 the commander of Transjordan's army kept promoting his ideals among the British government's circles. In a document dated to 17 January 1947 he already presented his worries caused by the possibility to give the Jewish side too wide acquisitions. He pointed out that their dominance in Palestine could bring very bad consequences for the Empire. He kept insisting that they should carry out the division as a British operation regardless of the protests made by the UN and the Arab League. He also argued that the Hashimite government in Amman is the best warrant of British influences, and it should take the majority of the mandated territory. This government would also stop the influences of the supporters of Amin al-Husayni, which were being

²⁵ NA.WO 216/207 Top Secret. Glubb to Field Marshall Lord Montgomery Jul 13, 1946.

²⁶ NA.FO 371/52567 Top Secret. Amman to Foreign Office. Kirkbridge to C.W. Baxter, December 6, 1946.

²⁷ J.B. Glubb, *A Soldier...*, p. 68.

reborn in Palestine. He advised to not worry about the criticism, but to act quickly. Aside from that, he also presented his evaluation of the matter of Negev province, which is worth mentioning here²⁸.

This territory was almost only a desert. J.B. Glubb claimed that till that moment he did not take care of the Negev territory because it was obvious that it belonged to Arabs. The point was that the territory did not present any economic value. Because of that he did not consider it to be an important matter. It came to him as a great surprise that Zionists relentlessly tried to conquer this desert. If one was to believe what the commander of the Arab Legion wrote at the beginning of 1947, he could not even begin to understand what was the purpose behind the behavior of the Jewish side. He could not see any merits in that for the Jewish nation. The whole claim seemed to be an irrational whim. He added that in Beersheba's neighborhood Jews had a few colonies, which were completely isolated from the main territories. Adding those to the Jewish territory would only become a burden for the new country. Generally, he even assumed that Zionist politicians put the Negev matter forward for trading purposes. He admitted that he did not believe that Zionists treated the postulate seriously²⁹.

Those fragments are quite important. They show that J.B. Glubb at the beginning of 1947 still held very traditional ideas of Jewish emigrants. In spite of all the negative opinions about their totalitarian structure, he saw them as peddlers or businessmen. He never imagined that Zionist politicians wanted to take possession of Negev for strategic purposes, and the economic value was at the time irrelevant. From the notes concerning Jewish colonies near Beersheba one could conclude that he imagined the Jewish country to be weaker than its Arab rival. It was supposed to seek right to communicate with its colonies on the far Negev. Generally, he was completely wrong about the military powers of Zionists. At least, this is what could be concluded from the memorials he sent to ministries in London.

Of the influence of J.B. Glubb's letters on British military spheres could serve as a proof what marshal B. Montgomery said in December 1947 about the situation in Palestine. He said that when the Secretary of State asked the military officers about such an evaluation. Marshal almost word for word repeated arguments from J.B. Glubb's letters about the territories which were to be controlled by both sides. What is more, he stated that Arabs would beat Jews, and those would only be able to survive if they agree to a compromise. The marshal also added that Abd Allah would become the one who would take the control over the majority of Palestine³⁰.

However, the civil part of administration was not convinced about the plans concerning Abd Allah. Generally, E. Bevin never shared his own opinion that would differ from the official statement. On 1 February 1947 J.B. Glubb received an official response to his postulates from Foreign Office. The ministry thanked him for advice but univocally

²⁸ NA.FO 371/61858. A Not on the Exact Sitting of the Frontier on the Event of the Adoption of Participation, pp. 1–4.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁰ E-12325, FO 371/61583.

pointed out that Great Britain cannot carry out the division on its own. Such a law needed to be widely discussed in the UN. This would rule out a sudden military operation of Great Britain. It was also pointed out that such stand was official and final³¹.

In spite of this failure, the commander of Arab Legion remained as the advocate of the idea of London's support for the expansion of Transjordan. At the beginning of 1948 the Foreign Office received another letter from him. This time he had different premises. He pointed out that it came as a shock in Amman that the British decided to remove their forces from Palestine. He tried to prove that Transjordan practically cannot exist without its relations with the territories situated on the west side of Jordan. He predicted that the chaos that would emerge could cause the fall of the Hashimites' rule. In such case, Transjordan's lands would become a moot point between Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It could even lead to a war. In Palestine there would be created a nationalistic Jewish country that would become London's enemy, and – equally unfriendly towards the British – country of the supporters of Amin al-Husayni. Both fanatically nationalistic creations would be always in conflict. As could be easily guessed, J.B. Glubb believed that as a solution to the problem would serve Abd Allah's continued rule and enabling him to take control over the Arab part of the old mandate. Only such a solution, in his opinion, could guarantee the continued interests of the British Empire in the Middle East.³²

In the end, the British government did not decide to take any real action in order to put an end to the crisis. It withdrew its forces from Palestine, and the last units left the country at night of 14 May 1948. Arabs and Jews became enabled to solve the conflict on their own. As a result, the Jewish society proclaimed the birth of Israel, and the neighboring Arab countries sent their armies to Palestine on 15 May 1948. In the area, there were already week-long battles.

Of course, Palestine was also entered by the Arab Legion under the command of J.B. Glubb. His personal views, already presented above, were unequivocal. However, in May 1948 the situation was completely different from his vision. Instead of taking control over the country by Transjordan forces, there was a chaotic war and the sudden entry of some Arab armies. In spite of those changes, the commander tried to carry out his plans. The analysis of the military side of the conflict would require a separate study, so it is worth to take a notice of the matter on which J.B. Glubb had a great influence. Namely, it is about the political future of Jerusalem.

Above all, he reminds that Transjordan's army, which entered Palestine, numbered 4,5 thousand soldiers. The units were perfectly trained and armed in light weapons, but did not have big reserves, and they did not have their own sources of ammunition. Transjordan did not produce it. In this way, the commander denied the information that the Legion numbered a dozen thousand soldiers. During the fights, all the armed units were sent to the front, and many volunteers listed to join the army, but still J.B. Glubb's

³¹ Foreign Office to J.B. Glubb Pasha, February 1, 1947, FO 317/61858.

³² Top Secret December 1947. Amman to Foreign Office. Glubb memo to Foreign Office. A Not on the Effect of the Palestine Situation on the Future of Trans-Jordan, January 5, 1948, FO 816/112, pp. 1–3.

forces were very small, a little over 10 thousand after a few months of fighting. During the deciding stadium of the war, J.B. Glubb had to carefully manage the 4,5 thousand professional soldiers and he needed to carefully distribute them³³.

J.B. Glubb pointed out that at first he understood his task to be to occupy Arab territories in Palestine in order to protect them from Jewish fighting squads. The seizure of the province was supposed to be carried out peacefully. In a similar way the operation was understood by Abd Allah and Amman's elite. During the talks between Transjordan's delegation and E. Bevin on 7 February 1948, in which the commander of the Arab Legion actively participated, the guests were under impression that the head of the Foreign Office accepted their plans. J.B. Glubb pointed out that he wanted only to seize the territories given to Arabs. At the same time, he accepted the point about excluding Jerusalem from the division and the idea to transform it into an international enclave. The problem was that there was no military force that would carry it out. And on 15 May 1948 Jerusalem's territory was already for weeks a place of fights between both sides of the conflict³⁴.

As a military officer, J.B. Glubb pointed out that having 4,5 thousand people in Palestine (the whole military part of the Legion numbered about 6,5 thousand), he could seize the countryside territories and protect mountain areas with the use of the natural characteristics of the region. However, his unit was not trained for fighting in the cities. What is more, battles of such type would have to involve most of his soldiers and destroy the whole plan to seize the Arab part of Palestine. That is why he confessed that he avoided for as long as he could to engage his forces in the battle of Jerusalem. However, the whole situation got out of control. In Old City, Arab fighting squads were losing, and the Amman's court was flooded by pleads for a quick intervention. According to J.B. Glubb, it was Abd Allah who made him enter Jerusalem in spite of his military and political objections. The king was to answer those by saying that he understands the risks, but he prefers to lose an army than to leave a holy city in need. In the end, the Arab Legion entered Jerusalem on 18 May and after a fierce battle it took control over its east part by 28 May 1948. J.B. Glubb had a written order from the king but there was no directive from London³⁵.

The commander of Transjordan forces after the time had to admit that the fate of Jerusalem was completely disregarded in the analysis from before 15 May 1948. In the meantime, its location made it an important tactical point during the fighting. So if he was surprised by the development of the situation, and he claimed to be in his memoirs, it says a lot about his sense of prediction. In the changed situation he was forced to improvise. There was a need to invite a large contingent from Iraq to appoint to countryside territories of Palestine. The majority of the Arab Legion was now protecting Old City and its neighborhood, e.g. Latrun. It was doing it very efficiently during the whole time of the conflict, but it did not have the necessary strength to

³³ J.B. Glubb, *A Soldier...*, pp. 92, 94.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 109–111, 118.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

operate successfully in other regions. This is how he explains why the cities Lod and Ramla were left without protection. Those two cities were situated on a flat land, and in order to efficiently protect it, it would be necessary to send a big garrison, but there was not enough soldiers for such an operation. Finally, a great blow to J.B. Glubb was the decision made on 28 May 1948 by the government in London to place an embargo on weapons and ammunition on both sides of the conflict in order to force them to make a truce. The embargo only hit Amman. What is more, Great Britain removed its officers from the Legion (it mostly concerned the ones delegated from the British army, not the ones hired by the king like it was in the case of J.B. Glubb). That last matter infuriated Abd Allah. The commander of the Legion pointed out that it was a blow to the London's prestige that brought difficult to overestimate consequences, even if at first Arabs were forced to continue the cooperation³⁶.

On 11 June 1948 the first treaty in Palestine was signed. This stadium of fights – from 15 May till 10 June 1948 – could be called a success of the Arab side, but at the same time a real country of Israel was being created. The Arab Legion turned out to be a great military force that defeated the enemy in Old City and stopped its attacks in Latrun. However, J.B. Glubb had to admit that his own vision concerning how to solve the Palestine's matter collapsed. The south of the country, including Negev, was seized by Egypt, which intervened at the last moment, and their actions, at least in part, were fueled by desire to stop the expansion of Hashimites. In practice, a question emerged at the time: to keep the treaty or to start fighting again. J.B. Glubb unfortunately did not write much about this deciding moment. He pointed out that he and the king were in favor of accepting the treaty, but they did not decide to act against the Arab League. The League decided to not prolong the treaty. In spite of objections, the decision was accepted. It is necessary to add that London for years have insisted that Abd Allah should respect the opinions made by the organization. At the same time, at this particular moment it would prefer that it would accept the treaty, especially when it came to Egypt. The policy of E. Bevin was completely different from the mood of Arab masses. Egyptian politicians strongly insisted to end the treaty. In accordance with this decision, on 9 July 1948, the fights were resumed³⁷.

When the treaty expired, Israel units mostly attacked the positions held by the Arab Legion. In Latrun the attack was repelled. However, on 9 and 10 July 1948 Israelis seized Lod and Ramla, to which J.B. Glubb did not send reinforcements because, as he said, he did not have enough men to do it. From those cities the attackers threw out about 50–70 thousand Arabs who joined the runaways that flooded Transjordan. Simultaneously, on 12 July 1948 London announced that it would stop funding the Arab Legion (as a consequence of ending the treaty). Those two facts happened at the same time quite coincidentally but they made all the conspiracy theories more probable. The

³⁶ Kirkbridge to Tawfik Abu al-Huda, May 28, 1948, FO 816/121; J.B. Glubb, *A Soldier...*, pp. 133–134.

³⁷ Bartosz Wróblewski, *Sojusz Wielkiej Brytanii z Haszymidzkim Królestwem Jordanii (1946–1958). Dylematy mocarstwa w relacjach z zależnym partnerem*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2013, pp. 184–185.

British Ambassador and the coworker of the Arab Legion's commander's, Alec Kirkbridge said that Amman was flooded by a great number of demonstrations. The hatred towards Great Britain became popularized. If at that time the crowds were to attack the king's palace, the fate of the monarch would be sealed. The police was microscopic (about 100 policemen) and the army was fighting in Jerusalem. But the crowds mostly attacked the British. J.B. Glubb was also accused of treason. The king did not hide his own outrage towards London's attitude. Luckily for Amman, another truce was signed on 18 July 1948. During the following stages of the conflict there were no more fierce battles between Transjordan and Israel. And the situation the Legion was in was not the best. The posts around Jerusalem were protected, but there was no more ammunition left³⁸.

The downfall of Lod and Ramla created a new psychological situation. Till that time, J.B. Glubb would be perceived as the main agent of imperialism. At the same time, British politics was being often blamed for every misfortune of the Arab side. Before, the Legion's commander was rather ignored by the nationalists, but now he became a good object of attacks. It was also expected that the king would fire him. Abd Allah sent him on a special mission to London. In such a way, he removed him for a time from the eyes of the impassioned publics. In the meantime, Israelis defeated supported by Syria Arab Liberation Army in Galilee, and then they defeated Egyptian army on the north of Palestine. The final defeat of Egyptian forces took place in December 1948, and on 7 January 1949 a treaty was signed which ended the First Arab-Israeli War. Even in face of defeat, the situation of Transjordan, which kept its conquests, seemed to be relatively positive³⁹.

J.B. Glubb did not regard the new situation as something good. After all, his own concept was different. In August and September 1948, when there was another ceasefire in Palestine, The UN's envoy Folke Bernadotte was acting. J.B. Glubb fully supported his mission, and no wonder because the report submitted by this diplomat on 16 September 1948 was in accordance with the Arab Legion's commander's vision of the division of Palestine. He envisaged a union of the Arab part of Palestine with Transjordan, and Negev was supposed to be a part of this country. With that, the UN's envoy completely rejected the plan decreed by this organization in 1947. However, his report was rejected by the countries of the region, and he was murdered by Jewish terrorists from Lehi in August 1948. Those events were another blow to the concept of J.B. Glubb's and the British' who wanted to strengthen the Hashimites cartel⁴⁰.

From the statements and facts presented above, a clear conclusion emerges: simple pigeonholing of J.B. Glubb missed the mark. In the case of Palestine, he presented a clear pan-Arab attitude. And he was not motivated by support of the modern Arab nationalism, but by Hashimites' policy, namely Abd Allah's and by his own vision of the development of the Arab world. At the same time, he absolutely believed that in doing

³⁸ A. Kirkbridge, *From the Wings: Amman Memoirs 1947–1951*, London 1976, pp. 47–48; J.B. Glubb, *A Soldier...*, pp. 165–166.

³⁹ B. Wróblewski, *Legion...*, pp. 102–103; A. Kirkbridge, *From the...*, pp. 34, 37.

⁴⁰ Yearbook of the United Nations 1947–1948, pp. 304–312.

so it would serve the best interests of Great Britain. A united Arab country under the rule of Hashimites would become the best partner for London. As it was shown, this concept was completely ignored by E. Bevin's government. Because of that it is difficult to say that J.B. Glubb was fulfilling British policy. Rather, he was a man who had his own vision of what the policy should look like.

J.B. Glubb and the Changes in the Middle East

After the disaster in Palestine a wave of frustration swept the Arab world strengthening nationalism and anti-western sentiment. Parliamentary regimes began to collapse and the reform dictatorships were bandying anti-colonial rhetoric about. Independence was supposed to be the remedy for all the ills. Against the background of these changes, the situation of J.B. Glubb was becoming particularly uncertain. Despite this, he managed to keep his job from 1949 to 1955 until the beginning of 1956. This was due to the specific conditions of Jordan at that time. Despite this, the position of this officer was unique when it comes to the countries of the region.

The international situation of the country was determined by such events as the coup in Egypt in the night of 22 to 23 July 1956. This resulted in the overthrow of the monarchy. The Egyptian republic became, however, a permanent military dictatorship which strongly supported the ideology of pan-Arabism. Finally, in 1954, colonel Gamal Abdel Naser became the actual leader of the country. Soon, he became the leader of not only Egypt but also the whole pan-Arab movement (at least its leftist part). Naser became involved in the conflict with Israel. The Cairo propaganda managed to convince Palestinians that Egypt, thanks to breaking off the ties with the West and the cooperation with USSR would be able to defeat Israel. The Palestinian refugees wanted to believe in this vision. At the same time, Hashimite monarchy was no authority for them. On the contrary, it seemed to be an obstacle to their aims. Egypt began to effectively destabilize the system of the kingdom⁴¹.

Radical changes were occurring also inside the Hashimite state. Above all, king Abd Allah consequently led to the close union between of the former Transjordan with the gained lands in the centre of Palestine. The connection with the West Bank was carried out by way of a parliamentary resolution of April 21, 1950. The new state adopted the name the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan and only at that time the new name Jordan replaced the previous one Transjordan although the Palestinian territories had been controlled by Amman till 1948. The new situation was the majority of Hashimites' subjects were Palestinians. This community consisted of 800 thousand people and the former subjects were at most 400 thousand. The change in the population proportion was definitely changing the dynamics of the political process in the Kingdom. The unforeseen effect of this situation was the attack on the king Abd Allah I. The monarch

⁴¹ B. Wróblewski, *Jordania...*, p. 126.

was gunned down on July 20, 1951 in Jerusalem. The attacker Mustafa Shukri Ashu was a Palestinian associated with the movement of Hajj Amin al-Husayni. The Palestinian widely suspected that the king wanted to conclude a separate peace agreement with Israel, which outraged virtually the entire community. The death of Abd Allah made all understand that the previous, patriarchal style of governance exercised by that Hashimite became anachronistic⁴².

So far, Abd Allah had been the only justification for the distinctive character of Jordan. Worse still, his older son Talal suffered from a mental disorder. So, initially, the connection of Jordan and Iraq was being seriously considered. However, the Iraqi Hashimites were not in favour of this solution. Eventually, prince Talal was crowned but his condition made all treat his rule as provisional from the very beginning. On May 2, 1953, the king Talal abdicated and the new monarch was his son, prince Husayn. The new monarch was only 18 years old (born in 1935) and initially he left all the matters in the hands of the government. In general, it should be noted that from 1951 until 1957 the Hashimite monarchy in Jordan was experiencing a crisis. At the same time, there was a clear political liberalization in the country. In 1953 the newly established constitution introduced a multi-party system. Already in 1954 the general election shook up the Jordanian Chamber of Deputies and sparked rising political tensions in the country. Overall, one should say that under new condition the importance of Palestinian politicians was growing. Within a few years it seemed that the monarch became the secondary factor and the country was becoming destabilised. Against this background, the Jordanian army was gaining more and more importance. So was the role of J.B. Glubb. When Abd Allah was gone, he was the main element stabilizing the monarchy⁴³.

Institutionally, the position of the commander (or rather chief of staff) of the Arab legion was strong as never before in reality, however, it was threatened with the changeable public opinion of the Arabs. Part of the subjects of Amman considered him as a symbol of dependence from Great Britain. Worse still, he was suspected of activities harmful to Jordan and especially for the Palestinians. There were widespread rumors that the British and the Israelis were in collusion. In this perspective, J.B. Glubb was seen as a monstrous figure.

A lot of phobias related to J. B Glubb came to light at the time of the so called Qibya incident. The events took place on the West Bank where, close to the demarcation line with Israel, Qibya was situated. In this area the Palestinian partisans belonging to groups opposing the government in Amman made a lot of military attacks on Israel. Its secret services suspected that it was in Qibya where the attackers were situated. After another attack during the night of 14 and 15 October, in which 3 Israelis were killed (a woman and two children) the Israeli special combat unit attacked Qibya. There was a cruel massacre in which, as finally determined, 62 inhabitants of the settlement. The

⁴² Ibid., pp. 113, 120–121.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 125; A. Kirkbridge, *From...*, p. 145.

attackers blew up 40 houses. Part of the Arab Legion arrived on the scene when the Israelis had already withdrawn, which was too late⁴⁴.

The tragedy in Qibya caused international incident but, what is interesting, it activated a kind of mechanism for political protest. J.B. Glubb himself evocatively described the situation in a letter to Foreign Office dated October 19, 1953. He stated there that the incident triggered a wave of hatred towards the British. The victims of the persecution were Glubb himself as well as the British officers of the Arab Legion. He would add that the extremists suggested the collusion between London and Tel Aviv. That is more, they openly said that it was J.B. Glubb and the Israeli officers who had jointly planned the attack in Qibya and that Glubb deliberately did not let the army rescue the inhabitants. They also planned the petition to government to bring J.B. Glubb before court. He added that there were many people among Palestinians who believed in the most absurd accusations against him. Emotions are running high. Even those who reject extreme rumors don't believe in Great Britain's good intentions⁴⁵.

Needless to say, the commander of the Arab legion was not in collusion with anybody, what's more, he felt moderate reluctance towards the Zionist movement. Despite this, the wave of accusations was building up. He stated once that even Jordanian press publishers who were friends with him were afraid after the incident to post articles favourable towards the British even in secondary matters. For many Jordanian Glubb's Pasha guilt was unquestionable. He himself emphasized that the Legion was the army that was too small to protect the whole border line. He admitted that there were some mistakes made when it comes to the deployment of troops and the army's cooperation with the national Guard (the militia operating in the villages on the West Bank). He stressed that he was trying to eliminate the shortcomings and during the many next coming incidents the Legion reacted faster and prevented massacres even at a risk of life of his soldiers. Despite this, he had to admit that there was a permanent atmosphere of resentment towards him among part of the population of the country⁴⁶.

The assessment of J. B Glubb was no fiction. Among the feverish masses of people, in particular the Palestinian refugees, there really were absurd stories and opinions about him. Similar situations were reported by the British embassy in Amman. It can therefore be considered that a kind of mass psychic reaction model of reacting to military defeats was created in Jordan. J.B. Glubb became an easily identified subject to attacks. Any failure could be related to his illegal activities. As we see, he understood that mechanism. To better explain his role, one should also point to the opinions about his relations with the army. His main purpose was always to create a strong Hashimite army. Besides, it is worth noting how his role was perceived by other Brits in Jordan.

⁴⁴ Secret from Glubb/Qiada to Foreign Office, October 15, 1953, FO 371/104931.

⁴⁵ Secret from Glubb/Qiada to Foreign Office, October 19, 1952, FO 371/104790.

⁴⁶ J.B. Glubb, *A Soldier...*, pp. 313–315.

After 1950, J.B. Glubb was intensively working on increasing the size of the Arab legion and, at the same time, he was trying to arm the troops with much more expensive heavy weapon, it was all about the enlargement of the artillery and the formation of armored divisions. All the weapons and the money needed for the enlargement of the army came from Great Britain. J.B. Glubb was successful in his efforts. Officially, the army consisted of 12 thousand people in 1949 and 17 thousand 1953, in 1956 the numbers reached 25 thousand. In 1954 they finally created an armoured regiment which in 1956 was equipped with Cherioteer tanks as well as 65 mm tank destroyer Valentine. It was possible also thanks to the change of authorities in London. In 1951, after the Labour Parties lost in the general elections the Conservatives were back in power in Great Britain. The prime minister was first W. Churchill and later, following his disease, the function was taken over by A. Eden. The Conservatives valued the knowledge and the position of the commander of the Arab Legion and accepted his financial demands⁴⁷.

However, there was a paradox in relation with that enlargement. Between 1948 and 1956 there was a quadruple increase in the number of the people in the army. As a result of this, the demand for commanding and staff officers grew. J.B. Glubb solved this problem by hiring British officers. It was during the growth of Arab nationalism in the region. The commander argued this was a military necessity though. Enlargement of the army demanded finding trained commanders with professional practice in a short time. Politically, though, it was a risky step. Notably in the light of 1948 experience⁴⁸.

The situation had to stir up the feelings of jealousy among the group of Arab officers. Meanwhile, J.B. Glubb, a realist in general, seemed not to notice the inconsistencies of his own strategy. He was convinced that the legion was a cohesive and loyal army without any internal problems. He attributed all the problems to external forces. In his memoirs, written many years later, he kept saying that the Arab soldiers and the younger officers did not show any disloyalty towards the British stuff. It seems he represented patriarchal ideals and perceived the army as a harmonious family. The Legion itself was his own creation so he idealized the relations among its members. So, he claimed for example that all the anxiety in the army was due to The Egyptian secret services. The leaflets of the so called 'Free Officers' group smuggled to barracks were printed by Egyptians who also bribed his subordinates. According to Glubb, out of 1500 Arab officers serving in the Legion in 1955, there were only 6 thousand involved in the conspiracy. He himself, however, added that those were the only names he knew⁴⁹.

Meanwhile, the sheer number of 1500 officers gave food for thought. It could be a politically naive group (reputation built by J.B. Glubb himself) but it had its own group needs. Meanwhile, the influx of the British was blocking promotion and was at odds with anticolonial sentiment present in the Legion. L. Lunt who served in those years as

⁴⁷ P.J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and...*, pp. 79, 81.

⁴⁸ J. Lunt, *The Arab...*, p. 133.

⁴⁹ J.B. Glubb, *The Changing Scene of Life. An Autobiography*, London 1983, p. 180.

an officer seconded from the British army rather confirms that there was a resentment towards the structure of the command. He points that king Husayn himself was linked to the Arab opposition officers. He adds however that the Legion was the army not concerned with politics and the conspirators could be silent. Anyway, the Bedouin officers generally did not present their thoughts outside of the circle of their tribesmen. He claimed though that in the years 1951–1955 the officer stopped noticing the changes occurring inside of the army⁵⁰.

It is worth pointing out yet another fact. J.B. Glubb, thanks to his authority, managed to obtain more British grants for the army. However, one has to add that he was the only authorizing officer of those sums. The donations were not given to the Jordan's government but were paid into a special account which was disposed of by the chief of staff J.B. Glubb. This, of course, had to provoke reluctance among the ministers of the government in Amman⁵¹.

In the period analysed, the position of the position of the army commander was strong then, and could be seen as unshakable. He himself considered himself to be the patron of the army and was confident about his position. He suspected difficulties on the part of the Palestinians and civilians in general, and, in particular, politicians. Nevertheless, he idealized the role of the army.

It seems that this outlook on things was largely characteristic of the British policymakers. It was between 1951 to 1956 when the position of J.B. Glubb's was being appreciated in London. One may have even the impression that they overvalued him. As an example of it, one can provide the transcript of the discussion between general Gerard Templer, the chef of staff of the British army, and Charles Duck, the ambassador of Great Britain. The talks were conducted during the first visit of general G. Templer in Jordan on May 31 to June 2, 1955. In the summary of the discussion they emphasized the role of J.B. Glubb. The general was greatly impressed by the power and potential of the commander of the Jordanian army. The general was perhaps even surprised by how important he was. The ambassador stressed his importance and said by the way that during the last argument between J.B. Glubb and the Jordanian government the embassy had warned the prime minister that removing the commander of the Arab Legion from post could influence the scale of grants received by the armed forces. General G. Templer was surprised with this information. They both agreed, however, that it was J.G. Glubb whose role was most important when it comes to the British influences in Amman. They agreed that his position should be kept by all means and that he should be protected against the attacks from the Jordanian government and the court. They were also considering the importance of the officially proclaimed demands to arabise the officer corps of the Jordanian army. Finally, the guest accepted the view taken by J.B. Glubb.

⁵⁰ J. Lunt, *The Arab...*, pp. 137–138.

⁵¹ Top Secret. Summary record of Conversation Between generals Templer and Keightly and H.M. Ambassador on September 13, 1955, FO 371/115682.

He considered the arabisation demands a political postulate by the politicians from the cities but received quite differently by the Arab soldiers⁵².

In the report of June 10, 1955, the ambassador himself presented in detail J.B. Glubb's views as to 'the arabisation'. The commander of the Legion communicated these views to general G. Templer during the talks and got his acceptance. Glubb stressed that a strong insistence in this matter was attributed solely to the civilian politicians. He also understood that the young king puts pressure on this issue and that he is surrounded by a group of young officers. The commander of the Arab Legion knew those facts but he ignored them when talking to general G. Templer. To improve the political mood, he announced that he would have appointed 3 or 4 Arab officers as colonels by the end of the year. This, he thought, would silence the civilian critics. He added that in the light of their lack of experience, they would be trained for 3 years following their appointment and that they would perform functions at headquarters. Only after that time one of them could receive the title of the command officer of the brigade. He also suspected that it would take 10 years before an Arab officer would be able to take command of the division. These dates were supposed to be the result of the natural necessity to raise the ability levels of the Arab officers who, for the time being, were not able to command modern brigade formations. Any way you look at it, J.B. Glubb predicted in his plan that the more complete arabisation of the officers' corps would be possibly carried out around the year 1966, or later. Strangely enough, he believed the officers would consider that procedure natural⁵³.

The End of the Jordan Specifics

These facts point to one more interesting aspect of the case. J.B. Glubb was unlikely to be termed the agent of the British Empire at that time. Due to some random reasons, he became after the death of king Abd Allah an independent political figure. The ambassador in Amman as well as the chief of staff of Great Britain do not only give him instructions but they believe this is him who is a guarantee of London's influences in Jordan. Our subject himself thinks he is the protector of the Arab case, which he exclusively identifies as the position of House of the Hashimites and the increase in the strength of his Arab Legion. The letter intensively arms and extends itself thanks to the money from Great Britain. It is hard to guess if he had any far-reaching plans as far as its future role is concerned. At the same time, he disregards the Arab populist nationalism, which is effectively used by Egypt. Generally, one has to emphasize one more time the inadequacy of the terms that could took the measure of the officer according to the patterns created by Anglo-Saxon liberals or the socialist camp. And bearing it all in mind, he represented

⁵² Top Secret. Summary record of Conversation Between generals Templer and Keightly and H.M. Ambassador on June 1, 1955, FO 371/115681.

⁵³ From Amman to Foreign Office, June 10, 1955, FO 371/115681.

a clear political anachronism in 1950s. He thought, for example, that he would be able to compromise British patriotism with his own vision of supporting the cause of Arabs.

All the inconsistencies of the attitude of both J.B. Glubb and British politicians came into light during the fight to acquire Jordan for the accession to the Bagdad Pact. During the fight, J.B. Glubb was supposed to be the main asset of London, he supported the idea himself but eventually, this situation contributed to his demise.

At this point, however, it is worth indicating again J.B. Glubb's general views on the situation in the Arab world and the future of the British dominance in the region. The analysis of these issues could be found in his letter to the Foreign Office sent already on August 6, 1951. The author strongly argued that the whole policy of London towards the Arab world during the period from 1945–1951 was based on erroneous assumptions. He strongly disapproved of the faith in real political unity of the Arabs. He rejected the idea of cooperation with the Arab League. He indicated that the organization, if it has any importance at all, it is due to the fact it is influenced by Egypt. Meanwhile, contrary to the belief of many British people, the dispute between Cairo and London is substantial and is not the result of temporary misunderstandings. Great Britain prevents Egypt from uniting the Nile Valley and is holding out against the evacuation of the forces from the Suez Canal. This condemns the parties to conflict. He also recommended to reject the faith that Israel is a common enemy of Arabs. Arab solidarity, he believed, existed but only verbally. It was a useful tool used by Egypt and Saudi Arabia against Jordan. There was no simple choice between the Arabs and Israel. If London supports Arab equality, it will easily lead to political isolation of Jordan, the only consequently pro-British state in the region. The country, under the authority of Hashimites has to cooperate with Great Britain. Meanwhile London, as he emphasized, cannot count on having good relations with both Amman and Cairo. In the Arab world, the empire has to choose whether it wants to cooperate with Egypt and Saudi Arabia and reject Jordan and Iraq, or to cultivate good relations with Amman and Bagdad. In the latter case, the conflict with Egypt and Syria will be necessary, however only probable with Saudi Arabia⁵⁴.

In retrospect, one must acknowledge that J. G. Glubb's analysis of the situation was right. He also rightly assessed the idea of Arab unity as a political tool in the hands of dominant countries and leaders. As a British patriot, he felt the responsibility to educate the British elite about Arab politics. A different matter is the effectiveness of his efforts.

After a few years in 1955, Great Britain got involved in the creation of the pro-western military pact in the Middle East. Thanks to the support of the USA, the alliance was formed during the summit in Bagdad on November 21–23, 1955. The alliance joined Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Great Britain together and it was named the Bagdad Pact after the place where its statute was created. The participation of Iraq opened the alliance to the Arab world, but created an overwhelming hostility of Egypt. For Bagdad and London, Jordan became an obvious candidate for accession. At the same time Egypt,

⁵⁴ From Lieut General J.B. Glubb Pasha Lieut. Colonial R.K. Malille. Staff Liaison Office. 18 Upper Phillimere Gardens. London. Secret and Personal, August 6, 1951, FO 371/91839/E1942/60.

Syria and Saudi Arabia definitely opposed the British plans. Eventually in Jordan in 1955 a political storm broke over the fight for the shape of this pact. It seemed almost certain that J.B. Glubb gave the advantage to the British⁵⁵.

The discussion over whether to join the pact or not evoked the greatest mass protests in the history of the kingdom. On December 16, 1955, upon the request of pro-Naser opposition tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets. The riots spread over the cities of the West Bank as well as Amman, Irbid to the east of the river. Essentially, the riots lasted till December 19, and during that time it turned out again that the police were not able to protect the government and that the pro-government parties did not enjoy authority with the public. The Arab Legion had to stop the riots. It turned out, though, it didn't have the right training and the proper equipment. What's more, the Arab officers are not enthusiastic about their tasks, however they do perform them. In order to end the protests, the authorities ensured that there were no plans for the country to join the Bagdad Pact. A similar wave of riots broke out on January 4, 1956. This time, the Arab Legion was prepared and it stopped the protests after a few days. At the same time, the rioters caused lots of damage, this concerned, in particular, the public buildings. It turned out that in the conflict context the only real forces in the country were the left-wing opposition and the army⁵⁶.

This was the background to the last act of the activities of J.B. Glubb in Jordan. It should be noted that the riots in December 1955 started in connection with general G. Templer's second visit in Jordan during December 6–14, 1955. During the visit, the British delegation was trying to encourage the government in Jordan to quickly access the Bagdad Pact. The instruction for this delegation was formulated largely according to J.B. Glubb's recommendations who, on November 28 in 1955, sent to London his own memorandum indicating the overall political situation in the region as well and the practical advice of how to make Amman access the Bagdad Pact. The author predicted strong opposition of Egypt and the left in Jordan. Also, he pointed out to the young age of the king and his instability when it comes to decision-making. He himself emphasized his belief that the accession to the alliance would be good not only for him but for Great Britain too. He indicated at the same time that the political elite in Jordan found itself in a difficult position and its hesitancy was due to authentic problems and dilemmas. London had two choices. It could force Amman to access the pact by e.g. threatening it to stop the subsidies. Another possibility was to win Jordan elite by increasing the subsidies (especially the military ones) or flattering the vanity of the king and the Jordan dignitaries. Also, it was necessary to remember that bargaining was the tradition of the region. J.B. Glubb was a strong advocate of the latter option. He warned that due to the emotional reactions of the young monarch the first option could end up with Amman's termination of the cooperation despite all the dangerous consequences. Generally, the

⁵⁵ B. Wróblewski, *Sojusz...*, p. 294.

⁵⁶ Philip Robins, *A History of Jordan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, p. 92; B. Wróblewski, *Jordania...*, p. 132.

author of the writing believed that winning the Jordan elite would bring positive effects. Separate space was devoted to the king Husayn I. He wrote he still had the child's mentality. He is not concerned with boring statistics. He recommended to impress him with the military plans and to point the kinds of modern weapon to him which Great Britain can hand over to the Jordan army within the alliance⁵⁷.

General G. Templer received the Foreign Office's instruction generally in line with J.B. Glubb's recommendations. He was trying to stick to them during the long negotiations in Amman. Any wordings suggesting ultimatum were avoided. The result was negative though and the government wasn't convinced to issue a positive declaration. According to G. The reason for it was, according to G. Templer was the Palestinian ministers feared being called traitors⁵⁸. So this time the commander of the Arab Legion did not give London the effective advice.

Additionally, after the riots were over, there were voices among the Arab officers of the Arab Legion calling for the army to seize power. In his letter dated February 9, 1956 J.B. Glubb recalled the events of the last weeks. He wrote that in December 1955 a state close to chaos reigned among the Jordanian politicians. He added that he himself as well as the army command were surprised by the events. In order to suppress the riots in January 1956 they prepared the army much better. Commanding was entrusted with the Arab officers and strong effort was done not to show the British commanders. That, however, doesn't protect them against accusations that the British are suppressing the national uprising. Meanwhile, according to what J.B. Glubb says, groups of Arab officers are massively coming to him asking why the riots were suppressed if the civil politicians will anyway lead to the crisis. The author suggested that a kind of seize of power would be necessary. In this case a quick accession of Jordan could be done. J.B. Glubb was aware of the political difficulties. The military actions had to be led by the Arab officers and they, of course, didn't command⁵⁹.

In the weeks that followed, the authorities in Amman suspended the matter of the Bagdad Pact. Meanwhile, in the army and among the Bedouin tribes there was agitation for joining the alliance. J.B. Glubb's contribution into it was widely recognized. Because of the ferment in the Legion and its role in suppressing the riots, the commander of the army was becoming a key figure. Meanwhile, western press was full of information about the importance of the British man and small role of the government and the king. The authorities of the country were exposed to the risk of losing their authority. In a climate of tension and uncertainty there came a sudden blow by young king Husayn who, of course, knew about the disregard of his person by the commander of his army. On March 1, 1956 J.B. Glubb was informed that he had to immediately leave Jordan. For technical reasons, he and his family flew out of Amman on March 2 1956 never to

⁵⁷ Top Secret. Memorandum Jordan From Glubb. November 28, 1955, FO 371/115532/V1073/13486.

⁵⁸ From Amman to Foreign Office. Secret. December 11, 1955, FO 371/115656/V51051/83.

⁵⁹ Top Secret. From J.B. Glubb to General Sir Gerald Templer Chief of the Imperial General Staff, War Office, February 2, 1956, WO 216/893/AL/CGS/300/G.

return there again. That day the conservative British government was shocked and in the cities of Jordan there were many joyful demonstrations. What many observers were most shocked by, however, was the fact that the army and the tribes accepted the resignation without emotions and there was practically no reaction to that⁶⁰.

Final word

The consequences of J.B. Glubb's resignation constitute a separate topic that would need a comprehensive article. It should be noted here that the former command, after his arrival in London, was softening the emotions and trying to encourage the British government to maintain the relations with Amman – all despite his resentment against the king Husayn. He particularly cared about the stability of the army he created.

It is now time to refer back to the title question. In order to better understand the case, the words and opinions expressed by J.G. Glubb himself were reported here. His subjective perception was the question did not make sense. British patriotism and the commitment to the Arab case were the two feelings that, according to his belief, were interconnected and there was no clash between them. One has to add that his pro-Arab attitude was real. J.B. Glubb honestly believed he was serving the Arab nation. Nevertheless, he understood it as his own vision of the nation and its welfare.

One thing is J.B. Glubb's feelings, the other however an attempt to recognize the objective reality. The problem is it is not simple and obvious. What does Arab interest mean? The current political circumstances show that treating Arabs as a political nation has no real justification. The command of the Arab legion had his own vision of the society in the Middle East. He identified the proper Arab ethnos with Arab nomads. He imagined that serving the family of Hashimites in Jordan will contribute to the unification of the Arab Middle East. He believed at the same time in Britain's continuous dominance through the link with the Hashimite monarchy. One certainly cannot call him a British agent in the traditional sense of the word. He, after all, supported the influences of London for a couple of years and this is a completely different level of activity.

In general, J.B. Glubb was an independent military and a politician resembling some Europeans who, in the colonial era, implemented their plans thanks to their outstanding abilities and connections with the elites in the metropolis. He belonged to the British epigones, the supporters of the construction of a large Arab monarchy under the sovereignty of the Hashimites. At the time of his greatest influence (1951–1955) he was already an anachronism. It seems that his plans failed already in 1948. The Hashimite kingdom encompassing Transjordan and the majority of Palestine could be something different than Jordan full of refugees. In fact, J.B. Glubb understood it but he was not able to change the fateful developments.

⁶⁰ J.B. Glubb, *A Soldier...*, pp. 422–424.