



Future of the Arab Nationalist Security Under Regional Challenges

Asst.Prof.Dr. Abdulkhalig Shamil Mohammed*

Asst.Lec. Salah Ibrahim Hamadi

Kirkuk University- college of Law and Political Science

Tikrit University- college of Political Science

abdulkhalig.sh@yahoo.com

salah69@tu.edu.iq

Article info.

Article history:

- Received 7 Apr 2019
- Accepted 15 Apr 2019
- Available online 5 May 2019

Keywords:

- Nationalist Security
- Arab
- Arab strategy
- International studies

Abstract: Given its geostrategic importance and geopolitical status, the Arab region has become, throughout its formative stages, an arena for competition and conflict between regional and international non - Arab forces and actors as each of these powers carried a perspective and a grand strategic vision towards the Arab region aiming through which to achieve their hegemony project in the region. This coincided with the absence of or lack of a unified Arab strategy or vision to prevent this from happening.

* **Corresponding Author:** Abdulkhalig Shamil Mohammed , **E-Mail:** abdulkhalig.sh@yahoo.com ,
Tel:009647701709587, **Affiliation:** Kirkuk University- college of Law and Political Science

مستقبل الأمن القومي العربي في ظل التحديات الإقليمية

م.م صلاح ابراهيم حمادي

كلية العلوم السياسية ، جامعة تكريت

salah69@tu.edu.iq

أ.م.د. عبد الخالق شامل محمد

كلية القانون و العلوم السياسية ، جامعة كركوك

abdulkhaliq.sh@yahoo.com

معلومات البحث :

تواريخ البحث:

- الاستلام : 7/نيسان/2019
- القبول : 15/نيسان/2019
- النشر المباشر : 2019/5/5

الكلمات المفتاحية :

- الامن القومي
- العرب
- الاستراتيجية العربية
- الدراسات الدولية

الخلاصة : نظراً لأهميتها الجيوستراتيجية ووضعها الجغرافي السياسي ، فقد أصبحت المنطقة العربية ، طوال مراحل تشكيلها ، ساحة للمنافسة والصراع بين القوى الإقليمية والعربية غير الفاعلة والجهات الفاعلة لأن كل من هذه القوى تحمل منظوراً وروية استراتيجية كبرى نحو المنطقة العربية تهدف من خلالها إلى تحقيق مشروع هيمنتها في المنطقة. تزامن ذلك مع غياب أو عدم وجود استراتيجية أو رؤية عربية موحدة لمنع حدوث ذلك.

Introduction

Given its geostrategic importance and geopolitical status, the Arab region has become, throughout its formative stages, an arena for competition and conflict between regional and international non - Arab forces and actors as each of these powers carried a perspective and a grand strategic vision towards the Arab region aiming through which to achieve their hegemony project in the region. This coincided with the absence of or lack of a unified Arab strategy or vision to prevent this from happening.

Since more than a decade and a half of time the Arab system witnessed a state of internal cracks and changes in the structural formation of its regional system as a result of the absence of active Arab parties and forces in it and of their forsaking their regional role such as Iraq, Egypt and Syria. These states were taken out of the regional balance equation in spite of their will, leaving the field to the growing and the rise of regional powers, seeking to impose a policy based on the re - drafting of the regional balance equation in order to ensure their national interests, and absolutely at the expense of the interests of the Arab states.

The bitter reality the Arab countries witness and the big challenges they suffer from at all the levels are closely linked to Arab national security as each defect

related to the Arab region, albeit small, affects, in turn, the Arab regional system and throws its shadow over its national security.

Importance: The importance of the subject lies in the quality of events that the Arab region experienced at the beginning of the third millennium due to the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, and the associated political, security and economic repercussions that has casted a shadow over the Arab region as well as the outbreak of popular uprisings and revolutions in the Arab region in 2011 which resulted in a wave of political change which affected a number of Arab ruling regimes. This change has led to a state of chaos and political instability and lawlessness reflected its repercussions on the structure of the Arab regional system and is now threatening the future of national security and has affected nature of international relations in general.

Problem: the problem of our research topic is based on the problem of political and security instability in the Arab region which stems from the intensification of competition and conflict between regional non-Arab forces that are trying to impose their project which guarantees regional hegemony and from this problem the research questions arise including:

- What is the nature of the Iranian project of regional hegemony?
- What are the pillars of the Turkish dream to return to the new Ottoman?
- What are the directions of Israel as a regional power towards the Arab region?
- Have the Arab countries succeeded in achieving their national security in the light of regional challenges and conflicts in the region? And what are the future scenes and mechanisms to achieve it?

Hypothesis: The research starts from a scientific hypothesis that: There is an inverse relationship between the challenges or the magnitude of the threat to the Arab region and the achievement of Arab national security i.e. the greater the number of threats and challenges facing the Arab regional order, the more inhibiting factors that limit the process of achieving Arab national security.

Methodology: For the purpose of validating the hypothesis, the method of analysis was adopted to show how the Arab regional system, in most of the stages of the international system, has been an arena for interactions of regional powers , sometimes competing and other times at odds with others to control and manage the region's resources. The strategic analysis approach was also adopted in the study of strategic directions of the other countries towards the region as well as the prospective approach that helps to develop a vision of the future according to the data available to what the future of Arab national security will come.

Structure: In order to shed light on the most prominent regional challenges facing the Arab national security we shall deal with the topic through the following demands:

The first demand: Arab national security and Iranian ambitions for regional hegemony.

The second demand: Turkey and the dream of the new Ottoman.

The third demand: Israel as a dominant regional power.

The fourth demand: future of the Arab national security.

The first demand: Arab nationalist security and Iranian ambition of regional dominance.

In its simplest form, security is defined as the reassurance of fear, or it is the ability to respond to a threat which requires a good understanding of that threat, its sources, degree of gravity, and the values it threatens¹. The term nationalist security is actually a translation from the European term (national security). The American (Walter Lehman) first developed a specific concept of the term national security in 1943 which states: (The state is safe when it does not need to sacrifice its legitimate interests in order to avoid war and is able in case of challenge to protect those interests through waging war)², and in the same context, the League of Arab States set a definition of the concept of Arab nationalist security as: (the ability of the Arab nation to defend its security and rights, and maintain its independence and sovereignty over its territory, develop Arab capabilities and potentials in various political, economic and cultural fields based on military capacity and diplomacy, taking into account the national security needs of each state and the available capabilities and internal, regional and international variables that affect Arab nationalist security)³.

Iran aims to establish an Islamic Middle Eastern project in the region to confront American-Zionist projects. This Iranian project depends on two axes⁴:

The first axis is ideological: the Iranian regime's belief in the inevitability of the global government of Islam and the need for Iran to play a strong role in preparing for it.

The second axis is strategic: Iran's ability to form a security belt that serves as a wall against the attempts of its opponents to penetrate it from inside or besiege it through neighboring countries.

After the American administration announced its intention to change the political system in Iraq, Iran began planning its project in the event of such a political gap. In August 2002, the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution ordered the

(¹)Mustafa Alawi, "Regional Security Between National Security and Global Security," the International Center for Future and Strategic Studies, Issue.(4), first year, Cairo April, 2005, p. 9.

(²)Quoting: Juma'a Bin Ali Juma, Arab Security in a Changing World, Madbouli Library, Cairo, 2010 , pp. 25-26.

(³)Ismail Qira, "the League of Arab States in a Uni-polar World," Journal of Arab Affairs, Issue . (81), General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, Cairo, 1995, p. 101

(⁴)Muhammad Abbas Naji," Deflation : Future of the Regional Role of Iran after the Arab Revolutions, "Journal of International Politics, Issue . 185 , Cairo, 2011, pp. 54-55.

formation of a special committee in Iraq to develop a strategy to achieve Iranian interests in Iraq after the overthrow of its political regime. This committee identified three main goals namely: to prevent the United States from winning in Iraq, a case which undermines the security of Iran, and consolidate its influence in the new Iraq and prevent the emergence of a strong Iraq¹.

And as a result of the American invasion of Iraq in March 2003, and the collapse of its political system, there was a widespread chaos in Iraq which paved the way for Iran to fill the gap by force after the Arab countries, especially the Gulf countries, failed in executing this role because of the weaknesses in their military institutions compared to what Iran enjoyed at that time.

However, Iran's military and security ambitions in the region have not ended but have increased with the entry into the stage of international changes and the destruction of Iraqi military capabilities. Iran aims to become the dominant force in the Arabian Gulf and the influential force in the Middle East².

Therefore, we notice that since the first day of transferring power to the Iraqis, it began to intervene in the Iraqi issue because it does not want to establish a strong national Iraqi government but emphasizes the existence of a friendly Iraqi regime which secures its vital interests³. Iran was also keen to strengthen its relations with the Iraqi religious authorities, at this stage, because of its desire for Iraq not to establish a secular state sparing it a sufficient degree of hostility⁴.

This was accompanied by the influx of thousands of Iranians into Iraq through the coordination with Syria, the opening of borders to their collaborators in this field, the facilitation of their training, and their passage through their territories to Iraq⁵. This was stated by the commander of the US Central Region, General Petraeus, when he noted that (Iran, through its border with Iraq, sent between one million and one and a half million Iranians including members of the Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guard, under a diplomatic cover, in order to preserve the mobility capability) and described them as an arm to implement Iran's foreign policy in Iraq⁶.

(¹)Mustafa al-Ani,"Iranian Interference Policy in Iraq,"Security and Terrorism Bulletin, Issue 3.July 2006, p. 4.

(²)Mustafa Talas, "Challenges Facing the Arab World Under International Changes," Centre for Military Studies, Damascus, 2000, p.86.

(³) Crisis Group, "Size of Iranian Influence in Iraq, Iran's Policy After the Fall of Baghdad," translations, Issue. (6), International Centre for Future and Strategic Studies, Year 1, 2005, pp 12-18.

(⁴)Hussein Hafez Wheib, "Iranian Foreign Policy Between Pragmatism and Principle Concerning of Iraq," International Papers, Issue. (134), Centre for International Studies, Baghdad, May 2006, p. 16.

(⁵)Hussein Hafez Wheib, "Iranian Foreign Policy Between Pragmatism and Principle Concerning of Iraq," International Papers, Issue. (134), Center for International Studies, Baghdad, May 2006, p. 16.

(⁶)YoelJoginski, "the Iranian Interference in Iraq, the Motives, Characteristics and Effects," Israeli Jerusalem Newspaper, Issue. (6937), October, 2011, p. 1.

This prompted American national security adviser Stephen Hadley to acknowledge the existence of a tactical success by Iran in the region after the success of Hezbollah, Iran's main ally in Lebanon in the year 2006, and Hamas, its strong ally in the Palestinian territories, after it controlled Gaza, as well as what was achieved by its allies in Iraq against American forces¹.

As soon as the talks upon the negotiations concerning the American withdrawal from Iraq began, Iran offered itself to fill the gap after the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq, as stated by Iranian President Ahmadinejad, saying that Iran was ready to fill the gap left by the American withdrawal from Iraq².

Iran has also worked to set up cross - relations of the official institutions and national governments through religious and intellectual influence on certain political parties and social groups depending on the ideological and religious side and supporting them politically, economically and militarily as well as the dissemination of cultural and media centers in a number of Arab countries. Alongside with the launch of the so-called revolutions of the Arab spring and the accompanying changes of the political systems in a number of Arab countries, the Iranian role increased in countries experiencing political and security disturbance in order to increase the gap among these different groups and governments, and thus tearing the social fabric in these countries and the omission of national identity and replacing loyalty to the homeland with loyalty to the sect and denomination and making these groups and parties act as determined by the requirements of Iranian policy in the region to impose its regional hegemony.

In addition, Iran provoked sectarian conflicts in the region through its formation of the so-called Shiite axis or crescent which was referred to by King Abdullah II in the year 2004, including Arab and Asian countries, as opposed to a Sunni axis led by Saudi Arabia including a number of Arab and Gulf countries. The sectarian conflict is a prelude to a major religious division in Muslim world. Therefore, we see it working hard to preserve Bashar Assad's regime in Syria because its loss of the link through the collapse of the Syrian regime means reducing its influence on Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and Jihad movements in Palestine. On the other side, Saudi Arabia along with a number of the Gulf states bet on toppling Bashar Assad 's regime option in order to dismantle this axis or crescent that connects the line (Tehran, Baghdad, Damascus, Lebanon, Palestine). Iran also stood side by side with the Iraqi government forces in the war against the terrorist groups or the so-called (isis), on the claim that they were supported by the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia and other regional countries. Iran also provided military support in the form of advisers, weapons and money to the Hothi group in Yemen which is

(¹)AnthonyKrodsman, Iran and the United States," Important Issues from an American Perspective, Washington, De-Center For strategic and International studies,2011, pp. 32-35.

(²)Ibid, p. 36

fighting against the legitimate troops of the Yemeni president Abdrabh Hadi Mansour as Iran relies on these axes as regional tools it exploits in implementing its policy and strategy in the region.

The issue of the Iranian nuclear project represented a major threat to the Arab nationalist security especially after signing the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015 between Tehran and the European powers in the Austrian capital Vienna. According to observers, it is considered a victory for Iran through this agreement for receiving one hundred billion dollars of its frozen funds in the American and European banks and lifting the majority of economic sanctions in exchange for the reduction of Iran's nuclear enrichment which leads to the delay the production of nuclear weapons for a number of years only¹. This led Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, to work hard on obtaining nuclear weapons as a form of mutual deterrence in the event that Iran possessed nuclear weapons.

All of this came through a vision prepared by the Iranian Expediency Diagnosis Council project called (the Iranian twenty year strategy 2005-2025) which shows the Iranian targets in obtaining the status of a key and dominant regional power not only in the Middle East but in Central Asia as well, as it focused on continuing its nuclear program, deepening the Iranian role in Iraq, supporting the Syrian regime and preventing it from falling, expanding its international relations with the major international powers dominating the international system and trying to come to an understanding with the United States on regional issues². This matter renewed suspicions of the United States about Iran's intentions toward the region. Thus, the American President Donald Trump announced the new United States strategy on October 23, 2017 in which he called on the whole world to join the United States to curb Iran's ambitions and its aggressiveness and its support for terrorism to shake the stability in the region, indicating that the United States will withdraw from the nuclear agreement held by the major powers with Iran in July 2015.

In light of these data and in the absence of the Arab regional project, the continuation of Iran's ambitions to achieve its goals as a dominant and influential regional power in the formulation of political and security equations in the region through building separation barrier of problems among the Arab countries in general and Gulf countries particular, it becomes a fundamental obstacle in the establishment of a unified and effective Arab security system. It will push these

(¹)Nadia SaadEddin, *New Security Equations in the Arab Regional System*, International Politics, " Strategic Transformation Annex, Cairo, Issue 205, July 2016, p. 8.

(²)According to this project , Iran will become a source of inspiration for the Muslim world. It will play a political, economic and security a key role in the region. For more details see: Joseph Holliday, "The Struggle for Syria in 2011: An Operational and Regional Analysis," Middle East Security, Report 2 (December 2011), p.23.

countries to search for their national security in isolation from their nationalist security in their Arab surroundings.

Second: Turkey and the dream of the new Ottoman.

In earlier stages, Turkey practiced an arrogant foreign policy with Arab region and went on to ally with their opponents by exploiting the water issue as a means of pressure on a number of Arab countries such as Iraq and Syria which posed a threat to the Arab food security which is an integral part of the Arab nationalist security.

With the arrival of the Justice and Development Party to power in Turkey in 2002, it has adopted a new foreign policy towards the Arab region which, as a matter of fact, was based on resetting problems and adopting soft power tools for the purpose of drawing a positive picture in the collective Arab mind. It keeps one eye on its Arab south and keeps the other on Europe by focusing on the issues and problems plaguing the Arab region such as the American occupation of Iraq. It criticized the Israeli excesses of the legitimate Palestinian rights, the Syrian revolution and the increasing Iranian influence in the Arab Gulf region. In addition to that, it hosted the Islamic conference. This trend represented a good coming back to its relations with the Arab region and an attempt to use it in the service of its foreign policy.

The Turkish privileged relations with the United States did not prevent Turkey from trying to have independence in its foreign policy away from the influence of American and Israeli policy through the adoption of positive neutrality policy in all the region. It will not remain just a bridge between the West and the East and according to the words of the Turkish Foreign Minister (Ahmed Daud Oglu), will adapt its regional policy by employing its historical and geographical heritage to become a major player in the area. This new trend in the Turkish foreign policy emerged through two major crises of the Arab world. For example, during the Iraqi crisis, Turkey refused to let the US forces move across its territory and become a starting point to strike Iraq while other Arab countries agreed to become that starting point. In the recent Gaza war, the Turkish position was very clear. It was able to criticize (Israel) while Many Arab countries could not direct such criticism¹.

(¹)Hassan Naf'a et al, the Arab World, Its Predicaments and Desired Reform, Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jordan, edi.1, 2011, p. 19.

For more details about the nature of the shift in Turkish - US relations, see Fuad Al-Saeed: "Changing Dynamics in Turkey and the Repercussions on the US - Turkish Relations," the International Center for Future and Strategic Studies, Issue 45, Year 4, Cairo, September 2004, pp. 6-7.

The Turkish foreign policy was able to achieve a remarkable success, especially at the Arab level, due to several reasons, the most important of which are the following¹:

1. The gap that the Arab region was experiencing because of American occupation of Iraq and the Arab countries failure to reach an appropriate formula to fill the resulting gap.
2. Iran's growing strategic power in Iraq and its growing influence in Syria and Lebanon that deepened the defect in the Arab regional balance and resulted in many security threats, especially for the Gulf states, which created a demand for a Turkish role to parallel the Iranian role.
3. The rise of the relative weight of the political Islamist forces in the Arab political life especially the Muslim Brotherhood which has organic links with the Justice and Development Party on one hand and historical ties with the state of the Islamic Caliphate project on the other. The Brotherhood emergence in 1928 was a reaction to Ataturk's abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 and thus provided the environment that incubates this trend in many Arab countries.
4. The American support for the Turkish model as a moderate Islamist system which provides the alternative to radical political Islam that embraces violence.

With the emergence of the popular movement in many Arab countries, the change in political systems in these countries and the rise of Islamic currents, especially the Muslim Brotherhood to power in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and the Hamas movement takeover of Gaza, Turkey hurried to adopt these new systems which share it the same ideological approach. Therefore, Turkey called for the need to seize this historic opportunity to achieve its ambition to lead the Middle East but these parties failed to manage the Authority shortly after coming to power which put the Turkish policy in confusion and thus its policy was characterized by ambivalence and lack of clarity in every situation. With the expansion of the Arab protests and revolutions circle to include Syria also, Turkey felt that the situation in Syria will not be different from the situation in the other Arab countries which went through the change and felt that the overthrow of the political system in Syria will result in the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood to power. Therefore, it supported the process of change in the Syrian regime in any way and it opened its borders to the rebels although it had close ties with Syria in the political, economic and cultural fields.

(¹)Mohammed Saad Abu Amoud, "Turkey and the Dream of Re-production of the Ottoman Caliphate State," *Journal of International Politics*, Issue. 201, Cairo, July 2015, p.100.

Turkey is convinced that the process of toppling the Syrian regime is not a goal in itself, but it forms a blow to one of the main pillars of its regional rival, Iran, and the overthrow of the Syrian regime means to weaken Iran axis - Syria - Lebanon - Iraq¹.

The aim of the new Turkish foreign policy was to re-produce the Ottoman Caliphate, or the so-called New Ottoman Empire, through practicing regional leadership over the Ottoman-controlled areas of the Balkans and most of the Middle East and Central Asia i.e. the creation of a Turkish commonwealth like the one which was established by Britain with its former colonies², The uniqueness of the regional role of Turkey was expressed by its foreign minister, in his speech before the Turkish parliament on April 27, 2012 by saying that Turkey would lead the wave of change in the Middle East and would continue to be the vanguard of the wave of change. Turkey would not only be a friendly and sisterly country for the Middle East, but also a new thinker that would define its future and a country that is the vanguard of the new regional order³.

Thus, we are witnessing a new Middle East led by Turkey in accordance with its interests away from any partnership with others, whether the Arab or Iran. This Turkish aspiration to lead the region is based on an ideological vision and aims to restore historical and cultural ties between Turkey and the colonies that were under the Ottoman control. Therefore, when the Turkish President "RejebTayyip Erdogan "was asked about the reason for Turkey's interference in Syrian affairs, he said that the Syrian people was their ancestors' trusteeship in their necks and that they were a country founded on the rest of the Ottomans. President Erdogan goes on to say that they would get to every spot that their ancestors arrived on horseback and would take care of them⁴.

Turkey's policy towards the Arab states, especially toward Syria and Iraq, poses the subject of the charges to mobilize, receive, train and facilitate the passage of terrorist elements to Syria and Iraq as reports indicate that there is a close relationship between the Turkish intelligence and the organization of the Islamic state (isis) through the hosting and support with money, weapons, treatment and facilitating foreign fighters transit into Syria, as well as oil trade and antiquities⁵.

(¹)Ibid, p. 53.

(²)For more details about the Ottoman Caliphate project and the Turkish role in the region see: AhmetDavutoglu, "the Strategic Depth: Turkey 's Position and Role in the International Arena," trans. Mohammad Thalji and Tariq Abdul Jalil, AldarAlarabia for Science Publishers, Beirut, 2011.

(³)Mohamed El SayedSelim, "Post-Revolution Pressure: Increasing Exposure of the Arab Regional System," International Policy Journal, Issue 192, Cairo, April 2013, p. 51.

(⁴) Mohamed Nur El Din, "The Turkish Project - Internal Recession and External Collapse," Journal of Osten Affairs, Center for Strategic Studies, Issue 147, Year 24, Beirut, February 2014, p.56.

(⁵)Mohammed Saad Abu Amoud, op. cit., p. 101.

As a matter of fact, the Turkish repeated interventions in the Arab affairs did not stop with one state, starting with the constant intervention of the Turkish army in Kurdistan of Iraq and setting up a military base in Ba'shiqah area in Mosul under the pretext of the war on terrorism on one hand and presenting itself as the defender of the rights of the Turkmen in Iraq from time to time on the other. It is also engaging itself in military operations in the Syrian Kobani and Afreen region as these areas in Iraq and Syria pose a major challenge to Turkey especially after demanding the establishment of a Kurdish state which would encourage Turkey's Kurds to gain autonomy.

Turkey is also trying to strengthen its presence in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa through the establishment of military bases in Qatar, following the recent Arab Gulf crisis and in Somalia. These two countries represent a geostrategic importance in Turkey's strategic perception. In the context of opening new markets to the Turkish arms in the region, the Turkish military movements in the region give the impression that there is a joint coordination between Turkey and the United States. The United States relative military deployment decline in the Middle East is met with an increase in the influence of the Turkish military which is like the process of distribution of roles to serve the Turkish American interests. The presence of Turkey is now besieging the Arabian Gulf region north of Iraq and east of Qatar and south of Somalia. The Turkish military presence in Somalia and near the Gulf of Aden represents a threat to the Egyptian and Sudanese national security both in the Nahdha dam project and through the two countries' water share in the Nile as there is an alliance between Somalia and Ethiopia and the entrance of the Zionist entity on the same line.

Third: Israel as a dominant regional power.

The importance of (Israel) has increased tremendously in the American strategy after its success in the role entrusted to it in the Cold War which also increased the possibility of United States reliance on it in achieving its objectives in the region¹.

Based on this, the United States found in (Israel) its desired ally to achieve its objectives in the region especially after its failure to gather states of the region in one alliance. And because of the location of (Israel) in the heart of the Arab world and its proximity to the oil- rich Arabian Gulf, it is considered an ideal starting point for military operations and can be used as a weapon and gear storage location that allows US intervention when confronted with a crisis in the Arabian Gulf.

Therefore, within these perceptions, the United States has worked on preserving the survival of this entity as a major regional state, dependent on US support, to maintain the supply of oil through conservative sympathetic systems to the West in

(¹) L. Arion and R. Mitchell, *The Modern Middle East and North Africa*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1984, p. 349.

the Arab oil states. Add to this the American perception of (Israel) as a strategic relation that cannot be compared to any relationship with any of the Arab states¹. So, it became the only reliable state in the region due to its association with America and its importance to the American strategy².

Iraq has always been the source of inconvenience and concern to (Israel) because of its support of the Palestinian organization and because of obstructing the compromise process and its rejection of normalization of the Arab relations with (Israel). Therefore, the occupation of Iraq by the United States and changing its political system was necessary for the (Israeli) security from the perspective of regime change and establishing a new democratic government that would accept the coexistence with (Israel) and possibly normalize relations with it and from another perspective contain Iran and besiege it.

(Israel) sees that the war on Iraq is an Israeli war based on the notion that any event or change may come from this invasion will change the situation in the region and (Israel) in particular as the results of the invasion will be channeled to the strategic objectives of serving (Israeli) strategic goals³. The war was like a crucible where the American and (Israel) interests met at the expense of the interests of the states of the region and for the purpose of eliminating any nationalist bloc that brings states in the region together and entering them into a broader regional framework.

There is no doubt that the American policy position concerning the Arab- Israeli conflict was always leaning towards the side of the latter. Because of their moral commitment to principle, the Arab states began to feel that the ways of the military solution were weak, especially after the 1973 war. Theories also emerged stressing the inevitability of negotiations and entering a stage of peaceful settlements under the auspices of the United States. These negotiations brought Egypt out of the conflict, a case that was considered one of the biggest successes for (Israel) in the Arab regional system fragmentation along with the other agreements: Madrid 1991, Oslo 1993, Wadi Araba 1994 and others .

The condition of the inability and Arab division led the Arab states to a full conviction that they will not enter another war with (Israel) and even if we assumed, for the sake of argument, the war occurred, the Arab states would be the losing party in it. Therefore, they opened the door for the Islamic resistance in Lebanon and Palestine to carry out this role on their behalf such as Lebanon war in 2006 and Gaza in 2008 .

(¹)Khalil al-Anani, "Evolution of US Strategic Concepts Towards the Arab World, The Arabs and Great Powers," Alhura studies series, Issue 19, the House of Wisdom, Baghdad, 1998, pp. 20-21.

(²)Fikri Namiq, "United States Policy Towards the Arab World," House of Wisdom, Baghdad, 1998, p. 102

(³)Group of Researchers, "Israel 's Role in the US War on Iraq," Trans. Ahmed Abu Hadya, Center for Palestine Studies, edi. 1, Damascus, 2005, p. 9.

Thus, we can point to two major shifts in the regional scene¹:

1. (Israel) emerged as a regional power technologically and scientifically superior and able to stir events and wage war.
2. the concordance of the official Arab regional system in not confronting (Israel) while the forces which try to confront it are forces beyond the Arab legitimacy according to the point of view of some Arab regimes.

According to the American- (Israeli) vision, the settlement is connected to an American- (Israeli) plan which based on the elimination of the Arab system as a framework for the interactions among the Arab states. With this, we can try to explain American- (Israeli) attempt to marginalize the Arab League role, as a historic institution for the Arab regional system, in the settlement negotiations with (Israel) because of the insinuations to end it and even replace it with a Middle Eastern organization that have been repeated more than once².

Some Gulf states started relations with (Israel) such as Oman and Qatar without checking with the Gulf Cooperation Council or its members and their rush towards the normalization and establishing diplomatic and trade ties with this entity threatens the Arab nationalist security with unprecedented dangers whether in its overall concept or the security of each state separately³.

With the onset of the Arab Spring revolutions, the changes in the nature of the Arab political systems and the events that went along it increased the level of the (Israeli) threats and they serve its interests and policy in the region. This is because of the chaos and the increase of the political and security instability in the states which witnessed these revolutions especially Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In addition to the events in Iraq which came out of the circle of conflict because of the occupation and prolonging the Syrian crisis and working on dividing it on the ethnic and sectarian bases and removing it from the circle of the Arab- (Israeli) conflict. All of this led to the decrease in the ability of the Arab parties to deal with the latter. The (Israeli) threats to the Arab nationalist security are not so clear now because of the escalation of other sources of threat whether local or regional.

In the same context, the (Israeli) African relations witnessed remarkable development after the occupation of Iraq. (Israel) presented free military aid and experts and technological equipment in the field of irrigation and agriculture for a number of African states that have an impact on the course of the river Nile such as Tanzania, Eritrea, Kenya and Ethiopia in order to urge them not to adhere to the agreement of the distribution of water of the Nile signed between Egypt and the

⁽¹⁾ Hassan Nafa'a, *op cit.*, P. 19 .

⁽²⁾ Mohammad Murad, *US policy Towards the Arab World, between the Strategic Constants and Variables*, Lebanese Dar Manhal, edi. 1, Beirut, 2009, p. 359.

⁽³⁾ For more details on these risks see: Hassan Zaidan al-Lahibi, "The Risks of the Gulf Opening onto the Zionist Entity on the Arab Nationalist Security," *the Military Journal*, Issue.2, Directorate of Military Printing Presses, Baghdad, 2002, pp. 72-77.

African South states in 1929 through the creation of a number of dams on the tributaries of the Nile. (Israel) also encouraged the opposition movements in the south of Sudan to secede because of its desire in finding a government loyal to it in the south of Sudan. The essence of the (Israeli) African relations is to try to reach the sources of the Nile to pressure Egypt and Sudan by threatening their national security through the water problem¹.

In fact, the most unfortunate thing that the Arab nationalist security is exposed to, after the occupation of Iraq, is the breach by the regional powers not only through the Iranian penetration, the Turkish intervention and the (Israeli) policies of destruction, but we can almost assert that the majority of the Arab states are exposed to the same breaches like the penetration of their borders by another state or interference in their internal affairs. Sudan is witnessing interference by the African states, in the south and in Darfur, Somalia is witnessing the same situation by the strong Ethiopian presence in it, and Iraq has become a hotbed for the multinational companies whose affiliations are not known under the pretext of reconstruction. The Arabian Gulf states are not safe from the Iranian interference in their internal affairs (the case of Bahrain) which indicates a great danger threatening the fabric of the Arab society and threatens their nationalist security.

The fourth demand: Future of Arab nationalist security.

The talk about the future scenes of Arab nationalist security and the effective means needed to meet the challenges upon all levels prompts us to ask important questions regarding the ability of the units of the system to find harmony and agreement on the priorities of the Arab nationalist security. So, what are the policies required to deal with these challenges? And is it possible to come up with a common strategy to confront these challenges effectively and not theoretically? For the purpose of answering these questions, we addressed this subject through the following scenes:

First: the scene of Arab cooperation to maintain nationalist security

The difficult and dangerous circumstances which threaten the existence and security of the Arab regional system necessitate the rearrangement of the Arab cards through a clear and common strategic vision based on collective Arab solidarity to achieve the unified Arab rising project. In the context of Arab cooperation, the idea of establishing a joint Arab force was within the framework of a unified Arab strategy and under Article (9) of the Charter of the Arab League which states that:

"The states of the League of Arab States wishing for closer cooperation and stronger ties than those stated by the provisions of this Charter may conclude such

¹ Mona Hussein Obaidin, Israeli Policy towards the Nile Basin Countries (Egypt and Sudan) Model, Center for Palestinian Studies, University of Baghdad, Issue 17, 2013, p.53.

agreements as may be necessary for the achievement of these purposes, and the treaties and agreements already concluded or subsequently concluded by a state of the League with any other state do not bind or restrict other members".

In an attempt to implement the project of establishing a joint Arab force starting from the Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Treaty, which was held in Alexandria in 1950, and the following agreements of bilateral or collective treaties, there was the call made by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi during the Summit, which was held in March 2015, for the need to coordinate efforts and plans to establish a joint Arab force to meet the challenges facing the Arab countries at various levels and to maintain the Arab nationalist security and guarantee its future.

In fact, the establishment of the joint Arab force is extremely difficult, if not impossible, if we take into consideration the available data. The absence of security and joint military coordination is one of the biggest challenges facing the Arab regional system due to the sensitivity of treatment because of the lack of political consensus among the Arab states as a result of the lack trust among Arab leaders especially after the Gulf crisis in 1990. Iraq's entering of Kuwait represented a collapse for the Arab nationalist security theory, and shaking of the pillar of the common enemy because the threat and danger did not come from an external enemy rather it came from an Arab country. Therefore, the joint Arab force project faces a set of problems and obstacles, including procedural issues, since the project is still in the process of theorizing as an idea and did not move to the practical stage to build institutions that take responsibility for setting goals and setting priorities and drawing plans and policies. It did not set the extent to which this force will be able to address the local or regional sources of threat. Also, the readiness of this force requires sufficient time for the purpose of preparation and coordination and determining its functions and whereabouts in addition to the financial requirements. This is on one hand.

On the other hand, there is the pressure exerted on the Arab countries by regional powers (Turkey, Iran and Israel) and major international powers, especially the United States of America, which is working to prevent the formation of a joint Arab force by deepening the Arab-Arab differences and destroying the growing Arab forces and working on removing them of the equation of regional balance as it did happen with Iraq and Syria for the benefit of regional forces other than the Arab. As for the Arab Gulf states, they have prepared troops within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council represented by the forces of the island's joint shield.

As a matter of fact, the Joint Arab Defense Treaty had become useless because it had not been able to prevent Iraq from invading Kuwait on August 2, 1990 nor had it been able to prevent the United States war on Iraq and occupying it in the year

2003. The process of the occupation of Iraq ended this treaty and omitted it from the Arabic dictionary because this crisis showed the inability of the Arab regional system to achieve security for its members. This crisis stressed that the Arab countries give priority to their international obligations when they conflict with their obligations under this system¹.

The developments in the Arab region at the beginning of 2011 and the accompanying changes in the ruling political regimes in the region, whether through the democratic means (the case of Egypt) or through the military means (the case of Libya) and the subsequent internal cracks in the security situations, culminated in the control of the organization of the Islamic State or the so-called (isis) over large areas of land in Iraq, Syria, Libya and other countries.

A number of states, instead of confronting the escalating threats of terrorist organizations that threaten Arab national security, have gone on to provide support and facilities to these organizations to serve regional and international agendas and exacerbated the threat to the Arab region.

Therefore, the process requires the cessation of interference in internal affairs among states as well as the cessation of the process of supporting and financing the sources of terrorist threats, inciting or embracing them, and above all, reaching a common agreement among all states in the region to maintain the cracks in the relations between the Arab states and to find common grounds to confront the threats after determining their priorities and means of treatment and the necessary tools for doing so.

Second: The scene of decline and integration into a broader Middle Eastern framework.

It seems that this scene is the opposite of the first scene on the grounds that its future outlook is based on the fact that the data of cooperation between the Arab countries are not existent on the ground which leads to the success of the new project adopted and supported by major countries led by the United States and the European Union. It is a Middle Eastern project in which the centre states, ie the Arab countries are the weaker party and the regional neighbouring countries, especially (Israel), take the task of leading this system, with the support and the guidance of the major powers. The strategic vision of America towards the Arab region stems from three basic pillars (²):

- A.** To redraw the main features and characteristics of the countries of the region in order to become more democratic and open than they are.

(¹)Muhammad Saad Abu Amoud, "The American War on Iraq and the Arab System," *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya*, Issue 135 , Al-Ahram, Cairo, July 2003 , p. 104.

²Khalil al – Anani, "American foreign policy toward the Arab world, future vision," *Journal of Arab Affairs*, No. (123), Cairo, 2005, p . 79.

- B.** To prevent the emergence of any currents or political forces hostile to the United States, intellectually, ideologically and exercising a pressure to get rid of them, if any, under the pretext of the war on terrorism.
- C.** To preserve Israeli superiority in the region, and ensuring its continuity, even at the expense of Washington's allies from Arab states.

After the serious developments in the Arab region , the beginning of the third millennium, in particular the occupation of Iraq in 2003, and the destruction of its infrastructure completely in order to get him out of the regional balance equation, and the concomitant repercussions on the level of political stability and security of states in the region after the launch of the Arab revolutions of 2011 which led to the overthrowing the political systems of several Arab states and the collapse of the security system in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, and the spread of these revolutions to Syria and Bahrain as well as the schisms between the GCC states following the recent Qatari crisis as well as the decline of the role of the regional system represented by the Arab League as an official Arab institution responsible for the unity and cohesion of the system. Major countries have worked, especially the United States under the pretext of change in the region to enter it in a cycle of internal conflicts on the (religious, nationalist and sectarian bases), which led to the depletion of economic, military and security capabilities, after the political systems in the Arab states have failed to invest what they have of economic resources in the treatment of the deteriorating social reality and the lack of services in all areas. These systems have also failed to contain these revolutions and to respond to the demands of the people which opened the door for the intervention of regional states in the internal affairs of the Arab states and thus they were forced to accept the process of change from outside in the Middle Eastern framework.

In return, regional states (Iran, Turkey and Israel) have been able to invest the opportunity and intervene in a number of states hit by the winds of change. They are thus trying to establish broader regional arrangements from the Arab regional system by imposing their Middle Eastern project which gives them the right to manage the region according to the interests of the major powers and without doubt at the expense of the interest of the Arab states.

Third: The scene of rebuilding political alliances

The process of building alliances and the policy of the axes were not a new phenomenon in the Middle East in general and the Arab region in particular and they were the major strategic pillars of the Great Powers during the Cold War and continued till the day. The region has become a scene of conflict and a scene of competition between the major international powers seeking to impose their will and interests by influencing the balance of regional powers. The states of the region have become mere tools to carry out wars directly or by proxy to serve the interests of major powers and to strengthen their influence.

The issue of forming alliances and building the axes in the Arab region at the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially after the American occupation of Iraq and the start of popular protests, increased. Both major events led to a state of political and security gap and chaotic results as a result of the exclusion of influential forces and other Arab forces from the equation of regional balance to intervene in the internal affairs of the states of the region on the pretext of maintaining their national security especially after the control of international non-state (terrorist organizations) on large areas of Arab lands.

After these events a new phase began to rebuild alliances and draw a policy for new axes and the states in the region hurried to enter in these alliances with the aim of fighting terrorism and protecting their borders and national security. Thus, there was the (International Alliance and Four -party Alliance and the Islamic Alliance) as well as a series of axes divided into three main ones:

First, the Iranian axis: the Iranian influence increased in a number of Arab countries after the US withdrawal from Iraq and after the wave of the Arab revolutions, especially after the governments of Iraq and Syria asked Iran for a material and intelligence support in fighting terrorist organizations. This axis is strongly supportive for keeping Bashar al-Assad regime in power and this is what the Turkish and Saudi axis does not like. This axis depends on the religious and sectarian factor in influencing the social groups that embrace the same ideology, benefiting from some religious currents, political parties and some social groups loyal to it as in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine, Bahrain, Libya, Egypt and other Arab countries, especially after the adoption of this axis the process of resistance and resistance against the Zionist entity. The Iranian influence has become a threat to the security and safety of these countries because it aims to impose the Iranian will as a regional force in the Arab region.

Second, the Turkish axis : With the arrival of the Justice and Development Party to power, the talk about fulfilling the Turkish dream has begun to dominate the region and impose its authority over all lands that were subject to the Ottoman caliphate exploiting in this, the vulnerability of the Arab security system and intervening in the affairs of many countries especially in Iraq under the pretext of protecting the rights of the Turkmen minority and in Syria under the pretext of supporting the opposition and the illegitimacy of the Assad regime. It agrees in this goal with the majority of the Gulf states. Turkey also started to go to the African continent to strengthen its presence there through the consolidation of relations with Sudan and Somalia as well as with Algeria, Tunisia and the rest of the Arab states, in addition to its position against the military coup against President Mohamed Morsi leading to the deterioration of the Turkish-Egyptian relations. With the development of the situation there have been transformations on the structural aspect of the Turkish-Gulf axis after the deterioration of relations between them following the Gulf -

Qatar crisis. In response to all Gulf threats to the state of Qatar, Turkey announced the dispatch of military forces to Qatar and the start of the construction of a military base there. Through these and other events, Turkey is trying to play the role of the real defender of the rights of the Sunni Arab states and at the same time trying to confirm its presence in the region as an effective regional power.

Third: the Saudi and the United Arab Emirates axis: Both Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states except Qatar and Oman adopted opposition to the process of democratic transformation in the Arab region and used all means to fail it and at the same time adopted the call to topple Bashar al- Assad 's regime which is the focal point of Beirut - Syria - Iraq – Iran axis because it began to feel the magnitude of the threat and danger posed by the Iranian presence in Iraq on its national security .

However, it is remarkable that these alliances and axes were more on paper than they were realistic and they did not adopt an ideology in the strict sense as their previous alliances did although they depended on the doctrinal aspect in their inception and composition. It is not expected that they continue for a long time because the political, economic and strategic interests of the states leading these axes control and move them in a manner that affects the course of events and they did not achieve their objectives to strengthen their influence especially concerning the regional hegemony in the area.

Conclusion

From this we conclude:

- 1- The Arab region and through the stages of its formation has become the arena for competition and conflict between the international powers and sometimes among the regional powers seeking to impose their hegemony over the region and to strengthen their influence and to secure the acquisition of its economic resources and geopolitical status. It is always in political chaos and security instability.
- 2- Iran is among the regional powers in the area. It has a regional project that it is seeking to achieve to become an influential and dominant force. The Expediency Council prepared a strategic vision called the Twentieth Iranian strategy (2020 - 2035) which aims to reach the status of regional dominant power in The Middle East and Central Asia. It relies on those who support it from religious currents, political parties and some social groups that share the same belief from the countries of the region. They are used as arms in the region to use pressure on other powers whenever their interests so require.
- 3- The rise of the Justice and Development Party to power and the scientific technological and economic renaissance which it achieved in all fields represented the beginning of a new start for Turkey at the regional level. It

worked through its new Ottoman project to adapt its historical, geographical and cultural heritage and call for the re-production of the Caliphate State on all the land it had before. So it supported all the Arab states to get their natural rights. The ideological vision of the Turkish project to lead the region as a dominant regional power was expressed by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu saying : " Turkey will lead the wave of change in the Middle East and will continue to be the vanguard of the wave of change. Turkey will not only be a friendly and sisterly country for the Middle East, but also a new thinker that will define its future and a country that is the vanguard of the new regional order "

- 4- The American war on Iraq and its occupation in 2003 represented the crucible where the American and (Israeli) interests met as the occupation of Iraq and the subsequent events in the Arab region and of popular protests removed active and influential Arab forces from the circle of Arab (Israeli) conflict and caused a problem in the equation of regional balance and led to a decline in the ability of the Arab parties to deal with the latter.
- 5- The regional projects put forward by the successive US administrations, the latest of which is the Greater Middle East project and is trying to impose on the states of the region, is in fact a project aimed at weakening the Arab states and eliminating any national bloc that brings together the countries of the region, dividing them into small contiguous blocs or states and throw them into national, ethnic and sectarian conflicts. It also attempted to westernize the collective Arab mind through bringing about normalization concepts and the Middle Eastern culture rather than the Arab culture which enhances the Arab disintegration and works to limit the potential for the advancement of Arab regional framework in favour of creating a framework of a supra - national (Middle Eastern) multi-ethnic and multi- national whose strings are linked to the American strategy in which the Zionist entity is the principal and important part of the region. This is due to its being its strategic ally and the guarantor of its interests. It also aimed at tightening its hegemony over the economic resources of the region, especially oil and gas with the aim of linking the process of the global economy with the American will and waving of military force from time to time to prevent the emergence of any competitor that threatens the American interests.
- 6- The Arab regional system, rather than facing the challenges and taking responsibility for resolving issues and the rampant problems inside, stood helpless to take firm decisions to treat and resolve fateful crises. It has become a tool for justification and making decisions which identifies with the great powers policies the regional actors in the region.