# American and European strategic directions in the Arab East region

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## Abstract

Arab society is in general undergoing a crisis that is almost entirely based on today's situation. The majority of people view the political concept in this manner as a fortified fortress whose occupation is an essential requirement for complete control over the national process. It often refers to the Islamic State, the state of secularism, the democratic state, the socialist state, the national state, the one Arab state, the state of authoritarianism, the monarchy state, etc. In researching and understanding the countries of the Arab East, as well as their issues, this research represents the key to understanding the social, economic, political, and cultural crisis of Arab societies. In a certain historical period during the heart of the Islamic world, the Arab, Turkish, and Iranian populations differed in national affiliations, despite their affiliation to Islam. The relationship between them is also marked by differences in geopolitical orientations and many cultural differences. By applying external pressure on the Islamic world, the struggle between dependency regimes or balances of power facilitated international pressure. As a result, some countries became dependent on it to varying degrees and Islamic peoples became deeply divided over it. While Iran and Turkey could use the official Arab political weakness as a means of exploiting the Arab issue, they could also maximize their advantages from successive regional and global developments to gain the greatest depth of expansion. In Turkey and Iran, there is a lot of caution and tension in the relationship between the Arab countries. The tensions increase from time to time and decrease at other times, with differences over certain borders and repeated violations, as well as a lack of respect for neighbors.

## Keywords

## 1.      Introduction

**1.1 The First Topic**: The local, regional, and international factors affecting the Arab East.

**1.1.1 The First Requirement**: A historical view of the Arab East and the crises it went through.

The term "Arab East" and "Middle East" appeared for the first time in 1902, when it was used by the American historian (Alfred Tide Mahan). These terms referred to the area between India and the Arabian Peninsula, with its centre being the Arabian Gulf, as shown in Figure 1 [1].



Figure1. Middle East[1]

It is a geographical term called the Arab East, which is part of the Middle East region, extending from the Mediterranean Sea in the West to the Iranian plateau in the east. Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Sultanate of Oman, and Yemen) are included. It also sometimes adds Egypt and Sudan together. The Arabs and this geographical area were subjected to many invasions from neighboring areas thousands of years ago. Many fateful battles took place on its land that affected the whole world. It was invaded by the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks, Crusaders, Mongols, Ottomans, and then the English and French in the early modern era. The Arab East is considered one of the tensest security regions globally, as it witnessed more than ten wars since the losses of the Palestine war in 1948. This includes the Arab-Israeli wars, the Iraqi-Iranian war and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and the US-British occupation of Iraq in 2003 [2].

- The independence of the East countries:

The events that followed the declaration of the Arabs of the Levant rebellion against the Ottoman Empire in 1916 resulted in a near-unanimity to catch up with the West in terms of independence, unity, democracy, and development. These are the supreme goals that the Arabs seek to achieve, representing the components of their desired renaissance. These goals take on different names or meanings according to the stages of the struggle and the degree of development of consciousness [3].

In this research, we define the problems and put solutions to them by knowing the American and European strategic directions in the Arab East region on the two sides of the European Union and the countries of the East of the Arab East on the other hand, and the great security window, the countries of the East have a fragile security environment, and some countries even have dilemma security, such as Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Research hypothesis: Through the agreements concluded between the United States and the Arab East on one side, and the European Union and the countries of the East on the other, a beautiful solution to security and political problems can be reached through diplomatic means.

### 1.1.2 Secondly: The crises experienced in the Arab East:

### 1.1.2.1 The Arab East and Western Subordination (AEWS)

The set of pathological symptoms that the infiltrated political system suffers from is the unique form of the Arab East's dependence on the major powers. Its dependence on these powers is in terms of being in a power relationship, the weaker countries through oppression (coercive force), the use of the most effective threat, and the power relationship binds. The major countries with other countries must be accepted (amicably or under duress) and gain legitimacy by entering the global political system. The relationship of hegemony itself is legitimate. Additionally, there is a kind of dependence, which is economic dependence, so that the exchange of goods and services is in the interest of the economically superior state. According to the idea of dependency, the Arab East, in terms of being a marginal region linked to the central countries, i.e., the major countries, is unequal. This relationship hinders its progress and makes the achievement of the higher Arab a threat to the imperialist centre countries' strategic, political and economic interests the idea of the East appeared to be synchronized with (Romantic era) in the West, which had its beginning in the (Missolonghi) incident in Greece, and that the Eastern question was the problematic of the imperialist countries' dealing with the first state. The Ottoman Empire and the optimal method for ripping it up and distributing spoils among them, in the subsequent development of this issue, became a series or group of pathological symptoms that afflict any political system subjected to imperialist penetration, which is what happened in the Arab East. Here, we see how Leon Carl Brown described it by making a relatively accurate diagnosis of these pathological symptoms that characterize the penetration of the political system with four characteristics:

❖ It is distinguished by the fact that the external force or forces do not add the infiltrated regime to its entire political system, but never let it escape its suffocating grip.

❖ The infiltrated political system lives in a continuous (and perhaps daily) confrontation with external forces or forces

❖ Here the local, national, regional and international political issues are mixed. The political system of the infiltrated society (even at the local level) is not understood without reference to the force or external forces.

❖ The political system in which it is penetrated is a political game played by local and regional social forces in shifting and changing alliances.

The intervention of external forces in the Arab East is more of a competition between these forces than the fact that this intervention is based on a rational awareness of their interests in the region. Thus, it is difficult to calculate the cost of the interventions or estimate their benefits directly [4].

### 1.1.2.2 The Islamic and secular conflict

The countries of the Arab world in general, and the Arab East in particular, the countries of the Arab world and the Arab East are striving to escape get out of the state of fragmentation and confusion in which they are living and the importance of returning to the cultural and even religious heritage, and hope to find in them a base or anchorage base or anchor in them, or at least solace, in the face of psychological trauma, and political and social predicaments that have become its daily diet. But However, beyond this general return, the movement of Arab ideas and responses to the current crisis seems to indicate the crystallization of two conflicting main lines that are in conflict that and will quarrel for a long time: awareness and the Arab political sphere.

• Emanating from the social elites that were more closely related to the West, both culturally and materially, proves that the only possible solution is stemming from a deeper adoption of the values of a Western culture marked by universality, which can compensate for the failure of Arab and Islamic culture by itself.

• Reflects the elites' responses that are more conservative and linked to the local culture. This makes valuing the ancient or national heritage and beautifying the page a basis for a defensive discourse as well as aiming to resist the feeling of powerlessness, humiliation, and derogation. These are just what the Islamic or national elites seek, in the name of privacy, authenticity, and differences, to oppose the discourse of universality. The values associated with it negate the concept of the universality of values and the unity of their intention in all nations and societies. This concept nourishes the basic thesis today of the Arab modernity movement after its old nationalist and progressive model collapse. It is believed that there is no event that better embodies the conflict existing between these two visions arising from aborting progress in the Arab world.

Because of the crises that the Arab East has experienced, it is threatened with collapse, and there are countries in it that face the risk of decay and loss of the state's structure, such as (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen). This peril is due to some negative foreign interventions and control over most political decisions. Rather, these long-term interventions made these countries become socially, politically, and economically disintegrated in an unprecedented manner that has reached the disintegration of the state's structure and institutions. The state is almost absent from the current scene. Then, the suffering of those countries worsened even in the main vital sectors, simple industries, and essential services, such as electricity and other services. Wars have consumed all the state's resources, and the matter is getting worse in these countries, especially in the absence of political solutions [5].

**1.1.2 The second requirement: the factors affecting strategies in the Arab East:**

**1.1.2.1 Local factors**

❖ Weak political systems in the countries of the Arab East and the absence of strategies that can maintain the effectiveness of this system resulted in the domination of the Arab East by the phenomenon of intersections. Instead of building bridges to link them all in an advanced regional system with an effective dynamic mechanism and an organization of relations between them, it is witnessing divisions at the horizontal and vertical levels, divisions over relations with the United States and Israel. Other divisions are observed over the policy of dealing with Iran and different positions on the events in Syria, the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance, along with the effects of sectarian and its divisions.

❖ The instability and turmoil to which the Middle East region in general and the Arab East countries, in particular, have been exposed, for more than thirty years, has been the scene of wars and conflicts. These countries have continued to suffer because of the occupation, interventions, and foreign pressures, and the emergence of major differences between the East countries. The emergence of resistance movements in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq, and the conflict is spreading to Syria and Yemen. The countries of the Arab East differ in supporting and naming these parties and movements. Rather, the war has evolved into factions supported by an Arab country fighting another faction supported by another Arab country [6].

❖ The successive developments in the arenas of confrontation with the Israeli entity in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria between (2007-2008) allowed shedding light on the Iranian role in support of the resistance forces. This highlights the size of the paradox between this role and the roles of the Arab moderation countries, making the settlement a strategic choice for them [7].

### 1.1.2.2 Regional factors: (Iran, Turkey, and Israel)

❖ Iran's strategic interests: Iran is moving in the region according to a strategy of expansion and aims to obtain international recognition of its role as a regional power that possesses the required ingredients and controls its tools, if its interests extend from the Gulf to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and even Palestine.

❖ Turkey's strategic interests: Extends to three regional circles imposed by its geographical location: the European circle, the Arab circle, and the Central Asian circle. Because of the changes that occurred in the international system, which threatened the Arab land, Turkey turned to the Arab circle, which constitutes a fertile field for interests. The economic, financial, investment and commercial benefits are that the Middle East and the Arab East, in particular, have reached this dangerous juncture in which the political horizon has become blocked. This caused overlap between regional and international parties.

❖ Israel's strategic interests: Despite the schisms that prevail in the Arab regional system, Israel has dealt since the early days of its establishment with this system as a whole, as a reality with its capabilities. Israel is working hard to abort any Arab efforts for solidarity and unity. Here, the Zionist project in its essence is a settlement project, whose philosophy is based on the continuation of the conflict to swallow more Arab lands, to bring in more immigrants from the lands of other countries, to replace the Palestinian citizens using funding from third parties and impose this as a fait accompli by blackmail and force of arms. This matter encouraged Israel to persist in using the language of force as a consistent method in dealing with the region's countries to perpetuate their ugly image. On the other hand, we find that the Arab countries did not succeed in solving the question of Palestine. Hence, the contradictory and uncoordinated positions of the Arab countries in dealing with Israel made Israel emerge as a super-regional state [8].

### 1.1.2.3      International factors

The United States, the European Union, Russia and China, the continuous US interference in the affairs of the Middle East has contributed to bilateral polarization in the region between the United States and Iran, which put the axes of conflict on the Mediterranean arena, which directly affected the interactions of strategic issues more than their developments.

### 1.1.3 Isolate the Arab East from the Arab Western:

Many attempts have worked to tear apart the unity of the Arab and Islamic world, including France, Spain, and Italy, to westernize the "Arab Maghreb" and separate it from the Arab world. (France) Algerian society tried by granting French citizenship to Algerians. However, they failed because Muslim scholars forbade obtaining this French citizenship and consider those who obtain it an apostate. This

prohibition was done to preserve the Arab identity of both Algeria and Morocco. The policy of moving away from the Middle East was not new; some heads of state are directing the Maghreb's separation from the Arab nation and attention to their internal problems and integration into the African Union.

It was done in hopes that this organization will be similar to the European Union. The most prominent representative of this trend is the Libyan President, Muammar Gaddafi, who proposes a move away from the problems of Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon, as mentioned in a speech at the recent Arab summit held in Sudan. Specifically, this adds that this region is full of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and the land contested in the Middle East is unknown. To complete chaos and to maintain African harmony now requires the continent of African countries to distance their country from that region. Gaddafi's words were not very different from Western theorists' view that different ethnic and religious groups inhabit the Arab East. For the ease of controlling them, the Islamic world was divided, the division of the Arab world was sought, and Israel was planted in the heart of this region only for the continuation of schemes that undermine any unity. Real Arabism among the Arab regimes will constitute a strategic, economic, military, and even social weight due to the important economic resources that this nation possesses and may constitute tremendous pressure on the entire international community [9].

**1.2 Second Topic: The international trend in interfering in the Arab East**

**1.2.1 The First Requirement**: **The American strategic direction in the Arab East**

The strategic direction of the United States of America in the Middle East in general and the Arab East, in particular, is usually described as fixed and changing according to the requirements of the American national interest, as it is affected by decision-making institutions in the United States of America. Accordingly, President Biden's strategy represented a significant difference from former President Trump's and President Obama's strategy. Thus, we will look at the strategic goals and US determinants towards the Arab East countries.

**1.2.1.1        The USA strategic orientations towards the Middle East**

❖ The war on terrorism: The United States considers jihadist terrorist organizations to constitute the most dangerous terrorist threat to the American nation. The Middle East region in general and the countries of the Arab East, in particular, are still home to the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world. Thus, the American national security strategy adopted the goal of defeating the organization ISIS [10].

❖ Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: The first country in the Arab East accused Iraq of possessing weapons of mass destruction. It was subjected to a harsh siege and then occupation. It was revealed that Iraq does not possess these weapons, and they were used as a pretext to occupy Iraq. The Middle East is free of weapons of mass destruction, including Iran, without mentioning Israel.

❖ The flow of oil: The flow of oil at low prices from the Arab East countries is no longer the only thing that the United States of America seeks, but also to control its export and to reduce the influence of OPEC by putting pressure on the oil states in the Arab East.

❖ The stability of friendly regimes: The United States of America is keen to maintain a friendly relationship among the regimes to satisfy the American political demands in the region. Washington responds with support regardless of the type of regime, and the American strategy differed during the era of President Trump. It was imposed on all countries to pay in return. For the United States of America to defend it, the United States should not bear responsibility for this huge cost, and the region's countries must pay this price [11].

❖ The Deal of the Century: The US administration has retreated from being a neutral mediator in the peace process between the Palestinian people and Israel. Trump has adopted an unbalanced policy different from that of Obama, who tried not to confront the region's countries through his biasness towards Israel. At the same time, President Trump insisted that he formulate the "deal of the century" and establish peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Still, in practice, his administration did nothing more than support the right-wing government in Israel and try to cut off Palestinian aid. The Trump administration intensified its attack on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which provides aid to millions of Palestinians in the West Bank. West Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria wanted to close UNRWA's funding completely while observers expected that what Trump did would not achieve peace but would increase the tension, which would explode one day. After President Biden's victory, the strategy differed, but what was expected happened, and it became a war between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Nevertheless, it spread among all Arabs in all countries of the world and the Palestinians [12].

❖ Strengthening democracy: The United States of America employs democracy and human rights as one of the means that serve its interests in the Middle East in general. The arrival of an Islamic current through democracy to power is considered harmful towards its interests. Trump believes that rapprochement with Islamic currents has led to instability in the region. Trump has adopted a realistic perspective in dealing with the region's issues, which means the decline of democracy promotion in Trump's agenda. He also rejects the idea of American exceptionalism and the American moral leadership role for the world. He also rejected changing regimes by force, spreading democracy or human rights, focusing on the interests of the United States of America and its allies in the region as part of a strategy [13].

Internal and external determinants form a governing framework for a strategy that the United States has managed towards the Middle East in general and the Arab East in particular.

### 1.2.1.2 Second-Internal Determinants:

### 1.2.1.2.1 The American Strategic Making Foundation:

It relies on two main pillars:

❖    The American decision-maker, the president's personality, and convictions play an influential role in the American strategic directions in the world.

❖    The US Congress, in its two chambers, the House of Representatives and the Senate, states that the process of making strategic decisions is the product of interaction and consensus between American institutions. This includes the president and his national security advisors, the Ministries of State and Defense, Congress, the pressure group, and research centers. It is a complex process governed by the size and intertwining of American interests worldwide [14].

1.2.2  **The second requirement**

The European strategic orientation towards the Arab East:

### 1.2.2.1 European strategic direction in the Arab East.

Many European countries view the Arab world, at best, as an oil well and a huge market, as it is seen as a turbulent and dangerous environment. Therefore, access to oil, market penetration, and security interests have significantly pushed European policies towards this region. The strategy of the European Union since its establishment until now has been based on the Arab East characterization of the abundance of resources at the global level. The permanent goals of the European Union are energy, market, and security. These goals were the same for 65 years, and this was the case for the global Mediterranean policy (1972-1992), the Euro-Arab dialogue (1974-1989), the renewed Mediterranean policy (1990-1996), the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (1995-2008), the European Neighborhood Policy (2004-1012) and finally the Union for the Mediterranean (2008-2021). In some cases, two or three overlapping policies were implemented at the same time.

Other goals, such as conflict resolution and the promotion of human rights and democracy, are often mentioned in the official documents of the European Union. However, there is a contradiction between what is mentioned in the documents and actions. For example, we do not find a position of the European Union in the Arab-Israeli decision. It was marginal and often hesitant if it was not incoherent. Meanwhile, the question of human rights and democracy, which is supposed to be the core of European politics, was placed on the backside for "real politic" reasons, and Arab civil society was not taken seriously as a partner in the dialogue [15].

### 1.2.2.2 The partnership of the European Union and the Arab East countries:

It was expected that the European Union would sign an association agreement with Syria on the 14th of December 2008, as this agreement had been suspended since 2004 because the European Union considered that the political conditions were not appropriate, thus refusing any agreement. The Association

Agreement between the European Union and Jordan, which was signed on the 24th of November, 1997, entered into force on the 1st of May, 2002, after completing all constitutional ratifications in all the parties' states. Its maximum is 12 years from the date of the implementation of the agreement. In the eleventh chapter, Tunisian expert Tawfiq Al-Madini discussed the partnership agreement between the European Union and Iraq, where Catherine Ashton, the High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and Security of the European Union, together with former Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari signed in Brussels the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Iraq, on the 11th of May, 2012. Ashton noted that this is the first such agreement between the European Union and Baghdad.

Furthermore, she was pleased to sign the document that will serve Iraq and the Union's interests and their relations. She also stressed that the signing of the agreement opens a new chapter in relations between the European Union and Iraq. The Cooperation and Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Iraq regulates the relationship between the two sides and puts it in the right framework. This partnership agreement includes more than 12 vital sectors, including economic, commercial, scientific, and cultural. This is in addition to energy represented by oil and electricity, as well as the sectors of human rights, combating terrorism, organized crime, money laundering, illegal immigration, and antiquities theft and trafficking, as for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and their relations with the European Union. The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf comprises six countries, namely the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its smaller neighbors, namely the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain.

The council is based in Riyadh. Official economic cooperation relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and European countries did not start long ago, as negotiations between the two parties were delayed first until the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981. Secondly, the opposition that the United States of America reached an agreement. An economic agreement between the European countries and the Gulf Cooperation Council, in addition to the diverging and conflicting opinions and positions of the European countries, and their failure conclude a cooperative economic agreement. It implies that their opinions ranged between supportive countries such as France and Greece and opposing countries such as Germany and Britain [16]. The issue of economic cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union countries occupied a prominent place in the political and economic relations of the Gulf. This became clear since the beginning of the Gulf-European dialogue after establishing the Cooperation Council in 1981 when the foreign ministers of the European Common Market decided to conduct initial informal contacts with the secretariat of the Council to determine the scope of the proposed cooperation. Negotiations continued between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council until the signing of the cooperation agreement between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries that was reached on the 15th of June, 1988, and then approved by the Supreme Council at its ninth session (Manama,

December 1988). It entered into force at the beginning of 1990. The cooperation agreement between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council included two basic conditions. The first focused on agreeing to set and formulate the features of establishing a free economic zone between the two sides in the future. The second condition dealt with an agreement for consultation and political partnership based on which a joint council would be established at the level of foreign ministers to discuss problems. In addition, the agreement granted the GCC states the status of the most favoured nation.

Thus, the European Union became linked with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in a preferential agreement. In the sense that this agreement has deepened and focused European relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, codifying the scientific trade exchange between them and setting a framework for continuous consultation even in the political fields between the foreign ministers of the two parties. The established the sense that this agreement has deepened and focused European relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, codifying the scientific trade exchange between them and setting a framework for continuous consultation even in the political fields between the foreign ministers of the two parties, and established the project of establishing a free trade zone between them [17-20].

## 2. Conclusions:

The study reached several conclusions explaining the regional and international impact on the Arab East countries, especially the present and future study model, as follows:

1- The concept of the Arab East has disappeared together with its separation from the Arab Maghreb and the transfer of the name to the Middle East. This is credited to the development of events in the international strategic environment and the importance of Arab East countries, particularly, and the Middle East, in general.

2- The development that occurred during the past centuries is reflected in the change in the direction of power from a world shared by two poles to the leadership of one pole and then to multiple poles. This conflict was the cause of the problems of the Arab East countries.

3- Through international evidence, the countries of the Arab East were not able to unite among themselves, except for the Gulf States. Rather, the rivalry was apparent and sometimes reached war.

4- International interventions and the growth and support for terrorism and its development caused some Arab East countries to collapse, causing other Arab East countries to worry, leading to a pretext for foreign interventions and larger armies in the region.

5- Turkish, Iranian and Israeli competition for expansion and control over these countries, either through religious or ideological expansion, such as Turkey and Iran, or through normalization, such as Israel.

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