



BALTIC JOURNAL OF LAW & POLITICS

A Journal of Vytautas Magnus University
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 3 (2022)
ISSN 2029-0454



Cite: *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics* 15:3 (2022): 1085-1099
DOI: 10.2478/bjlp-2022-002077

Factors affecting the process of conflict management in the Middle East (a study of religious and sectarian factors)

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Received: August 01, 2022; reviews: 2; accepted: November 05, 2022

Abstract

The Middle East region has always been a point of interest for international and regional powers alike, due to its geostrategic, natural, human, political, economic, civil and religious components, which made it the focus of the attention of the greedy major powers and pushed them to compete and conflict with the aim of imposing control and influence on the region. In any way, taking advantage of the changes taking place in the countries of those regions after the year 2011, the so-called Arab Spring revolutions, to fuel and ignite the most important factor of conflicts within the region is the sectarian and religious factor, which has increased dramatically in the region, without any doubt that it will affect in one way or another the conflict management in the region.

Keywords

Conflict, Regions, Geostrategic, Affecting.

Introduction

The management of international conflict is a series of interconnected processes, each stage is carried out according to the level and intensity of the conflict. and causes to prevent the fuse from igniting again in the future.

The factors affecting conflict management in the Middle East are due to an important historical fact, which is that this region has perhaps been distinguished more than other regions in that looking at it and understanding the course of events

within its framework may be affected by security and military aspects more than it is affected by the diplomatic and commercial movement, as well as the movement politics within regional organisations.

This matter may continue in the future, based on the factors of regional turmoil and tension, and this is evident by tracing the history of the region, especially after the events of the Arab revolutions after 2011 and before and after them. Therefore, the factors of conflict are latent in the Middle East region and are clearly characterized by sustainability.

Research importance

The importance of the research is in shedding light on the most important factors affecting conflict management in the Middle East after 2011, especially after the changes and revolutions that occurred in the region, and trying to know the extent of the seriousness of these factors and the extent of their impact on conflict management in the region.

Search problem

The main research problem stems from the central question: Are there certain factors that affect the conflict management process in the Middle East? What is the role of religious and sectarian factors? And what is its nature?

Research Hypothesis

This research is based on the hypothesis that there are a number of factors that greatly affect the process of conflict management in the Middle East, especially religious and sectarian factors after 2011 Conflicts in the region.

The first requirement: the Middle East region, concept and definition

The Middle East is one of the most prominent regional areas affecting the balance of power and interests in the world. Its unique strategic location made it governed by the law of overlap and conflict between opposites. Intellectual approaches differed about its identification, since the American geographer "Alfred Mahan" identified it at the beginning of the last century, specifically in The year 1902, and since then until now this concept has been employed on a large scale in order to achieve political, economic, strategic and geopolitical purposes, which made it the focus of the attention of major international powers.

The importance of the region is also changing, because the features of the region have changed due to the crises that the region has been exposed to, as well as the change in the range of interests with which the major world powers are linked. In addition, the area has a wide area in the form of a transverse extension, which gave it the opportunity to be part of the large sedimentary basin, which is a great reservoir for the production of oil and natural gas, as well as the rest of the

minerals and other raw materials, which earned the region a global status.

Also, its supervision of the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the location of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal gave it the ability to control the movement of land, sea and air transportation between the three continents of the world, Asia, Europe and Africa.

First - the concept and definition of the term Middle East

The term Middle East is used to refer to the countries and civilizations present in this geographical spot. The term has passed through several stages that have added many developments in terms of significance and goals. North Africa, after this region was associated with European colonial powers with an increase in the global trade movement, and the expansion of economic relations between China and Europe and the two regions of East Asia, and by this term he meant the region that is confined between the Near and Far East, and this is due to the European political coordination With both German projects and Russian activities in all areas of the Ottoman Caliphate.¹

With the end of World War I, the use of the concept by academic and political circles developed, so that the term Middle East includes a section of the geographical areas that were under the term "Near East." The clear evidence of the use of the term "Middle East" is the British government's launch of the term "Middle East Command" on its leaders. The problem is to manage its occupation in the Middle East, which is concerned with the affairs of Iraq and the east of the Hashemite Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and unites its leadership of the British forces in the Middle East, with its headquarters in Iraq and the other headquarters in Egypt, and used the term to both commands.²

During World War II, the term "Near East" was used to include Turkey and the Arab region, then after the end of the Cold War and the entry of Arabs into peace processes with Israel, the Middle East became called all Arab countries, along with Israel. And certain determinants of it, including the fact that it is a mixture of different races, cultures, races and religions, and that it does not enjoy a single identity.³

Among the most prominent definitions put forward about the Middle East:

1- Definition of the United Nations (*): The United Nations defines the Middle East as (the region that includes all the member states of the Arab League,

¹Ivo Dalder and others, *The Crescent of Crises, "The American-European Strategy towards the Greater Middle East"*, translated by Hassan Al-Bustani, first edition, Arab House for Science Publishers, Beirut 2006, p. 9.

²Zain Nour El-Din, *The International Conflict in the Middle East and the Birth of the States of Syria and Lebanon*, first edition, Dar Al-Nahar Publishing, Beirut 2001, p. 14.

³Dr. Nasr Muhammad Aref, *The Origins of the Identity Crisis in the Middle East*, Journal of Democracy, Issue (69), Al-Ahram Center, Cairo, 2018, p. 63.

* Alfred Mahan: a science officer in the US Navy, a geostrategist and was also a historian. He was called the most important American strategist in the nineteenth century AD, and his concept of "sea power" was based on the idea that the countries with the greatest naval power would have the greatest influence around the world. It is known that this concept was presented through a historical book, which is the influence of the power of the sea on history.

as well as Iran and the Israeli entity). The existing and the possible between its parties) it seems with this definition that he annexed Iran and the Israeli entity within it stems from the logicity of that vision, as the two parties had and still have conflicts and tensions between the Arab countries, although they differed between Iran and Israel¹.

2- American definition: The definition of the Middle East by the United States of America came within the framework of the initiative of President George W. Bush to control armaments in the region, which was announced in May 1991, and defined the Middle East region as (that area extending from Iran in the east to Morocco in the west, as well as Israel). This definition excluded Turkey from the Middle East region, although it was not excluded from the American Encyclopedia, when it specified the region.²

Secondly, the importance of the Middle East region

The Middle East region extends between 45 degrees north latitude (northern Pakistan) and the equatorial circle (central Somalia), and thus includes 45 latitudinal circles, and extends between longitude 75 degrees east at (eastern Pakistan) and longitude 20 degrees east (the coast of Greece). and western Libya), i.e., with an extension of about 55 degrees longitudinal, and of course, the Middle East occupies with this vast extension, a large mass of land with an area of 24.5 million km², which is equivalent to 18.2% of the land area of the world., which is equivalent to 2.5 times the area of the European continent.³

This focus of the region in the world has given great importance to the Middle East region, not only from a historical and contemporary point of view, but also because the eyes of the whole world are directed towards it and are still towards the heart of the Middle East, and it is the controller of the international transport link between the ores of the East and the industries of the West, in addition to being a landing point The sacred heavenly religious civilizations, and as for the political units of the Middle East, they are represented in the countries of the heart (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, the Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Yemen) as well as the neighboring countries (Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan). Palestine), as well as the remaining countries (Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya, Cyprus, the southern part of Greece), and the population of all these countries is estimated at more than 598 million people.⁴

* The United Nations: a global organization that includes in its membership almost all the independent countries of the world. The United Nations was founded on October 24, 1945, in San Francisco, California, USA, according to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference held in Washington, DC, and the organization is funded through assessed contributions and voluntary contributions from its member states.

¹Mamdouh Mahmoud, *The US-Soviet Conflict in the Middle East*, first edition, Madbouly Library, Cairo, 1995, p. 41.

²KJ Holesti, *International Politics Aframe work for analysis*, (London, Prince Hall Press), 1974, P(29).

³Ali Wahb, *The International Struggle for Control of the Middle East*, 2nd Edition, Publications Company for Distribution, Beirut, 2015, p. 62.

⁴The aforementioned source, p. 63.

1- The geopolitical importance (geographical location) of the Middle East

The Middle East is considered one of the most important logics of the world from a geopolitical perspective because it has the natural characteristics that enable us to touch its vital importance, according to the most prominent theories presented by geopolitical scientists such as Sir (Halford Mackinder) (*) and (Speakman) (**), which explained the importance of The Middle East, and they describe it as the closest place to the heart of the earth, and that it constitutes a part of the ocean that surrounds the heart of the earth. Geopolitics, with its different views and aspirations, has considered the Middle East as an area of international conflict competing for this region by the great powers, headed by the United States of America. , in order to control and impose influence and control the most important details of conflicts and international relations, which prompts these countries to directly interfere in the affairs of the countries of the region and seek to conclude agreements and treaties with those countries, in order to remain under their control.¹

Based on the foregoing, we refer to some geopolitical characteristics of the region, the most important of which are:²

- 1- The distinctive and important location of the region, as it is located at the confluence of the major continents of the world (Asia, Europe, Africa).
- 2- It contains many important rivers, such as (the Nile River, the Euphrates River, the Tigris River, and the Jordan River).
- 3- It supervises the largest water group of seas and oceans, which are (Bahrakzwein, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Arab Sea, Arabian Gulf, Indian Ocean).
- 4- The Middle East is considered the controller of a group of the most important international traffic sites, namely (Suez Canal, Bosphorus Straits, Dardanelles, Bab al-Mandab, and Hormuz).
- 5- The extension of the Middle East region over an area characterized by depth and breadth, allows the distribution of production areas in the region in peacetime, and also allows for the deployment of military bases in times of war.

2- The economic importance of the Middle East region

The Middle East is a vital region by all standards.³Its geographical location is also one of the most important strategic locations in the world, as well as its

¹Ali Nasser, US military bases in the Middle East and their impact on international peace and security, PhD thesis in international and diplomatic relations, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Diplomatic Sciences - Department of International and Diplomatic Relations, Islamic University of Lebanon, Khalde, 2016-2017, p. 47.

²Mamdouh Mahmoud Mansour, The American-Soviet Conflict in the Middle East, first edition, Cairo, Madbouly Library, Cairo, 1995, p. 51.

³Sawsan Ismail Al-Assaf, America and the Strategy of Arms Control, International Papers, No. (124), Center for International Studies, University of Baghdad, Fifth Year, August 2003, p. 19.

enjoyment of a large stock of energy, especially oil, which is a great source of strategic power in the world, as well as an important means of production that can never be dispensed with, all of which made it an important economic position in The strategy of the most important country of the great countries in the world, the American strategy.¹

In addition to the presence of natural gas, which is one of the important sources of energy in the region, and also occupies an important place in the US strategy towards the region, as it possesses natural gas reserves, more than 40% of the world's total reserves.²

It is worth noting another important source of energy in the Arab world, which is (uranium), which is one of the resources available for development of depleted energy. Primary deposits of uranium have been found in confirmed quantities of about (24 thousand tons) and other deposits as well, but they are almost certain, amounting to about (53 thousand tons), and there are many evidences of the possibility of its presence in Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, where the reserve is about (150.50 thousand tons).³In addition, the region embraces a large number of manpower that qualifies it to rely on it in production and military operations. It is also characterized by the abundance of production factors necessary to carry out military industries, as it is a region characterized by economic growth in the field of trade, investment and agricultural production.⁴

3- The geostrategic importance of the Middle East region

The Middle East region enjoys unilateralism of paramount importance in the foreign policy of the major and emerging powers, especially at the beginning of the twenty-first century, because of the great importance of the region in terms of (geopolitical, economic, security), and its enjoyment of a great abundance of natural resources, the most important of which is oil and natural gas, and its privileged position between The world's continents, all of this made it an open market for industrialized countries and the focus of attention and attention for the policies of the great countries, as it was and still is subject to external interference over the decades, so it can be considered a politically and security turbulent region as a summary of these interventions.⁵

The Middle East region, especially the Arab region, has a positive specificity that is not limited to the economic and strategic aspects only, but there are other unique characteristics and features that contributed to the formulation of the

¹Alessandro Ronclea, *The International Oil Market*, translated by: Abbas Al-Marji, first edition, Dar Al-Watan Al-Arabi for Printing and Publishing, Kuwait, 1987, p. 13.

²Aref Al-Abed, *Lebanon and Taif: A Historical Intersection*, First Edition, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 2000, p. 27.

³Ali Muhammad Al-Sayegh, *Solar Energy in the Arab World*, Arab Future Magazine, Issue (78), Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 1985, p. 120.

⁴Albert Hourani and (others), *the modern Middle East*, translated by: Asaad Saqr, first edition - the second part, Dartlas Publishing, Damascus, 1996, p. 15.

⁵Saddam bitter Ahmed Attia, *The international and regional conflict in the Middle East and its impact on the Arab revolutions*, Tikrit Journal of Political Science No. 11, College of Political Science, Tikrit University, 2017, p. 301.

importance of the region, and the following will mention some of them:

1- History and Civilization: The region is considered the cradle of civilizations, the birthplace of the first letters, the motherland of the word and writing for the whole world, and the first to make and build civilized buildings. Several civilizations arose in it that arranged the lives of their peoples according to political and legal systems, at a time when the peoples of the rest of the world lived in caves and dark ages prevailed. It is afraid of the sun due to its intense heat, and as a result of the existence of those civilizations, an intellectual and cultural diversity arose, including: the Mesopotamian civilization, the Nile Valley civilization, and the Phoenician civilization.¹

2Religion: The religious aspect is of great importance to the region because it is the hidden engine of the conflict in the region, and just as this region is the cradle of the three largest monotheistic religions in the world (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), all the messages of the prophets were revealed to them in this part of the world. Between each of (Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, the Levant, the Hijaz and Najd), and to this land all the hearts and eyes of the believers from all over the world yearn.

Third_ the conflicts in the Middle East

The region has witnessed many events and revolutions in the Arab and Middle Eastern countries, the occurrence of which is due to three factors, among which the writer and political analyst "Abdulghani Salama" believes that these factors are the main motive for their outbreak since these countries were liberated from colonialism and gained political independence, and the factors are (the nature The politics of the ruling Arab regimes, totalitarian parties, and external factors).²

If the focus is on the existing policies in most countries in the region, we will find them "totalitarian authoritarian regimes", and we will find the absence of many aspects of good governance, including political pluralism in the appearance of its policies, the peaceful transfer of power, and its curbing of freedoms related to public opinion and the use of force by the rulers of the region. In order to stay in power, there is no place for any real opposition or any partisan pluralism, only for those who support the ruler's authority.³

Based on all of the above, the region has become full of interactions and intersections that are affected by the balance of international forces, particularly the United States of America, which is in control of the status quo in the region, as well as Russia, which aims to return as a major player in all current international

¹Adnan Muhanna, *Confronting Iran and America's Hegemony in the Middle East - Contemporary Iranian Thought Series*, First Edition, Center of Islamic Civilization, Beirut, 2014, p. 23.

²Quoted from Adel Muhammad Hassan Al-Olayan, *The Arab Change Movement - A Study in Its Most Important Causes and Results*, Sir Men Ra'a Journal, Issue (38), College of Education, Samarra University, 2014, p. 48.

³Same source pg.

issues, the most important of which is what is known as: (Arab revolutions).¹

The most important conflicts in the Middle East after 2011

There are many conflicts in the Middle East, some of them are for influence and control, and some are for the sake of interfering to resolve conflicts and build peace, among which we mention what the Middle East witnessed from a strategic turning point in its history in the modern era, after the outbreak of the so-called Arab Spring in 2011, for what it carried There are major changes and transformations, the effects and facts of which are still unraveling at the regional and international levels until now, and there is no doubt that the region has lived years full of rapid and successive transformations that did not give its observer an opportunity to analyze its deep causes or even to anticipate its upcoming paths, and it is remarkable to change the actors affecting it and the emergence of countries It was not a pivotal country before, and it is becoming one of the influential actors in the region.

The Arab countries whose attempts to restore stability in the face of the strikes that accompanied what is known as the Arab Spring are still suffering from internal tension, with the continuation of the demonstrations witnessed by some countries in the region from time to time, in connection with the deteriorating political and economic conditions, the high rates of inflation and poverty, and the reform bill. The economy is being pushed by the peoples and countries of the region, the last of which was the Iraqi protests and demonstrations that erupted on October 1, 2019, in Baghdad and the provinces in protest against the poor economic conditions of the country, the spread of unemployment and administrative corruption. Arab region.²

Moreover, there is no region in the world comparable to the Middle East region in terms of the level of tensions and turmoil it witnesses, as the indices issued by conflict databases for the period from (2011-2016) indicated that this region contains 50% of the total terrorist attacks In the world, about 60% of the total victims of terrorism in the world fall.³

To clarify this, there are many factors causing instability in the region, some of which are related to the continuation of conflicts and civil wars that some Arab countries have witnessed, such as Syria, Libya and Yemen since 2011. Country Alliance–Turkey, as well as the alliance of the Arab Quartet, which includes the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt.⁴

¹Hala Khaled Hamid, US-Russian Relations after 2001, The Path and the Future, Political and International Journal, Issue (25), College of Political Science, Al-Mustansiriya University, 2014, pp. 450-451.

²Abu al-Fadl al-Asnawi, Issues affecting the development of international conflict, Journal of International Politics, Issue 214, Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo, 2018, p. 12.

³Ian Davis and Dan Smith, The Middle East and North Africa 2016 from a comprehensive perspective, from the book Arms, Disarmament and International Security, first edition, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Beirut, 2017, p. 115.

⁴Raji Youssef Mahmoud Al-Bayati, Saudi-Iranian Relations, first edition, Dar Al-Hikma, London, 2016, p. 88.

The second requirement

Conflict management process

First, the concept of conflict

Conflict is a real phenomenon of a human nature related to human activity and the continuity of its existence and movement. In the goals and interests, and a clear discrepancy in perception and understanding, which leads to the outbreak of conflict¹.

The concept of conflict is the basis on which the specialized literature in conflict and peace studies revolves, and the important pillar from which many basic concepts in the field of these studies are based.²

One of the most important definitions of conflict

1_ The concept espoused by "Johan GalantogGohn Galtung" He is one of the founders of the science of conflict and peace studies, where he defined conflict as (a state of contradiction between the goals of Goals (countries or between values) Valucs (actors) Actors (in the social system) Social SystemThis is done within the framework of the concepts and beliefs of each party.³

2_ "Consi Wright"Quincy WrightHe is also one of the founding scholars of the same field of studies, as he sees (that conflict is sometimes used to refer to inconsistencies or contradictions in principles, concepts, emotions, goals, or claims to entities or identity, and sometimes it is used to refer to the process of settling these contradictions).⁴

In general, the concept of conflict in the specialized political literature has been viewed as a "dynamic phenomenon".⁵ It has many aspects, including that it takes a trend based in its definition of the concept on the competitive dimension as a form and types of competitive behavior, whether for individuals or groups, when there is competition among them about goals that have not been agreed upon, regardless of whether these goals are real or from their perception or about resources Ltd.⁶

Secondly, the concept of conflict management

The concept of conflict management is one of the main concepts related to the conflict, and one of the concepts that has received widespread controversy in

¹SamiIbrahim Al-Khazandar, *Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution, a theoretical framework*, first edition, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, Doha, 2014, p. 53.

²Same source, pg.

³Galtung, Johan: "Conflict as a way of life", Op.cit., p.486

⁴Wright, Quincy: "The Nature of Confiict" Op.cit, p.15, in Burton, John & Dukes, Frank (cds): Op.cit.

⁵Dennis J. Sandole "Paradigm, Theories, and Metaphors in Conflict and Conflict Resolution: Coherence or Confusion?" in "Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice." edited by Dennis J . Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993: 3-24, pp.6-7.

⁶K. Boulding, "Conflict and Defense, 'New York: Harper and Row, 1962. See also: Boulding.K, in North, IEES., 1968: 226-228.

opinions and a great discussion about determining the limits and nature of the concept, and in general we can say that its main axis is that: a process whose goal is to limit, calm, contain or prevent an escalation violence, and it often seeks to reach a settlement of the conflict. The concept evolved to become comprehensive of many terms and topics, including conflict settlement, conflict resolution, conflict prevention, in addition to the escalation, fabrication and complexity of conflict and ways to prevent conflict.

see (Glenn Herald Snyder) Klein Hurd, that conflict management means (the exercise of governance in the details of the conflict, by the rulers involved in it with the aim of reducing the possibility of the crisis that precedes it erupting and reaching the stage of war, and this means that each country seeks to manage the conflict in a manner that serves its interests to the maximum extent possible).¹

As the institute points outGTZThe German, that conflict management is (an attempt to organize the conflict, by working to prevent or end violence and seeks to bring constructive solutions from all parties to the conflict that can be benefited from).²

Objectives of conflict management

Through our knowledge of the principles of international conflict management, we can indicate that this process includes three main objectives, which are achieved through the previous strategies, and these objectives are:

- 1- Preventing or limiting the conflict from reaching the level of military confrontation and war.
- 2- Negotiating with the parties in order to try to change the course of the conflict, negotiations instead of war.
- 3- Striving to achieve lasting peace by eliminating the causes of conflict and uprooting them from their roots.³

Fourthly_ International conflict management

The management of the international conflict has many means that are resorted to when it is not possible to reach a settlement to the existing conflict, especially when each of its parties adheres to its position, which requires the entry of a third party to manage this conflict, and there are four means for the third party to use in managing the conflict, which are as follows:

1- The diplomatic means

The third party uses the diplomatic means in managing the conflict, by

¹Johan Galtung, The Middle East Crisis and Conflict Theory (presentation by Ahmed Youssef), Journal of International Politics, first issue, Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo, October 1972, p. 42.

²Ropers, Norbert and Kingwbiel, Stephan:2002, Peace-Building, Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management: Technical Cooperation in the Context of Crisis, Conflicts, and Disasters, Eschborn, Germany, Deutsche Gesellschaft for Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), division 42, <http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/en-crisis-prevention-and-conflict-management.pdf>, p. 12.

³Ball Nicole, Making for Peace Work, (Johns Hopkins University Press, Washington, 1996).

relying on the means of diplomacy, including negotiation, mediation, good offices, investigation, conciliation and bargaining, in order to reach an agreement between the parties to the conflict.

2- The judicial means

To manage the conflict, the third party resorts to the judicial means, with the aim of putting pressure on the parties to the conflict, so resorting to institutions and judicial bodies that are authorized to apply laws and obtain confessions to put pressure on the parties to the conflict.¹

3-Economic means (Economic sanctions)

The actors in conflict management use the economic tool as a coercive and coercive method to pressure the parties to the conflict, for example, imposing economic sanctions on one of the parties, and that economic sanctions mean as Nieler defined them. Naylor (A set of punitive measures of an economic nature, taken by an international party (a state or an international organization) in the face of another international party). The most important of these sanctions is the imposition of urbanization and siege, and they are used with the aim of achieving the goals and political interests of the party that imposes them.²

4The means of actual use or threat of force

The third party to manage the conflict resorts to this method with the aim of persuading one of the parties to the conflict by threatening to use force, or an actual use of armed force if all the above-mentioned methods fail to manage the conflict.³

The third requirement: the factors affecting the management of international conflict, especially the Middle East region

First - the stimuli that motivate the regional powers

Among the most important repercussions that followed the events of the Arab revolutions since 2011, is the great change that affected the elements of state power in some Arab countries and affected the process of the regional balance of power in general, and among the most important elements of power that were subjected to change in this period is the collapse of the institutions of political systems The Arab countries in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria ... etc., which were reflected in the result on the strength and cohesion of these countries, starting from the era of the inevitable link between the institutions of the state and the institutions of its political system, where the fate of the Arab state was linked to

¹Ahmed Zakaria Al-Basousy, *The Effects of the Energy Security Threat on the International Conflict on Natural Gas, "A Case Study of the Eastern Mediterranean Basin"*, PhD thesis, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, Egypt, 2018, pg. 40.

²Ahmed Mohammed Wahban, *Analysis of International Conflict Management "a survey study"*, Journal of the Saudi Association for Political Science, King Saud University, 2014, p. 28.

³Previous Source, pp. 33-34.

the fate of the political system in it to some extent.

Among the reasons that led to the acceleration of the collapse of some Arab regimes is the decline of the United States' interest in the necessity of stability and sustainability of Arab regimes since the events of September 11, 2001, when the United States gradually became aware that Arab authoritarian regimes had become a burden on the role of the United States in the Middle East region. ¹

When comparing the region with some other regions in the world, we note that this region lacks to some extent appropriate mechanisms for resolving regional conflicts, as well as its lack of diplomatic protocols that would narrow the scope of regional conflicts.²

Since the absence of the most important aspect of these mechanisms is the decline in the role of organizations for conflict analysis in conjunction with the spread of wars and various conflicts, it will inevitably lead to the exacerbation of security crises on many levels, which may lead some countries to take what they deem necessary of steps to maintain their national security, Such as military intervention in areas of regional conflict to preserve their interests, form alliances, or enter into military alliances, which means creating a security threat to other countries that push them to increase their arming activity or enter into new alliances, and this is what creates a strong regional security dilemma.³

Secondly, external interventions

Three of the civil wars in the region, in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, have local origins since 2011. Although each conflict has its own unique characteristics, there are common components in the three cases, the present socio-economic systems of the downfall, corrupt rentierism, and authoritarianism, Over time, each one of the conflicts escalated and became regional and international at the same time.⁴

Regardless of whether the disengagement of the United States from the Middle East constitutes a grave mistake, a course change, or a financial necessity, the regional and international powers have tried to fill the resulting void. We find that throughout the region, countries are now interfering in the affairs of their neighbors politically, economically and militarily at unprecedented rates. Both partners and competitors of the United States have moved to carve out greater roles for themselves in the region. The continuing conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen continue because local leaders, like their international partners, believe that they can achieve their strategic goals through military victories, in which gains and losses are equal for both. Both parties, however, may be wrong in this belief.⁵

¹Khaled Hakki Ali, *The Situational Path of Three-Flame Uprisings, Contagion and Exposure*, Journal of Democracy, Issue (75), Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo, 2019, p. 48.

²Yara Bayomy, Jonathan Landay, Warren Strobel, "Trump Seek to Revive 'Arab NATO' to Confront Iran," Reuters, July 27, 2018.

³The same source, p. 48.

⁴Khaled Hanafi, *Stimulating entrances to building peace in conflict areas*, International Politics Journal - Theoretical Trends Supplement, Issue (206), Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo 2016.

⁵Muhammad Qashqoush, *The Struggle of Military and Security Influence in the Middle East*, International Politics Journal, Issue (213), Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo, 2018, p. 80.

Many early indications indicate that these states that are now interfering in regional conflicts, especially when they aim to achieve major political goals and not merely for defensive purposes, may witness similar results.¹

Third, arms sales

Arms sales are an influential factor for managing the conflict in the region. In addition to direct military intervention, external actors also intervene indirectly, through the sale of arms and security assistance, which may seem an attractive way to influence the course of the conflict, without taking military action or using soldiers. .²

Moreover, arms sales may bring important economic benefits to their major exporters, such as the United States and its European allies, as well as Russia and China. They have become a diplomatic priority and an important factor in achieving political gains for leaders in exporting countries. We find that the Middle East is the most militarized region in the world, although in numerical terms it constitutes (8%) of the world's population, and contributes only (6%) of the global gross product, it represents nearly one-third of arms imports for the period between 2013-2017 And it is more than twice its imports compared to the previous five years.³

In addition to the economic benefits of arms sales, advocates of arms exports in democracies argue that both arms sales and security assistance programs may help professionalize emerging military institutions, and thus generate a moderating effect on recipient countries. US officials also stress the need To upgrade the capabilities of allied countries and enhance the possibility of conducting joint operations with US forces. It is also rarely, arms sales to the two parties involved in a conflict are the decisive factor for it. Instead, they will generate an actual opposite response from the opposing countries, which will exacerbate and intensify it rather than end it.⁴

Fourth requirement: Religious and sectarian factors affecting conflict management in the Middle East

Religious factors are among the most prominent and important factors influencing conflict management in the Middle East. The concept of sectarianism, according to the Oxford Dictionary, means: a person who follows a particular sect in an intransigent manner, rejecting all other sects and denying their rights, or who earns for his sect the rights of other sects, exalting or ignoring them, or Intolerance

¹Ahmad Majidiyar, "Iran Faces Uphill Battle to Profit From Its Role in Syria War," Financial Times, February 13, 2018, p12.

²"Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2017," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), March 2018, P1.

³A. Trevor Thrall and Caroline Dorminey, "Risky Business: The Role of Arms Sales in US Foreign Policy," Cato Institute, March 13, 2018.

⁴Jonathan Saul et., "Exclusive: Iran Steps Up Support for Houthis in Yemen's War-Sources," Reuters, March 21, 2017.

against it, and does not mean merely belonging to a particular sect or a particular sect that makes a person sectarian or his endeavor to improve the conditions of his sect or the region in which he lives without harming the latter and their rights.¹

Political decisions in the region are often taken according to the assumptions that the Middle East is torn by a bilateral sectarian war between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and that sectarian identity is fixed in the region and its problems are latent and intractable. In order to not only fit with sectarian divisions, but also help to strengthen those divisions by supporting the establishment of new, alternative regions and countries in line with sectarianism. Undoubtedly, these assumptions, some of them are often mistaken, misleading and incomplete, but certainly sectarian identity is the crux of the matter.

The most important reasons that made religious and sectarian factors effective at their highest peak in the Middle East are the combination of the following three factors:²

1- The Middle East region witnessed in the post-1979 and 2003 eras a sharp rise in sectarianism, due to the strongly increasing external support for sectarian divisions in light of the acceleration of the political dimension for the sake of the policy of affirming sectarian identity over national identities. For example, we find that Iran and Saudi Arabia or the Shiite and Sunni sects, each Among them, and respectively, the religious identity has been used according to its consideration as a political tool, by imposing its direct influence on the rest of the policies of other countries in the region in order to achieve their interests and political goals, as mentioned about that by the prominent Lebanese Shiite cleric Sayed Ali Fadlallah (Sayed Ali Fadlullah) saying:

"Sectarian tools are used in these conflicts because of their great influence. If you were to ask the people to fight now to gain regional or international influence, they will not respond to you, but they will respond when they are told that your sect is fraught with dangers."

2- The increase in the percentage of mass participation in the political processes in the region and the growing desire to obtain the largest direct share in political representation, gave sectarianism more power than it was at any time in history, and this can be attributed mainly to those people who cling to their religious identities More than it was in the past, in response to the growth of secular nation-states as well as to the secular dictators who have tightened the screws on political Islam in the region during the past hundred years.

Conclusions

- The Middle East region has always represented a point of interest for

¹Fares Al-Khattab, Sectarianism, the Sedition of the Present and the Future, 6/4/2013. <http://www.aljazeera.net>

²Yaroslav Trofimov, "Sunni-Shiite Conflict Reflects Modern Power Struggle, Not Theological Schism," Wall Street Journal, May 14, 2015.

international and regional powers, due to its important geostrategic, natural, human, political, economic, religious and cultural components, which prompted these forces to enter into waves of competition and conflicts with each other for control and domination of the region.

- The multiplicity of motives and causes of conflicts, their diversity and overlap in the region, prompted the search for rules for analyzing and interpreting conflicts as an initial stage to form the way towards managing those conflicts to prevent them from reaching war or limiting their spread through conflict management.
- Conflict management has become a necessary matter in the region, due to the complexity of the conflict phenomenon, its intertwining and its close connection with international conflicts, which is easier than the occurrence of war, which is the highest peak of the conflict. To choose the alternatives presented in order to prevent the aggravation of the conflict.
- The Middle East was and still is and most likely it will remain one of the centers of global conflict. This is due to many political, economic, cultural, religious and ideological reasons, and the presence of internal and external nutrition for the ongoing conflicts in the region.
- Sectarianism is the set of attitudes, beliefs, and actions that exclude and marginalize everyone who belongs to another religion, such as the massacres committed by the Islamic State in the region.
- Sectarian and religious factors are a complex phenomenon shaped by social, political, economic and other considerations, embodied in the form of religious enmities and ideological differences.
- There are other factors related to religious factors that fuel sectarian conflicts in the Middle East.
- Sectarianism is not the same in every country or region. Therefore, policy makers should realize that they avoid making generalizations about the role of sectarianism in the conflicts in the Middle East, in order to formulate an effective and unique approach to each conflict in the region.