



ларига кўра 2008-2009 йиллардаги молиявий-иқтисодий инқирозни қайд этиш керак. Бу ўринда гап нафақат соғлиқни сақлаш тизимининг глобал инқирози ҳақида, балки сиёсат, иқтисодиёт, ижтимоий соҳадаги сифат ўзгаришлар борасидаги муқаррар рағбат ҳақида кетмоқда.

Ҳозирги мураккаб вазиятда минтақавий ўзаро ёрдам, хатти-ҳаракатларни мувофиқлаштириш ва ахборот алмашиш пандемиянинг салбий оқибатларини енгиб ўтишда ўта муҳим аҳамиятга эга. Жаҳондаги тенденцияларни кузатиш ҳамда ўзимизнинг ички ва ташқи устуворликларни шакллантиришда уларни ҳисобга олиш зарур.

Пандемияга қарши туришда умумминтақавий хатти-ҳаракатларнинг жипслиги ўзаро фойдали минтақавий ҳамкорликни янада мустаҳкамлашни, шунингдек мамлакатларнинг иқтисодий соҳада ўзаро ҳамкорлигига оид чора-тадбирлар мажмуининг кенгайтирилишини тақозо этади.

Стратегик режалаштириш, ўзаро қўллаб-қувватлаш ва мувозанатланган ташқи сиёсат Марказий Осиёда коронавирус пандемиясининг тезда енгиб ўтишда ва ижтимоий-иқтисодий вазиятни барқарорлаштиришда асосий омил бўлиб хизмат қилади.

Дунёда юзага келган вазият шуни кўрсатадики, бирон бир давлат ёлғиз ўзи ушбу дахшатли эпидемияга бас қилиши қийин. Бунда ҳамжиҳатлик, ҳамкорлик ва ўзаро ёрдам ушбу касалликка қарши курашда дастуриламал бўлиб хизмат қилади.

Бугун халқаро ҳамкорлик ҳар қачонгидан ҳам муҳим аҳамиятга эга, бусиз ушбу инқирознинг давомли иқтисодий оқибатларини енгиб ўтиш мушкул. Айниқса, минтақавий шериклар билан ҳамкорлик муҳим аҳамиятга эга бўлиб, сўнгги йилларда улар билан кўп томонлама ҳамкорлик алоқалари жадал ривожланмоқда.

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### **The foreign policy and political anthropology of the Middle East**

**Abstract.** *Developing the idea of the Arab world or region, Egyptian researchers R. Al-Bustani and F. Fargus, analyzing regional processes starting with the formation of modern states, do not use the term the Middle East, but write about the Arab world, Arab states, North Africa, East Africa, the "Fertile Crescent" of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula. Another Egyptian scholar, M. Muallim, notes that the Middle East is a region from Iran in the east to Libya in the west, and from Turkey in the north to the southern borders of the Arabian Peninsula and in Africa to the southern borders of Sudan. Such a Middle East is a political concept, and, in his opinion, it is better to use the term "Asia-African region", which includes all the specifics of the territories, from the geographical*



location at the junction of Europe, Asia, Africa, and ending with energy resources. Some scholars compare the excesses of the "Arab Spring" and its consequences with such powerful historical cataclysms as the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of national Arab formations after the First World War. In the current situation, the diplomacy of Uzbekistan should help in the settlement of conflicts and a positive political and economic transformation of the Middle East and have a solid analytical foundation.

The article pursues a study of the situation in the Middle East in the light of the regime changes that have taken place and the change in the geopolitical configuration of the region. The article analyzes the features of the formation and implementation of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) in the Near East (Iraq, Turkey, the Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian zone, Egypt, the Persian Gulf countries, Yemen) in the context of the transformation of the forms and methods of implementing Washington's strategy of "systemic containment" IRI. Particular attention is paid to identifying the potential of Iran as one of the leaders of the Middle East region. Therefore, the article broadly covers the main directions of the foreign policy of the countries of the Middle East and assesses the Middle East situation.

**Keywords and expressions:** the Middle East, international security, regional complex, Persian Gulf, oil-producing countries, extra-regional powers, G. Morgenthau, USA, Iran, Russia.

**Аннотация.** Араб дунёси ёки минтақаси гоёсини ривожлантириб, мисрлик тадқиқотчилар Р. Ал-Бустани ва Ф. Фарғус замонавий давлатларнинг шаклланишидан бошланган минтақавий жараёнларни таҳлил қилиб, Яқин Шарқ атамасини ишлатмай, араб дунёси ҳақида шундай ёзадилар, Араб давлатлари, Шимолий Африка, Шарқий Африка, Ироқ, Сурия, Ливан, Исроил, Фаластин, Арабистон ярим оролининг "Фертил Ярим Ойи". Яна бир мисрлик олим М.Муаллим Яқин Шарқ - шарқда Эрондан гарбда Ливияга, шимолда Туркиядан Арабистон ярим оролининг жанубий чегараларига ва Африкада Суданнинг жанубий чегараларига қадар бўлган ҳудуд эканлигини таъкидлайди. Бундай Яқин Шарқ-бу сиёсий концептсия ва унинг фикрича, Европа, Осиёнинг чорраҳасидаги географик жойлашувидан тортиб, ҳудудларнинг барча ўзига хос хусусиятларини ўз ичига олган "Осиё-Африка минтақаси" атамасини ишлатган маъқул. Африка ва энергия манбалари билан тугайди. Баъзи олимлар "араб баҳори" нинг ҳаддан ташқари ошиши ва унинг оқибатларини Усмонли империясининг қулаши ва Биринчи жаҳон урушидан кейин миллий араб тузилмаларининг пайдо бўлиши каби кучли тарихий катаклизмлар билан солиштиришади. Ҳозирги вазиятда Ўзбекистон дипломатияси низоларни ҳал қилишида ва Яқин Шарқнинг ижобий сиёсий ва иқтисодий ўзгаришига ёрдам бериши ва мустақкам таҳлилий асосга эга бўлиши керак.

Мақолада режимнинг ўзгариши ва минтақанинг геосиёсий конфигурациясининг ўзгариши нуқтаи назаридан Яқин Шарқдаги вазиятни ўрганиш кўзда тутилган. Мақолада Яқин Шарқда (Ироқ, Туркия, Сурия-Ливан-Фаластин зонаси, Миср, Форс кўрфази мамлакатлари, Яман) Эрон Исломи Республикаси (ИРИ) ташқи сиёсатини шакллантириши ва амалга ошириши хусусиятлари таҳлил қилинган. Вашингтоннинг ИРИ "тизимли қамров" стратегиясини амалга ошириши шакллари ва усулларини ўзгартириши контексти. Эроннинг Яқин Шарқ минтақаси этақчиларидан бири сифатида салоҳиятини аниқлашга алоҳида эътибор қаратилмоқда. Шундай қилиб, мақолада Яқин Шарқ, мамлакатларининг ташқи сиёсатининг асосий ўналишлари кенг қамраб олинган бўлиб Яқин Шарқдаги вазиятга баҳо берилган.

**Таянч сўз ва иборалар:** Яқин Шарқ, халқаро хавфсизлик, минтақавий комплекс, Форс кўрфази, нефт қазиб олувчи давлатлар, минтақадан ташқари кучлар, Г. Моргентхау, АҚШ, Эрон, Россия.



**Аннотация.** Развивая представление об арабском мире или регионе, египетские исследователи Р.Аль-Бустани и Ф.Фаргус, анализируя региональные процессы, начиная с образования современных государств, не используют термин Ближний Восток, а пишут об арабском мире, как Арабские государства, Северная Африка, Восточная Африка, «Плодородный полумесяц» Ирака, Сирия, Ливан, Израиль, Палестина, Аравийский полуостров. Другой египетский ученый, М. Муаллим, отмечает, что Ближний Восток - это регион от Ирана на востоке до Ливии на западе и от Турции на севере до южных границ Аравийского полуострова и в Африке до южных границ Судана. Такой Ближний Восток - понятие политическое, и, по его мнению, лучше использовать термин «Азиатско-Африканский регион», включающий в себя всю специфику территорий, начиная с географического положения на стыке Европы и Азии, Африка, и заканчивая энергоресурсами. Некоторые ученые сравнивают эксцессы «арабской весны» и ее последствия с такими мощными историческими катаклизмами, как крах Османской империи и появление национальных арабских образований после Первой мировой войны. В нынешней ситуации дипломатия Узбекистана должна способствовать урегулированию конфликтов и позитивным политическим и экономическим преобразованиям Ближнего Востока и иметь прочную аналитическую основу.

В статье исследуется ситуация на Ближнем Востоке в свете произошедших смен режима и изменения геополитической конфигурации региона. В статье анализируются особенности формирования и реализации внешней политики Исламской Республики Иран (ИРИ) на Ближнем Востоке (Ирак, Турция, Сирийско-Ливано-Палестинская зона, Египет, страны Персидского залива, Йемен) контекст трансформации форм и методов реализации Вашингтонской стратегии «системного сдерживания» ИРИ. Особое внимание уделяется выявлению потенциала Ирана как одного из лидеров ближневосточного региона. Таким образом, в статье широко освещаются основные направления внешней политики стран Ближнего Востока и дается оценка ситуации на Ближнем Востоке.

**Опорные слова и выражения:** Ближний Восток, международная безопасность, региональный комплекс, Персидский залив, нефтедобывающие страны, внерегиональные державы, Дж. Моргентау, США, Иран, Россия.

The Middle East is already a well-established concept in science and history. The East, close to Europe, in the Middle Ages and in modern times denoted approximately the same region as at present. At the same time, the changing environment, the situation both in the region and in the world, as well as the development of science predetermine discrepancies concerning the borders of the region and even to its designation.

Several Arab scholars believe that the term the Middle East itself was created to include non-Arab countries such as Cyprus or Afghanistan in the region. This demonstrates, firstly, a departure from the traditional concept of the "Arab world", and, secondly, the central role of the West in the modern world order. Supporters of this point of view prefer to use the term "Arab world" or "Arab region" instead of the Middle East, emphasizing the different features of the region than in the West<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ахмадуллин В. Анализ интерпретации термина «Ближний Восток» арабоязычными авторами. // Армия и общество (Россия). - 2014. №4. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/analiz-interpretatsii-termina-blizhniy-vostok-araboyazychnymi-avtorami>.



Developing the idea of the Arab world or region, Egyptian researchers R. Al-Bustani and F. Fargus, analyzing regional processes starting with the formation of modern states, do not use the term the Middle East, but write about the Arab world, Arab states, North Africa, East Africa, "Fertile Crescent" in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula. Another Egyptian scholar, M. Muallim, notes that the Middle East is a region from Iran in the east to Libya in the west, and from Turkey in the north to the southern borders of the Arabian Peninsula and in Africa to the southern borders of Sudan. Such a Middle East is a political concept, and, in his opinion, it is better to use the term "Asia-African region", which includes all the specifics of the territories, from the geographical location at the junction of Europe, Asia, Africa, and ending with energy resources [Ahmadullin V. 2014 url].

Some of the Arab scholars use the term the Middle East, including parts of North Africa, Southwest Asia, and Southeast Europe. The boundaries of the region remain uncertain, however, in their opinion, the region could include Cyprus, Egypt, Turkey, Sudan, as well as the Asian countries Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Arab countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Concerning Palestine, in a typical way for Arab authors, the absence of Israel is indicated, but the presence of the occupied territories of Palestine with the capital in Jerusalem. Rather, it is an ideological rationale that has nothing to do with the prevailing realities.

Western authors have discrepancies both in the name of the region and in the definition of its boundaries. For example, the Encyclopedia America indicates that the Middle East covers mainly Southwest Asia and Northeast Africa, and also covers the part of Europe that Turkey occupies. At the same time, the authors of the encyclopedia emphasize the fact that the boundaries of the region are changeable, and from time to time certain territories are included or excluded from the region, and in the cultural and geostrategic sense, the region has always been and will occupy a central place.

Also, it should be noted that historically the term Near East was used to refer to the region. As noted in the Britannica encyclopedia, Middle East began to be used only in the 20th century, although today the two concepts can be used interchangeably. The terms near east, Middle East, FarEast were originally introduced to refer to the entire "East". nearest meant the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan Peninsula in the 19th - early 20th centuries, the Middle East - the territories of the Persian Gulf and South Asia, and FarEast - the Asia-Pacific region, that is, the regions of Asia with access to the Pacific Ocean. During World War II, the British began to use the terms NearEast and MiddleEast as synonyms, and now they usually include states from Morocco to Iran in the region, often using the abbreviation MENA - the Middle East and North Africa, which, perhaps, more accurately describes the study area and maybe geopolitically united into one region. Russian researchers also sometimes use the concept of the Middle East and North Africa, and the analyzed topics go beyond the region and may relate to such topics as Sino-Pakistani cooperation or France's plans in the Sahel region.



In our opinion, this region artificially includes countries such as Morocco, which, despite their common religion and historical past, are much more involved in the processes in Africa and Europe than in the Gulf region, at the same time, exclusion from the region Pakistan seems to be much less justified than the inclusion of Morocco or Algeria in it, since Pakistan is much more often and more directly involved in the events in the Middle East-related to the Gulf countries, and is, in particular, in regional organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation with involving, inter alia, Iran and Turkey. Also, the marked borders of the region are much more Eurocentric, since they cover Europe from the south and southeast, and are more expedient from the position of Western European states.

It should be noted that in the 21st century, in connection with the geopolitical dynamics, there have been transformations that have affected both the name of the region and its borders. In 2004, the US administration called for an expanded interpretation of the region's borders. During the G8 summit, US President George W. Bush. introduced a new term into the political lexicon - "Greater Middle East" (Greater Middle East).

In Russia, since the times of the Soviet Union, the term Near and the Middle East has become widespread. There is an opinion that Iran and Afghanistan, and sometimes Pakistan also belong to the Middle East. The term "Middle" itself, applied to the East, characterizes its position between the Far and Near East, based on the criterion of distance from the European subcontinent<sup>1</sup>.

It is possible to highlight materials in which the term the Middle East is interpreted as a literal translation of the concept of the Middle East. In particular, the online resource World Digital Library, based on information from the Library of the US Congress, denotes the Middle East like Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and other states of the Arabian Peninsula, as well as Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. A similar definition is given by UNESCO.

The Great Russian Encyclopedia uses the term the Middle East, interpreting it as "territories in southwestern Asia and northeastern Africa, where Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Qatar, Cyprus, Kuwait, Lebanon are located, UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Palestinian National Autonomy".

The Middle East stands out as a separate security complex in the framework of the theory of B. Buzan and O. Wever. They refer to the regional complex as "a group of states whose main security concerns link them so closely that their national security cannot be considered in isolation from each other."<sup>2</sup>.

The regional security complex should include the following variables:

- borders dividing the regional security complex;
- the presence of two or more autonomous units in the structure of the regional security complex;

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<sup>1</sup> Исаев Г. Что такое «Ближний Восток»? // Перспективы (Россия), 08.04.2020. [http://www.perspektivy.info/book/chto\\_takoe\\_blizhnij\\_vostok\\_2009-09-30.htm](http://www.perspektivy.info/book/chto_takoe_blizhnij_vostok_2009-09-30.htm).

<sup>2</sup> See: Buzan B. and Waever O. Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security. – Cambridge University Press, 2003.564 p.





- the presence of poles, between which the strength of the participants in the complex is distributed;
- the existence of a social structure with more friendly and more hostile relations between states.

International security is determined at the regional level. The modern international system is a superpower - the United States - and the great powers - Russia, the European Union, China, and Japan - as well as regional complexes, one of which is the Middle East. The capabilities of a superpower and great powers allow them to interact with various regional security complexes.

The most active interaction is taking place within the regional security complexes. These complexes have a certain degree of autonomy, determined, among other things, by history. The Middle East macro-level security complex includes three interconnected sub-complexes: the Persian Gulf, the Levant, and the Maghreb<sup>1</sup>.

In our opinion, based on the research topic and modern realities, the region under consideration is better characterized precisely through the prism of the theory of regional security complexes.

The "Middle East" and "oil" have become inextricably linked images of world geopolitics. It is also generally recognized that oil reserves and production in the Middle East are of great importance to the global economy. Estimating oil and gas reserves is usually a task associated with many uncertainties since producing countries tend to exaggerate their energy potential to attract investment and increase international prestige, as do energy companies interested in increasing the value of their company.

If we start from the countries of the Persian Gulf, where the main reserves of the region's energy resources are concentrated, it can be noted that these states together occupy an area of 5.4 million square kilometers (or about 3.6% of the Earth's surface), but their importance for the global oil economy is unmatched. It is no coincidence that these countries, led by Saudi Arabia, make up the core of OPEC - the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

The energy center of gravity of the whole world is concentrated in the region. The famous American geologist Everett Lee DeGolyer (1886–1956) was one of the first oilmen to recognize the unique abundance of oil resources in the Middle East. In 1943, he visited Saudi Arabia on a special mission to collect data to estimate the volume of Middle Eastern oil. In a report published in July 1944, DeGolyer estimated the oil reserves of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar at about 27 barrels per day, but also suggested that larger reserves were yet to be discovered. He concluded that the "center of gravity" of world oil production is shifting from the Caribbean to the Persian Gulf.

The findings of the report, delivered at the height of World War II, underlie the geopolitical significance of the Middle East today. After World War II, the role of the region's oil-producing countries continued to grow, however, due to

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<sup>1</sup> See: Buzan B. *People, States, and Fear*. – Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1983., P. 106.



extremely low energy prices determined by consumer companies rather than market conditions, the energy-exporting countries did not receive dividends that would allow them to get out of the state of permanent poverty.

The situation changed after the 1973 oil crisis when Arab countries refused to sell energy resources to those states that support Israel in the conflict with Palestine. As a result, a shortage of energy resources appeared on the world market, prices rose sharply, and at the same time, the issue of security of supplies to consumer countries arose in the context of an aggravated military-political situation.

Significant financial resources fell into the hands of the oil-producing states, which allowed them to become on a par with the most prosperous states in the world. Politically, their role in the international arena has grown dramatically. New regional powers were formed, claiming leading roles in the Middle East. The total energy reserves of the Persian Gulf zone are estimated to be up to 60% of the world. The Middle East accounts for a third of world oil production, one-sixth of gas production, 48% of proved oil reserves, and 38% of proved gas reserves<sup>1</sup>.

Among the region's richest countries in energy resources, Saudi Arabia stands out, which has the largest oil reserves in the Middle East - 297,700 barrels in 2018, the Kingdom has 17.2% of the world's total proven oil reserves and is also the largest oil exporter. , according to OPEC data.

The main reserves are concentrated in several fields, which include the onshore Gavar field, which has been developed since 1951, the Safania offshore oil field, which has been developed since 1957, and the Shaiba onshore field, which was brought onstream in 1998. also considered the largest onshore oil field in the world. It is operated by Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national oil company.

Iran ranks second in oil reserves among the Middle Eastern countries, producing 155.6 thousand barrels in 2018. The country has about 9% of the world's proven oil reserves. It ranks fourth in the world among the countries with the largest oil reserves.

Major oil fields in Iran include the Marun, Ahvaz, Gachsaran, Aghajari, and Esfandiar oil fields. Located in the Iranian province of Khuzistan, the Marun field is estimated to contain 22 billion barrels of recoverable oil reserves, making it one of the world's largest onshore oil fields. It was commissioned in 1966.

The onshore Ahvaz field in the Khuzistan region is considered one of the three largest oil fields in the world in terms of production. Ahvaz, which is owned by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and operated by the National Iranian Southern Oil Company (NISOC), has been operating since 1954.

Iraq ranks third in the list of countries with the largest oil reserves in the Middle East, with 147.2 thousand barrels in 2018. The country produces almost 90% of its oil from onshore oil fields in the southern part of the country. The

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<sup>1</sup> Rasoul Sorkhabi. How Much Oil in the Middle East?. // GeoExpro (UK), 2014. <https://www.geoexpro.com/articles/2014/02/how-much-oil-in-the-middle-east>.



cities of Basra, Baghdad, and Ramadi store most of the country's oil reserves, and according to the World Bank, Iraq needs an annual investment of \$ 1 billion to continue its current oil production.

The country primarily exploits the world's third-largest producing field, Rumaila, with an estimated 17 billion barrels of recoverable oil remaining.

Iraq also operates the Majnoun field located in the south of the country. This field is considered one of the richest oil fields in the world with oil reserves ranging from 23 to 25 billion barrels and proven reserves of 12.8 billion barrels of oil.

Kuwait, despite its small size, makes a significant contribution to the global energy market and has the fourth-largest oil reserves in the Middle East. In 2018, 101.5 thousand barrels were produced, and being the third-largest oil producer among the OPEC countries, the country owns 8% of the world's oil reserves.

Oil production in Kuwait is carried out from three main fields. One of them is Ratka, which is located in the northern part of the country. The field is expected to help meet the target of 4 million barrels of oil per day.

The Burgan field is considered the second-largest oil field in the world. It is located in the south of Kuwait and is capable of producing up to 1.7 million barrels per day. Kuwait has been developing this field since 1938.

The Kuwait Oil Company plans to invest in Big Burgan to increase capacity through improved oil recovery techniques such as seawater and carbon dioxide injection.

The country also produces crude oil from the Wafra oil field, located within the onshore Divided Neutral Zone (PZ) near southern Kuwait.

The Wafra oil field, covering an area of about 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>, includes four other fields, including South Fuvaris, South Umm Gudair, Humma, and Ark.

The United Arab Emirates is also one of the world's 10 largest oil producers, with the fifth-largest oil reserves. As a member of OPEC and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), the country manages several major fields, including Murban, which is the country's main export stream. More than 90% of the UAE's reserves are located in Abu Dhabi, followed by Dubai and Sharjah.

One of the main fields in the country is the Upper Zakum field, located about 84 km northwest of the Abu Dhabi islands.

The field, which currently produces 640,000 barrels of oil per day, has approximately 50 billion barrels of oil reserves.

There are several centers of power in the Middle East that claim a dominant role in regional processes. Among them are Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and Israel. It seems that when analyzing their foreign policy, it is advisable to proceed from the provisions of the theory of political realism, including neoclassical, and neorealism.

The founder of political realism, Hans Morgenthau, believed that such eternal natural qualities as anarchy, lust for power, and selfishness are always inherent in human nature. The nature of international relations, like human nature, is anarchic. Therefore, it is wrong to demand any evolution from international





relations, a transition from wars to eternal peace. In this anarchy, the right of force dominates. Therefore, the rules of international relations determine the strongest<sup>1</sup>.

According to G. Morgenthau, those states that are unable to compete with the leading powers play a subordinate role in international relations. Their independence is limited by the interests of the most powerful states. Countries can resolve their local issues until they collide with the interests of a state equal or superior in strength. To change the balance of power in your favor, you need to enter into alliances. However, these alliances are also short-lived and last only as long as the national interests of these countries coincide. Collisions of the national interests of states are inevitable.

In the Middle East, two leading extra-regional powers can be distinguished - the United States and Russia, which, along with the leading regional powers, form the balance of power in the region. The rest of the states can follow the policy of these centers of power, ensuring relative independence only by skillful maneuvering between their dominant interests.

The balance of power is central to the maintenance of peace. However, in conditions of turbulence of regional processes, the balance of power becomes extremely unstable and rapidly changing, which is inevitably accompanied by local conflicts with the participation of external forces. This balance is most often fragile since each state by its nature seeks to change it in its favor, but after the Arab spring, the entire regional security complex is subject to processes that affect fundamental factors, so armed conflicts become characteristic of the Middle East.

The ideas of G. Morgenthau received their critical development in the works of K. Waltz. Analyzing the situation in the Black East and the intense competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran, he believed that the development of nuclear weapons by Tehran in the future would bring more peace and stability to the region than before. In his opinion, the presence of nuclear weapons in Iran will force the United States to refrain from attacking and will allow it to contain Israel. If following Iran, Saudi Arabia tries to obtain nuclear weapons, this will make it possible to mutually deter Tehran and Riyadh from attack<sup>2</sup>.

According to K. Waltz, any state facing a dilemma of strength or security must choose security. Therefore, Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as Iran and Israel, avoid a direct attack. To ensure security, K. Waltz considers the "sufficient" level of strength, which is necessary to ensure the survival of the state and protect its national interests, to be decisive. Further, "excessive" build-up of force becomes dangerous due to the threat of being drawn into an armed conflict. An "excess" of strength is just as dangerous as a lack of it<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*. - 6th edition, New-York: McGraw-Hill, 2005, 752 p.

<sup>2</sup> See: Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*. -New-York: W.W. Norton, 2003. 220 p.

<sup>3</sup>See: K. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. New-York: McGraw-Hill, 1979. 251 p.



Saudi Arabia has the largest energy reserves in the region and the world, giving it powerful financial resources. In addition, Riyadh traditionally relies on its special position in the Islamic world as a "keeper of Muslim shrines."

Saudi Arabia is trying to justify its claims to regional leadership by its active position on all issues related to the Islamic world. Saudi Arabia traditionally demonstrates its leadership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which unites the entire Muslim world, as well as in the League of Arab States. Riyadh is in favor of the creation of a Palestinian state and against the State of Israel. At the same time, in a certain way, the position of Saudi Arabia is undermined by its alliance with the United States and the deployment of American military bases on its territory, as well as by its relatively weak military potential<sup>1</sup>.

The weak military-technical potential of Saudi Arabia prevents it from conflict with Iran, which has been going on for more than a decade. So far, Riyadh is unable to defeat the "hybrid wars" with Iran either in Syria or in Yemen, but the confrontation continues throughout the region, largely determining its geopolitics.

Saudi Arabia blames Iran for meddling and destabilizing Shiite-majority countries such as Iraq and Bahrain, as well as countries with significant minority Shia communities such as Kuwait, Lebanon, and Yemen. The position of Saudi Arabia is that Iran has no right to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, especially Arab countries<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, Iraq has a rich history as a key member of the Arab community. He was and can be an important force in the Arab world. He is a founding member of the Arab League, the United Nations, and OPEC, has an enormous wealth of natural resources, and may one day become a major player in the energy markets. It is located in the heart of the Middle East, but according to the Saudis, much of its potential is being suppressed by Iranian intervention. Iraq has become an important arena for growing Iranian influence in the aftermath of the 2003 US invasion.

Over the past decade, Yemen has emerged as a security threat to Saudi Arabia. The military intervention of the coalition led by Saudi Arabia, which began in 2015, against the pro-Iranian group Ansar Allah, did not bring results. Moreover, the protracted conflict has led to threats to the territorial integrity and security of Saudi Arabia itself. For example, in the spring of 2019, Ansar Allah supporters launched missile attacks and drone attacks on Saudi Aramco's Saudi pumping stations, announcing that the attack was just the beginning of a broader campaign targeting 300 "vital military targets" in Saudi Arabia. UAE and their bases in Yemen<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Крючков И. Внешняя политика Саудовской Аравии на Ближнем Востоке в начале 21 века. // Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета. Серия 4: История. Регионоведение. Международные отношения. 2017. Т. 22 №3. С. 142-149.

<sup>2</sup> Turki Al Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy. // Middle East Policy Council (USA), 2013. <https://mepc.org/saudi-arabias-foreign-policy>.

<sup>3</sup> Yemen's Future Looks Grim After Saleh Killing. // Chatham House (UK), 2019. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/yemens-future-looks-grim-after-saleh-killing>.



In Lebanon, Riyadh is providing financial assistance to the government to strengthen government agencies and weaken the parallel structures represented by the pro-Iranian Hezbollah.

In Syria, Saudi Arabia from the very beginning advocated regime change, calling for the transfer of B. Assad and his "Iranian patrons" to the International Criminal Court.

Egypt has a special place in the security interests of Saudi Arabia. It is the largest Arab country with close and historically deep and significant ties with Riyadh. King Abdullah maintained close relations with President H. Mubarak for over 30 years. Rejecting him or any of his close allies during the revolutionary uprising was not a viable option for Riyadh. The new Egyptian government headed by M. Morsi, in the opinion of Saudi Arabia, "turned out to be incapable and incompetent to govern such a country as Egypt."<sup>1</sup>

After the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from the leadership of the country, King Abdullah of the KSA became the first leader to congratulate the Egyptian leadership and authorize the allocation of \$ 5 billion in grants, loans, and deposits for the new Egyptian government.

The Islamic Republic of Iran occupies an advantageous geostrategic position. Located in the center of the region, from the north it is washed by the Caspian Sea, from the south - by the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, through which all sea transportation of energy resources of the Persian Gulf is carried out. Iran shares borders with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia, as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan, opening access to South Asia. This gives the country an extremely advantageous military and economic position.

Iran also has a relatively developed industrial base aimed at diversifying the country's economy and minimizing its dependence on energy exports, which is still quite high.

Iran's foreign policy is based on a belief in regional leadership and claims to leadership in the Islamic world, which is based on the potential of the Islamic Republic and the ideas of the Islamic Revolution.

Iran's ambitions and ideology led to its permanent confrontation with the United States and Saudi Arabia. With Washington, the rivalry is taking place both in the military-political and economic spheres. Politically, Tehran opposes American plans in the Middle East, because the country is currently surrounded by US military bases from the west (Iraq and Turkey), the south (Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf), and the east (Afghanistan), as existential a threat to their existence. In economic terms, the United States has traditionally pursued a policy of sanctions against the Islamic Republic, which is a heavy burden on the development of Iran's economy.

Russian Federation in the 1990s has almost completely withdrawn from the Middle East. The restoration of its position began only in the 21st century. The

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<sup>1</sup> Turki Al Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy. Middle East Policy Council (USA), 2013. <https://mepc.org/saudi-arabias-foreign-policy>



processes of building up Russia's influence were sharply accelerated as a result of the processes of the Arab Spring, which significantly changed the strategic alignment of forces in the region.

As Russian expert A. Kortunov notes, "with relatively small investments of material resources and with minimal combat losses, Moscow managed to turn from an almost invisible extra on the Middle East scene into one of the main characters, without which today it is impossible to solve a single major issue of regional security."

Russia in the Middle East relies on the military-political factor. Thus, its military assistance to the government of the Syrian Arab Republic directly affected the radical change in the situation in the country. After 2015, the positions of the Assad government were no longer threatened by an immediate overthrow, and joint Russian-Syrian operations at each stage led to new successes. Syria has become a key indicator of Russia's influence in the Middle East.

In contrast to other influential international players, Russia was able to maintain constructive relations with almost all parties to the Middle East conflicts - with Israelis and Palestinians, with Sunnis and Shiites, with Turks and Kurds, with Iran, and with the Arab monarchies of the Gulf.

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