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Arab National Security Strategy in a Changing Regional Environment: Transforming Regional Order

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Abstract

This research paper aims to clarify the concept and formulation of Arab national security. Since the mid-1970s, Arab thinkers and researchers in political thought have increasingly sought to formulate a unified concept of Arab national security. During this period, research and studies intensified in Arab universities, political science institutes, and social studies centers to provide a comprehensive definition of this concept. This study emphasizes the close link between security and the social, economic, and political conditions in the region.

This research aims to clarify the concept of Arab national security, while examining the diverse threats it faces at both the internal and international levels. It also assesses the current state of Arab national security and proposes a framework to guide its development. The study adopts a descriptive methodology, drawing on periodicals, books, dissertations, and previous research.

The findings indicate that Arab national security faces a growing set of internal threats, including political instability, terrorism, the Zionist occupation of Palestine, food insecurity, water scarcity, and weak military and security coordination among Arab countries. As we have noted, external threats, the constraints imposed by US policy, the decline in the influence of Arab states in international affairs compared to Israel, and globalization, were also addressed, as were the challenges facing Arab cultural security.

Accordingly, this research recommends intensifying collective security and military efforts among all Arab states, including the exchange and formulation of regional security plans, strengthening the armed forces of all Arab states within a framework similar to an Arab NATO, developing an Arab arms industry, and reforming the education system with a focus on cybersecurity and digital sciences to support the strategic security objectives of Arab states.

The study also highlights that Arab political thought has not yet produced a comprehensive and widely accepted formulation of Arab national security capable of confronting the rapidly changing dynamics in the Middle East and the global security environment. Given the rise and spread of terrorist organizations in the region, the study emphasizes the urgent need for a cohesive Arab force under unified leadership to effectively counter these threats and ensure the security and stability of Arab states.

Keywords

Arab National Security, Political Thought, Geopolitics, Strategy, International Security.

Introduction

National security is a matter of paramount importance for any country in the world and remains a top priority for all nations, despite the varying strength and nature of the threats they face. A country's success and stability are closely linked to the level of security it provides for its territory and people.

In the modern era, the concept of national security has become increasingly prominent on the political stage, often associated with military affairs, strategic balances, and the competition for power.

In this context, it is important to note that while the term "national security" was used extensively in most countries after 1945, its origins can be traced back to the 17th century, specifically to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which marked the birth of the nation-state. The Cold War contributed to shaping the concept of national security, with efforts to develop theoretical and institutional frameworks. Since the 1990s, the term "national security strategy" has often been formulated using Western, specifically American, terminology, which subsequently spread globally. (Room, 1993) The year 1947 marked a turning point in the establishment of the national security concept in the United States with the passage of the National Security Act of 1947. Other countries subsequently adopted this term, primarily using it as a framework for political planning and long-term strategic vision, rather than as a tool for systematically addressing threats to sovereignty or for integrating security planning into state institutions. In most cases, the practical understanding of national security remains closely linked to defense and internal security structures and institutions (Al-Barsan, 2007).

In the regional context, traditional Arab states' concepts of security have long relied on geographical proximity or shared ethnic, cultural, economic, religious, and social characteristics, thus forming the basis of regional security systems.

However, despite the geographical proximity of the Middle East, particularly the Arab region, which constitutes the largest proportion of the region's countries in terms of both population and geographical area, the regional system suffers from deficiencies in the effectiveness of interactive cultural relations, economic exchanges, and, most importantly, security and military cooperation to maintain national security.

Therefore, effective regional security is that which establishes vital relations in various fields, achieving comprehensive integration and cooperation that serves the security of the region as a whole and the security of all its states.

We have discussed Arab national security and regional security in general, but Arab national security has been addressed in relation to the period following the wars of national liberation and political independence. Arab national security is defined as the ability of Arab states to protect their existence from internal and external threats to ensure their survival, based on unified democratic systems that agree on a unified security strategy to protect their geographical borders. It also depends on the existence of comprehensive economic development capable of meeting the needs of the region's peoples as a whole and guaranteeing their survival and security. (Algerian Encyclopedia of Political and Strategic Studies, 2017).

A definition of security, quoted from the British Ministry of Knowledge, is "the protection of the nation-state from the danger of oppression by a foreign power." Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who held national and foreign security positions in the 1970s, offered a vision of the concept of national security as: "He pointed out that national security is a set of measures taken by society to maintain its security and legitimacy, which is essential for its survival." Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara stated during the Vietnam War: "Security means development, whether economic, social, or political, under guaranteed protection. The true security of a state stems from its deep knowledge of the sources that threaten its various capabilities, from confronting them, and from providing the opportunity to develop them that is, building genuine developmental capacity in various fields, both now and in the future." (Al-Barsan, 2007).

We would also like to point out that the concept of national security is securing the state from within and protecting it from external threats, to ensure a stable life for all its inhabitants, enabling them to progress, develop, prosper, express their identity among nations, and exercise their freedom to utilize all their human, mineral, and natural resources to achieve their goals of progress, prosperity, freedom, and peace. This includes protecting its territory, resources, and interests from external and internal threats (Abdul Wahab, 2017).

As for the modern era and the progress and changes that have occurred in various aspects, and in light of globalization, we see a transformation in the concept of security, particularly the concept of power, which is no longer linked to military factors, but rather to politics, technology, education, economic growth, and the use of information.

In this context, there are a number of schools specializing in strategy and international security. The first school, which specializes in strategy, focuses on the military aspect and external threats. The second school of thought is the contemporary or developmental school, which views threats not only as external but also as internal, encompassing economic, social, and cultural dimensions (Al-Hazima, 2003).

The term "security" emerged after a group of authors and researchers addressed how to achieve security and avoid war, leading to the development of deterrence and balance theories. The National Security Council was subsequently established. Numerous studies have been published in this field, and various concepts have become prevalent under different names, including "American national security," "European security," "Soviet national security" (before its collapse), "Chinese national security," "Indian national security," and "Arab national security" (Ahmed, 2016).

This research examines a range of threats facing the Arab nation and its national security within the context of the new international order and international terrorism, which emerged in the early 1990s and continued until 2017 following a series of international changes. These changes included the rise of terrorist organizations in the Arab region and the emergence of a unipolar world order led by the United States. They encompassed political, military, and economic developments, the end of the Cold War, the arms race prevalent in the bipolar era, and competition among major powers in the region.

The concept of Arab national security faces a degree of ambiguity in its definition and even in identifying its various aspects. This ambiguity stems from the nature of the national bloc that unites Arab states. This is evident in the historical belonging of Arab peoples to a single nation, while simultaneously dividing them into independent, sovereign political entities within the global system. This study covers 22 Arab states, which differ in their political systems and applicable laws. Some adopt a semi-presidential system, while others have a parliamentary system, including monarchies. This has led to the development of the state and its logic, with each state pursuing its own interests at the expense of other national interests. This has led to the absence of a concept of Arab national security on both the political and military levels. Historical, social, economic, and military factors have failed to contribute to the establishment of an Arab system capable of safeguarding the national security of Arab states. This is a result of the convergence of political and international interests in the Arab region, foreign interventions by major powers, and colonial and economic competition within the Arab world.

Significance and objectives of the Study

The importance of this research stems from its focus on achieving a clear and comprehensive understanding of the meaning of national security and strategic planning, their significance, and their practical applications. In this context, we can say that the correct concept of national security is the state's ability to protect its internal and external economic, military, and institutional resources—that is, to protect the state's sovereignty and utilize it effectively in various fields. This includes protecting these resources from internal and external threats, ensuring their stability in times of peace and war, and maintaining their readiness for ongoing operations and future strategic objectives.

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To clarify the concept of Arab national security and develop a mechanism and framework for it within this international and regional context.
- To employ scientific research methods and literature in identifying and analyzing all types of threats, both internal and external.
- To conduct a comprehensive study of all existing strategies and mechanisms used by Arab states to confront security challenges.
- To develop a conceptual framework that contributes to formulating effective national security strategies in Arab states, particularly in the face of emerging threats such as terrorism, political instability, and regional conflicts.
- The study also aims to provide policy recommendations that support strengthening Arab security institutions, encouraging collective security cooperation, and developing strategic planning capabilities.

- By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to enrich the dialogue on national security and strategic planning in the Arab world, both theoretically and practically, particularly in light of the current conflict between the United States and Israel/Iran.

Problem and Questions of the Study

The research problem discussed in this study is the main question of how terrorist threats affect Arab national security. Through this question emerged a number of questions that the researcher will try to answer:

- Why Arab collective security capabilities cannot be activated?
- What are the Pillars and the concept of Arab national security?
- What are the implications of globalization on national security?
- What is the Political and Strategic Challenges Facing the Arab World and Threatening its National Security?

Limits of the Research

- A- Geographical Scope: The Arab world from the Arabian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. 22 Arab countries.
- B- Temporal Scope: From the beginning of the twentieth century, with a brief look at historical events of the past century to connect current political transformations to the causes and circumstances that prevailed before this century.

Methodology of Research

We adopted as a researcher the historical analytical approach that enabled me to study security and strategy in all kinds, principles and characteristics as well as my dependence on the scientific method and some books of political professors and scholars in this field.

To confirm the validity of the hypothesis, we see that we have a considerable number of methodologies that can be easily followed. Among these methodologies are the systems methodology and the concept of the state, the restriction of political participation, the decision-making methodology, and the methodology of political elites.

Definition of Terminology

National Security:

Perhaps the most accurate expression of the concept of security is found in the Holy Quran, where God Almighty says: "So let them worship the Lord of this House, Who has fed them against hunger and made them safe from fear." In this context, we would like to emphasize that security protects individuals and societies from fear, encompassing all its contemporary manifestations, regardless of the nature of the threats, including security, economic, social, political, and military threats, both internal and external.

Despite the use and importance of the term "security," it remains a relatively recent concept in political science, international relations, military science, and the humanities. This has contributed to its conceptual ambiguity and raised numerous analytical challenges. We believe that the term alone may not be sufficient to fully understand the complexities of national security in the modern state. In this era, security has crystallized into an independent field, separate from strategic studies, with its own theoretical frameworks, hypotheses, research methods, verification tools, and rules of evidence, all aimed at developing a systematic understanding of threats and preventive measures.

Professor Zakaria Hussein, Professor of Strategic Studies and former Director of the Nasser Military Academy in Egypt, indicated that a comprehensive understanding of security lies in the state's ability to ensure the effective utilization of its internal and external economic and military resources across various domains, and to protect them from internal and international threats, in both peace and war.

The Strategy:

The establishment of the strategy in establishing and forming:

Since the fifth century BC, there has been a function of what we can call the (stratège). Where "tribes" choose ten "strategists" or planners. They establish a school within which one can impose itself on the others who remain. But all members of this school have the possibility to lead the army or part of it, a strategic one of them leads armed soldiers in rural areas, and the other charged with defense of the territory or the state, and two other task to defend the beaches, the fifth is interested in arming the fleet, and the other five have Multiple and variable works.

Furthermore, in this context, I believe that the concept of strategy is closely linked to the military aspect, particularly in the context of traditional warfare. This concept was used to develop appropriate plans before wars, to prepare and equip for them before they occur, and to ensure the protection of military camps and the state from potential attacks. In this sense, I can say that strategy emerged within the field of military science as a systematic methodology for managing various circumstances and emergencies, ultimately contributing to maintaining a constant state of war readiness.

Since a strategy refers to a structured set of principles, objectives, and guidelines related to a specific area, designed to support decision-making through meticulously defined and carefully considered plans, it encompasses, with utmost precision, all procedures and methods employed to achieve the state's predetermined security objectives. This includes taking into account all relevant factors that may influence its implementation or outcomes. Therefore, an effective strategy requires continuous evaluation and adaptation to ensure its relevance to evolving realities and, consequently, the full realization of its intended objectives.

Literature Review

Several thinkers and political researchers have examined the technical aspects of the national security concept, questioning how to measure the levels, roles, and concepts of security, sovereignty, and democracy in all Arab states. Among these are the following:

- The book "National Security: Turning the Threat Map and the Proposed Strategy for Confrontation," by Dr. Iman Rajab, (2017): The book deals with four dimensions of change in the term of National Security:
 - 1- The growing importance of the human dimension of national security.
 - 2- The overlap of internal and external threats to security in a way that is difficult to separate them in practice, although they were separated theoretically in chapters two and three in the book,
 - 3- Renewed the debate between the priorities which restoring security? Especially in countries in transition due to the wave of Arab revolutions such as Arab Spring states.
 - 4- The disruption of Arab national security circles with renewed debate in the Arab and Western academic and political circles on the relationship between the Arab system and the Middle East.
- The research paper "National Security Strategies of the Middle East: A Comparative Perspective" By Charles D Freilich. The Middle East is an ancient homeland for diverse peoples and nations with rich and deeply rooted cultures, having undergone varying stages of social, political, economic, and other forms of development. It has often witnessed conflicts. Now, with urbanization, modernization, and relative stability, the region's landscape has changed, leading to significant implications for the strategic concept of Arab national security and shaping the region's relations with the world. As the primary source of global energy resources, the Middle East remains volatile, facing challenges such as terrorism, extremism, and international competition. In other words, conflict persists in this region, particularly after the discovery of oil, posing a serious threat to regional and international security. The author also points to a number of challenges facing Arab national security.
- The book of "Gulf War and National Security" By. Talaat Ahmed Muslim. In the book "Gulf War", the author tries to shed light on these events in an attempt to examine their causes and effects through a logical trial to the issue of lack of interest in national security, which is a key element in establishing a balance between Arab countries, especially those with neighboring relations. The study was divided into the following topics: the main term of National Security, Arab national security before Gulf War, the impact of the Gulf War on national security, national security after the Gulf War.
- "Arab National Security"(2015), by Mustafa Osman Ismail: The book deals with many geopolitical issues imposed by the current moment such as: Arab Regional Security Theory, Arab Alliance, and Arab Economic Partnership to (the future of Arab national security). "The book has four different introductions developed by four Arab politicians, "Imam Sadiq al-Mahdi, Ahmed Jouaili and Zine El Abidine, in addition to the author himself.
- Arab National Security in the Age of Globalization: Breakthrough of Culture and Dissipation of Identity, (2012), By Ali Layla. This book is one of three parts in which the author talks

about the emergence of globalization, its method of distorting Arab and Islamic culture and identity, how it works towards dismantling society, distorting the quality of life, and its role in generating or producing many negative phenomena. The first part, entitled "The penetration of culture and the dissolution of identity" and "Five chapters, the titles are as follows: Globalization of its origin; operations; its basic goals, and on the definition of the term of National Security, and the attack of globalization on Arab culture And to remove holiness from heritage, and the concept of identity. Their variants to search for a reference to understanding and interpretation, and finally the erosion of Arab identity in the era of globalization; and the exposure to national security.

It is worth noting that several factors hinder the activation of collective Arab security capabilities, most notably three main reasons.

First: Regional and international interventions and interference.

These Arab, regional, and international interventions constitute a major obstacle, and are more extensive than international interventions due to their direct geographical proximity and deeper social and political impact. These interventions often reflect expansionist ambitions aimed at extending influence at the expense of Arab states' sovereignty. Religious, sectarian, and ethnic divisions are frequently exploited to justify intervention and fuel internal conflicts within Arab societies.

Moreover, these interventions often originate from armed terrorist militias, which serve as tools to undermine state authority and destabilize political systems, resulting in significant security deterioration in many Arab countries. Consequently, the repercussions of these interventions affect both the state and society, exacerbating instability and weakening national cohesion (Anis, 2015).

Here, we see that such interventions have hindered the ability of regional and political powers to penetrate Arab political and security structures and establish a unified Arab security system capable of effectively confronting these challenges. This is largely due to the exploitation of structural weaknesses within the Arab system, including conflicting national interests and the prioritization of state agendas over collective Arab interests. Consequently, some Arab states have entered into strategic alliances with ambitious regional powers, often in ways that contradict the principles of Arab solidarity and undermine regional stability (Shabi, 2009).

However, in this context, the proliferation of armed militias in many Arab countries can be understood as a direct result of external regional interventions. These militias thrive in environments characterized by weak central authority and fragmented state institutions, and they receive external support that enables them to implement the agendas of their regional and international backers (Al-Khallan, 2008).

Furthermore, the adoption of a policy of "neutrality" by some Arab states, particularly in regional conflicts, is another factor that complicates the situation. In situations that pose a direct threat to Arab national security, neutrality can inadvertently contribute to escalating crises. For example, the conflict in Yemen demonstrates how external regional interventions have exploited internal conditions to exert influence by supporting ideologically driven armed militias seeking to seize control of the state. In such cases, a commitment to neutrality may serve the interests of external actors, thereby undermining collective Arab security. Therefore, protecting Arab national security should take precedence over neutrality when fundamental regional stability is at stake.

Secondly: The reliance of some Arab states, whether partially or wholly, on external support from major powers, alliances, or the principle of protection to guarantee their national security, represents a continued decline and failure in developing self-defense capabilities. This factor cannot be relied upon for extended periods because external guarantees are volatile and change with any shift in international political circumstances or the environment. The current conflict between the US and Israel on one side, and Iran on the other, clearly demonstrates these changes. External security and defense guarantees (from major powers) are not granted to "Arab security as a whole," but rather to individual Arab states.

In our current Arab situation, or indeed, there is nothing inherently wrong with obtaining external security or defense guarantees. This system is prevalent in most parts of the world (not just the Arab world). However, the mistake lies in relying on these guarantees as a guaranteed or permanent element, and failing to develop alternatives in case they are withdrawn, reduced, or fail. It is also crucial that these external guarantees do not conflict with the goals and objectives of collective or comprehensive Arab national security. (Karam, 2017).

Thirdly: In this context, We would like to focus on terrorism as the primary source and those who create and finance it, which has been one of the greatest threats to both Arab and international society. It is worth noting that terrorism is sometimes misleading, especially when it ignores the underlying causes and motivations behind this phenomenon. While the activities of terrorist organizations undoubtedly pose a serious threat, terrorism remains a challenge that can be contained through a comprehensive set of security, political, and cultural measures.

We believe that reducing the scope of threats facing Arab states to terrorism, especially within a narrow Western framework, risks neglecting broader and more significant structural challenges that directly affect both the state and society. Among these challenges are expansionist regional policies, particularly those seeking to impose long-term strategic influence and regional hegemony. These interventions contribute to the fragmentation of Arab societies and exacerbate sectarian divisions, posing profound and persistent threats to Arab national security.

Therefore, Arab (collective) national security requires independent assessments based on regional realities to ensure that security priorities reflect the actual challenges facing the Arab world. In this context, the rise of such transnational terrorist organizations remains a major concern, alongside other serious threats such as the emergence of fragile or failed states, irregular migration flows, transnational organized crime—including illicit drug trafficking—and the misuse of digital platforms. Social media, in particular, has become an effective tool for influencing Arab youth, potentially undermining cultural identity and reshaping values in ways that may conflict with prevailing societal norms (Kamal, 2017).

We wish to emphasize that these diverse risks and challenges underscore the urgent need for Arab states to develop comprehensive and integrated deterrent security policies and strategies capable of addressing existing and emerging threats across the Arab world. Such a strategy is essential to ensuring the resilience, continuity, and stability of Arab states within an increasingly complex and conflict-ridden regional and international environment.

From a purely academic perspective, and with a clear understanding of the term, I would argue that the very definition of "terrorism" remains a subject of debate. Despite its widespread use in political and academic discourse, terrorism lacks a universally agreed-upon definition due to differing ideological perspectives and cultural contexts. What one state or society classifies as terrorism may not necessarily be viewed in the same way by another (Issa, 2011)

Historically, terrorism is not a new phenomenon. Its origins can be traced back to the first century CE, when groups like the Zealots targeted those who collaborated with Roman rule. Over time, the concept evolved to encompass various forms of politically motivated violence, including feudal practices and acts such as piracy, which were sometimes considered forms of organized violence or terrorism. With advancements in science and technology, terrorism has similarly evolved, adapting its methods and expanding its scope (Hossam, 2017).

Regarding international efforts to define the concept of international terrorism and its challenges, it was defined by the 1937 Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism as: "Criminal acts directed against a state, aimed at spreading fear and panic among individuals or the public." Despite these attempts, the absence of a universally accepted definition continues to complicate international cooperation and legal frameworks that address the concept of terrorism (Moseley, 1992).

Key Foundations and Pillars of the National Security Concept

As many researchers have pointed out, national security can be defined as a state's ability to protect its sovereignty, its territory, resources, and vital interests from external military threats and internal challenges. However, in the era of globalization, this concept has undergone radical and fundamental transformations. Power is no longer limited to military capabilities alone, but increasingly encompasses political influence, technological advancement, educational development, economic growth, information control, and digital and cyber advancements (Hanafi, 2015).

In this context, the widespread use of terms such as security, terrorism, war, and strategy in political, intellectual, and media discourse underscores their pivotal importance in contemporary analysis. These terms are frequently invoked in print, visual, and audio media, as well as in daily reports. Among them, the concept of security occupies a central position, representing the ultimate goal around which the other concepts revolve. Wars are often justified in the name of security,

strategies are formulated to achieve it, and terrorism is usually portrayed as a constant threat to it, as is the case today in the wars raging in the Middle East, Europe, and Africa (Sloane, 2012).

Accordingly, I believe that each state seeks to define its own concept of security and formulate its strategies based on its vision of its vital and strategic security sphere—that is, the geographical and strategic environment capable of influencing its stability and continuity or posing potential threats to its interests and existence. These spheres may overlap or intersect between states due to their geographical proximity or their ability to project influence across borders through economic, cultural, or military means.

However, in the current Arab context, there is a clear absence of a unified and defined vision for a collective vital Arab security sphere. Instead of a coherent framework for Arab national security, the region reflects a state of fragmentation and erosion of a shared strategic vision. This is evident in the handling of crises in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Lebanon, Palestine, and Sudan. External powers have played a pivotal role in shaping regional dynamics, often bypassing or marginalizing an organized Arab regional framework (Hajj Muhammad, 2017).

The Arab world is a prime example of this fragmentation. Despite its historical and demographic identity as part of this vast world, external interventions and internal divisions have contributed to redefining its identity along ethnic and sectarian lines. This has been accompanied by efforts to weaken its Arab character and integrate it into competing regional spheres of influence (Al-Barsan, 2006).

We would like to highlight a broader structural imbalance, whereby regional powers actively define and expand their security spheres of influence, while Arab national security remains largely theoretical rather than practical. Despite widespread recognition as a pressing strategic imperative, it still lacks effective implementation and collective commitment. I also observe that while some decision-makers in Arab states express concern about the expanding influence of neighboring international and regional powers, this concern often overlooks internal shortcomings, particularly the failure to prioritize and institutionalize collective Arab security. Critical turning points, such as the invasion and occupation of Iraq and the ongoing 2026 war between the United States and Israel/Iran, have revealed the consequences of this neglect. Instead of focusing on blaming external actors, a more constructive approach lies in strengthening the foundations of Arab national security, defining its sphere of influence, and reinforcing its strategic borders. Such efforts would enhance the region's ability to resist external interference and protect its collective interests. (Al-Shukri, 2012).

Pillars and Types of National Security

Types of National Security:

First: Military Security: This refers to the security that demonstrates a state's ability to defend itself against armed threats and preempt the intentions of other states through effective defense capabilities.

Second: Political Security: This refers to the security that demonstrates the political stability of the state, protects its legitimacy and justice, fosters the relationship between officials and citizens, and safeguards its governing institutions.

Third: Economic Security: This includes protecting wealth and financial resources, promoting economic development to support national interests, and ensuring food security.

Fourth: Social Security: This type pertains to peaceful coexistence among all components of society through mutual acceptance, respect for customs and traditions, national unity, strengthening national belonging, and protection from discrimination or fear, regardless of race, religion, or identity (Ghariba et al., 2017).

Main Pillars of National Security:

First: Identifying internal and external threats.

Second: Adopting and formulating strategies to enhance the state's capabilities.

Third: Ensuring the ability to respond effectively to threats.

Fourth: Vigilance and proactive measures to anticipate the intentions of entities hostile to the state. (Al-Ghamra, 2010).

National Strategy

The most important aspect of a national strategy is the optimal utilization of the state's political, economic, psychological, military, and ideological resources, in both peace and war, to achieve objectives that guarantee security, sovereignty, independence, and stability. I would like to point out that the military strategy, as part of the national strategy, involves deploying military means to support

it. However, an excessive focus on military power can drive competing states into an arms race, often at the expense of social and economic development. In many Third World countries, reliance on superpowers for military technology has led to the perpetuation of regional conflicts and social instability, as resources allocated for development are diverted to military spending at the expense of sustainable development. (Mahmoud, 2014).

Totalitarian regimes often prioritize military capabilities to maintain power rather than protect national security, creating dependence on arms-exporting countries and contributing to political, social, cultural, and economic stagnation. Effective planning should be implemented in the strategic development process, along with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the success of the strategies implemented within the state. (Hassoun, 2010).

Economic Strategy

The importance of economic strategy lies in protecting strategic resources and aligning economic development with national security objectives. In industrialized nations, securing energy resources, particularly oil and gas, has become a cornerstone of national security (Ahmed, 2016). This has frequently led to foreign interventions in the Arab world, as evidenced by the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the 2011 Libyan crisis, and the 2016 US-Iran war, where control over energy resources and regional influence were primary objectives for these states. (Mahmoud, 2014)

In this broader context, I believe that globalization falls within the scope of foreign intervention, often under the guise of promoting democracy, combating terrorism, or supporting civil society. These interventions have impacted education, curricula, social norms, and intellectual and cultural values, disseminating liberal ideologies as alternatives to traditional structures (Mahmoud, 2014).

The Impact of Globalization on National Security

Globalization is one of the pretexts that has enabled countries like the United States to adopt security policies that extend beyond their national borders, particularly within the framework of "counterterrorism." These policies have sparked debate about redefining American national security and its repercussions for other countries (Said, 1992). Regionally, Iran's perception of American threats has led to military expansion, including the deployment of its forces in Syria and the Arabian Gulf, and the development of its cyber warfare capabilities. The leaks revealed by Edward Snowden in 2013 regarding US surveillance of the European Union and other countries demonstrate the global reach of modern intelligence operations (Abdul Wahab, 2017).

The Effects of Political Transitions

It is important to note that national security is not achieved through military force alone, but is measured by a state's ability to maintain stability and control. States undergoing democratic or political transitions are more vulnerable, as old regimes are dismantled and new ones are established. This transitional period often creates a political vacuum that is exploited by jihadist organizations, as well as by regional and international actors seeking to obstruct transitions that do not align with their interests. (Darwish, 1999; Hajj, 2016).

The most important security, strategic, and political challenges to Arab national security:

The concept of Arab national security is defined as the ability of all Arab states to protect their territorial sovereignty and the Arab people from any internal or external threats, actual or potential, thereby ensuring the preservation of all the essential elements of these states and strengthening the idea of national solidarity and Arab unity, despite the complex and multifaceted challenges facing the Arab world since World War I and its establishment.

First: The direct threat from the Zionist presence in occupied Palestine.

The Zionist occupation of Palestine constitutes one of the most important and prominent strategic threats to Arab national security, given its geographical location and geopolitical function. Since the nineteenth century, Western strategic visions have linked the importance of establishing an entity in Palestine to containing the Arab geographical expansion, especially in the region connecting Arab states in both Asia and Africa, particularly Egypt and the Arab states of the Levant located in Asia. Palestine has become a geographical and strategic dividing line that hinders natural communication between Arab states on the two continents. The successive Arab-Israeli wars (1948, 1956, 1967, 1968, 1973), along with the repeated invasions and attacks on Arab states in the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, Syria, and Yemen, have exacerbated this threat. This threat is not limited to the military dimension but extends to political, security, and economic dimensions.

In this context, the Israeli entity has adopted what is known as the "encirclement" or "periphery" strategy, which aims to besiege Arab states by building regional alliances with non-Arab countries, as has occurred in some African countries such as Ethiopia, Chad, South Sudan, and Somaliland. This has been clearly manifested in the support of separatist movements in these countries, serving to reshape the geopolitical environment in accordance with the interests of the Israeli entity. This has negatively impacted the water and strategic security of some Arab states in the region, such as Sudan, Egypt, and Somalia. The entity pursued an economic policy with some of the countries neighboring the Arab countries in the Horn of Africa to control the sources of the Nile River, and in particular Ethiopia, as part of its efforts to strengthen and extend its strategic influence, enabling it to influence vital issues such as the security of the Red Sea and international waterways in the Bab al-Mandab Strait (Abu Shweisha, 2007).

Second: Internal Challenges to Arab National Security after the Arab Spring:

Some Arab countries witnessed popular uprisings dubbed the Arab Spring or the Arab Awakening, beginning in Tunisia and spreading to five other Arab countries: Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and finally Syria. This period marked their second revolution, following their first revolution aimed at dismantling imperialism and transitioning from colonialism to liberation. However, their current revolution is not against external colonial powers, but rather against internal injustice and the lack of political and social justice in these countries, which has affected all aspects of economic, social, and political life. This new reality has created additional challenges that have directly impacted Arab national security, as evidenced by the following:

- 1- A clear divergence in approaches to the Palestinian issue and the peace and settlement processes, which have reached a dead end.
- 2- The initiation of engagement with the two central Islamic powers in the region, Iran and Turkey, according to a new political cooperation framework based on strategic collaboration and friendship, rather than on principles of enmity.
- 3- The need to seriously address the power vacuum that has emerged in the Arab region, reflecting the decline of the American hegemonic project in this area. (Al-Masry, 2017).

Third: The Emergence of Direct Foreign Intervention in the Internationalization of the Arab System:

In this context, the phenomenon of foreign intervention in the internationalization of the Arab system has become increasingly evident, with external powers penetrating and infiltrating it across various political, economic, military, and even internal security spheres. This has led to many fundamental Arab issues being managed outside the Arab framework and subjected to external influences. This is manifested in several cases, such as the Western Sahara conflict, and the crises in Sudan, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. The Arab-Israeli conflict is another example, where these issues have often become hostage to international power balances and interventions aimed at maintaining Israel's dominance in the region.

This reality has transformed the nature of relations and interactions within the region's countries from self-management of issues to a pattern of direct and indirect foreign intervention. This is not a new phenomenon; rather, it represents an extension of a continuous historical situation linked to the strategic importance of the Arab world, whether in terms of its geographical location or its oil and gas resources, as well as its status as an arena for international competition for decades.

It is essential to point out that the occupation of Iraq, the Syrian crisis, and the situation in Yemen are the clearest evidence of these interventions, which have had a profound impact on Arab national security. These interventions serve as a clear example of this pattern of foreign interference, resulting in deep repercussions for Arab national security. This has been achieved by strengthening and establishing bases for most major powers (foreign presence) within the region, leading to increased dependence of Arab regimes on external powers, particularly the United States, Russia, Germany, France, China, and Britain, in numerous fields, especially security. Furthermore, this has contributed to reshaping perceptions of threats to Arab national security, consequently leading to a decline in the centrality of Arab national issues due to the weakening of national will and the fragmentation of priorities. (Hilal, 2011).

Fourth: Internal Crises Facing Arab States:

The challenges and crises facing various Arab states differ from one region to another, whether internal or external. In the Maghreb, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, and Yemen, internal challenges are

more severe than external ones. Terrorism has become a regional problem, imposing itself as a direct and medium-term threat to all countries in the region. Unemployment rates are high, sometimes exceeding 20% to 25% in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, and surpassing 30% in Mauritania. This is in addition to the Western Sahara conflict between Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania, which involves all regional and international parties (Moussaad, 2011).

Likewise, in Libya, recent events have undoubtedly cost the Libyan people dearly, in terms of the lives lost, political, economic, and security capabilities, and social unity. In Sudan, the situation has been even worse, with the ongoing war against the rebels. External challenges precede internal ones and do not prevent them. One chapter ended with the secession of South Sudan and its emergence as an independent state. The remaining challenges persist, particularly in Darfur, in addition to the traditional challenges of unemployment, low economic income, and the resulting decline in the quality of services.

In Somalia, a country with a unique global strategic location, abundant water resources, arable land, and other resources such as minerals, border crises and internal challenges led to the collapse of the state in January 1991 and the outbreak of civil war. This prompted external intervention by major powers under the auspices of the United Nations, with multinational forces deployed between 1992 and 1994. Arab and African efforts continue to preserve Somalia's unity, the security of its people, and its independence. Somalia remains a hotbed of conflict in the Arab world and a vulnerability in a system that directly impacts Arab national security.

Regarding the Arab Republic of Egypt, we are aware that this unique Arab country faces very significant challenges, both internal and external. The January 25th Revolution and the subsequent political turmoil in Egypt, coupled with the external challenges posed by Israel's presence on its northeastern border and the threat to its national security in the Nile Basin from the south, have created numerous internal and external challenges. It's worth noting that any security or political instability in Sudan will directly impact Egypt; in other words, everything that happens in Sudan directly affects Egyptian national security. (Abdel-Aati, 2012).

As for the Arab states of the Middle East, there are many types of challenges, including internal, regional, and external ones. These include the challenges posed by Iran and its threat to the security of the Arabian Gulf, as well as its growing influence, particularly in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, and Yemen. In addition to the external presence in the region, where the Western, and especially American, presence (military and political) is evident in most Arab countries in the Middle East, and given the cooperation and strategic alliance with Israel, the United States, which considered the Gulf region to have political, economic, and strategic interests in 1973, poses a threat to the Gulf states and their people.

The security of the Arab Gulf states is strongly linked to Arab national security and has a direct connection to the security of the United States. Most political systems in the Arab states need polarization and alliances, which are indispensable and consequently lead to unwanted regional conflicts. Besides the security challenges stemming from the foreign military presence and surrounding threats, they will face other problems and challenges, including, for example, foreign hegemony, challenges to national identity, and the rise of terrorism, especially in the Levant. I would also like to point to the external challenge of regional pressures from Turkey, Iran, the United States, and Israel, as well as the internal challenges represented by the winds of change in some countries of the region, or what is called Arab reform. (Younes, 2017).

In light of the weakness of the Arab regional system represented by the Arab League, and its inability to keep pace with the successive changes in the Arab region, they did not ignore the Arab system and through its stages of development of the phenomenon among the Arab States, This situation led them to direct military confrontation. Solutions were reached on some of the Arab issues raised by Qatar, which aimed to strengthen relations between them. However, the overall political situation was not as desired. I believe there are significant disagreements between most Arab countries, which have consequently led to disputes between political regimes in Arab states. From a social perspective, Arabs as a nation share warm and close relations based on mutual respect, and the Arab nation possesses a rich social heritage rooted in its historical legacy. I also believe that some of these disagreements on various issues remain unresolved between political regimes. It is worth noting that there are issues such as border disputes with neighboring countries, the water issue, and potential conflicts that may arise in the future, either between Arab states or with upstream countries.

In this context, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 had a profound impact and was a decisive turning point in relations between all Arab states. The Arab world was divided into three axes. The first axis emerged, supporting Iraq, which considered the liberation of Kuwait and the entry of major powers into the region as yet another aggression against Arab national security. The second axis stood with and assisted Kuwait, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Syria, and Morocco. This war and the liberation of Kuwait led to a suffocating political and economic crisis and had a direct impact on Arab national security, which was breached. The situation became even more complex after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and this scenario continues to unfold to this day. It is worth noting here that, particularly in light of the Arab Spring uprisings in some Arab countries, and the differing stances and orientations of Arab states towards these uprisings—ranging from support to criticism, denial, and neutrality—they have plunged the region into a genuine and entirely unjustified crisis. (Hassoun, 2010).

I believe that what transpired during the Arab Spring events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria... It had the greatest impact on the resulting Arab divisions, at all political, social and economic levels. This consequently led to a decline in Arab unity and economic participation, such as Arab integration projects in all political, economic and cultural fields. I believe that the mechanism of the continuation of these divisions will consequently lead to a major challenge and threat to Arab national security. (Al-Amoush, 2017).

Fifth: The Emergence of Divisions and Separatist Tendencies in the Arab World:

The Arab world spans over 14 million square kilometers in the middle of the globe and is home to approximately 400 million people distributed across 22 Arab states. Despite this vast geographical expanse and significant demographic weight, it has faced considerable and escalating challenges related to internal divisions and separatist tendencies, as well as political circumstances and external interventions such as colonialism and foreign hegemony. This has weakened Arab cohesion within this complex system, impacting and continuing to impact the structure and strength of Arab national security.

These phenomena have contributed to deepening the fragmentation within the Arab system, negatively impacting economic and social development and diminishing the ability of Arab states to achieve integration and stability. (Al-Momani, 2014).

Sixth: The issue of minorities in the Arab world is a source of concern.

As previously mentioned, the Arab world spans a vast area, and its history has been marked by numerous mass migrations of various ethnicities from around the world, resulting in a diverse and varied population. This has coincided with the development of Arab societies and their pursuit of stability, development, freedom, and democracy. These groups (minorities) strive to secure recognition of their rights and integrate their distinct identities within Arab societies, including their languages, ethnicities, cultures, and religions (Al-Hadrami, 2012).

In this context, the researcher believes it is a humanitarian and ethical obligation to recognize the rights of minorities, especially those who have lived for decades in the Arab world. The existence of minorities globally is a reality that demands recognition. It is essential to address their demands and grant them their rights. Recognizing minorities is crucial for building an inclusive and democratic society. These minorities also wish to preserve their identity and historical heritage. They desire recognition as a social entity within the Arab nation, one that is acknowledged and respected. I believe this will help in building a harmonious and just society. Political systems in Arab countries must protect the rights of minorities. The existence of minorities in the Arab world should be recognized, given that their cultures, languages, and religions are an integral part of the diversity of the regions.

The nuclear threat to Arab national security from both Israel and Iran is one of the most prominent challenges facing Arab national security. Israel has acquired nuclear weapons and is the only state in the Middle East possessing this type of weapon. It is also the only state in the region that has not signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This fundamental issue constitutes a direct and serious threat to Arab national security. Conversely, Iranian experts estimate that Iran could acquire a nuclear weapon within a relatively short period (Al-Hajjaj, 2013).

It is worth noting that the international community is addressing this issue through a range of options, including diplomatic channels, as pursued by China and Russia, and European countries through negotiations and sanctions. Recently, there have been military options being considered by

the United States and Israel against Iran in this regard, including strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities in Bushehr, Isfahan, Arak, Natanz, and other sites used for storing nuclear materials.

As for the Gulf Arab states, they are dealing cautiously with the highly significant Iranian nuclear program, given its potential security and environmental implications for Arab national security in general and the security of the Gulf Arab states in particular. These states, along with the rest of the Arab world, tend to support diplomatic solutions to this issue, while rejecting any new military intervention in the Middle East region (Al-Jarad, 1999).

In this context, the urgent need arises for all Arab states to adopt multiple Arab alternatives for dealing with the existing Israeli nuclear program, as well as with the Iranian nuclear program should it become militarized. These alternatives include either achieving a deterrent balance through the acquisition of similar nuclear capabilities, working towards Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or continuing to demand the establishment of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, thereby achieving a strategic balance between Arab states and non-Arab regional powers (Kafawin, 2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this paper must state that Arab national security remains a rather complex concept, shaped by constantly shifting external, regional, and internal dynamics and policies, internal fragmentation, and external and regional interventions. Despite early references to collective security or national security as a whole within the framework of the League of Arab States, the absence of a clearly defined and binding institutional security strategy has limited the effectiveness of joint Arab action.

Historically, divisions within the Arab system, particularly between the so-called moderate and opposition axes in most Arab countries, have weakened collective responses to major challenges, most notably the Arab-Israeli conflict and other regional and external challenges. However, the post-Arab spring period, especially after 2010, witnessed deeper transformations, including the reshaping of alliances, the rise of non-state actors, and the escalation of sectarian and geopolitical rivalries across the Arab region. In the same vein comes the most complex issue in the regional situation, exacerbated by the growing influence of regional powers such as Iran and Turkey, alongside the continued strategic role of global actors like the United States, Russia, and China. These overlapping alliances and conflicts have contributed to the persistence of instability, particularly in conflict zones such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Sudan.

Furthermore, it has become clear that the proliferation of unconventional threats, including terrorism, irregular migration, the economic fragility of some regional states, and ideological extremism, has broadened the scope of security beyond its traditional military dimension. The marginalization of the Palestinian issue, despite its centrality in Arab public opinion, reflects the fragmentation of Arab priorities within the evolving regional order. In conclusion, this study finds that several factors contribute to the current situation. The absence of Arab strategic coordination, weak institutional mechanisms, and perhaps limited integration between local and regional policies have significantly hampered the ability of all Arab states to respond effectively to emerging security challenges.

Recommendations

- In light of these findings, the study proposes the following strategic recommendations:
- Institutional Reform of Arab Collective Security
- Strengthening the role of the League of Arab States through binding mechanisms and enforcement tools is essential to ensure the implementation of joint security decisions.
- Developing a Comprehensive Arab Security Strategy
- Arab states should adopt a unified and clearly defined security doctrine that integrates the military, political, economic, and social dimensions of security.
- Developing a Comprehensive Arab Security Strategy
- Enhancing Joint Defense Capabilities
- Activating and updating agreements, such as the Joint Defense Treaty (1950), by establishing rapid reaction forces and coordinated intelligence-sharing systems. Promoting Regional Cooperation and Conflict Resolution
- Encouraging diplomatic initiatives to reduce internal Arab tensions and resolve existing conflicts, particularly in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, through Arab-led frameworks.

- Balancing Regional and International Relations
- Arab states should pursue a balanced foreign policy that limits over-reliance on external powers while preserving their strategic independence.
- Addressing Non-Traditional Security Threats
- Expanding security strategies to include counterterrorism, cybersecurity, economic resilience, and managing migration and refugee crises.
- Reaffirming the Palestinian Cause.
- Re-emphasizing the centrality of the Palestinian cause as a unifying issue within the Arab national security discourse and policy frameworks.
- Investing in Strategic Research and Expertise.
- Establishing specialized research centers and think tanks to enhance strategic planning, risk analysis, and policy innovation throughout the Arab world.
- Strengthening State-Society Relations.
- Enhancing internal security through full empowerment, supporting political participation, and linking national security to societal needs, including those that generate legitimacy.

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