Futures Studies in International Relations

Applied Models



Prof. Dr. Walid ʻAbd al-Hay

Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations

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Prof. Dr. Walid ʻAbd al-Hay

Al-Zaytouna Centre
For Studies & Consultations
Beirut - Lebanon

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دراسات مستقبلية في العلاقات الدولية: نماذج تطبيقية

Prof. Dr. Walid ‘Abd al-Hay

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P.O. Box: 14-5034, Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: + 961 21 803 644
Tel-fax: + 961 21 803 643

E-mail: info@alzaytouna.net Website: www.alzaytouna.net

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Rabie Maarouf Murad

Cover Design by:
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Introduction

The contemporary era is marked by a challenge unprecedented in human history: the ability of political, economic, social and military systems to adapt to the accelerating pace of change. These transformations affect both the material and normative foundations of societies, reshaping culture, legal and constitutional frameworks, patterns of social interaction, and the tensions between science and religion, national and subnational identities, and local cultures and globalization.

To address this challenge, futures studies has emerged as a sophisticated field dedicated to anticipating and analyzing potential developments before they unfold. In this sense, it serves as a form of anticipatory adaptation, helping societies prepare for and mitigate the disruptive effects of what Alvin Toffler famously termed "future shock."

International relations has long been a major focus of futures studies. Consequently, forecasting has moved beyond intuition to employ methodologies grounded in statistics, logic, philosophy, and mathematics. As the field has matured, it has developed increasingly sophisticated analytical tools that enhance predictive rigor while reducing the influence of subjective preferences and ideological bias. This evolution has produced a substantial body of theoretical and methodological advances.

Nevertheless, the value of these tools ultimately depends on their application to real-world cases. Accordingly, this study seeks to demonstrate their practical utility across a wide range of issues in international relations, encompassing specific sectors and political entities as well as broader phenomena, including regional and international systems, globalization, wars, alliances, global macroeconomic trends, and technological change.

Given the breadth of international relations, this volume examines a wide range of issues. Particular attention, however, is devoted to the future of the Palestine issue, reflecting its enduring significance for the Arab region and its profound implications not only for the Middle East but also for the broader international system.

The volume also addresses issues of strategic importance to major powers, particularly the US and China, as well as the evolution of the international order.

In addition, it explores developments likely to shape the future of the Arab world and several pivotal regional actors.

It should be noted that, throughout the volume, we identify the futures studies techniques employed in each analysis without elaborating on their methodological foundations. Where appropriate, references are provided for readers interested in further exploring these approaches. In other cases, such references are omitted, as specialists in futures studies will readily recognize the techniques applied. Our focus here is on practical application rather than methodological discussion.

The value of futures studies can only be assessed once the projected time horizon has been reached. If the forecasts prove accurate, confidence in the underlying analytical framework and methodology is reinforced. If they prove inaccurate, however, it becomes essential to determine whether the failure stemmed from the methodology itself or from its application, thereby enabling improvements in subsequent analyses.

I have long maintained that the ultimate test of social and political theories is their predictive power. The accuracy of their forecasts provides the most reliable measure of a researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study.

In my observation of futures studies committees and institutions in advanced countries, I have noted that their teams often include poets and literary scholars. Further inquiry suggests that such individuals bring a distinctive capacity for imagination, which helps expand the range of plausible scenarios and anticipate the wider implications of specific events or transformations.

The increasing number of universities offering academic degrees in futures studies has further strengthened my conviction regarding the importance of this field. In this context, the publication of this study by Al-Zaytouna Centre contributes to advancing this effort by raising awareness of futures studies and supporting societies in better anticipating and preparing for the challenges of an uncertain future.

Prof. Dr. Walid ʻAbd al-Hay

December 2022

Chapter One

The Problem of Managing International Relations in the Contemporary International System

The Problem of Managing International Relations in the Contemporary International System

Introduction

Three concepts are being circulated in the literature of international relations, whose meaning and uses must be controlled, and by understanding their intra-relationship, international action can be addressed.

First: The Concept of the International System

International relations literature uses sub-concepts related to the "international"[1] system, they are:[2]

1. **International Regime**: It is the customs and legal boundaries within which the units of the system operate and interact, as they represent the "constitution of international relations."
2. **International Order**: It is the position of the state in the hierarchy of the international system; is it a super or major power, a regional center, a small country, or a mini-state, and accordingly the state's position on the international scale of power is determined.
3. **International System:** This concept is primarily concerned with the interaction of actors, based on the number of central powers in the international system. It may be unipolar, bipolar, a balance of power system, multipolar or nonpolar, with Richard Haass being the most famous theorist on the nonpolarity issue. Then the question would be, is this system dominated by peaceful or military interaction.[3]
4. **International Structure:**[4] It includes all of the above rules regulating international relations, the hierarchy of powers and their interactions. Accordingly, the structural change of the international system means radical change in the rules of interaction among the units of the international system, or a change in the position of the state on the scale of power or a general change in the interaction between peace and war.

Second: The Concept of Zero- and Non-Zero-Sum Perspective

Based on the interests of the international community, the network of international relations is characterized by three types:

1. Conflicting interests; where the parties do not meet at any level of consensus.
2. Common interests; which are beneficial to both parties.
3. Mixed interests; those which combine contradictions in certain aspects, and harmony in others.

The management of this network of interests is evaluated on two bases:[5]

1. The zero-sum game: It means that what one side gains is an equal loss to the other side. For example, every Jewish immigrant to Palestine is a direct loss to the Palestinian side. Thus, the equation is +1 for one side and –1 for the other, so the result is zero.
2. The non-zero-sum game: It is based on how to reconcile the contradiction in certain interests with the harmony in common interests. For example, China has conflicting interests with the US in Taiwan, but they have common interests of being the first business partner.

Third: Managing Relations in the Contemporary International System

The units of the contemporary international system are the territorial or national state, then supra-state units (such as international governmental and non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, or cross-border political organizations (whether armed or unarmed), and finally sub-state units (such as minorities, sub-cultures and local armed groups). The relationship and the overlap between the units of this huge network might be partially responsible for the difficulty of managing international relations, given the huge number of parties having conflicting or common interests. This requires the establishment of research bodies that would set scientific models for dealing with this overlap and the interdependence of interests, values, natural environment and cognitive methods. To be aware of this overlap and its complexities, it is sufficient to identify some indicators:

1. Managing Relations in Light of Interdependence and the Common and Overlapping Interests

Globalization is manifested in the growth of political, social, economic and technical interdependence among the units of the international community, which makes drawing the boundaries of common and conflicting interests very complicated, especially since this interdependence is increasing in a clear and accelerating manner. Here, it is necessary to consider the following indicators for the year 2021:[6]

a. The number of countries involved in globalization has increased as clearly shown in the table below. In 1970, the number of countries that scored more than 60 points on the globalization index was 14, while the number increased to 98 countries in 2021.

Table 1: Number of Countries by Globalization Index Score[7]

Year	Globalization index score			
	<40	40 – <60	60 – <80	80 – 90
1970	116	63	14	0
2021	11	84	66	32

b. The size of interdependence of interests, i.e., the average globalization score of all countries in all the central political, economic and social globalization indicators and sub-indicators. Available data indicate the following:

- The correlation rate in 1970 was 38.47 points, and it became 62.23 points, which means an increase in the annual globalization rate by more than one point.
- The number of bank mergers increased from 247 in 1985 to 1,316 in 2020.
- The volume of international trade in 2021 reached $28.5 trillion. Global exports, which accounted for 13.30% of global GDP in 1985, rose to 29.49% in 2020, more than the double.
- Around 80% of trade agreements concluded among world countries since 230 BC until now took place during the past 30 years.
- There are 338 major American companies currently operating in China, of which 90 companies sell all their production in China. In return, there are 2,400 companies in the US controlled by Chinese capital.

- China holds 19% of US debt, equivalent to $1.17 trillion. Moreover, 2.6 million US workers are employed by companies that produce goods for the Chinese market.
- There are 4.65 billion people around the world connected to the Internet.
- There are about 60 thousand multinational companies, with about half a million branches, and controlling around half of the world's trade, including trade among the branches of these companies.
- The value of the activities of private security companies operating at the global level increased from $78 billion in 2011 to $132 billion in 2020.

Accordingly, this interdependence will increase the overlap of common interests, thus making international relations proceed at an accelerating pace towards the non-zero-sum perspective. Hence, the management of international relations will be more complex in terms of calculating losses and profits or the method of calculation. Also, the application of the cross-impact matrix in international relations becomes necessary for every country seeking to identify the changes that have the most negative or positive impact on its international relations, and for drawing up its strategies based on the outcome of the matrix.[8]

2. Managing Relations in Light of the Complexities of the Current International Scene

The current international scene can be described as one in which the central powers seek "to ward off evil more than to bring about gain," which is evident in the following:

a. There is an empire which has disintegrated and wants to prevent disintegration from penetrating into its heart; this is the Soviet Union after its transformation into the Russian Federation.[9]

b. There is a second empire, whose position on the international scale of power is deteriorating, and is seeking to stop or slow this decline; this is the US.[10]

c. There is a country that invokes its nationalism to build an economic rather than a political empire and to achieve "peaceful development or peaceful rise"; this is China.[11]

d. There is a great neo-mercantilist state that does not have the ambitions of the international pole and is content with its new mercantilism; this is Japan.[12]

e. There is a region that is confused; on one hand, it has its political history and ethnic and sectarian diversity, on the other hand, it tends to complete its integration and post-functional integration, and at the same time, it seeks autonomy, which is interrupted by the pressures of the polar forces; this is Europe.[13]

f. As for the remaining regions, these live between their conflict and social fragmentation on the one hand, and their inability to adapt to the accelerating technical, economic and social interdependence in light of globalization on the other hand.[14]

g. Overlap and mutual influence between each of the previous dimensions, which is described by the cross-impact matrix.

3. Managing Relations in Light of the Problem of Power Measurement

International relations scholars have discussed various models of the international system, but most of them were more concerned with the behavior of polar states than with measuring the bases for determining the nature of the polar system. Morton Kaplan discussed six models of the international system and focused on the coherence of the structure of the system; loose, tight, balance of power, etc. George Modelski linked the international system with the dominant mode of production; agricultural or industrial, etc. For his part, David Singer developed an equation that measures power concentration in a particular international system to determine the structure of the polar system based on this equation, which is:[15]

$$\text{Concentration}_t = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N_t}(S_{it})^2 - \frac{1}{N_t}}{1 - \frac{1}{N_t}}}$$

t = the time at which the concentration of resources (i.e. power) is being calculated

i = the state of which the proportion of control over the system's power is being measured

N_t = the number of states in the great power system at time t

S = the proportion of power possessed. Hence, S_{it} = the proportion of power possessed by state i at time t.

The expression $\sum_{i=1}^{n}(S_{it})^2$ represents the sum of the squares of the proportion of power possessed by all states in the great power system.

The closer the resulting concentration is to zero, the more evenly divided power is. The closer to 1, the more concentrated power is. There is a general but not strict correlation between concentration and polarity. It is rare to find a result over 0.5, but a result between 0.4 and 0.5 usually indicates a unipolar system, while a result between 0.2 and 0.4 usually indicated a bipolar or multipolar system. Concentration can be plotted over time, so that the fluctuations and trends in concentration can be observed.

Such a formula means there is need for continuous measurement to observe fluctuations and trends in power concentration rates and thus determine polarity in the international system.

The other aspect worth of attention is the role of the middle or nonpolar powers in determining the polar structure of the international system, which was studied by Edward Mansfield in his article, "Concentration, Polarity and Distribution of Power."[16] Chinese scholar Yang Jiemian believes that the shift from a certain polar system to another is achieved by economic rather than military factors, which is what he considers the basis of his theory that the world is moving towards multipolarity. He believes that the 2008 economic crisis constituted a turning point in the international system and produced what he called the four groups: the first is those benefitting from the crisis which is China and the countries defending the status quo; the second are the US and the ones weakened by the crisis; the third is most of the developing countries and the fourth is the losing ones, which are the European Union, Russia and Japan. All of this has restructured the international system towards multipolarity, according to the Chinese perspective.[17]

The other aspect regarding polarity is the transitional stages between one polar system and another. Here, several questions arise that deal with the length of the transitional period, its characteristics and the determination of the forces of decline and forces of ascent, and whether the indicators of rise and decline remain the same at all historical stages.[18]

A final aspect is when the unit of analysis of the futures study is change, then the pace of change (acceleration) determines the results of the race between international forces. It is noted here that the interval between each technological invention and the next one is shrinking, as well as the period between the invention and its transformation into a traded commodity. For example, China laid out in 2015 the Made in China plan to spend $1.68 trillion in the field of artificial intelligence in 2025 to achieve dominance in this sector by 2030. The result will be that the GDP by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in 2030 will be in "trillion dollars" as follows:

- China: $64.2 trillion
- India: $46.3 trillion
- America: $31 trillion

Taking a sample of 10% of the highest-cited journals to measure the competition in artificial intelligence, has showed that 26.5% of citations were from studies by Chinese scholars and 29% of them were from American scholars' studies. This is while noting that the US share has been declining since 2011, while the Chinese one has been increasing since 2009, which means that China will prevail by 2026.[19]

4. Identifying Mega-Trends in the Management of International Relations

Despite the detailed differences among researchers in defining the mega-trend, the components of these definitions indicate that it is a pivotal tendency for a particular phenomenon to change negatively or positively over time. If this tendency extends from the narrow level of the phenomenon to the broader level globally, we will be facing a mega-trend. There is no guarantee for a trend observed in the past to continue into the future.[20]

The mega-trends in international relations that are most agreed upon among researchers can be summarized in the following:[21]

a. The global shift in economic power: The most prominent of these shifts is the class shift, as the global middle class constituted 27% in 2009 but tends to be about 60% in 2030, according to available estimates.

As for debt at the global level, estimates indicate that the size of debt to GDP in 2035 will be 133% in Europe, 213% in the US and 385% in Japan.

Most studies indicate that 25% of global GDP will be in India and China in 2030. Asian progress is evident in the development of Asia's share of global GDP from 20% in 2010 to 28% in 2017, while being expected to reach 35% in 2030.

b. Change in the population pyramid: The demographic pyramid in the world indicates that 8% of the world's population is over 65 years old, and this percentage is projected to rise in 2030 to 13% because of the declining number of births. Around 35% of the world's population in 2030 will be in China and India only.

c. Overcrowding in cities: In 2013, 50% of the world's population lived in cities, but the percentage will rise to 60% in 2030, while 80% of the increase in urban congestion in cities will be in two continents: Africa and Asia.

d. Acceleration of technological development: Most researchers agree that technology in its broad sense represents the central variable in contemporary international life. The recent developments in artificial intelligence, Internet,

mobile phones and computers will continue to have a profound impact on the political, social and economic structures and within a short period up to 25 years, which is the average of the logistic curve. This is so while the time difference between animal domestication for transport and the invention of the wheel took centuries.

e. Climate change: Specialized studies reveal that an increase in temperature with the year 2050 by 2 degrees will need from $70 to $100 billion annually for adaptation and will cause the displacement of about 240 million people.

f. Scarcity of resources: The world is living in a state of depletion of its natural resources. For example, the difference between supply and demand for water will be about 40% in 2030, and the demand for various energy resources will increase at 40% compared to the present time, due to the increase in population, economic growth and technological development, which may result in the depletion of many raw materials.

Determining the Repercussions of Interdependence and Mega-Trends on the International Community

The interdependence of societies due to globalization and mega-trends in international life has led to several repercussions, most notably:

1. The Decline of Interstate Wars and the Continuation of Intrastate Wars

Table 2: The Percentage of Interstate and Intrastate Wars 1945–2020[22]

Year	1950	1970	1990	2010	2020
Intrastate Wars	3.9	8.3	16	7.9	7.5
Interstate Wars	3.7	3.3	1.5	0.5	0.3

Quantitative studies of international conflicts "wars" indicate that, from 1946 to 2020, there were 285 military conflicts including 122 intrastate wars, 35 interstate wars, 45 wars against an external organization and 83 interstate wars that turned into an international war. What matters in these indicators is that:

a. Wars against an organization outside the country's borders are decreasing.

b. Wars between two states are decreasing.

c. Wars of external international intervention are slowly increasing.

d. Intrastate wars are increasing in the general trend.

International relations literature indicates that the inability to adapt to rapid changes has led to an increase in intrastate wars, while the acceleration of globalization in a way that transformed international relations from zero to non-zero relations has made interdependence a factor in reducing the number of interstate wars.

2. Increasing the Economic Sanctions and International Guarantees Policies[23]

During the period 1914–2012, i.e., for about 98 years, the economic sanctions policy was applied to change political regimes 165 times. In 40 cases it succeeded, about 24.3%.

The US participated with other countries in 115 cases of economic sanctions, succeeding in 26 cases, i.e., 22.4%. The US alone imposed economic sanctions in 50, succeeding in 14 cases, i.e., 28%. This means that chances of success increase by around 5.5% when the US pursues the measure alone. However, the most important indicator in this context is monitoring the historical trend of success, which shows a linear decline. If we divide the entire period, we find that in 1914–1945 the success rate of economic sanctions was higher than in the second period 1945–1969. Success rate continued to deteriorate in the third period 1970–1989 and in the fourth 1990–2012. This means that the success rate of economic sanctions in overthrowing regimes is declining, which is something I believe to be caused mainly, but not solely, by globalization that has made it extremely difficult, or perhaps impossible, to control the mechanisms of sanctions.

Another phenomenon that has significance in the same context is international guarantees given by a major country to a smaller one to protect it from other powers, especially the major ones.

Monitoring shows that the history of this phenomenon—international protection—is also no more tempting to rely on than the policies of economic blockade. During the period 1815–2014, i.e., in around two centuries, the major countries gave 116 international guarantees, whether individually or jointly, where only 20 of which, or 18%, were implemented.

Future Scene

In a study published in November 2020, we compared the US power with the Chinese one to determine the pattern of polarity prevailing in the current international system.[24] In this study, however, we added the Russian Federation to determine whether the structure of the international system is pluralistic or not. We also added four variables to the measurement variables bringing the total of the comparison variables to 24 instead of 20. Then, we calculated the distribution of global power for the great powers based on the above Singer equation. The study covers the period 2018–early 2021 (see table 3). as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Power Indicators in International Relations 2018–2020 for China, the US and Russia, and Measuring Power Difference Among Them Based on International Measurement Indicators[25]

	Indicator		China	US	Russia	Comparison
1	GDP	Nominal	$13.4 trillion	$20.49 trillion	1.7	+2 (US) +1 (China)
		PPP	$27.31 trillion	$21.44 trillion	4.32	
2	Gini index		38.5	41.1	37.5	+1 (China) +2 (Russia)
3	Military spending (% of GDP)		1.9%	3.4%	4.5	+3 (US) +1 (Russia)
4	Scientific research spending		$553.4 billion	$511.1 billion	38.5	+1 (China)
5	Democracy		2.26	7.96	3.24	+3 (US)
6	Globalization		65.11	82.41	72.03	+1 (US) +1 (Russia)
7	Political stability		–0.24	0.30–	–0.73	–
8	Foreign trade		$4.6 trillion	$4.3 trillion	$606 billion	+1 (China)
9	Trade balance deficit		+ $359.3 billion	– $946.1 billion	+ $91.8 billion	+3 (China) +2 (Russia)
10	Global Militarization Index (GMI)		550	683	883	+1 (China) +1 (US)
11	Debt to GDP ratio		55.36%	106.70%	32%	+2 (China) 3+ (Russia)

	Indicator	China	US	Russia	Comparison
12	Crime rate (per 100 thousand)	31.18	47,7	30.14	+2 (Russia)
13	Number of universities ranked among the world's top 100	6	26	0	+3 (US)
14	Firepower (military strength, military spending, market and geographic potential)	0.0511	0.0435	0.0501	+1 (US) +1 (Russia)
15	Foreign aid	$38 billion	$34.62 billion	1.14 billion	+1 (China) +1 (US)
16	Favorability by international public opinion of the country as a global leader	32%	33%	30%	+1 (US)
17	Number of major companies ranked among the world's top 30	10	14	0	+1 (US)
18	Number of vetoes at UN Security Council since 2000	12	14	27	+1 (China)
19	Overseas military bases	4	55	8	+3 (US)
20	International organization membership	74	77	48	+1 (US)
21	Population	1.439 billion	331 million	146 million	+2 (China)
22	Area	9.388 million km^2	9.147 million km^2	16.367 million km^2	+3 (Russia)
23	Number of patents	1,441,086	496,123	3238	+2 (China)
24	Pace of change in GDP 2000–2020	6 times	2 times	0.7 times	+3 (China)
	Supremacy points for each side				US: 37.40 China: 34.50 Russia: 28.10

The previous table reveals a stable trend in international relations towards a multipolar international system, which makes the diplomatic realm more open to medium and small countries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this analysis can be summarized as follows:

1. The extreme complexity in international relations requires from specialized think tanks to address more how the international community would act in a situation of non-zero-sum perspective rather than a zero-sum one, and where organic links grow at the expense of mechanical ones.
2. The increasing acceleration, the pressure of mega-trends in the international environment and their mutual impact require the development of a forward-looking culture to help find adaptation mechanisms before the occurrence of the future shock, in the words of Alvin Toffler.
3. The Asian shift towards a broader role in international relations is likely, given the growing international standing of this region. This would require from the Arab countries to strengthen their relations with the rising Asian powers, an issue we have addressed in a previous study.[26]
4. The growing organic ties of Israel will make it less able to maintain its mechanical ties. Thus, the core of its Zionist ideology, which is based on the temptation of historical models, will be dismantled.
5. The policies of the major powers in the coming stage will be more defensive than offensive, and it is an opportunity for the middle powers to reap benefits by investing in multipolarity.
6. The shift in international relations from the billiard ball model to the cobweb model means a steady increase in the influence of external factors in policy-making at the expense of the weight of internal factors.[27] This makes medium and small countries more fragile and vulnerable to turmoil, which is gradually pushing towards building regional or even cross-border blocs, an issue the Arab political systems have not yet realized.

Endnotes

[1] We will note in subsequent pages that the concept of "international" is no longer confined to the state as a unit of international relations analysis. See Vito Tanzi, "The Demise of the Nation State," International Monetary Fund (IMF) Working Paper, August 1998, pp. 7–14.

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Chapter Two

The Futile Power and the Determination of Israel's Future

The Futile Power and the Determination of Israel's Future

Introduction

The power concept in international relations (IR) is central in IR theories. Ever since the Greek historian Thucydides wrote *History of the Peloponnesian War*, the Indian Kautilya wrote *Arthashastra* (about political science and economic policy), the Arab Ibn Khaldun wrote *al-Muqaddimah* (The Introduction), and Hans Morgenthau wrote *Politics Among Nations*, the concept of power dominated the approaches and philosophies of IR. Its definition is almost confined to a narrow concept expressed by most IR researchers, albeit with different formulations. It means that a state has the capabilities to make other states comply, i.e., the state achieves its central goals by using its power towards the parties targeted.[1]

IR literature speaks of three types of power: Hard power that coercively achieves a goal, such as military, economic, geographic, demographic, and natural resource power; soft power that achieves goals by attractive forces, such as legitimacy, political values, education, culture and diplomacy, etc.; and smart power which manages the hard and soft powers in an integrated manner, enhancing the chances of achieving strategic goals at the lowest cost and highest possible return.

As for the futile power, it means the inability to reach a strategic goal, despite the long period and the presence of the three powers. If IR scholars have been preoccupied with measuring the variables of power, it is necessary also to measure results and compare them with the variables of power that were exerted to obtain these results. That is if the cost far outweighs the results, then we are facing a futile power, and if pragmatism considers the idea to be correct as long as it brings benefits, then the power should be measured by the results obtained from employing various variables.

The history of colonialism during the past two centuries, the invention of guerrilla wars by oppressed peoples, and the disintegration of ancient and contemporary empires are all examples of how forces could become futile. Some studies estimate that 25% of international conflicts have ended with the victory of the weak.[2] Perhaps the examples of the Vietnamese victory over the US, the Algerian victory over France, the Afghan victory over the Soviet Union at first and

the US later, the length of the Korean conflict without a result for either party, or the US inability to change the political system in some Latin American countries such as Cuba are all proof of that.

Therefore, a futile power can be determined when:

a. Soft and hard powers exist without the smart power.

b. Long time passes without reaching the goal, despite the availability of the three powers.

c. There is confusion in defining strategic goals, despite the availability of the three components relatively.

In this research paper, we will discuss if the concept of futile force applies to Israel.

First: The Futile Hard Power

Since the Basel Conference of 1897, the central goal was to establish a Jewish state on all the land of Palestine, which means the complete control over Palestine and getting rid of its Arab population to ensure having a Jewish state. It is the same objective that has been increasingly raised in Israeli literature in the post-Oslo Accords 1994 period, particularly during the terms of Benjamin Netanyahu.

In order to assess the achievement of this goal, the following observations must be made:

1. The Palestinians in historic Palestine outnumber the Jewish population; 7.234 million Palestinians compared to 6.697 million Jews, i.e., a difference of 537 thousand, and although the Jews control 98.7% of historic Palestine, except the Gaza Strip (GS), Israel still has a strategic problem, the Palestinian population. Despite all its might, it seems that Israel does not know how to solve it, especially as this population is increasing in a way that deepens the intractable Israeli problem, which is evident as follows:[3]

The total population of Israel, Arabs and Jews, until the beginning of 2022 was 9.5 million, including about 7 million Jews, with 1.9% annual increase of Jewish population. As a result, Israeli population is expected to reach about 13.2 million in 2040. This is while noting that the sources of Jew immigration are starting to dry up despite the increase in recent months due to the Ukrainian war. However,

the general rate of immigrant increase remains between 16–18 thousand annually, which is the same rate of the 2000–2020 period.

As for the number of Palestinians in 2022 in historic Palestine; The 1948 occupied territories, the West Bank (WB), and GS, it is 7.2 million; where 1.9 million are in the 1948 territories, 3.2 million in WB and 2.1 million in GS. Based on a 2.3% annual increase, Palestinian population is expected to reach about 13.8 million in 2040. Accordingly, the Arab and Jew population of historic Palestine will be 27 million, with a population density of 1000 ppl/ km^2, whereas it is now 530 ppl/ km^2, ranking 22nd globally.[4] Hence, the Palestinian population will remain outnumbering the Jews, and this is a predicament for Israel, especially since most of the settler colonial experiences that had imbalanced population ratio in favor of the citizens ended in the defeat of the settlement project; as happened in South Africa, Algeria, Zimbabwe, former Rhodesia, etc.

2. The ongoing militarization: Israel ranks first in the Global Militarization Index, with an average of 437 points.[5] Even though its population is 0.11% of the world's population, it has been at the top of this list for a long time,[6] and it was a major party of 8% of all war conflicts in the world since 1948.[7] Therefore, it fits the description of the Garrison State, as per the political sociologist Harold Lasswell. It is the state where security is superior to any other goal.[8] When searching for the concept of the Garrison State, we find that Israel is frequently mentioned in Western studies or media reports.[9]

The impression of Israel being a Garrison State increases when considering two other dimensions related to militarization and the priority of security. They are:

a. Global Peace Index (GPI): According to GPI that uses 23 indicators and whose data are based on the reports of the United Nations (UN) and various academic centers, Israel ranked low, particularly in 2018 and 2022, ranging between 2010 and 2022 between 134th and 152nd. Among the 20 Middle Eastern countries, it ranked the 13th. Based on that, it becomes clear that the economic cost of such a situation amounts to 8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP),[10] knowing that Israel ranks the 30th among the top GDPs of the world.[11]

b. Political stability index in Israel: We have mentioned in a detailed study that the political stability in Israel will remain in the negative side until 2030.[12] This means that this state, which was founded 84 years ago, 1948–2022, and despite all of its hard power, it has not been able to achieve the minimum positive political

stability. This establishes social fatigue and deepens doubts about the feasibility of the Zionist project.

Researchers point out that the state's involvement in "prolonged wars" negatively affects the other types of power, as an example, the US. It also applies to Israel in its over stretching of its military activities from Palestine to the adjacent environment, the neighboring Arab countries, to the regional environment; striking Iraq, Sudan, Tunisia, and the military intervention in Morocco to support it against Algeria. Then in the international community; overt and covert military intervention in African countries and through security companies, etc.[13] Furthermore, Israel ranks 18th globally in the Global Firepower (GFP) index, with a score of 0.2621.[14] It has fought successive wars since its establishment, and according to most sources, the number of Israelis killed in battles with the Arabs since 1948, has reached 24,981, i.e., an annual rate of 342.[15] We add to this that the current Israeli military spending rate (2020) is 5.6% of GDP compared to the global average of 2.2% of global GDP, which means that Israel spends 2.5 the rate of global spending.[16] During periods of war or military operations in GS, its military spending increases, about 9% of its usual military spending.[17] Nevertheless, Israel is among the most politically unstable countries in the world, as we mentioned earlier.

Therefore, we conclude that hard power has not achieved for Israel until this moment its strategic goal; the establishment of a "pure and stable Jewish" state.

Second: The Futile Soft Power

In our previous definition of soft power, we indicated that the tools for achieving "legitimacy" constitute the core of soft power. It means the ability to find an integration between hard and soft power to achieve goals, and this integration must have a sufficient degree of legitimacy and acceptance by the international community.

Here, it is necessary to answer the long-term strategic question: What is the extent of international acceptance of "the legitimacy of Israeli behavior and its management of its conflict with the Palestinians in particular"?

1. The Status of Israel in the UN

Most researchers consider the compliance with the UN Charter and resolutions the most expressive indicator of international legitimacy. In this context, Israel ranks

globally first in the number of condemnations leveled against it by UN bodies, due to its violation of international conventions and laws. It was condemned in some UN bodies by decisions that exceed the total resolutions that the rest of the world was condemned by, especially concerning human rights. In some years, the rate of convictions of Israel has reached three times that of all other countries.[18]

This means that despite the legal or de facto recognition of Israel, there is not enough international official satisfaction to describe it a legitimate state. The Soviet Union was a strong country by the standards of hard force, and it was recognized by most countries, but it collapsed and its hard power was of no avail.

2. The International Public Opinion on Israel

In Western public opinion polls, the public opinion in 23 out of 27 countries, representing about 75% of the world's population, view the Israeli role in the world negatively, i.e., 85% of countries view Israel negatively. Also, Israel is globally the fourth most hated countries. Even in countries that traditionally are known to be pro-Israel, such as the US, polls indicate that youth, highly-educated and the democrats are increasingly becoming less sympathetic with Israel.[19]

3. The Attraction Force of the Israeli Model

According to Jewish Agency, the percentage of Jews living in Israel out of all the Jews in the world stands at 45.3%, i.e., 54.7% of the world's Jews do not belong to Israel. This weakens the claim that Israel is the "state of the Jews" or that it constitutes an attractive political model.[20]

In April 2022, a report by *Israel Hayom* newspaper has revealed that 33% of Israelis have thought of reverse migration, for the following reasons:[21]

a. 40% cited the high cost of living.

b. 22% cited the security situation.

c. 18% said social rifts.

d. 20% other reasons.

These percentages show that the attraction force of the Israeli model is weak, even for Jewish youth, and this is confirmed by another indicator, which is the fact that about 12 thousand Jews immigrate from Israel annually, according to official Israeli figures.[22]

Third: The Futile Smart Power

Power, in its absolute sense, is that variable that controls the state, direction, position, or motion of a certain body. In IR, it means the ability of the state to compel other members of the international community to take into account its interests. In international law, the "legitimacy of using force" must be proportionate to the purpose.

Since its establishment, the ultimate goal of Israel was to "control the Palestinian land and empty it of its original inhabitants as much as possible." To achieve that, it has managed its IR by having nuclear armament, with between 80 and 400 nuclear warheads; alliances with polar powers; technological and scientific development in a way that surpasses any state in the region; and by making the Arab political regimes gradually recognize the "legitimacy of Israel's existence and normalize relations with it." However, the conflict did not stop, and Israel, since its establishment, goes through war once every five years, a rate that most countries do not go through. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that Israel, when managing its smart power, does not have a vision for solving the Palestine issue other than using its hard power. It can be assumed that it has what IR researchers call "strategic blindness," which means a political entity would reach "unintended and unexpected" outcomes.[23] Did the Zionist strategic mind in the beginnings expect that the conflict would last more than a century, from the Balfour Declaration until now? Did it expect that Israel would fight 14 wars, interspersed with military operations and continuous attacks by the Palestinian resistance until the time of writing of these lines, reaching a low rank in political stability or peace indexes? Did those, who planned for the Zionist project, expect that the rate of economic growth in the Israeli GDP would decline from 30% in the mid-1950s to 5% today? Did they expect that that continued conscription among Israeli youth would cost 4.3% of GDP? Or that the continuous occupation of WB would cost annually $6.8 billion, which is equivalent to about 8.7% of the annual government budget?[24]

The hardest question is: How does the Israeli strategic mind imagine the right solution for the current Arab-Israeli conflict would be? Here strategic blindness will appear, as the Israelis do not have a solution. Each of the solutions they propose has its flaws that would revive the security concerns of the Israeli political decision maker. This is evident in the following proposed solutions:[25]

1. The Forced Displacement of the Largest Possible Number of Palestinians

This can be done by making life hard and creating unrest among Palestinians, i.e., between those in GS and WB or between those living in the same areas, a situation that may reach a civil war, hence pushing them to seek refuge in neighboring countries. It can also be done by practicing Israel's arbitrary expulsion policies. However, due to economic pressures and the positions of some Arab countries, this will reopen the Palestinian file with the neighboring Arab countries. It will resurface the discussions similar to those revealed lately in 2022, in the transcript of a White House meeting between the then President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Menachem Begin, where they discussed expelling the Palestinians to other Arab countries, and how some of them—including some that have traditional relations with the West—were not ready to absorb a significant number of them.[26]

The former experiences of the Palestinians and international reactions make the asylum much less tempting. In addition, there is no guarantee that this scenario would be feasible in light of the large number of Palestinians in historic Palestine.

2. Keeping the Status Quo

That is, the continuation of high tension between the Palestinians and the Jews, the continuation of the Israeli mobilization, the constant threat of the outbreak of wars again with Arab or Muslim countries, and the failure to guarantee that changes will occur in Arab countries that would bring things back to the previous periods of high tension, etc. Indeed, after the Iranian revolution, the Israelis became more aware of their inability to fully adapt the region in favor of their strategies.

3. The Participation of Arab Countries in the Gradual Absorption of the Palestinians

This is done by allowing them to work and settle in other Arab countries, especially Jordan, the Gulf and Lebanon, and also by having development projects in some areas close to Palestine, in order to gradually turn them into an "alternative homeland." They could be near Gaza in the Sinai Penninsula, the Saudi islands that Egypt recently ceded, Tiran and Sanafir, or in the Saudi "NEOM" project, etc. Some Western countries like Canada may contribute to absorbing part of the Palestinians.

This scenario requires a long period, and the population increase will make the number of Palestinians a burden on the "host" countries, not to mention that instability in the Middle East, for many reasons, is the highest in the world. In

addition, there is a significant percentage of Palestinians who do not accept what they consider the "trap of seduction," and would remain in their land even if they are naked and hungry.

4. Genocide

This may be done by large-scale military operations, or by quiet killing through stifling environmental conditions; for example, burying nuclear or other wastes, promoting certain drugs, or poisoning the water, etc. All of that has one obstacle, for the separation in daily life and natural conditions between Arabs and Jews is no longer possible, and this makes the above procedures dangerous to everyone, especially with the increasing population and the high population density due to the limited space. This is not to mention the Arab and international reaction to such policies and their repercussions on the Israeli image.

5. Accepting the Establishment of a Palestinian State in WB and GS to Get Rid of the Palestinian Population Burden

This scenario faces the problem of settlements, Jerusalem, and the shared water sources, in addition to Israel's loss of the strategic depth of the state and the guarantee of its security at borders, especially the Jordan River. This is not to mention the economic and military aspects these areas mean to Israel. Also the Israelis expect that WB, in the event of its independence, would become a new base of resistance, citing GS. Therefore, even if a possibility is weak, Israel never takes a chance.

6. One-State Solution

From a value perspective, this project seems tempting, especially in liberal circles, however, the population increase will make Israel a replica of the apartheid regime, with the potential of failure like South Africa. As for accepting the Palestinians on an equal footing, it means that the prime minister and the majority of Knesset members will be Palestinians, by the virtue of numerical superiority of the population, and this would make Israel lose its identity, and even its political existence.

Israel has set six "No"s for its settlement strategy, which are No to the:[27]

a. Two-state solution.

b. One-state solution.

c. Negotiations to find a final solution (It wants negotiations for having procedures that would ease the burdens of occupation on Israel).

d. Dismantling of settlements.

e. Sovereignty of the Palestinians over East Jerusalem.

f. Return of refugees.

In addition, all Arab public opinion polls, whether by Western or Arab bodies,[28] have indicated that the percentage of Arabs who reject normalization, or Abraham Accords, with Israel is the highest and still increasing. All of this deprives Israel of regional acceptance of its strategy.

Conclusion

Israel has accomplished many parts of the Zionist project; the control over the land, penetrations of the Arab environment, and military and technical superiority over the Arab region. However, none of this led to its full and unambiguous legitimacy being recognized, enabled it to get rid of the Palestinian citizens, whose number exceeds that of Jews in historic Palestine, or stop the resistance, ease the burdens of self-defense, or promote a positive image of itself in its regional and international environments. This is in addition to cracks in its social fabric. This reinforces the idea that the power possessed by Israel is a futile power and that it has not yet made the transition into being a natural state. We consider this a prelude to fatigue that would make many aspects of Israel similar to settler colonialism, especially the demographic, geo-political, and geo-strategic aspects.

As for Israel, there are new sources of concern, such as: the Iranian threat; the diminishing strategic importance of Middle East to the US compared to its other geo-strategic regions; the possibility of further Turkish flip-flopping towards Israel, especially as a result of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's relationship with the Islamic movements and the tendency to dominate the Mediterranean basin; the unequivocal rejection of Israeli presence by the Arab community; and the continuation of the Palestinian resistance, albeit with ebb and flow, however, it hasn't stop. It suffices to put the conclusion of a study issued by one of the most important Israeli centers of political studies, in November 2021, to confirm this continuing concern, "It is important to depict accurately the new situation that has gradually emerged over the last generation, and to voice a loud and clear warning against an excessively optimistic interpretation and unfounded expectations for a transformation of Arab-Israeli relations in the foreseeable future."[29]

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Chapter Three

The Future of Political Stability in Israel in 2030

The Future of Political Stability in Israel in 2030

Introduction

Since Daniel Kaufmann developed in 1996 his model of qualitative measurement of political stability worldwide,[1] the research in this respect has expanded, most importantly developing the main and sub-indicators of measuring the phenomenon, reaching about 350 indicators, and measurement methods and main measured dimensions, which appeared in three approaches to measuring political instability, namely:[2]

1. The propensity for regime or government change.
2. Political upheaval or violence in a society.
3. Frequent change and instability in the "strategic policies and plans" of the state.

Based on the above, we will determine the level of political stability in Israel throughout 2000–2020, and sometimes we will refer to some indicators until 2021 and 2022 depending on available data. Then, we will determine the mega-trend of the phenomenon comparing it with the levels of stability of various countries and, consequently, we'll determine Israel's worldwide rank of political stability.

The measurement model is based on a scale ranging between +2.5 (the highest degree of stability) and –2.5 (the lowest degree of stability) where, based on time series analysis, we will determine the level of political stability in Israel in 2030.

Measuring Indicators of Political Instability in Israel[3]

In this study, we will rely on theGlobalEconomy.com model,[4] taking advantage of some aspects Kaufman highlighted, and we will focus on presenting the 12 main indicators of political stability, each of which is divided into a varying number of sub-indicators according to the nature of the main indicator.

When applying these main indicators to Israel, we find the following:

1. Government stability: Throughout 2000–2022, the executive authority was assumed by six prime ministers, but the term of their rule varied greatly as follows:[5]

a. Ehud Barak: One year and 245 days.

b. Ariel Sharon: Five years and 39 days.

c. Ehud Olmert: Two years and 351 days.

d. Benjamin Netanyahu: 15 years and 92 days, of which approximately 12 years were included in the study period.

e. Naftali Bennett: One year and 17 days.

f. Yair Lapid: About two months.

The previous distribution reveals a great discrepancy in the duration of stability in power, sometimes reaching more than 15 times between one government and another while four of the six governments did not complete their four-year term.

2. Socioeconomic conditions: Such as class differences, income level, crime, etc. It is sufficient to consider the Gini index where it shows that fairness of income distribution has improved, but by no more than 1% in about 22 years.[6]

3. Investment profile: In terms of their stability, increase or decline, etc. Financial reports of various international bodies indicate that the volume of foreign investments in the Israeli economy has been increasing since 2008,[7] which contributes to absorbing some social tensions.

4. Internal political conflicts: In the past three years (2019–2022), five parliamentary elections were held due to the cracks in the structure of governments. They were held in April and September 2019, March 2020 and March 2021, and a fifth election is expected to be held in November 2022. This irregular number of general elections reveals the fragility of government coalitions and internal conflict among political forces. It also indicates power rotation at irregular intervals, as we mentioned in the first point. Moreover, throughout the history of Israel, no party has obtained a majority in the Knesset, and this explains why the "average" number of parties participating in the elections has reached about 27 throughout 1977–2022. What adds insult to injury is that many parties appear and disappear within short periods of time as, for example, 40% of the parties that won the 2015 elections did not exist in the 2005 elections. The fundamental differences between parties revolve around two strategic issues, namely, the means of settling the Arab-Zionist conflict, on the one hand, and the identity of the state (secular or religious), on the other hand. In addition, there is the continuous increase in the electoral threshold, which leads to a continuous change in the participating parties, especially the smaller ones. For example, during the first 40 years of the Israeli political system, a party was required to obtain 1% of the votes; then, the percentage was raised to

1.5% in 1992 and to 2% in 2004 while reaching 3.25% since 2014.[8] Also, elections were held 24 times in the history of Israel, and if we divide these times into three sub-stages, we will find that popular participation in parliamentary elections at each stage is lower than the previous one, which is a negative indicator.[9]

5. External conflicts: Without going into the details of the military conflicts between Israel and the Arab countries since 2000, especially on the Lebanese and Palestinian fronts in Gaza and Syria, besides the daily clashes and various attacks targeting Palestinian civilians, Israel has the highest number of convictions by the United Nations, a matter that has repercussions on the internal structure and on the image of Israel in international public opinion.[10]

6. Corruption: Corruption is defined as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain."[11] Transparency reports indicate that, between 2000 and 2021, the rate of corruption in Israel is almost constant, with a slight tendency to increase. Quantitative indicators have revealed that the corruption has increased in the five years between 2016 and 2021 by about five points. Transparency in Israel scored 64 points in 2016 but decreased to 59 points in 2021.[12]

7. Interference of the military institution in political decisions: Given the priority of security in Israeli policies, the Israeli army is a key partner in strategic decision-making. The Cabinet, a supreme body concerned with security-related decisions, but one which has lost its official character since 1990—not to mention the role taken by the National Security Council (NSC) formed in 1999—still plays a role in decision-making. This causes disagreements with the government, increasing government instability to some extent, and even enhancing the prospects of the continuation of political stability in Israel, as will become clear next.[13]

8. Religious tensions: In addition to the tensions between Arabs (Muslims and Christians), on the one hand, and Israelis and the religious Jews, on the other hand, the Israeli society has witnessed polarization within Jewish religious movements, and between these movements and secular ones. Their conflicts revolve around many issues, especially democracy and the relationship between the state and religion.[14]

9. Rule of law: The rule of law rests on four pillars: accountability and responsibility for all; justice that means the application of law to everyone, on the same basis and regardless of any considerations; transparency in the application of the law to everyone; and that those implementing it are independent of the

influence of any party. The record of Israel shows that this indicator declined clearly and significantly throughout 2000–2009, improved throughout 2010–2015 and deteriorated again from 2015 until now (2022), bringing the level after 2020 to almost the same level in 2000; yet, it remains higher than the world average.[15]

10. Ethnic tensions: Israeli studies tend to divide the Israeli Jewish society into four main ethnicities: Ashkenazim, Sephardic, Russian and Ethiopian (African). These four groups vary in their share of income, political and military influence as well as social status. Often, manifestations of violence take place between these ethnicities.[16]

11. Democratic accountability: It means how far is it possible for political forces, parliamentarians or those who assumed their positions through democratic processes to be held accountable. It is noted that this sub-indicator of political stability decreased by about 13 points throughout 2016–2020, although it witnessed an improvement throughout 2010–2016 reaching 21 points.[17]

12. Government effectiveness: The government effectiveness indicator is calculated based on perceptions related to six dimensions: the level of public services; the level of civil service; the degree of its independence from political pressures; policy formulation; the level of policy implementation; and finally the credibility of the government's commitment to these policies. Quantitative data of the period 2010–2020 indicate that the 2010–2014 period witnessed a decline in the government effectiveness of Israel, then an improvement in 2015–2017, followed by deterioration from 2018 until now (2022), with a decline rate of 0.38 points out of 2.5 points (where 2.5 points are considered the strongest in measuring government effectiveness), reaching 1.1 points.[18]

The Overall Indicator of Political Instability in Israel

The model for measuring political stability ranges between –2.5 (the highest degree of instability) and +2.5 (the highest degree of stability). Stability values are determined based on the 12 main indicators mentioned above, and the country's rank is determined based on the measurement results and comparing them with the rest of the countries. Then, the trend is determined for each country (the increase or decrease in the rate of stability) and compared with the global average.[19]

Table 1: Trends of Political Instability in Israel since 2000

Year	Political stability index[20]	Israel's international ranking	Number of countries whose stability was measured	Global rate of instability
2000	–1.04	153	185	–0.01
2001	–1.25	158	185	–0.05
2002	–1.46	164	185	–1.01
2003	–1.52	175	192	–0.03
2004	–1.32	170	193	–0.05
2005	–1.25	165	193	–0.05
2006	–1.26	167	194	–0.05
2007	–1.25	170	194	–0.05
2008	–1.32	171	194	–0.05
2009	–1.63	179	194	–0.07
2010	–1.34	172	194	–0.07
2011	–1.20	167	194	–0.06
2012	–1.08	161	194	–0.06
2013	–1.10	163	194	–0.06
2014	–1.04	167	194	–0.05
2015	–1.09	171	194	–0.06
2016	–0.79	155	194	–0.05
2017	–0.89	160	194	–0.05
2018	–0.91	163	194	–0.06
2019	–0.79	154	194	–0.07
2020	–0.83	156	194	–0.07
2021	–0.76	148	179	–0.08
2022	–0.75	146	179	–0.09

Analysis

Table 1 indicates the following results:

1. By converting the adopted scale into percentages, the rate of instability in Israel ranged between 65.2% in 2009 (the highest throughout 2000–2022) and 41.6% in 2000 and 2014 (which is the lowest rate).

2. The comparison between global instability rate and its rate in Israel reveals that the latter is always higher than the former. This means that the impact of global instability on Israeli one is limited, which reinforces the idea that the internal factors for Israeli political instability, rather than the international environment, are the decisive variables. This means that the correlation coefficient between Israeli instability and international instability is clearly weak. In return, the general trend of global political instability tends to rise slightly, while Israeli instability tends to decline, confirming that the repercussions of international instability do not show their impact on the Israeli side.

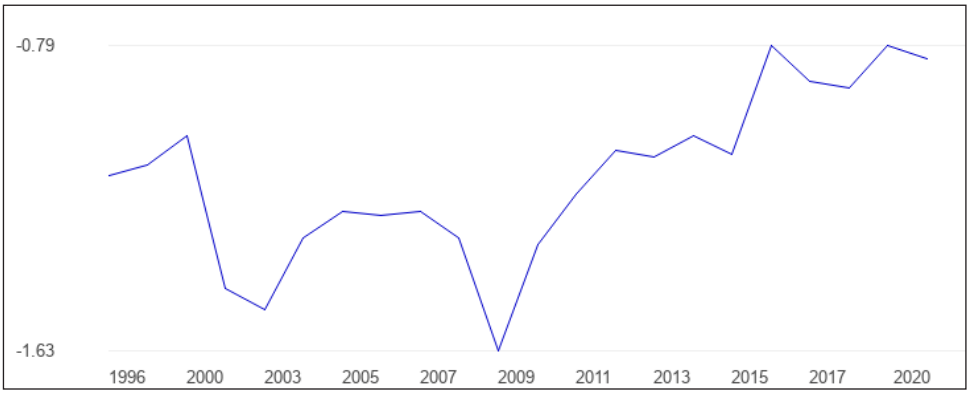
3. The Israeli global rank in the level of political stability ranged between 179 (among 194 countries) in 2009, which is the worst, and 146 (among 179 countries), a rank which places Israel among the countries with the worst instability throughout 2000–2022.

4. It is noticed that the stability rate in Israel throughout the measurement period 2000–2022 always falls on the negative side (see table 1 and graph 2).

5. However, it should be noted that the stability ratio has begun to improve (although it remains in the negative level), and although this improvement does not assume a linear trend, the longer historical series analysis indicates an improvement (see graph 2).

6. Based on the foregoing, the political stability in Israel in 2030 will remain in the negative side, but it will be better than that in 2000–2022.

Graph 1: Mega-trend of Israeli Political Stability 1996–2020[21]

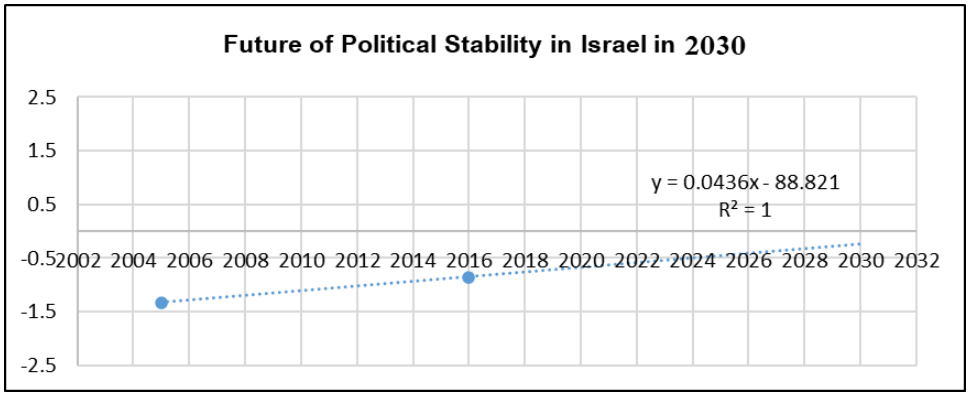


The Future of Political Stability in Israel

The quantitative data of the main and sub-indicators of political stability indicate that Israel will remain in the negative range according to the political stability index. This means that, until 2030, Israel will remain an unstable state due primarily to the local conditions, then the regional and international ones.

Also, the level of instability will decrease throughout 2022–2030, but it will remain, as we mentioned, in the negative side and within the group of unstable countries, and the rate of instability will remain between (–0.3 and –0.4). This will keep Israel in the ranks between 107 and 111 based on the measurement of 192 countries. (see graph 2).

Graph 2: Time Series for Measuring Political Instability in Israel 2000–2022[22]



Conclusion

It is noted that political instability in Israel has increased in the periods following escalated confrontations between the resistance and the Palestinian people on the one hand, and the Israeli forces and settlers on the other hand. This is evident in the periods after the *Intifadah*s (uprising) and major confrontations with Gaza Strip, but particularly after the religion-based confrontations (see graph 2).

Based on the above, increasing political instability in Israel is linked to the activities of the resistance, the halt of negotiations and the suspension of security coordination with Israel. Furthermore, this instability increases when the differences between Jewish sub-cultures (Ashkenazim, Sephardi, Russians and African Jews) are instigated, and also between the religious and secular movements. Some Jewish movements may contribute to this instability, such as the Neturei Karta movement or the New Historians.

There is no doubt that the waves of official Arab normalization with Israel will lead to a more favorable environment, enhancing the chances of improving the stability of Israel. They might lead to a transition from being in the current negative level to reaching the beginning of the positive level later, but that depends on three factors:

1. The strategy of the resistance forces to deepen political instability in Israel, the most important of which is the abolition of security coordination with Israel and the dissolution of its apparatuses, and even threatening those who continue to work in these apparatuses. Remarkably, Israeli studies indicate the close relationship between the level of stability in Israel and security coordination.[23]
2. Exacerbation of societal disparities among the Jews of Israel.
3. The reflection of regional and international developments on the political stability in Israel.

According to quantitative measurement, we expect Israel to remain within the area of negative political instability until 2030 unless the low probability-high impact factor intervenes.

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Chapter Four

The Prospects of Structural Transformations in Political Systems

The Prospects of Structural Transformations in Political Systems

Introduction

The concept of "authority" is one of the oldest concepts of sociology, especially political sociology. It includes various dimensions, where authority is a set of peremptory rules based on which the members of a social or political system have agreed to interact, entrusting their enforcement to whoever they deem appropriate by virtue of power, knowledge, wealth, social position or otherwise. However, the subordination of individuals or societies to authority is motivated either by fear, benefit, or respect of a set of values based on which they seek order and the development of their lives. Notably, it is necessary to distinguish, regarding authority and its forms, between the "position" itself and the incumbent, despite the mutual influence between them.[1]

Futures studies have sought to monitor the mega-trends of authority and its status to determine its future in the long run. In this study, we seek to alert the Arab and Muslim political forces to the transformations taking place in this regard, which will have profound impact on the structure of our societies, and on their ability to adapt to the changes that influence our societies and authorities, especially the political ones, and that would influence, also, the authorities and societies of the allies and opponents. I also believe that it is necessary to pay attention to the difference between mega-trends, events and sub-trends, or trends that may appear temporarily deviated or transient to historical mega-trends but eventually fall within the course of the mega-trend; otherwise, they will constitute a turning point signaling the beginning of a new mega-trend.

First: The Mega-Trends of Authority

Based on the foregoing, what are the mega-trends of authority development, and what will its form be like in the coming decades?

To answer the above question, it is necessary to monitor the literature of change, regardless of its normative dimension. In this context, we will find the following:

1. The Decline of the Authority of Ideology in Favor of the Pragmatic Approach

By this, we mean questioning the weight of contemporary ideologies in determining patterns of political interaction. This literature appears in Zbigniew Brzezinski's Convergence Theory, which links the increasing and accelerating similarity in the infrastructure of most contemporary societies to the gradual and accelerating similarity of their superstructures, including ideologies. This is the same perception put forward by Daniel Bell in his study about the "End of Ideology," where he predicted a model combining the socialist style with capitalism as embodied in the welfare state model. Samuel Huntington supported this trend in his study on the clash of civilizations with the belief that culture replaces ideology, and Mikhail Gorbachev added in his book, "Perestroika," a call for stripping international relations from ideology, a trend reinforced by Heike Holbig's study on the adaptation of ideology in Chinese politics.[2]

If we look at the political authority of religious beliefs, it is necessary first to distinguish between the historical trend and the fluctuating sub-trend, which is evident in the growing role of religion from 1970s until now (Islamic movements, the return of Confucian traditions, the victory of the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party in India, liberation theology in Latin America, Aleksandr Dugin's theories on the role of Orthodoxy in Russia, the growing weight of religious parties in Israel, neoconservatives in the US, and the study of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe "*Towards a Beautiful Country: My Vision for Japan*," focusing on returning to the origins and traditions, including religious ethics.[3]

However, looking at the historical mega-trend indicates:[4]

a. The increasing tendency to explain various social (poverty, wealth, tyranny, victory, defeat in wars, etc.), and natural phenomena (earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, diseases, etc.) using the scientific method at the expense of metaphysical explanation.

b. The number of political systems classified as religious in the strict sense are two (Iran and the Vatican) out of 199 countries, in addition to the gradual decline in the number of countries stipulating that their constitutions include the state religion or the adoption of religion in one way or another in public life, which is illustrated in the following table:[5]

Table 1: Status of Religion in Contemporary Political Systems

Status of religion	Countries	Distribution	Percentage compared to the countries of the world
The existence of a constitutional provision (or laws) on the state religion	43	27 Muslim countries 13 Christian countries 2 Buddhist 1 Jewish	22%
Countries considering the religious dimension without a constitutional text	40	3 Muslim 28 Christian 4 Buddhist 5 varied	20%
Countries with no official or preferred religion	106	–	53%
Hostile to religion and stipulates for its prohibition	10	Most of them are left–wing countries (China – Cuba – Vietnam – North Korea ... etc.)	5%

c. The number of religious wars historically (less than 6.98%), according to the Encyclopedia of War.[6]

d. International laws regulating most aspects of contemporary international life are man-made laws. Some of them, like the Charter of the United Nations, provide for refraining from building relations on religious grounds.[7]

e. International trade: Indicators of international political economy show that most trade of religious blocs is external rather than internal, meaning that these religious blocs interact economically and commercially with countries outside their bloc. Also, some blocs have transcended the sectarian differences within the same religion although sectarian disparity has historically been the cause of fierce wars.[8]

f. Globally, restrictions on forming religious organizations or teaching religion in schools have increased by 20% from 2007 until now.[9]

2. The Decline of the Authority of the Traditional Politician in Favor of the Technocrat

The enormous increase of the technical complexity of life has made the technocrats the real decision-makers, while the politicians do nothing but

implement. When the author of these lines studied China and the USSR, he found that Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping reached power when communist technocrats outnumbered traditional ideologues in central decision-making bodies.[10] It seems that Alvin Toffler was right in his perception that the clash between the forces that will employ knowledge and experience and the forces of wealth will be more important than the conflict between socialism and capitalism or between nation states. For using traditional violence in the exercise of power expresses a low-level authoritarian pattern, while using wealth is considered a medium-quality authoritarian pattern. As for the case when using the power of knowledge, it is considered a high-quality authoritarian pattern, because it influences individuals and societies through remote and indirect guidance.[11]

The findings of the study of the American theorist Buckminster Fuller show that the "World Game" he established in Canada in which thousands of scientists and leaders participated to formulate equations to solve the world's crises indicated that the worst results were those set by politicians, due to their inability to understand complex transformations which need a broader participation of experts to be able to comprehend them.[12]

3. The Decline of Party Authority

The rate of participation in political parties is declining globally for the favor of engaging in civil society bodies. Anthony Giddens says that the percentage of membership in civil society organizations in the world is 20 times the number of those involved in parties, and the percentage is increasing.[13] Civil society organizations have taken on the role of parties gradually and quietly, but this is not separate from the decline of ideologies and the rest of the indicators we will address in this regard. Quantitative studies reveal that the decline takes place in the percentage of members in parties, the percentage of participation in party elections, the percentage of election of party lists, the change of voting trends for parties between election rounds, and the continuous erosion of the social bases of traditional parties. Apparently, the Arab region is among the most declining in this aspect compared to other global political regions.[14]

4. The Decline of the Charisma Factor

The charisma that has often dominated the minds of societies as one of the components of political influence is retreating from the charisma of the heart (emotional attachment due to the elements of the charismatic personality) to

the charisma of the mind, that is, towards astonishment in front of scientific achievements. With the geometric progression of inventors, it became difficult to count and keep track of them, however, their large numbers made the political leader lose his charisma. Thus, it is not surprising that charismatic leaders are gradually fading, and the literature on the subject indicates what some researchers confirm about the correlation between the gradual disappearance of the phenomenon of charisma and the growth of rationality and the critical mind less affected by the "charm of the personality and its attractiveness."[15] The debate about charisma revolves around who makes this phenomenon: Is it the personality traits of the individual leader, or the followers who have a knowledge and value system that correspond to the personality, or is it the situation that allows certain personality traits to emerge? Academic studies indicate that the three dimensions together create the phenomenon of charisma, which requires linking the decline of charisma to the decline of its components.[16]

Despite the validity of the theory of heroism—developed by Thomas Carlyle who tends to explain history on basis of the central role of the heroic individual, the increasing need for political, scientific or economic achievements, requires now more than a hero to accomplish the task, without denying the individual differences among humans.[17]

5. The Decline of the Tradition Authority

a. Globalization has made the interpretation of phenomena in dire need of a perspective other than the traditional understanding of politicians. The interpretation became dependent on cognitive integration, thus marginalizing the political and ideological monopoly of interpretation. The problem here is that the pace of change is clearly accelerating, in three aspects, namely: technology, climate change and globalization. However, the pace of adaptation of social, cultural and political structures is much slower than the pace of change, which creates a deep and growing chasm that does not give politicians or ideologies enough opportunity to adapt to it. It is sufficient in this context to reflect on the consequences for the future of the concept of the family if the scope of human cloning expands (especially the intelligent ones), or the phenomenon of surrogacy expands, which will create a disturbance in the concept of genealogy, and even in emotional ties and the concept of traditional social systems, or if we reach the point of the Cyborg.[18]

b. The media revolution has made the comparisons between what the readers or spectators see and what they experience, lead to the development of critical minds, especially in the field of political behavior and government administration. For example, the increasing ability of the media to "fake reality," which is identical to the expression adopted by the Oxford Dictionary "post-truth political debate," which means that the new media has been able to provide information while using different technical tools so as to reach the desired shaping of the public opinion (for example: hiding the image of bin Laden and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at the moment of the fall, and publicizing the image of Saddam at the moment of capture...). International reports have identified the most prominent challenges facing democratic systems due to the acceleration of technological and economic change. For example, the change of the logistic curve of technology reveals the poor distribution of income in the 25 industrialized countries. During the period following the economic crisis in 2008 to present, in the US, "the incomes of the top 1% grew by more than 31%, compared with less than 0.5% for the remaining 99% of the population," which creates social crises and triggers questions about the capitalist model and its value system.[19]

From another angle, technology will affect many aspects, which are directly or indirectly related to authority:[20]

a. The end of privacy: In the next five years, there will be about 25 billion devices that monitor individuals' devices and their flowing information.

b. Predictive policing, which means the ability of security services to predict crime before it occurs.

c. Automation: Machines will replace humans by 35% in Britain, 77% in China, while currently 6% of jobs are automated in the US every ten years.

Second: Repercussions of Mega-Trends

The trends we mentioned have left a series of repercussions on several aspects, as follows:

1. Political Authority

An increasing global trend towards the following:

a. The election of a ruler: The election of the ruler represents a gradual change towards not accepting the absolute and eternal ruler. Rather, the formal inclusion of this procedure (as in the Arab world) was due to the pressure of mega-trends,

which will continue. There is another dimension this issue reveals, which is that between 1950 and 2020, 76 monarchs around the world were deposed.[21]

b. The reduction of the ruler term: In most countries, the terms of presidents are almost limited to five years, and there are few countries that allow a less or little more. Also, most countries are now limiting the number of times a person is allowed to assume presidential power to two times.[22]

The indicators available in this aspect show the following:[23]

a. The time-limit on the term of the president:

- The term of office of the president has become between 4-5 years in 103 countries compared to 10 countries for a term of six years and 10 countries for a term of seven years.
- As for the number of times for assuming power (in theory or in practice), 103 countries specified two times, one country once, and three countries three times. The rest of the countries did not specify the number of times.
- There are 45 countries where the term of office is not specified (the number of times for renewal has been deleted for the Chinese president).

If we take Africa as an illustrative example, we will find that between 1945 and 1990 there were only six African countries that set the term of office for the president. However, by 2010, the number became 49 countries (out of 54 African countries) that set the term at two times, while Seychelles set it at three times.

b. The increasing number of parties participating in power reduces the role of the president, and the increasing complexity and intertwining between different fields complicates the ability to understand different phenomena, which makes the president in need of many experts. Thus, the scope of those participating in decision-making has expanded, as most of the alternatives are set by the technocrats, and the president chooses between them. This means that the technocrat is the one who prepares the local environment for decision-making.

c. Declining power of the official media in favor of a new media sector produced by the information revolution and the Internet, which fired a bullet of mercy at the majestic image of the leader, or the authority of the tribal sheikh, the master, or all forms of social rituals, etc. Rather, these new means destroyed the majestic image of the leader where it is sufficient to mention the display of pictures of the ouster of Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, Nicolae Ceausescu, Evo Morales, etc.

2. The Social Authority

As for the authority of language, it seems that attention to grammar tends to be less important than the semantics of the term (Futures studies scholars tell us that 55% of current English is not understood by Shakespeare at all).[24] Adherence to grammar no longer has that sway, and the reader is no longer interested in grammar, as it is sufficient for him to understand the intended idea. This is what we absolutely notice in the Arabic language, where there is a rebellion against the rules of traditional poetry and rhyme, etc. This is something we find in the English language and elsewhere, and all of this involves a degree of rebellion against the authority of language.[25]

In the field of customs and traditions, an academic study issued by Stanford University[26] has tackled the relationship between the developments of "fashion" and the political values and structure, in different historical and contemporary stages. The study wonders why the clothing styles that are less "submissive" to the orders of social authority are increasing (see for example ripped pants, or the transformation of some shirts into billboards on the chest and abdomen), as this is not an "immoral act as many see it," but rather a "collective unconsciousness that silently revolts, where the decisions against the rules of behavior are individually made." Perhaps the idea of fashion is in essence a rebellion against a "peremptory dress code."

The above leads to two conclusions:

a. Political values (freedom, equality or justice) do not appear only in electoral behavior, demonstrations or political violence. Rather, it is necessary to read beyond the transformations in architecture, fashion, arts, literature, etc., to infer future political trends.

b. Reconstructing hierarchies of tribes, gender, color, religion, language, etc. The restructuring of the social hierarchy will have repercussions that will lead to the weakening of the traditional political center.

3. The Economic Authority

If we ask about the impact of the multiplicity of commodity forms that serve one purpose on the concept of "implicit authority," then pencils, Bic pens or liquid ballpoint pens have retreated in favor of countless forms in their colors and shapes and even ways of using them. The pen may even be on its way to extinction

with the increase of use of computers as the number of times the pen is used has become less. What is true for the pen can be applied to all commodities, markets, currencies and the interrelationship between the local economy and the globalized economy. Thus, is the American company in China part of the American economy or the Chinese economy? General Motors (GM) changed its slogan "What is good for America is good for GM" to "What is good for GM isn't necessarily good for America."

Third: Summary of the Position on Authority

I know that the issue of authority in its political, social and economic sense raises many observations. This calls for looking at the issue from two angles:

a. Historical and not immediate trends, which means the analysis of phenomena through the mega-trend and linking events and sub-trends to that.

b. Paying attention to the increasing rate of symmetry of the political, economic and social systems of different societies. Consequently, the historical differences on which authority—in its various forms—has built its power are changing, paving the way for a new authority that is less hegemonic, on the one hand, and more participatory and less linked to geography or to the immediate social environment, on the other hand. This is what our political, social and economic systems seem to be insufficiently aware of.

Let us dissociate from the current reality, and look at historical trends to realize the silent rebellion that will turn into a declared one later. It is not permissible to separate political, social, economic and scientific rebellions from globalization with its scientific and secular essence, due to the massive intertwining among the different structures of all societies. Accordingly, the subconscious hidden in the social and political structures is the driver that futures studies must place at the center when monitoring trends, rather than being merely preoccupied with immediate events or sub-trends.

It is known that futures studies are concerned with change; accordingly, the status of authority becomes linked to changes and their impact on: peremptory rules; influence; the importance of the position or the person occupying it; and the extent to which the existing knowledge is compatible with the lived reality. This means the necessity of studying the foundations of authority identified by Max Weber at:

1. Traditions: These depend on the strength of social institutions that protect the traditional value system.[27]
2. Charisma: It depends on personality traits (like most revolutionary systems).
3. Rational legality: It is based on obedience to the rules of whoever is in office (bureaucratic systems).

It seems, at the present time, that the first and second sources are weakening in favor of the third, which raises a question about the reasons for this decline. Here, these indicators must be mentioned:[28]

1. The problem of replacing the authority of the elected by the authority of the expert, where both have their own legitimacy.
2. Globalization (market, culture, power selection mechanisms, etc.) has weakened local traditions.
3. Globalization has led to the expansion of the elite bases, and scientific creativity has weakened the chances of charisma...
4. The decline of the status of the nation-state, as the erosion of the state takes place from above (through delegating some of its powers to international organizations, multinational companies, non-governmental organizations, etc.), and from below (minorities, sub-cultures, migrations, violent organizations and the local community... etc.). The traditional state is giving up its traditional functions, and the state has become "bigger than minor problems but smaller than major problems,"[29] which explains the depth of internal turmoil and the cracking of the walls of the nation-state. Otherwise, how can we explain that from 1989 to present, 5% of wars were international wars while the rest were internal wars in the nation-state,[30] resulting in the deaths of nine million people and 65 million refugees?[31] The linear decline of international wars and the increase of civil wars indicate the expansion of the non-zero game of international relations, and the growth of organic ties at the expense of mechanical ties as described by Emile Durkheim in his well-known theory of the division of labor.
5. Declining trust in governments as the Edelman Trust Barometer indicated that the study of samples from industrialized and underdeveloped countries in different continents reveals continuous decline in people's trust in governments, business institutions, non-governmental organizations and the media.[32]

A study on the levels of trust in governments between 1981 and 2000 implies a general decline, but at different rates in different regions of the world, as follows:[33]

1. Latin America: 26%.
2. Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics: 29%.
3. Western Europe: 4%.

Fourth: Future Authority Scenarios[34]

When building a matrix of mutual influence between these data and their interactions, scenarios of the upcoming forms of political power emerge through the interaction of three parties:

Table 2: Matrix of Mutual Influence of the Components of the Political Community

Parties	Government	Citizens	Giant digital companies	Size of Influence
Government	*	2	1	3
Citizens	2	*	1	3
Giant, especially digital, companies	3	2	*	5

Based on the matrix, the structure of authority "in the future" is moving towards one of the following models:

1. Auto-democracy

It is mainly characterized by decentralized authority and self-organizing communities. The orientation drivers for such a scenario are:

a. Widening social gap.
b. Loosening the grip of power.
c. Limited public services.

This will result in:

a. Sensing the power of citizens so they themselves manage public utilities.
b. Electronic means of communication will spread effective ideas quickly.

c. The strength of citizens' participation in political affairs at the local level, leaving the rest indirectly to the central authorities and major corporations.

The model drivers are:

a. Widening social gap.

b. Erosion of the financial capabilities of the state.

c. The growing role of digital platforms.

d. Decentralization and the decreasing size of the administrative apparatus.

2. Private Algocracy

Which means replacing bureaucratic rules, management and control by a computer network through a set of mathematical, logical and sequential steps necessary to solve a problem. This process is run by companies that acquire data and information from different national sources and manage the decision-making processes of individuals and governments.

The function of this model is:

a. Data on all parties is accumulated by digital giants.

b. This is monitored by major surveillance companies, and they are not required to disclose their information or sources.

c. Analyzing and identifying the political interests of the individual through his data (smart election).

The model drivers are:

a. Giant digital companies cooperate with each other to the extent of great control.

b. Informational and data integration of everything.

c. Expanding the economic activities of giant digital companies to include public services.

d. Reducing democracy in public life.

e. Replacing the United Nations by World Economic Forum.

3. Collaborative Government

This is done through:

a. Expanding the artificial intelligence circle to analyze data in a specific time.

b. Encouraging open and creative governments.

c. Enhancing data protection and privacy.

d. Increasing the valuation of unpaid businesses.

e. Increasing citizen involvement in the government decision-making process.

4. Over-Regulatocracy

It is mainly characterized by excessiveness and complexity in the systems through which it operates, and digital platforms are nationalized and placed under the supervision of a democratic government. Also, services are available, but obtaining them goes through great complications, which will end when most trust in the government is lost.

Its drivers are:

a. The increased criticism of global digital companies.

b. The increasing use of artificial intelligence in decision-making.

c. Increased need for social protection policies to meet growing social challenges.

d. Increased need to justify public spending and accountability leads to increased bureaucratic hurdles.

Conclusion

1. An accelerated decline in the status of power based on traditions, charisma and ideology in varying degrees.
2. Shifting the authority from being a ruler to a facilitator.
3. The widening base of the decision-makers and the erosion of the authority of the ruler.
4. The decline of the role of bureaucratic authority in favor of giant digital companies.
5. The increasing similarity of political systems.
6. Expanding the base of organic links at the expense of automated links.

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Chapter Five

The Future of Arab-Chinese Relations in 2030

The Future of Arab-Chinese Relations in 2030

Introduction

Change constitutes the central unit of analysis in futures studies. Without change, the concept of time ceases as time is a quantity of motion; hence the relative concept of time since Heraclitus and his famous phrase "No man ever steps into the same river twice" to Albert Einstein and al-Khwarizmi and his statement that "time is counted by motion."

We initially believe that one of the gaps in contemporary futures studies in the Arab world is the lack of understanding of the relationship between accurate predictions in the study of phenomena, and the methodology of dealing with time as a relative rather than absolute concept. This latter concept assumes that time precedes phenomenon; thus, it is not an empirical concept but it exists in the mind like Plato's "ideals," while the relative concept does not see time as separate from the movement and the phenomenon, as we indicated with al-Khwarizmi and other philosophers and scientists. Einstein believes that moving the clock forward does not mean that your age has increased as the container of time must be filled with movement, which leads to another point represented in the sense of time and the rhythm of movement in it, as is evident in the concept of the philosopher Gustav Feschner about the sense of time in his theory of the elements of psychophysics. This makes us conclude that the year in Beijing is not the year in Nouakchott, Sanaa or Beirut, and accordingly, studying the future of Arab-Chinese relations needs a new methodology that depends on the relativity of time.[1]

This means that the methodology of monitoring change in international relations requires adherence to the relative concept of time and awareness of the complexities of predicting the pattern of the relationship between two parties with varying rhythms of change and connotations of time.

To solve these problems in studying the future of Arab-Chinese relations, it is necessary to distinguish between the levels of interaction between the two sides as follows:[2]

1. Distinguishing between levels of change, as there are four levels for each phenomenon from the perspective of change:

a. The event: This is represented in any amount of change in the relationship between the Arab and Chinese sides, no matter how simple or individual (commodity price rise, the death of a political figure, a diplomatic problem, a specific scientific discovery, the victory of a sports team, etc.).

b. Sub-trend: It is the interconnection of a group of "events" related to a particular phenomenon or dimension. For example, the increase of Arab students in Chinese universities, the translation from Arabic to Chinese, or the Confucius centers in Arab countries form, when linked together, a sub-trend in the cultural dimension, which can be applied to the interdependence of economic or political events.

c. Trend: It is the change of interrelated sub-trends. Thus, the increase in Arab-Chinese cultural interaction, the increase in Chinese or Arab tourists to the other party, or the increase in the size of Chinese or Arab diplomatic missions to the other party, all indicate sub-trends uniting to form a trend in the Arab-Chinese relationship.

d. Mega-trend: It is the expression of a specific path of one of the dimensions of the phenomenon, which continues for a long time and includes overlapping dimensions. For example, the increase of Chinese-Arab trade volume since more than four decades, the investments between the two sides during the same period, the employment in labor markets and the Chinese loans to Arab countries are all indications of a mega-trend of the economic sector.

2. The dynamics of change: The change of the Arab-Chinese relations may be linear, that is, it moves in one direction (negative or positive), and it may be non-linear, which calls for realizing the effects of this movement on monitoring change and its trends, and thus employing the Futures Wheel technique to track the successive and interrelated repercussions of the dynamics of change in Arab-Chinese relations.

3. Acceleration: Researchers in futures studies of international relations agree that the pace of change of events, sub-trends, trends or mega-trends must be monitored to determine the period these dimensions need to be taken into account when projected onto the future. It is known that change may take a stable character (or the so-called monotonous change), or it may be volatile (increases or decreases from one period to another), or accelerating (speed of change increases in each stage compared to the previous one). For example, the period between

various scientific inventions is decreasing, which is known as the logistic curve in technological prediction. Thus, it is necessary to consider this acceleration in any sector of the Arab-Chinese and link it to the levels of change in other dimensions to measure the cross-impact among phenomena.

In light of the previous methodology, we will **monitor the mega-trends** of Chinese-Arab relations in order to depict their future picture, then establish a cross-impact matrix to measure the cross-impact between indicators and dimensions of the relationship between the Arabs and China. Ultimately, the time series technique will be employed to determine the phenomenon in 2030.

By linking events and sub-trends, as mentioned above, the mega-trends of Chinese-Arab relations are represented in the following:

First: Mental Images and Historical Memory Between Arab and Chinese Societies

In a study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) about the mental image that societies store of each other, Hadley Cantril and his research team reached an important conclusion: the dedication of mirror image is the result of the nature of the historical relationship between the two sides,[3] that is, the historical relations between two peoples leave mirror mental images, where each side maintains psychological impressions and intellectual convictions towards the other side and draws the characteristics of its national character. A negative image indicates an obstacle to the future development of the relationship, while a positive image constitutes a strong motive for strengthening and developing the relationship.

The Hydraulic theory, developed by German scientist Karl August Wittfogel, attempts to compare the river civilizations in both the Pharaonic civilization (Egypt), the Mesopotamian civilization (Iraq) and the Yellow River civilization (China). It provides an explanation for the convergence in patterns of thinking and political structures in these societies by linking this similar infrastructure (control of water resources, agriculture and production tools), and the superstructure (thought, literature, arts, metaphysics… etc.) in the Arab and Chinese societies, which constitutes a basis for rapprochement and harmonious vision between the two sides.[4]

Historically, concerning diplomatic relations, we find that the first ambassador of the Rightly-Guided Caliphate State at the time of ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan was to China, which is an extension of an image drawn by a call attributed to the Prophet Muhammad “to seek knowledge even in China,” not to mention that most of the first Chinese inventions were transferred to the Arab Islamic state, while mathematics, medicine and other sciences produced by the Arab-Islamic civilization reached China.[5]

Arab-Chinese relations in the eighth century CE reached the point of alliance, when the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid sent military support to control unrest in Chinese regions. Also, the voyages of the Chinese sailor Zheng He, especially the fourth and fifth voyages, reached the Arab shores during the first third of the 15th century.[6] This was followed by the subjugation of both the Arab region and China to Western control, which formed a common memory for the Arab and Chinese sides towards “one enemy.”

In the period of Arab liberation, especially from 1952 (the beginning of the Nasserite period) to 1970, the relations between the two sides went through two phases:[7]

1. The stage of mutual misunderstanding: This period lasted from 1949 (the victory of the Chinese revolution) to 1955 (the Bandung Conference). During this period, most Arab countries sought diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China (Taiwan) contrary to Chinese popular aspirations. Also, Chinese media at that period addressed the Palestine issue as if the Zionist movement was a national liberation movement parallel to a Western-Arab alliance. Chinese media at that stage even described Egyptian President Gamal ‘Abdul Nasser a “military dictator.”

2. The stage of transformation towards a positive relationship: The Bandung Conference (the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)) in 1955 constituted a turning point towards the re-correction of the relationship between the Arabs and China. After Egypt’s nationalization of the Suez Canal and the Tripartite Aggression (Britain, France and Israel) in 1956, the image of the Arab national liberation movement became clearer to the elites and the Chinese society. China’s recognition of the Algerian interim government in 1958 was another turning

point as the People's Republic of China (PRC) was the first non-Arab country to recognize the interim Algerian government. Moreover, China's relations with the Palestinian liberation movement developed broadly, and China supported Arab positions in all international forums, especially after China occupied its permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council in 1971; where Algeria was among the countries that presented this membership issue to the UN General Assembly.

A review of Arab history from the angle of international conflicts unequivocally indicates that the mental image about Asians among Arabs is less hostile than that about the West. This makes the development of the Arab relations with Asia unconcerned with the capitalist colonial control and the Western arrogant perspective, kept in the Arab historical memory. Thus, these conditions create an environment conducive to the mission of the Arab diplomat to nurture the pace of the pivot to the east. Colonial wars and the western occupation of Arab lands since the Crusades, then the waves of settlement invasion in the Maghreb and Palestine, as well as the campaigns of Napoleon Bonaparte, represent a deeper memory with negative connotations, when compared with the legacy of Arab-Chinese relations.

Anthropological studies of the cultural and societal structures in these Asian societies indicate that they are "relatively close" to Arab societies in comparison to Western societies. Also, the Muslim presence in a large number of Asian societies reinforces this aspect, as population data indicate that Muslims of Asia (non-Arabs) constitute 74.5% of the world's Muslims and 28% of the population of Asia.[8]

Despite some contemporary circumstances (which we will address later in this study) of the Arab-Asian relations in general, and China in particular, Arab public opinion polls of various periods and sources, confirm the positive Arab view toward China, whether at the level of the Arab public or the elites. This is evident in the results of the following surveys:[9]

Table 1: Attitudes of Arab Public Opinion: A Comparison of the Stances Towards the US and China

Indicator	US (%)	China (%)
Favored as a superpower	7	23
Favorable country to live	7	8
Preferred country to study	20	2
The country posing the biggest threat (2010) to the category of 36 yrs and over	80	4
Acceptance of it as a mediator to settle the problems of the Arab region	11	49
Acceptance of it as a mediator to settle international problems	8	51
General attitude toward the country (positive)	20	62
Would develop economic relations with it	24	54
More aid to Arab countries	48	57
The position of the elites on strengthening the relationship with the country	21	34
Taking a just position on the Palestine issue	8	88

The previous table indicates that the image of China in the Arab mind, on the level of the public and the elite, is dominated by the positive aspect, which increases the possibilities of developing the bilateral relations. If we add to this the negative image about Israel in the Chinese mind, the possibilities of positive development of the Arab-China relations are further enhanced. In response to the question "How do you view Israel's influence in the world," 57% of the Chinese sample said that it was closer to the negative role compared to 15% who described it as positive.[10] Yet, this should not hide the beginning of a positive shift in Israeli public opinion toward China. In 2018–2019, international opinion polls revealed an increase in Israeli positive view of China by up to 11%, which is an important indicator, due to developments of the Arab-Israeli-Chinese relations network (we will return to this later), not to mention that the volume of Chinese investments and contributions to the development of Israeli infrastructure has participated to strengthening the Israeli individual's perspective of China.[11]

Second: The Expansion of the Arab-China Trade and Economic Relations[12]

1. The comparison of the Arab-China trade volume indicates two important phenomena: Its continuous increase, which at the beginning of 2018 reached $244.3 billion, an increase of 28% from 2017, compared to $25.4 billion in 2003 and about $30 billion in 2014. In 2020, according to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, it increased to $266.4 billion, which means an annual increase of about $15 billion. Chinese imports from Arab countries amounted to $146 billion in 2019, an increase of 4.8% year on year. In the same period, Chinese exports to Arab countries amounted to $120.4 billion, up 14.7% year on year.

2. Chinese data showed that Chinese direct investments in all Arab countries amounted to $1.42 billion in 2019, an increase of 18.8% compared to the previous year. The value of project contracts signed by Chinese companies with Arab countries amounted to $32.5 billion in 2018, down 8.7% year on year, while the business value of Chinese companies amounted to $30.5 billion, up 9.8% year on year. Chinese official figures indicate that the total volume of China's investments in the Arab region rose from $36.7 billion in 2004 to $224.3 billion in 2018.

3. Chinese aid to Arab countries: In 2018, China provided an aid package to Arab countries amounting to about $23 billion, about 87% of which was in the form of loans allocated to develop projects and create job opportunities, and $90.6 million of this aid was in the form of humanitarian and construction aid to Syria, Yemen, Jordan and Lebanon. Egypt was also lent up to $1.2 billion to construct a 68 km electric railway reaching to the new Egyptian administrative capital. Egypt also received a Chinese investment to build 18 towers in the business district in the administrative capital, at $3 billion, and China provided 85% of which as a loan, the repayment of which starts after 10 years, that is around 2030.

In February 2019, the KSA signed 12 joint trade agreements with China worth $28 billion. Aramco's share alone amounted to $10 billion, as the company signed an agreement to establish a complex for refining oil and petrochemical industries in China. The UAE also signed 16 agreements with China in the fields of economy, oil and environment. These agreements included entrusting the development of a residential and entertainment area in the vicinity of Beijing Daxing International Airport to the Emirati company Emaar through an Emirati investment of $11 billion.

4. Energy relations: Arab oil is of great importance to China. The volume of Arab oil exports to China in 2018 amounted to about $107.7 billion, while 3 Arab countries were among the top 5 countries covering the major part of China's energy need in the same year. These 3 countries were: KSA in second place (worth $29.7 billion), Iraq in fourth place (worth $22.4 billion), and Oman in fifth place (worth $17.3 billion).

5. Chinese-Arab employment and tourism: Data issued by the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in 2019 showed that the number of exchanged visitors between China and Arab countries increased by an average of 16.5% annually throughout 2014–2019 thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The number of Arab visitors to China in 2018 reached a total of 338.8 thousand Arabs, while about 1.456 million Chinese visitors visited Arab countries for tourism as a first stop, with an increase of 0.7% and 8.9% for 2018–2019. Flights between the Arab countries and China reached an average of 28 per day.

6. The BRI constitutes a future horizon for Arab-Chinese relations. China has signed agreements with 18 Arab countries to participate in this initiative, and 9 Arab countries have joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, with these relations covering various energy sectors. The League of Arab States signed a memorandum of understanding with the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization in China, while the China Atomic Energy Agency signed another memorandum of understanding with the Arab Atomic Energy Agency to establish a training center for the peaceful use of atomic energy in the Arab region.

7. Arab-Chinese cultural cooperation: Chinese data reveal that since 1987, China began forming the Chinese Society for Arabic Literature Studies, and many classic Chinese literary studies have been translated into Arabic, while Arab relations have deepened with the increase in the number of Arab and Chinese students in universities on the other side. As of 2019, there were 20,149 Arab students in Chinese universities, compared to 1,129 Chinese students in Arab universities. China also increased the number of Confucius Institutes in Arab countries to reach 12, in addition to four Confucius classrooms in 9 Arab countries.

Third: Predominance of Pacifism in Contemporary Arab China Relations[13]

All the above-mentioned evidence indicates that the general feature of the Arab-Chinese relationship is pacifism, as the Arab-China relations are devoid of the tendency of military intervention in the Arab region or founding active military Chinese bases in the Arab region. Also, China is not among the top countries in arms sales to the region.

Western sources estimate that the US has about 32–35 thousand military personnel, most of whom are in the Gulf states, in addition to a presence in Syria and Jordan. If we compare Western military facilities with Chinese military facilities in the Arab region, we find that there are about 30 Western military bases or facilities in Arab countries (13 facilities for the US, 6 France, 4 Italy, 2 Russia and 5 UK), while China has only a logistic base in Djibouti.

In 2015, China issued its first national military strategy, whose main tasks are as follows:

1. Dealing with all kinds of emergencies and military threats against China's national territorial integrity as well as its air and sea sovereignty.
2. Supporting national reunification of all Chinese territory.
3. Preserving the new forms of security and interests of the nation, and preserving the integrity of external interests.
4. Maintaining strategic deterrence and preparing for nuclear counterstrikes.
5. Participating in regional and international security cooperation for the sake of regional and global peace.
6. Strengthening efforts to combat infiltration, separatism and terrorism, and protect national political security and social stability.
7. Participating in humanitarian disaster relief.

Although China has adopted a foreign policy of "military non-intervention" since 1953, and although this policy is embodied in the preamble to the Chinese Constitution, the indications for adapting this principle to the new developments in the world are increasing clearly. Several indicators can be presented as examples of this adaptation:

1. The announcement of the Chinese President Hu Jintao, in 2004, regarding "new historical missions" for the Chinese People's Liberation Army to protect vital Chinese interests abroad. This was reflected in the increase of Chinese supply bases in maritime areas, outside the Chinese borders. The Chinese Xinhua News Agency reported in January 2013 that there was a tendency to build 18 Chinese bases on the high seas (Egypt's Port Said and Lebanon's Tripoli may be candidates for that). In addition, there is an increasing tendency to build aircraft carriers supporting the movement abroad.

2. The statement by Wang Yi, the Chinese minister of foreign affairs, in December 2014, that his country could "help Iraq to defeat ISIS." Although he did not specify the mechanism for this assistance, the statement suggests a willingness to participate in joint combat missions with other powers when feeling the threat to Chinese national security and interests. China's intervention in Libya to save its nationals (about 36,000 individuals) might be an indication of this trend, especially since China lost in Libya about $20 billion in investments, which made it realize that abandoning other regions may generate the same experience, so the principle of non-military intervention abroad must be modified.

3. In September 2014, China announced its willingness to send 700 infantrymen to South Sudan as part of international forces even though Sudan does not provide more than 5% of China's oil needs. China also sent troops to southern Lebanon as part of international forces, the same as it did in Mali and South Sudan. Also, the commander of the international mission on the island of Cyprus between 2011 and 2014 was a Chinese officer.

4. China conducted joint military exercises with Iran in September 2014, which had clear political overtones, and joint military exercises with Iran and Russia were repeated in 2021. Indeed, the strategic agreement in March 2021 between China and Iran confirms "China's policy of adaptation" to the developments in the security situation in the Middle East, especially since the agreement does not refer to security dimensions or cooperation in the defense industries,[14] while some reports indicate that there are possibilities for military cooperation, especially in the areas of countering terrorist movements and intelligence cooperation.[15]

Fourth: Chinese Concerns Regarding Arab Regional Instability

Available data from various references indicate that the Arab region is one of the most geopolitical regions that are politically unstable. Based on about 45 major political, economic, social and military indicators, with about 300 sub-indicators adopted by international standards concerned with measuring the degree of stability, the following is noticed on the stability scale, which consists of 5 positive levels (0 - +2.5), and 5 negative ones (0 - –2.5):[16]

1. Only 4 countries fall within the circle of political stability (Qatar, the UAE, the Sultanate of Oman and Kuwait), and the positive points in these countries range from 0.7 to 0.13. These countries ranked 53, 54, 59, and 83 respectively, and they constitute 4.7% of the total Arab population.

2. Fourteen Arab countries, representing 95.3% of the Arab population, fall within the region of instability, with a negative rate of about –1.3. The Arab countries in the lists of political instability occupied ranks ranging from 127 to 195 out of 195 countries monitored in the world.

3. Arab military spending indicators show that Arab military spending rate in relation to GDP is 5.4%, compared to a global spending rate of only 2.2%. This means that international spending reaches 40.7% of the Arab average, knowing that the US is the first supplier of weapons for the Arab region by a large margin compared to the rest of the major countries.

This Arab environment constitutes a source of concern for Chinese foreign policy, given the possibility that all of these aspects will reflect on the development of the Arab-Chinese relationship and affect trade flow, the growth of investment and the development of the BRI across the Arab region.

This means that there are necessities that may push China to shift towards further “soft” external interference, which can be “coercive” later according to the developments. Here, it is sufficient to reflect on the following indicators:[17]

1. An Islamic minority lives in China, including the Turkic-speaking Uyghur minority in the western region of Xinjiang, estimated at about 11 million people, and they have political movements calling for secession from China and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Turkestan. The most prominent of these movements is the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement, which has an arm in

Istanbul hiding behind the East Turkistan Solidarity and Education Association, and there is the Turkistan Islamic Party led by Abdullah Mansour, not to mention the incitement practiced previously by Ayman al-Zawahiri against China on a number of occasions. The region witnessed severe turmoil in 2009, where around 200 people were killed, mostly Han. In 2013, there was a suicide attack in Tiananmen Square in Beijing and in Urumqi in 2014 with car bombs.

In June 2014, China announced the execution of 13 Chinese on charges of joining terrorist groups, meaning that China realizes that it has an environment that may embrace extremist organizations, such as ISIS, and threaten its internal security, Also, it is concerned that the Arab environment constitutes a base for such terrorist organizations. In one speech, in July 2014, ISIS former chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi spoke about what he called China's persecution of Uyghur Muslims, and he listed 20 countries accused of persecuting Muslims, with China topping the list. In late July 2014, a statement by ISIS branch in the Syrian city of Aleppo called on Chinese Muslims to join the caliphate state and immigrate to its territory. It is likely that the Chinese government was taking these calls seriously, especially after the Malaysian Minister of Interior Ahmad Zahid Hamidi stated that about 300 Chinese crossed his country on their way to join ISIS.[18] In early 2015, the Chinese police arrested a number of Turks providing fake passports to Chinese to join ISIS,[19] and three Chinese Islamists were executed by ISIS after they had suspected their desire to escape from Syria,[20] one of whom was a university student from China studying at a Turkish university. Also, in July 2014, the Chinese National Space Administration reported that photographs were taken of tunnels in Xinjiang to smuggle weapons and trainees from neighboring countries.[21]

2. The effects of armed Islamic movements on Chinese foreign interests: These are as follows:[22]

a. Threat to the New Silk Road Project, the Land Road and the Maritime Road: The Silk Road extends across Eurasia (from Beijing to Rotterdam), but it will intersect with the components of the Caliphate state according to the map previously published by ISIS, from what it called Khorasan (which includes parts of China), passing through the Islamic countries of West Asia, especially Iran, Syria and Iraq. The Maritime Silk Road extends from Fujian Province in the southeast of China through the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, especially after its recent expansion, reaching the Mediterranean Sea to

intersect with the land road in Italy, which is also in contact at several points with the project of the caliphate state according to ISIS map (in Asia and the Sinai desert). This means that the project of ISIS or of extremist Islamic movements pose a threat to the Chinese project.

b. Chinese concern—which is clear—about the transfer of Islamic movements to Afghanistan; the increase of their strength, especially following the withdrawal of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the US forces from there; and the possibility of a return to activity of the Wakhan Corridor between the Chinese and Afghan borders, which was used by the Taliban movement to train and arm the fighters of Sinkiang connected to Afghanistan through this corridor.

c. The energy issue: This issue is represented in several aspects:

- According to the estimates of oil sources, China is the first investor in the Iraqi oil sector, and it supplies approximately 20% of its oil needs from Iraq. Also, around 10 thousand Chinese were working in the Iraqi oil sector when ISIS rose to the fore, which means that the chances of the revival of the activity of Islamic movements may pose a major threat to China's energy resources, not to mention the threat to Chinese investments.
- The expansion of the circle of Chinese interests in the energy sector in the neighboring Muslim regions in West Asia (60% of its oil comes from the Middle East). This will urge China to ensure the stability of its oil import sources, especially after some Islamic movements have controlled—at one time—60% of Syria's oil.
- A significant proportion of natural gas pipelines coming from Central Asia pass through Xinjiang, which means that the disruption of this region will pose a threat to these Chinese supplies.
- In response to these developments, and to protect China's interests internally and externally, the Chinese defense and security expenditures have increased remarkably annually, which suggests Chinese concerns about the future. For example, security expenditures on internal security in China increased between 2010–2014 from $87 billion to $135 billion, while defense spending rose in the same period from $84.6 billion to $131.57 billion. It is necessary to note that the Chinese accounting system for defense expenditures does not include the expenses of producing warplanes and warships, as these are placed within the

ministry of heavy industries. Also, the retirement of hundreds of thousands of the military is not counted in defense expenditures, but is counted with the ministry of social affairs, etc. This means that adopting the usual methods of calculating defense expenditures will make Chinese spending greater than the announced figures.

Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) indicate that Chinese military spending rates have increased linearly from 2010 to 2020, and foreign estimates of Chinese military spending indicate that actual spending may be much higher than official figures. In 2019, the Chinese government announced an official defense budget slightly under $178 billion, while SIPRI estimated actual (nominal) spending at $261 billion. The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated China's defense spending at $225 billion.[23]

- It is natural for China to realize that the success of the principle of "multipolarity" that it advocates with Russia is not destined to succeed without contributing with the international community, especially its central forces, to the burdens of international decisions' expenditures. Hence, China will not hesitate to adapt the concept of intervention against Islamic military organizations to serve its interests that I mentioned and in a manner that ensures these interests on the one hand, and the gradual transition from intervention with soft tools, guided by the theory of Zheng Bijian of peaceful rise, to some coercive intervention, on the other hand.

Fifth: The Chinese Theoretical Framework for International Relations[24]

The Chinese political literature in the post-1978 period reveals a certain shift in the Chinese strategic vision of international relations and the international system. The most important of these new shifts can be identified in the following inclinations:

1. Theories of pragmatism at the expense of the ideological perspective:[25] Until the 1990s, discussions in the Chinese political literature revolved around the nature of the international system. These discussions focused on the questions posed by the Chinese thinker QIN in 1978, represented in a number of strategic questions about the nature of the international system and whether it should be viewed from

the angle of war and conflict, or from the angle of peace and development, and whether China achieves its goals through integration into the international system, or through competition and power.

Chinese intellectual literature sought to achieve three strategic goals that were referred to in the theory of peaceful rise, which turned into the theory of peaceful development. The theory, formulated by Chinese thinker Zheng Bijian, called for establishing an international system based on multipolarity, and then shifting from a country seeking to change the existing international system, as was the case in the Mao Zedong period, to one seeking to integrate into the existing system and presenting itself as a leader in the process of globalization. However, it requires being accepted as a country with a special position in the international system commensurate with its rising international position.

These trends were based on an intellectual perspective identified by two theories that prevailed in contemporary Chinese thought after the death of Mao Zedong, namely:[26]

a. The bird-cage theory proposed by Deng Xiaoping, which is based on the idea of not abandoning socialism, while deploying some capitalist mechanisms. That is, China should remain in the "cage of socialism" with the need to expand the space of the cage.

b. The cat color theory, which was formulated by Lou Jiwei, which is an expression of the pragmatic tendency in China, in the post-Mao Zedong period. The color of the cat is not important, what's important is that it hunts mice. That is, what matters are economic and political results no matter what the "ideological color" is.

2. Intellectual trends with a pragmatic tendency were reinforced by the growth of a Chinese nationalist tendency, whose features were embodied in the revival of the Chinese heritage since the reign of Xia (Hsia) (2200 BC), and the work on building more than one hundred national centers to accomplish this task. This was accompanied with a change in curricula that reflects significant indicators; For example: replacing the interpretation of building the wall from repelling the invaders, to the tendency for national unity, and that the watch towers were to facilitate communication between the various Chinese groups, as an indicator of national unity. This indicates a Chinese return to some features of the Westphalian view of the role of the state.

Sixth: Direction of the Chinese Relationship with Israel and the US

Despite what we indicated at the beginning of this study about the stage of "misunderstanding" between the Arabs and China throughout 1949–1955, and despite Arab recognition of Taiwan at the time when Israel recognized the People's Republic of China without recognizing Taiwan, the relationship returned to its positive orientation later (as we mentioned). However, the post-Arab Spring period (2010-present), the emergence of the BRI in 2013, and the expansion of Arab-Israeli normalization since 1979 (the Israeli-Egyptian treaty) to the Jordanian and Palestinian treaties, then waves of Arab normalization with Israel, in addition to the repercussions of the Middle Eastern scene after the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq war, and the American invasion of Iraq and other Arab countries; all of these were variables that produced a series of repercussions with a relative impact on the Arab-Chinese relations as follows:[27]

1. It comes at a time when the US strategic tendency is to gradually and quietly disengage from the deep US involvement in the Middle East, and particularly when China is the number one trading partner of the Middle East. The conditions of US energy independence from the Middle East oil have increased, and there is a European reluctance to expand the scope of NATO's work outside the European framework, which in turn increases the burdens on the US. In addition, Russia seeks to ensure a secure Middle Eastern environment as a strategic belt for its Eurasian project and that would narrow the movement area of the US strategy. For there is a high degree of Chinese-Russian harmony, where both are members in international, regional and intercontinental organizations, not to mention the overlap between the Eurasian project and the BRI.

2. There is an Israeli concern over the prospect of "gradual militarization" of the Chinese project, which necessitates thinking deeply of how to deal with this possibility, whose signs began with the establishment of China military base in Djibouti. A Pentagon report that was submitted to the US congress has outlined this possibility. It indicated that there is a possibility of establishing additional military bases in Pakistan and in countries that have a precedence of for hosting foreign military bases, especially in the Middle East.

3. Israel is thinking about how the Chinese project would affect European-Israeli relations, especially in light of the sharp reaction of some European countries and

the US to Italy's announcement of its participation in the BRI, where the latter is the only one among the seven countries that took this stand.

Seventh: Limits of the Israeli Role in the Chinese Project[28]

The Israeli contribution to the Chinese Belt and Road project can be identified in an infrastructure represented by the following features:

1. The construction of a railroad from Eilat to Ashdod ports to connect the Red Sea to the Mediterranean.

2. Chinese interest in the purchase of Israeli insurance companies or in being contributors in them.

3. Beijing's aspiration to win tenders for the construction and operation of the two private ports in Ashdod and Haifa and a twenty-year concession to operate the latter.

4. China's contribution to the construction of tunnels, and the extension of pipelines to transfer natural gas out of Israel. In 2021, the EuroAsia Interconnector project, which is a subsea cable system connecting the electricity grids of Israel, Cyprus, and Greece with the European transmission network, will be finished, making Israel a pure source of electricity to Europe. In addition, Israel produces in its sunny southern part 200 Mega Watt of renewable energy, and by 2021 the EuroAsia Interconnector project is supposed to contribute significantly to the clean energy from Israel to Europe, and China is working on connecting the EuroAsia Interconnector project to the BRI.

Eighth: Elements of the Israeli Strategic Attraction for China[29]

There is a set of variables that constitute the elements of Israeli attraction for China, and these elements are as follows:

1. The geo-political and geo-strategic position of Israel: It is a connecting point between the three continents (Africa, Asia and Europe), which is of China's interest.

2. Israel is ranked the second lowest investment risk on the Economist Intelligence Unit BRI risk index, out of 63 countries, making the investment in the Israeli market highly attractive for China.

3. Israel is an important gateway to China to access Western technology, especially in light of the intensified US blockade of this aspect of its relation with China. China considers this Israeli aspect important, since there are many partnerships between Israeli companies and American ones in particular and European ones in general.

4. The discoveries of potential energy sources on the shores of the Mediterranean have increased, making Chinese options to access energy sources expand, especially when the indicators of economic convergence between Israel, Greece and Cyprus are increasing.

5. The growing Arab openness to Israel has made China pay attention to the new trade corridors between the Arab countries and Israel.

Ninth: The Israeli Strategic Vision of the Relationship with the Chinese Project[30]

The approach to the relationship with China in Israeli strategic thought can be divided into three trends, with controversy among them, focusing on the future prospects of the Israeli-Chinese relationship in the next three decades.

First Trend: The Security Trend

This trend prevails among the Israeli military and security circles, and believes that China is "employing soft power tactics aimed to make it a new imperialist power that aims to control Southeast Asia, East Africa and the Middle East, while its next targets are the relatively weak economies of Europe." This trend compares between what appears to be a positive image of China today and the contrast between the very positive image of the US in the world before World War I and before it became greatly involved in international wars and how things ended up at a later stage, where now the US is at the top of the world's most hated countries, and this may happen to China later.

Since this trend reflects the Israeli perspective of international relations; where security is one of its main features, it warns against going too far along the Chinese project. For there are concerns over the negative impact of the growing Chinese-Israeli relations on the US-Israeli relations. Since this trend views that the US-Chinese trade competition would particularly increase, it considers that

deepening the relationship with China may threaten the US-Israeli relationship, and would make Israel the back door for China to ease US sanctions on it. There are precedents in this area, for when in 1999 the US forced Israel to cancel a deal with China, through which China was seeking to obtain from Israel an advanced airborne radar system on surveillance planes.

There are also US concerns that the Chinese-Israeli relationship may be a gateway for China to access sensitive US technology, especially in military, security, and computer fields, etc, which could threaten the US-Israeli relations. This trend considers the Chinese presence in Haifa, and facilitating their operation there, could be a Chinese hotspot for gathering information about the US Sixth Fleet stationed there, a matter considered by Washington to be of the utmost gravity.

This trend warns of China's penetration into the Israeli economy domestically or in some academic institutions, citing the Tnuva deal. In this deal, China acquired 56% of the shares of the Israeli dairy company Tnuva worth $ 2.5 billion, knowing that the company's share of Israel's dairy market exceeds 70%. The deal faced fierce resistance in the Israeli Knesset, which saw great risks in it, in case it spread. There are reports that the Israeli government is considering establishing a CFIUS [Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States]-like mechanism to assess risks to Israeli interests from foreign investors with a focus on Chinese entities.

This trend also reinforces its view by raising China's position on Arab issues, especially the Palestinian one. This means that the development of the Chinese-Israeli relations has not affected China's "political positions" on political issues that interest Israel. It cites the following indicators:

1. China's stated position on Palestinian rights, which is closer to the Palestinian side than the Israeli one.
2. China's voting pattern at the United Nations remains unchanged, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China in 1992, and after the opening of the second consulate of Israel in China.
3. China's weak attention to Israeli concerns over China selling arms to Arab countries and Iran.
4. China continues to support the Iranian nuclear agreement, not to mention that the degree of its compliance with the sanctions on Iran remains below Israeli approval.

5. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation countries oppose the accession of Israel to the Asian Development Bank, in which China is a major force. They also oppose providing support to Israeli institutions seeking opportunities from this bank.

Second Trend: The Pragmatic Trend

Contrary to the concerns of the first trend, this trend seems to be more inclined toward developing the relationship with China. It refers to the Chinese-Israeli relationship, especially in the commercial sphere, which is steadily and rapidly growing, where during 2012 to 2015, Chinese investments in Israel saw an increase of 100% each year. By the end of 2018, trade reached $14 billion, and may make even greater leaps once Israeli participation in the Chinese project is enhanced. It is noted that the increasing Chinese investment in Israel is associated with a general trend of declining foreign investment in Israel. This means that China's investments offset the decline (albeit non-linearly) of investment in Israel. China is even involved in 50% of foreign investment projects in Israel. It should be noted that Israeli planning indicates that over the next 30 years, Israel needs an investment of over $200 billion, and this reinforces relations with China.

With the increased Arab openness towards Israel, this trend believes that it is necessary to make Israel a transit point from the Levant to Europe. This requires the development of the Israeli infrastructure and connecting it to the branches of the Chinese project in the Arab countries. As Arab normalization with Israel is expanding, China's political positions towards the Arab issues would become on one hand less important, and on the other it would become less adhering to its traditional positions on these issues.

This trend notes that the Chinese companies are investing in various sectors in Israel, Thus, competing with the local counterparts. This is clear in the Chinese shares in Israeli companies such as: Tnuva, Makhteshim Agan, Shahal, and Nextec, etc. In this regard also, Israeli-Chinese cooperation in the field of water is highlighted, as it seeks to develop the Islamic Western provinces (Xinjiang), which are the home to the Uighurs Muslims, and China is seeking to have stability there. It has already witnessed some armed opposition by Islamic organizations targeting Chinese government facilities, mentioned above.

This trend also notes that in addition to the fact that Israel has joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (which provides banking facilities

to the countries participating in the project), it has formed the Joint China-Israel Bilateral Task Force on Economic Relations headed by Eugene Kandel, which seeks to develop the Israeli role in the project linking the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean across the Gulf of Suez on the one hand, and on the other hand, it monitors the investment sectors between the two parties.

Third Trend: The Reconciling Trend

This trend takes a middle position on Chinese-Israeli relations, trying to reconcile between the security and economic pragmatic perspectives as follows:

1. The Israeli-Chinese cooperation in the field of civilian technology would continue, with extreme caution in military-technological relations. That is moving away from the technology that provokes the US, and focus on other sectors such as new energy sources, agriculture, development of transport technologies, life sciences, etc.
2. Developing trade relations and mutual investment, without letting the Chinese reach deeply in sensitive sectors or to the extent that threatens strategic sectors in Israel.
3. This trend calls on Israel to abandon the caution policy in dealing with the Chinese project, engage in it, strengthen Israeli relations with China, and allow Beijing to become more involved in the Palestinian-Israeli and Gulf-Iranian conflicts.

The Cross-Impact Matrix in the Arab-Chinese Relations and its Future Repercussions

Thirteen indicators were identified based on mega-trends of Arab-Chinese relations, then the correlation coefficient between each indicator and the other 12 indicators was used to determine the following:

1. The most positively influential indicator.
2. The indicator that has the most negative influence.
3. The most positively affected indicator.
4. The most negatively affected indicator.

The future possibilities were analyzed on the basis of the interaction of these 6 indicators, by measuring their values and the acceleration of their change, then determining the situation in 2030 on the basis of the time series technique.[31]

Table 2: The Cross-Impact Between the Indicators of Arab-Chinese Relations

	Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total of impact
1	**Chinese pragmatism**	*	–1	+2	+3	–1	–1	+3	–2	–2	+2	+2	+2	–1	**6**
2	**American Chinese competition**	–2	*	+2	0	+2	+1	+1	+3	+1	+2	+1	–2	+1	**10**
3	**Arab normalization with Israel**	+3	–1	*	+3	+1	–3	+1	–3	+1	–2	+1	+1	–2	**0**
4	**The acceleration of China-Israel relations**	+2	+1	+2	*	–1	–2	+1	–1	–1	–1	+1	+3	–1	**3**
5	**Russian role**	–1	+1	+1	+1	*	–1	–1	+2	–1	–2	+1	0	–1	**–1**
6	**Islamic movements**	–1	+1	–1	+2	–1	*	–1	+2	–1	–1	0	0	+1	**0**
7	**Expansion of Arab-Chinese trade relations**	+2	+1	+1	+1	–1	–1	*	+1	–1	+2	+1	0	–1	**5**
8	**Possibilities of China's militarization of the BRI**	–2	+2	–2	–1	+1	+1	–2	*	–1	–2	+1	–1	+2	**–4**
9	**European tendency to curb the Chinese role**	–1	+1	–1	–1	–1	+1	+1	+2	*	–1	–1	–1	+1	**–1**
10	**The decline of the strategic position of the Middle East in the US strategy**	+2	–2	–1	+1	+1	–1	+1	–1	+2	*	0	–1	–1	**0**
11	**Chinese need for Middle East energy**	+1	+1	0	+1	–1	–1	+2	+2	–1	+1	*	0	+1	**6**
12	**Chinese access to Western technology through Israel**	+2	+2	+1	+3	0	–1	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	*	+1	**12**
13	**Iranian-Israeli relations**	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	+1	–1	+2	+1	+1	0	+1	*	**9**
Total of "affected"		**6**	**7**	**5**	**13**	**0**	**–7**	**6**	**8**	**–2**	**–1**	**8**	**2**	**0**	

Analysis of the Cross-Impact Matrix of Arab-Chinese Relations[32]

After analyzing the correlation coefficient between the variables of the Arab-Chinese relationship based on the quantitative indicators expressing these relations, the cross-impact matrix of the Arab-Chinese relations revealed that the most influential indicators in determining the future of the Arab-Chinese relations are:

1. The level of US-Chinese competition in the region.
2. The Chinese tendency to deepen the relationship with Israel as a bridge to access advanced Western technology, and to employ the geostrategic position of Israel within the BRI.
3. The nature of Iranian-Israeli relations and China's attempt to curb the effects of this relationship on the development of Chinese-Middle Eastern relations.

As for the indicators most affected by the trends of Arab-Chinese relations, these are:

1. The possibility of accelerating the development of Israeli-Chinese relations during the next 10 years.
2. The possibility of a relative militarization of the Chinese presence along the BRI stations, especially if the US-Chinese competition intensified further.
3. The continuing Chinese need for Arab energy sources at least in the next decade.

Accordingly, and based on the cross-impact matrix, the future picture of Arab-Chinese relations until 2030 will tend to be as follows:

1. China's continuing tendency towards the relative and slow militarization of some facilities of the Chinese BRI in the region, to ensure the security of Chinese interests without reaching confrontation with major international powers, bearing in mind that the project is destined to be completed in 2035, and that the project's geography expansion to 147 countries makes militarism all the more necessary.
2. Maintaining pragmatism in Chinese politics, and persistence in the strategy of not engaging China in bilateral conflicts between the Middle Eastern regional powers (Iran/ KSA, Iran/ Israel, Turkey/ Egypt, Palestine/ Israel, etc.).

3. Relative involvement of Chinese diplomacy in working on the gradual transformation of Middle Eastern international relations from the level of the zero-sum game to the level of the non-zero game, and strengthening the management of competition with what William James called the moral equivalent of war.[33]

Based on these results, the Arab countries, individually or collectively, should establish the strategy of their relations with China on the basis of these three rules, which we believe will become more stable in the Chinese strategy towards the region until 2030.

Endnotes

[1] For further details on the concept of time in futures studies between the absolute and the relative, see Walid ‘Abd al-Hay, “Futures Studies: Origin, Development and Importance,” *Al-Tasamoh* journal, Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Muscat, issue 3, 30/6/2003, pp. 67–69.

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As for the time series: The elements of the time series in statistics are as follows:

- Secular trend.
- Seasonal variations.
- Cyclical variations.
- Irregular variations.

[32] The cross-impact matrix was analyzed by measuring the correlation coefficient between each indicator and the rest of the 13 indicators, and later two issues were identified based on the levels of the correlation coefficient between the indicators:

Determining the indicators that have the most negative or positive **impact** on the rest of the indicators.

Determining the indicators most "**affected**" negatively or positively.

After that, the levels of the correlation coefficient are divided into four levels (high correlation 3 points, medium 2, weak 1, no effect 0). Then, the final result of the strength of each indicator is determined.

Determining the highest indicators and placing each of them in the Futures Wheel, and tracking their repercussions until 2030.

Cross-impact matrix studies can be found in: Kenneth Chao, "A New Look at the Cross-Impact Matrix and its Application in Futures Studies," *Journal of Futures Studies*, May 2008, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 45–51, https://jfsdigital.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/124-A04.pdf

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Chapter Six

Arab Ranking in Global Indices and Its Projected Impacts

Arab Ranking in Global Indices and Its Projected Impacts

Introduction

One of the problems of evaluating the achievements of any country, political region, or international organization, is the defining of the criteria on the basis of which countries are compared and ranked. There is difference between the "impression" one has about a particular country, which often dominates the public opinion, locally, regionally or internationally, and the evaluation and comparison that are based on certain quantified indicators that are more realistic. It is known that strategic planning of any country, region or international body are based on realistic evaluation rather than on mere impressions.

Index Measurement Methodology

Most researchers in the field of quantification of various social phenomena consider the positivism of the French philosopher Auguste Comte the first step in this context. He called for dealing with social issues in a manner similar to the subjects of natural sciences. His call was well-received by the French thinker Pierre Guillaume Frédéric Le Play (19th century), who is credited with establishing what has become the modern-day social survey. Then, in the 1950s and 1960s, other scales appeared especially in psychological studies, and then they were found in almost all branches of social sciences, including political science and international relations.[1]

The indices to measure the economic, social and political dimensions are constructed by following a number of steps, they are:[2]

1. An index is elaborated, which is based on sub-indices, and a simple index is constructed based on a subset of indicators.

2. The sub-indices have weights, which are averaged to give way to the index. These weights are determined based on mathematical rules and social theories. Through comparing, we found out that the differences between the weights of the same index in the different models was small. Therefore, in most cases, the

sum of differences in weights does not affect the country's ranking or the general level of its achievement. Each sub-index is based on data gathered from the state, research institutions, regional or international organizations or academic studies (or the media when necessary). Sometimes normalization[3] is used to standardize the indices of different weights.

3. The weight of the index is based on the Cross-Impact Matrix, where the correlation coefficient between each sub-index and the rest of the indices is measured to know its effect (positive or negative), and accordingly weights are distributed over the indices. The indices with highest impact (positively or negatively) are given the highest weights, then the weights of the rest of the indicators are arranged on this basis.

4. The ranking of a state is based on the total points it obtained in the sum of the sub-indices of each major index, then in the sum of all indices. It is important to point out that some main indices (such as Political Stability) contain a large number of sub-indices, some of them have been classified as a main index in other models. For example, the GINI index which measures the equality in income distribution, is found in some models a main index, and in others a sub-index, thus to be more accurate, it is required to be calculated once.

5. Some models are based on the comparison between countries, either at the global or regional level. Furthermore, depending on the social or political index to be measured, the comparison would be done in most cases on the basis of the general average of a number of years rather than one year.

The Study Indices

For the ranking of Arab countries, we relied on ten indices that have 413 sub-indices, where their weights are based on the aforementioned rule. When we made measurements based on a number of measurement models, we did not find any statistically significant differences. The following table displays the indices we used, their weights and their sub-indices:[4]

Table 1: Indices and Weights

Index	Sub-Indices	Relative weight
Democracy	60	5
Political Stability	305[5]	5
Gini	2	4
Militarization	5	4
Globalization	24	3
Research and development (R&D) expenditure	1	2
Crime	4	2
Poverty	10	2
Health expenditure	1	2
Literacy	1	2
Total	**413**	**31**

Measurement Results of Arab Countries

Among the difficulties we faced during the preparation of this research, there were a number of discrepancies that we had to take into account when setting the results:

1. "Some" Arab countries such as Syria, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia, Iraq, Sudan and to a lesser extent Egypt, had witnessed during the 2010–2020 period difficult circumstances that caused significant changes in the value of indices. Consequently, I have considered the indices of the three years before the decade of the Arab turmoil, in addition to the last three years (2018–2021). Then, the average value of a certain country was concluded, while taking into consideration more than one model for precision purposes.

2. When determining the ranking of Arab countries among each other and then determining their ranking globally, we noticed that the regional ranking is inconsistent with the global ranking, and the reason is due to:

a. The number of countries on a regional basis is a fixed one (19 Arab countries that were measured), while in international models there are indices that measure more than 200 countries (independent countries or dependent territory), while others measure 193 countries (The number of countries in the United Nations), or measure the countries of which data is available, which sometimes may be less than a hundred countries. Hence, the regional ranking differs from the global one, though with limited difference.

b. The impact of the turmoil decade (2010–2020) was different from one Arab country to another, where the economies of some countries have undergone major transformations that exceed those of other Arab countries. As a result, due to these exceptional circumstances, some countries were ranked higher than others. Therefore, to determine the mega-trend of the index, some results have been modified based on the trend of the measured index, using the statistical technique of time series analysis, used in future studies.

The measurement results were as follows:

Table 2: Indices of Arab Countries 2018–2021

	Democracy[6]	Political stability[7]	Gini[8]	Militarization[9]	Globalization[10]	R&D expenditure (% of GDP)[11]	Crime per 100 thousand[12]	Poverty (%)[13]	Health expenditure[14]	Literacy[15]
Egypt	2.93	–1.21	31.5	705	68.34	0.72	46.83	32.5	4.95	26
Libya	1.95	–2.48	30.7	484	55.28	0.51	61.78	33	6.1	12
Tunisia	6.59	–0.63	32.8	574	68.72	0.68	43.69	15.20	7.29	18.2
Algeria	3.77	–0.86	27.4	743	56.15	0.54	52.03	5,5	6.22	19
Morocco	5.04	–0.33	39.5	720	70.53	0.73	48.66	15	5.31	26
Mauritania	3.92	–0.75	32.6	848	50.57	0.01	43.8	31	4.58	47
Sudan	2.54	–1.76	45	538	46.34	0.30	42.34	46.5	4.51	39
Jordan	3.62	– 0.32	33.7	833	73.4	0.71	39.96	15.70	7.79	2.1
Syria	1.43	–2.73	32.70	796	50.83	0.02	68.4	35.20	3.57	15
Iraq	3.62	–2.53	29.5	664	46.73	0.04	70.5	18.90	4.11	14
KSA	2.08	–0.66	54.9	735	67.73	0.82	60.1	12.70	6.36	5.3
Lebanon	4.16	–1.65	31.8	728	68.63	0.79	67.6	27.40	8.35	4.9
Kuwait	3.80	0.24	53.9	818	71.86	0.06	33.42	4.1	5	3.8
UAE	2.70	0.63	48.9	713	75.51	1.30	53.3	7.2	4.23	7
Qatar	3.24	0.67	56.3	571	75.32	0.51	52.1	3.3	2.49	7
Oman	3.0	0.37	55.1	751	63.73	0.22	49	6.2	4.13	4
Bahrain	2.49	–0.59	57,4	739	68.92	0.10	55.4	12.5	4.13	4.3
Yemen	1.95	–2.67	36.7	671	48	0.27	61.3	48.60	4.88	34
Palestine	3.93	–2.05	33.7	807	33.9	0.49	12	36	6	3.3

Ranking Among Arab Countries

The ranking of the Arab countries was made on the basis of:

1. Determining the values of each state's indices.
2. Determining the ranking of each Arab country based on the values of each of the ten indices (highest to lowest).
3. The best country would be given the value 19 (According to the number of countries in question), then 18 and 17, etc.
4. We multiply the country's rank by the value of the relative weight of the index (i.e., we multiply 19 by 5 for the first country, then 18 by 5 for the second country, etc.), so on so forth with the other indices, where we multiply the country's ranking by the weight of the index as shown in table 1. It's important to note here that we took into account that the highest value of some indicators are considered the worst case (such as in the case of crime or military index, etc.). Consequently, the worst country is ranked number 1 and multiplied by the weight of the index, which makes it get a lower value than the best country. Therefore, the order is sometimes ascending and sometimes descending, based on the nature of the index (negative or positive).
5. We add the values obtained of each country and rank them according to the total.

Based on these steps, the total of the Arab countries and their ranking in the ten indices are shown in tables 3–7:

Table 3: Democracy and Political Stability Indices of the Arab Countries (2018–2021)

Country	Democracy	Weight: 5 (19×5)
Tunisia	6.59	95
Morocco	5.04	90
Lebanon	4.16	85
Palestine	3.93	80
Mauritania	3.92	75
Kuwait	3.8	70
Algeria	3.77	65
Jordan	3.62	60
Iraq	3.62	60
Qatar	3.24	55
Oman	3	50
Egypt	2.93	45
UAE	2.7	40
Sudan	2.54	35
Bahrain	2.49	30
KSA	2.08	25
Libya	1.95	20
Yemen	1.95	20
Syria	1.43	15

Country	Political stability	Weight: 5 (19×5)
Qatar	0.67	95
UAE	0.63	90
Oman	0.37	85
Kuwait	0.24	80
Jordan	–0.32	75
Morocco	–0.33	70
Bahrain	–0.59	65
Tunisia	–0.63	60
KSA	–0.66	55
Mauritania	–0.75	50
Algeria	–0.86	45
Egypt	–1.21	40
Lebanon	–1.65	35
Sudan	–1.76	30
Palestine	–2.05	25
Libya	–2.48	20
Iraq	–2.53	15
Yemen	–2.67	10
Syria	–2.73	5

Table 4: Gini and Militarization Indices

Country	Gini	Weight: 4 (19×4)
Algeria	27.4	76
Iraq	29.5	72
Libya	30.7	68
Egypt	31.5	64
Lebanon	31.8	60
Mauritania	32.6	56
Syria	32.7	52
Tunisia	32.8	48
Jordan	33.7	44
Palestine	33.7	44
Yemen	36.7	40
Morocco	39.5	36
Sudan	45	32
UAE	48.9	28
Kuwait	53.9	24
KSA	54.9	20
Oman	55.1	16
Qatar	56.3	12
Bahrain	57.4	8

Country	Militarization	Weight: 4 (19×4)
Libya	484	76
Sudan	538	72
Qatar	571	68
Tunisia	574	64
Mauritania	648	60
Iraq	664	56
Yemen	671	52
Egypt	705	48
UAE	713	44
Morocco	720	40
Lebanon	728	36
KSA	735	32
Bahrain	739	28
Algeria	743	24
Oman	751	20
Syria	796	16
Palestine	807	12
Kuwait	818	8
Jordan	833	4

Table 5: Globalization and R&D Expenditure Indices

Country	Globalization	Weight: 3 (19×3)
UAE	75.51	57
Qatar	75.32	54
Jordan	73.4	51
Kuwait	71.86	48
Morocco	70.53	45
Bahrain	68.92	42
Tunisia	68.72	39
Lebanon	68.63	36
Egypt	68.34	33
KSA	67.73	30
Oman	63.73	27
Algeria	56.15	24
Libya	55.28	21
Syria	50.83	18
Mauritania	50.57	15
Yemen	48	12
Iraq	46.73	9
Sudan	46.34	6
Palestine	33.9	3

Country	R&D expenditure	Weight: 2 (19×2)
UAE	1.3	38
KSA	0.82	36
Lebanon	0.79	34
Morocco	0.73	32
Egypt	0.72	30
Jordan	0.71	28
Tunisia	0.68	26
Algeria	0.54	24
Libya	0.51	22
Qatar	0.51	20
Palestine	0.49	18
Sudan	0.3	16
Yemen	0.27	14
Oman	0.22	12
Bahrain	0.1	10
Kuwait	0.06	8
Iraq	0.04	6
Syria	0.02	4
Mauritania	0.01	2

Table 6: Crime and Poverty Indices

Country	Crime per 100 thousand	Weight: 2 (19×2)
Palestine	12	38
Kuwait	33.42	36
Jordan	39.96	34
Sudan	42.34	32
Tunisia	43.69	30
Mauritania	43.80	28
Egypt	46.83	26
Morocco	48.66	24
Oman	49	22
Algeria	52.03	20
Qatar	52.10	18
UAE	53.30	16
Bahrain	55.40	14
KSA	60.1	12
Yemen	61.30	10
Libya	61.78	8
Lebanon	67.60	6
Syria	68.40	4
Iraq	70.50	2

Country	Poverty	Weight: 2 (19×2)
Qatar	3.3	38
Kuwait	4.1	36
Algeria	5.5	34
Oman	6.2	32
UAE	7.2	30
Bahrain	12.5	28
KSA	12.7	26
Morocco	15	24
Tunisia	15.2	22
Jordan	15.7	20
Iraq	18.9	18
Lebanon	27.4	16
Mauritania	31	14
Egypt	32.5	12
Libya	33	10
Syria	35.2	8
Palestine	36	6
Sudan	46.5	4
Yemen	48.6	2

Table 7: Health Expenditure and Literacy Indices

Country	Health expenditure (% of GDP)	Weight: 2 (19×2)
Lebanon	8.35	38
Jordan	7.79	36
Tunisia	7.29	34
KSA	6.36	32
Algeria	6.22	30
Libya	6.1	28
Palestine	6	26
Morocco	5.31	24
Kuwait	5	22
Egypt	4.95	20
Yemen	4.88	18
Mauritania	4.58	16
Sudan	4.51	14
UAE	4.23	12
Oman	4.13	10
Bahrain	4.13	10
Iraq	4.11	8
Syria	3.57	6
Qatar	2.49	4

Country	Literacy	Weight: 2 (19×2)
Jordan	2.1	38
Palestine	3.3	36
Kuwait	3.8	34
Oman	4	32
Bahrain	4.3	30
Lebanon	4.9	28
KSA	5.3	26
UAE	7	24
Qatar	7	24
Libya	12	22
Iraq	14	20
Syria	15	18
Tunisia	18.2	16
Algeria	19	14
Egypt	26	12
Morocco	26	12
Yemen	34	10
Sudan	39	8
Mauritania	47	6

Adding the scores of each Arab country and comparing them with their total of the pre-Arab turmoil period (2007–2010), the ranking would be as follows, see table 8:

Table 8: Arab Countries Ranking Before and After the Arab Turmoil

Country	Ranking of Arab countries by total score (2020–2021)	Average of total score before the turmoil (2007–2010)	Drop or progress of scores between the pre- and post-turmoil period	Ranking of Arab countries based on the drop of scores
Tunisia	469	478	– 9	13
Morocco	409	408	+1	2
Jordan	390	395	–5	10
Qatar	388	388	0	3
UAE	379	380	–1	4
Lebanon	374	391	–17	15
Kuwait	369	370	–1	4
Algeria	356	360	–4	9
Egypt	330	339	–9	13
Mauritania	322	323	–1	4
Oman	306	307	–1	4
Libya	295	328	–33	17
KSA	294	300	–6	12
Palestine	288	289	–1	4
Iraq	266	260	+6	1
Bahrain	265	270	–5	11
Sudan	249	270	–21	16
Yemen	188	249	–61	18
Syria	146	349	–103	19

Based on table 8, we conclude the following:

1. The scores of 17 countries have dropped after the turmoil decade.
2. There only two countries whose scores have increased; Iraq (+6) and Morocco (+1).
3. Five countries have encountered the highest drop of scores during the turmoil decade; Syria (103), Yemen (61), Libya (33), Lebanon (17) and Sudan (21).
4. If the absolute value of the sum of indices is: 19 (number of countries) × 31 (sum of weights) = 589, and the total drop of scores is 278 (Table 8), this means that the turmoil has caused a drop of 47.2% in the 10 indices of the Arab countries.

As for the Arab ranking worldwide in each index, table 9 shows the following:

Table 9: Arab Ranking Worldwide in Each of the Ten Indices[16]

Country	Democracy	Political stability	Gini	Militarization	Globalization	R&D	Crime	Poverty	Health	Literacy	Total	Global ranking
Tunisia	54	86	39	78	65	45	72	46	63	113	661	66
Jordan	118	133	49	147	45	41	71	34	50	46	734	73
UAE	145	29	35	131	42	25	50	63	140	84	744	74
Qatar	126	36	119	76	43	53	29	54	175	86	797	80
Lebanon	108	144	32	136	71	37	70	86	43	77	804	80
Bahrain	150	76	148	140	62	73	21	36	142	55	903	90
KSA	156	87	146	118	70	36	101	32	90	74	910	91
Morocco	96	96	106	135	59	38	111	42	115	130	928	93
Libya	157	163	22	37	118	52	89	99	96	96	929	93
Kuwait	114	71	140	144	51	82	61	78	125	67	933	93
Palestine	113	143	50	142	164	54	84	58	97	58	963	96
Oman	136	63	147	142	85	65	35	85	143	70	971	97
Algeria	115	126	12	141	113	47	118	89	95	116	972	97
Egypt	138	141	30	129	67	39	146	101	126	132	1,049	105
Mauritania	112	147	36	114	145	101	116	96	132	149	1,148	115
Iraq	118	160	21	118	162	88	126	85	145	153	1,176	118
Sudan	149	172	56	62	163	60	185	144	133	145	1,269	127
Syria	164	177	37	139	144	94	113	172	150	108	1,298	130
Yemen	157	179	84	122	159	62	145	168	129	134	1,339	134

Based on table 9, and concerning the Arab countries ranking globally (the average number of ranked countries is 185 in the ten indices over three years), we conclude the following:

1. There was no Arab country among the top 65 countries in the global ranking.

2. The order of Arab countries was as follows:

a. The ranks of 13 countries were between 66 and 97.

b. The ranks of 6 countries were between 105 and 134.

3. The total population of the Arab countries that are ranked least globally include 64.7% of the total population of the Arab world, indicating the continuation of the Arab impasse. This requires measuring on the basis of "society" and not on the basis of Arab countries, because it is more expressive of the Arab situation.

4. The table indicates that the difference in scores between the best Arab country (Tunisia) and the worst country (Yemen) is 678, which is more than the double. This means that the disparities in the Arab structure are quite sharp.

5. If we look at the index values of a country like Egypt, which is the largest in terms of population, media influence, and military power, not to mention its historical value in the Arab conscience, we will find that the decline in its ability to lead the region is a reflection of the decline in its achievements and ranking in development indices. It is ranked 14th among the Arab countries, and was not ranked the first or the second in any of the ten indices. The difference between Egypt and the first Arab country is 388, as shown in tables 9 and 10.

When determining the best two Arab countries in each index, we find the following results according to the previous criteria:

Table 10: Countries Ranked First and Second Among Arab Countries in the Ten Indices

Index	1st	2nd
Democracy	Tunisia	Morocco
Political stability	UAE	Qatar
Gini	Algeria	Iraq
Militarization	Libya	Sudan
Globalization	UAE	Qatar
R&D	UAE	KSA
Crime	Bahrain	Qatar
Poverty	KSA	Jordan
Health	Lebanon[17]	Jordan
Literacy	Jordan	Bahrain

Analysis

Our impressions must not affect us in accepting or rejecting these results, as mentioned earlier in the introduction. To make a sound judgment about a country, it is also important not to rely on a single index and not to ignore the differences in the weights of the indices.

By monitoring the ten Arab indices, we concluded the following:

1. It is noted that in the main indices, which have a relative high weight, the Arab countries have scored the worst, such as in democracy, political stability and militarization indices, which represent 45.2% of the total weights of all indices. Since these three indices are of a structural nature, hence they influence the rest of the indices the most, and are considered their driver, as termed by future studies. This means that any shifts in the Arab position depends mainly on the change of these three indices.

2. It is noted that the main Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, KSA and Sudan) lag behind in most of the indices, when compared to the rest of the medium or small size Arab countries, whether status or population wise. Therefore, the weakness of the central indices and the backwardness of the main Arab countries leads us to say that we cannot be optimistic about the Arab conditions.

3. It is necessary to note that some indicators (poverty, health, and literacy) were calculated in the Gulf countries on the basis of the total population and not only the citizens (where foreigners constitute about 63% of the total population in 2018/2019), and that the total population of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries constitute only about 9% of the total Arab population.[18]

4. Comparing the geo-strategic weight of the Arab region with the rest of the regions indicates that it either ranked the last or the penultimate, especially in the main indices.

5. A study conducted previously by the researcher has showed that the Arab region is one of the most penetrated regions in the world.[19] Furthermore, the current decline of the United States (US) and the decline of the importance of the Arab region to the US, as was explained by the "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance," issued by the current US President Joe Biden,[20] means that the region is on the cusp of strategic transformations. These would give the central Arab forces the chance to forge new international alliances with rising global powers that are less interventionist than the US and other Western European countries. However, this depends on the level of rationality of the Arab decision-makers and the achievements concerning the ten indices that we discussed in this study.

The General Trend of Political Stability in the Arab Countries 2018–2021

Since the political stability index is the most comprehensive one, then determining its general direction determines the stability trends in the Arab countries during the next five years, until 2025.

Based on the results of the past four years, the following was concluded:

Table 11: Trends of Political Stability in Arab Countries 2017–2021[21]

Country/ progress (+) or drop (–) of stability scores	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Yemen	–0.6	+1	+1.8	+0.7
Syria	–0.1	+0.7	+0.8	0
Sudan	+5.4	+3.5	+2.8	–0.4
Libya	–0.7	–2.4	–4.8	–1.8
Iraq	+9.2	+6	+2.9	–0.3
Mauritania	+4.6	+3.1	+1	–0.4
Lebanon	–0.8	–2.2	–4	–4.3
Palestine	–1	–1.2	–0.9	–2.2
Egypt	+4.8	+3.7	+3.4	+1
Jordan	+1.9	0	–0.9	–1.4
Algeria	+3.2	+2.2	+1.8	+1
Morocco	+3.4	+2.5	+1.5	–0.3
KSA	+1.5	+0.5	+0.7	–0.9
Tunisia	+5	+2.9	+0.9	–1.1
Bahrain	–1.8	–2.3	–2.9	–2.8
Kuwait	+5.6	+3	+0.3	–2
Oman	+2.1	+2.2	–0.4	–2.4
Qatar	–0.1	+4	+1.3	–0.4
UAE	+3.4	+2.5	–0.2	–2.2

1. In 2021, three Arab countries (Yemen, Egypt and Algeria) out of 19 have witnessed improvement in political stability. However, the improvement rate of Egypt and Algeria is decreasing annually, indicating that it may become negative in the next few years.

2. It is noted that what applies to Egypt and Algeria almost applies to most Arab countries, in terms of the tendency of gradual decline in improvement (as in Sudan or Kuwait), or in terms of getting worse, as is the case of Lebanon, Bahrain, Oman, UAE, Jordan, Palestine, and Libya. This means that the trend of worsening stability conditions has preceded the Covid-19 pandemic, and the latter has added a new factor of instability to the relevant sub-indices.

3. If we calculate the total progress and decline of stability levels in 2021, we find that the overall total of all Arab countries is a drop in stability scores by a total of 20.2 points compared to 2020.

Political Stability Indices in Non-Arab Regional Powers

Table 12 reveals the values of the political stability index of the regional powers that have direct and continuous influence in Arab affairs. They are Israel, Turkey and Iran. The table indicates the following:

1. The instability trend is equally increasing in two countries, Iran and Israel, although the total score of Israel's stability index is higher than Iran's. However, the growing points of instability in the two countries will be reflected in one way or another on the Arab region, thus increasing the tension there.

2. Although Turkey has recorded a clear improvement in its stability index during the measurement period, it is noted that this improvement has declined in 2020 and became negative in 2021.

3. If we consider the mutual influence between Arab instability and the instability of non-Arab regional powers, this indicates that there will be more turmoil on the Arab and non-Arab sides.

4. The US disengagement from the Middle East has left a geo-strategic vacuum that will be employed by rising powers (China and Russia). This may lead to the reconfiguration of traditional alliances, hence possible confrontations between the forces of traditional regional alliances and the forces leaning toward new alliances. As a result, the structural stability of the Middle East region will be effected, and the stability of each country depends on its proactive adaptation efforts that would absorb the effects of the upcoming transformations.

Table 12: Non-Arab Regional Powers[22]

Country	2018	2019	2020	2021	Result	2020 Total*	Global Ranking of 179 countries**
Iran	+1.3	–0.2	–1.5	–1.1	–1.5	84.5	136
Turkey	+1.1	+2.5	+0.6	–0.6	+3.6	79.7	122
Israel	+0.2	+0.2	–0.4	–1.5	–1.5	44	31

* The Total score indicates "instability."
** The highest is the worst.

Recommendations

Although we acknowledge that there are gaps in quantitative measurement methods, it rids society of the burdens of the "Cognitive Dissonance" theory,[23] which is based on mental deception resulting from the control of a certain idea or impression refuted by quantitative data. For ideological biases, country tendencies, emotional ties, charismatic fascination, or ethnic prejudice generally push individuals and leaders alike to fabricate interpretations of the reality consistent with the idea that dominates the individual or the leader. However, "strict scientific quantitative approaches" refine this view and neutralize its impact on the individual's cognitive system. Therefore, it lays the sound basis of a "qualitative" analysis, and builds the most appropriate theories to understand our Arab landscape. It helps us to determine the achievements of each Arab country, on the one hand, and the achievements of the Arab region compared to the rest of the global geopolitical regions, on the other hand.

Based on that, we call for:

1. Defining the positions and policies of Arab countries on the basis of quantitative approaches, similar to our study, in order to get rid of the quirks of artificial cognitive consistency.
2. Arab powers to start developing proactive adaptive strategies to employ the geostrategic future shifts to their advantage.
3. The need to be aware that since the non-Arab regional powers are competing to forge strategic partnerships or strategic understandings with the international forces advancing towards the region—after the US disengagement—this means

that the least fortunate is Israel.[24] For despite the development of its relations with China and the attempts to arrange its relations with Russia, Iranian relations with the two powers, as well as the Turkish relationship with Russia, indicates that they are ahead of Israel in this regard. Thus, Arab strategists are required to think of ways to employ this development for the benefit of the Arab side. This issue could be the focus of further scientific research.

Endnotes

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[3] Normalization of ratings means adjusting values measured on different scales to a notionally common scale.

[4] To find out the number of sub-indices, please refer to the models cited in the endnote of each index, and to understand the measurement steps and identify the indicators, see https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.42/2017/Seminar/Chapter_6_draft_2017.06.15_-_for_the_seminar.pdf; see also measuring Global militarization Index (GMI) in https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/74494/ssoar-2021-bayer_et_al-Global_Militarisation_Index_presentation_codebook.pdf?sequence=1&isAllo

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Chapter Seven

Militarization Indices and Security Strategy in the Arab Countries

Militarization Indices and Security Strategy in the Arab Countries

Introduction

Literature discussing "Holistic Approach" in contemporary international relations focuses on three dimensions that overlap and establish the "security concept" and all the strategies based on it. They are:[1]

1. **Community security:** It means securing the "free development of the social, political, economic, cultural and technical dimensions in a peaceful internal environment," which requires the continuation of social cohesion and the absence of religious, ethnic, sectarian, class, regional, color-based or gender-based cracks in society.
2. **State security:** It means preserving "the political and natural geography of a political entity, and preventing others from controlling its natural resources," or taking advantage of them (such as springs located outside the state, or when oil or gas fields span more than one country, etc.
3. **Regime security:** It means "the ruling class remains unaltered," forcibly or voluntarily.

Accordingly, the political systems in the world can be divided into six types, based on how they prioritize these three dimensions:[2]

1. Systems prioritizing community security, then state security, then regime security (Welfare states).
2. Systems prioritizing community security, then regime security, then state security (Capitalist countries).
3. Systems prioritizing state security, then community security, then regime security (Israel).
4. Systems prioritizing state security, then regime security, then community security (Taiwan).
5. Systems prioritizing regime security, then community security, then state security (Socialist countries).
6. Systems prioritizing regime security, then state security, then community security (Most developing countries, especially the Arab countries).

Certainly, these dimensions are interrelated and interact with each other, and the priorities of countries may change from one stage to another, due to internal or external reasons. However, this does not negate the fact that each country has its own political value system and they prioritize these dimensions accordingly. Here, we will not discuss all of these types, we will focus on the last one, applicable to almost all Arab systems, albeit at varying levels, while discussing the most important variable in their structure and policies, in addition to other indicators. As a result, the understanding and interpretation of the political behavior of Arab countries would be enhanced.

First: Militarization

Militarization can be defined as the "the relative weight of the military apparatus of a state in relation to the internal and external interaction of the political entity it belongs to." In political studies, there are different approaches to measuring this weight, but most of them determine militarization through three central indicators, measured through six sub-indicators, by which the relative weight and importance of the military apparatus of a state in relation to society as a whole is measured:[3]

Table 1: Militarization Central Indicators and Sub-indicators

Central Indicator	Sub-indicator	Weighing Factor*
Expenditures	Military expenditures as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)	5
	Military expenditures in relation to health spending (Government's in particular)	3
Personnel	Military and paramilitary personnel in relation to population	4
	Military reserves in relation to population	2
	Military and paramilitary personnel in relation to physicians	2
Weapons	Heavy weapons in relation to population	4

*The weighted indicators were added together and then normalized.[4]

As for the Militarization ranks and scores of the Arab countries, they are as follows:[5]

Table 2: Militarization Indices of the Arab Countries Compared to Israel in 2000 and 2019/2020 (Out of 500)

Countries	Score 2000	Rank	Score 2019/2020	Rank
Mauritania	224	45	199	30
Morocco	213	47	218	23
Algeria	251	29	255	15
Tunisia	169	73	175	47
Libya	329	13	183 (2017) *	43
Egypt	228	40	199	31
Sudan	247	31	162	54
Jordan	354	8	279	10
Syria	387	6	329 (2013) *	4
Lebanon	326	15	275	11
Iraq	157 (2004)*	77	226	18
Saudi Arabia	351	9	294	6
Kuwait	343	10	284	9
Qatar	n/a	n/a	191 (2013) *	44
Bahrain	394	5	301	4
UAE	395	4	296 (2017) *	7
Oman	362	7	306	3
Yemen	282	24	148 (2017) *	68
Israel	440	2	363	1

UAE = United Arab Emirates.

* In some cases, when we did not find the measurement of a certain year, we chose the closest year measurement.

Table 2 provides the militarization scores and ranks of the Arab countries in 2000 and 2020. It shows that:

1. Out of 18 Arab countries whose militarization indices have been measured, 12 Arab countries have advanced in their global rank, that is, their militarization has increased. They constitute 66.7% of the Arab countries.

2. In 2000, the Global Militarization Index (GMI) showed that seven Arab countries (five Gulf Arab countries, along with Syria and Jordan) were among the top ten countries in the world. This means that 70% of the highly militarized countries are Arab countries.

3. In 2019/2020, i.e., after twenty years, the number of Arab countries among the top ten remained the same (7 out of 10), and they are the same countries that occupied these positions in the first period.

4. Since 2001, according to GMI, Israel tops the list of the world's most militarized nations, which confirms that the image of a democratic state that it is trying to promote to the world is not consistent with the militarization measurement.[6] A quantitative academic study indicates a high correlation coefficient between the militarization index and the decline in civil liberties. It analyzed data from 30 countries, and showed that a country's level of militarization and civil liberties is associated with the political values in society. It showed that a country's high military expenditure and low level of civil liberties correlates positively with citizens' Belief in a Zero-Sum Game.[7] Israel considers any Arab development in any of the fields as "a loss, and that it has to prevent it with all forms of force." This is similar to the perspective of Arab regimes that see any "political development" in their societies, in the region or in the world a threat to them and their power survival, so they consider "militarization" necessary to stop such development.

Second: Militarization Sub-Indicators

After discussing the GMI and the ranking of the Arab countries, we will discuss the sub-indicators of militarization in the Arab world, based on a number of institutions concerned with measuring each of these indicators. As a result, the relationship between the Arab military institution and the Arab society will be defined on the one hand, and then the mega trend of the nature of this relationship will be determined, on the other hand.

The militarization sub-indicators are:

1. Arab Military Expenditure[8]

Military expenditures are represented by two sub-indicators: military expenditures as percentage of GDP, and military expenditures in relation to health spending (Government's in particular).

Literature has defined military expenditure as the spending on the armed forces (including peace keeping forces), defense ministries and other government agencies engaged in defense projects; paramilitary forces when judged to be trained, equipped and available for military operations; and all expenditures on current personnel, both military and civil, retirement pensions of military personnel; and social services for personnel and their families; operations and maintenance; procurement; military research and development; military construction; and military aid.

When the sub-indicators of Arab military spending were measured, the results were as follows:

Table 3: Military Expenditure as a Percentage of the GDP in the Arab World and Globally 2000–2019

Year	Military expenditure as % of GDP – Arab World [9]	Military expenditure as % of GDP – Globally[10]
2000	6.417	2.191
2001	6.415	2.233
2002	5.896	2.337
2003	5.470	2.396
2004	5.077	2.396
2005	4.632	2.399
2006	4.387	2.360
2007	4.525	2.325
2008	4.199	2.391
2009	5.325	2.622

Year	Military expenditure as % of GDP – Arab World	Military expenditure as % of GDP – Globally
2010	5.039	2.528
2011	4.913	2.426
2012	5.004	2.381
2013	5.755	2.316
2014	6.348	2.264
2015	7.469	2.268
2016	6.162	2.236
2017	6.473	2.191
2018	6.067	2.170
2019	5.420	2.205

Table 3 reveals that throughout the 2000–2020 period, the Arab military expenditures (which include two sub-indicators mentioned in Table 1) were more than the double of the global ones, making the Arab region the highest in the world in this aspect. It suffices to note that in 2020, the total Arab military expenditure amounted to $113.4 billion, and the North African Arab countries spent in 2020 $24.7 billion, a 42% increase when compared to 2011 and 1.2% of total global military spending.

As for the Israeli military spending, it amounted to $21.7 billion in 2020, a 32% increase when compared to 2011, and 2.7% increase when compared to 2019. Israeli military expenditure when compared to the GDP reached 5.6%, while this percentage was in the countries with the highest military expenditures, between 1.4% in Germany and 4.3% in Russia.

When comparing the Arab region with the rest of the regions and countries, it becomes clear that the total global military expenditure in 2020 amounted to about $1,981 billion and that it has increased by 9.3% during 2011–2020. In this case, the global military expenditure represents 2.4% of global GDP, and the percentage of Arab military expenditure to GDP is more than double the global percentage.

Among the top 15 countries in list of the percentage of military expenditure to GDP, we find that there are 8 Arab countries (according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute – SIPRI) and 10 Arab countries (according to International Institute for Strategic Studies – IISS), as follows:[11]

Table 4: The Arab countries that are Among the Top 15 Countries with the Highest Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP, Compared to Israel

Country	Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP SIPRI 2019	Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP IISS 2020
Oman	8.8	12
Saudi Arabia	8.4	7.1
Algeria	6	6.7
Kuwait	5.6	7.1
Jordan	4.7	4.9
Morocco	–	5.3
Lebanon	4.2	10.5
Bahrain	3.7	–
Iraq	3.5	5.8
UAE	–	5.6
Qatar	–	4.4
Israel	5.3	5.2

Studying the 40 countries with the highest military expenditure in 2020, we find that their combined spending is equivalent to about 92% of the total global military expenditure. Out of these, there are six Arab countries:[12]

Table 5: The Arab Countries with the Highest Military Expenditure 2020

Country	Military Expenditure 2020 ($ billion)	Global Rank
Saudi Arabia	57.5	6
Algeria	9.7	24
Iraq	7	29
Kuwait	6.9	30
Oman	6.7	31
Morocco	4.8	40

In 2020, the Saudi military expenditure was 2.9% of the global one, ranking sixth globally and surpassing the expenditures of Germany, France or Japan. During 2011–2015, Saudi military expenditure increased (at the beginning of the military intervention in Yemen) by 63%, however, after that, it started to decline due to the decline in oil prices. Between 2016 and 2020, it decreased by 37%, while remaining high compared to 2011 by 29%.

When comparing Arab military expenditures as percentage of GDP with the health expenditure as percentage of GDP, we find the following:

Table 6: Military Expenditures and Health Expenditures as Percentage of the GDP of Some Arab Countries Compared to Israel

Country	Military Expenditures as % of the GDP 2019[13]	Health Expenditures as % of the GDP 2018[14]
Algeria	6	6.22
Bahrain	3.7	3.13
Egypt	1.2	4.95
Iraq	3.5	4.11
Jordan	4.7	7.79

Country	Military Expenditures as % of the GDP 2019	Health Expenditures as % of the GDP 2018
Kuwait	5.6	5
Lebanon	4.2	8.35
Libya	15.5	6.05
Mauritania	2.8	4.58
Oman	8.8	4.13
Qatar	1.5	2.49
Saudi Arabia	8	6.36
Sudan	1.6	4.51
Syria	4.1	3.57
Tunisia	2.6	7.29
Morocco	3.1	5.31
UAE	5.6	4.23
Yemen	4	4.88
Israel	5.6	7.52

Table 6 indicates that there are seven Arab countries whose military expenditure exceeds their health expenditure compared to the total government spending, they are: UAE, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Libya, Kuwait and Bahrain, most of which are located in the Arabian Gulf (5 out of 7).

2. Arms Imports

Arms imports represent the highest in Arab military expenditure. The comparison of arms imports indicates that between 2010 and 2020, Arab countries increased their arms imports by about 61%, and that five Arab countries are among the top ten countries with the highest increase in arms purchase rate, as shown in the following table:[15]

Table 7: Percent Change of Arab Arms Imports 2010–2014 and 2015–2019

Importer	Percent Change of Arab Arms Imports 2010–2014 and 2015–2019*
Qatar	631
Egypt	212
Saudi Arabia	130
Iraq	98
Algeria	71
Jordan	54
Oman	24
Countries with Decline in Arms Imports	**Decline Percentage**
Morocco	–62
Kuwait	–22
UAE	–18

* The two periods are indicative of one before the Arab Spring and the other after that and until now.

The Congressional Research Service Report "Arms Sales in the Middle East: Trends and Analytical Perspectives for U.S. Policy," has indicated that the 2000–2019 period has witnessed considerable increase in arms supply to Arab countries. The arms suppliers were as follows:[16]

Table 8: Top Arms Suppliers to Arab Countries 2000–2019

Arms Supplier	% Share of Total Arab Arms Imports
US	44.9
Russia	19.3
France	11.4
UK	5.8
Germany	3.7
China	2.5
Other	12.5

The competition between major powers reinforces militarization, and the size of foreign military presence in the Arab countries (Military bases, experts, joint exercises, security agreements, etc.) is consistent with the volume of arms supply of these major countries.

3. Military Expenditure as a Percentage of General Government Expenditure

Table 9 shows Arab military expenditure as a percentage of the general government expenditure, where in 2019 it was 12.13%, while globally it was 6.1%. This means that the Arab world spends on militarization compared to spending on other sectors, twice the global average. The Arab countries in this field are led by Saudi Arabia and Oman, with an average of 20.3% each, followed by Algeria 15.5%, Jordan 15.2%, Lebanon 13.8% and Bahrain 12.1%.[17]

Table 9: Military Expenditure as a Percentage of General Government Expenditure of Some Arab Countries Compared to Israel 2019

Country	Military Expenditure as a % of General Government Expenditure 2019
Saudi Arabia	20.3
Oman	20.3
UAE*	17
Algeria	15.5
Jordan	15.2
Yemen*	14.3
Lebanon	13.8
Syria	13.6
Bahrain	12.1
Libya	10.8
Mauritania	10.7
Kuwait	10.5
Morocco	10.3
Sudan	9.2

Country	Military Expenditure as a % of General Government Expenditure 2019
Tunisia	7.9
Iraq	7.8
Qatar	4.9
Egypt	4.2
Israel	13.2
Arab average	**12.13**
World average	**6.1**

* 2014.

Third: The Militarization of Arab International Relations: Index of Arab International, Inter-Arab and Civil Wars

Wars in the Arab region can be divided into three types:

1. Civil wars: They remain confined between different forces in the same Arab country.
2. Interstate wars: They are between Arab countries or between them and non-Arab countries.
3. Internationalized civil wars: They are internationalized by foreign intervention.

According to the available indicators on the number of these wars and the parties involved in them, we found the following:[18]

Year	Arab countries involved in wars	Civil and interstate wars	Internationalized civil wars
2000	3	3	
2001	3	3	0
2002	2	2	
2003	2	2	2
2004	3	3	
2005	4	5	5

Year	Arab countries involved in wars	Civil and interstate wars	Internationalized civil wars
2006	4	5	
2007	4	4	4
2008	4	4	
2009	5	5	5
2010	5	5	
2011	7	7	6
2012	7	7	
2013	5	7	7
2014	7	8	
2015	7	10	7
2016	8	11	
2017	8	12	12
2018	8	13	
2019	8	11	12
Annual average	**4–5 countries**	**6–7 countries**	**6–7 conflicts**

The above table indicates the following:[19]

1. Quantitative international studies show that the annual rate of intrastate conflicts in the international community had increased from 30 conflicts during the 1989–2011 period to 70 conflicts during 2012–2019, which is confirmed by the above table at the Arab level. This means that internal wars are increasing globally and not just regionally, for the world is interconnected economically and technically, but it is disintegrating politically and socially due to the globalization effect.[20]

2. When comparing the number of internationalized conflicts in each region of the world, it turns out that the Arab region has the highest rate of external interference in Arab local conflicts. There are six to seven foreign countries that intervene annually in Arab local conflicts during the period referred to in the table.

This means that despite their high militarization index, the Arab military forces are unable to resolve local conflicts in their favor, therefore they seek help from foreign forces.

3. If we correlate the previous results with the stability rates at the regional level, and we compare that with the rest of the geopolitical regions of the world, it turns out that the Arab region is the highest in political instability. Out of 19 Arab countries whose indicators of political stability were available, only two countries are considered stable (UAE and Qatar with rates of 67% and 64% respectively). There are two countries that enjoy medium political stability (Kuwait and Oman with rates of 60% and 56%, respectively). As for the rest of the 15 Arab states, they are unstable, i.e., their instability rate is over 50%. When looking at the Arab sub-regions, it becomes clear that the rates of instability are as follows:

- The Nile Basin 79% (Egypt and Sudan).
- The Fertile Crescent 77% (Levant and Iraq).
- Arab Maghreb countries 67% (Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco and Mauritania).
- The Gulf countries 52% (Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Yemen).

When correlating population distribution with instability levels, we find that 80% of Arabs live in countries of 75% **instability** levels.

This means that Arab militarization has led to the opposite of the regimes' justifications of militarization. It has clearly led to instability, and this result is supported by unambiguous quantitative indicators.

Fourth: The Impact of Militarization on Democracy Index in the Arab World

Based on the academic models of measuring democracy, and without going into the details and methods of these measurements, we find that they all agree on the following:[21]

1. In 2010–2020, the democracy index of the Arab world was 3.5 (out of ten). This means that the political, military, social and economic turmoil during the Arab Spring did not have a positive and significant impact on the democracy level in the Arab world.

2. Globally speaking, in 2010–2020, the world's average democracy index was 5.3–5.5 out of ten. This means that the Arab average is significantly behind the rest of the world.

3. By dividing the world into seven geopolitical regions, it becomes clear that the Arab world ranks last among the world's regions in terms of democracy.

4. When ranking the countries, it turns out that all Arab countries (except Tunisia, which ranked 54th and Morocco 96th) fell into the category of authoritarian states. Their ranks started from 118 (Jordan), followed by the rest of the Arab countries.

5. Despite the clear increase in Gulf military expenditures on the one hand, and high per capita income, on the other hand, all Gulf countries rank among the lowest in the Democracy Index.

We have mentioned in the previous pages when talking about Israeli militarizatıon that there are correlations between aggregated scores for Belief in a Zero-Sum Game (at the internal level) and indices of national military expenditure, consequently the lack of democracy and civil liberties.

Conclusions

We have assumed that the Arab countries belong to the category whose political administration prioritizes the regime's security, i.e., staying in power, and due to the absence of democracy and the peaceful transfer of power, the military is entrusted with maintaining or changing the political regime. In case the regime reaches an intractable stalemate with the society, the military forces change the regime through a coup or with the support of the street. Here, it is necessary to compare the 1948–2010 period, when the Arab military carried coups and then sought to bring the street to support them, and the 2011–2021 period, when the streets began to move first, and the military invested later in these changes in one way or another. In the first period, the army initiated the change of regime (regardless of the nature of the existing regime), then the new regime sought to mobilize popular support, while in the second, the army hid behind the street movement (whatever the street's credibility is) to change the regime, as if it is responding to the popular will, which legitimizes its move. What's common between the two periods is the employment of military to change the regime.

The military appears to benefit from internal or external turmoil through the following:[22]

1. Security risks to the state or society make the political decision more dependent on the military. Therefore, it is of the military interest to keep the ruler under the preoccupation of security threats, internally or externally, so as to remain more dependent on the military.

2. To ensure the loyalty of the military, regimes bestow on these institutions many benefits through privileges and by turning a blind eye to the corruption in them, especially in arms deals, in which some sources estimate that the commission rate is between 15–30%. A report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) mentions that corruption in the arms trade contributes roughly 40% to all corruption in global transactions.

3. The Richardson (Lewis F. Richardson) arms race model, which analyzes the relationship between wars and the arms race at the global or regional level, indicates that this race enhances the chances of turmoil and wars more than the chances of peace and stability. For the latter would make the military fear losing its importance and role in the strategic decision-making, which is detrimental to the interests of the military elite. This means that maintaining internal or external tension is in the military's interest.

4. Despite the huge military expenditure of Arab countries, and their high ranking in the militarization index, their impact on security and internal or external threats are very modest. In fact, the armed popular organizations have been more effective in different regions of the Arab countries than the traditional armed forces, especially when facing Israeli and US threats.

5. It is remarkable that the Arab-Israeli peace agreements led to an increase in Arab militarization. For since the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty in 1979, the Oslo Accords with the PLO 1993/1994, the Wadi Araba Treaty with Jordan, and until the Arab normalization with most of the Gulf states, Sudan and Morocco, the Arab military expenditure as a percentage of GDP has been indicating that Arab militarization with its various sub-indicators is increasing.[23] This confirms our view that in most Arab countries, militarization is used internally rather than to confront foreign threats, particularly when taking into consideration that the global trend is heading towards a decline in military expenditure as compared to global GDP.[24]

In short, the increasing Arab militarization has brought neither stability nor democracy nor societal development. It has failed miserably in ensuring the sovereignty and independence of Arab countries. The primary objective of the Arab military has been limited to the priority of protecting the regime. While the task of looking after the security of the state and community is always made to serve the security of the regime, through further militarization.

Endnotes

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[8] These data and figures were collected from the following references: Diego Lopes da Silva, Nan Tian and Alexandra Marksteiner, Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2020, SIPRI Fact Sheet: April 2021, site of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 26/4/2021, https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/fs_2104_milex_0.pdf; M. Szmigiera, Military expenditure as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) in highest spending countries 2020, site of Statista, 10/5/2021, https://www.statista.com/statistics/266892/military-expenditure-as-percentage-of-gdp-in-highest-spending-countries; International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2021* (London: Routledge, 2021); and Chapter. 2; Frequently asked questions, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex/frequently-asked-questions#1-definition

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Chapter Eight

The Future of the International Scene in Post-Coronavirus Era

The Future of the International Scene in Post-Coronavirus Era

Among the problems facing future studies when developing their models is the inclusion of the "High Impact–Low Probability" variable, especially when this variable constitutes a turning point in a certain trend or the mega-trend of the phenomenon in question.

This high-impact, low-probability variable can be divided into three types:

1. Black Swans, which are the events that are beyond the realm of normal expectations. Specific planning for such an event is close to impossible. This is not the case of the coronavirus, which was predicted by lots of scientific studies.[1]
2. Known but unprepared for, which are the events that were identified as a potential threat, but where little or no action is taken to prevent or mitigate the impacts. This is the coronavirus case.
3. Known and prepared for,[2] which is not the coronavirus case.

This variable is studied by following approaches used in futures studies. They are the Heuristic approach, deterministic approach and the probabilistic approach, each of which has its own methodological steps.[3] However, we will not detail each approach in this article.

Based on the above, the coronavirus was not only expected by scientists, but also by politicians,[4] nevertheless no plans to face it were made, for reasons worthy of contemplating and studying.

First: The Global Order Between the Mega-Trends and Its Turning Points

According to human history, the "human mind"—through gradual evolution—has eventually managed to absorb major shocks (Epidemiological, political, economic, environmental, or others). It has managed also to re-adapt its structures to maintain four "mega-trends," which have not stopped in human history despite all the major and minor turning points, and were not deterred by shocks, turning-points or the winding path of phenomena. These mega-trends are:

1. Preserving human life: For the "trend" of world population, in any period of history, tended always towards increasing, despite all what humanity has faced whether the years of drought and degradation, wars, diseases or nature's anger, etc.

2. The scientific development in all aspects of life: Knowledge accumulates in various sciences and arts. All theories and discoveries are scrutinized, where some remain, others get developed, and others are replaced by new ones, for sometimes the old ones become no longer appropriate, whether in economics, technology, politics, literature, art, etc. This development and scientific accumulation did not stop, even for a moment, despite all the sudden and not so sudden developments.

3. The communication between societies and the development of its tools, through the growth of cities (more connected communities), shortened distances (By using transportation methods; from horses until the Concorde), and even the abolition of distances (through satellite TVs and the internet). This is greatly confirmed by the historical studies of anthropologists.[5]

4. The dialectical relation between humans and humans (and the society with the other society), and the dialectical relation between humans and nature and beyond. This dialectic is represented by a dual relationship that sometimes manifests itself through conflict (wars or negative natural phenomena such as pollution, disasters, epidemics and the like), or sometimes through reconciliation and benefit (whether by cooperation or reaping all kinds of fruits/gains from nature).

Based on the above, the post-coronavirus (COVID-19) international scene may put the aforementioned mega-trends on some winding or lagging tracks. It may produce phenomena that are unheard of. However, I'm inclined to say that the four mega-trends will continue; the population growth will not stop (when comparing the number of births to the number of deaths, even with the coronavirus pandemic); Scentific development will not stop (for the human mind is restless by nature, and will not settle when faced with anything new. Rather, it will pursue it to understand, adapt and even employ it). The communication between societies and individuals will not decline, rather any hole in the network would be sealed in a hurry. Finally, the dialectical relation between humans and humans, and between humans and nature and beyond will not stop.

Accordingly, I will dedicate the rest of the article to discuss the features of the international scene in light of the transitional disruptions, trying to foresee the near future of the international scene (3 years), and determine its general features, despite its being the description of a moving scene.

Second: The Relationship Between the Change Rhythm and the International Scene Transitions With the Biomedical Dimension

It's up to the medical labs to estimate the period required to reach a drug that curbs the spread of the virus, hence mitigate the implications of the human and economic cost. If the virus is to last until 2021, as per some reports (the briefing of the Public Health England),[6] the human and economic implications will be profound. However, there are other medical centers that are more optimistic.[7]

Due to the serious consequences for all, major powers have turned to the health sector experts to face the crisis. This may increase competition between these countries on the one hand (Especially pharmaceutical companies, and the resulting trade gains and the strengthening of the soft power of the state), yet it may advance the synergy and collaboration of experiences by sharing relevant discoveries, on the other hand. Such a collaboration was urged by a large number of global elites, and was supported by a UN General Assembly resolution, co-sponsored by 188 nations.[8] It is more likely that this approach is not only confined to global powers, especially since the virus is not aligned with anyone in its war, not on a class level, or on national or religious levels, etc. Thus, it is an enemy of "all," which enhances, to some extent, the common confrontation. The reports of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stated that "The economic impact is and will be severe, but the faster the virus stops, the quicker and stronger the recovery will be."[9] Perhaps the adoption of most central banks of policies that facilitate monetary policies, increases cooperation between different countries, without denying that some competition between them still remains.

Third: The Economic Repercussions and the Ability to Adapt to Their Adverse Impacts

The accelerating change makes a faster impact, hence the ability to adapt becomes weaker, under the disturbance caused by a "High Impact–Low Probability" variable, which is in our case the coronavirus.

Looking at the historical precedents of the impact of epidemics on global economies, we find SARS, for example, has cost in 2003 East Asian countries about 2% of their gross national product (GNP). The total economic cost of the 2011 Japan earthquake has reached up to $235 billion, where the production has stopped at some of its largest companies.[10] Despite Japan's great potentials to adapt, the impacts of the earthquakes remained until 2017. Undoubtedly, the coronavirus impact in many countries has exceeded that of Japan's earthquakes.

It is clear that the repercussions of the crisis are not equal in all countries (humanitarian and economy wise), neither in all sectors (compare the tourism sector, airlines, or major companies along with the banking sector or the stock markets, etc.), nor in all regions (compare the impact in Europe, US, and China with African or Latin American countries). The repercussions in the oil countries is different from other countries, where oil prices, in the last week of April, fell to $20.84 a barrel, the lowest since 2000, and US oil prices turned negative for the first time.[11]

If we look at the most important stock markets in the world (see table 1), and compare between the first and last week of April 2020, a large percentage drop happened at first, then it started to recover in late March after the US Senate passed a $2 trillion coronavirus aid bill to help workers (about 4.4 million workers became unemployed in April) and businesses (because they stopped working).

Table 1: The Percentage Drop of Shares in the Most Important Global Markets

Index	First week of April 2020[12]	Last week of April 2020[13]
Financial Times Stock Exchange (London)	28.8%	24.5%
Dow Jones (New York)	24.1%	18.5%
Nikkei (Tokyo)	22.2%	14.7%

However, shares in technology companies (for entertainment, holding online meetings, or online learning) made great gains, such as Zoom (+146.1%), Netflix (+29.4%) and Amazon (+26.4%). The travel industry has been badly affected, in the last week of April 2020, more than 100 countries had travel restrictions, which made the airlines cut more than hundred thousand flights. All of this indicates the different levels of impacts from one economic sector to another.[14]

The depth of the crisis resulting from the coronavirus varies among countries. Strong economies, especially those of global powers, and despite the loss, will be able to shoulder the burden of the crisis. However, this does not negate the fact that some of them may witness an economic recession. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the global economy is expected to shrink by 3.0% during 2020, while it predicted a partial rebound in 2021, with the world economy growing at a 5.8% rate, depending if a cure for the coronavirus was found.[15]

As for the developing or poor countries, or those undergoing political instability periods, they will face significant challenges. The flow of money into them has considerably tapered off, furthermore, the costs of dealing with the pendamic, including health expenditures and business interruptions, have made things worse. And as a result of the potential human and economic risks in these countries, investments are being reduced. From the beginning of the coronavirus crisis until late March, Investors had removed $83 billion from emerging markets since the beginning of the crisis, the largest capital outflow ever recorded. Until now, nearly 80 countries have requested the help of IMF, which may make it consider allocating Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), as was the case during the 2008 financial crisis. Major central banks have initiated bilateral swap lines with emerging market countries. As a global liquidity crunch takes hold, a broader network of swap lines would be facilitated by international monetary organizations.[16] Preliminary estimates that the global economy may need bailouts that could collectively top $10 trillion.[17] It must be noted that global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth since 2008 (the financial crisis) until 2020 didn't exceed 3%, with the exception of three years; in 2010 (4.5%), 2011 (3.4%) and 2017 (3.3%). During the rest of the years, it was less than 3%, which means that the global economy was experiencing a lot of problems before the coronavirus. Hence, one cannot draw a future picture separate from the structure of the pre-coronavirus global economic system.[18]

The economic dealing with the crisis indicates that cooperation would be the more likely trend, without denying that competition may be embeded in it. However, the financial, commercial and monetary pressures include everyone, albeit with a varied impact, depending on the region. For example, these pressures in the Gaza Strip are much heavier than anywhere else in the world.

There is a positive correlation between a rising degree of globalization and the per capita growth rate of economies. An econometric study has showed that the growth rate of per capita gross domestic product increases by 0.33 percentage points when the globalization index increases by one.[19] This is realized by many countries which remain keen on globalization, especially its economic dimension.

In light of discussing the end of globalization or the return to traditional realism in international relations in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, it is necessary, at first, to differentiate between globalization as a process and as a normative perspective. This means that it is necessary to differentiate between globalization as a manifestation of the intertwining and overlapping mechanisms and parties of the international community, which form a cobweb, and the normative perspective that is based on determining who benefits and who is harmed, and the ethical and humane assessment of globalization. The latter is not what I want to discuss, for it has been heavily discussed by researchers. What I want to focus on is a specific question: Is the international community, after the pandemic, going to tear down the cobweb of globalization?

The reversion of states to mechanical interdependence (going back to the notion of the nation-state) is largely dependent on the erosion and disintegration of the role of organic interdependence organizations (economic and technical interdependence, as well as the international division of labor between states); so the question is: can the current international structure tolerate the disintegration of those organizations?

When talking about the end of globalization or the gradual transition away from it, a number of indicators need to be taken into consideration, which indicates that this matter is not so simple, in light of the current conditions, and the depth of the mega-trend of organic interdependence. These indicators are as follows (in addition to the historical mega-trends mentioned earlier in this article):[20]

1. Multinational Corporations:

According to EU estimates, the multinational corporations (MNCs) account for half of global exports. There are 60 thousand MNCs that have half a million branches around the globe, of those 162.4 thousand branches are in the EU. Will these giant companies dismantle their factories and branches that cover their production, marketing and after-sales services, etc? MNCs' activities may witness winding paths, as was the case when the world trade volume decreased by 1.1% between 2018 and 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic.

2. International Trade:

The international trade has increased from 1950 to 2019, from a level of $62 billion to $19 trillion, more than 306 folds, and with an annual increase of 4.4 folds. A decline will definitely happen, but it will recover the moment the pandemic ends. Most probably the two types of market mechanisms will return: The socialist market economy whose country currently adopts a globalization perspective, and the capitalist market perspective that has proven to be immensely resilient to the convulsing global economy.

3. Foreign Direct Investments:

In 2018, global foreign direct investment was around $1.3 trillion, which is the third annual decline since 2015 (i.e., before the coronavirus). These enormous sums and mega projects are difficult to dismantle, rather, countries having these investments may offer more inducements to investors, in order to keep and prevent their economies from collapsing, due to the pandemic. That is although the investments were in decline before the pandemic, however, the burden of economic stoppages may push some countries to make more concessions to attract investments, thus, strengthening the path of globalization again.

4. Migrant Workers:

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 164 million migrant workers worldwide. They transfer huge sums annually to their countries, supporting their economy. Will these people leave their jobs? and their fortunes? These workers are distributed over different regions (32% in Europe, 23% in Northern America, 13.9% in the Arab states, 13.3% in other Asian countries, 7.9% in Africa and 7.1% in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, etc). Some of them may return to their homeland, or the increase in their numbers may slow down, but

overcoming the pandemic will make them return to their factories, especially in light of the mutual need between the two parties.

5. International Students and University Branch Campuses (University Branch Campuses Similar to the Branches of MNCs)

There are 5.3 million foreign students studying outside their countries, with an increase of 3 million during 2000–2020 (out of those currently there are 330 thousand Americans studying outside the US). Internationally, there are 225 university branch campuses. Will these students leave their foreign universities, will the university branch campuses close? and can countries afford to accommodate returning students and returning workers, with all the resulting economic and social imbalance?

6. International Non-Governmental Organizations Network

During the period 1990–2020, the number of international organizations increased reaching 5 thousand international governmental organizations, while the international non-governmental organizations increased from 6 thousand to 25 thousand, covering all sectors. These organizations have now transnational political, legal and humanitarian influence, etc. How will they be dismantled?

All of this means that dismantling the infrastructure of globalization is not possible. Globalization will remain, without negating the possibility of some change in some of its aspects.

Fourth: Political Repercussions Between Globalization and the Nation-State

The political debate between those studying the political repercussions of coronavirus focuses on two main points: The status of the nation-state in domestic and international politics, did the crisis cause the state to cease significantly its heavy involvement—regionally and internationally—in foreign affairs? Or is it otherwise? In this matter, a significant number of writers and researchers tend to believe that the coronavirus has defeated globalization, and that countries are back to the nation-state notion and their traditional functions. The regional systems would be disintegrated and the concept of sovereignty would be restored, as refined by Jean Bodin in the sixteenth century. They believe that when the pandemic ends, the existing international order would disintegrate. Such a landscape is described

in the writings of Stephen Martin Walt, the pioneer of neorealism, which is inconsistent with the views of Joseph Nye (the originator of the soft power), and partly consistent with the views of William Burns and other thinkers.[21]

The second point is the question: Will the repercussions of the pandemic increase the conflict tendency in a way that reshapes the international system, or the peaceful competition would continue, especially among major powers? In other words, is the international community on its way to a zero-sum game or a non-zero-sum game?

Looking at the trends of the contemporary international system, we find that it "promotes economic and technical interdependence," on the one hand, but it has involved, since 1945, political and social disintegration, on the other hand.[22] Both ways affect one the other, or according to the theories of globalized political economy—such as neoliberal institutionalism, the neomedievalism concept or the "cross government" theory—they cannot be separated (interdependence and disintegration). Suffice to consider the following table highlighting the most important manifestations of disintegration:[23]

Table 2: The Increase of Member States in the United Nations (Due to the colonial phenomena disintegration and the separatist tendencies of minority groups)

Year	Number of member states
1945	51
1955	76
1965	117
1975	144
1985	159
1995	185
2005	191
2015	193

Table 3: Separatist Minority Groups in 2020[24]

Africa	31
Asia	28
Europe	13
North America	7
Oceania*	9
South America	8

The current scene brings us back to the theory of Émile Durkheim about the inverse relationship between organic interdependence and mechanical interdependence, between the individuals and societies. Therefore, globalization will resist any recoil from interdependence, based on the following features:

1. The economic and technical interdependence, which represents organic interdependence weakens the mechanical one, which is based on race, language, religion, sect, etc. It is known that the core of the nation-state (the example of the Peace of Westphalia 1648) was based first on mechanical interdependence, then was strengthened by organic bonds. As for globalization, it raises the importance of organic interdependence at the expense of the mechanical one. Hence, it threatens the status of international nationalism, especially with the overflow of external influence over all aspects of political, social and economic life. Accordingly, the return to the mechanical interdependence, whose disintegration led to social and political fragmentation, will not allow the nation-state—as some think—to easily regain its position. Most probably the "soft power" of the country, which finds the coronavirus vaccine first and saves itself, will strengthen its "soft power." These countries, especially the great powers, will instrumentalize the coronavirus issue to strengthen their position in the context of globalization, which means strengthening their soft power. This is considered axiomatic in the competition between the superpowers. It seems that China has improved its image, despite being accused of lack of "transparency" at the beginning of the crisis. For it quickly curbed the acceleration of the crisis, in addition to providing aid to other countries, especially

* Colonial islands or islands belonging to a state but having separatist movements; such as Fiji, Micronesia, or Cayman, etc.

Italy and others (which Russia has followed suit). This may lead to "some" tension in its relations with some other countries, despite the call of the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO) to end the politicization of Covid-19.[25]

In return, the ability of the United States to quickly face the crisis with technical and managerial creativity may enhance the prospects of Donald Trump's second presidency. However, his total or partial failure may weaken these prospects, which will have political repercussions, especially on the US policy in various parts of the world, including—to a certain extent—the Middle East. He has made "economic incentives" the backbone of the "deal of the century." In light of the deep trade and financial repercussions of the coronavirus crisis, accompanied by oil price shocks, the momentum of this plan will suffer especially where the Palestinians are concerned. Nevertheless, Israel will consider it an opportunity, taking advantage of the international and regional preoccupation with the pandemic, and thus a "national unity" government is being formed, while there are preparations for the annexation of large areas of the West Bank (WB).

2. The mutual need of the global power markets will make these powers engage in a non-zero-sum game. That is investing in conflicting interests in a manner that does not harm their common interests, which have now a great clout in these countries (economic, financial and monetary) policies. These are some of the most important pillars of globalization.

3. The importance of specialized international organizations, such as WHO, may increase, despite Trump's convulsions. For the world has become more aware of the dangers of pandemics, especially their spread across borders. Consequently, environmental and other organizations, especially those of service nature, would be strengthened, whether they were international governmental or non-governmental organizations, and this would reinforce globalization again.

4. The ideological dimension: The above scene indicates that it will be embodying Hegel's Complex, i.e., country policies will synthesize between socialism (distributive justice) and capitalism (growth rates). This would make international relations (between countries) less prone to violence, while internal violence and civil wars would continue to a certain degree, in a non-linear track. Such a synthesis was predicted early by a number of international relations scholars.[26]

5. The crisis seems to have "refined/reshaped" the global public opinion on military institutions, which helped limit the spread of the pandemic. This was the

case of Russia, for example, which called in the army to help tackle the coronavirus crisis.[27] The task given to the hard power will grant it more freedom, particularly in developing countries, not to mention the possibility of strengthening its economic role, as is the case in China and other countries, especially developing ones.

6. It seems that the Asian perspective on international relations, has to a certain extent acquired some "glory" at the expense of increasing criticism of the Western perspective, especially when comparing the speed of the Asian response, especially in the pandemic epicenter, with the delay of European and American one. Some have described the situation as the beginning of the de-westernization process, or the beginning of a complex perspective that is represented in the WEAST model introduced early by some political researchers. It is based on the notion that "East meets West in a new global culture."[28]

7. The Coronavirus will make the forces of organic interdependence adapt themselves at first, and so it will slightly do with the forces of the mechanical interdependence. However, the next strategy of technical interdependence (transportation, communications and the Internet), climate interdependence (the coronavirus has crippled factories and air and land transport leading to a sharp drop in the percentage of pollutants like carbon dioxide. Even China's coal consumption has declined by some 40%, according to some reports),[29] and the previously mentioned indicators, is not stopping globalization but "organizing it more," and looking for new dimensions regardless of its normative evaluation. For the "spider" remains, and the old and new ways of weaving continue. The shock may cause some bounce for two years or more, and then the mega-trends would return and have their impact. As the world found in the League of Nations a way out after the First World War, and in the United Nations after the Second World War, the world will adapt with the coronavirus and continue, but with many consequences.[30] The percentages of the poor covered by social and health assistance vary between countries, which will reflect on their stability. Hence, the impact on internal conditions will vary. Moreover, the non-treatment of coronavirus in poor countries means the possibility of its return to the rich countries, a situation that calls for more international cooperation, which may gradually lead to an increase in the phenomenon of "digital" diplomacy as more international teleconferencing takes place.

8. The pandemic has made many international bodies demand the easing of sanctions and siege policies on some countries, for humane reasons, so they would be able to cope with, as in the cases of Iran, Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip), and others. This was evident in the positions of the US Democratic presidential candidates Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, who called on Trump to relax the sanctions.[31] Therefore, the world may converge to confront the virus, but it may temporarily diverge so that each side protects itself from the epidemic.

9. The geopolitical dimensions will remain the same because the virus cannot change geography. Therefore, Europe must turn to its southern Mediterranean and Russian neighborhood, and some cracks may appear in the walls of the European Union (EU) or in EU-US relations. Nevertheless, the political, economic and social fabric is so intertwined, that it is difficult to disassemble it as being promoted. For the disintegration of the EU, for example, is not an easy issue, thus the crisis may lead to the restructuring of some EU institutions, or the EU may pay attention to some issues, as a matter of normal reaction to some matters. China, also, will not abandon its global project or the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) project.

Conclusion

1. After curbing the coronavirus spread, the world will be repairing the economic damage, including the decrease of per capita income in 170 countries. However, this cannot be done unless the existing structures of globalization are utilized, but in return, national competition would push globalization towards the interests of the nation-state leading to political crises without reaching any direct clashes with rough means. **S**ome oil countries may experience more instability, due to economic paralysis caused by the coronavirus on the one hand and the large drop in oil revenues, on the other hand (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Algeria, Libya, Mexico, Ecuador, and Nigeria, etc). Some oil countries may have to review their policies and projects, like Saudi Arabia, whose Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman pledged four years ago to build an economy free from dependence on oil. He started projects that could not be accomplished without selling oil at $80 a barrel, while now it is $20 a barrel.[32] Some Arab countries were heavily dependent on tourism as one of their most important economic resources, however, at the end of April 2020, the tourism sector losses in the Middle East were estimated at about $ 40 billion**,** and that doesn't include airlines losses of more than $14 billion.

In some countries in the region, including Egypt, Iran and Turkey, tourism and airlines are a strategic parts of the economy, accounting for a significant portion of their GDPs.[33]

2. Discovering the coronavirus vaccine, goes through the stages of discovering the drug, then testing it, then producing it on a large scale, then distributing it. This means that the virus will accompany the world economy for a period of not less than one year, thus prolonging the negative effects on the economies, especially in poor countries. Such effects may vary according to the political, economic and social coping mechanisms of each country, and depending on the speedy arrival of the vaccine, and if the pandemic doesn't spread again next year in 2021.

3. The results of the US presidential elections will speed up or slowdown the adjustment of the international system structure. For if Trump wins for the second time, the economic tool would be used again in global conflicts, where the Middle East, China and Latin America would be most affected, In case he failed, the incoming Democratic president would work to fill the gaps left by Trump in US foreign relations, especially with the EU and China, and to a lesser extent the Middle East. In this context, if unemployment rates continue to rise and quarantine continues in some states, the US may witness waves of violence.

4. The deep crises caused by the coronavirus have made developing countries, including the Arab countries, realize that building regional blocs—on sound foundations—is in the long run the protective shield against the effects of all "High Impact–Low Probability" variables. Despite the shortcomings of regional structures when facing the pandemic, as was the case of the EU, the ruling on EU's role based on a less than 4 months old phenomenon is hasty. We believe that the EU may respond to the crisis, after absorbing the shock and the surprise of its rapid spread.

5. We think that the peaceful aspect of international relations will press more strongly than before the coronavirus. This may seen when new international organizations form or when the existing structures try to re-adapt, without denying that the conflict tendency will persist, however less sharply than before the coronavirus period. Accordingly, the economic and social service role of the rough power may be the most pressing in international relations, especially that such a role was played in many countries, even if in varying degrees.

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Chapter Nine

The Future of Israel in Non-Arab Futures Studies

The Future of Israel in Non-Arab Futures Studies

Introduction

Setting aside interpretations of biblical texts concerning the fate of the Jews,[1] some of which claim that four biblical prophecies were fulfilled before the twentieth century, seven more during that century, and others remain to be fulfilled until the Day of Judgment, while also linking these prophecies to contemporary Christianity, Israeli and Western academic futures studies generally accord such predictions little significance. This is largely because interpretations of religious texts are often shaped by political and cultural considerations.[2]

Based on a review of Israeli and Western futures studies published between 2000 and 2020, the researcher found no comprehensive Chinese, Russian or Japanese studies on the future of Israel that met the methodological standards of futures research. Accordingly, this chapter assesses the future outlook for Israel through the following steps:

1. Examining selected Israeli futures studies.
2. Reviewing selected European futures studies.
3. Analyzing selected US futures studies.
4. Identifying the main areas of convergence and divergence among these studies.

The author also highlights several methodological considerations regarding the presentation of these studies:

1. A detailed discussion of the analytical models, techniques and indicators employed in these studies would unnecessarily burden the present analysis, particularly since some of the works examined extend to hundreds of pages. Moreover, such technical discussions are of limited value to readers unfamiliar with futures research methodologies. The focus, therefore, is on the principal findings and mega-trends, with methodological references included only where necessary.

2. A clear distinction must be made between strategic studies and futures studies. Strategic studies are designed to achieve predefined objectives, whereas futures

studies explore and assess the full range of plausible alternatives, regardless of their alignment with the policies or preferences of any particular actor.

3. Sector-specific futures studies, such as those addressing Jerusalem, education, or economic conditions…, are incorporated, where appropriate, into broader analyses of Israel's future as a political entity and its international relations.

First: Israeli Futures Studies

The main projections in Israeli futures studies during the period under review can be summarized as follows:[3]

1. David Passig's Studies

David Passig, a professor at Bar-Ilan University, is widely considered one of Israel's leading futures studies scholars and the first in the country to earn a PhD in the field. His work closely follows established futures studies methodologies, with a strong focus on technological change and its social, political and economic implications. He has also collaborated with experts from Israeli security institutions, research centers and university professors, as will be shown throughout this chapter. His key projections can be summarized as follows:

a. The Palestinian-Israeli Future

Passig argues that Israel will withdraw from the West Bank (WB) in the late 2040s, a move that, in his view, will carry substantial human and geopolitical costs. He contends that a Palestinian state will emerge following the withdrawal and remain heavily dependent on Israel. Over time, however, demographic and economic pressures are expected to impose severe constraints, prompting efforts to expand toward the Mediterranean coast. According to Passig, these pressures will gradually erode the Palestinian state's viability, leading Israel to regard its withdrawal as a strategic error and eventually reoccupy the WB. He further suggests that Türkiye and Saudi Arabia will play significant roles in encouraging both sides to return to the peace process.

Passig also projects that, by about 2050, nearly two-thirds of the world's Jewish population will reside in Palestine. In his assessment, Israel's territory will be insufficient to accommodate this demographic growth, further strengthening pressures to reassert control over the WB.

At the domestic level, Passig argues that Israeli society is increasingly vulnerable to a civil war, driven largely by divisions over the future of the occupied territories. While he does not foresee a war on the scale of the American Civil War, he contends that it could nevertheless be highly violent and deeply traumatic. Contrary to conventional expectations, he predicts that such a civil war would be sparked by the assassination of an Israeli political leader amid escalating partisan, ethnic, class and ideological tensions, particularly over the question of withdrawal from the WB.

Passig also draws attention to a demographic challenge that has received limited scholarly attention but which he considers more serious than is commonly recognized: the relationship between demographic trends and the long-term sustainability of social security and pension systems, and their implications for Israeli society. His argument may be summarized as follows:

- Life expectancy in Israel is about 80 years.
- The retirement age is 60.
- Consequently, individuals are expected to spend roughly 20 years in retirement, generally with substantially lower income than during their working years.
- When rising expectations and consumption levels are taken into account, retirement savings may be sufficient for only about ten years. As a result, retirees could face a marked decline in their standard of living during the following decade, generating a profound social imbalance. Passig argues that the resulting pension-fund crisis could trigger a form of [social] "upheaval that will shock all societies by the middle of the twenty-first century."

When extrapolated to Israeli society, he argues that by 2050 as much as 60% of the population may be unemployed, thereby raising the prospect of a breakdown in "social security systems." This trajectory, he contends, is reinforced by rising life expectancy on the one hand and increasing birth rates among Jews in Israel and the diaspora on the other. Within this framework, he projects that Israel's population will reach approximately 16 million Jews by 2050 and 30–35 million by 2100.

b. The Future at the Regional Level

Passig argues that a future war involving Israel on one side and Lebanon and Syria on the other would likely culminate in Israeli forces reaching the outskirts of Damascus, followed by a withdrawal under security guarantees brokered by

Türkiye and the US. He further suggests that such an outcome would contribute to a continued decline in the centrality of the "Palestinian-Israeli" conflict within regional politics.

In a parallel projection, Türkiye is expected to emerge as the principal regional power in the Middle East, with Egypt and Saudi Arabia increasingly situated within its sphere of influence. Türkiye would assume a sustained mediating role between Arab states and Israel over the coming decades... .

With regard to Iranian-Israeli relations, Passig anticipates that Israel would ultimately carry out strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities, while dismissing the likelihood of Iran initiating a nuclear attack against Israel.

The findings of Passig's studies are broadly consistent with a study issued by the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS), a think tank closely associated with Benjamin Netanyahu. The study argues that, under current conditions, unilateral Israeli withdrawals would neither enhance Israel's security nor improve its international standing. Instead, it maintains that historical precedents, particularly the withdrawals from Lebanon and GS, have not brought an end to conflict; rather, they have, in some instances, contributed to its escalation. Accordingly, the study contends that a unilateral withdrawal from "Judea and Samaria" [WB] could facilitate Hamas's control over these areas while simultaneously reinforcing Palestinian demands for additional concessions. It further warns that such developments would likely exacerbate internal tensions within Israeli society.

The same study further contends that Iran's regional posture surrounding Israel is primarily designed to deter Israeli strikes against its nuclear program and to convince Israel that pursuing such a course of action would have far-reaching consequences for Israel itself, akin to the conflict dynamics on the Korean Peninsula between North and South Korea.

According to the study, Israeli policy toward Iran is defined by the strategic use of the threat of striking its nuclear program as leverage to "push for a revision of the Iranian nuclear agreement," while also benefiting from closer Israeli ties with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The study further underscores the importance of maintaining dialogue with Russia to reassure it that Israel "is not acting in ways that undermine Russian interests in Syria." It also argues that Hizbullah's threats to target Israel's offshore gas fields are likely to deter foreign

investment in the country's energy sector, thereby constraining the development of its natural gas resources. Within this framework, Hamas is portrayed as a tactical challenge, whereas Hizbullah is regarded as a strategic threat due to its structural alignment with Iran.

- **At the international level**

In his book 2048, Passig adopts a historical approach to patterns of international conflict, first identifying long-term demographic and technological trends before projecting the evolution of great-power wars in the twenty-first century. He forecasts that Russia would enter into conflict with the US in 2020 and with Japan in 2048. He further argues that Israel's capacity to generate international political support through what he terms "attractive assistance" remains limited. In this context, he suggests that American Jews have become less receptive to the Israeli model, a development he views as a potential risk to the durability of US-Israeli alignment. This assessment, he notes, is also shared by Yehezkel Dror in a related study.[4]

2. Studies on the Israeli Security Future Dimension and the Degree of Consensus among Israeli Political Science Specialists[5]

This study, conducted under the supervision of a group of Israeli academic researchers and experts, applies the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) framework. The approach is grounded in temporarily suspending the epistemic constraints embedded in dominant social, religious, and cultural paradigms, and proceeds through a structured sequence of analytical stages:

a. Deconstruction: The analytical process of breaking down a phenomenon into its constituent elements in order to examine how each component is constituted.

b. Genealogy: Tracing the evolution of prevailing concepts in the Arab-Zionist conflict by following the history of their formation.

c. Distance: Separating one's assumptions about the future from what current empirical indicators of the phenomenon actually suggest.

d. Understanding the relationship between past and future (alternative pasts and futures): Linking different forms of the past with their corresponding future implications and trajectories.

e. Reordering knowledge: Reorganizing knowledge on the basis of diverse civilizational or religious epistemologies (e.g., Marxist, nationalist, Islamic,

Christian, etc.) in order to identify points of convergence and divergence in analyzing a phenomenon such as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Building on the methodological steps outlined above, the study analyzes the degree of convergence among a sample of Israeli political science scholars holding honorary distinctions regarding the components of comprehensive national security, understood in its military, economic, social and political dimensions.

Based on these patterns of convergence, it then compares elite orientations with those of Israeli political parties. Since parties take into account both public opinion and elite preferences due to their implications for electoral success and political power, any projection of their future positions, and of Israeli government policy more broadly, must consider societal orientations and their influence on strategic choices, particularly in the short term.

The study's findings indicate varying levels of consensus on issues related to Israeli national security, as follows:

a. Broad areas of agreement (among the expert sample) aimed at securing Israel and maintaining these priorities in the future:

- Preserving Israel's scientific superiority over all neighboring states (95% agreement).
- Ensuring Israel's water and energy independence (80% agreement).
- Encouraging the demographic dispersion of Israelis from the country's center toward its peripheries, alongside the establishment of security hubs in these areas (85% agreement).
- Designating the Negev Desert as the primary development priority in the twenty-first century (70% agreement).
- Expanding trade with neighboring states to increase the economic cost of war for them (75% agreement), thereby shifting the "Israeli conflict" from a zero-sum to a non-zero-sum framework.
- Positioning Israel as a leader in the global transition away from oil dependency (65% agreement).
- Emphasizing Zionism as the core of Jewish national identity, irrespective of individual levels of religiosity (85% agreement).

b. The most contentious issues in formulating an Israeli security paradigm:

- Israel should pursue greater autonomy in the security domain, even at the cost of temporary economic losses (5% agreement).
- Establishing specialized courts for security-related issues (5% agreement).
- Replacing Jewish or Israeli citizenship with "Hebrew citizenship" (5% agreement).
- Adoption by the Israeli military of certain guerrilla warfare tactics (5% agreement).

c. Relative Consensus in the Future Security Outlook (agreement above 40%)

- Allowing Israeli citizens to work in any sector regardless of ethnicity, gender or religion (55% agreement).
- Preparing infrastructure to withstand potential earthquakes (60% agreement).
- Incorporating the Holocaust into the educational curricula of states allied with Israel (45% agreement).
- Integrating Arabs within Israel into Israeli society (40% agreement).
- Maintaining Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity (40% agreement).
- Requiring Israeli institutions to adopt contingency or backup plans to address potential cyberattacks (55% agreement).
- Committing Israel to non-interference in the internal affairs of neighboring states (40% agreement).
- Training African Jewish immigrants (including Ethiopian immigrants and undocumented migrants) in intelligence work and facilitating their return to their countries of origin to establish local intelligence networks (45% agreement).

d. Relative Areas of Disagreement (15–30% agreement)

- Including judges in every decision-making unit (20% agreement).
- Strengthening mutual defense agreements among neighboring states (excluding Israel) (15% agreement).
- Guaranteeing equal rights for Arabs within Israel (30% agreement).
- Enhancing security cooperation and consultation with BRICS countries (30% agreement).

3. Studies on the Future of International System and Its Implications for Israel

Regarding the implications of transformations in the international system and its structure for Israel, a study by The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) argues that Israel must account for possible future developments associated with a shift toward a multipolar order or systemic international disorder. These developments include:[6]

- The erosion of Israeli deterrence and military power due to a potential decline in US global standing and growing divisions within the Atlantic alliance, particularly between the US and Europe.
- A possible US withdrawal from the Middle East, driven by its prolonged military entanglements in the region and their associated costs, as well as US energy independence, which has reduced the strategic importance of the Middle East and could result in a power vacuum likely to be filled by other actors.
- The weakening of democratic and human rights norms under a multipolar or disorderly system, which could grant Israel greater latitude in managing Palestinians, as its policies would face reduced international scrutiny.
- The economic costs to Israel stemming from increasing protectionist trends in global trade, as already observed, which may limit access to key markets.
- The US-China rivalry, particularly in the commercial and technological domains, which could place Israel in a position of having to choose between competing powers, thereby risking the loss of one side.

4. Official Israeli Futures Studies: "Israel 2020"[7]

This study involved 15 Israeli ministries and governmental agencies and was conducted in collaboration with approximately 250 Israeli and international experts over a six-year period. Its main findings emphasize the following:

- Israel is among the most densely populated Western countries.
- Population growth in Israel exceeds that of other Western industrial states.
- Israel's economic development indicates a narrowing gap with Western economies.

The study outlines three possible future scenarios for Israel:

First Scenario: A trajectory of industrial development in parallel with Western countries.

Second Scenario: Transforming Israel into a global center for world Jewry, which would require strengthening its absorption capacity.

Third Scenario: An expansion of "peace" between Arabs and Israel, accompanied by intensified economic and trade relations, through which Israel would emerge as a regional development hub.

However, the study assigns greater likelihood to rising internal tensions within Israeli society, driven primarily by two factors: income inequality and the weakening of social cohesion. It further argues that, in the future, Israel will need to prioritize the development of its peripheries and external gateways.

Finally, the study considers the establishment of a Palestinian state to be a likely outcome, which would lead Israel to place greater emphasis on its relationship with it and with the region, rather than continuing to view itself as a "European suburb."

5. The Future from the Perspective of Israeli Society[8]

The findings of a study conducted by the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), titled National Security Index 2019, identify key indicators of Israeli national security and its future outlook, thereby informing the strategic orientations of Israeli decision-makers.

According to the study, the following conclusions emerge:

What are the principal threats to Israeli national security? They are:

- The northern arena (Southern Lebanon and Syria).
- Nuclear Iran.
- US-Israel relations.
- The media and its positive and negative influence on society.
- Israeli-Arab relations and their future trajectory.
- Social aspects within Israeli society.
- Public attitudes toward Israel's security establishment (the military, police and intelligence services).
- The Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

What is the most significant external threat to Israel?

Northern arena	32%
Nuclear Iran	26%
“Terrorist” activity	8%
Palestinian-Israeli conflict	14%
Hamas	12%
Diplomatic isolation	8%

Israel can successfully deal with the following challenges:

Ongoing severe “terror” attacks	81%
Escalation on all fronts at once	73%
Polarization between the different Israeli sectors	72%
Corruption in the government system	62%
International isolation	56%
Reduced US support	55%

If Israel is involved in a war on the northern front or in Gaza, how will it likely end?

A clear Israeli military victory	43%
The other side could also claim victory	34%
A sense of loss and missed opportunity for Israel	11%
Serious damage to the home front that will cloud the results of the war	12%

Looking back, who won?

	Israel	**The other side**	**No one**
The Second Lebanon War	50%	8%	42%
Gaza war 2014 (Operation Protective Edge)	49%	9%	44%

Favor a solution of two states for two people: Those who said no:

2006	2009	2012	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
29%	36%	31%	40%	41%	45%	42%	45%

Favor a two-state solution:

Religious Jews	25%
Secular Jews	72%
Arabs	89%
Jews	55%
Right	39%
Center	82%
Left	82%

How should Israel deal with the Hamas threat from Gaza?

Military operation to dismantle Hamas's military wing	34%
Sever the Strip from Israel? (closure of the border crossings)	23%
A prolonged ceasefire in exchange for easing the closure and improving daily life and infrastructures in Gaza	26%
Accept Hamas governance and work toward an agreement	6%
Continue the existing conflict management policy	11%

A continuation of the existing situation without a political arrangement works to Israel's advantage:

2017	44%
2018	35%
2019	34%

Do you believe that a two-state solution is achievable in the foreseeable future?

Achievable in the distant future	40%
Not achievable	34%
Achievable in the near future	11%
Don't Know	15%

On recent ideas regarding a unilateral annexation of areas in the West Bank (Only Israel):

In favor of a unilateral annexation of settlement blocs	26 %
In favor of a unilateral annexation of all settlement areas	14%
In favor of a unilateral annexation of all areas of the West Bank	7%
In favor of annexation of all of Area C	8 %
Opposed to any unilateral annexation	45%

What is the best option for Israel regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Strive for a comprehensive solution	37%
Temporary arrangements to separate from the Palestinians	23%
Annex settlement blocs in the West Bank to Israel	17%
Continue the existing situation	14%
Annex all areas in the West Bank to Israel and create one state	9%

Implications for Israel's identity, barring two states for two peoples:

Israel will remain as it is today	46%
It will harm Israel's character as a Jewish state	28%
It will harm Israel's character as a democratic state	18%
It will be necessary to redefine the character of the State	8%

Do you support or oppose an initiated action by the Israeli army to prevent Iran becoming entrenched in Syria, even at the price of war?

Support	70%
Oppose	30%

Confidence in the security establishment:

Israeli army	93%
Mossad	86%
Israel Security Agency (ISA)	80%
Police	53%

Is the Israeli army prepared for the next military confrontation?

Prepared	87%
Not prepared	13%

Do the ideological disputes in Israeli society affect the performance of the Israeli army?

Negative effect	64 %
No effect	26%
Positive effect	10 %

Are the values currently guiding the Israeli army's senior command close to the values acceptable to most of the Israeli public?

Close	70 %
Distant	30%

If you had to advise youth about to be drafted into the Israeli army, what advice would you give?

To enlist in the Israeli army as a combat soldier in a select elite unit	15%
To enlist in the Israeli army as a combat soldier	20%
To enlist in the Israeli army and be assigned in line with the military's needs	35%
To enlist in the Israeli army in a role that has value in civilian life	21%
To enlist in the Israeli army in a role that is easy	5%
To make efforts not to enlist at all	4%

The media's handling of military and security issues:

Credible	74%
Objective	64%
Patriotic	61%
Balanced	59%

How do you view Israel's Arab citizens?

People who should be respected but suspected	54%
Citizens with equal rights	21%
Potential enemies	25%

Which of the following sentences is closest to your opinion?

The government must invest in order to close the gaps between Jewish and Arab citizens quickly	35%
The government must invest in Israel's Arab citizens in a manner equal to the investment in its Jewish citizens	34%
The government need not invest in Israel's Arab citizens	31%

The sense of solidarity in Israeli society has weakened:

Agree	70%
Disagree	30%

What is the central element responsible for the weakened sense of solidarity?

Tension between right and left	40%
Religious-secular relations	23%
Israeli-Palestinian conflict	11%
Gaps between rich and poor	10%
Israeli-Arab relations	8%
Tension between conservative and liberal worldviews	8%

Is the Israeli home front prepared for a possible military confrontation?

To a great extent	58 %
To a limited extent	42%

Are you and your family prepared for a military confrontation?

To a great extent	31%
To a limited extent	38%
Not at all	31%

What is the value that is most important to you?

	A democratic state	**Greater Land of Israel**	**State of peace**	**A state with a Jewish majority**
1988	15%	19%	33%	33%
2019	19%	15%	15%	51%

To what extent do you agree with each of the following sentences?

Those who agree:

The Jewish nation is the chosen nation	60%
The Jewish nation dwells alone	56%
The entire world is against Israel	49%
Israel can rely only on itself	82%
The State of Israel is a "villa in the jungle"	66%
Israeli democracy is in danger	55%

Israel's strategic position in the world has never been better:

Yes	44%

To what extent do you agree with each of the following sentences?

	Yes
We will always live by the sword	64%
If someone comes to kill you, kill him first	84%
Arabs understand only force	61%
There is no partner for peace	62%

Future Implications of the Survey Findings

The above trends suggest that Israeli society is likely to push future governments toward the following directions:

1. Increasing societal pressure on the Israeli government to eliminate the potential Iranian threat.
2. Not ruling out the possibility of a decline in US economic and political support.
3. A decisive victory over the Palestinian resistance in Gaza Strip (GS) or over Hizbullah is unlikely in the short term.
4. A two-state solution is unlikely to materialize in the short to medium term.

5. The relationship between Israel and GS will continue to rest on two pillars: violence and blockade, in the short to medium term.
6. The annexation of parts of WB (in addition to settlements) is assessed as a 55–60% probability.
7. Discrimination against Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories will continue.
8. Indicators of Israeli societal cohesion will continue to decline, while the likelihood of social unrest will increase.
9. Hard power, in its various forms, will remain the primary instrument of Israeli policy toward Arab states.

6. Studies on the Future of the Religious Phenomenon in Israel[9]

Israeli researchers, along with a substantial number of Israeli security experts, argue that the growing influence of the religious current in Israel is likely to lead, in the future, to an unfavorable or even highly adverse outcome. They further maintain that Netanyahu's prolonged tenure in office has reinforced this trend.

These studies point to the phenomenon of clandestine religious organizations. The extremist underground current known as the Jewish Underground developed particularly after the early 1980s. Its activities included car bomb attacks against Palestinian municipal leaders, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, attempts to burn *al-Aqsa* Mosque, assaults on worshippers at the Ibrahimi Mosque, the killing of a large number of Palestinian worshippers, and ongoing settler attacks on Palestinian individuals and property. This dimension is further reinforced by the steady rise, since 1995, in tendencies toward extremism among religious Jews, estimated at 20–25% over the period 1995–2019.[10]

Carmi Gillon, a former ambassador and former head of the General Intelligence Service (GIS or *Shabak*), argues that the right-wing current, of which Gush Emunim is a key component, expanded among settlers in the 1980s, when their number was approximately 12 thousand. Today, they number more than half a million in the WB. He further contends that this constituency may later engage in the destruction of Islamic and Christian religious sites in Palestine, as well as the killing of Jewish reformists or members of the Knesset. He adds that such tendencies could intensify if Israel were to withdraw from the WB.

These strategic assessments are closely tied to trends in Israeli public opinion. A study by the Israel Democracy Institute on religiosity in Israel and its impact on society and Israel's international relations indicates the following:

Jewish youth aged 18–24 identifying as "religious right-wing"	69.9%
Jewish youth opposing gender equality	42.4%
Supporting a two-state solution	70.4%
Supporting the annexation of the entire WB	40.2%

Another study by the Israeli scholar Omri Boehm,[11] adopting a normative perspective, argues that the main currents in Israel (the right and the left) have failed due to their prioritization of security and ideological considerations over human concerns and the rights of citizens and individuals. The study maintains that the overall trajectory of Zionist ideology points to a continued decline of the Israeli left and a growing chauvinistic tendency within the Israerli right. In light of the increasing Arab population in Israel, it argues that Israel is moving toward a model that may be even more severe than apartheid South Africa in the early 1990s, following a comparable trajectory. Accordingly, the study proposes a "binational federal republic" as the way out of this crisis.

In contrast to this perspective, there is a current in Israel led by Yoram Hazony, head of the Herzl Institute, which advances a unilateral nationalist conception of Israel. This current is characterized by an explicit rejection of globalization and by its view that universal human rights discourse is fundamentally flawed. It instead calls for its replacement with a moral framework he terms "minimal biblical ethics."[12] This position stands in tension with advocates of liberal Zionist thought, particularly those aligned with globalization. Hazony envisions a future in which states pursue independent trajectories, cultivate distinct traditions in relative isolation, and advance their interests without external interference.[13] At the same time, his position on minorities suggests an implicit acceptance of the continued subordination of the Arab minority to the dominant majority framework, as is the case in Israel.[14]

7. Study of the Future of Israeli Relations with the Jews Outside Israel

A study by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates that the level of commitment among American Jews toward Israel in 2008 was lower than in

previous periods in Israel's history. This reflects a negative trend in the level of American Jewish support for Israel,[15] taking into account that Jews in the United States currently constitute approximately 68% of Jews living outside Israel.[16]

8. The Most "Optimistic" Trend in Israeli Futures Studies

A study by JISS, a think tank closely associated with Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a recent study titled "The Future of Israel Looks Good," the optimistic outlook on Israel's future is more pronounced than in other studies. This view rests on the following considerations:[17]

a. A wide gap exists between Israel's scientific advancement and that of neighboring countries. Israel ranks among the highest globally in research and development expenditure relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reaching 4.5%, the highest rate worldwide.

b. About 300 multinational companies maintain research centers and laboratories in Israel.

From a security perspective, the study identifies Iran as the principal threat in the foreseeable future. It further argues that the optimism that prevailed in the mid-1990s regarding prospects for "peace" was misplaced, and that pragmatic considerations regarding territory in the WB outweigh ideological ones. It also suggests that a prevailing view in Israeli society is that Israel "will to live by its sword for the foreseeable future." Regarding the rocket threat from Palestinians in GS, the data indicate that 88% of these rockets are intercepted, a high and significant proportion.

The study further argues that the social balance between Jews of Eastern and Western origin is becoming more entrenched in Israeli society, thereby reducing the likelihood of ethnic unrest or the influence of subcultures. Indicators of this trend include:

a. An increase in mixed marriages between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews.

b. A growing number of Sephardi university students, expanding their access to higher administrative and other positions.

c. An increasing number of senior Sephardi officers, which reduces feelings of marginalization regarding their participation in decision-making, particularly in strategic affairs.

In another future-oriented study by the same institute, the following findings are presented:[18]

a. Identification of key security threats, namely:

1. Iran and its regional expansion along Israel's borders, particularly the possibility of its transition into a nuclear state.
2. The continued failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
3. The continued control of Hamas over the GS.
4. The spread of Salafi Islamic organizations around Israel.
5. The Muslim Brothers (MB) movement model in the region surrounding Israel.
6. The return of Russian influence to the region.
7. The possibility of continued Iranian presence along the Golan border, alongside Syrian forces and Hizbullah. As the Syrian army weakens, reliance on Iranian and Hizbullah forces is expected to increase, a development viewed as concerning for Israel.
8. A weakening of US commitment to intervention in the Middle East.

b. Opportunities

A set of indicators is seen as making Israel's future more "secure," including:

1. The Arab Spring disrupted the Arab regional order and weakened threats to Israel.
2. The rise of proxy wars between locally based forces supported by regional or international actors (Türkiye, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and Egypt, etc.), with Iran-backed forces appearing the most organized and cohesive and thus the most dominant.
3. The existence of large areas across Middle Eastern states where competing forces seek control.
4. The fragmentation of political Islam into state actors (Türkiye and Qatar versus Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE) and movements (MB Movement, Salafists, ISIS, al-Qaeda, etc.).
5. The Palestinian schism (GS/ Ramallah).

c. Implications[19]

1. The Palestinian Authority is not inclined toward any form of confrontation with Israel.
2. Countervailing dynamics working against Israel include the growing role of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, the rise of left-wing parties to power in some European states, and the expansion of global popular opposition to Israeli policies.
3. Russia's positioning in Israeli strategic thinking as a "competitor" rather than an "enemy" (including concerns over Russia's transfer of S-300 or S-400 air defense systems to Syria).
4. The growing development of Saudi–Emirati–Israeli relations, both covert and overt.
5. The decline of Arab nationalism (1948–1978) and political Islam (1970–2020).

Second: European Futures Studies[20]

In an analysis of the seven foundations of Israel's existence and its future trajectory, Bulletin No. 7 of the Global Europe Anticipation Bulletin argues that the future is marked by several key indicators, including the following:

1. The end of two foundational variables of Israel in Western discourse: the compensation of Jews for Nazi crimes, a factor whose salience is diminishing with time; and the decline of the colonial phenomenon that enabled European powers to transfer territory from one party to another.
2. The end of the phase of military dominance, reflected in the failure in southern Lebanon following the 2006 war with Hizbullah, and the reduced US capacity in the Middle East to shape regional developments.
3. The end of unilateral solutions, driven by a reassessment of Israel's capabilities and a shift in the Israeli military's role from "battlefield combat effectiveness" to a policing model of order enforcement, particularly in the WB.
4. The growing combat capabilities of Arab and Islamic actors, including Iran's nuclear capability, Hizbullah's capabilities, increasing criticism of Israel, and the potential global economic risks of future wars.

5. Increasing doubts about the long-term sustainability of US support for Israel.
6. The growing role of European influence in the Middle East, which is comparatively less aligned with Israel.
7. The expanding role of regional powers in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including Iran, Türkiye, the EU, etc.

According to the European study, these transformations could lead to two possible scenarios:

1. The continuation of Israel's policy of force.
2. The failure of Arab unity efforts and the strengthening of Iran's regional role.

Based on these scenarios, the study anticipates the following implications:

1. 20% of Israel's population holding non-Israeli passports would leave the country in the event of successive waves of missile attacks on Israel.
2. Over the long term, Israel could evolve into a "Jewish sect" in the Middle East. Although this scenario may appear implausible, the study points to two considerations:
   a. The ghetto model and its evolution in Europe, particularly in the context of declining US influence.
   b. Israel's greater dependence on external actors than on its regional environment, making its future increasingly tied to external human, technological and economic resources.

This gives rise to the following possibilities:

1. Israel's integration into the region, a direction being considered by a number of Israeli leaders, particularly among the younger generation.
2. The strengthening of Arab unity trends, driven by the decline of opposing international powers such as the US, the success of the European Union model, and the growing influence of Islamic forces.

A German study on the future of Jerusalem outlines two scenarios:

First Scenario: It envisions a political agreement that would end the conflict. Under this scenario, East and West Jerusalem would be separated with minimal cooperation, or Jerusalem could become an open city with two municipal governments, Israeli and Palestinian, alongside an overarching council, committee, or joint administration responsible primarily for municipal services.

Second Scenario: It assumes the absence of a political solution and the continuation of current trends, including a growing settler presence in East Jerusalem and further efforts to reduce the Palestinian share of the population to between 28% and 32%. This would likely prompt Palestinians to seek ways to confront Israeli policies, potentially leading to renewed confrontation.

Third: US Studies[21]

US studies issued by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and subsequently declassified in redacted form indicate a number of factors contributing to the erosion of Israeli power, including:

1. Rising instability, reflected in distorted budgets, inflationary pressures, the absence of political consensus, the increasing influence of Sephardim, the rise of religious fundamentalism, and the growth of settler terrorism in the occupied territories.
2. A growing Israeli hawkishness, driven by the factors noted in point 1 above, the increasing influence of extremist figures, greater tendencies toward territorial annexation, the weakening of prospects for a settlement with the Palestinians and Jordan, and the persistence of anti-Israeli sentiment in Arab society.
3. The continuation of intermittent confrontations with neighboring actors, particularly in Lebanon and GS.
4. The growing prevalence of anti-Israeli sentiment in Arab society.
5. The erosion of Israel's military supremacy in the Middle East.
6. Fundamental changes in the states neighboring occupied Palestine.
7. The potential introduction of non-conventional weapons in future confrontations.

The foregoing developments may give rise to the following outcomes:

1. Complications for US policy stemming from its relationship with an unstable state, along with the possibility of a decline in the depth of US commitment to Israel.
2. Increased Israeli military and economic dependence on the US.
3. Growing Arab hostility toward the US due to its bias in favor of Israel.
4. Expanded Russian, Chinese and European influence at the expense of the US.

The study concludes in Point 19 with the following assessment:

"The contingency of a decisive Iranian victory over Iraq, the fall of Saddam, and the inauguration of a radical Shia government in Baghdad would have seriously disruptive effects throughout the Gulf area, the Levant, and Egypt. In such circumstances new US opportunities would doubtless arise to help lessen the intensity of Arab feelings toward Israel, and perhaps find some avenues of more common cause against the new contagion," namely Iran, thereby increasing the likelihood of an Iranian–Israeli confrontation.

As for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) study, it argues that ideological balances within Israel impede progress toward "peace." It further suggests that international pressure on Israel is expected to increase in the future, potentially contributing to greater internal instability. The study also maintains that the destruction of the Iraqi army in the Gulf Wars led to two main outcomes:

1. A reduced likelihood of Israel facing a military attack from the east.
2. A decline in the strategic value of WB from an Israeli perspective.

In addition, the study states that the Iranian nuclear threat is growing, thereby increasing the likelihood of nuclear proliferation in the region. It further argues that US efforts to "democratize" the Arab region have reduced the importance of Arab support for Palestinians, while expanding the space for Islamic movements, thereby generating more adversarial forces. Finally, it concludes that the stagnation of the peace process in the Middle East will persist in the near term, and that the objective of establishing a Palestinian state will continue to recede.

Futures Studies and Low-Probability, High-Impact Variables

Although strategic planning based on futures studies typically rests on major trends and sub-trends, the element of surprise in international relations cannot be ignored. In regional futures studies on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the following possibilities have been identified as low in probability but in impact:

1. A military confrontation between Gulf states and Iran, with Israel intervention.
2. Instability in Egypt leading to the return of the MB Movement to power.
3. Gulf states refraining from any confrontation with Israel, leaving Israel to face Iran alone.
4. Russia imposing constraints on Israel on the Syrian front.

5. A US return to the nuclear agreement with Iran without amendments deemed important to Israel.
6. The death of the Iranian Supreme Leader, followed by internal political unrest in Iran that weakens Iran-aligned forces in the region.
7. A Jordanian realignment toward Türkiye and Qatar, affecting Jordanian-Israeli relations.
8. Deep political change within Jordan's ruling system.
9. A civil war in the WB leading to Hamas taking control.
10. Escalation in GS under blockade conditions pushing Palestinian resistance toward a major confrontation with Israel.
11. Türkiye and Egypt joining a regional nuclear arms race.
12. The rise of the US left to a level that leads to the suspension of military aid to Israel.
13. A "major terrorist" attack in Europe or the US leading to renewed Western intervention in the region.
14. A nuclear confrontation in Korea or Kashmir, strengthening global non-proliferation pressures that extend to Israel.

Overall Picture

Without engaging in the methodologies of futures studies, and based on a careful review of the relevant literature and its sources, the main features of Israel's future in these studies can be summarized as follows:

1. Regional instability and recurring waves of military confrontation are expected to persist until 2050.
2. Iranian-Israeli confrontation is likely to remain the most probable scenario in the medium term.
3. Israel is expected to maintain scientific and technological superiority over all neighboring states.
4. The likelihood of internal conflict within Israel is high, though assessments differ regarding its intensity and form.

5. In terms of the balance of power between Israel and the Arab states, Israel is not expected to be in a stronger position in the future than it is today.
6. The principal future concerns for Israel include:
   a. A gradual decline in US support for Israel, driven by global, regional and domestic factors.
   b. A deterioration in Israel's global public image, with corresponding effects on its international standing.
   c. The continued dominance of conflict as a defining feature of the region over the next three decades.
7. Prospects for the establishment of a Palestinian state fluctuate between a "state under occupation," "self-administration," or the absence of a state altogether.
8. European and American futures studies tend to focus on the medium and long term, whereas Israeli studies are more oriented toward the short and medium term. European studies also appear more pessimistic about Israel's future, locally, regionally and internationally, compared to American or Israeli studies in general.

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Chapter Ten

The Indication of Israel Ranking in the International Measurement Models

The Indication of Israel Ranking in the International Measurement Models

In 1863, the first model of ranking of technical universities in Europe appeared,[1] then the scope of rankings widened to include most aspects of life; whether political, economic, social, military, technical, athletic, etc. Now, countries are competing in these categories to improve their ranking position.

Country Ranking as one of the Soft Power Components

Since the day Joseph Nye introduced the concept of "soft power" in 1990, most countries realized that the ranking of a country in the international ranking forms is among the soft power indicators. For, on the one hand, this ranking is to be considered an attraction force, and on the other hand, it improves the state's image in the international community, whether for its peoples or their rulers. This matter is of great interest for Israel. But how important is the ranking of a country in these forms:[2]

1. It enhances the opportunities to attract foreign investment and encourages trade with that country, even lending it, in addition to attracting students to study at its universities. This is evident, for example, in the competition for the advanced positions in university rankings, and in the Ease of Doing Business Index, which would enhance trade relations with highly ranked countries.[3]
2. The high ranking of a country enhances the chances of tourism, for more the country is politically stable the higher its tourism rate, and the higher its ranking, the more tourism contribute to it.[4]
3. The rapprochement between the international community bodies and the country that holds the highest ranks would increase, thus strengthening the negotiating position of this country.
4. The high ranking state will enjoy wide international public support, hence it will become an attraction hub for international or regional organizations, NGOs, or intellectual, literary and sports activities, etc.
5. Monitoring the ranking of a particular country in different ranking forms helps to identify its major trends, progressing sectors and lagging ones.

6. A country that is highly ranked in certain sectors becomes an attractive model for other countries, which would follow its example. This gives "added value" to the country's soft power account.

Forms and Methodologies of Country Ranking[5]

In general, an achievement is a tool for measuring the differences in a specific category between individuals, groups, countries, or various organizations. As students are ranked according to their scores, or companies according to their profits or production volume, or parties according to their number of seats, a huge number of international scientific organizations have elaborated indices and established country ranking forms, which are based on:[6]

1. Defining the category to be measured (political, social, economic, or military, etc) or a comprehensive one.
2. Identifying the indices of the category to be measured, for example, if it's the economic category, the indices would be the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), GDP per capita, trade volume, reserves, etc. Similarly with other categories (political, social, etc).
3. Identifying the sub-indices, whose total forms the index; for example when measuring the democracy index, we measure the sub-indices like electoral integrity, censorship, freedom of opinion, and freedom of organization, etc. Then, the aggregation of sub-indices produces a final index score.
4. The value or percentage of the main index is determined, and the values of each sub-index according to their importance are defined. This is done by following statistical steps like the analysis of the cross impact or the correlation coefficient, or regression analysis to know the general trend of the index, or by polling the experts, etc.
5. All sub-indices are added to get the value of the main index. Then the main indices are added.
6. Ranking the country according to the sum of its indices, while noting the following:
   a. The number of countries varies according to different measurement forms.
   b. The difference between the forms is not much, for they are mostly based on either similar or sufficiently credible sources of information.

There are about 85 institutions that measure indices based on different forms, and the average sum of the indices of these forms is around 165 major and sub-indices.[7]

Locating Israel in These Indices[8]

The Israeli media tries to focus on the ranking of Israel in global indices, focusing in particular on categories that Israel excels in, such as international influence, education, universities and patents, etc.[9]

And to show the interest of Israel in the significance of its ranking in various fields, suffice to take a look at a pro-Israel article and its reaction to a website that ranks the world's armies, placing Iran above Israel. It criticizes the method of calculation of scores, where 55 individual factors are utilized and modifiers are applied,[10] whereas these methods are not crticized if they put Israel in the top list. For instance, some democracy rankings do not consider the occupation index and the number of detainees under occupation among the indicators of democracy or human rights. Even the Globalization index, it is questioned if the results of Israel are not as it expects.[11]

To determine the overall ranking of Israel in the major categories, we observed four main sectors, and we used the major index forms of each sector, while comparing them to other forms to ensure more precision, and at the same time taking any differences into consideration.

1. The economic sector: It includes 11 indices, each with sub-indices (such as GDP, GDP per capita, development index, human capital, trade volume, globalization, etc). Each index may have a different number of sub-indices with different weights. For example, in the A.T. Kearney/Foreign Policy Globalization Index, there are 14 variables or sub-indices, while in the KOF Globalization Index there are nine.[12]
2. Social sector: it includes 9 indices; education, technology patents, entertainment, social violence, etc.
3. Political sector: it includes 10 indices; democracy, political stability, international relations, arrests, freedom of thought, press, etc.
4. Military sector: It includes 6 indices; military expenditure (% of GDP), firepower, arms sale, militarization, etc.

Observation led to the following:

1. The general ranking of Israel was 42nd out of 160 countries.
2. At the sectors level, the results were as follows:
   a. In the economic sector: Its world ranking is 24.
   b. In the political sector: Its world ranking is 60.
   c. In the social sector: Its world ranking is 62.
   d. In the military: Its world ranking is 23.

Result Analysis

If we divided the country ranks into four (high, middle, low and weak), Israel is highly ranked in the military and economic sectors, whereas it was among the middle ranks in the political and social sectors. This means that Israel is a strong, technically advanced country, but it is much less ranked in human-related issues (political and social).

The above conclusion requires Arab and Palestinian planners to think of how to deepen this defect in the Israeli structure. We believe that this can be done through various forms of resistance, whose aspects are further clarified when some sub-indices are explained:

1. In the Press Freedom Index, Israel is ranked 101 out of 180 countries.
2. In the Global Peace Index, Israel is ranked 144 out of 163 countries.
3. In crime (drugs, money laundering, organ trafficking, white slave trade), Israel is ranked 129 out of 245 countries or political entities (some islands and autonomous regions are included, especially that they were often shelters for bank branches and giant companies to launder money through offshore banking units (OBUs).[13] It is known that Israel, in 2003, was blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force, an international body that sets standards in the fight against money laundering and terror financing.[14]
4. Israel has fallen from being ranked 28 among the world's countries in 2016 to 35 in 2019, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). That leaves Israel falling closer to the rank of 50 out of some 180 countries, considered the red line for corruption.[15]

The Gravity of Normalization

If we examined the sub-indices of the two main social and political sectors, the Globalization Index shows the dangerous role that Arab openness plays in strengthening the Israeli global position. For the political globalization indices will be enhanced with every step of Arab openness to Israel, not to mention the improvement that will ensue on the economic indices level. It is enough to see the following indicators:[16]

1. The increase of trade volume between Israel and the Gulf countries reaching about one billion dollars.
2. The sports, intelligence, tourism and official Arab visits to Israel have increased.
3. Arab hiring of Israeli companies or forging partnerships with them have increased (especially in the telecommunication domain).
4. The very weak Arab reaction to the "deal of the century," proposed by US President Trump, thus promoting the impression internationally that the plan may be implemented. Consequently, the number of delegations coming to Israel will increase in the hope of contributing to the projects of "deal of the century."
5. The Arab media has changed in terms of concepts, boycott related terms, and news related to Israel.
6. Endeavors to establish civil society organizations (CSOs) that include Arab and Israeli elite.

These changes when turned into quantitative indices will be—according to the weights of the sub-indices related to them—consolidating continuously Israel's position, hence the burden would increase on the Palestinian side.

Israel is seeking to strengthen its international ranking to expand its international political space, and at the same time, is working on turning the Israeli-Arab conflict from a zero sum game to a non zero sum game. In the first case, every loss by one side (–1) is a gain to the other side (+1) and the sum would be zero. In the second case, the objective is to combine conflict and cooperation, within a future perspective, to widen gradually the scope of Arab-Israeli cooperation. In this case, the weight of conflict of interests would become less important, for the wider the circle of Arab-Israeli common interests, the less important the contradictory interests, especially on the Palestinian side. Therefore, strengthening Israeli-Arab

relations aims to make the Palestine issue gradually lose its weight. This is what Israel is aspiring to achieve, supporting its endeavors with a strategy to enhance its regional and international ranking in global indices and employ it at all levels.

Strengthening the Resistance

The other side of this issue is strengthening all forms of resistance, for this will hugely affect the indices and sub-indices, and consequently negatively impact Israel's ranking and its ensuing effects. As a matter of fact, the resistance directly affects the indices that have higher relative weight, and whose impacts are clear in the global indices as follows:[17]

1. Economic and technical indices: 37%.
2. Social indices: 39%.
3. Political indices: 24%.

Two Application Examples

It's enough to take two application examples of index forms:

First: Fragile States Index

The Fund for Peace institution has been publishing The Fragile States Index for 15 years. It is based on 12 key political, social and economic indicators and over 100 sub-indicators. With respect to Israel, this index indicates the following:

1. Israel was ranked 67 out of 178 countries gaining a total of 76.5 points during the period 2018-2019, which means it has a fragility rate of 63.75%. It is sufficiently matched with results of the Political Stability Index issued by The Global Economy, where Israel was ranked 163rd out of 195 countries, getting –0.93 on a scale that ranges between +2.5 (the most politically stable) to –2.5 (the least politically stable), which means that Israel is unstable by 63%.[18] A percentage similar to the previous one.

2. During 2013–2019, Israel's ranking improved by 7.8 points, due to the policies of the Palestinian Authority, whether concerning security coordination or the flabby Arab and Palestinian diplomacy when interacting with various global powers. This is despite the fact that all international public opinions favor the Palestinian side.

Second: Ranking Forms Related to International Students in Israeli Universities[19]

According to the 2019 Academic Ranking of World Universities published by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, six Israeli universities were ranked among the top 500 universities worldwide, ranking between 85 and 401. This has strengthened the soft power of Israel, which is evident in the number of international students in these universities, where in 2019, it reached 12 thousand, a thousand student increase since 2017. Israel seeks to increase this number to 24 thousand in 2022. If we take into account the population compared to the number of foreign students, Israel is in an advanced position in the international ranking of the number of foreign students. It is noted that the Israeli attraction efforts are directed to North America, China and India, aiming—as stated in Israeli reports—to strengthen Israel's status, by connecting with these graduates later and strengthening relations with their country. However, Israeli reports have highlighted political obstacles, which contribute to delaying the achievement of Israeli goals in this regard.

Conclusion

The advanced ranking of Israel in global indices is part of its soft power. It tries to promote these ranking to reap the ensuing gains. However, measurements indicate that the increase of resistance operations negatively affects Israel's ranking in political, social and economic sectors. In return, the disorderly Arab and Palestinian policies and statements positively reflect on Israel's ranking, a matter that one must be aware of, due to its threat to the chances of positive international interaction with Palestinian rights.

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Chapter Eleven

The Future of Jerusalem: Real Risks

The Future of Jerusalem: Real Risks

Introduction

This assessment aims to extrapolate, from available data, the future of Jerusalem, in the near and medium term. It explains that the current indicators point to dangerous future contexts, warning that all should bear their responsibilities towards Jerusalem and toward its rescue.

First: Prelude: Studying the Future Phenomenon

Studying the future of any political phenomenon requires considering the following aspects:

1. Focusing on trends rather than events. For when observing the Arab negotiating behavior, it indicates that the dominant trend is the change in the Arab and Palestinian positions. The Arab diplomacy started on the basis of rejecting the establishment of an Israeli state in Palestine, then it agreed to a truce with it, then accepted negotiations with it, then fully recognized it, and then the Arabs started gradually to abandon the Palestine issue… This means that the Arab side may continue the abandonment of all Palestinian issues (refugees, borders, water and the right of resistance). Hence, the "possibility" of some Arabs recognizing Jerusalem as the unified capital of Israel is not to be excluded.

2. Assessing the three aspects of the balance of power: material variables, moral variables, and managing and employing these variables. In my opinion, the first one is in the Arab side's interest (quantitative wise), the second is both in Israel's interest (development, internal cohesion, technology, etc), and in the Arab side's interest (ability to endure loss and suffering for a long time), whereas the third variable—which is considered the most important one—is largely in Israel's interest.

3. Refraining from wishful thinking, and seeing the reality as it is, whether this wish is political, religious, ideological, or other. Such wishful thinking is more evident in Arab political thinking than in the Israeli political thinking.

Second: The US Position

The change in the US position has begun since Reagan's administration (1981–1989), i.e., after Egypt exited the conflict. This change has taken gradual steps that make Trump's latest position unsurprising:

1. The U.S. abstention (rather than rejection) on the UN Security Council Resolution 478, in 1980, which determined that "all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the recent 'basic law' on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith."

2. Considering Jerusalem an Israeli city in the records of the US State Department (since the terms of Reagan and George H.W. Bush).

3. Agreeing to purchase Arab lands in Jerusalem to build the American embassy on them.

4. Martin Indyk, the U.S. ambassador to Israel in the 1990s, said that he wrote his "first memo on moving the embassy to Jerusalem in 1982."[1]

5. The Congress approved the "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995," which stated that "Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel," adding that it should be established no later than 1999. Since then every US president sure to sign a waiver every six months, putting away the implementation of this legislation.

6. Clinton adopted the position that "the US embassy [at the current tome] should not be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem," was adopted. However, he supported considering Jerusalem the capital of Israel.

7. The Trump administration and the embassy move, have concluded the above tracks. They have reflected the increase of imbalance of power in favor of Israel, which grew with the turmoil of the Arab world since 2011 until now. This is especially true when the restrictions on the Palestinian side to achieve more imbalances have increased, such as exerting Arab and international pressure on Gaza Strip (GS), reducing aid to the Palestinians, weakening the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), pressuring some Arab countries to include the Palestinian resistance movements in the lists of terrorist organizations, the increasing Arab normalization

with Israel, etc. Trump stated that the "boundaries of the Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem or the resolution of contested border," would be determined in bilateral talks, nonetheless, he began working on more power imbalances, to ensure that the outcome of any future negotiations is in the interest of the Israeli side. For he knows that the balance of power, and not argument, affects negotiation outcomes.

Third: The Israeli Public Opinion

According to a study by the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at Tel Aviv University,[2] there is a correlation between the degree of Israeli public adherence to East Jerusalem and the intensity of resistance operations. It concluded that:

- In 1994–1998, some 80% of Israeli respondents felt that "Jerusalem must be united and opposed any division of the city."
- In 1998–2000, opposition to dividing the city dropped to 65–70% of the Jewish population.
- In 2014–2015 and 2016, those opposing the transfer of Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to the Palestinians further declined to about 60%. INSS adds that the Knives *Intifadah* of 2015–2016, undermined the longstanding assumption that it is possible to maintain the city's status quo. In addition, the concrete divider between the Jewish and Arab neighborhoods has decreased those opposing the transfer to reach 49% in 2017.

As for the interest of Israeli public in making changes in East Jerusalem, the results were as follows:

- 25% of respondents supported maintaining the status quo.
- 20% favored more physical separation between East and West Jerusalem.
- 27% favored transferring control of the Arab neighborhoods to the Palestinian Authority (excluding the Old City).
- 28% favored the establishment of a municipal authority for the Arab neighborhoods separate from the Jerusalem Municipality, though under Israeli sovereignty. This indicates a moderate increase in support for the idea from 23% in 2017.

INSS indicated that the Israeli policy in Jerusalem faces many problems, such as:

- Most of the international community continues to view East Jerusalem as an occupied territory.
- The religious significance to Judaism and Arabs (Muslims), fuels feelings and makes the explosion every time possible.
- The difficult living conditions in East Jerusalem makes stability more difficult.
- The ongoing security challenge and Israel's de facto limited sovereignty in the east part of the city.
- 38% of the residents of Jerusalem (east and west) are Arabs, and are expected to grow (East Jerusalem has a population of 230 thousand Palestinians); settlers account for only 1% of the population in those neighborhoods. For example, in 1990, there were 8,700 Palestinians in Silwan and zero Jews. Today there are 500 settlers and more than 20 thousand Palestinians. This means the percentage of Jews to Arabs is increasing on the basis of the settler increase, from zero settler to 8,700 Palestinians (1990) to one settler to 40 Palestinians now.[3]

Fourth: Strategic Factors Unfavorable to the Israeli Side

1. Population: The number of Palestinians now in historic Palestine (2019) is 6.4 million compared to 6.3 million Jews. According to population growth rates, between 2030–2035, 54% of the population of Palestine will be Arabs, compared to 46% Jews. This is considered a major problem to Israel that will lead to one of the following three possibilities:

a. Withdrawal from the West Bank, where there is a risk of diminishing the strategic depth of the Jewish state.

b. Non-withdrawal (Netanyahu's project), where there's the risks of a gradual transformation into a bi-national state, and other consequent risks.

c. Repeating the Gaza model, i.e., withdrawal from the least area of land with the largest possible Arab population. This requires the gradual displacement of Arabs, which would resemble the model of racial ghettos or "Bantustans."

2. The possibilities of diverting US strategic attention from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region, hence the Importance of the region for the US would

decrease, especially with the strategic problems facing the US, such as: the growing role of China, US energy independence, US economy problems (World's biggest debtor nation), growing poor income distribution, highest rate of crime of any industrialized nation.

3. Israel has failed (until now) to push the US or other Arab or international powers to confront Iran militarily, in order to let the power imbalances in the region grow.

4. Technological development of substate organizations, making it difficult to control its consequences in the future.

5. All international public opinion polls indicate a gradual decline in the degree of sympathy for Israel, which the latter knows has long-term risks.

6. There are widening cracks in Israeli society, with the Falashas, or with the Russians uniting under certain parties, in addition to the fact that there are old sensitivities known to the sub-cultures of the Israeli Zionist society.

7. There are concerns that instability in the Arab region may lead to changes in some regimes, making the conditions unsuitable to Israel; whether through military coups, revolutions, or chaos in some countries such as the Gulf states or Egypt, etc.

Fifth: The Future

According to the current available data, Jerusalem is facing major risks in the near and medium terms. According to available data, perceptions and indicators, we can determine Jerusalem's future as follows:

Scenarios	One or two states	One or two municipalities	Possibility (%)
First scenario: Two states	Two capitals	Two municipalities	11
Second scenario: Two states	One capital	A municipality with two sections	15
Third scenario: One state	One capital	Two separate municipalities	22
Fourth scenario: One state	One capital	A municipality with two sections	26
Fifth scenario: One state	One capital	One municipality	26

This means that:

1. The probability of two states is 26%, with two tracks: two capitals and two municipalities 11%, and one capital with two sections 15%.
2. The probability of one state is 74%, with three tracks: one capital and two separate municipalities 22%, a municipality with two sections 26%, or one municipality 26%.

This indicates that according to current data, the track of Israeli domination is the most probable, and that according to current power balances, Israel will continue the Judaization of Jerusalem and changing its identity.

Sixth: The Israeli Approach

The Israeli approach concerning Jerusalem is: encouraging local Arab leaders to emerge, granting them municipal positions, and improving the living conditions of East Jerusalem and its environs. In Israel, many suggestions were discussed, such as:

1. Menachem Froman: One municipality with a religious department for Muslims and Christians.
2. Professor Emeritus of International Law Ruth Lapidoth suggested: The division of Jerusalem by religion, and postponing the issue of sovereignty for 30 years.
3. Another professor of law Shmuel Berkovitz suggested: Considering the holy sites "headquarters of the Palestinian diplomatic mission," where sovereignty will be within their headquarters, but on the Israeli soil.

Seventh: Conclusion

The power balance will determine the future of Jerusalem, and it seems that, in the foreseeable future, local, regional and international power balances are not in the Palestinians' favour. This means that Israel will use the power imbalances—as much as possible—in its best interest. It will accelerate harvesting the fruits of this imbalance, because it fears repercussions of the seven factors I referred to. This means that it will try to push more countries to move their embassies to Jerusalem (In 1982 Costa Rica moved its embassy back to Jerusalem, followed by El Salvador in 1984, however, in 2006 both countries announced their decision to

relocate to Tel Aviv). It will also seek to change the demographics of Jerusalem, by harassing its residents to make them emigrate or relocate to other areas within the West Bank.

Facing the real risks mentioned above, requires the mobilization of all Palestinian, Arab, Islamic and international efforts, in order to preserve the Arab and Islamic identity of Jerusalem and its holy sites, and support its people.

Endnotes

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Chapter Twelve

American Declinism and the Dilemma of Arab and Israeli Strategic Options

American Declinism and the Dilemma of Arab and Israeli Strategic Options

Introduction

Political studies of international relations have embraced a historical trend to explain the rise and fall of empires or international poles, with the studies of the Cyclical Pattern of History by Arnold Toynbee, Ibn Khaldun, Oswald Spengler and Edward Gibbon representing the intellectual and methodological references in this respect. However, contemporary political studies have gradually adopted the future perspective. Thus, instead of explaining the collapse or decline of political entities throughout history, the trend has become to "predict" the fate of current international powers and determine which will ascend and which will decline.

The link between the "historical and futures" methodologies is that the historical methodology tracks the movement of the political entity from the moment of its inception until its fall or collapse, then works to determine the causes of what happened. The futures methodology, on the other hand, anticipates developments and determines their shape based on past trends related to the entity and its environment, and tries to determine its fate, whether it would fall or rise.

American Declinism: Future Outlook

American "declinism" has been a recurrent topic in US politics since the 1950s. The roots of this trend extend to the repercussions of the Great Depression that lasted until the early 1940s, then the growth of German power before World War II reaching to the growth of Soviet powers, especially after the launch of the Sputnik satellite in the 1950s, followed by the spread of the communist ideology that culminated in the heavy US defeat in Vietnam. In the 1970s and the 1980s, there was the accelerated growth of Japanese power and status, followed by the expansion of the European Union (EU) reaching joint institutions and a single currency. Currently, the literature of American declinism is focused on the growth in the Chinese position.[1]

Opponents of American declinism believe that all previous literature has ended with the failure and collapse of the powers on which this literature had bet to be

an alternative to the American position. This was evident in the end of Nazism, the collapse of communism, the Japanese reluctance and then the cracks in the EU walls, which resulted in opposing political literature, talking about the end of history and the victory of the capitalist model dominated by the US. Such orientations were based on indicators of American scientific superiority, the US entering the stage of energy independence, and even entering energy markets as a competitor, with all the geo-strategic changes this entails in the structure of the future international system. Also, the US military forces cannot be compared in terms of deployment, firepower and defense spending with any other country, as a matter of fact, some countries, such as Israel and Taiwan, exist as a result of their complete dependence on US power and influence.[2]

With this disparity between the two currents, systematic problems arise in determining whether the US is in a state of decline or not. These problems are evident in the following:[3]

1. The problem of agreement on defining the indicators for measuring traditional and contemporary power.
2. The problem of determining the weight of power variables of major powers. Are the weights of these variables represent the absolute weights of these powers, or should the geostrategic and political environment be considered a distinct factor to determine the weight of the indicator for each of these major powers?
3. Defining the sub-indicators of the central indicators of power and determining their weights. Thus, in the central economic indicator, for example, does the equity of income distribution have the same weight of the per capita income, the gross domestic product (GDP), the volume of foreign trade, or investment, etc?
4. Would the power be measured by its outcomes or by absolute mathematical quantification?

Contemporary Literature on American Declinism and its Presentation of an Alternative Model

Futures study seeks to be freed from the intensity of the current moment regarding its impact on strategic or future thinking, and tries to focus on the mega-trends, while integrating the "turning points" in the structure of these trends. The study of Michael Mandelbaum and Thomas Friedman has linked five turning

points, and considered that link an indication of a "mega-trend" concerning the future of the US as follows:[4]

1. Sputnik was launched by the Soviet Union in 1957 (The US first decline).
2. The American defeat in Vietnam in the mid-seventies.
3. The inflation and dollar decline during the presidency of Jimmy Carter.
4. The growth of Japanese competitiveness since the mid-seventies.
5. Contemporary Chinese growth.

Declinists focus on internal aspects, especially those related to the economic sides, such as:[5]

1. The decline in real wages.
2. The decline in productivity levels.
3. The decline in the competitiveness of American companies in the global market.
4. The decline in job security, especially for white-collar workers.
5. The decline in infrastructure levels.
6. The increase in federal budget deficit.
7. The decline in the performance of the health system.
8. The decline in individual safety due to crime.
9. The decline in educational attainment levels of school students.
10. The disparities in the distribution of wealth.

Declinism literature tries to determine the indicators of the status decline, by comparing the movement of the American society and state with the movement of competing societies and states. This is achieved through the discussion of the following hypotheses:

1. The US is not declining, but the problem is that other states are quickly catching up with it.
2. The development of other societies and countries has been reflected in the increase in the widening class devide in the US.
3. The problem is not with the decline, but with the ability of the American social structure to adapt to the patterns of the new economy.

The Intellectual Debate Between Declinists and Anti-Declinists

The 1980s and 1990s can be considered the most prosperous phase for the declinist trend in contemporary American thought. The greatest starting point in this respect is Paul Kennedy's book,[6] whose central idea revolves around what he calls "imperial overstretch." Within the stages of its geographic expansion, the empire reaches a stage when the burdens of expansion outnumber its gains, which opens the way for a decline in its geographical area and international influence leaving a gap that would be filled by the rising international powers. Accordingly, Kennedy predicted that the US would begin to decline starting in 2000.

In 2014, Charles Kenny published a study based on an idea of some novelty. He asserted that the progress and development of other countries, and the shift in the network of international relations from zero-sum to non-zero-sum (in the former one side wins, while both sides win in the latter) would reduce the burdens of the US in its relentless endeavor to preserve and stabilize the international order. Hence, this would open the way for the US to rise again in the hierarchy of international powers.[7]

Joseph S. Nye Jr. has opposed declinism since the 1990s, as he believed that such trend was based on data lacking accuracy and that, for a long time to come, the US will continue to lead the international system, while preserving its geopolitical superiority. Still, he acknowledged that the internal situation in the US might lead to a problem in maintaining this position. He has founded his perception on the basis of comparing three levels of international powers, which are:[8]

1. The traditional military and strategic balance in the international system.
2. Economic changes and the potentials of each of the major powers.
3. The challenges of supra-state actors (such as regional, international intergovernmental (IGO) and nongovernmental organizations (INGO), and sub-state actors (minorities, civil society, etc.).

Notably, Nye acknowledged the decline in the attractiveness of the American model and its value system, or what he called its soft power variables.

Many studies and articles have supported the idea of US decline, such as the study by Richard Barnet, who in the 1980s estimated that the US would clearly witness the manifestations of decline within a quarter of a century. A study by

Flora Lewis published a year after Paul Kennedy's study supported the idea of burdens befalling the US and imposing its decline. James Schlesinger asserted that the idea of the US's decline in the hierarchy of economic, military and political power was taken for granted. Peter Passell analyzed the US's loss of its leading position in its economic and scientific competition with Japan. Tom Wicker argued that the US dependence on raw materials and energy sources would weaken its ability to maintain its advanced position as a great power.[9]

However, a number of developments opened the way for anti-declinists, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the change of the Iraqi political system by US military force allied with a number of other countries and the US's topping the list of information technology countries. Hence, there were Samuel P. Huntington's writings ruling out American retreat[10] and Francis Fukuyama's perceptions of the end of history in favor of capitalism,[11] although he later retracted some of these perceptions.[12]

However, a number of thinkers, such as Niall Ferguson,[13] brought the theory of decline back into limelight once again since 2004, as Ferguson asserted that the US "aspires to globalize free markets, the rule of law and representative government," "Yet Americans shy away from the long-term commitments of manpower and money that are indispensable if rogue regimes and failed states really are to be changed for the better." Ferguson believes that the US is an empire in denial of its decline, especially because of its internal weakness, mainly regarding its financial deficit and weak manpower, and it does not recognize the size of global responsibilities. He believes that the US is in the process of decline, and while none of the major powers will replace it, "terrorist" organizations and organized crime gangs will fill the void. This, in Ferguson's view, justifies the return of US-China-European cooperation. Ferguson is one of the American thinkers most hostile to the EU, and has called on President Donald Trump for non-confrontation with China, besides the need to deal with Russia as a great power and recognize a vital scope for it in Eurasia.

The US National Intelligence Council's study issued in 2008 represents one of the predictions supporting the idea of the transformation of the international system towards multipolarity.[14] It talks about the emergence of new great powers, the continuation of economic globalization, the transfer of international wealth from the West to the East, and the growth of supra-state and sub-state entities. Also, the

study says that by 2025, the international system will be a global multipolar one with smaller gaps in national power between countries. Notably, these perceptions were not included in the report issued by the same council four years earlier, which predicted that a unipolar system (US) would prevail until 2020.

Eric S. Edelman's 2010 study falls between the two trends (the multipolar and the unipolar trend).[15] Despite the predictions of global trends 2025 that the world is heading towards multipolarity, Edelman suggests the continuation of the unipolar system. However, he considers that the US hegemony will be less obvious in that system than it was in the 1990s, and its priorities will be limited by domestic and international economic constraints, whose aspects will be more contentious between the regional powers and the US. China will pose the biggest challenge in Asia, and potential new nuclear powers such as Iran and North Korea, will be difficult problems for US deterrence extending in northeast and southwest Asia. Edelman's study suggests that other US challengers may appear, such as Venezuela in the Western Hemisphere (especially if allied with a nuclear-armed Iran). Edelman believes that the overwhelming focus on BRICS countries in the declinism literature tends to distract attention from the truth, for the proliferation of nuclear weapons remains the utmost challenge to continued US supremacy.

Yet, an American university thesis (a master's thesis at the University of Iowa) measured 15 power indicators and then compared them among the US, Russia and China throughout 1991–2016. The indicators are:[16]

1. Hard power, which includes 10 indicators: GDP, population, military spending, military manpower, number of active naval vessels, iron production, steel production, petroleum production, primary energy consumption besides research and development spending.
2. Soft power, which includes the percentage of government investment in education, the percentage of foreign students in national universities, the percentage of university degree holders annually, state's investments abroad, in addition to the extent of the spread of popular culture and its symbols abroad.

The study concludes that:

1. The US is deteriorating in eight indicators.
2. China poses a very strong challenge in nine of the indicators (meaning that the US surpasses China, but the latter is moving faster than the US in these

indicators, which means the possibility for China to catch up and outperform the US).

3. Russia will not pose a major challenge to the US in the next two decades.

In addition to the theorists mentioned above, it is necessary to present the perceptions of futures researchers in political science and international relations, especially regarding American declinism:

First: Johan Galtung's Theory[17]

Galtung is known as one of the most prominent professors of futures studies in international relations, especially after he predicted in 1980 the collapse of the Soviet Union within ten years based on tracing and analyzing five major variables. In his 2004 study on the decline of the American empire, Galtung adopted the theory of internal contradiction in the US structure. He indicated 14 contradictions and estimated that the decline will be clear by 2025 (he adjusted the date to 2020 after Trump). Galtung believes that George W. Bush and Trump have both contributed to accelerating the repercussions of these contradictions, which Galtung listed as follows:

1. Economic contradictions, which are represented in three: The contradiction between growth and distribution, the contradiction between commodity production and financial economy, in addition to the contradiction between production and its impact on nature (climate, pollution, etc.).
2. Military contradictions, whose manifestations are demonstrated in three: The contradiction between the US state terrorism and armed groups terrorism; the contradiction between the US and its allies, especially the contradiction between the US command of NATO and the European army proposed since the Helsinki Conference in 1999; in addition to the contradiction between US hegemony in Eurasia and the Russia-India-China triangle.
3. Political contradictions, which are represented in two: The contradiction between the United Nations and the US, and the contradiction between the US and the EU.
4. Cultural contradictions, which Galtung defines in three: The contradiction between the Jewish Christian culture and Islam, the contradiction between the US and ancient civilizations (Confucianism, Buddhism, etc.), besides the contradiction between the American and European elites.

5. Social contradictions, which Galtung limits in three: The contradiction between workers and capital owners, the contradiction between the new and old generations, as well as the contradiction between social reality and fiction in the American value system.

Galtung studied the mutual effect (negative and positive) between these 14 indicators, over a period of 20 years, and concluded that addressing any of them would lead to some degree of decline. Also, the combination of these contradictions would lead to the growth of the main contradictions due to growth in sub-contradictions, which would lead to the collapse of the US empire (but not the US state).

Second: Richard Lachmann's Theory in 2014

Lachman founded his idea on four central dimensions:[18]

1. The decline in the dollar's status.
2. The growing Chinese role.
3. The increase in US military spending.
4. The unfavorable transformations in the US industry throughout 1960–2007, resulting from the growing trend in the US economy towards the disintegration of the major industrial establishments.

Lachmann asserted that these dimensions were only preludes to an American decline on the international stage.

Third: Julia Schubert's Theory in 2012

Schubert's study is based on a critique of hegemonic stability theory established by Charles P. Kindleberger, and then promoted by a number of American researchers, such as Stephen Krasner, Robert Gilpin and Robert Keohane. This theory is based on the assumption that there is a "hegemon" in the international system to prevent others from violating its rules, and this hegemon is the US given its capabilities and the flexibility of its liberalism and its military capacities. Schubert showed through a number of indications that the "hegemon" has begun to lose the necessary capabilities to lead and overpower other states in the international system. Among the most prominent indicators Schubert mentioned and considered as distinct signs of the US decline is the political, social and economic instability within the structure of the international system, which indicates its gradual loss of

its presumed "hegemony. In other words, she linked the growing contradictions in the structure of the international system to the decline of the capabilities of the system's hegemon, i.e., the US.[19]

Fourth: The Study of American Historian Morris Berman in 2012[20]

Berman believes that the American decline is governed by four factors continuously pushing it: the growing economic and social inequalities in the American society, the diminishing returns from investments in social structures, the decline of critical thinking, in addition to what he called the spiritual death of the US. He even refers some of these contradictions to a disparate value structure between the north, which is dominated by the idea of the continuous pursuit of wealth ownership without any restrictions, and the south, dominated by the values of courage, honor and friendliness, etc. He tries to compare the Roman model (and how it declined) and the contemporary American model, concluding that the two models are very similar, meaning that the US is repeating the Roman model.

Comparing Power Indicators Between China and the US:

We developed 20 strategic indicators benefiting from the indicators adopted by most studies on power measurement. Then, these indicators were measured for both the US and China during 2018–2019, and sometimes taking the indicator rates of 2020, as shown in the following table:

Table of Power Indicators in International Relations 2019–2020 of China and the US, and Measuring the Power Difference Between Them Based on International Measurement Indicators[21]

	Indicator	China	US	Comparison
1	**Nominal GDP**	13.4 trillion	20.49 trillion	+2 for the US
	Purchasing power parity (PPP)	27.31 trillion	21.44 trillion	+1 for China
2	**Gini Index***	38.5	41.1	+1 for China
3	**Military spending as % of GDP**	1.9%	3.4%	+3 for the US
4	**Scientific research spending as % of GDP**	$553.4 billion	$511.1 billion	+ 1 for China
5	**Democracy**	2.26	7.96	+3 for the US

	Indicator	China	US	Comparison
6	**Globalization**	65.11	82.41	+1 for the US
7	**Political stability**	–0.24	0.30	+1 for China
8	**Foreign trade**	$4.6 trillion	$4.3 trillion	+1 for China
9	**Trade balance deficit**	+$359.3 billion	–$946.1 billion	+3 for China
10	**Global Militarization index (GMI)****	550	683	+1 for China
11	**The ratio of public debt to gross product**	55.36%	106.70%	+3 for China
12	**Crime rate (per 100 thousand)**	31.18	47.7	+2 for China
13	**Number of universities ranked among the world's top 100**	6	26	+3 for the US
14	**Firepower (military strength, military spending, market and geographic potential)**	0.0691	0.0606	+1 for the US
15	**Foreign aid**	$38 billion	$34.62 billion	+1 for China
16	**Favorability by international public opinion of the country as a global leader**	32%	33%	+1 for the US
17	**Number of major companies ranked among the world's top 30**	10	14	+1 for the US
18	**Number of vetoes at UN Security Council since 2000**[22]	12	14	+1 for China
19	**Overseas military bases**	4	55	+3 for the US
20	**International organizations membership**	74	77	+1 for the US
21	**Supremacy points for each side**	16	19	+54.3% for the US +45.7% for China

Note: The table was prepared by the researcher.

* Gini Index: A measure of class differences in terms of income in a society.

** Global Militarization Index: a measure of military indicators (number of forces, weapons, and military spending ...) in relation to the population and the percentage of spending on health and civilian sectors.

The table reveals the following results:

1. The US excels in ten indicators, while China excels in the other ten.
2. The total score for American outperformance is 19 points compared to 16 points for Chinese outperformance (see the endnotes for an explanation of the treatment method).
3. The distribution of power ratio for each side indicates that the share of the American power is 54.3% compared to 45.7% for Chinese power.

Analysis

Approaches to measuring power vary among researchers as well as between proponents and opponents of American declinism.[23] However, the point on which researchers are almost unanimous is that the gap between most US and Chinese indicators in the table is diminishing continuously as a result of the acceleration of Chinese development compared to the American acceleration in the same domain. Accordingly, declinism trend focuses on the speed of change in each of the two countries, as the US is developing in many sectors, but the pace of its development is much less than that of Chinese development, while opponents of American declinism disregard the difference of acceleration between the two countries. Thus, declinists have the ability to predict the results of the race at a time when anti-declinists seek (for one reason or another) to go beyond this aspect, which we deem as the most important.[24]

The Impact of Declinism on Israeli Strategy

Some declinists believe that Israel has contributed to the US decline, and some argue that the increase in "militarism" in US foreign policy was often driven by Israeli motives rather than by US considerations. America's hostility to Arab liberation movements and repeated military interference in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon and Somalia, in addition to the deployment of bases around Iran are all in essence a response to motives that serve Israel more than the US. Thus, instead of intertwining the founding of the American empire with expansion in the international market, building the empire has been intertwined with the military establishment and arms production companies, which are forces closely related to Israeli circles and needs.[25]

American declinism represents a grave concern for the future strategy of Israel which seeks, on the one hand, to maintain its ties with the declining US because of its great influence on Israel's future. On the other hand, Israel wants to join the locomotive of the emerging power, which is China, given its future projects in the region, especially the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Yet, reconciling the two matters is not easy in light of the intense rivalry between the two competing powers, the US and China, an issue which Israeli intellectuals have clearly expressed.[26]

Summary

Based on the previous analysis, we believe that China is heading to the forefront of the international system, but by changing some of its rules in a way less damaging to the interests of other peoples compared to the behavior embraced by the US, which is struggling to preserve the existing international architecture. Since the strategic alignment of the Arab liberation forces is easier with China than the US, they must hasten to employ the Chinese rise at a pace that surpasses the Israeli haste, a pursuit the US is keen to prevent. However, some Arab political regimes are facing the same Israeli predicament, for they want to develop their relations with China, but they are historically and firmly tied to US interests. Therefore, Israel and the Arab regimes, closely related to the US, find themselves facing two choices "the lesser of two evils!"

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Chapter Thirteen

Israeli Scenarios of Facing the Iranian Nuclear Program

Israeli Scenarios of Facing the Iranian Nuclear Program

Introduction

Israel's strategy in the field of nuclear armament is based on two important pillars: the first is monopolizing the possession of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and working on the world acceptance of this monopoly. Accordingly, it will do everything in its power to establish this principle as was historically demonstrated in the beginnings of its nuclear project in the late 1950s with the pursuit of Egyptian scientists and killing some of them, striking the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981, the direct and indirect pressures on Libya, striking the Syrian nuclear reactor in 2007 and even raising some allegations against Algeria in an earlier period.

The second pillar is the adoption of what is called strategic ambiguity,[1] which means that Israel does not acknowledge its possession of nuclear weapons. Rather, it makes others in the international community deal with it as a nuclear state without any obligations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and without accepting the idea of freeing the region from nuclear weapons or agreeing to include it within the issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Through its nuclear project, Iran has posed a serious challenge to this Israeli strategy, as Israel believes that the Iranian nuclear project is strategically a military project. Therefore, possessing this weapon means deeply destabilizing the Israeli strategy, whether in terms of ending the nuclear monopoly in the Middle East or regarding the viability of strategic ambiguity as an effective policy.

First: Israeli Options for Dealing with the Iranian Nuclear Program

The Israeli options for dealing with the Iranian nuclear program can be identified in three strategic options:

1. Strategy of Attrition Against Iran

The attrition strategy is based on the continuous disruption of Iran's nuclear capabilities. It is a strategy, which Israel followed throughout 2000–2013, when negotiations with the P5 + 1 began. It includes disrupting Iranian capabilities through:[2]

a. Destruction of infrastructure, through direct strikes, bombing operations, or cyber-attacks, as happened at the Natanz nuclear site in mid-2020 and April 2021, or by disabling the computers managing the program, as happened in 2010, when the CIA and Mossad conducted a joint operation to this end. However, the escalation of cyber warfare and its development must take into account that various reports have confirmed Iran's possession of significant capabilities in this field. It was evident in some of its attacks throughout 2012–2020, whether on Gulf targets (Aramco, Western companies) or American institutions (companies, universities, government agencies), and some reports estimate these attacks to be around three thousand throughout 2010–2020.[3]

   Furthermore, such an Israeli strategy will face increasing difficulties given that the Iranian security measures will increase in accuracy and expansion with the recurrence of Israeli sabotage operations. This would make matters for the Israeli strategy more difficult, limiting its impact.

b. Killing Iranian nuclear scientists, where Israel throughout 2010–2012 assassinated four Iranian scientists, and then in November 2020, the assassination of one of the most prominent scientists Mohsen Fakhrizadeh took place. [4] However, Israel's continued pursuit of such operations may lead Iran to adopt the same strategy towards Israeli scientists through its regional apparatus or arms.

c. Revealing secrets to intensify international pressure. This has happened when in 2018, the Israeli Mossad stole documents from Iran's nuclear archive. Such an operation is usually done by Israeli agencies or in cooperation with the Iranian opposition, US or European intelligence, or with regional intelligence services, especially the Arab ones.[5]

d. Media focus on the program's dangers to the region, security and global peace, thus reinforcing the international mistrust in Iran.

e. Supporting the Iranian opposition in hope of changing the Iranian regime, a policy in place since 1979. There are conflicting reports about communication between the US and Israel on the one hand, and the Iranian opposition forces, especially the People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), on the other hand. However, such relations, even when they are confirmed, have not led to tangible results, especially concerning the political stability in Iran.

f. Rigorous efforts to maintain the largest amount of economic sanctions on Iran, hoping that the economic hardship will push the Iranian regime to either yield or face internal problems. However, the history of economic sanctions aimed at changing regimes does not show clear success in this respect, as demonstrated by the historical experience of embargoes imposed unilaterally by the US on other countries. A review of US embargo policies, from the end of World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union, and from that period until 2018 when the US abolished the nuclear agreement with Iran, shows the following results:[6]

- A documented study of the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) indicates that unilateral US sanctions have achieved foreign policy goals in only 13% of the cases where they have been imposed. This means that the response rate of the blockaded country to US conditions was very low during about 73 years.
- During the unilateral sanctions since 1970 and until 1990, the US lost nearly $17 billion annually in potential exports, which translates into 200 thousand jobs lost.
- Out of 115 cases of economic sanctions beginning with World War II to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the success rate of blockade in general (from the US and others) in reducing the economic growth of the besieged country is only 2.4%.
- There were 16 cases of unilateral US sanctions throughout 1945–1990, where 11 cases were during the 1945–1970 period. This means that the number of cases decreased during the following 20 years to only 5, that is more than 50% decrease.

The previous indicators perhaps suggest that the "history" of politically motivated economic sanctions does not demonstrate a level of success sufficient to encourage their continuation. This, however, does not mean that they have had no impact.

Likewise, the continuation of pressure policies against Iran, through sanctions or tactical military strikes, or evading the European obligations in the nuclear deal, may push Tehran, as it did in the first quarter of 2021, to pursue policies of gradual abandonment of its obligations in the agreement. Hence, more developed centrifuges would be deployed, and then gradually raising the rates of uranium enrichment to 60% purity.[7]

Most international estimates reveal that such exhaustion tactics can mostly disrupt the development of the Iranian nuclear program for 2–4 years only. Remarkably, these Israeli actions have become less acceptable to some countries, especially some European countries, Russia and China, because they are aware that the Israeli goal is to disrupt efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.[8]

However, some believe that the continuing strikes on Iranian facilities and scientists, in addition to the ongoing economic sanctions, may lead to internal unrest and consequently to regime change. However, this remains unsupported by sufficient indicators, especially since the political stability index in Iran, according to "Western" stability models, shows that it has improved throughout 2010–2017 from –1.7 in 2010 to –0.9 in 2017, but it rose again after Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of the US from the nuclear deal in 2018 and reached almost the 2010 rate.[9]

Yet, this does not negate the existence of indications concerning some internal discontent. For, in 2017, more than thirty Iranian provinces witnessed demonstrations; in early 2020, there were some protests against the Revolutionary Guard's downing of a Ukrainian plane, and in 2020, the participation in the parliamentary elections was low. However, these demonstrations have occurred previously, and sometimes more sharply, without exceeding the rates of political stability which we have referred to. It seems that the current negotiations with the US administration, albeit indirectly, and with the US side showing some flexibility towards sanctions, enhance the chances of a return to the levels of stability witnessed in 2017.

2. Having Regional or Global Forces Bear the Burden of the Confrontation with Iran, as happened with Iraq, Libya and Syria[10]

It seems that this option is the best for Israel because it has the least human and material cost, and it is the most acceptable one to the Israeli public. An Israeli public opinion survey, in 2018/2019, on how to deal with Iran, the results indicated the following:[11]

a. 49% of Israelis viewed Hizbullah and Iran as the most dangerous threat to Israel.

b. 49% of Israelis believed that the most appropriate option for Israel in dealing with the Iranian nuclear project was a military attack in cooperation with the US.

c. 20% of Israelis believed that the most appropriate option is for the US to work to improve the terms of the nuclear deal with Iran and to make it more favorable to Israeli interests.

d. 10% of Israelis supported the Israeli attacks on Iran without coordination with the US.

The Israeli relations with the Arab Gulf states, especially the opening of the Gulf airspace for Israeli aviation and the accelerated normalization with Israel, might make the possibilities of this strategy—from the Israeli perspective—greater, although they are not viable enough, even with these conditions. However, the other option is an international coalition to destroy the Iranian nuclear program, with US participation, which was explicitly suggested, in 2013, by French President Francois Hollande, in a meeting with former Israeli President Shimon Peres.[12]

Doubtless, this option is the least expensive for Israel, however, it is not a convincing option for many countries, including the US. Notably, the US has announced its plans to withdraw from Afghanistan in September 2021 and reduce its military presence in Iraq. At the same time, it has major problems with China—commercial and geo-strategic (in the Pacific Basin), and with Russia in Ukraine, in addition to the internal problems of the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing racism and other aspects of US declinism.[13] Ultimately, this weakens its tendency of foreign intervention, especially in cases that are more complex, such as Iran.

3. Israeli Direct Confrontation with Iran

For some experts or officials in the Israeli security apparatus, this hypothesis involves some difficulties and repercussions, which may have profound effects on Israel.[14] Such a strategy needs US approval, which seems difficult in light of the preoccupation of the Democratic administration with restoring the US decline in many fields and the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition, the strategic value of the Middle East for the US has declined.

Interestingly, Iran may go to reactions that would complicate matters for Israel, such as:

a. The Iranian reaction may lead to heavy strikes on population centers in Israel, as Iran may find support from Hizbullah in Lebanon, or even from other forces in Syria or Yemen (by affecting international shipping in the Red Sea) or even Gaza. Although some Israeli experts question Iran's ability to threaten Israeli nuclear

facilities, the element of surprise may be one of the aspects of the confrontation between the two sides. For Iranian capabilities are not completely exposed.[15]

b. Dramatic rise in oil prices at a time when most countries are suffering from the economic repercussions of COVID-19. The world consumes about 97 million barrels per day, a $10 rise in oil prices will cost the world about one billion dollars a day, which will be unbearable under the circumstances that we have referred to. The Iranian ability to disrupt the transportation of oil through the Strait of Hormuz in the Arab Gulf is a strong aspect of the Iranian response strategy, for example if a direct Israeli attack occurs. Notably, Iran has increased its military capabilities, acquiring advanced Russian air defense systems.[16]

c. Israeli strikes in an all-out war with Iran can entail the risk that it may not end the Iranian nuclear program. Some reports talk about secret or fortified sites in hard-to-reach areas, especially nuclear sites in the far eastern border of Iran, in addition to two other important elements that further undermine this Israeli option:[17]

- The first is that the Iranian nuclear program is based on "decentralization," meaning that it is not like the Iraqi program that can be paralyzed at one fell swoop. It is a program whose facilities are distributed in many and faraway places, which makes striking all of its facilities extremely difficult. If we take into account the nuclear research centers, military complexes, enrichment centers and uranium mines, the number of these "known" facilities reaches nine. They are located in distant cities extending from Bandar Abbas, in the south of Iran, to the city of Bonab in the far northwest, with around 1,500 kilometers between the two cities and 1,035 kilometers between Bonab and Bushehr. Some of these facilities are located in mountainous places, and they are accessed through tunnels extending about 80 meters inside the mountain.[18]
- The second is that the foundations of the Iranian nuclear program have become "national" or local, i.e., they do not depend on foreign sides whether concerning the production of infrastructure or the experts. This indicates that even if assumably the program was significantly damaged, Iran has the abilities to re-run it.[19]

d. This Israeli strategy may lead to Iran's withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or Iran's termination of all forms of

cooperation with the IAEA, with all consequent repercussions. This issue has been raised several times in the Iranian parliament.

e. A direct attack on some Iranian nuclear facilities may involve the risk of a potential nuclear contamination that may affect the entire region (similar to the leak that occurred in the Soviet Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the 1980s). It could push major countries or regional countries to put pressure on Israel to avoid such a trend.

Second: Future Outlook

It seems that the Israeli adventure with a unilateral attack on Iran represents the weakest possibility given that international actors mostly oppose this trend, including the US. These global forces believe that diplomacy and economic pressures combined, with "military strikes" targeting Iran or its facilities, especially through cyber-attacks—which seem to be increasing—will provide better results than direct Israeli attack.

As for the possibility of forming an international coalition to attack Iran, similar to the international alliances that directly intervened in Iraq and Libya, and to some extent in Syria, it has diminished due to the current international environment. This includes the US's awareness of the validity of Paul Kennedy's theory of the burdens of overstretch, the repercussions of COVID-19 on global economies, especially in Europe and the US, in addition to the Gulf states' fears that an international confrontation with Iran will make these states the main battlefield, with all the human, economic, environmental and military risks entailed.

This means that the "mutual attacks" between Israel and Iran may continue with all available means for both sides, but we believe that the confrontation fronts will focus on the following dimensions:

1. The increase in cyber-attacks by both sides.
2. The escalation of strikes on the maritime trade routes of both parties.
3. Iran may be tempted to pursue Israeli nuclear scientists or those who have an important scientific role in the development of military industry.

Any deal between the P5 + 1 and Iran may defuse the crisis, and this can be achieved through Iran's refraining from increasing the number of centrifuges and not raising uranium enrichment levels beyond what was stipulated in the

agreement. In return, the US would lift economic sanctions to an extent sufficient to appease Iran. This would be the worst-case scenario from Israel's perspective, as it would severely constrain its options in this regard. Yet, it would make every possible effort to disrupt or undermine the agreement in order to continue the "attacks," which it believes is the only available option for minimizing its losses or maximizing its gains. Therefore, based on the above, the only option available to Israel is to pursue the following strategy:

1. Preventing reaching an agreement that would bring the US back to the 2015 deal.
2. If it fails to do so, it will work to add to any new agreement clauses that would increase restrictions on Iran's nuclear program activity, especially those that would impede enrichment operations or expand the scope of inspection of the IAEA to include the largest possible number of Iranian nuclear program facilities.
3. Should its previous step fail, it will work to implement the strategy of Shadow War,[20] which is to keep the situation with Iran ranging between war and peace. The mutual attacks between them would continue, using different tools, within a number of secret and declared strikes, and in different places; the Middle East in particular, or other areas of the world in general.

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Chapter Fourteen

The Asian Political Mind and the Arab Pivot East

The Asian Political Mind and the Arab Pivot East

Introduction

In the period of 2018–2020, Arab political literature included calls to reconsider the configuration of Arab international relations, to respond to the profound shifts taking place in the international order and its central interactions. In this context, calls for a pivot toward the East, particularly toward Asian powers, was the most prominent.

In order to leverage such calls strategically, it is important to identify the motivations behind it, then examine the central features of the Asian political mind, in the great Asian powers beyond the Asian Muslim states, in order to understand the source behind the rise of the region between East and West Asia on the global stage, including on the eastern fringe of the Arab world. It is also important to learn the common denominators of the political epistemology of these Asian powers, in terms of their perspectives of modern international relations, to allow Arab planners to chart out relations with these powers, based on understanding the political mind of these powers, and the reasons behind the rapid evolution of Asian relations with Israel.

Managing international relations with one or multiple parties in the international order requires first identifying the epistemological and ideological reference frame of these parties, and the hierarchy of their political values, in order to learn the primary and secondary values of the state or regional system under study. Perhaps the record of Orientalists in studying Arab and Muslim societies are a salient example of the importance of this approach in managing relations between two parties.

First: The Justifications for the Pivot East

There are several historic, contemporary, and forward-looking factors behind the calls for an eastern pivot, most notable of which are:[1]

1. The allure of the current Asian rise: One of its manifestations is that the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measured in terms of the purchasing power parity, not the nominal GDP, of four Asian countries (namely China, India,

Japan, and Russia[2]) represents 34.3% of the global total output, equivalent to the combined GDP of the United States (18.2%) and European Union countries (16%).

2. The total trade surplus of Asian countries ranks them first in the world. Indeed the US trade deficit with China and Japan alone is approximately $487 billion, while the European trade deficit with China is around €185 billion (about $221 billion). China controls 13% of global trade and it ranks first in the world, while Japan has maintained its global trade between 2012 and 2020.

3. Asia has the largest number of nuclear countries compared to the rest of the continents. It has 6 nuclear states: North Korea, China, India, Pakistan, Russia, and Israel. It also has 41.13% of the total number of operational nuclear reactors in the world (188 of 457).

4. Asia is the largest continent in the world in terms of both population (59.54% of the world population), and surface area (21.7% of the global surface area).

5. The cultural and societal structures in these countries are "relatively" closer to Arab societies compared to Western societies. Moreover, the Islamic presence in a large number of Asian societies reinforces this closeness, as demographic data indicates Asian Muslims (non-Arabs) constitute 74.5% of the world's Muslims, and 28% of the entire population of Asia.

6. Studying Arab history from the angle of international conflicts unequivocally indicates that the mental image the Arabs hold about Asians is less hostile compared to the Arab image of the West. As Hadley Cantril and his research team concluded, the crystallization of a mutual Mirror Image between peoples is the result of the nature of the historical relationship between them.[3] This makes the development of the Arab relationship with Asia liberated from the concerns surrounding colonial capitalist domination, and the Western supremacist view held in the Arab historical memory, creating a favourable environment for the Arab diplomat's mission to pivot east.

7. Asia represents the top trade partner for the Arab region, with mutual trade growing steadily. Arab trade with Asia accounts for 55% of total Arab trade, which is 15% higher than its value in 1999.[4] The value of Chinese investments alone in Arab countries amounted to about $150 billion by the beginning of 2020, concentrated in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Iraq,[5] not to mention that the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) includes

12 Arab countries, whereas the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum constitutes a regulatory framework for Arab-Chinese relations.

Second: The Level of Arab Awareness of the Asian Theoretical Frame of Reference

In light of these political, economic, military and social indicators, a question arises about the extent of Arab familiarity with Asia in general, and of the key powers in this continent, especially China, Russia, India and Japan in particular, in terms of their epistemology and values. Here we present the following problematic: Is this accelerated Asian development taking place without an intellectual framework that organizes and guides it? Is the political decision in these rising Asian powers isolated from both old and modern Asian intellectual theories? What are these theories? How do they see the world? How is political life philosophized? What are the solutions they present? What are their highest values?

In order to answer the previous questions, in-depth and specialized knowledge in this regard is necessary, but my observations on the syllabuses in political science departments in our Arab universities, and on publications issued by our Arab research centers in particular, and contemporary Arab political thought in general, reveals an insistence, voluntarily or involuntarily, to remain trapped in the cage of Western theories in our political literature. Yet with the rapid growth of the role of the Asian powers, especially China, Japan, India, and Russia, it has become necessary to identify the political intellectual orientations of these powers, in order to understand their future orientations towards the Arab world in particular and the world in general. Since one of the trends in contemporary international relations embraces the idea that the twenty-first century is an "Asian century,"[6] it is necessary to alert Arab researchers to two aspects, namely:

1. The theoretical framework of Asian thinkers, especially China, Japan, India and Russia, which we will pay attention to in this study.
2. The applied dimension, that is, studying the behaviour of these countries, especially towards the Arab region, in light of the Asian political literature, which we will study later.

Third: The Call to Pivot East in Israel

A study by the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Washington underscored the rapid growth in Israeli-Asian relations focusing on North Asia (Japan, South Korea, and China) and South Asia (India, Vietnam, and Singapore). The study attributed the reasons for the Israeli pivot East to the following factors:[7]

1. "Garrison State Diplomacy," which has been described by the researcher Jacob Abadi, meaning a state located in a hostile political territory region such as Israel. Such a state is keen to find a space outside this environment to enhance its recognition and break its regional isolation, in addition to investing in rising powers in the international system, which are Asian powers at this stage.

2. Improving the image of Jews in the Asian mind. In a previous study, we referred to the image of Jews in general and Israel in particular in the Japanese mind, and this image has roots that Israel seeks to uproot.[8]

3. Economic motives; Whereas 3 of the 7 largest economies in the world are located in Asia, and since China is Israel's second largest trading partner after the US with bilateral trade reaching $15 billion, and since China is facing US restrictions, especially in technology, Israel needs to invest in all these aspects, not to mention the Israeli partnership in the BRI, which we covered in a previous study.[9] If we add to this that Israel is the second biggest supplier of arms to China and India, and that in 2016 it joined the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in addition to seeking to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, we can see how Israel may be tempted to plan to become a bridge between East and West, with all the resulting gains that it will employ in its struggle with its neighbours.

4. Comparing Western reactions to Israeli military operations in Gaza with Asian reactions, clearly indicates a decline in Asian interest in Israeli policies against the Palestinians, a matter that needs attention where Israeli studies and research guide the Israeli decision-maker in this direction. Here, there is a strategic question: Why did European public opinion become more interested in the Palestine issue, while Asian non-Islamic interest in it waned? This is what Israel seeks to cement further going forward.

Fourth: Pivoting East and the Priority of Understanding the Asian Perspective on International Relations

As is known, the development of political theory concerned with the internal dynamics of authoritarian organization predates the development of international relations theories concerned with external dynamics. While attempts to theorize international relations began as an academic discipline in 1919, the forces of globalization and the blurring of borders between the inside and the outside "hastened" the development of international relations theories. For many historical, economic and social reasons, Western theory became hegemonic, and the theory of international relations, as Christine Sylvester says, has become a white male dominated western theory, which echoes Martin White's question; why is there no non-western theory for international relations?[10]

The study of the contemporary Asian, non-Islamic, perspective of international relations is a strategic matter needed to understand how to interact with this major international bloc. Without realizing this, the possibility of building a solid foundation for pivoting eastward becomes futile, whereas looking at the Asian rise through the Western value and knowledge system remains deficient. Therefore, it is necessary to see the Asian rise based on the peculiarity of the Asian epistemological and value system, which is what this study seeks to achieve, as follows:

1. The Genealogy of the Asian Perspective on International Relations[11]

In reviewing theories on Asian international relations, five major intellectual approaches can be identified. They set the framework in which to consider political problems, especially internal ones, given that the international perspective in its contemporary sense had not at the time sufficiently crystallized. However, these approaches have left their imprint on the later development of the Asian perspective on international relations. This calls for a return to these approaches in order to understand the framework of Asian knowledge with which we live these days.[12]

The first theoretical framework: **Daoism: Lao Tzu:** This framework emphasized the role that nature should play in any effective political theory. This philosophy is based on a critique of the pursuit of wealth and power, while attempting to present a normative perspective aimed at providing a solution to alleviate these desires that Daoism describes as "unnatural."

The second aspect of this school of thought is that it makes "self-education" a tool for enlightening political thought, and through freedom from self-tendencies.

The second theoretical framework: Is what is called legalism, which is embodied in Shang Yang's views. The followers of this school did not rely in their political theories on a normative basis, but on the world as it is. Accordingly, they sought to present a vision of how to establish strong and stable states without the need for a mass culture like the one demanded in Confucian political theory (and Daoism). Moreover, they have developed and argued for not only a comprehensive legal system, but also an extremely complex bureaucracy, realizing that the success of any political model does not depend on a single ruler, but on a stable system that can be implemented regardless of who is in charge.

The third theoretical framework: Mohism: From which the Logicians branched out. This school paid attention to the meaning of concepts such as existence, time, place, etc., which made some call it the school of names. This theory was founded by Muzi in the 5th century BC, and calls for the necessity of individual piety and submission to the will of heaven, or Shangdi (supreme deity), and denounced the Confucian emphasis on rituals and ceremonies as a waste of government funds.

This perspective is based on what they call the state sequentialism, meaning that building a fair government requires providing material and moral needs of society through the development of education and knowledge for each individual, in contrast to the Confucian ethical ideal represented by the Ren ("Humanity" or "Charity"). This school distinguished between the private love of parents and the family, and the general love that is manifested towards others. The Mohists advocated manifesting love indiscriminately (Jianai). They attacked Confucianism, and especially Mencius for its orientations towards the concept of discriminatory love, and challenged the basis of Confucian family harmony, which was in fact the basis for the social harmony of the Confucian state.

But there were other schools like Yangism that focused on the importance of individual interests, and the Agrarians who focused on the values of equality.

The fourth theoretical framework: Besides this view there is the Japanese Shinto perspective. These ideas do not have a clear author. Generally, they do not believe in the absolute, and they see that man is inherently good, and the

mistakes he commits are only a result of the interference of evil spirits. The Shinto perspective promotes the idea of the divine origins of the emperors.

The fifth theoretical framework: The Hindu framework: About 82% of the population of India are Hindus, and here we find two levels of Hinduism: The Great Tradition and the Little Tradition. The first reflects the culture of 20% who are the upper class (Brahmanic Hinduism or Sanskrit), and these are divided into two currents, one of which is less attracted to Western culture and have strong suspicions of other minorities (especially Muslims). They represent the roots of the Indian nationalist movement, and they are the ones working to unify Hindu movements and insist on excluding Muslims and others, and it is from them the current ruling party, Bharatiya Janata, emerged. The second movement is the closest to Western culture and to accepting other minorities, nevertheless the first is the strongest. The second level is for the lower caste (other than Brahman or Sanskrit), which includes the poorer castes. But the most noticeable feature in both levels is that they are less "humanist" than Confucianism and Daoism, and the weakness of the Buddhist trend (the number of Buddhists in India is less than 9 million people out of about 1,350 million) does not change this picture much.

2. The Development of Asian Political Thought[13]

The first stage: Asian political thought saw a great overlap between religious heritage and political heritage, especially in the period before contact with the West. The culture in that period was marked by the domination of the metaphysical dimension in Hinduism in India, while Buddhism constituted what can be considered a Protestant trend in Hinduism. Then came the Islamic influence, which began when Caliph 'Uthman bin 'Affan sent the first "envoy" of the Islamic state to Confucian China, at the time dominated by the duality of yin and yang, which expresses the dialectic of existence (through the contradiction between its components) and the hierarchical structure of society. This is in addition to the contributions of the Manchu family by adding a sacred character to the emperor and linking him to heaven. Here, it should be noted that the secular tendency in the Chinese heritage is deeper than in the Indian heritage, as Confucius was not concerned with heaven, and it is noticeable that it was the upper classes who were most interested in linking the ruler to the divine.

In Japan, the Shinto Yamato class considered themselves deities, borrowing the organizational dimension of their society from Confucianism and Buddhism. They

believed that the peaceful aspect (of daily life struggles) in particular, was left to women in some stages, while the status of the samurai and after them the Shogun (who represent militaristic tendencies) rose in certain stages, and that left a later impact, as we will see, on Japanese political thought.

The second stage: The period of subjugation to Western colonialism saw the beginning of the emergence of nationalism among Asians, most evidently in India, especially with the dominance of the English language. For example, the Indian writer, Rabindranath Tagore, won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and an analysis of his novel "Home and the World," which he wrote in English, suggests an inclination toward acculturation with external societies.[14] Foreign missionaries played a key role in cementing a culture that sought to mix the Bible with Hindu heritage, such as Brahmo Samaj, established by Keshab Chunder Sen (19th century). His movement faced many splits, but left a trace in deepening the rationalist perspective in Indian culture.

In China, despite the alternation of different movements in its cultural perspective, the constant return to the Confucian perspective is clear. In Japan, the greatest impact in curbing Western influence happened during the first period of so-called isolation that lasted 200 years with the rule of the Shogun, during which leaving and entering Japan was prohibited, foreign trade was banned, and missionaries were expelled (sometimes violently). Things remained that way until the reign of Emperor Meiji, who made the Western political, development and industrial model the standard for development until 1912. After the defeat of World War II, Japan knew the second period of so-called isolation, through self-retreat, restoring what the war destroyed, and getting rid of the effects of defeat.

It is necessary to clarify, after presenting the stages of evolution, before and after contact with the West, that this Asian heritage, and through its interaction with the West, engendered "Asia" as a geopolitical cultural concept seen through three main perspectives:[15]

1. The idea that Asia as a political entity has no meaning without Europe: This perspective is evident in the Asian literature that believes Asia is a geocultural concept that must be abandoned and linked to Europe, for example in the discussions of the Japanese thinker Fukuzawa and his "theory of shedding Asia" which became popular in 1885.

2. The idea of Asia has a sociological substance based on peasantry and nationalism, which was manifested in the domination of Narodism as an expression of the ideology that defends the peasants, and calls for the distribution of feudal property among them. This has been called the application of rural socialism in Russia (1861), in parallel with the attempt of Chinese President Sun Yat-sen in China to build a nation-state from 1913–1925.
3. The concept of Asia (as a geopolitical region) between the perspective based on the "Great Asianism" vision proposed by the Chinese revolutionaries, the Japanese vision of "East Asia or (TOYO)," and dealing with East Asia based on the theory of "New Regionalism." The latter means freedom from broad pan-Asian association and focusing on Asian decentralization, while deepening interdependence between country units, without limiting it to economic and security ties, only along the lines of traditional regionalism.[16]

The third stage: The stages of independence (after World War II): Here we see two trends: the first is evident in Western influence and its continuation, which in India is manifested with the influence of the Fabian socialist movement on former Indian President Jawaharlal Nehru, the influence of Western democracy on Mahatma Gandhi, the influence of Marxism on Mao Tse-tung, and the radical change in the Japanese political system under the constitution imposed on Japan after its defeat in World War II. The second trend is represented by "Asian fundamentalism," that is, adherence to the Asian historical perspective, while working to adapt it to the requirements of the current era.

3. Modern Asian Theories of International Relations

The Asian efforts in this aspect are evident as follows:[17]

a. The contributions of Nishida Kitaro (1870–1945): Kitaro is the most influential modern theorizer of international relations in the Japanese school, focusing on the role of religion, culture, extremism, ethics, and nationalism, in international relations and the behavior of government systems. He can be considered the most important political philosopher in Japan in the pre-World War II period, while Western scholars place him among the founders of the constructivist perspective in contemporary international relations theories.

b. Akamatsu Kaname (Japan) (1896–1974): His focus was on the division of labor in regional systems through his theory of the Flying Geese Paradigm,

which he had published in 1960 receiving wide resonance. The theory focuses on the role of the leader in restructuring production due to the contrast between world economies, and arranging the stages of regional political and economic development based on transformation in economic production. He relies in part of his theory on the Kondratiev theory, which we will refer to shortly. Kaname divided the flock of geese into four levels based on regional hierarchies determined by the levels of industrial development. It is evident from the shift in manufactured goods from the most developed to the least as follows: the leading goose (Japan); the newly industrialized economies (South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong); the ASEAN countries (Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia); and the fourth level comprising the less developed group at the time (China, Vietnam, the Philippines, etc). The theory is based on the following assumptions:

- Increasing labor costs will push the leading country (Japan) to restructure its production.
- Because of the comparative advantages it has (at the global level), this country gradually shifts from labor-intensive production to capital-intensive production, with the former relocating to less developed countries that in turn begin to develop as a result. Perhaps one example is the textile industry that Japan left to other Asian countries, which in turn left it later, such as Korea and Taiwan, and turned towards the automobile and electronics industry, etc.
- Countries in the second tier (behind the leader) start exporting raw materials, then shift to primary manufacturing, then move to export, taking advantage of their comparative advantages.

c. Shiratori Kurakichi (1865–1942): Kurakichi is a Japanese historian and scholar, and one of the foremost pioneers in the field of "Oriental History." He is a sociologist, who focused on what he called Oriental history, as he sought to prove that the Chinese civilization, the Yellow Emperor, is the most influenced by and an extension of the Babylonian civilization and the Mesopotamian civilization, which represents a continuation of the Frenchman Lacouperie's theory. Kurakichi tried to reinforce the idea of a "historical Asia" in response to Fukuzawa's theory (to which I referred earlier).

d. Asian theorizing in the scope of future studies: Most postmodern and post-positivist theories focus on predicting from two aspects: future theories of international relations, and theories of future studies in political science. They are

based on the central premise that if you know the laws of a phenomenon you can forecast its direction. Here we find the following Asian contributions:

- The long wave cycle theory of Nikolai Kondratiev, in which he predicted the collapse of communism and the survival of capitalism (1928). Many western universities have returned to this theory after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[18]
- Soviet dissident Andrei Amalrik in his 1970 study "Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984," predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1984, noting that Mikhail Gorbachev took power in 1985 after which the series of collapse began.[19]

4. Contemporary Asian Theories

These theories are related to shifts in the internal structure of these Asian countries as follows:

a. Pragmatist theories at the expense of ideological perspective: the example of China[20]

Until the 1990s, discussions in the Chinese political literature focused on the nature of the international system, and on the questions posed by Qin in 1978, namely:

- Do we view the international system from the angle of war and conflict, or from the angle of peace and development?
- Can China achieve its goals through integration into the international system or by competition and force?

The Chinese theory sought to achieve three strategic goals referred to in the theory of peaceful rise, which turned into the theory of peaceful development, formulated by the Chinese thinker Zheng Bijian as follows:

- Formulating an international system according to a pluralistic perspective.
- The transformation from a state seeking to change the existing international order, as was the case in the Mao Zedong period, to a state seeking integration into the existing order.
- China wants a special place in the international system worthy of its rise.

These trends were based on an intellectual perspective identified by two theories that prevailed in contemporary Chinese thought, after the death of Mao Zedong, namely:[21]

- The cage bird theory proposed by Chen Yun, which is based on the idea of not abandoning socialism, while deploying some capitalist mechanisms. That is, China should remain in the "cage of socialism" with the need to expand the space of the cage.
- The cat-color theory, which was formulated by Lou Jiwei, which is an expression of the pragmatic tendency in China, in the post-Mao Zedong period. The color of the cat is not important, what's important that it hunts mice. That is, what matters are economic and political results no matter what the "ideological color" is.

These two theories were accompanied by nationalistic intellectual orientations, such as:

- Revival of the Chinese heritage since the reign of Xia (Hsia) (2200 BC), and the work on building more than one hundred national centers to accomplish this task.
- A change in curricula that reflects significant indicators; For example: replacing the interpretation of building the wall from repelling the invaders, to the tendency for national unity, and that the watch towers were to facilitate communication between the various Chinese groups.

b. Theories of the continuation of the Mercantile tendency: Japan[22]

After World War II, there were two important questions that defined the course of Japanese political thinking in international and domestic relations, namely: Why was Japan defeated? And how can Japan secure its interests in a highly polarized international system?

The answer was the shift towards topics such as: international trade, international political economy, international interdependence, international institutions, etc., and here discussions arose about:

- Is Japanese idealism responsible for the Japanese defeat, or does the responsibility rest on the shoulders of the militarism that dominated Japan at the time?
- Are Japanese interests best protected through alliance with the US, or by trusting in international institutions?
- Will the future be dominated by interdependence or by power politics?
- Will the Mercantile Policy, with a degree of pragmatism, lead Japan to the position it seeks?

c. Theories of a return to religious fundamentalism: India[23]

The theorizing of Indian international relations is based on a number of determinants:

- An assessment of India's role from independence to the early 1970s (especially the period of non-alignment).
- The dominance of Chinese and Pakistani regional threats strengthened the dominance of the security perspective in Indian thinking.
- Criticism of the Western perspective through some Indian literature, especially the studies of Ashis Nandy, has provided the opportunity for the Hindu Janata Party to emerge with a national perspective

Asian models in contemporary theories

Asians are particularly involved in this field, and even have important propositions, which often contradict the core content of Western theories:[24]

1. Yaqing Qin Theory; Qin, who is a professor at the Chinese University of Foreign Affairs, is one of the foremost critics of Western theories of contemporary international relations. In his theory, he focuses on the role of cultural dimensions, especially the images that those interacting with each other store, in shaping the nature of international relations.

2. The theory of the Peaceful Rise, which was developed by Zheng Bijian and supported by The Global Convergence of Interests theory. Bijian is ranked 44th among the 100 most important thinkers in the world today. The theory is based on analyzing the relationship between "soft power and international peace" through the convergence of global interests, and not through traditional theories such as the balance of power or deterrence, etc.

3. For Russia, as we indicated at the beginning of this study (endnote 2 of this study), Lenin considered Russia an Asian country. We did not consider Soviet or pre-Soviet literature because it is well known to Arab researchers, however, contemporary Russian theorists such as Aleksandr Dugin—described by Westerners as the most influential thinker in Putin's circle—deserves more attention from Arab researchers and policymakers, and his contributions are exemplified by his theories such as:[25]

a. The Fourth Political Theory (2009): This theory tries to integrate and transcend the theories of Marxism (class as the unit of analysis), liberalism (which makes the individual the unit of analysis), and fascism (which makes the state the basis). He focuses on the civil society alternative that transcends class, national affiliation, and individualism due to globalization, and proposes new perspectives about this.

b. Eurasian Theory (1997): The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia, in which the focus is on the Russian role in building alliances around Russia, such as with Iran and Muslim countries, and on employing oil and gas in adapting European policies, and strengthening ties with southern and central America.

4. Kenichi Ohmae:[26] It can be said that the theory of the end of the nation-state (globalization) was the most influential among the theorists of globalization, starting from Anthony Giddens, Roland Robertson, to Thomas Friedman. The theory of "the end of the nation-state" and the erosion of the concept of sovereignty is an extension of Ohmae's theory of a world without borders that he developed in 1990 (Borderless World (1990)).

Ohmae's main idea is that the organic interconnectedness of the world (i.e., technology, economic and financial interdependence, etc) dismantles the default interdependence (national, religious, cultural, etc.), thus destroying the basis of the nation-state that emerged from the post-Westphalian period since 1648. It states that regional blocs, on the one hand, and functional civil society organizations, on the other hand, have put international borders and the concept of sovereignty in a state of continuous decline.

5. Rejection of US hegemony in Asian affairs:[27] This movement is represented by Shintaro Ishihara and Akio Morita in Japan, and their study, "Japan That Can Say No," focuses on severe criticism of US policy, with emphasis on the importance of employing Japanese soft power, such as technological superiority, educational level, and moral level in international relations and political negotiation with the central power, which is the US.

The Japanese study is consistent with a Chinese study written by a number of Chinese researchers, most notably Song Qiang, and has the same main title "China That Can Say No." It is based on the idea of challenging the US specifically from the cultural angle, while getting rid of the feeling of inferiority towards it.

6. Advocacy for international acculturation:[28] This movement advocates reconciling global values with local Asian values in international relations theories, and drawing steps for international interaction on the basis of ensuring the preservation of Chinese cultural heritage. It advocates positive interaction with the contemporary developments, on the one hand, and with the rise of China on the international stage, on the other. This was highlighted in the Chinese study by Hung Jen Wang published in 2013.

7. Indian subscription to the idea of preserving the historical character of society during interaction with international powers.[29] The studies of the Indian thinker Navnita Chadha Behera represent the most prominent example in this direction. Behera tried to attribute the level of violence exercised by a country in its relations with other countries to the cultural component and the historical identity of the community of that state, which is evident in her analysis of the historical heritage in five Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka). But Western theories constitute the theoretical frame of reference for Navinita's explanation of the phenomenon of violence, which reinforces what we previously indicated in terms of the depth of Western influence in India, in a way that surpasses other major Asian powers.

8. Although socialist studies initially criticized the theories and methods of future studies in political science (theories as well as methods), their popularity is increasing in Asia. Recall that the well-known future studies scholar Alvin Toffler was the first guest of the Four Modernizations group in China after the death of Mao Zedong. The contributions of Sohail Inayatullah, who works at Taiwan University, especially his 2008 study, The Six Pillars: Future Thinking of Transformation,[30] can be considered one of the most important contributions, besides his role in developing Causal Layered Analysis techniques in future studies.

5. Common Features in the Current Asian Perspective:[31]

From the previous presentation, it seems that the theories of Asian international relations have common features, in the literature on international relations in the central countries as follows:

a. Focusing much more than Western theories on the cultural dimensions (religion, nationalism, ethics, and arts) in the interpretation of international relations.

b. Attempting to employ soft power, contrary to the Western perspective, which is dominated by the perspective of hard power. It is noticed that the idea of

soft power was circulated in traditional Asian literature before Joseph Nye's theory of leadership was put forward: Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power 1990. It turns out that the most used term in four thousand Chinese scientific journals was the term "soft power." And increasingly since 2006, the Chinese have focused on the "role of intellectual heritage" as part of soft power, especially legitimacy and international morals, etc. This is clearly evident in the following:[32]

- The strong return of Confucianism: From the demolition of Confucius' home in an earlier period, to the opening of 516 cultural centers in the world bearing the name of Confucius by 2017, and planning to reach one thousand by the end of 2020.
- The return of Hinduism in India to the top of the political scene.
- The great response to the Japanese Ishihara studies that we referred to against the US.
- The influence of Alexander Dugin's writings, especially on the fourth political theory, on Russian thinking, which makes the Orthodox tradition one of its most important pillars.

c. The humanistic horizon in Asian theories is more pronounced than in the Western heritage, which is evident in the lack of clear distinction between what is international and what is local, and in making the unit of analysis predominantly in Western theory the individual. The focus in Asian theory is on communitarianism, as evidenced in the series of articles by Lee Kwan Yew, former prime minister of Singapore[33].

d. The Asian rise has a peaceful character, while the Western rise has an aggressive character, which explains the higher value of individualism in comparison to the Asian collective tendency. It is not possible to explain Western economic growth in isolation from direct or indirect colonialism, while the literature of the peaceful rise of Bijian forms the intellectual basis for the Chinese, Indian and Japanese recent rise. There is confusion on this point on the Russian side, where the Russian thinker Alexander Dugin appears more belligerent in this aspect.

e. Comparing the Asian theory of non-alignment (and its African extensions) with the European concept of "neutrality" indicates an important difference between them ... Neutrality is a negative behaviour in which there is an individual

tendency and narcissism, while non-alignment is positive, as an expression of a higher sense of responsibility towards others, as Nehru said.[34]

f. There is conflation between the content of the Western perspective in the theory of the center and the periphery developed by Immanuel Wallerstein in particular, and the perspective of Asian thought developed by Inoguchi in Japan or Yongjin Zhang in China, or Kanti Pajipia in India. The Western view here is based on a perspective of conflict (starting from Charles Darwin to Karl Marx to Sigmund Freud to Hans Morgenthau, etc.), while the Asian perspective is based on a metaphysical perspective whose goal is "harmony" between human beings, any human being regardless of color, class, nationality, etc., and the laws of the universe, including those related to human relations. This makes me argue that the eastern perspective has a tendency to soften Western (political) thought. But the Indian thinker that we referred to earlier (Navinita Chadha Behira) does not see the importance of proposing an Asian theory based on the desire to critique the Western perspective, saying, "I do not want my theory to be motivated by confronting the theory of the other."

6. The Impact on Our Region: The Social and Political Phenomenon is not an Absolute Good or an Absolute Evil

Dealing with social and political phenomena requires an awareness of them and the laws of their interactions. In addition to the common features that we have referred to in Asian thought, which can be used in favor of Arab issues, there are subjective tendencies in the countries of the Asian Center that seem more complex and negative, such as:

a. Hindu zealotry and its hostile stance towards Muslims and Arabs, despite Ram Mohan's ideas in the 18th and 19th centuries on humanity and tolerance, the traditions of Hindu-Islamic conciliation of Guru Nanak, or the tendency to root all religions in Hinduism, such as in the views of Swami Vivekananda[35] and others.

b. China's BRI implies a Mercantile tendency, and its early phases suggest it will militarize later.

c. The continuation of the mercantilism in Japanese politics.

d. The Russian view, articulated by Dugin, of the Arab region as a protective belt against Western expansion.

Accordingly, pivoting eastward will not bring positive results to Arab countries except under three conditions:

a. Accurate knowledge of the intellectual framework of Asian thinking, which is something that Arab knowledge does not seem sufficiently familiar with yet, but rather improvisation prevails.

b. Increasing the percentage of Asian studies in Arab universities, and working to increase the number of specialized Arab studies centers in Asia.

c. Utilizing commercial, political and historical relations, especially in the major Asian countries with Islamic minorities, to influence Asian stances towards Arab issues.

Endnotes

[1] Report for Selected Countries and Subjects, site of international Monetary Fund, https://www.imf.org/; The 20 countries with the highest trade surplus in 2019, site of Statista, https://www.statista.com/statistics/256642/the-20-countries-with-the-highest-trade-surplus/; Countries With Nuclear Weapons 2020, site of World Population Review, https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-with-nuclear-weapons; Number of operable nuclear reactors as of April 2020, by country, Statista, https://www.statista.com/statistics/267158/number-of-nuclear-reactors-in-operation-by-country/; and Houssain Kettani, "Muslim Population in Asia: 1950–2020," *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development*, no. 1, January 2010, pp. 136–142.

[2] It may seem problematic in considering Russia an Asian country, as the coat of arms of Russia is an eagle with two heads, one looking at Asia and the other looking at Europe; moreover 77% of Russia's land mass is located in Asia, while 75% of the population (104 million) live in the European sector, compared to 36 million in Asia. While the capital Moscow in the European part, most of the raw resources are located in the Asian part, and the separation between the two parts is marked by the Ural Mountains or the Volga River. Yet Lenin considered Russia "without a doubt an Asian country." See site of Marxists Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1912/jul/15.htm; Alexander Lukin, "Russia between East and West: Perceptions and Reality," Paper presented at the Joint Session of the European Consortium for Political Research, Edinburgh, 28/3–2/4/2003, site of Brookings Institution, https: // www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/lukin20030328.pdf; and Is Russia European or Asian ?, site of Russia Beyond, 19/1/2018, https://www.rbth.com/arts/327309-is-russia-europe-or-asia

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[4] Nasser Saidi and Aathira Prasad, Background Note: Trends in trade and investment policies in the MENA region, MENA-OECD Working Group on Investment and Trade, 27–28/11/2018, http://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/WGTI2018-Trends-Trade-Investment-Policies-MENA-Nasser-Saidi.pdf

[5] file:///C:/Users/marina/Downloads/CASCF5-1%20(1).pdf
Site of Silk Road Briefing, https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2019/06/21/chinas-belt-road-initiative-middle-east/

[6] This idea dates back to 1924, when the German thinker Karl Haushofer predicted the 21st century would be dominated by Asia, specifically China, India, and Japan. See Hans Weigert, "Haushofer and the Pacific," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 4, 1942, p. 735. Also see recent studies on the same idea: Christopher Layne, The End of Pax Americana: How Western Decline Became Inevitable, *The Atlantic* magazine, 26/4/2012.

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Confucius, who focused on ethical issues of politics. It is possible to say that Confucius is the first known human rights philosopher.

Sun Tzu (5th century BC), who focused on war strategies and planning. See "The Political Thought of Asia: A Contextual Pedagogical Essay," https://sites01.lsu.edu/faculty/voegelin/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2015/09/Timothy-Lomperis.pdf

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Chapter Fifteen

The Future of the Golan Heights Between Realism and Legalism

The Future of the Golan Heights Between Realism and Legalism

Summary

The US decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights has taken the realistic approach in international relations rather than the legal approach. This means that the international action is largely unconcerned with the rules or norms of international law.

Based on that, and in light of the great flaws in the current domestic, regional and international balance of power to Israel's advantage, the possible scenarios are as follows: The first scenario is that internationally, countries will gradually follow in Trump's footsteps; and the second scenario, Syria would call on the United Nations (UN) Security Council to assert its decisive right in the Golan Heights. The third scenario is to bet on Trump failing the next presidential elections, and a democratic president winning it (or a republican), who would retract Trump's Golan decision. Whereas the fourth scenario is in keeping the status quo, where all parties keep their positions, Israel would build facts on the ground, and the chances for an international gradual support for the annexation of the Golan Heights would increase.

The last one is the most probable, although there are some other scenarios, such as the catastrophic one of dividing Syria, and the military one, where armed resistance against the Israeli occupation of Golan would be launched, while benefitting from the experience of resistance in southern Lebanon. The implementation of this scenario is hard but not impossible, and can be developed with time. There is also the negotiations scenario, where both the Syrian and Israeli sides would negotiate the future of Golan.

Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that the American decision is rejected, and to take all the political, media and legal measures to confront the decision at all levels, while supporting the steadfastness of the people of the Golan in the face of the Israeli occupation.

First: The International Environment for the Golan Issue: Realism and Legalism

Realism in international relations is based on the idea that a state tries to increase its power by expanding its sphere of interests (Traditionalists: Morgenthau and his school of thought), or the state pursues more power to preserve its security and interests, in the absence of a central authority, leading to an international anarchy (Neorealists: Kenneth Waltz and his school of thought). In this case, international action becomes unconcerned with the international law or its norms, except for the variables that assist the political action.

As for legalism, it is based on the notion that the international community has institutions that control the peaceful and non-peaceful international interactions, through a network of International and regional organizations, conventions, norms and traditions. Hence, these international institutions ensure the rights of states.

Comparing the two perspectives, it seems that the international stage prefers realism over legalism, especially in international political conflicts. For example, and despite the relative stability in the number of interstate conflicts (2–5 wars per year), and their decline in the period 1946–2018, the intrastate conflicts are considerably rising, from 10 wars in 1946 to 47 armed conflicts in 2016. However, the success of the United Nations (UN) (Legalism) in the settlement of intrastate or interstate conflicts did not exceed 7%, despite the considerable increase of UN peacekeepers deployed all over the world.[1]

This reinforces the importance of neorealism over legalism in the settlement of disputes. It is noted that the 2018 Global Peace Index (GPI) found that the global level of peace has deteriorated by 0.27% in the last year (2018), marking the fourth successive year of deterioration, and it has deteriorated by 2.38% since 2008.[2]

This means that the environment of the Golan crisis (weakness of international institutions in settling the conflicts legally, on one the hand, and the GPI linear deterioration during the past ten years, on the other) is not affected by legalism as much as realism, and this defines the general frame for constructing the future scenarios of this crisis.

If added to the above the fact that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)—where the Golan is located—remains the world's least peaceful region among the nine regions of the world,[3] the evidence of realism increases, especially that

the decision of US President Donald Trump (Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and Jerusalem) has definitely ended the "land for peace" formula on which the peace settlement was built. This means going back to the pre-1991 Madrid conference conditions.

Second: The Golan Heights Between the Two Perspectives

As soon as Trump signed the presidential proclamation, on 25/3/2019, which officially recognizes the Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights occupied since 1967, the discussions about the future of the Syrian Heights returned. Trump's proclamation stated:

> The State of Israel took control of the Golan Heights in 1967 to safeguard its security from external threats. Today, aggressive acts by Iran and terrorist groups, including Hizballah, in southern Syria continue to make the Golan Heights a potential launching ground for attacks on Israel. Any possible future peace agreement in the region must account for Israel's need to protect itself from Syria and other regional threats. Based on these unique circumstances, it is therefore appropriate to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.[4]

The roots of this US position go back to 1975, when on 1/9/1975, the then US President Gerald Ford sent a letter to the then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin stating that "any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights."[5] This commitment was re-affirmed by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher in 1996.[6]

This means that when the Knesset ratified the Golan Heights Law in December 1981, it was based on a previous US promise, despite the fact that it is contrary to the official US position. May be the suspension of President Ronald Reagan of the strategic agreement between the two countries, after Israel's decision to annex the Golan, then inviting Prime Minister Begin for an official working visit at the White House and resuming the strategic dialogue between the two,[7] reinforces the notion that Trump's decision is not separate from the US administration's tendencies. In April 2016, Prime Minister Netanyahu's announcement was on the same note saying, "The Golan Heights will forever remain in Israel's hands. Israel will never come down off [from] the Golan Heights."[8]

Consistent with the US new position, the State Department acknowledged the change in its annual human rights report of 2019, which considered the Golan Heights to be "Israeli-controlled" instead of the past designation "Israeli-occupied."[9] And this asserts that realism is outgrowing legalism.

Third: The Legal Status of the Golan Heights

As the Golan Heights were among the territories occupied in the 1967 war, the UN Security Council Resolution 242 established a clear and explicit principle that emphasized "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war." This position was reinforced by the UN Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in addition to 76 UN resolutions refusing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 49/6).[10]

In reality, all world countries—without any exception—did not accept the Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights, since they were occupied in 1967. Then came Trump's proclamation, which opposes even the opinion of the State Department Legal Adviser to the committee of international relations of the House of Representatives, stating the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories including the Golan Heights.[11]

Clearly, the international community did not accept Trump's proclamation, and no other country has supported it.

Fourth: Realism: Israeli Incentives to Control the Golan Heights

The Golan Heights has a total area of 1,860 km^2, of which 266 km^2 constitutes a buffer zone between the Syrian and Israeli forces, maintained by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Concerning the Golan occupied area, there are discrepancies concerning its exact area, Israel claims it's 1,150 km^2, Syria says it's 1,500 km2, while the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) stated it's 1,300 km^2.[12] It has an 80 km border with Jordan and occupied Palestine, through which passes the ceasefire line (Purple Line). In 2016, the Golan population was around 49 thousand, including 22 thousand Israeli settlers living in 33 settlements, and 27 thousand Syrians[13] who refuse to take Israeli citizenship and keep their Syrian citizenship.[14]

The Israeli motives to annex the Golan Heights can be defined as follows:

1. Security: The Golan has a high strategic value, as it overlooks southern Lebanon, northern Israel and most of the Syrian south, while being only 31 km away from the Syrian capital Damascus. Since 2011, Israel has been using the turmoil in neighboring Syria—the civil war—as a pretext to entrench its security claims, expressing its concerns over the impact of the Syrian chaos on its security, claiming that if Iran and Hizbullah stay in the area, they would "pose an existential threat to Israel,"[15] especially that the Golan overlooks a large area of Israeli settlements.

2. Settlement Expansion: Few days after Trump's decision to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, the Israeli government announced a plan to construct 30 thousand settlement units to accommodate 250 thousand settlers by the year 2048, in the occupied Syrian Golan. The plan was drafted and prepared by the Ministry of Housing and in cooperation with the Golan Regional Council.[16]

3. Exploiting the Golan's Natural Resources: Water, Oil or Gas: There are a number of rivers that flow into the Golan, such as the Jordan river, Banias river, Yarmouk river (whose total length is 57 km, out of which 47 km pass through Syrian soil, especially the Golan), the Hasbani river (whose springs are located in Lebanon, then it flows through the Golan to end up in the Jordan river), and the two rivers Zakiyeh and Masadiyeh, which flow into the Lake Tiberias, in addition to a considerable number of springs. According to the Israel National Water Company (Mekorot), one third of Israel's drinking water, irrigation water and water for various uses come from the Golan Heights and Mount Hermon.[17] The Heights also provide 21% of Israel's grapes production, 50% of mineral water production and 40% of its beef production. It is known that water was one of the major reasons of the Israeli-Syrian dispute, when Israel transferred the sources of the Jordan River and caused the outbreak of the 1967 war.[18]

In the early nineties, the Israeli government awarded the first license to drill for oil in the Golan Heights, where two million barrels of oil were discovered. During Yitzhak Rabin's term (1992–1995), drilling was suspended due to the launch of the peace process, but in 1996, Benjamin Netanyahu approved the resumption of oil drilling. In 2012, the Government Companies Authority (GCA), headed by Tzipi Livni (Foreign Minister 2006–2009), decided that the drilling permits would

be returned to the governmental gas and oil drilling companies, then the drilling license was awarded to the Genie Energy company.[19]

Perhaps these motives explain the position of the Israeli public opinion concerning Golan, constituting a source of pressure and support for this policy of the Israeli government. Various surveys prove the consistency of this position as follows:

Surveys of Israeli Public Opinion Regarding the Return of Golan Heights to Syria[20]

Year	Annexing the Golan Supporters (%)	Notes
1979	80	After the "Peace Treaty" with Egypt
1994	45	If such an act would be linked to a full "peace treaty" between Israel and Syria, including diplomatic relations, demilitarization, and international security guarantees
1999	54	The resumption of negotiations between Syria and Israel
2004	60	–
2006	71	–
2007	63	–
2008	59	–
2011	64	–
2012	84	–
2016	51	After Prime Minister Netanyahu declared that Israel would never give up the Golan Heights
2019	62	Among Jewish Israelis, the Right strongly believed the decision was beneficial to Israel's vital interests (74%), along with a plurality of both the Left (40%) and the Center (42%)
Average	63	Among Jewish Israelis, the majority—across all political blocs—opposed returning the Golan Heights. Opposition was highest among the Right (96%), followed by the Center (83%), and lowest among the Left (53%), with a party average of 77.3%.

This table indicates the following:

a. The support for keeping the Golan Heights among party blocs has been clearly higher than among the public opinion (noting that the Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories were excluded from these surveys). This means that the political decision, subject to the political parties, will be in favor of keeping the Golan.

b. The support of party blocs and the public opinion for keeping the Golan Heights prevents any Israeli government from returning them. In the Sinai peninsula's case, the support for keeping it was the lowest compared to the West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza and the Golan, which eased the government's decision to withdraw. In the Golan's case, it is much harder.

Fifth: Regional Realism

The other side of the Golan Heights political environment is that realism prevails over the regional and national environment, whose features are:

1. The erosion of the Syrian material and moral power during the civil war, and foreign interference. The Israelis think that such a situation makes Syria incapable of any military action to regain the Golan by force. The Israeli political thinking tends to further weaken Syria, where some Israeli studies, in which Zvi Hauser (Israel's Cabinet Secretary 2009–2013) participated, tend to plan the partitioning of Syria into six states, then holding a referendum among the Golan citizens (including settlers) on the Heights' fate.[21]

2. The Arab political, economic and social weakness due to the continuous turbulence since 2010, and the consecutive/successive normalization of Arab countries with Israel, on different levels, enhances Israeli relaxation over the Golan issue.

3. The resistance axis has been subjected to unprecedented pressure, through the economic siege on Syria, Iran and Hizbullah, and by listing armed organizations (Hizbullah, Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)…) as terrorist. This makes Israel feel that the ability of these organizations to change regional power balances is limited.

4. The Israeli official and public impression that the refusal of international active forces to the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights is just a "verbal"

position. This was evident in the positions of the UN Secretary-General, Russia, EU, China and Turkey.[22]

At the end of March 2019, the European Union unanimously declared their rejection of Trump's proclamation,[23] followed by Turkey, China, the Russian Federation, the Arab countries, and the UN.[24] Nevertheless, none of these took any "practical" steps, deeming these stances less important in the future, and especially in light of the results of the "European sanctions slapped on Russia after the annexation of Crimea five years ago, or the punitive steps taken by Europe against Turkey following its invasion of Cyprus 45 years ago."[25]

Sixth: Future Scenarios

In light of the dominance of realism over legalism, and in light of the great imbalance of power at the domestic, regional and international levels of conflict, the possible, probable and preferable futures concerning the Golan Heights are as follows:

1. Other countries would gradually follow in the footsteps of Trump: i.e., international recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Perhaps the balance of power on the aforementioned three levels enhances the likelihood of this scenario. Following suit internationally may start calmly by some marginal countries at first, then the most understanding countries of Israeli interests in the sovereignty over the Golan may follow (such as Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Lithuania…). It may start symbolically violating the 2015 EU decision that some goods produced on land seized in the 1967 war must be labeled "made in settlements."[26] Israel is betting on such an orientation, for researchers indicate that there were similar historical precedents like: The Taiwan issue, Kashmir, Gulf of Iskenderun (formerly Alexandretta), Crimea… and other territories that have been separated from their State, which the world eventually either implicitly or explicitly recognized.

2. Syria would bring the issue to the UN Security Council: betting on the "force" of law and international norms. However, as long as the US has the power of veto, taking any decision in the UN Security Council that opposes Trump's decision would be impossible; especially that not recognizing the sovereignty of Israel over the Golan completely opposes Trump's policy. Even if we assumed that the US would abstain from voting on such a resolution, the implementation of it by having

effective international action would prompt a number of European countries to refrain from supporting it, even some (like the UK and France) may veto it.

3. Betting on Trump's failure in the next presidential elections: in November 2020, when the winning new democrat (or republican) president reviews Trump's decision concerning the Golan. A similar precedent to this is the Iranian nuclear deal that Trump withdrew the US from, despite signing it by Obama.

Theoretically, this scenario is probable, but it depends on how much pressure the new US administration would face from the three levels of conflict (domestic, regional, and international). Hence, it becomes possible rather than probable, especially that the nine presidents who had ruled the US before Trump since 1967 (four democrats and five republicans) did not take a similar step.

This means, theoretically, the general US and international trends are not with Trump's decision, for his decisions (recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the "deal of the century," Israel sovereignty over the Golan, financial pressure on the Palestinians…) have paralyzed the US mediation role in the region's conflict, and isolated the US from the international community. Therefore, the next president—in case Trump failed in the next elections—"may" review the decision, especially that the Democrats were skeptical of Trump's decision.[27]

4. The status quo scenario: Syria would keep its public stance that refuses the US proclamation but without any action, while Israel would stay in the Golan and continue its settlement building, changing of the demographics. That is repeating the scene since 1973, which is similar to the Kashmir case between India and Pakistan.

5. The catastrophic scenario: Two Israeli researchers suggested this scenario, which is based on two levels:[28]

a. To continue with the internal Syrian crisis until decentralizing and splitting up Syria into 6 states on ethnic and sectarian basis, where the Golan would be one of those.

b. Holding a referendum in the suggested "Golan State" on accepting Israel's annexation of the territory, independence, or returning the Heights to Syria. Since the settlers' population is fast increasing, which will allow them to participate in the referendum, the vote result would be accepting Israel's annexation of the territory. Consequently, this matter would be considered legal, and according to

the two researchers, it is similar to when Russia annexed Crimea, the James Baker Plan envisioned "Moroccan settler"s voting on the fate of Western Sahara, and when the Kofi Atta "Annan Plan allowed Turkish settlers in Northern Cyprus to vote on the island's fate."[29]

6. The military scenario: Syria would (unilaterally or with its allies) conduct a military operation similar to that of the 1973 war to regain the Golan Heights by force. In that Syria may follow two approaches:

a. Conduct unilateral military action after rearranging its internal status.

b. Replicate the experience of liberating southern Lebanon, by conducting popular resistance and guerrilla wars led by the Syrians, Hizbullah, Iran, some armed Iraqi groups, and Palestinian factions. Perhaps this is the most worrisome scenario to Israel, for despite its extreme difficulty it may happen, but in this assessment, it is not possible to delve into more details, especially concerning the conditions in Iraq, Iran and Lebanon.

7. The negotiations scenario: Along the other scenarios, there may be a growing tendency that Israel and Syria would go back to the negotiations table, based on the fact that some Syrian parties hope that the Golan reaches the same state as the Sinai desert did (i.e., An Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, the Syrian presence would be limited to its internal security forces, international observer forces would be stationed there, in addition to the diplomatic recognition and complete normalization between the two sides).

Some opine that the position of Trump and Israel in the Golan is no more than a position for negotiations, to wrench out more concessions on the expense of the whole Palestine issue. It is also to prepare the scene for the "deal of the century," by threatening some (Syria) and luring others (Israel) as follows:

a. Threatening Syria: Trump took the Golan decision so that he would negotiate with the Syrians over it, within the "deal of the century." He would be willing to reverse his decision if Syria established a comprehensive peace, recognition and normalization with Israel. For he considers Syria the most important Arab opponent to Israeli politics.

b. Enticing Israel: Some see that Trump's decision on the Golan is but a tactic to "entice" Netanyahu to offer more concessions in the Palestinian case.[30]

Seventh: Conclusion

By going back to the three levels of conflict (domestic, regional, and international), it turns out that the balance of power (including its material and moral variables, and their management) is imbalanced in favor of the Israeli side.

Thus, realism heavily outweighs legalism in this conflict, especially with the first indicators of the "deal of the century."[31] The crisis environment and the dominance of realism would allow Israel more intransigence, it may develop and acquire a wider Arab recognition of Israel as a political entity, while Syria would need to heal and rebuild its economic and social structure over a 7–10 year period. Therefore, the "status quo" scenario is the most likely for the foreseeable future.

As the future holds a (low probable and highly effective) variable, the military scenario, despite its difficulty, remains open. However, it depends on the changes in the Arab, regional and international environment.

Eighth: Recommendations

1. Refusing the US proclamation, considering it an assault against Syria's genuine and full right to Golan, deeming it a support of the Israeli occupation and aggression, and considering it a violation of international law and covenants.
2. Launching political, media and legal campaigns to support Syria's right to its land and retrieving the Golan Heights.
3. Supporting the steadfastness of the Golan citizens, who are facing the Israeli occupation and resisting Israeli settlement projects.
4. The issuing of Arab, Islamic and international decisions that refuse the US proclamation and support the Syrian right to retrieve the Golan.
5. To garner more of the Arab, Islamic and international support against the expansionist Israeli project, and promote official and popular action to face the normalization with Israel.

Endnotes

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It is noted that chapter nine (Part I) bets on the decentralizing and splitting up Syria, and tries to complement the previous pages of the study by comparing the "duration of Syrian sovereignty" over the Golan and the duration of the Israeli sovereignty. The study has found out that Syria controlled the Golan since 1946 (the end of the French mandate) until 1967, while Israel controlled it since 1967, which means more than double the Syrian duration, see Chapter "The Split-up of Syria: a Geo-strategic Security Interest and a Reflection of the Ethnic Reality."

The study legally justifies the Israeli control of the Golan by stating that it was the result of a "defensive" war in order to eliminate the Arab threat, and not an "offensive" war. Meaning that the demise of the Arab threat and the holding of a comprehensive peace is the condition that makes the Golan issue negotiable, a matter that the study considers unavailable at the moment.

[29] This thinking is based on a comparative study by Prof. Eugene Kontorovich of Northwestern University Law School. See the comparison of the Golan Heights with other regions: Eylon Aslan-Levy, "The Case for Israeli Sovereignty in the Golan Heights," *The Tower* magazine, issue 38, May 2016, http://www.thetower.org/article/the-case-for-israeli-sovereignty-in-the-golan-heights/

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Chapter Sixteen

The Prospects of Algerian Policy Between Change and Adaptation

The Prospects of Algerian Policy Between Change and Adaptation

Introduction

If we consider the phase of Algerian national liberation from French colonialism the fundamental turning point in contemporary Algerian history, studying the period 1962–2020 (about 58 years) helps us define the general features of the relationship between the Algerian society and the political authority on the one hand, and the relationship between the Algerian polity and the international and regional environments on the other hand. It would help us measure the mutual effect between the first and second dimensions, and the Algerian adaptation mechanism to internal and external changes.

First: The Political Sociology of Algeria

Contemporary Algerian history shows that the relationship between the political authority and the Algerian society is generally characterized by the following:

1. The Prevalence of Militarism on the Authority Structure

The period during which the military assumed the presidency has comprised 58.3% of the period extending from 1962 to 2020, including the terms of Houari Boumedienne, Chadli Bendjedid, ‘Ali Kafi and Liamine Zeroual. Civilians, in return, have ruled 41.7% of the period and are Ahmed Ben Bella, Rabah Bitat, Muhammad Boudiaf, ‘Abdelaziz Bouteflika, ‘Abdul Qadir bin Saleh and ‘Abdelmadjid Tebboune. Excluding Bouteflika’s term, most of the civilian periods are transitional periods, which have not been able to establish stable bases of civilian rule, thus allowing the military bases to be more sustainable. These include having an alliance with the National Liberation Front (FLN) (through the representation of the military establishment in its central committee or its political bureau, or through ministers or deputies with military backgrounds), and an alliance with government bureaucratic leaders and local administrations overlapping with representatives of the Interior Ministry and security forces.

Manifestations of military control are the following:

a. Militarizations index: This indicator is based on a number of sub-indicators, including the comparison of the rate of military spending to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the one hand, and the rate of health spending on the other hand. It also measures the number of members of the military establishment in relation to the number of doctors on the one hand, and the population on the other hand. Then comparing the number of heavy military vehicles to the total population. Notably, Algeria recorded high rates of the militarization index and this indicator even increased clearly before 2017 and 2018 to the following rates:[1]

Table 1: Militarization Index in Algeria

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Militarization index	763.05	764.49	762.59	764.45	768.08	770.37	764.22	761.01	756.67

The table reveals a gradual decline in the rate of militarization in the post-2014 period, as a result of the sharp and continuous decline in the prices of oil which is the backbone of the Algerian economy.

Measuring the correlation coefficient between the militarization and democracy indicators shows a high inverse correlation, for the higher the militarization rate gets, the lower the rate of democracy will be, which explains in one aspect the fragility of democracy in Algeria as we shall see later.

b. Military Expenditure Index:[2] Algeria ranks third globally in terms of the ratio of military spending to the GDP, reaching to 5.3%. The military spending represents 13.8% of the Algerian government's expenditures, thus ranking 13th globally. In the 2010–2020 period, the average annual military spending rate is about $9.6 billion with expenditure vacillating with fluctuating oil and gas prices as shown in the following table:[3]

Table 2: Algerian Military Spending

Year	Defense spending ($ billion)	Percentage of GDP (%)
2015	10.41	5.27
2016	10.22	6.01
2017	10.07	6.38
2018	9.58	6.27
2019	10.3	6

c. The Proportion of Military in Leadership Positions: According to a document disclosed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in February 2012,[4] the rule in Algeria until that time was based on an alliance between three forces: the army, the government bureaucracy and the leaders of the FLN. In 1981, 42% of the FLN central committee was from military backgrounds. The document points to some aspects of competition between and within these forces as it indicates that the influence of the Berbers or Amazigh (Kabyle, Chaouia, Mizabia and Tuareg) in the military security forces (intelligence) is strong, which sometimes provokes sensitivities with the Arab majority of officers. Thus transformation was witnessed there, starting with the ouster of Kasdi Merbah from the military security apparatus and the later linking the apparatus to the presidency. Also, the regional tendencies within the army are sometimes a source of concern; however, they do not affect the general support of the central authority. During the transformations undertaken by Chadli Bendjedid, governmental bureaucracy and the FLN leadership became more pragmatic and less ideological than was the case throughout the Boumedienne period. The document sees that the military controls bureaucracy, especially in strategic options. It cites the subordinate role of former Foreign Minister Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, however, Chadli had to a certain extent strengthened the role of bureaucracy. As for the party, the presence of military in the leadership ranks enables the army to control it.

After the overthrow of Chadli Bendjedid in 1992, and the outbreak of civil war until about 1999, the army took full control of the political decision, especially after the assassination of President Muhammad Boudiaf. New military elite started to appear, who are more professional and cultured than the old military elite. The new elite tried to establish their legitimacy on new foundations, most importantly their role in the stability of the state. This was unlike the old military elite, whose legitimacy was based on their role in the liberation war from French colonialism.

2. Democracy Index in Algeria

In most of the models approved by researchers, democracy index is based on a number of indicators, the most important of which are: pluralism in the electoral process, government performance, popular participation, political culture and civil liberties. Algeria recorded the following rates throughout 2000–2019:[5]

Table 3: Democracy Index in Algeria 2000–2019

Year	Democracy index
2000–2005	3.17
2005–2010	3.44
2010–2015	3.95
2015–2019	4.01

The table indicates a slow and gradual improvement in democracy due to the decline in the militarization index mentioned earlier, related to two phenomena: the deterioration in income rates resulting from the collapse of oil prices, and the gradual replacement of traditional military elites with new military elites more aware of transformations in the environment. Yet, this positive change is not sufficiently consistent with the pace of rapid changes in the structure of society on the one hand, and the shifts in regional and international environment on the other hand. Consequently, the ability to adapt to these shifts remains less than what is actually needed, which does not rule out the possibility of renewed political instability, particularly in light of a number of indicators:

a. Subcultural Congestion in Algerian Society:[6] This is manifested in: the continuous debate about the Amazigh identity with a great variation in estimating their population[7] and the limits for expressing cultural identity, in addition to the debate about raising Amazigh flags and the arrest of some who raised these flags. In addition, their presence in public institutions, where reports indicate their high percentage in the technocratic sectors and less influence in the military and security institutions, especially after the change in military intelligence. The acceptance of the Amazigh language varies, where it is constitutionally accepted, while socially it is less accepted. Identifying it as a national language or an official language is also debated. The acceptance of the Amazigh movements of Algerian involvement in Arab concerns. Moreover, tension have appeared on several occasions such as the conflict in Ghardaia in 2013 between Mozabites (Berbers) and the Chaamba (Arab-Maliki) over such issues as water, land and jobs. There are also the 2017 events, including the arrest of some social media bloggers, such as blogger Marzouk Touati who was arrested after he interviewed the spokesperson of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and was released in March 2019, the arrests of hundreds of Ahmadis in 2017, besides the closure of churches in tribal areas, especially Protestant churches.[8] Further, there are the periods of the so-called Berber Spring

in 1980 and following tensions, such as in 1990 when the teaching of the Amazigh was permitted in some schools in Amazigh majority regions. In 2001, there were disturbances in the city of Tizi Ouzou (Algerian Amazigh capital), then in 2003 when Amazigh was considered a "national" rather than an official language. However, the elites and the Amazigh movements continued their pressure urging the state to include an amendment in the constitution, where in 2016, it was approved by the Algerian People's Assembly to consider Amazigh as an "official" language.[9]

It is noted, for example, that the least-voting provinces for President Bouteflika in the 2014 elections were Berber dominated provinces of Batna, Khenchela, Béjaïa, Jijel and Tizi Ouzou.[10]

Perhaps the important observation is that the Berbers do not strategically adopt the idea of separation as a minority, given several factors. I have previously discussed these factors in a study on the indicators of measuring separatism tendency of minorities. The study included 27 indicators, of which the most important is the geographical indicator, a variable not available for Berbers in Algeria[11] despite all attempts by external parties to feed this trend.[12]

b. Gaps in the Democratic Process: The most prominent of these gaps could be traced in the following aspects:

- The presidential elections in December 2019, which saw the election of current President Abdelmadjid Tebboune. All five candidates whose candidacies were accepted (28 other applicants were rejected) were closely related to the official institution, while none of them represented significant Islamic forces since they are prohibited, and the chances of their victory remain valid in the event of fair elections.[13]
- According to the Algerian constitution, presidential seat was limited to two terms. However, this provision was amended in 2008 to allow a third term, but was again amended to two terms in 2016. Bouteflika sought to amend it again to run for a new term, but popular unrest forced him to back down and resign. This indicates a degree of constitutional instability and a reflection of deep political tensions between the generation of the revolution and the post-revolution generation, some of whose effects remain intact.
- The political participation, especially in the presidential elections, is an indication of the society's confidence in the political system. It is noticeable that

the participation rate, excluding 2004, decreased from 75.8% in 1995 to 74.11% in 2009 to 50.7% in 2014 and to 39.93% in 2019.[14]

This reflects the increasing gap between the political system and the society in terms of confidence in the results of the elections especially that the Algerian opposition forces (particularly Islamic forces) estimated voter turnout in 2014 at no more than 20%.[15]

c. Family Disintegration Resulting From the Increase in Divorce Rates in the Algerian Society: Official statistics show that 20% of marriages end in divorce, and that divorce to marriage rate has increased dramatically since 2014, reaching more than 68 thousand divorce cases annually.[16] This could be caused by the economic and political pressure, and the accelerating spread of social media networks with which the Algerian society have failed to cope, thus leading to social unrest with divorce as its most prominent manifestation. Ultimately, this creates social turmoil, which indirectly nourishes the political turmoil.

3. Political Stability Index in Algeria

The rate of political stability is an important indicator of the outcome of the interaction between all political, social and economic dimensions. It is measured based on 12 sub-indicators (security threats, factionalized elites, group grievance, economic decline, uneven economic development, human flight and brain drain, state legitimacy, public services, human rights and rule of law, demographic pressures, refugees and displaced persons and external interventions).[17] A scale is used ranging from +2.5 (strong) to –2.5 (weak).

The following table indicates a continuous but slow improvement in the rate of political stability in Algeria throughout 2000–2018:[18]

Table 4: Algeria Political Stability Index

Year	Political stability index
2000	–1.43
2005	–0.92
2010	–1.26
2015	–1.09
2018	–0.79

This result is consistent with the democracy and militarization indices in Algeria, which makes the mega-trend indicates that there is a continuous improvement of internal indicators, however, there is a need to restrict the impact of regional and international environments (as we shall see later in this study).

4. Economic Income Indicators

While acknowledging the importance of GDP rates (whether nominal or purchasing power parity) as well as per capita income rates and growth rates, and in order to remain consistent with the focus of this study, we will address three important dimensions in this context: the gap between population growth and economic growth, the fairness of income distribution (GINI index), and the diversification of the Algerian economy away from its dependence on the energy sector.

a. The Gap Between Population Growth and Individual Income

The Algerian Ministry of Health estimates the fertility rate in Algeria at 3.5 births per woman, which is one of the highest fertility rates worldwide. Accordingly, the Algerian population will reach 50–51 million in 2030, and more than 72 million in 2050.[19] However, it is noticed that population growth rate in Algeria has declined throughout 1985–2000, but has been increasing since 2000, with an increase of more than one million persons annually.[20]

If we link this increase to the rates of economic growth, we find that the economic growth in Algeria throughout 2010–2019 is 2.97%, with the lowest rate of growth seen in 2017 at 1.7%,[21] while population growth rate is 1.76%.[22] Compared to individual income rate we find:[23] the average per capita income (based on purchasing power parity) was $5,493 in 2015, and it decreased to $3,948 in 2019, marking a 19.13% decrease, which is a continuation of the fluctuation in the rate since 1993.[24] This might explain reaching an overall unemployment rate estimated at about 11%; yet, it is among the youths who constitute the broadest base in the Algerian population pyramid reaching 29%.[25]

b. Income Inequality

The income inequality scale (GINI index) indicates an increase in poor distribution of income, although Algeria remains among the moderate countries in terms of class differences, and almost the best among the Arab countries regarding income distribution fairness. However, recently there was an increase in income inequality rates since 2011 as follows: (what is acquired by the 10% segment with highest income among the population):[26]

Table 5: Income Inequality in Algeria

Year	GINI index
2011	27.60
2018	32.20
2020	35.3

This means that the rate of acquisition by the "upper-upper class" has increased during nine years by about 7.7% of total income. This might be related to the administrative and political corruption indicator, which, despite fluctuation, puts Algeria among the countries with high corruption levels as shown in the following table:[27]

Table 6: Transparency Index in Algeria

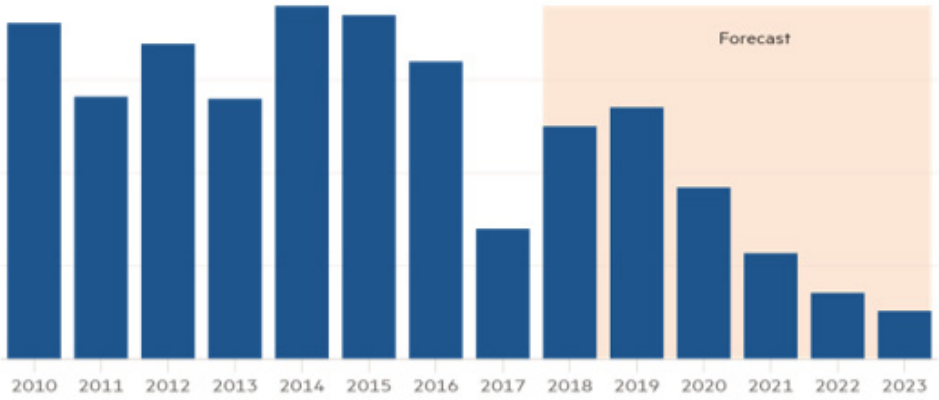
Year	Transparency index
2015	36
2016	34
2017	33
2018	35
2019	35

c. The Dependency of the Algerian Economy on the Energy Sector

95% of Algeria's hard currency revenues depend on its exports, which constitute about 40% of the state budget. However, the collapse of oil and gas prices after 2014 led to the decline of Algerian financial reserves from $193.6 billion in 2014 to about $55.2 billion in mid-2020, a 72.5% decline.[28] It also led to a budget deficit of 9% of GDP at the end of 2018. The scene becomes further complicated if we add the depletion levels in some wells, the increased levels of domestic energy consumption, and the decline in foreign investment in this sector due to the security concerns of foreign companies (although 2/3 Algeria has not been excavated yet), especially after the bloody attack in 2013 on some gas installations near the Libyan border. High taxes were also imposed on foreign companies, while bureaucracy further complicates obtaining the authorities' approval for investment. All of these

lead the expectations that economic growth rate would continue to decline, which has already started in 2015 (the rate was about 3.5%), and in 2023, it is expected to reach 0.5%,[29] as shown in the following graph:

Economic Growth Rates in Algeria 2010–2023[30]



All the above led to a contraction of economic activity by 6.5% in 2018, and 7.7% in Q1 2019, while the same period witnessed a slight increase in the growth of non-energy sectors at 3.4% and 3.9% respectively, thus making a slight compensation for the decline in this sector. Remarkably, Algeria is not burdened by debt, with its external debt reaching only 2% of GDP, while the public debt stands at less than 20% of GDP.[31]

Second: The External Environment

1. Regional Environment

Algeria is surrounded by six countries (seven if we consider the "Sahrawi Republic") with which it shares a land border of 6,393 km, in addition to 1,622 km sea border on the Mediterranean. This means a great security burden exists, which is exacerbated by the fact that most neighboring countries are not politically stable, constituting a major concern for the Algerian decision-maker regarding how to curb the impact of instability in neighboring countries on the internal situation in Algeria. Notably, the infiltrations across these long borders, together with the vast area of Algeria, especially the Sahara (which exceeds 1.990 million km2), indicate the gravity of the situation where protecting the Libyan borders only could reach $500 million annually.[32] The security threats due to these very long borders are:

a. The infiltration of armed elements from the neighboring countries referred to above, whether African or Arab organizations.

b. Migrants crossing towards Europe.

c. The movement of smugglers to and from Algeria.

d. Prospects for influx of refugees from neighboring countries in the event of widening turmoil in any of them.

Discussions in Algeria over the proposal to amend the Algerian Constitution (Articles 29 and 95) to allow the Algerian army to carry out missions "abroad" seem to indicate a kind of "proactive defense" to help neighboring countries to stabilize. The proposed text of the amendment states that "Within the framework of the United Nations, the African Union, and the Arab League, and in full compliance with its principles and objectives, Algeria can participate in peacekeeping operations abroad" (amendment to Article 29). The proposal also states that "(The President of the Republic) decides to send army units abroad, after the parliament approval by a two-thirds majority" (amendment to Article 95).[33]

It is known that the Algerian army had actively participated in the 1973 war against Israel (i.e., beyond its national borders), and the statements of army leaders and Algeria's army magazine indicate that the army was satisfied with the step or even proposed it.[34] Referring in the amendment text to "the United Nations, the African Union and the Arab League" could be an attempt to ensure legal and international legitimacy for external interference, while the approval of the parliament's two-thirds majority could be meant to guarantee internal legitimacy of any Algerian military intervention in the future.

The conduct of Algerian diplomacy toward regional turmoil, especially in Libya, reflects a degree of incompatibility between Algerian political movements. Some Algerian movements have concerns about the progress of al-Wefaq government (with Islamic orientations in its general trends and allies, which prompted Algeria to conduct covert military operations inside Libyan territory against groups with Islamic extremist tendencies[35]), and the possible repercussions on the Algerian interior in the medium term. Other movements have fears concerning General Haftar's connections, his links with France and his connections to some extent with the US besides Egypt and some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. A third movement believes that the situation in Libya might come to an end with

its division on regional or ethnic basis, which may lead to the transmission of the fragmentation model to the whole Arab Maghreb.

To address this regional condition bordering Algeria, the Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune participated, in his first foreign trip, in the Berlin International Conference in January 2020. Shortly after that, he agreed with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to implement the decisions of the conference. Tebboune then delivered a significant statement saying that Tripoli (which General Haftar attacked) was a "red line," thus prompting pro-Haftar media outlets to launch media campaigns against Algeria. This was the same position Algeria faced after its officials met with officials from Haftar's government, but this time by the pro-al-Wefaq government media outlets.[36] This indicates that the congruence between Algerian politics and both parties to the Libyan conflict is not significant.

2. International Environment

The direct and indirect international intervention in the Libyan crisis (Turkey, Russia, Egypt and some GCC countries, in addition to the French, Italian and US interference, besides the influx of mercenaries from southern Libya or from far regions) has been a source of grave concern in the Algerian political decision-making circles, especially that the UN attempts, regional bodies' mediation or international individual efforts do not indicate an imminent settlement of the Libyan crisis. In addition, the regional and international competition over natural gas resources in the Mediterranean has its own repercussions, which might extend to all countries of the region. This could manifest in conflict over territorial waters boundaries or over the high seas borders, and it includes most of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

The intertwining of Algerian interests and the interests of international parties involved in Libya (France, Russia and Turkey) makes the Algerian diplomatic movement more complicated. Apparently, Algeria is more inclined to a peaceful settlement as evident in its participation in international conferences as well as in hosting foreign ministers of countries neighboring Libya.[37] This position was reiterated at the meetings of the current Algerian president in February 2020 with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and with the Tunisian President Kais Saied.[38]

Interaction Between Regional and International Environments

The Algerian government seems a little closer to the Libyan al-Wefaq government due to its control over the border areas with Algeria, and to the presence of some Algerian influence among the tribes of the western region in Libya,[39] besides international legitimacy enjoyed by al-Wefaq government. However, it is wary (especially at the level of Algerian security forces and some elites) of this Libyan government's relations with the Muslim Brothers (MB) movement, and of al-Wefaq government's alliances with Turkey, whose ties with NATO are a sensitive issue for Algeria. The latter remains keen on maintaining relations with Ankara due to high percentage of Turkish investments in the country. In return, Haftar's international relations with France and Russia in particular, and his regional relations with Egypt and the UAE, make dealing with these disparate forces extremely difficult for Algerian diplomacy due to the non-zero game between Algeria and the forces involved in Libya. Here, it suffices to recall the US-Emirati-Egyptian objection to the appointment of an Algerian UN envoy to Libya, who is the former Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra, after the resignation of the Lebanese UN envoy Ghassan Salameh in March 2020, not to mention General Haftar's reservation about this nomination demanding, as expressed by his spokesman, that the UN candidate must "not be from countries neighboring Libya."[40]

Future Prospects

The last stage of Bouteflika's presidency manifests the Algerian confusion in dealing with the Libyan crisis as evident in the following indicators:

1. The collapse of oil prices and its impact on the internal and external conditions.
2. Growing corruption and political paralysis.
3. The conflict within the authority wings: between the revolution generation and the new generation, between military leaders, especially between the army and intelligence leadership, and between the president's entourage (specifically his brother Said) and its opponents. This has caused severe political congestion leading eventually to Bouteflika's resignation and to striking at "some" hotbeds of corruption.
4. The explosion of popular unrest against the general situation.

5. The occurrence of some attacks from political groups, which prompted the army to shift its intensified presence from the west (with Morocco due to historical grudges and the Sahara issue stuck for some time between the two countries) to the Libyan and southern borders.
6. The impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on the Algerian political scene as manifested in the difficulty to return to the major demonstrations, which makes the authority more able to catch its breath.
7. The Algerian concern about the expansion of foreign intervention in Libya, especially as Algeria has been against the position of the Arab League since 2011, which allowed foreign intervention in Libya and the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. This position was reaffirmed by the current Algerian president in his speech in Berlin in January 2020, and some[41] even fear the repercussions of wide confrontations between Egypt and Turkey on Libyan soil, which widens the scope of Algerian security concerns.

Table 7: Algerian Interests and the Non-zero Game[42]

Country	Importance for Algeria	Position toward parties of the Libyan Conflict
Russia	First weapon provider + traditional relations between the two sides	Backs Khalifa Haftar
Turkey	Friendship and Cooperation Agreement in 2006 + $3.5 billion investments in Algeria + trade exchange amounting to $3.1 billion	Supports al-Wefaq government
France	Third in exports and second in imports + traditional ties (immigrants, language, etc.)	Supports Haftar
UAE	30 thousand Algerians in the UAE working in various sectors + $10 billion investments + agreement to curb religious movements	Supports Haftar
US	Annual trade of $5.5 billion during 2013–2020 + US investment in the oil sector besides scientific and technical cooperation agreements + security coordination against terrorist organizations	Fluctuating and unclear position
Egypt	Agreement to restrict religious movements	Supports Haftar

Table 7 shows that Algeria has important and strategic relations with most of the powers involved in the Libyan issue. Hence, Algerian diplomacy finds it difficult to stand with one side against another, given the negative effects this bias

would have on its relations with the forces supporting the opposite Libyan side. Algeria's relations with al-Wefaq would affect its interests with Russia and France, whereas the relations with Haftar would affect its relations with Turkey and the US (to a certain extent).

Conclusion

It seems that the Algerian internal conditions (economic, political and social), as we explained in the indicators of these sectors, lead to thinking in two directions: the first is in-field involvement in the Libyan crisis to absorb internal congestion, which may result in great risks internally and externally. The second is sticking to the diplomatic settlement of the Libyan crisis, by playing the role of facilitator of international, regional and local meetings on Libya, hoping to reach a solution and ensure the return of stability to the country.

Based on available data, and given the Algerian interests intertwined with the contradicting international parties involved in the Libyan crisis, the second track seems to be more appropriate and less expensive than the first, especially if the economic situation continues to decline. The Algerian ability to change the structure of its economy to shift towards non-energy resources for its economic income appears to be unattainable in the short term (five years), which makes the second alternative more rational.

However, the international competition, turmoil in Libya and the persistence of tension to the south of Algeria, especially in Mali and Niger, might force the Algerian government to pursue the worst choice, as indicated in the above analysis of army interference abroad. Also, the persistence of tension, even without Algerian field intervention, keeps the Algerian decision in the hands of such institutions as the military and other security forces, and justifies the military spending. For Algeria ranks first in the African continent in this respect, despite the decline in its oil revenues and despite the current government's decision to reduce its spending by 9%.

On the internal side, it seems that Algeria is heading very slowly toward political stability, which might see some tensions yet without affecting the general trend we have explained in our study.

The future of the popular movement, which started in February 2019 is governed by a number of variables that define the possible, probable and preferred scenarios. These variables are:

1. Current variables: The outbreak of coronavirus led to stopping gatherings and demonstrations, at the request of the official authorities and health bodies in the country, a year after the demonstrations have started (Feb. 2019 – Feb. 2020). With the increasing severity of casualties, the conviction among the popular movement grew that preventing gatherings is not a political "ploy" to curb the movement but rather an objective fact.

Accordingly, the state's success in confronting the epidemic might enhance its balance and limit the movement to some extent. However, its failure might add a new congestion to the political and socio-economic congestions displayed above, which opens the way for the movement to return, but in a less systematic fashion, although there might be a rift within the movement between those who may "risk" organizing protests, and those whose concerns regarding the epidemic prevent them from participating.

2. The confrontations between the authority and the forces of the movement in 2019 were generally peaceful. The compliance of the regime with a number of demands, most notably the exclusion of Bouteflika and the imprisonment of some symbols of corruption (despite the arrest of some activists of the movement and some leaders for different periods), has enabled the authority to strengthen political stability, which it completely failed to achieve during the Black Decade.

3. There are weaknesses in the structure of the movement, which help the system to hold together facing the demands:

a. The absence of a central leadership or a pivotal force, which determines the movement's reaction toward the regime's policies internally and externally.

b. The escalation of regional concerns (especially the Libyan crisis) might push the forces of the movement to wait for the outcome of the Libyan developments. This trend might deepen in the event of the outbreak of international wars in Libya, or the escalation of proxy wars.

c. The movements' field practices have shown some cracks demonstrated in the subcultures dilemma mentioned in the previous pages.

Based on the foregoing, the trend of "relative" stability in Algeria is the most likely, and political forces would crystallize within the next 3–5 years that would be more responsive to the local, regional and international landscape. However, they will maintain their connections with their Algerian roots.

As for its future Arab relations, the composition of the existing Algerian government (the government of Abdelaziz Djerad), the orientations of its president as reflected in his speeches and his plan submitted to the Algerian parliament,[43] along with the internal economic conditions, would make Algeria less involved in Arab affairs, especially in the Palestine issue. Also, the Algerian diplomacy and the behavior of its military and civil institutions would show an increasingly pragmatic behaviour, especially with the paralysis of the Arab League and the rigidity of the role of the Arab Maghreb Union.

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Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations
مركز الزيتونة للدراسات والاستشارات
P.O. Box: 14-5034 Beirut - Lebanon
Tel: +961 21 803 644 | Tel-Fax: +961 21 803 643
info@alzaytouna.net | www.alzaytouna.net

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