

The Relations between Russia and NATO and its Impact on the Balances of Power in the Middle East

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Introduction

The world has become a mixture between patterns of competition at the international level and patterns of obtaining power at the regional level, as it represents a force that pushes major countries and other political units to move towards what achieves their national interests. That is, the world has become a pressure on international actors, which has contributed to the structure of the international environment. The fall of the ideologies and beliefs that used to guide and guide countries, and due to the decline in ideological trends that had prevailed during the Cold War period, and the emergence of other determinants and pillars that made countries change the course of their foreign policy, including the transformation events in international relations from some of their previous determinants; To serve the interests of the dominant power positions in the world, there are a number of determinants that determine international relations alongside national interests, which is represented by the issue of development, as it has come to occupy an increasing scope of the global agenda, and the issue of development has become the subject of great attention to international relations, especially In light of each country's keenness to achieve its

own sustainable development, and to activate future visions to keep pace with development and current progress, development is no longer viewed as an economic matter as it was previously. It is now viewed as a topic with political, social, and cultural components, and new humanitarian issues have emerged. Represented in human rights issues, the issue of human rights has become a link between countries and each other.

The major countries began to seek to preserve their position and the reasons for their own power, and to work to use their relationships to achieve their interests through various tools. The matter did not stop at hard power, which had become traditional in the balance of power. Rather, soft power represented by the use of diplomacy in human relations, cultural relations, It is more dangerous not only for the opposing state, but also for the areas of competition, and that is the new rule for state relations, as the primary pillar in these relations is the interests between countries. Perhaps the best example of this is the Russian Federation's relations with NATO, and the influence they have. On the balance of power in the Middle East

Russia is a major continental country with its own interests and international goals that it seeks to achieve. It tops the list of foreign policy priorities, competing at all levels, and aims to restore rapprochement with neighbouring countries, including Eastern European countries. Thus, it becomes an international actor with influence in the international arena. However, it cannot be ignored that the neighbouring environment presents many obstacles, represented by the presence of NATO military bases in Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics, in addition to the conflict of interests and

goals between the two sides, especially since Russia follows policies It could clash with the NATO countries, given Putin's expansionist foreign policy and the return of the glories of the Russian state through the different visions that Russia holds of hegemony and the pursuit of international competition at the expense of the interests of the NATO member states. Perhaps the reason for the existence of a conflict between the two sides is Russia's entry into a state of conflict. Competition with the United States of America, which appears on the surface to support the interests and goals of NATO, but in reality, it is not so.

Russian state through the different visions that Russia holds of hegemony and the pursuit of international competition at the expense of the interests of the NATO member states. Perhaps the reason for the existence of a conflict between the two sides is Russia's entry into a state of conflict.

The Middle East region represents a stage for competition and conflict between the two superpowers represented by the Russian Federation, which aspires to return to the international arena and compete in all fields and seeks to gain allies in the Middle East by using its tools, whether political, economic, or military, as well as NATO. Which attaches great importance to the Middle East region, which pushes the member states, led by the United States of America, to turn towards it, as the alliance has drawn up a set of strategies and projects that express the interests and goals of the alliance within the region, so the alliance is trying to avoid behaviours from the Russian side, which takes policies from This threatens security and stability, which reflects negatively on the interests and objectives of the alliance.

Therefore, it can be said that this situation of conflict and tension in relations between the Russian Federation and NATO is represented by the emergence of two powers on the scene of the Middle East region, which affects the balance of power in the region, and threatens security and stability, due to the presence of different motives and goals that of conflict, especially when it is related to competition within the Middle East region.

Study problem:

In general, it can be said that international relations depend on achieving the national interest of the state or interested parties. If we assume that relations between countries range between cooperation and conflict, then this interaction affects the conflicting or cooperating parties and leads to a change in the balance of power in the region. When this concept is applied to the Middle East, we find that the region is witnessing conflicts between regional powers such as Turkey, Iran, and Israel. In addition to the Arab countries. These balances are subject to change due to the rapid dynamism of events and acute interactions.

When looking at the relations between Russia and NATO, we find that the relationship between them depends on conflict and competition and is affected by political and economic factors in different regions of the world. This conflict dates back to the period after World War II and the Cold War, and it has developed into a threat to Russia and turned into the Middle East region. In general, it can be said that the relations between Russia, NATO, and the Middle East depend on competition and conflict, and alliances or alliances between them cannot be ruled out. Interested parties in this region.

Competition and balance processes are considered one of the most important and diverse processes, as competition creates a state of power imbalance between political units that do not adopt the preservation of the status quo, given that international competition related to hegemony, or traditional competition related to obtaining certain economic resources, or a geographical location constitutes a source of It is important for economies, and therefore it can be said that there is a positive relationship between power competition and the balance of power through achieving balance in the environment of the international system on the one hand, while it constitutes one of the factors that undermine the international system itself.

The Middle East region has become a coveted and fertile ground for international and regional interventions. It is considered a starting point for competing powers because of their political as well as economic importance, and through the conflict of interests between international powers at the international level and at the regional level, which in turn led to the issue of conflict of interests between international powers at the international level and at the regional level, where it escalates. The Russian role in the region, seeking hegemony and restoring the glories of the Soviet Union once again. At the same time, NATO seeks to work to achieve its own strategies and projects in the Middle East region, in addition to the presence of the United States of America as an influential member of the alliance, with its own ambitions and strategy. Through it, it works to limit the Russian incursion into the region, so we find a state of conflict between the two sides that can affect the balance of power.

NATO has had many repercussions. It has changed the balance of power in the world and changed the pattern of unipolarity that

was dominated by the United States. In contrast, we find that the relations between the Russian Federation and NATO will have many repercussions on the region. Which will lead to an impact on the balance of power in the Middle East considering the growing role of new regional powers in the Middle East region, represented by the following: (Turkey, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt), and each of these countries' efforts to achieve their projects and interests. In particular, based on what was mentioned above, the problem appears in the following main question:

To what extent do relations between the Russian Federation and NATO affect the balances of power, in the Middle East?

Characterizing the balance of power in the Middle East

The issue of the global balance of power is considered a source of international and regional stability to maintain international and regional stability, as we find that balance of power policies take place at all levels at the same time. The great and major powers seek to achieve balance among themselves by possessing power and building alliances, and this was clear in the relationship between the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union. The United States during the Cold War, and it still exists between the United States and Russia to this day.

When we look at the Middle East region, we find that it has, with all its implications, an important value and status for the international powers present in the region, as the region includes several countries that are considered arenas of conflict between international powers and are also centres for determining their strategic interests. For the United States, the Middle East represents an important region. It provides it with valuable opportunities during

times of crises, and it can also play effective roles in confronting other international powers.

The balance of power system in the Middle East region has been exposed to constant sources of threat, as it is characterized by a state of instability, thanks to the balances imposed by international and regional interactions between the elements of the regional system. We find that most of the areas that have been exposed to threat are between large, effective countries and small, ineffective countries. We find that the balance of power has been disturbed due to the tyranny of state power at the expense of another state, or through the collapse of a major state that causes the emergence of other powers that are its heirs.

The Middle East region is going through many transformations due to the changes imposed by the regional powers in the region, in addition to the changes imposed by the international system, which affect the regional system in the Middle East region and affect the role of the effective forces of this system in imposing political changes that reflect negatively on the structure of the balance of power in the region. The region occupies great importance to international powers as a geographical location and the presence of natural resources that have been discovered, which are considered the lifeline, production and well-being of Western countries. Therefore, the multiple international powers worked in various possible and impossible ways to compete in the region.

The importance of the Middle East region and its strategic impact within the framework of the balance of power In the Middle East:

In terms of geographical location, the Middle East region rep-

resents a regional extension as a single geographical bloc, based in the east on the Zagros Mountains and the Arabian Gulf, and in the west on the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore, it is a regional scope characterized by strategic depth, and the location gains strategic importance by penetrating many bodies of water, such as: The Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea to the north, and the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean to the east and southeast.

The Middle East region is distinguished by the presence of the Suez Canal, which represents the lifeline for global navigation, as it is a sea route that connects the industrialized countries of the West to South Asia, which is rich in raw materials and cheap manpower, and also connects the countries of the West to the African continent, which is rich in raw materials that represent great importance for all industries, such as Uranium, chromium and copper, which made the Middle East a link between South and East Asia and between Europe and the Americas.

The Red Sea is located in the Middle East, the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Middle East as a geographic block located between two latitudes of “8 degrees - 42 north” and longitudes of “60 east - 25 west.” Thus, the Middle East is considered the heart of the world, and in the southern and south-eastern security zone of Europe, which is the main border line that Russia crosses to reach warm waters.

The political composition of the countries of the Middle East is characterized by the difference between a monarchy and a republic. These countries vary in their democratic experiences, in addition to the multiplicity of political and strategic visions of the ruling

elites, and the diversity of political culture. From a geographical and demographic perspective, the Middle East is considered a region in which Islamic geopolitics overlaps with geopolitics. With this diversity and overlap, we find that the region is witnessing many historical interactions and transformations in many fields, including the military, economic, security, and intellectual fields.

Water security in the Middle East region has had a long-term impact on the strategic direction, as it expresses crises, threats, and risks of varying proportions between political units in the region, and may reach the limits of conflict in the future, in light of some countries in the region controlling water resources (Ethiopia - Turkey - Iran), and it is worth noting that the Arab region suffers from water scarcity and that more than 67% of the water resources supplied to the Arab countries come to them through geographically neighbouring countries, and therefore the seriousness of the matter stems from the establishment of the water issue and its use as a means of pressure between countries of the region to achieve their economic interests.

We find that the most important thing that distinguishes the Middle East region in its religious civilization is precisely because it is the path in which is the cradle of the three civilizations and religions, and which includes the Islamic sanctities, which are the Holy Kaaba, the Mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) and grant him peace, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and many religious sanctities to which the hearts of people in the Middle East region are attached.

The Middle East region is characterized by its extreme sensitivity to important variables, whether these variables are related to the rise and fall of great powers, and these variables are linked to the

rise and fall of great powers. This region has occupied great importance for regional and international powers because it contains many economic resources. Especially oil, labor, solar energy, and gas, in addition to this region's possession of important minerals that contribute to building vital industries that are based on a broad base of technological and scientific progress.

The fact that the Middle East region contains many resources and economic wealth has made this region an important strategic theatre for the major powers, since it theoretically provides them with the flow of oil, gas and raw materials in peace and war, and whoever controls the waterways in the Middle East controls the world.

The geostrategic situation in the Middle East region:

The map of the balance of power in the Middle East region has been shaped throughout history

On fixed determinants determined by the region's geostrategy, or variable as a result of the state of competition and conflict between its regional units, in addition to external determinants related to the impact of transformations.

In the international system and the strategies of the major powers and their orientations towards the region, as well as the influence and roles of non-state actors in the region, we will review the most important determinants according to which the state of the balance of power is formed in the Middle East.

The geostrategic situation of any particular country or regional region means the interaction between its geographical, political, and economic capabilities, and we find that this interaction has an

impact on its foreign policy, as well as its impact on its relationship with its neighbouring regions, and the Middle East region has an important strategic position for all active forces in the international community. This is due to the fact that the region occupies a central location between the three continents of the world, Asia, Africa, and Europe, and is where most of the global air, sea, and land transportation networks are gathered.

The Middle East region is also one of the regions that is highly sensitive to important variables, whether related to the rise or fall of great powers or those related to the economy and technology. The region has gained great importance from the perspective of American and European interests due to its location close to the former Soviet Union and also because it possesses

The waterways in the Middle East region guarantee control over the world, which has made this region represent the most important axis in the global policies of the United States of America, and it has become necessary for it to secure its interests to maintain an appropriate regional balance with American interests, by building balances of power that are in the interest of its regional allies, provided that The regulator of this balance in the region is Israel.

The outbreak of war in this region represents a real threat to European interests and an example to this includes the October War of 1973, when Arab oil was used as a pressure weapon on European countries.

Alliances and balances of power in the Middle East and their international extensions:

Strategic interests in the Middle East region have become the governing determinant of regional interactions beyond religious or

sectarian divisions on the basis of the Sunni-Shiite binary, which reflects the conflict of some regional powers or the decline in the chances of Islamic movements rising to power in some countries in the post-Arab revolutionary movement phase. However, there is another trend that sees a continuation of this role, as the year 2018 witnessed significant examples of the centrality of the role of religion in the region's interactions.

We become certain when we consider the political situation in the Middle East region in the current period, and the network of interwoven relations internally or externally, that there are strong reasons for some countries from within the region to search for new relations with each other that take the form of bilateral alliances, or other multilateral alliances whose clear goal is to build balance. Simple forces to confront security threats or control the chaos of the internal situation in one of the neighbouring countries, or to confront the ambitions of regional powers and stop the expansion of their influence.

As witnessed by the major powers, led by the United States of America, and given the geostrategic importance of the region, they are involved in bilateral relations and alliances with regional parties for political, economic, security, and military reasons. It is clear that foreign relations for the Arab countries are in a state of instability as a result of the clash of external powers with regional powers in the conflicts that its foundation revolves around some Arab countries, and this causes a state of contradiction and differences in visions, whether at the level of internal relations between Arab countries, or trends with external parties and powers.

Characteristics of the balance of power in the Middle East:

After looking and in-depth, we found that the balance of power is a system characterized by equality in the Middle East in many ways, through radical transformations in the system of international and regional power balance, and we find these central international powers' policies to preserve interests based on international and regional trends.

Regional arms race:

The countries of the Middle East region have become increasingly dependent on military force in the face of increasing threats, which has led to an exceptional rise in military spending to obtain non-conventional weapons systems by the countries of the region, in what could be called a “new arms race.”

Among the most present forces on the regional scene, especially with the escalation of tension between the axes of regional alliances.

We find that achieving the balance of power at the regional levels has become a priority for the policies of international powers, because the outcome of the balance of power at the regional levels represents the basic axes in building the international balance of power, which is what events in the last two decades indicate, and it has become clear that the major powers build their alliances on regional foundations. Thus, the competing regional countries seek to build their alliances on international foundations, and this is clearly evident in the Middle East region: Iran, Russia, Turkey, the European Union, Israel, the United States of America, the Arab Gulf states and the United States of America.

The changing role of regional powers in the Middle East:

The Middle East region is witnessing many highly influential transformations. They are transformations that are difficult to monitor and estimate their repercussions with a high degree of confidence in the state of the balance of power in the region. However, it is certain that these transformations produce fundamental challenges for regional and international powers to find the optimal method to stabilize the state of balance in the region. Among the most important regional powers active in the Middle East are Turkey - Iran - Israel - Saudi Arabia - Egypt, and each power seeks to achieve its interests and

The Russian strategy and its impact on the balance of power in the Middle East:

The Middle East region occupies an important strategic position among the various regions of the world due to the geopolitical, strategic, and economic importance of this region, which makes it coveted by major international powers throughout ancient and modern history. And whoever controls this region controls many regions of the world, as Russia and other major countries have focused their attention on this region because of its importance in their future strategy.

When looking at the Russian strategy in the Middle East region for the year 2023, we find that it is based on geopolitical considerations based on strengthening bilateral relations and trade to strengthen the Russian position instead of focusing on ideological influence during the Arab uprisings, as Putin's ideology is based on a kind of transparency while avoiding interference in the internal affairs of

countries. The other, especially the one that is closely linked to the Russian position, as well as the condemnation of Western double standards on human rights, the expansion of NATO in establishing missile defense systems, and not repeating the Libyan mistake in Syria, especially after direct military involvement in Syria.

We find that the strategy in Syria is based on presence and influence, which has enabled Russia to play the role of mediator in the Middle East. Close relations with Syria have added an ally to Russia's war against the rebels in Chechnya. Russia is looking to Egypt and Libya, and to North Africa more broadly, to explore the extent to which the ability of potential partners to sign bilateral agreements allows Moscow to access seaports instead of investing in the process of building them. Moscow has taken the Black Sea to control the Middle East region. Moscow seeks to achieve naval superiority in the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean, where it can increase its role. The Russian Navy in the context of non-nuclear deterrence.

Russia is working to secure its position in the region and across the world by containing extremism that reaches it from neighbouring countries. Russia works in a pragmatic way to strengthen and support friendly regimes in the region and build permanent alliances with them. It also pursues a renewed policy to maintain a semi-symbolic military presence in and around the region. This provides advanced supply bases that allow for a rapid increase in capabilities, when necessary, in addition to maintaining access to seaports on warm waters. After the establishment of the Russian military base in Tartous, direct Russian military intervention in Syria came as a direct result of the aforementioned direction Russia

seeks to strengthen its presence in the region by supporting energy prices in the markets through policy coordination with the main producers of oil and gas in the Gulf, which is considered one of the vital interests of Russia, which relies mainly on energy exports to secure the lost balance in the region in its financial policy balances.

Russian foreign policy tools in the Middle East:

Russia seeks to strengthen its regional role to gradually restore the vital space of the Soviet Union. At the international level, Russia has begun to adopt policies to crowd out the influence of the uni-polar region to ensure an end to the phase of weakness and collapse. These policies have crystallized in building strong alliances with many countries in the region while seeking to build strong relations with the Gulf countries. Arab League and Israel while working to deepen Russian-Iranian relations.

Russia found itself forced to enter the arms race and protect all its vital areas or return to the features of the Cold War, especially with the expansion of NATO and the anti-Russian campaigns of the United States under the slogans of promoting democracy and human rights.

Russia seeks to continue support for its allied countries within the region, especially countries facing crises that may harm their strategic interests or threaten their military strength. Therefore, we find cooperation with the Syrian side in an attempt to protect its military bases. An example of this is Russia's position on the Syrian crisis and its integrated support for ending the crisis. In order to achieve its interests and presence in the region in a way that enhances the Russian- American competition in the Middle East.

This axis began to decline, especially after the Ukrainian crisis, in which the United States saw that Russia should not be tolerated and imposed economic sanctions on it in order to change its policy regarding this issue. Since 2011, this relationship has turned into a doctrine for the Russian political leadership, represented by the rejection of Unilateral hegemony over the world: Since the nature of the threats is largely related to the nature of the global political system, it has become more and more clear that the unilateral leadership of the world that the United States aspires to constitutes a burden under which the American administration, no matter how strong, sways under its weight.

Russia has taken the side of cooperation with China, as an agreement was signed to transfer (10%) of Russian gas, which will now be sold to China, and Russia will obtain sales estimated at about (400) billion dollars, and therefore the economic file between the two countries is the most prominent or most important file, and this importance is crystallized through the economic agreements that bring together the two countries. This cooperation has angered the United States of America, especially since this cooperation represents a danger to the future of international competition over the conflict. Polar region, as well as the economic dominance that the United States now enjoys.

According to the Russian strategy, the Middle East region is considered one of the most unstable regions in the world. This strategy is summed up in deterring and weakening Islamic extremism, the effects of which can spread throughout Russia and its immediate neighbours, bringing investments to Russia, including investments

from the rich countries in the Persian Gulf, and supporting energy tanker prices by working to coordinate actions with the main suppliers of oil and gas in the Arab Gulf countries. The Middle East region has become an important reality for military and political manoeuvres in the context of the conflict with the West.

The new Russian strategy 2023

Russian foreign policy in its new formulation is unprecedented in Russia's history, as it has been modified and changed based on the orientations of the country's political leadership over more than 30 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In his last meeting with the Russian National Security Council, President Putin announced that radical changes in the international arena must require amending strategic planning documents, including the new strategy for Russian foreign policy that defines the principles and tasks of Russian diplomacy. Therefore, there is a need for a new foreign policy strategy that reflects the recent amendments to the previous strategy approved by Putin in 2013.

The new strategy for Russian foreign policy was signed by Putin on March 31, 2023. This strategy is considered a road map for the Russian Foreign Ministry and other relevant parties in the coming years, which aims to strengthen Russia's sovereignty and increase its contribution to building a more just global order, and provide the possibility of taking Actual response measures, whether similar or dissimilar, and in this new context, the United States is considered the initiator and main force behind anti-Russian policy in the world.

The document prepared for discussion was presented in January 2022 to members of the Russian National Security Council, but

President Putin returned its draft for review and approval of the final wording, and the final version was approved on March 31, 2023, as Putin stressed that it was necessary to amend the main strategic documents based on the changes. Fundamentalism at the global level Accordingly, the new concept will be the basis for Russia's practical actions in the medium and long term and will form a doctrinal basis for future international action.

Lavrov pointed out the necessity of restructuring the global economy. The previous wording was approved by President Putin in 2016, but he announced the cessation of its work in a special decree issued on March 31, 2023, which included 104 items and did not include precise details like the new wording, which included 76 items, with the aim of strengthening Moscow's relations with countries. The former Soviet space, in addition to referring to the Islamic world and its role within the folds of this new document despite the privileged position enjoyed by Asia and Africa.

NATO's strategy and its impact on the balance of power in the Middle East:

NATO was keen to adopt a number of strategies, which allowed it to be present in the international decision-making circle and enabled it to readapt to events, because this region is the most dynamic in the context of tensions and security instability, and because it is considered the first source of resources and wealth that affect and are affected by the global economy and influence. This affects international peace and security.

NATO worked on drawing up many tasks and initiatives for its presence in the Middle East and implementing its military and civil-

ian strategy through a series of interventions that it led in addition to training and aid operations. This presence had many security consequences on all NATO member states on the one hand and on the countries of the region. On the other hand, the member states of the alliance have great interests in the Middle East and achieving stability in the region by working to confront security threats through the presence of many extremist movements in Iraq and Afghanistan, confronting nuclear proliferation in Iran, and internal ethnic conflicts in Yemen.

NATO seeks to confront the escalating daily challenges and threats in the Middle East region due to the threats of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, failed states, and transnational organized crime. The capabilities possessed by the countries of the Middle East are considered very weak compared to the size of the threats because they suffer from instability that is due to political problems. Multi-dimensional.

The strategic data has played a major role in the interest of Western powers in the region, especially in light of the crises that the world is going through, given that this region contains energy sources that have been estimated.

We find that NATO's strategy in the Middle East was based on military foundations through the process of individual and logistical support for military operations in Iraq and through the air strike against Libya in 2012.

NATO's approach within the framework of the balance of power in the Middle East:

NATO adopts many trends that work to achieve the interests of the member states in the alliance and uses military force in order to achieve the goals of the member states, which leads to its involvement in many crises such as the Libyan and Syrian crises and others.

NATO has been involved in the Middle East and North Africa region at various levels over the past decade, in activities that fall within its two primary missions, namely crisis management and cooperative security. The overall goal has been to address what NATO calls the rampant instability on its southern flank through a broad agenda of projective stability. The NATO summit in June 2021 reiterated the Alliance's commitment to strengthening our long-term engagement in the Middle East and North Africa region, building stronger security and defense institutions and capabilities, enhancing interoperability, and helping to combat terrorism.

NATO activities in the field of cooperative security took the form of training and building the defense capabilities of partner nations. There was also an effort at socialization through the establishment of staff relations and the involvement of partner officials in teaching NATO programmes. NATO thus worked primarily within the framework of the Mediterranean Dialogue and to a lesser extent the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative has also developed bilateral activities through the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program agreements, and more specifically through the Interoperability Partnership Initiative, with agreements with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia; through the initiative to build defense and security capabil-

ities related to agreements with Iraq, Jordan, and Tunisia.

These initiatives aim to develop the interoperability of partner forces with NATO and enhance their defense capabilities by providing advice on defense and security sector reform and institution building, developing local forces through education and training, or advice and assistance in specialized areas.

Looking at NATO's strategy for 2022, we find that it views the Russian Federation as the greatest threat to Allied security since the peace in Europe was broken by waging an aggressive war against Ukraine and also focuses on other threats and challenges to the security environment of the Alliance, including terrorism and conflicts. And instability in the Middle East and Africa. Therefore, NATO decided to make a fundamental shift in deterrence and defense, supported by increased defence spending, joint financing, and long-term assistance, as NATO works to protect the independence and security of each member state through joint political and military action and support of states.

The impact of the relationship between the Russian Federation and NATO on the balances of the Middle East region:

The process of expanding NATO membership has been a significant step that has been a consistent feature of US policy toward Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. This process has affected Moscow's perceptions of its security needs, which in turn has had a profound impact on East-West relations. Events have shown that Russia's opposition was not sufficient to stop this expansion, and the West considered this opposition to be a remnant of old Soviet ideology, and

with the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, the West's view was strengthened that NATO expansion is a logical means to deter Russia, which has returned to pose a serious threat to Europe.

Finland has become the thirty-first member of the military alliance, which has proven its ability to adapt to international environmental conditions during the end of the Cold War, which is one of the fastest membership processes that took place in the history of the alliance, after it submitted its application for membership in May 2022, which is considered a strategic and historical transformation. After a bias that lasted for nearly three decades, Finland emerged from its corner to join NATO, and it is the sixth country in NATO that shares borders with Russia (along with Norway, the three Baltic republics, and Poland). NATO's direct borders with Russia doubled after Finland's accession. The borders of the two countries reach 1,340 km, and this constitutes a worrying development for Russia, this accession comes about three months before the contract was held. NATO summit in Lithuania in July 2023.

Sweden then became the thirty-second member of the alliance after Finland's accession, which is a historic step in the history of NATO. The subsequent accession of Finland, as well as Sweden, as full members of NATO will represent a great addition to the alliance. Given their geostrategic location, their military capabilities, and their identical political orientations with other members of the alliance, we point out in this regard the following considerations:

1. The subsequent accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO represents a major transformation in European security, and an additional advantage that will strengthen NATO financial-

- ly, as the two countries will become providers of security services, in particular making significant contributions to sharing burdens among allies and enhancing NATO's ability to modernize its planning. And develop its defensive capabilities.
2. Membership of the two countries will enhance NATO deterrence and European stability by greatly complicating Russian military planning in the Baltic region, and Finland will introduce a system of compulsory military service. It will also increase its defense budget by a significant 54% in 2021, and by an additional \$2.2 billion in the aftermath of the war. Ukrainian.
 3. Finland's forces are part of NATO's defence of its northeastern flank, which extends from the Baltic Sea opposite the Kola Peninsula in the Arctic, which creates an integrated strategic space for the alliance in the north, unites the European Nordic region and covers the entire Baltic Sea, as well as the High North. And most likely the North Pole.
 4. In connection with the above, Finland will contribute coastal defences with strategic locations and a highly capable air force, including (starting in 2026) a large fleet of F-35 Joint St fighters. A large land force by today's standards, long-range artillery systems such as the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), and significant capabilities for competition in the Arctic.
 5. With Russia's direct threat to Finnish and Swedish sovereignty in the Baltic states and the north-eastern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula, the governments of the two countries are unlikely to agree to send large numbers of forces to missions that are not directly related to confronting the Russian threat,

and it will be difficult for the two countries to convince public opinion to participate in Operations outside Europe, especially in light of their frustrating experiences in Afghanistan and Mali, where they were present alongside NATO in Afghanistan, and Finland participated in the European Union training mission in Mali.

We note here that Finland and Sweden's efforts to join NATO did not happen until after Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, a step that conjured a direct threat to the two countries. They believe that joining NATO is a purely defensive step, taken to protect the eastern flanks of the two countries, and to keep Russia away from the Baltic states and Eastern Europe.

6. Although all NATO members participate in collective defense as a basic principle on which the alliance is based, the levels of political and military involvement of each member in this regard differ greatly according to each country, and unlike the United States of America, which is still the backbone of the alliance; Given its commitment and ability to project significant military power across the entire Euro-Atlantic theatre of operations, many smaller members including Finland seek to play a limited role, both in terms of geographic concentration and force size.

A Vision of the state of the balance of power in light of the competition between NATO and Russia:

The Middle East region represents great importance as it is the main supplier of oil to the developed world, which has given some countries in the Middle East economic power that has had a positive impact on the lives of people, most notably the Arabian Gulf re-

gion, which is characterized by an abundance of oil and natural gas, which has made the region of great importance at the international level. The Middle East has been exposed to many conflicts and crises at all regional and international levels through the Iranian and Turkish movements of those with hostile tendencies and political ideology based on support for terrorist groups and the continuous direction to undermine regional security and stability.

The region has witnessed several developments that have been reflected in the state of regional balance with a decline in the relative power of countries. The political and economic power of some regional countries has declined, but some other countries have remained steadfast despite all the challenges and threats, as Egypt and Saudi Arabia have remained steadfast in their external orientations in order to achieve development and confront all the challenges facing them. Peace and stability process.

Turkish and Iranian foreign policy continues on its path towards achieving non-peaceful goals through which it targets security and stability due to hostile ideas and continued support for terrorist groups and militias, and this matter has greatly affected the situations of many countries in the region, as well as Russian consensus on many issues, especially with regard to the matter. With the situation in Syria.

At the international level, international powers seek to build relationships and achieve their interests. In the Middle East, especially (the United States of America - the Russian Federation), because of their effective capabilities that enable them to compete at all levels, we note that Russia is striving with all force to build great capabilities at the political, military, and economic levels. This competition

has appeared greatly in the Syrian conflict and many contemporary issues. In the region.

When we look at the state of the balance of power in the Middle East, we find that there is a Russian-Iranian consensus

In many areas, despite the difference in views on the Syrian file, and Iran was the only country that supplied Russia with weapons, it is not possible for a conflict to take place between Russia and Iran in the Middle East region, as both countries are trying to contain each other and converge in their views. If a war occurs in the region, Russia and Iran are likely to cooperate with each other against NATO.

We find that Russia cooperates with Turkey in many fields, and common visions agree on many issues, especially the Syrian file, and after the Russian war in Ukraine, Turkey stood by Russia, especially after the imposition of Western sanctions on it, and worked to resume the export of grains. In the event of a collision in the Middle East, it is possible For Turkey to stand alongside Russia; As a result of Turkey adopting a policy of isolation from the United States of America, it is possible for Turkey to cooperate with NATO if a dispute occurs between it and Russia over energy sources if Turkey seeks to replace Russia with regard to exporting gas to Europe.

On the Israeli side, we find that despite the existence of interconnect- edness, relations, and consensus in common visions and positions between Russia and Israel on many issues, especially the Syrian file,

However, if a war breaks out between Russia and NATO in the Middle East, Israel will join NATO and the United States of America as the enemy's greatest strategic ally, and Israel will exploit its relations with NATO in order to achieve its interests in the Middle East.

We find that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Egypt are adopting a moderate balance approach in their relations with Russia and NATO, as Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seek to pay attention to the strategic building of relations and the strengthening of capabilities at all levels in order to confront the threats and conflicts that occur as a result of the imbalance of power at all levels. But if a war breaks out between Russia and NATO in the Middle East, the two countries will intervene to maintain security and stability in the region.

Researcher's opinion:

We find, through what was discussed in this study, the extent of tension in relations between both the Russian Federation and NATO, led by the United States of America, as each party works to compete with the other party and diminish its influence and interests in many regions of the world, and in this context we find The Russian Federation is working to strengthen its role in many of the areas in which the NATO countries are active in the region, and in return, Western countries are working to impose political and economic isolation on the Russian Federation by expanding towards Russia and annexing the countries surrounding it, as they work to annex neighbouring countries to Russia, such as Ukraine and Finland. Sweden and Norway, which threatens Russia's strategic depth areas, which prompted the latter to wage a war in Ukraine to prevent the expansion of NATO.

At the level of countries in the Middle East region, it is expected that they will move towards building regional alliances to confront external risks and threats, especially since there are many indicators

Which confirms the tendency of the countries of the region to resolve their differences and build more stable relations, in order to reach

On a point of balance with external threats, and thus achieving the common interests of the countries of the region, as the region witnessed in recent months a rapprochement between several countries in the region that had common relations dominated by tension and conflict, as discussions began between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran and built common relations. This is in addition to the rapprochement between Turkey and the Arab Gulf states and others from countries in the region.

Israel is currently facing a complex reality of repercussions in a way that makes the options proposed for a solution limited and with varying costs according to the calculations of the parties involved in the current scene, especially since personal considerations will be present in the calculations of those parties, and therefore, at that moment, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is counting on the choice. The least expensive for him, which guarantees his continuity in the scene or guarantees a safe exit, and whether things turn towards this or that option, Israel will be facing a new chapter in its conflict with the Palestinians according to new data imposed by the recent escalation process, which has reinforced the state of weakness that The Israeli interior is suffering, and it will take many years to address its effects.

In addition, the escalation of the intensity of the conflict between Russia and NATO may lead to an increase in the efforts of the major regional powers to move towards an arms race, which will push the major countries known for exporting weapons to increase their military spending at the global level and the related increase in economic burdens, as most countries, especially The West is moving

to increase its military spending in light of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which has led to an increase in public debt, including higher interest rates and energy prices, in addition to reviewing military doctrine, as the competition between Russia and NATO, especially in the Ukrainian arena, has prompted many countries to change their doctrine. The military, led by Germany, worked to develop its armed forces by allocating a military budget estimated at about 100 billion euros, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

We also find that Russian arms exports declined in the period from 2018-2022 by 31%, and in return, China and the United States tended to benefit from this and play a pivotal role in the arms industry by developing their local defense industries, especially China, which is making great efforts to strengthen its presence in the international military arena. As one of the largest military industries in the world, it adopts a firm strategic goal related to undermining the American presence in the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and this is crystallized in its doubling the number of its naval vessels and increasing aircraft carriers, as well as employing artificial intelligence tools to serve military objectives.

It is also worth noting the regional powers that sought to stimulate the arms market, most notably Turkey, which provided its drones to Ukraine as it sought to market and sell them to many countries, especially the European Union countries bordering Russia, in addition to Iran, which provided its drones to Russia, which reflects the sovereignty of a state of The militarization of the international system in light of the increasing intensity of competition

between Russia and NATO, including the organization of military manoeuvres with a political nature and the accompanying fuelling of other hotbeds of conflict.

Accordingly, it can be said that the region will witness major changes at all levels, as a result of complex movements, whether at the regional or international level, as each country has a different vision and policy. There are countries searching for hegemony, others searching for a way to eliminate hegemony, countries supporting terrorism, and others confronting terrorism in all its forms. We find all these conflicts exist on one theatre of operations, represented in the Middle East region. Therefore, we say that the burden increases on the Egyptian state, which is always seeking to protect its national security requirements, as well as the security and stability of the region in order to achieve economic and social development for all countries of the region, which obliges the state to the necessity of alliance. With the active Arab powers in order to achieve balance in the region and maintain security and stability there, especially in light of the state of international tension and the effort to make the region a stage for competition over the international system.

Future vision of the study:

- The first scenario: agreement between NATO and the Russian Federation in an arrangement interests in the region (optimistic scenario).

Parties to the first scenario: NATO - the Russian Federation.

NATO and the Russian Federation incurred a high cost in their competition with each other, as these countries were forced to spend a lot of their financial resources in providing support and aid to the

countries that were working to get closer to them, in addition to the high cost required to build the military arsenals of that country, and therefore the work To reach some kind of consensus to achieve the appropriate amount of its interests in the region in a way that does not negatively affect the interests of the other party.

This is because the current calculations of both the Russian Federation and NATO are to work to monopolize influence and complete control and deprive the other party of the greatest possible amount of its interests in the various regions, which will result in a depletion of the capabilities and resources of all parties, which will result in the defeat of both parties or one of them on the ground. At the very least, this is after its economy has been exhausted in the competition and arms race, and the Cold War in the second half of the twentieth century between the Western Bloc led by the United States of America and the Eastern Bloc led by the Soviet Union, which lasted for many years and ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the fall of the slogan of ideological difference, and the trend toward... A cold war of a different kind was represented by the variables of the international environment on many countries, after it wasted many economic resources that could have been exploited in achieving internal development in the countries of the Union. Hence, through reviewing historical evidence, it is important that work be done to reach a solution. Agreement on the interests that both parties seek to achieve, and then reaching a kind of positive balance of power.

The second scenario: the continued conflict of interests between NATO and Russia in the region (pessimistic scenario):

Parties to the second scenario: NATO-Russian Federation.

In light of the intertwined and complex relations between NATO countries and the Russian Federation, we find that consensus between the two powers may be difficult to achieve, especially in light of the number of alliances and interests that have entered into this conflict, such as the Chinese alliance with Russia, as China took advantage of the state of tension between NATO. Russia is in alliance with Russia in joint cooperation, and the NATO countries, led by the United States, have worked to exploit all forces hostile to Russian expansion in order to build great powers that compete with Russian powers, which contributes to staying on top.

It reinforces the current situation in the international community, especially regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war, which is considered a proxy war, as Western countries and NATO provide full support to Ukraine in its confrontation with Russian military forces, in addition to developments in the Palestinian issue and the imposition of the military operation (Jerusalem Flood) carried out by the Hamas movement. Several new data, which indicates the worsening crises between the two parties and the difficulty of reaching an agreement between them, at least at the present time, and in this context, the researcher believes that the conflict of interests between NATO and Russia in the region will continue, and this will drag the region into a state of division between the two powers. In a way that the strategic interests of each country differ, we find that each country has interests that it seeks to achieve according to the vision that it finds most beneficial on the scene, and each of the parties will work to make alliances and coordinate with the active regional powers.

The third scenario: the continuation of the conflict between the Russian Federation and NATO and the countries of the Middle East region moving toward regional alliances (the pessimistic scenario):

Parties to the third scenario: NATO - the Russian Federation - the countries of the Middle East.

The evidence and data for this scenario depend on the latest developments in the Middle East region, as well as the relations between the Russian Federation and Western countries. As for the continuation of the conflict between the Russian Federation and NATO, we find that it is witnessing an unprecedented state of tension and disagreement, as NATO seeks to expand towards... The East and annexing the countries surrounding Russia, in order to encircle Russia's political influence, impose a state of isolation on it, and penetrate Russia's strategic depth areas, which Russia completely rejects, and this was made clear through the military operations that it began in Ukraine since February 2022 AD and are still continuing until now. Present.

Russia also fought its war in Ukraine because of its attempt to join NATO. Before the military operations, Russia announced its absolute rejection of Ukraine joining the alliance and that it would take all necessary measures to prevent Ukraine from taking that step. Indeed, Russia invaded Ukraine militarily when it confirmed the seriousness of Ukraine in its endeavour. To join NATO, it implemented its threats and launched its war against it, and in return, NATO stood with its full capacity to support the Ukrainian forces in confronting the military forces, which intensified the rivalry between the two powers and had the greatest impact on the continued rivalry and disputes between the two parties.

At the level of countries in the Middle East region, we find that the periods witnessed a kind of development in the awareness of the risks and threats surrounding the region, which requires increased coordination and cooperation, which reflects on security and stability in the region. For example, we found a rapprochement between both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran, after a rupture in relations. It lasted for years, in addition to the Turkish rapprochement with the Arab Gulf states and its discussions with the Egyptian state to normalize relations and find an alliance to resolve common differences, in addition to Syria's return to the Arab League after freezing its membership for many years. Thus, we find that the general atmosphere in the Middle East region is prepared for the establishment of joint alliances between countries. Region.

The researcher believes that achieving this scenario will produce a set of results, which are:

A- Increased tension in the international community as a result of the intensification of the conflict between the Russian Federation and NATO, which indicates an increase in indicators of tension and threat.

Due to the increased competition between the two parties in the areas of influence over which they are competing, especially the Middle East.

B- Increasing the orientation of the countries of the Middle East towards regional alliances, whether bilateral or collective, in order to confront the external challenges that result from the conflict between the major powers, which may bring many crises to the region.

- C- Increasing the role of active states in the region, such as: The Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates with regard to coordination on cooperation and alliance between the countries of the region.
- D- The decline in the pace of conflict between the countries of the region, indicators of which have already begun to appear in recent periods, as a result of the increased awareness of the countries of the region of the importance of the alliance to confront shared risks.