

VI. GEOPOLITICAL FEATURES OF REGIONS. REGIONS IN SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



THE CHANGING BALANCE OF POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Summary. In 2011–2012, revolutionary events occurred in the Middle East and North Africa, which dramatically changed the balance of power in the region. As a result of revolutions, new political regimes were created in many countries, which led to changes in the foreign policy of these countries. In connection with the revolutionary political transformations, the problems of the escalation of the crisis in the internal state, as well as the intervention of foreign States and international organizations, have increased the relevance of the parameters of the "Arab spring".

Keywords: Arab spring; Middle East, stability; balance of power; political regime; regional powers.

The balance of power has been changed as a result of the 2011–2012 revolutionary events in the Middle East. This is a change in political regimes, the intensification of terrorist organizations, and the emergence of new conflicts in the region, such as the civil war in Syria and Yemen. One of the important regional powers is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Author of the article "Large Regional States in the Middle East Instability Zone" D. Malysheva emphasizes that inequalities in the Middle East in the area of regional security and the influence of Iran (including conflict zones) in the Middle East, push the KSA to intensify its policies, but also tries to stop Iran" [6].

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been active until 2015 and maintains a close relationship with the United States of America, for which the pledge of the world oil market and its regular deliveries are made. However, with the advent of the new monarch, foreign policy has changed. Recently, there has been some tension in the relationship between KSA and the US. Saudi Arabia seeks to reduce the U.S. influence on the Middle East, claiming to be the leader in the region, and considers its intervention in the region's internal problems inconvenient. I. Kryuchkov in his article "Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy in the Middle East at the Beginning of the 21st Century," states that the tensions between the two states prove that the Saudi King did not meet US President Barack Obama at the airport on April 21, 2016 " [2].

Despite differences in foreign policy, these countries need co-operation and interaction in the field of economic and military security. The establishment

of a Saudi-backed coalition in Yemen with the support of Saudi Arabia is a clear evidence of the country's foreign policy. Thus, following the Arab Spring events, Saudi Arabia has been able to strengthen its position in the Middle East. Strengthening its position, the KSA has begun to consider this area as a special area of influence.

Egypt is another regional power. It is worth noting that Saudi Arabia's policies regarding Egypt are aimed at strengthening Egypt's dependence on Riyadh in order to take a leading position. Kryuchkov said that "during the crisis" the country had a severe blow to its economy and its political reputation, and Egypt was also experiencing demographic turmoil. The country needs investments, financial assistance and loans to develop the national economy” [2]. These factors make Egypt maintain a good relationship with Saudi Arabia as it has significant financial resources in the country. Egypt's policy is also focused on reducing U.S. dependence. Egypt is seeking closer contacts and cooperation with Russia and China in various fields.

From 2011 to 2013, Egypt replaced three political regimes: the Hosni Mubarak regime, the transitional government created by the Supreme Army Council, and the Mohammed Mursi regime. In 2014, Abdel Fatta al-Sisi came to power, and under Muhammad Morsi, the country had become significantly weaker, both economically and in security. The country's leadership's support of radical Islamism and Salafism threatened a civil war in Egypt. It has also led to the development of security threats in the region and around the world. The government has taken control of a transient government that has announced new parliamentary and presidential elections. It is worth noting that the army is the main force in Egypt. For more than sixty years the military state has governed the state and the "Arab Spring" did not promote democratization of the regime, but instead led to further centralization of power in the hands of Morsi and other internal problems.

Egyptian President Abdel Fatta al-Sisi is seeking to reduce US dependence and is actively cooperating with Russia and China for this purpose. He also returned to Egypt as a mediator in the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, seeking to establish relations with the Israeli and Palestinian governments. Al-Sissi is conducting various reforms to overcome the economic crisis and reduce Egypt's foreign debt. Thus, in spite of many internal problems and foreign policy difficulties, Egypt has overcome political chaos and embarked on a course of development.

Despite its small territory and small population, Qatar is one of the important players in the Middle East. Qatar is trying to gain a leading position in the region and enhance the country's image. Qatar also seeks to influence not only the politics of the Middle East, but also the politics of other foreign entities. It is worth noting that the "Arab Spring" events did not affect the country due to the low political culture of the people of Qatar and the minority Shiites. Stability within the country and great financial opportunities have allowed Qatar to change its foreign policy. Qatar has transitioned from a mediation policy to a

policy of active intervention in what is happening in the region after the outbreak of the 2011–2012 Revolution.

The 2011 Syrian coup was a great concern for the country, as it was Syria, Iran's closest ally in the region. A. Kuznetsov in his article "On the Role of Iran in the Syrian Crisis", said that "The strategic partnership between Iran and the SAR began immediately after the victory of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. The alliance of Damascus and Tehran was born out of the necessity of a geopolitical purpose, not a religious one, in spite of the fact that the Alavist dogma is closer to Shiism" [5].

Iran has provided substantial economic, military and political support to the Bashar Assad government, despite the growing domestic economic opposition and pressure from its foreign patrons (US, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, EU countries). In addition, since May 2013, the Hezbollah militia groups have been actively involved in military movements under the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad. K. Truevtsev states that "the most important in this regard is the success of the negotiations which took place between May 30 and May 30, 2017 in Astana, with representatives of all major opposition armed groups. As a result, the Memorandum on the Establishment of a Conflict Reduction Zone was published in enclaves controlled by Russia, Turkey and Iran. In fact, this means that all Syrian government forces, wholly or in part, will be transformed into a military and political zone under the control of the political settlement process, despite the ongoing fight against terrorist organizations" [9].

In Yemen, Iran, on the contrary, had a negative impact on the development of the 2011 revolutionary events. The Islamic Republic of Iran provides financial and ideological support to the Husites, and also provides military-technical units to them. Iran is also actively interacting with the separatists in the south of the country. The Republic of Iran is tackling its geopolitical tasks in Yemen by combating terrorist organizations. If Shiite-Hussei rebels remain in Yemen, this will be the first state with Shiite elites, which will significantly strengthen Iran's position in the region.

At the same time, if the situation in Yemen is not settled, it can strengthen the antagonism between Saudi Arabia and Iran. M. Rybalov states that "a difficult situation is in Bahrain, despite the apparent sympathy of the protesting Shiites, the Islamic Republic of Iran must cooperate in the economic field" [5]. The escalation of Iran's influence in Bahrain has a negative impact on Iran, and can lead to a radical radicalization of society.

Iran is pursuing an active policy in Iraq. Iran has a significant impact on the new direction of the new Iraqi leadership, through the exchange of official delegations and joint projects to restore Iraq's economy and infrastructure. Iran also conducts "popular diplomacy" in this country, such as visiting Shiite temples, criticizing the country's occupation, and cooperating with victims of terrorist attacks. At the moment, a favorable political situation is being set for Iran to establish important positions in Iraq. M. Rybalov emphasized that one of

the aspects of "Arab Spring" is the complex political space, within which the Islamic Republic of Iran's position in Shiite communities can be strengthened through religious, historical and socio-political ties (for example, Iraq). After the invasion, the United States has ceased to be an independent actor in the Middle East, and weakened its position in the losing position (for example, in the case of Syria's victory over Sunni Sunni opposition)" [7].

With the onset of Arab Spring events, Turkish politics in the Arab world is experiencing serious difficulties. Turkey has formulated a foreign policy concept to co-operate with other countries called "zero problems with neighbors". According to this concept, it is necessary to involve all regional forces in the peace process, as well as to carry out effective diplomacy in respect of neighboring territories. Prior to the 2011–2012 revolution, Turkey was able to establish good neighborly relations with other countries within the framework of this concept. However, during the "Arab Spring", Ankara made some unmistakable mistakes, which led to the loss of previous achievements in the Arab direction. For example, Turkey has supported and given considerable support to the Syrian military opposition to Assad, including deteriorating relations with Israel and others. Thus, the concept of "neighborly problems" in foreign policy did not fit into the rapidly changing Middle East.

Turkey, like the states described above, positions itself as a regional dominant force. This position is also worrying in other parts of the region. The Turkish government has considered Egypt a strategically important ally in the Middle East. Therefore, Ankara strongly condemned the downfall of the Mursi government in Egypt and described the revolutionary events in Egypt as a coup. The Turkey-Egypt axis, which was formed in the Middle East after the Egyptian President left office, ceased to exist, and according to Turkish authorities, it should be one of the strongest unions in the region. Having lost a significant ally in the Middle East, Turkey has been isolated and has lost its position in the region. In Syria, Egypt, on the contrary, opposed the legal ruler Bashar Assad, in support of the Syrian opposition. Ivanova says in her article "Turkey in the Middle East: Concepts for Regional Actor Response", "Ankara's excessive involvement in Syrian affairs and the opposition's support have complicated the Turkish diplomacy's position, along with complaints from the regional leadership" [1].

Turkey's foreign policy is also aimed at preventing the intensification of Kurdish militants in connection with the Kurdish Workers' Party in northern Syria and preventing the formation of a Kurdish state in northern Syria. The Kurdish state can be a base for a terrorist attack on Turkey. Ankara also fears that the Kurds could inspire Turkish Kurds to establish an independent organization in eastern Turkey. Turkey has made significant contributions to resolving the Syrian issue.

During the talks in Astana, it was decided to create four zones for escalating the conflict in Turkey. Turkey is one of the guarantors of a ceasefire in Syria. Thus, the Arab Spring events have led to a decrease in Turkey's

influence in the Middle East. Turkey's failure to negotiate and negotiate with other countries in the Middle East, and the support of the opposition forces in Syria, have resulted in the country's isolation and the termination of diplomatic relations with a number of countries in the Middle East. However, a revision of foreign policy and positions will enhance Turkish-Turkish relations. Support for the talks in Astana will help restore Turkey's image in the Middle East.

The broad geopolitical region, including North Africa and the Middle East, is one of the important foreign policy directions for leading players in the world. The United States is developing various ways and means of influencing the Middle East. In late 2013, former U.S. President Barack Obama sought to replace the U.S. involvement in the Middle East and North Africa conflicts with political and diplomatic tools to resolve issues in the region. At the same time, America has sought to prevent the strengthening of Russia's military and political positions in the Middle East. The United States intervenes in domestic conflicts in the region, intensifying conflicts and violating inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations. The Trump administration is continuing its strategy of fighting the "Islamic State" in the Middle East. At the same time, America is trying to reduce the responsibility and participation of the United States in the region, while maintaining certain mechanisms for controlling the situation with minimal resources. To fulfill those efforts, Washington is reestablishing relationships with traditional partners in the Middle East.

Russia is another leading global player in the Middle East, claiming status. Russia has stated after the start of the revolution that it will not allow the United States to strengthen its influence in the Middle East, expand the sphere of influence close to the borders of Ukraine and Georgia, and create a unilateral world. Syria is a vivid example of a conflict of interest between Russia and America as well as EU countries. Following the start of the Syrian conflict, the Russian Federation has called for a normalization of the situation in Syria through national dialogue without the intervention of foreign powers. But despite Russia's call, the United States intervened in the conflict, which contributed to its escalation. Russia has been on the side of legal ruler Bashar al-Assad, and in 2015 sent a military force under the Syrian government's request. Thus, Assad's support, in contrast to Russia and America, has a positive effect on developments in the country, as it helps in the fight against different terrorist groups.

Thus, it can be concluded that the United States and the Russian Federation are expanding their influence in the Middle East. Unlike the United States, Russia has a balanced approach to non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Arab states and does not seek to disseminate and apply its values, norms and customs in the Middle East. For this reason, Russia's influence in the region is greater than in the United States. On the contrary, China suffered huge economic losses as a result of the Arab Spring events. China has failed to defend its interests in the region due to the lack of effective political and military supplies. China firmly adheres to a number of principles in its international

policy, the highest of which is the sovereignty and non-interference with other states [8].

The Arab spring was a series of uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011–2012 that led to internal political, economic and social problems, as well as the influence of external factors in the middle East, with the collapse of the ruling regime and, in some cases, civil war. A phenomenon that is still characterized by shaking in the area [4]. The Arab Revolution, in addition to opening up protests and political transformations in most states in the region, far exceeded national systems and influenced political order in the Arab world [3]. Thus, the "Arab Spring" events have had a significant effect on shifts in the balance of power in the Middle East. This is due to the change in political regimes, the intensification of terrorist organizations, and the emergence of new conflicts in the region, such as the civil war in Syria and Yemen.

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