MOSCOW PERSPECTIVE: THE MIDDLE EAST KNOT

VLADIMIR AKHMEDOV. ENSURING REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: FACTORS OF INFLUENCE

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Abstract. The article takes a theoretical perspective on the internal and external factors that shaped the development of a regional security system in the Middle East. It is noted that these factors were closely linked to the geostrategic position, resource base, demographics, ethnic and religious composition of the population, cultural traditions, and historical heritage of Middle Eastern countries. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of the specifics of political systems in Arab countries, which had a significant impact on the development of national security strategies and the definition of threats to security in the Middle East. The armed forces and officer corps have traditionally been a guarantee of Arab countries' security and regional stability in the Middle East.

The author emphasizes that at the turn of the 21st century, the evolution of political thought and Islamic ideology changed the role of Islam in the military and Arab society. The growing sectarian strife weakened the secular nature of Arab nationalist ideology, replacing it with radical Islamist ideas, which, amid the escalating political tensions, exacerbated the sectarian conflicts in the region. As a result, low-intensity conflicts and hybrid wars have become

one of the core aspects of political confrontation in the Middle East. Rooted in deep historical contradictions and sectarian hostility, such conflicts were protracted and latent in nature.

The increasing proliferation of religious conflicts changed the nature of modern warfare and national armed forces in the Middle East. Non-state armed groups and faith-based militias came to be actors in these conflicts. They shared a common existential foundation that was embedded in patterns of religious dominance ingrained in their political consciousness. The processes of war transformation and the evolution of Arab armed forces taking place in the region have created an enabling environment for militant Islamists and external religious expansionism in the region.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the global military-political confrontation in the Middle East transformed into a whole complex of regional crises and armed clashes. Their characteristic feature was a close interconnection with one another. Virtually all Middle Eastern states found themselves drawn into a complex system of interstate contradictions.

As a result, in the period of 2024–2025, the Middle East experienced a systemic crisis unprecedented in its scale, which engulfed millions of people and plunged the region into a series of unending conflicts and economic catastrophe. The internal political crisis in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, and Yemen provoked instability throughout the entire Middle Eastern region. International diplomatic efforts aimed at the definitive conclusion of the war in Gaza and the cessation of the humanitarian catastrophe in Palestine did not lead to substantive results. Amid the expanding scale of violence in the Middle East, the possibility of settling regional conflicts became more complicated.

This was largely due to the absence of effective mechanisms for maintaining stability in the Middle East. The process of creating a regional security system was comprehensive in nature. It was conditioned by a group of internal and external factors that were closely linked to the geostrategic position, resource base, demographics, ethnic and sociocultural diversity, and the historical heritage of the Middle Eastern states.

The historical heritage of the Middle Eastern countries played a significant role in the formation of the international security system in the Middle East. The history of the Arab world spans approximately one and a half thousand years. In antiquity, on the territory where modern Arab states are located, advanced centers of human civilization were formed, which, interacting with one another, gave rise to new forms of