

## **Review of US Foreign Policy in the Middle East Looking to the Future**

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### **Abstract**

Since 1971, the United States follows Israel's security and ensuring the security of energy flow goals in the Middle East. Is the pattern that U.S. adopted to achieve these goals in Foreign Policy is subject to change in the future? To achieve these goals, America tried to take the Middle East geo-economic points including the Persian Gulf under its political – security control since World War II. At geopolitical points near Israel, it perused the change of elite's decision in countries such as Egypt and Jordan and Regime Change in countries such as Iraq and Syria. Entering countries such as England, France and Turkey, the results shows that America Will attempt to govern a multilateral security system in the Persian Gulf in the future, but it pursue decision change in geopolitical areas and political structure change with the priority of federalism in Weak countries.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics, Geoeconomics, Regime change, Strategy, the Middle East.

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### **Introduction**

The Middle East region has always been of strategic importance to the great powers. In the era of imperialism (The eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century), this subject has led to the continued presence of major European powers Especially England, France and Russia in the Middle East. The collapse of the Ottoman and following that the formation of Small and large Arabic monarchies in the region was most affected by the strategic position of the Middle East and the great powers foreign policy interests.

Brzezinski in his book "Out of Control" divides the world into six systems. One of these six systems is related to the Muslims which includes North Africa and the Middle East. It is the only system that produces energy and therefore it is in the focus of great powers strategy attention (Nami, et al. 2009: 44).

The Middle East geopolitical network is not coherent and the geopolitical network in the Middle East is not coherent and is divided into different areas according to the distribution of threats and identity similarities. Meanwhile, the formation of Israel created a distinct security area in the area of the Shamats that made it important for the outside powers. This area is consists of countries that are in direct danger to Israel and / or they are directly involved with related disputes. Among its neighboring, countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria are in this area which, of course, from the Bowzan perspective the non-state actors such as SAF, Hamas and Hezbollah are also included.

In fact, the Middle East now has several clusters, including clusters:

- The Shamats area;
- The Western area;
- The Persian Gulf area;
- The Asia Minor area includes Turkey (Ghasemi, 2010: 66).

America follows different strategies in each of these subsystems. Major

strategies of this country have focused on legitimizing Israel.

In connection with the geo-economic value, it should be noted that the Persian Gulf region is one of the sides of Geoffrey Kemp's Strategic Oval. This issue, therefore, has also increased its importance to the great powers. The Middle East region, as shown in Table 1, has the World's first position in terms of oil reserves. While Saudi Arabia holds more than 15 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, the Islamic Republic of Iran is in the second place after this country with 9.3%.

Table 1: The amount of oil and gas reserves in some Middle Eastern and North African countries (2016)

country	The amount of oil reserves	Global percentage	The amount of gas reserves	Global percentage
Iran	157.8	9.3%	1201	18.2%
Saudi Arabia	266.6	15.7%	294	4.5%
Iraq	143.1	8.4%	130.5	2%
Kuwait	101.5	6%	63.1	1%
Libya	48.36	2.8%	53.1	8.9%
Qatar	25.24	2.1%	866.2	13.1%
Algeria	12.20	1%	159.1	2.4%

Source: BP (2016) Statistical Review of World Energy (2016); OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2016

The region countries are also in a distinct position in terms of gas reserves so that the Islamic Republic of Iran is in the second place after Russian Federation with 18.2%. As shown in Table 1, the region alone owns more than 40 percent of the world's gas reserves which adds to the strategic importance of it as a clean fuel.

The raw and minerals materials such as oil play a major role in the export mix. The Middle East countries export mix review shown that most of above countries are exporter of raw materials (World Trade Organization, 2015).

Due to the existing conflicts, America, regardless of the extent of change in US foreign policy, focused on the Middle East and the Middle East has special position among US foreign policy designers and executives as last

years. With a new idealistic foreign policy agenda and the commitment to change the face of the United States especially in the Middle East, Obama took the job (Mohammadi, 2014: 144).

The main question in this study is that what pattern will follow America foreign policy in Middle East in the future? One can say, in response, America has tried to control the Middle East Geo-economics points with a political-security approach from past to present and to follow behavior change at the geopolitical points of this region. It will attention to multilateral security system in Persian Gulf in the future and reaching its foreign policy goals in the form of federalism in this region.

### **Research Method**

This research has an explanatory approach in terms of purpose which attempts to identify and explain factors and variables shaping US foreign policy Using library documents and data. Using previous data and information in terms of the method, it is also a combined research which tries to find a new signs that Explanation pattern obtained, of course, can be useful for analyzing the future of US foreign policy in the Middle East.

### **Research findings**

#### **A. Political-security control of Geo-economics points**

The Persian Gulf sub system position attempts to do not allow other powers power up.

In what Geoffrey Kemp calls strategic ovals within Middle Eastern macro collection in the future of America's global power (Mollazehi; 2002: 35). Middle East Oil overcomes means controlling of the global economy and dominance on the economies of rival countries such as China, Japan and the European Union (Leina D, 2005: 8). Controlling Persian Gulf energy resources, America wish to hold the Security of oil flow and control its price in order to control the economic arteries of Europe, Japan and East Asia (the rivals which are major importers of the Persian Gulf oil and Central Asia) so

that, in this way, bring them along with their own goals in the modern system (Jaafari valedani, 2002: 19- 17). In this regard, it should be noted that America as one of the most influential Persians Gulf interventionists has an effective role in controlling systems formation after World War II which can expressed as follows historically: 1. Security pattern based on regional hegemony: After the departure of England and the replacement of the United States by the end of the 1970s which is the famous two-pillar pattern that is, Iran is a military pillar and Saudi Arabia is the economic pillar (Ebrahimiyyar, 2008: 20- 22). 2. Security pattern based on bilateral containment: This pattern is referred to after the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in which Iran and Iraq should be restrained (Ebrahimiyyar, 2008: 20- 22). 3. Force-based security pattern: After the 9/11 extremism was posed as a major threat to US security. In this policy military threats were of great importance; but these threats did not mean removing the actors (Ibid). The last pattern is an attempt to create a smart security order through the establishment of missile defense systems in the Middle East and selling advanced weapons to countries that is one of America's other tools to manage Middle East surrounding area. For example, America has military bases in all countries of the Persian Gulf region now. Deterrence and Balance of power security pattern are two other patterns which will use in the Middle East security suite by the United States (Barzegar, 2010: 2). Now that Iraq has been weakened, it is tried to fill the created power vacuum with the growing role of the European Union and to prevent creating a two bipolar system i.e. Iran and Saudi Arabia in the region. In this regard Turkish presence is also tolerable in the region especially among this country and Iran created serious conflicts in the Middle East from Islamic – Arabic spring which, of course, will provide more benefits to the United States (Lrrsch and Simao Sarti, 2014: 96). One of the most striking instances of a recent U.S. policy adjustment is the Trump administration's evident determination to not only rebuild, but enhance, traditional U.S. partnerships

with key regional allies such as the Gulf Arab countries – notably Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain – as well as Egypt and Israel. The primary motivation behind this recalibration toward long-standing allies appears to be a renewed focus on countering two major threats to long-term U.S. interests in the Middle East. The first is confronting the rise of Iranian influence and hegemony in the region. The

second is combatting the spread of extremist groups, particularly Sunni Salafist jihadist organizations like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and al-Qaeda. But this also includes halting the spread of pro-Iranian Shia groups, focusing on the transformation of Hizballah into a regional military strike force and revolutionary vanguard for Tehran, above all in Syria that is increasingly unmoored from its Lebanese origins. The Trump administration has, with the encouragement of its Middle East partners, decided not to scrap the nuclear agreement, and has recently confirmed that Iran is in compliance, while accusing Tehran of violating its “spirit.” The administration is not going ahead with additional sanctions relief but is conducting a policy review of whether such a step would be in the U.S. interest. Moreover, the administration has renewed its rhetoric calling Iran the primary state agent of destabilization in the Middle East. Iran’s harassment of U.S. naval vessels is being more aggressively confronted, as are its allies in Syria and Yemen (Ibish, 2017: 1-3).

**B. Trying to change the System and the decision change in Geopolitics points**

The first subject in part of US National Security Strategy Document named "Advancing peace, security and opportunity in the Greater Middle East" which is referred it was supplying Israel security and Israel is referred to as its strategic ally (Sadeghi and Hadi, 2012: 243). Obama also, in the Middle East section of US National Security Strategy Document in 2010, the first subject he states is commitment to Israel's security and this is among the most important U.S. geopolitical motivation to Presence in the Middle

East(Pishgah Hadeyan, 2007: 132- 133). This geopolitical motivation is a strong guarantee of America's presence in the region. About 50 years, therefore, the United States tried to provide Israel security through changes in the behavior and regime change of countries such as Egypt, Libya, Syria and Iraq. To achieve this, the United States put on the region actors behavior change as a goal especially in the peripheral environment of Israel. First, he prevented the hostility of Egypt to Israel through Camp David's agreement and Egypt's hostility to Israel has been stopped since then. The signing of a peace agreement between Jordan and Israel in 1994 was another consequence of an attempt to change the behavior and to change the decision of Israeli enemy's actors (Rashno, 2012: 134- 133). With a constructivism view, therefore, these actors became benign rivals from a hostile identity for this country. Since the change of actors decision like Iraq, Syria and Libya was not easily possible, The Americans tried to achieve their goal by changing the regime. Regime change started in Iraq by raising the Axis of Evil and this was accomplished with the US military strike against the country in 2003. Since the Americans did not succeed in Iraq and Iraq became an ally of Iran, The Americans took more cautious steps in their next steps. In Syria and Libya, therefore, the United States was waiting for the developments that the Arab-Islamic events provided this opportunity for the country. So Libya's withdrawal from hostility to Israel was achieved through the opportunity of the Arab-Islamic revolutions and NATO-led intervention by the United States. If the regime changes well done after Assad in Syria, the America has turned almost all Arab enemies into Israel's friend or rival which has no incentive to confront Israel and no Powerfulness. Syria is a case that the United States tries away it from Iran by using the crisis created in this country and weaken it because Iran's influence in the Syrian government and the existence of a Shiite government in Iraq after Saddam 2003 caused Iran be present besides the borders of Israel through the land easily (so that in this way it is also able to provide

the weapons required by Hezbollah and Hamas in Palestine and get away the war with Israel from its borders and operate it in a region beyond its territorial borders) and moreover it will be prevent Iran's regional Geo-economics network in the form of a Persian or Islamic pipeline because Syria and Iraq instability prevents Gas pipeline execution which its route passes from Iraq and Syria and comes to Europe via the Mediterranean(Hafidh & Faucon, 2011: 13). Therefore, in the first stage, the goal of intervention in Syria is security of Israel and in the next stage preventing the formation of an Iran's Geo-economics network (Poor Isa Chafjeeri, 2016: 35).

#### **Analysis and future scenarios**

With aim of security – political controlling of Geopolitical points and regime change and decision change in the future, the Americans will put some policies on the agenda that trying to be mention in this section.

#### **A. Federalism, the Americans desirable pattern**

Although the Americans do not seem to welcome the Middle East Dissemination Plan but it will try to implement a federalism plan in some countries of the region with the aim of increasing its geopolitical and geo-economics influence. The federalism project in the Middle East first began in Iraq and since 2003. In the framework of this project, the America together with the international community will attempt to drive away his opposing governments to a federal government especially in countries near Iran. In this way, actually, the United States will easily provide grounds for the independence of the ethnic groups in the future. This will have a serious advantage for America; As long as the governments in these countries have close ties to the US government, it will support the federal system that governs these countries, but as soon as the rulers of these countries intend to stay away from the America it is normal that America will support separatist groups in the framework of a federal system to achieve independence.



Another benefit of this system is the reduction of the Iran geopolitical influence as well as the lack of creation of geo-economics networks of in the Middle East because Iran's influence in the Syrian government and the existence of a Shiite government in Iraq after Saddam 2003 caused Iran will be present easily and through the land along the Israeli borders. In this way it is also able to provide the weapons required by Hezbollah and Hamas in Palestine and get away the war with Israel from its borders and operate it in a region beyond its territorial borders. By interrupting Iran's connection with the Mediterranean Sea, Iran's connection to the Islamic resistance axis is also cut off. On the other hand, Iran as a regional power which claims civilization could through this conceptualization revolving around Islamic resistance extend its sphere of influence from the Persian Gulf to the Shamat area especially that the Middle East region is still in the era of the Cold War and countries in the region are more likely to influence the smaller countries of the region and are seeking to succeed through a political alliances and coalitions what Iran does not exception and through this, it has expanded its sphere of influence to the remote areas of its borders, including Syria, Palestine and Lebanon and has become a regional power actor in the entire of Middle East from a power in the Gulf region subsystem. So it seems Possible Syria and Iraqi Federalize will cause serious restrictions and even will lead to the elimination of military cooperation with countries such as Syria and Hezbollah. The role of Hamas, Hezbollah and Syria as one of the main pillars of the resistance to Israel, the possibility of deterring the Islamic Republic of Iran against the Israel regime is reduced through the help and support of Hamas and Hezbollah and maybe Israel becomes the top actor in the region of Shamat. The Americans will also have the Russian accompaniment in their own strategy. Because if Iran's influence be limited in the field of geo-economics in Syria. They will be able to impede the implementation of the Persian or Islamic pipeline easily which is supposed to transports Iran's gas to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and then to the

Mediterranean and Europe (Hafidh & Faucon, 2011: 12).

**B. Preventing the creation of power poles in the Middle East**

America, with a realistic approach, will not welcome Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the region as well. Therefore, this goal will be achieved by using various instruments such as intensifying regional rivalries between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey in the Middle East. The Yemeni war is one example of America's efforts in this direction. In fact, Yemen is a serious point of competition for dominance over geopolitical areas between Iran and Saudi Arabia. If Iran succeeds in controlling Yemen, it will be able to inhibit Saudi Arabia in the future. This situation is a symbol of a new cold war between the two countries in the Middle East that will have different consequences for the United States including ideologizing the Middle East can be mentioned. This war raises the political, economic, and socio-cultural costs of the countries of the region. Another threat is that such a war increases the role of non-governmental actors, especially Islamist groups, in the Middle East (Grumet, 2015: 148-151). The Americans do not directly involved in the Yemeni conflict because the Geopolitical and Geo-economic position of this country is not attractive to America. Continuation of this war, the formation of power poles in the Middle East will be eliminated and once again the America will be able to maintain a balance of power between Iran and Saudi Arabia at the lowest cost. As happened in the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq and the great powers, by any means, prevented Iran from dominating the whole Middle East via this war. The America, in order to maintain a balance of power in the Persian Gulf is likely to encourage Saudi Arabia to be closer to the Iraqi government in the future. In fact, the Americans are trying to be formed a government in Iraq with less reliance on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Saudi Arabia's entrance in Iraq will cause Sunni management affairs in this country be done better and this group becomes a pole of power in Iraq once again which, of course, will reduce Iran's influence. Washington will not try to persuade Saudi Arabia to

participate with Iran in regional affairs. The United States is likely to try to encourage Iran to cooperate more in regional affairs including in Iraq, to persuade it to cooperate more with regional countries (Gause III, 2016). The reason why Americans choose between Iran and Saudi Arabia is that the first has more common interests and the latter is more powerful and the second is has become more powerful and consequently, with the aim of maintaining the balance of power, it will be beyond the weaker actor more (Pollack & et al, 2014: 3). In this regard, the US government has certain tools, for example, the Trump Administration has cited Iran's regional "malign activities" and repeated ballistic missile tests to assert that "Iran's provocative actions threaten the United States, [and] the [Middle East] region," and that the JCPOA has failed to address Iran's objectionable behavior beyond its nuclear program. The Administration has, to date, sanctioned additional Iran missile entities, sought to forge a regional coalition to counter Iran, and signed into law new legislation sanctioning Iran's regional activities and missile program. The Trump Administration has asserted that the JCPOA does not address key U.S. concerns about Iran's continuing "malign activities" in the region and its ballistic missile program, and might not be serving U.S. interests. The Administration has continued to implement the deal and to certify that Iran is complying, while at the same time conducting a policy review. In interviews and based on press reports, President Trump has indicated he might not certify Iran's compliance with the JCPOA at the next 90-day deadline on October 15—an action that could trigger a re imposition of U.S. sanctions and likely the collapse of the accord. During the U.N. General Assembly meetings in New York (September 18-21, 2017), which included a meeting on the sidelines of the P5+1 and Iran, Administration officials have appeared to clarify the U.S. position as seeking either a modification of the JCPOA or a separate agreement that might extend the JCPOA's nuclear restrictions beyond current deadlines, limit Iran's development of ballistic missiles, and address

Iran's "malign activities" in the region. Iran rejected any renegotiation of the JCPOA and it is not clear how much P5+1 support or leverage the Administration might have for achieving such a modification or separate accord (Katzman, 2017: 11).

### **C. entrance of friends and forbid competitors to Persian Gulf Security System**

While America is the largest provider of security in the Persian Gulf states, NATO allies will gradually enter the Persian Gulf. France created a multi-purpose military, airborne, and offshore base in the UAE in 2009, Britain plans to build such a base in Bahrain. The America, in order to be able to concentrate its power in East Asia to curb China it is necessary to share its allies in the regional order of the Persian Gulf. One of these countries is Turkey, which has obviously announced its willingness to establish a base in Qatar. The presence of Turkey in Qatar is encouraging both for the United States and for its allies in Persian Gulf because the signing of the nuclear agreement between Iran and the 5 + 1 countries has caused this concern in the Gulf States which like the Sykes Pico Agreement between England and France, based on which the Arab territories were torn apart, this time, another agreement was signed between the major powers that allowed Iran to enrich uranium at a high level and that's why the signing of the agreement has been a source of concern for the American Arab allies. As a result, the presence of Turkey in the region will create encouragement in the Persian Gulf States, so they can restore the balance of power in the region once again, because Iran, in their view, seeks to achieve a hegemonic position in the Persian Gulf region in particular and the Middle East in general. This will not happen with the Turkish presence, because, staying next to Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region in emergencies, this country will maintain a balance of power in the absence of the United States (Decottignies & Cagapty, 2016: 23).

The presence of Iran's regional rival, Turkey in Qatar, is somehow a

revelation of a great new game in the Middle East. A game that on one side of it will have America, England and Iran, Russia and, to some extent, Iraq are on the other side. The motivations of actors, even among Iran, Russia and Iraq, are not similar. Therefore, a game with conflicting goals is in progress. On the one hand, the game is centered on the Geo-economic element between Iran and Turkey that in this game, with special support they will do the Americans tries to prevent the formation of an Iranian Geo-economic network in the Middle East and Central Asia.

### **Conclusion**

As hegemony of the international system, the United States has goals and interests in all sectors of the international system. In the Middle East, the United States has also pursued two important goals namely Israeli security goals and energy security. According to regional researchers, the Middle East has two geopolitical and geo-economical dimensions in US foreign policy. Over the past five decades, the US has put Geo-economic zones under its political-security control. In geopolitical areas that do not have gas and oil reserves for the United States and geography is used more to curb competitors, the Americans were trying to use the opportunities to remove from the battlefield the strategic enemies of Israel, including Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Syria. In the future, the United States will also attempt to enter its friends and allies in NATO to Persian Gulf. Therefore, entering its friends, any government that will enter the White House in the future tries to maintain under its military security control the Middle East Geo-economic areas, especially the Persian Gulf. In the geopolitical points such as Syria, it is also trying to be a federal system.

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