

## An Analysis of the Position of the Three Components of Nation, Nationality, and Identity in the Process of the Arab Military Coalition Formation in the Persian Gulf

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### Abstract

The West Asian region's government structure, which is part of the Islamic world's civilization, faces significant governance challenges. Islamic countries do not adopt appropriate regional governance processes due to the essential differences between Islamic political thought and Western humanist political thought. Meanwhile, the geopolitical region of Southwest Asia and the countries bordering the Persian Gulf are no exception. The Arab military coalition influenced by geopolitical contexts in the region can be evaluated and analyzed regarding the three components of nationality and identity in Islam. A process controlled by the modern world's developments and is indifferent to the Islamic world history and the basic concepts of this religion. The results indicated that ideas in Islamic political thought and its religious teachings had provided ideal opportunities for producing and maintaining security; nevertheless, Western political ideas' influence on the Islamic world does not allow them to make such decisions. The security situation in the geopolitical region of Southwest Asia has deprived it of permanent stability and security.

**Keywords:** Arab Military Coalition, Security, Southwest Asia, Persian Gulf, Nation and Identity.

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### **Introduction**

In recent decades, the South West Asia Geopolitical Region countries have repeatedly sought to provide regional cooperation and engagement in inclusive coalitions and counter common threats. Alliances like designing the Islamic NATO to counter the influence of Marxist ideas in the region or forming the Gulf Cooperation Council to provide a collective security package in the Persian Gulf, but none of them achieved compelling results.

Here are some examples of the inflamed atmosphere in South west Asia in the years leading up to 2020: The formation of terrorist and insurgent groups in countries such as Iraq and Syria, the launch of Saudi fighter jets in Yemen and its military intervention in Bahrain, the political turmoil in northern Iraq, rising tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Iran's military presence and advisers in Iraq and Syria, etc. Some Arab countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia, to counter Iran's geopolitical influence and increase their military and economic power in the area, wanted to change the region's situation to their advantage and to the detriment of Iran forming an Arab military coalition.

The role of world powers such as the United States and modern and Western political thought in these particular circumstances is remarkable. Some important issues, such as Pakistan's negative stance and Iran's quick response to the pioneers of this anti-security plan in the study area, prevented the formation of a strong and cohesive coalition between the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region. Affected by the fact that some problems including geographical dispersion of Islamic countries, differences in their perceptions of Iran's political and international approaches, different nature of Islamic governments, deep-rooted cultural and economic interactions of some of these countries with Iran, the reluctance of some countries to accept the leadership of Saudi Arabia in Southwest Asia, the incomplete cooperation of trans-regional countries such as the United States with the plan and, most importantly, the essential differences in Islamic political thought with Western political thought.

The Arab countries of the region, especially Saudi Arabia, and some supra-regional powers such as the United States, are trying to confront Iran and reduce its geopolitical influence in a completely different plan. This issue is the new Arab NATO idea. It increases for reasons such as rising tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, anti-Iranian policies of the new US administration, growing economic and military rivalries with the Persian Gulf countries, some historical tensions between Iran and some countries in the region.

The study of these developments and the structure of governments in the West Asian region, which is part of the Islamic

world's civilization, reveals the main challenges in governance, which has also severely damaged the security situation in the region.

By casting doubt on the indicators that lead to the primary nation's rule, Islamic political thought does not recognize them and their tools. It offers different principles and indicators than what is proposed. The disregard of the rulers of the Islamic countries for the original ideas derived from the Qur'an, the way of governing the Prophet and the teachings of the Imams and the direct role of God in world domination have paved the way for following Western models such as creating an Arab military coalition in the Persian Gulf. The questioned coalition can escalate tensions in the region and impose additional instability on Southwest Asia. By casting doubt on the indicators that lead to the primary nation's rule, Islamic political thought does not recognize them and their tools. It offers different principles and indicators than what is proposed.

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Accordingly, the present study believes that the concepts in Islam's political thought and the religious teachings of this religion have provided ideal opportunities to produce and maintain security. Instead, Western political ideas' influence on the Islamic world does not allow them to make such decisions. The security situation in the Persian Gulf region and beyond in the geopolitical region of Southwest Asia has deprived it of permanent stability security. Now this research seeks to answer the question why in the geopolitical region of Southwest Asia transnational institutions are ineffective and the source of insecurity and tension?

### **1. Research Methodology**

The present study method, which recognizes the dimensions and components of government and governance in Islam and security approaches in the geopolitical region of Southwest Asia, is a model for developing a model and typology appropriate to governments' structure its executive models. This research's qualitative part is the study and discussion of these challenges in both theoretical and practical dimensions. The present study used a descriptive-analytical method with collecting documents, evidence, and library study. Research on the feasibility of the formation of the Arab Gulf Military Coalition, due to the novelty of the issue, is faced with a lack of sufficient resources and information in the field of universities, and most of the related information should be sought in

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the media and news articles. However, some researchers and experts have had studies in this regard, which are briefly mentioned below. Shirin Hunter, for example, in 1984, with reference to the Islamic Revolution and US efforts to conclude international treaties with Arab countries in the region to counter Iran, has traced the roots of this issue to the past. Also, in 2012, Mansouri Moghaddam, by studying the interactions of Iran, Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region before the Islamic Revolution, began tensions between the Arab Gulf states and Iran in the post-Islamic period and examined the US and its allies' alignment against Iran in recent decades.

Libyan researcher Salem al-Awkali is another figure who has made thoughtful studies in this regard and writes about the background of the Islamic NATO idea as well as the background of the formation of the Arab NATO idea: Almost half a century ago and in 1965 AD, the Islamic countries of Southwest Asia Influenced by the pursuit of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz, Iran and Saudi Arabia sought to form a NATO-like alliance called the Islamic NATO to counter the entry of Mexican and communist ideas into the region, with the kings of Iran, Jordan and Saudi Arabia as the sole rulers. Who agreed with this idea and its implementation, but now and under the influence of intense differences between Iran and Saudi Arabia, these two countries have become two completely opposite poles in the region and each is looking for a different way out of the current crisis? (Avakeli: 2015, 69).

Yadollah Karimipour in his book *Iran and its Neighbors* has addressed this issue to some extent and pointed out that based on the history of the overthrow of monarchies in the region, especially the Arab world, nationalist or religious fundamentalist systems are grounds for expansionist rivalry. And will lead to fierce ideological struggles in the region. In this book, the author suggests that three important issues be on Iran's agenda, noting that the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, led by Saudi Arabia, are seeking a security defense pact:

- A) Establishing an institutionalized mechanism for activating dialogue and negotiation on bilateral or multilateral disputes;
- B) Achieving a principled understanding to ensure regional security;
- C) Efforts to establish an organized, active and limited regional market (Karimipour, 2000: 170).

## **2. Geopolitics**

Human social groups can achieve a unified political order at the local to global levels of different geographical spaces based on common characteristics and interests. Human life is politically dependent on geographical factors such as place, space, resources, opportunities, and threats, and a level of collective and group power. Hence, the geography, energy, and politics that determine the patterns of

organized groups' behavior are geopolitics' primary nature in different forms. These forms are power fluctuation, competition, convergence, divergence, influence, crisis, governing, dominance, interaction, peace, coalition, war, security, trade, exchange, stability, etc. (Hafeznia, 2007: 12).

Geopolitics is an intellectual structure in the early twentieth century, proposed by Hofer, Ratzel, Kieln, Spokesman, and Mahan. Although the designers of this concept lived in Germany, the United States, Sweden, the United Kingdom, etc., geopolitics developed in the form of political geography knowledge in many countries worldwide. A concept with intellectual structure aims to identify and organize how governments can increase their external power. They make the best use of topography, hydrology, agricultural resources, industry, transportation systems, and communications (Garfinkle, 2015: 532).

### **3. Geopolitical Region**

A geopolitical region is a part of the planet Earth's surface or a set of neighboring countries and politico-spatial units, whether terrestrial, aquatic, or integrated space. It is a combination of specific political and geographical factors that are homogeneous and have a particular identity or standard function different from adjacent areas and areas. The Geopolitical region is the bedrock of forming the spatial pattern of political relations between intra-regional and extra-regional states. In its evolutionary process, it becomes a geopolitical structure. The condition in which regional and non-regional political forces become active, the functions of convergence, divergence, conflict, or cooperation develop in it. The systemic relations of actors inside and outside the region are formed based on the region's structural and functional elements explicitly and implicitly (Hafeznia, 2007: 112).

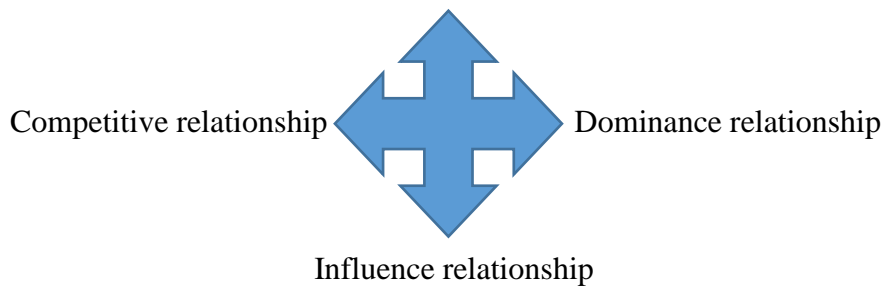
### **4. Patterns of Geopolitical Relationship**

Geopolitical relations are established between countries, governments, and political actors based on a combination of politics, power, and geography elements. Informing any relationship between actors, the aspect of politics emerges in political acting that shapes the nature of the relationship and the actor's actions. The power element is manifested in shaping the relationship's pattern and character and the actors' attitude towards each other. The geography element also plays a bedrock role and creates the necessary motivations for forming the relationship's political will, the spatial manifestation of the relationship, and the influence on the actor power level. Geopolitical relations between actors are created from various patterns called interactive, competitive, persuasion, and domination (Ibid: 363).



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**Figure 1: Patterns of geopolitical relationship** Source: Article authors



**5. Neo-Realist Theories about Military Alliances**

The neo-realist theories revised and refined by Waltz and Kinderman are based on certain assumptions in which any anarchy introduces the international system's basis. Countries more think just about their interests and join the union only to confront the enemy. The union also destroy without the enemy. The theories proposed by neo-realists in the world scientific literature examine the reason for military alliances from different perspectives. In other words, they present various ideas of the construction of transnational coalitions in geopolitical regions, such as the theory of balance of power, the harmony of threat, the balance of interests, and the idea of hegemony (Waltz, 1979: 79).

In the balance of power framework, one of the oldest international politics theories has been proposed by people like Kenneth Waltz; (1956-2012) countries move towards a coalition when a government becomes powerful in the region and can dominate. In this situation, other countries are drawn to the section to counter this domination and create a balance of power to prevent war (Ray, 1998: 353).

From the neo- realists' perspective, governments form coalitions when they feel the need to balance the threat. Still, the creation of any alliance or convergence reduces the coalition members' freedom of action and imposes costs on them to the extent of its cohesion and strength. According to the theory of balance of power in the international system, the balance of power form as an algebra automatically, and alliances are the main factors shaping this automated process. In other words, coalitions are formed to respond to the imbalance of forces and consolidate the members' capabilities (George, 1993: 107).

According to the threat balance theory put forward by people like Walt, countries are not on the path to forming a coalition for the balance of power and are trying to strike a credit against the threats they feel threatened. Hazards that are not based on the strength of conflicting governments; hence, they unite. Apart from the two theories, in the framework of the balance of interests, which people like Schuler proposed, the coalition's most important determining

factor is the compatibility of political goals and interests and the imbalance of power threat. According to Schuler, Countries' behavior in the union is not necessarily determined by external power or danger but determined by opportunities for achievement and interest.

Another neo-realist theorist who has commented on coalitions is Schuler. He criticized the theory of balance of power and balance of threat, presented the balance of interests. In his view, the coalition's most important determinant is the compatibility of political goals and interests, not the imbalance of power or threat. According to him, a country's behavior in the union is not necessarily determined by external force or threat, but opportunities for achievements and benefits determine this behavior. He believes that this theory can explain how the coalition is formed at the national and systemic level (Waltz, 1979: 91-97).

In addition to the theories mentioned, Joseph Nye first proposed another view called the idea of hegemony. According to this theory, a country is powerful enough to govern countries' relationships and intend to do so; that considers coalition formation not dependent on balance but the superiority of external power (Brilmayer, 1994: 24). Although usually examined hegemony in realist theory, especially structural realism, this concept has also been in various other views. Marxists have regarded it as an advanced and complicated stage of domination, class domination, and imperialism. To compensate for the impotence of imperialism and dependence theories, and have made great use of it in modern literature, especially in the view of the "World System."

Wallerstein has taken it seriously from the perspective of the historical sociology of international relations. In general, a state needs multiple resources to play a hegemonic role. In addition to military power, it must control the four primary economic sources of raw materials, capital, market, and unrivaled superiority in producing precious goods. A government must provide a set of factors to be in a hegemonic position. These factors include relative worth, national will, and international acceptance (George, 1993: 198-202).

## **6. Factors for the Success or Failure of Regional Coalitions**

Researchers based on modern ideas and the reasons for the success or failure of forming regional coalitions have listed specific cases, which are briefly mentioned below. In this article, the model of modeling and typology appropriate to the structure of governments and its executive model has been used.

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**Table 1: Success and Failure Factors of Regional Organizations Based on Modern Ideas (Akhavan Kazemi, 2004: 166-168).**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Success Factors | Greater homogeneity of member countries as a factor in increasing their consensus, broader support of regional governments for regional decisions due to indigenous legitimacy, better and more effective conflict resolution, limited third parties in disputes and easier access to them, weakness and inefficiency of international organizations in resolving disputes, especially regional disputes, less affected by the influence of significant powers and tensions between them, especially the lack of veto power in regional organization decisions   |
| Failure Factors | The ambiguity and flexibility of the concept of the region, the negative influence of regional organizations and its member states on superpowers, world powers and regional powers and the relative impairment of their decision-making independence, inaccurate explanation of the relationship between global organizations and regional organizations, diversity of regional organizations in terms of politics, geography, level of development, etc., less enforcement of regional organization decisions than global organizations such as the United Nations, many financial and budgetary problems, poor organization and lack of work ethic and experience in managing regional crises, lack of comprehensiveness of many regional organizations, difficulty in securing neutrality, inability to influence factors outside the region, lack of balance of power in the areas and the existence of central and peripheral forces in regional organizations, problems of regional organizations to interfere in the internal affairs of countries |

### 7. Basic Nation Governments

The primary nation's government is a political system composed of a population of human beings who have all been united according to a single pattern (Barzegar, 2004: 14). They live in a land with definite boundaries and all under a single rule (Heydari, 2005: 78), and in the form of a national constitution, they strive to achieve the national ideal.

This process forms a collective identity, called national identity (Razafi far, 2001: 103), the basis of which is patriotism and national pride. In political geography science, the nation's government is based on four components; the absence of any of these components disrupts the national government's definition. However, some political thinkers believe that international recognition is the fifth component of a nation-state. Until the global system does not recognize a nation-state, it cannot be formally considered a nation or "State." So, Islam's view of an Islamic government or religious government is not like in the history of Europe because, in Islam, the nation has sovereignty over the rulers and politicians of its society



(Ghannouchi, 2002: 217). Therefore, there is a fundamental difference between many of the components considered in Islam and the nation-state branches' definition.

### **8. Theoretical Problems of Islam In the Form of Basic Nation Governments**

The idea of forming a government in Islam dates back to the ten years of the Prophet's presence in Mecca, which was accompanied by the secret invitation of the people of Saudi Arabia to Islam. But the formation of government in Islam dates back to the time of the Holy Prophet's migration (PBUH) from Mecca to Medina. During this period, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) formed the political structure of the government. With the Holy Prophet's death (PBUH), the Holy Prophet created this structure split and the first divisions among the Companions the basis of this difference was the perception of each of these currents from the government in Islam.

With the movements of both currents, finally, after the Prophet, three caliphs, who were all representatives of the same intellectual current, took over the government, but after the death of the third caliph, Imam As, who was the representative of the opposite current, became the ruler of Islam. The presence of two drafts at the head of government affairs caused each current to expand and develop its ideas and ideological foundations in the field of government. After Imam Ali, the Sunni current, taking over the Caliphate's position, practically developed and expanded its ideas. Simultaneously, the Imams tried to explain the government's divine roots by explaining the jurisprudential origins.

The political thought of the Caliphate, which was the product of the Sunni currents' thinking, turned this position into a monarchy by occupying vast lands. But almost eleven centuries later, the Ottoman Empire, the last Islamic empire to be associated with the Islamic Caliphate, collapsed in World War I, and national governments emerged from which the republic's political system was the product of these governments (Entekhabi, 2014: 208).

The Shia political current had a different situation in history. After Imam Ali (A.S), the pure Imams did not have the opportunity to build a political system. All of them were busy teaching the basics of government thought and jurisprudence. They always promised that they would revive Islam's political position with the Age's Imam's advent. However, after fourteen centuries, the Islamic Revolution in Iran was considered a prelude to forming an Islamic government based on Shia jurisprudence. Although these two currents of thought differ in some issues, they both believe society's management needs government's construction. (Entekhabi, 2014: 211).

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In the past decades and centuries, the rivalry resulting from hatred and resentment and the inflammations of foreign powers have eliminated the possibility of establishing a close relationship between the two fronts, and these differences are intensifying every day. While the two currents of thought have profound similarities, they negate the indispensable nation's governments' primary indicators. The intellectual leaders of both drafts in the new centuries have emphasized it, such as Sayyed Jamal al-Din Asadabadi, Imam Khomeini, Hassan al-Banna, Rashid Reza, Sayyed Qutb, Shahid Motahari, and others (Yazdanpanah, 2018: 79).

#### **9. Islam, Islamic Unity, and Islamic Cohesion**

As mentioned above, the versions of national and regional governance in Western political thought have influenced many countries today and have become dominant patterns; however, according to Islam's history and teachings, unity and cohesion in Islam follow other practices.

In the primary nation's government, the solidarity of a country happens around historical, racial, ethnic, linguistic issues, and a nation strives to achieve an ideal that plays a role in that nation political thought. The diversity of nations and states has caused racial, linguistic, ethnic, etc. groups, which have been separated by chance or by prior planning, to pursue and strive for different ideals and different political goals. If necessary for cooperation and interaction, especially in the military and security fields, they should establish and follow these procedures under Western ideas and existing Western forms.

In a nation-state system, radically, a nation or tribe to have centuries-old historical roots and, incidentally, to be geographically distant from their races, now they have to pursue different political ideals due to this fragmentation. From the Islamic point of view, such an effort based on a set of credit matters, although probable in the national context, will distinguish between nations.

Islam is based on an Islamic government in which there are no ethnic, racial, linguistic, etc., differences, and all human beings are equal; and they will all try to do the laws of Islam and God's rules. This alliance is intellectual and ideological (Ibid: 83).

#### **10. Security and Its Various Dimensions**

In its objective sense, security means the absence of a threat to the acquired values, and in its subjective sense implies the lack of fear that will attack these values (Wolfers, 1962: 105).

According to the security concept, a country has security that does not have to sacrifice its vital interests and maintain its vital interests by winning the war in a conflict. Security has various social, political, military, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions

and can be defined at different local, national, regional, and global (Roshandel, 1994: 11).

In their joint book, "Regions and Powers," Barry Buzan and El Weaver argue that any country's security is not self-sufficient. Internal factors are not reliable to analyze a country's national security. On the other hand, due to the ambiguity and lack of general understanding of governments' global security, they introduce the regional level as the appropriate analysis level (Buzan and Weaver, 2009: 54). Researchers consider various security dimensions, including social, military, political, cultural, economic, and environmental. They believe that disturbances in any of the measurements can affect other dimensions in a chain manner.

### 11. Security in Islamic Thought

Security in modern and Western definitions, which is the basis of planning the plans of today's governments, is very different from the safety emphasized in Islamic thought and the Holy Quran. The Qur'an "Faith Security" is an essential issue, and its interpretation is close to the lexicon of faith and security. The Holy Qur'an mentions the "Faith Security" as the "Standard" security. The meaning of security comes from the root "a-m-n," which means to be safe and secure. "Amn" is one of the derivatives of this word, which means to have confidence and to believe. The Qur'an, while enumerating security and its objective aspects, considers the complete and prominent type of security as security based on faith in God. This concept represents all three modern meanings of accurate and mental security and peace of mind. Therefore, "Faith" and "Safety" are equal in divine logic (Gharayagh Zandi, 2011: 6-7).

"Those who believe and have not confused their Faith with polytheism, Security] in this world and the Hereafter [Belongs to them; they are rightly guided" (Quran, Anam: 82).

In another verse, God Almighty has considered "Safety" as compensation for "Faith."

"Allah has promised to those of you Mankind who believe and do good that He will appoint them the rulers in the world as he appointed those before Them; and will establish in authority Their religion which He is pleased with It; and He will replace security for their Fears;] and Allah states: They should Worship me only and should not Consider any partner for Me" (Quran, Noor: 55).

In Islamic culture, faith is both the basis of security and its goal. "Be sure That real tranquility for the hearts rests in Allah's Remembrance," remembering God and being in solidarity with God and correcting man's relationship with God leads to security, peace, and safety because communication with God causes man to find his right place in existence. Also, man's philosophical identity depends

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on man's correct understanding of his position in the presence (Jazayeri and Eftekhari, 2006: 13).

The concept of faith security in the Qur'an can be applied in all three general aspects of the idea of security. The Qur'an also discusses the result of the faith security in objective terms, including the breadth of aliment or protection from cunning, deceit, and disturbance; and by emphasizing key issues such as patience and trust, in mental terms conveys a kind of hopeful outlook on society. Finally, in the psychological aspect, God's remembrance calms the hearts (Gharayagh Zandi, 2011: 28-29).

The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) mission is to invite people to believe in God and the security that results from faith in God. From the beginning of his mission, the Prophet made a connection between belief in God and prosperity and salvation, that security is one of the instances: "Say God is unique to be saved." Throughout the Mecca and Medina period, he emphasized Islam's religion and monotheism as a security source; in defense of the faith, Prophet even risked his life in wars and non-wars (Lakzaei, 2016: 28).

#### **12. Geographical Scope of Research**

The geopolitical area of Southwest Asia in general and the southern margin of the Persian Gulf is the geographical area of the present study. Over the years, here has been the base of many American efforts to reduce Iran's power and national security and challenge Southwest Asia's security. A region in which some Arab countries have recently, with the US President's exceptional support, sought to launch new efforts to weaken Iran's position. They are trying to form an Arab military coalition in the region based on modern and Western ideas. They are indifferent to Islam's teachings, which are designed for unity and cohesion.

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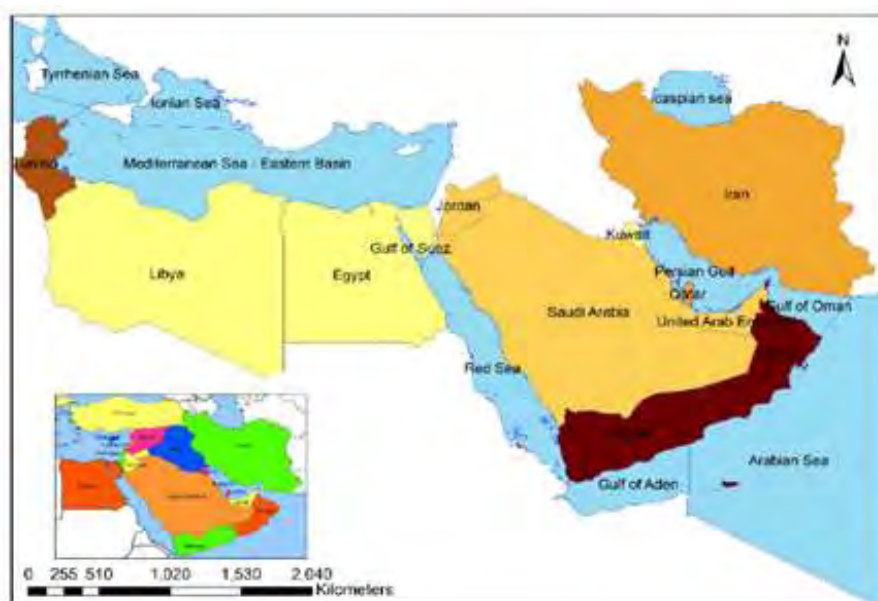


Figure 1: Southwest Asia and the Countries in the Region (Source: Authors)

According to studies in the region, countries such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Egypt are vigorously pursuing an Arab military coalition. Some other Arab-African countries, such as Morocco, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia, are also interested in joining.

For example, in May 2017, as the Gulf Arab states intensified their interest in forming a new Arab military alliance, some analysts called the "Arab NATO," the United States strongly supported this possible alliance. The visit of President Donald Trump to Riyadh also showed interest in this support. He visited Saudi Arabia and met the leaders of more than fifteen Arab countries in the region (During which the whispers of the formation of the "Arab NATO" became severe). The American newspaper "The Hill" in an article entitled "An 'Arab NATO' Including Israel Can Exist if it Stays Quiet" stated that the formation of the Arab NATO is another attempt to confront Iran; something like the military action of Saddam's regime under Reagan. (Rahimi, 2018: 20).

This Arab military alliance, which some analysts refer to as the Arab NATO, focuses on a collective and regional coalition to counter Iran. In recent years, it has been proposed by King Salman of Saudi Arabia, with the participation of the leaders of 15 Arab countries plus Turkey and Pakistan, and US President Donald Trump in Riyadh, to continue Saudi Arabia's aggressive policies with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Because of its utterly Arab nature, unlike Islamic NATO and other previous coalition ideas, it is funded by rich Arab countries. Its members are heavily dependent on Saudi Arabia, and its headquarters will be in Riyadh at the hands of Saudi



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Arabia. It is very different from other counter designs and can be more successful under these factors' influence (Rahimi, 2018: 22).

Rumors of the Arab NATO founding first surfaced after US President Donald Trump visited Saudi Arabia on May 21, 2017. The trip, Trump's first official visit since taking office, aimed to strengthen allies and bring the Arab actors' differing perspectives on the US Middle East strategy. On this date, about twenty Arab and Islamic countries gathered in Riyadh with Trump, and Iran's issue was one of the meeting's main topics. The proposal to form an alliance called "Arab NATO" was also raised for the first time at the meeting, mostly to counter Iran's influence. However, for various reasons, it has not gone beyond the initial proposals and some limited measures, such as the Egyptian exercise in mid-2018 and the preliminary meeting of military representatives in early 2019. In November 2018, during the Manama Security Conference, the Strategic Middle East Alliance, including the United States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt, and Jordan, was proposed for the first time. In January 2019, Mike Pompeo noted that the Trump administration's goal in the coalition was to address the region's most severe threats and support energy and economic cooperation, saying that it was time to end past rivalries to improve the area (Karami, 2020: Abrar Contemporary Studies Institute).

### **13. Research Findings**

In Islamic political thought, Islamic unity and cohesion based on concepts such as the *Uma* and the avoidance of inciting ethnic and racial differences are the basis for the production of security and peaceful life. In the current situation in the Persian Gulf's margin countries, especially Saudi Arabia, influenced by the destructive roles of trans-regional actors such as the United States, seek to produce security in the region in military alliances. Hence, they are desperate to establish an Arab military coalition called Arab NATO. Studies on the current situation in the geopolitical region of Southwest Asia and the existing relations between the countries showed that several factors directly impact the formation of the Arab military alliance in the Persian Gulf.

Factors such as: increasing Iran's military capabilities and weapons, increasing insecurity and tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the role of extra-regional powers and their influence, lack of economic dependence between Iran and the countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, a high volume of oil, gas, and energy in the Persian Gulf and the competition of Arab countries with Iran to seize the energy market, different religions, languages, and ethnicities of the Arab countries bordering the Persian Gulf, as well as Iran's nuclear agreement with the P 5+1.

The Arab countries of the Persian Gulf are worried that Iran, based on the factors mentioned above, in a close geopolitical rivalry with them and its other allies, will win the axis of resistance and become a superior and uncontrollable power. Based on the apparent developments, they were forced to form an Arab military coalition with supra-regional allies, especially the United States, to gain a deterrent and possibly sufficient offensive force against Iran. On the other hand, the present study's authors consider several factors as obstacles to forming this coalition. Factors such as current good relations between Iran and Oman as one of the influential Arab countries in the Persian Gulf, the emergence and escalation of tensions between Qatar and other Arab countries, concerns of regional economic rivals such as India, Turkey, and Russia about the formation of this coalition and the spread of its consequences to the interests of these countries, the complete lack of cooperation of the Egyptian political leaders with the alliance and their conflict with the internal protests, the interior public opinion of the Arab countries and the state-nation divide in these countries, Pakistan-Iraq mediation efforts to improve Iran-Saudi relations, as well as heavy coalition spending and fears of full-scale war. So far, achieving a systematic and organized coalition in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf has remained incomplete (Gelpi, ch: 1991, 84). The following table mentions the influential factors as well as the obstacles.

**Table 2:** Geopolitical factors of the success and failure of the Arab Gulf military alliance

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <p>Success Factors</p> | <p>Increasing Iran's military capabilities and weapons, increasing insecurity and tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the role of extra-regional powers and their influence, lack of economic dependence between Iran and the countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, a high volume of oil, gas, and energy in the Persian Gulf and the competition of Arab countries with Iran to seize the energy market, different religions, languages, and ethnicities of the Arab countries bordering the Persian Gulf, as well as Iran's nuclear agreement with the P 5+1.</p> |
| <p>Failure Factors</p> | <p>Good relations between Iran and Oman, the emergence and escalation of tensions between Qatar and other Arab countries, concerns of regional economic rivals such as India, Turkey, and Russia about the formation of this coalition, the complete lack of cooperation of the Egyptian political leaders with the alliance, the interior public opinion of the Arab countries, Pakistan-Iraq mediation efforts to improve Iran-Saudi relations, as well as heavy coalition spending and fears of full-scale war.</p>  |

Source: Authors

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### Conclusion

Islamic countries in the geopolitical region of Southwest Asia, despite their many religious and cultural commonalities and shared history in the past centuries, are influenced by humanist ideals, and Western governance patterns face severe problems in interacting with each other and the political management of their nations. The religion of Islam and the teachings of the Qur'an emphasize unity among Muslims and their avoidance of division. Regarding the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) teaching, Muslims' unity and their meeting under titles such as the Islamic Ummah has emphasized. Today, the political leaders of the grassroots governments formed in the region, like the Western nations, seek to govern their own countries and the area following patterns that are not commensurate with Islamic history and civilization.

A procedure according to which it is possible to understand why transnational institutions created by Islamic countries such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Cooperation Council of the Persian Gulf, the Union of Arab Countries, etc., have not achieved much success. And under the influence of many political and security margins, they have largely lost their effectiveness. Regardless of Islamic ideas and teachings, they have suffered a lot of damage to the political, economic, security, etc.

In the same context, in the years leading up to 2020, several countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf and North Africa, all of which are Islamic countries, influenced by the stressful policies of the United States, and in particular, the current president, Donald Trump, they sought to form an Arab military coalition called the Arab NATO.

The coalition aims to increase the Persian Gulf's margin countries' security and prevent the growing geopolitical influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region. Many experts in international affairs and political geography believe that this coalition does not positively affect creating security and reducing insecurity in the geopolitical area of Southwest Asia but can pave the way for insecurity and many other tensions in the region.

The margin countries of the Persian Gulf, especially the political leaders of Saudi Arabia, in the process of forming an Arab military alliance called the Arab NATO, like other regional models, have resorted to Western political-security ideas and models to get rid of the existing problems and differences. To prove this claim, we can refer to the neo-realism theory and its sub-theories, namely the idea of hegemony. Neo-realists believe that countries in a geopolitical region can mainly address their security concerns by forming

military alliances to achieve security and reduce regional insecurity and rival threats. This process happened with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Warsaw Pact, and the like. Again, the Arab Gulf states are seeking to form an Arab military alliance by the same model.

This alliance, which is known in the media as the Arab NATO and is sought by Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt, etc., can also be evaluated and analyzed as the hegemony theory. According to the hegemony theory, scholars believe that a geopolitical region's countries are influenced by supra-regional and global powers to achieve a military alliance and move towards a military alliance under these powers' guidance. The same is true of the Gulf Arab military alliance. US political leaders, such as President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, are keen to form a coalition.

This process of the Arab countries, while a large area of Southwest Asia belongs to the Islamic countries, whose history and civilization are intertwined in the past centuries due to Islam's trans-regional spread; and under the shadow of Islamic ideas and the teachings left in the memory of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), they can adapt their native patterns to get rid of problems and provide security.

It seems that as long as Islamic countries, especially in the Persian Gulf geopolitical region, seek Western versions to get rid of security threats and global problems, regardless of Islamic ideas and many religious and cultural commonalities, the issues in the region will continue. Existing tensions, especially between Iran and Saudi Arabia, will create unique opportunities for trans-regional powers such as the United States to play a lucrative role in the region.

Contrary to the existing process, and in the case of Islamic countries' return to the indigenous security versions derived from Islamic ideas, it can hope that the conditions for improving relations between Islamic countries will increase. And to achieve the necessary conditions for the growing growth and development of the countries in the good.

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