



# INVESTIGATING THE SOURCE OF CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST THROUGH A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MICROCOSM MODEL WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN ROLES TO DEESCALATE THE TENSION

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## Abstract

*In this paper, a multidimensional microcosm model is presented to investigate the origin of conflicts in the Middle East. In this regard, by dividing the origin of conflicts into three parts, national, regional and extra-regional, they were identified. Also, the injustice and the lack of comprehensiveness of peace plans are the most important reasons for their failure. Investigations showed that the solutions to reduce tensions include the conclusion of Iran's nuclear negotiations, a confrontation with terrorism and ending the Palestinian crisis through the Arab peace plan.*

**Keywords:** *Conflicts, Middle East, multidimensional microcosm model, Russian, Iran.*

## 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The security challenges of the Middle East are one of the main causes of tensions and conflicts and creating the problem of peace and conflict resolution in this region, the result of which is the sacrifice of concepts such as human rights and democracy [1]. In other words, security concerns have created a serious obstacle to the spread of democracy and the recognition of human rights in the Middle East region [2]. Considering the need to create some developments in the theories of international relations in the face of conflicts in the Middle East region and also considering the effect of the developments in the Middle East region on economic and political issues in other parts of the world [3], conducting prospective studies to identify sources and the roots of conflicts and providing practical solutions based on post-modernity to solve them is necessary and important. On the other hand, so far many plans have been presented to resolve the conflict and create peace in this region [4], but they have failed in the implementation phase. Therefore, another important point is to investigate the reasons for the failure of these plans.

Therefore, a detailed examination of the effective factors as well as determining the contribution of each of them is necessary and important, which can lay the groundwork for providing practical and appropriate solutions to solve these problems and return lasting peace to the region. Therefore, in this research, a microcosm model is used to identify the factors influencing the creation of conflicts and instability of peace in the Middle East,

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## 2. THE ORIGIN OF CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In general, the root and source of conflict in the Middle East region should not be searched only at the regional level and the relations between the countries of the region. Rather, a series of regional, extra-regional and even domestic causes have played a role in creating, intensifying these conflicts or creating obstacles in the way of peace plans.

Factors such as not having a common collective identity, the illegitimacy of the ruling system, the weakness of citizens in political participation, injustice and social dissensions are among the most important factors within the country that can be the cause of conflict and disruption of peace within countries or even in the region [5]. Also, at the regional level, factors such as ethnic, racial, religious disputes, seeking power, interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, border disputes, disputes over water rights and oil and gas fields can create a foundation for challenging peace and starting conflicts and disputes. In addition, at the extra-regional or global level, the involvement of superpower countries in regional affairs with the aim of benefiting from the region's strategic position and energy resources can be effective in the occurrence of conflicts and the failure of peaceful plans. As can be seen, many factors can play a role in the occurrence of conflicts and the failure of peaceful solutions in the Middle East region, the common point of all of them is that, in the first step, the security of the region is challenged.

Although all the mentioned factors play a role in creating or increasing tensions in the Middle East region, the contribution of all these factors in creating tensions is not the same. Among the national factors, the illegitimacy of the ruling system and injustice are more important than other factors in creating tensions in the Middle East region because the governance in many countries of the Middle East region, especially Arab countries is of the type of monarchy and dictatorship. Also, many countries in the region are involved in problems such as discrimination and injustice, and these injustices can lead to the formation of protests, riots, conflicts and finally, the occurrence of revolution.

At the regional level, one of the main causes of conflict is the religious issues that the governments are involved in. Also, racial discrimination can be one of the main reasons for the formation of conflicts and wars between countries. These differences generally lead to regional conflicts and wars. These conflicts often take place in the form of terrorist operations. The long-term conflict between Palestine and Israel, which is the most important conflict in the Middle East region, has religious and racial discrimination roots. Other examples have been observed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. In addition, the dispute over oil and gas can also be the root of many conflicts. In some cases, these conflicts are over the passage of oil to sell it to world markets. For example, Saudi Arabia entered into severe tensions with this country as well as Iran due to find a new route for the passage of its oil tankers and transfer them to Europe through Yemen. In addition, the dispute over water rights is also among these cases. An example of these conflicts has occurred between Iran and Afghanistan over the Hirmand River [6], as well as between the three countries of Turkey, Iraq and Syria over the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

At the extra-regional level, the interests of countries such as the United States, Russia, and China have increased tensions in the Middle East. America's attack on Afghanistan and Iraq and this country's numerous military bases in the Middle East region, as well as America's financial and military support to Israel, are examples of America's actions to increase tensions in the Middle East region. Similarly, Russia has played a role in all tensions in the region. Interference in the internal affairs of Iraq, Syria and Yemen has been some of these measures. At the extra-regional level, the role of America and Russia in creating tensions in the Middle East region is more than that of other countries.

## 3. DE-ESCALATION AND PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In recent years, the Middle East region has moved towards regional de-tension and peace building. Some countries have tried to resume normal relations with their neighbors. This process started with the United Emirates trying to establish a relationship with Iran. Saudi Arabia also did the same



regarding the re-establishment of relations with Qatar. In addition, diplomatic interactions were formed between Egypt and Qatar, Turkey and Egypt, UAE and Turkey, Turkey and Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as Turkey and Saudi Arabia [7].

After long years of tension, Egypt has established diplomatic relations with Qatar. The diplomats of these two countries formed a committee to resolve the problems in the relations between the two countries and to develop cooperation between the two countries.

Egypt and Turkey have established good relations by establishing peace. Delegations from the two countries negotiated with the aim of solving some bilateral problems and regional issues - especially regarding the conditions of Libya, Syria and Iraq. Some Turkish ministers also visited Egypt, which is the first visit of Turkish officials to Cairo after 9 years [8].

Also, two regional rivals, namely Iran and Saudi Arabia, negotiated for the first time in recent years with the help of Iraq. Security issues, Yemen and the reopening of embassies have been among the focal points of these talks.

The secret visit of the Israeli foreign minister to Ankara and the trip of a delegation of Turkish officials to Israel provided grounds for establishing relations, reducing tensions and creating peace. The parties also discussed the transfer of Israeli gas to Europe through Turkey [9].

Saudi Arabia and Turkey started normalizing relations by exchanging messages and calls between King Salman and Erdogan. These relations have been very effective in reducing tensions in the Middle East region.

In addition to the formation of peace negotiations between the countries of the region, the actions of extra-regional governments have also been effective in reducing some of the tensions. The withdrawal of American military forces from Afghanistan can be considered as one of the most important measures taken in this regard. In addition, negotiations between China and Russia have significantly helped to reduce the level of tensions in the Middle East.

#### **4. THE REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE PLANS**

Middle East peace plans are often proposed by the Zionists or their western supporters and some Arab governments. Therefore, it is obvious that all these plans are designed to improve or stabilize the precarious position of the Israeli government in the region. In all these plans, Israel has always benefited from more privileges than the Palestinians.

Although some efforts to create peace and reduce tensions in the Middle East region have been successful and have been able to lead to bilateral peace in some countries of the region, but the main roots of existing disputes and disputes remain unresolved.

Among the most important peace proposals that have been presented regarding the establishment of sustainable peace in the Middle East region are Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, the Camp David Agreement in 1978, the Madrid Conference in 1991, the Oslo Agreement in 1993, the 2001 negotiations in Egypt, the Ascending Saudi Peace Plan in 2002, the Geneva Agreement in 2003, Annapolis in 2001, the Washington Plan in 2010, the Trump Century Peace Plan in 2018, etc. [10].

The reason for the failure of many plans that have been put forward to resolve the conflicts in the Middle East and create peace is the failure to observe the principle of justice and the lack of comprehensiveness of these plans.

#### **5. RUSSIA'S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Russia, as one of the players in the Middle East region, after the revolutions in North Africa and its spread to the Middle East, has changed its approach towards this region and each of the countries of the region, according to its interests. In this regard, Russia, together with Iran and the forces of the resistance axis in Syria, are fighting against the militant and opposition forces of Assad. While it has extensive diplomatic and intelligence relations with Israel and have remained silent against the tensions created by Israel and the aggressive actions of this regime against the Syrian government. In addition, Russia sells its most advanced missiles and war weapons to Turkey, which can lead to an increase in conflicts in the Middle East. Also, Russia has started strategic cooperation with the



United Arab Emirates. In addition, agreements have been made between Russia, Jordan and Israel regarding the reduction of tensions in the south of Russia. Also, Russia has declared neutrality regarding the disputes between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. In fact, Russia tries to pursue its goals and interests through cooperation with all actors in the region. As it can be seen, Russia's relationship with some countries is in the direction of increasing tensions in the Middle East region, while the relationship with some other countries leads to the reduction of tensions. Therefore, Russia's goal in its relations with regional countries is not to reduce or increase tensions, but the main goal is to achieve greater interests of Russia.

Russia has huge resources and capacities of fossil reserves. Therefore, Russia should behave in such a way that security issues and geopolitical competitions in the region do not increase the production capacity of oil and gas and decrease the price of these resources in the world markets. In this regard, Russia tries to avoid creating tension in its relations with the main players who have these reserves in the Middle East. Also, it tries to reduce the level of tension in the relations of these actors with each other. Therefore, in order to achieve its economic interests in the region, Russia needs to reduce the tension in its relations with countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar.

Russia is one of the main arms sellers in the world. Considering that one of the main markets for weapons consumption is the Middle East region, therefore, increasing tensions and conflicts in this region can provide Russia's economic interests [11].

In Russia's stance on the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the dualities of Russia's foreign policy can be seen. When relations between Russia and Israel are tense, Russia's support for Palestine has increased. In addition, when Russia's relations with America and Israel have improved, Russia's support for Palestine has drastically decreased. In the case of Iran, Russia has adopted a similar policy and has supported Iran during Iran's nuclear negotiations with Western countries, whenever the parties, especially Iran and America, had many differences. But when the differences between Iran and the United States have decreased in the negotiations, Russia has prevented the finalization of the negotiations and the achievement of a lasting agreement. This confirms that for Russia, the increase or decrease of tension in the Middle East region has become a tool to achieve political and economic goals and interests, and in this regard, Russia does not consider any country as its permanent friend or enemy.

## **6. IRAN'S ROLE IN REDUCING TENSIONS AND ESTABLISHING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION**

Iran's role in reducing tensions and establishing peace in the Middle East region can be analyzed in three axes. The first axis includes the countries of Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon. With the entry of Iran into Iraq, the political and security routine of this country experienced positive changes. The real manifestation of this was when ISIS entered the territory of Iraq and began extensive occupations. Iran's presence in Iraq saved this country from the danger of disintegration and internal war of attrition. Also, the Syrian government had practically lost its control over the country after the arrival of ISIS and the conflict between terrorist groups. With the timely presence of a consultant, Iran was able to end this great regional challenge that was the foundation for the formation of the third world war. In the continuation of this crisis, Yemen also entered into conflicts and changed the equations, but Iran's political support revealed Iran's new role in reducing tensions and creating regional peace. In addition, supporting the Lebanese nation against Zionist aggression is one of the other important measures that binds Iran with the Lebanese nation.

The second axis of Iran's influence on Middle East tensions includes the countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey and Qatar. The conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan has created great tensions between these two countries, but Iran's diplomatic activities have prevented war between them for many years. The strategic restraint of the parties, in addition to securing Iran's security interests, is also important and effective for the peace and stability of both countries and the region. On the other side of this axis are the countries of Qatar and Turkey. Although these two countries were one of the most important and influential factors in creating instability and tension



in Syria, Iran's equations were arranged in such a way that, in addition to solving the challenge of terrorist groups, it approached these two strategic neighbors, and the relations between Iran and these two countries underwent extensive transformation. Although Saudi Arabia tried to form a coalition between the countries involved in the tension in Syria against Iran, it itself became a factor in the confrontation with Turkey and Qatar. Supporting the failed coup in Turkey against Iran's aid to the Turkish government and the blockade of Qatar against Iran's all-round aid show Iran's focus on de-escalation and stability in the Middle East region.

The third axis also includes Saudi Arabia, UAE and Israel, which can be considered the most tension-causing group that has destroyed the order and security of the Middle East and has always led to the presence of Western countries in the region in line with crisis-causing alliances. The conflict of these countries with Iran is obvious because their life, especially Israel, depends on the continuation of the crisis. Saudi Arabia also seeks to increase its power by creating a regional security puzzle by increasing insecurity. The United Arab Emirates has also increased the intensity of its destructive activities. These three countries have practically disrupted the regional order. The foreign policies of the Iranian government have always been aimed at confronting the destructive actions of the countries of this axis and increasing peace in the Middle East region [12].

## **7. PROVIDING SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE TENSIONS, FOCUSING ON RUSSIA AND IRAN**

Using solutions based on political dialogue and multilateral cooperation based on fairness, can lead to the establishment of sustainable peace in the Middle East region. In recent years, especially after the Arab uprisings in the region, Russia has played a role as an active extra-regional actor in the Middle East. The adoption of such a role has been of particular interest since President's Putin's era, but under the influence of internal and especially regional and international developments, it has been accompanied by ups and downs. In the last few years, the events in the Middle East in the form of the Syrian issue have caused Russia to play an active and effective role in the Middle East and confront the unilateral presence of the West led by the United States in this region. This role-playing has occurred with the aim of balancing power.

Considering Iran's key role in the Middle East region, one of the practical solutions to reduce tensions in this region is to normalize Iran's relations with regional and extra-regional countries, especially the United States, because the tensions between Iran and the United States cause tension between Iran and America's allies in the region. It is obvious that reaching a stable agreement between Iran and America can reduce some of the tensions in the Middle East region.

The second practical solution to establish peace in the Middle East region is to fight against all forms and symbols of terrorism. In fact, limiting the fight against terrorism to one of its forms and ignoring other types leads to the creation of more conflicts and armed groups. The forces of the regional coalition against terrorism centered on Iran and Russia, as well as Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Arab countries, can help to do this and improve security in the region.

The third practical solution to reduce tensions in the Middle East region and create peace is to create constructive solutions for the Palestinian people. In this regard, Russia should put pressure on Israel to accept the Arab peace plan to revive the peace process between the Arabs and Israel. This powerful action of Russia can take the Palestinian issue out of the hands of destructive actors in the region who use the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a tool to gain the emotional support of Muslims. Many of these regional actors have not paid the least attention to creating a solution for the Palestinian issue and are more interested in achieving their developmental goals and forming militia groups and obstructing the peace process and disrupting it.

Another proposed solution to reduce tensions in the Middle East is to support the legitimate government of Yemen. This approach can prevent Yemen from becoming a permanent scene for terrorist activities and sectarianism. In order to help the Arab coalition, Russia and Iran should support the legitimate government of Yemen and provide intelligence, security and logistics support to the coalition. Yemen's civil war and the country's war with Saudi Arabia pose a serious threat to the security of this country's neighbors and the world's shipping movement and the energy



transfer route to the world markets in Bab al-Mandab and the Strait of Hormuz, and if the security of these areas is not ensured, tensions will increase.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Factors such as the illegitimacy of the ruling system, and, injustice are the most important national factors of conflict in the Middle East. Also, at the regional level, factors such as religious disputes and seeking power, are a foundation for conflicts. In addition, at the extra-regional or global level, the involvement of superpower countries in regional affairs with the aim of benefiting from the region's strategic position and energy resources is the most important factors of conflict in the Middle East. Moreover, the injustice and the lack of comprehensiveness of peace plans are the most important reasons for their failure in the Middle East. Also, investigations showed that the solutions to reduce tensions include the conclusion of Iran's nuclear negotiations, a confrontation with terrorism and ending the Palestinian crisis through the Arab peace plan.

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