



THE REALISM OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM IN ACHIEVING INTERNATIONAL STABILITY: THE MIDDLE EAST AS A MODEL (2003-2020)

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This research seeks to analyze the nature of American realism in achieving international stability in the Middle East.

Methodology: This research adopted the logical, historical, and decision-making approaches to measure the extent of its impact on the structure of the international, regional system.

Main Findings: Based on the nature of the international strategic situation, the American administration is required to change its approach in maintaining its interests through the use of realism in its traditional and modern concept and its contemporary lines of thought that reflect the American political thought at the external level in dealing with the changes and events taking place in the structure of the regional system in the Middle East.

Applications of this study: This research is scientifically and practically significant since it: Contributes to enriching the theoretical aspect of the academic studies on developments in the reality of the American administration and its use of this model in achieving international stability in the Middle East region.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This research completely discussed the perceptions about the tracks of the American administration and the extent of use of realism in achieving international stability, especially in the Middle East region. As well as define the realist conditions, means, methods, and tools adopted by the American administration in strengthening the power theory to achieve international stability and enhancing its position in the Middle East.

Keywords: *Realism, American Political System, International Stability, Middle East.*

INTRODUCTION

Realism has been the most prevalent theory in analyzing stability and instability in the international situation and international relations since the second half of the last century (Grieco, 1988; Spilker, Bernauer, & Umaña, 2018). It was created on the logic of the conflict for power in the international system to defend the interests of the major countries, focusing on the security perspective as an anchor of the conflict. The international system is based on frequent and regular interactions among international actors (Natalizia & Valigi, 2020). Such interactions are governed by interests and patterns of power of these actors, whether military, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, or political power. The Cold War played a central role in harmonizing the theoretical proposition of realism with the nature of the international system at that time (Fiott, 2013, 2015). This theory managed to explain and analyze the logic of the use of force in the conflict, from its start to the collapse of the international conflict model with the fall of the former Soviet Union. As a planner of American policies, George Kennan defined the course of realistic analysis in the 1940s, through the perception of (containment of the communist enemy). Subsequently, axioms that governed the concept of the international conflict itself emerged (James, 1995; James, Solberg, & Wolfson, 1999).

In the second half of the twentieth century, and light of the pluralistic perspective of international powers, the liberal school - that sought to frame international multilateral cooperation and its mechanisms- emerged in the face of the realist school that attached great importance to the military force and the interests of individual countries as a determinant of the factors governing international relations (Sinclair, 2020). The elements of military power were the foundation used by the United States of America in measuring and determining the level of power of both international and regional actors, especially in the Middle East. However, in light of the security and political developments in the Middle East, the US administration reinforced the military power with economic power and scientific-technological power, which have become today the basis of its strengths in managing international conflict, especially the Middle East region (Raouf, 2019).

This research seeks to analyze the nature of American realism in achieving international stability through the use of power theory, choosing the degree of power, and measuring the extent of its impact on the structure of the international regional system. Therefore, the central question of this research is: What is the extent to which the US administration uses realism in achieving international stability in The Middle East?. From this main question, the following sub-questions are divided:

1. What is the nature of American realism in the direction of the American administration in achieving international stability in the Middle East?

2. Does the American realist theory express a new strategy in the Middle East?
3. Will the US administration's use of realism affect the structure of the existing international and regional order?

Based on the questions of the research problem, the following hypothesis was formulated:

The nature of the international strategic situation forces the US administration to change its approach in preserving its interests through the use of realistic theory in its traditional and new sense and its contemporary intellectual trends that embody American political thought at the external level in dealing with the changes and events occurring in the structure of the regional system in the Middle East.

The rest of this paper's discussion is organized as follows: Section two reviews the previous literature. Section three of this research addresses the approach to methodology. Section four introduces and analyzes the empirical evidence, followed by section five, which elaborates conclusions and discussions. Finally, section six provides suggestions for potential investigation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

[Dichar \(2014\)](#) shows the role of the realism that has controlled the American foreign political affairs from the Second World War to the present day. This theory still governs American foreign policy and external behavior with the neo-liberalism. Realism has ceased to adopt the concepts of war, force, and anarchic international system; rather, it has adopted international dependence, joint cooperation, and soft power. This study shows the contemporary thought trends of American realist thought. [Noman \(2013\)](#) shows that the American expansionist thought emerged to serve dual ideologies. The first one relates to the material enrichment, and second relates to the inevitable destiny. Such dualism is based on realism as to expansion and realization of interests that are originally based on an aggressive occupying thought. ([He, 2017](#)); [Kitchen \(2010\)](#) examined the systemic pressures of the state and domestic ideas. They are a vivid example of the neoclassical realism of the grand strategy adopted by some countries to achieve their national goals and interests. The principles of the United States still adopt the principles of the classical realism in its foreign relations and the achievement of its national interests.

American Realism and Analysis of the Problem of International Stability

Realism has been the most prevalent theory in analyzing stability and instability in relations among countries, especially since the second half of the last century. It was created on the logic of the conflict for power in the international system, in defense of the interests of countries, primarily focusing on the security perspective as an anchor of the conflict.

The Effect of Realism on Post-Cold War International Stability

The developments in the post-Cold War world, in which the influence of many international actors has emerged, have not prevented the thought hegemony of realism. This was for several reasons, most notably that realism was founded on an integrated structure of conflict analysis, where war is one of its manifestations. This was described by some scholars such as [Gilpin \(2016\)](#) as a theoretical richness, in defense of realism against early critics, especially Richard Ashley ([Battistella, 2015](#)). Richard Ashley argued that realism is a dangerous and poor way of thinking, while others, such as Barry Buzan, argued that it is "wisdom" ([Buzan, 1996](#); [Smith, 2019](#)). Barry Buzan was one of the pioneers of the neorealism when he posed the security dilemma that countries are constantly facing due to the anarchy in the international system ([Ahn, 2020](#); [Stone, 2009](#)).

The supporters of realism (as to international stability or instability) built their view on a number of basic elements leading to international stability. These elements include ([Battistella, 2015](#)):

1. The state of anarchy in international relations, which corresponds to the state of war, is due to the absence of a supreme authority capable of preventing the use of violence by international parties.
2. The main actors in international relations are groups of conflicts defined in human groups within the concept of the "nation" state.
3. The internal needs drive a state to seek to achieve the largest possible number of national benefits and interests, taking into account the international power system.
4. The balance of power is the only framework that can regulate and ensure international peace, order, and stability.

The Cold War played an important and essential role in harmonizing the theoretical proposition of realism with the nature of the international system at that time. It managed to precisely explain and define the horizon of the international conflict, from its start until the fall of the international "conflicting" model, i.e., the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. George Kennan set the course of real analysis in the 1940s, through his conception of "containment of the communist enemy." After that, mechanisms were created to control the foundations of the international conflict itself. Such conflict was not confined only to war for several reasons:

1. The financing factor that controlled the views of liberal states is being driven by direct or semi-direct warfare with the Soviet Union or the Eastern Bloc in general, as happened in the Korean War between 1950 and 1953 ([Al-Ali, 2016](#));
2. The legal factor associated with the international direct mediation bodies, especially the international organizations, such as the United Nations; and
3. Indirect communication in various intelligence and diplomatic ways.

As to whether realism was able to explain, at least, the structure of the subsequent conflict, which is the framework of the current international relations after the fall of the Eastern Bloc, and to establish stability controls, the post-Cold War realism propositions, i.e., after 1989, included terms that exceed previous structure of the conflict during the Cold War, since the state is the focus of the analysis of the concept of the conflict itself. We can thus recall terms such as: “globalization,” “transnational,” “fragmentation,” “diaspora,” and other theoretical structures that were formulated to keep pace with the shift in viewing a state as a narrow framework for analyzing conflict and instability. Moreover, some non-international actors or tools have become influential in international stability, as we have witnessed duplication between two worlds. This is since politics has entered a period of turmoil or instability, and therefore the “non-sovereign” actors, ordinary people, networks, and “non-international” actors have recovered, where their movement is a challenge to the traditional liberalism of international relations ([Rosenau, 1990, 1994](#)).

The transformation announced with the end of the Cold War had not lived up to the expectations of theorists of realism, and their opponents. The most important thing enshrined by realism in its approaches to international relations is that the state, under the threat of disappearance and extinction, must take into account, in its external behavior, the possibility of war that it can bear, to preserve its security, or to avoid a potential imminent danger. ([Pin-Fat, 2005](#)).

This understanding was based on the statement of the “pioneer of realism,” Hans Morgenthau, as he said, “International politics, like any politics, is a struggle over increasing or maintaining power.” ([Pin-Fat, 2005](#)). Such power is based, in its content, on a psychosocial dimension indicating that hostility is the root of human relations, where relations among states are not governed by ethical standards applicable among individuals. Influenced by ideas of “Klausvitz,” “Raymond Aron” then developed that argument, through an advanced sociological pattern, where he argued that the conflict is a result of human consequences, as he did not deny the fact that the bipolar balance model in the international system, during the Cold War, required that the less powerful countries must be allies of one of the poles. However, he added, “The external behavior of states is not controlled by power relations only,” as the thoughts and feelings can influence the decisions of actors” ([Aron, 1962; Kuru, 2019](#)).

Through Raymond Aron, realism built a model for promoting and consolidating international peace and stability, based on the issues of “homogeneity and heterogeneity” among international groups, since a homogeneous system is a system in which countries belong to the same type or model, and respond to the same concept of politics. On the contrary, states in the heterogeneous system are organized according to other contradictory principles. For example, alliances can be a system of stability, but they are not homogenous systems for peacebuilding ([Aron, 1962](#)).

As for “Barry Buzan,” he renewed realism’s arguments with the emergence of non-international actors through what he called “the emerging chaos.” He argued that when the multi-ethnic countries begin to collapse, the national groups find themselves forced to achieve their own security, in the absence of an effective central authority that handles this task, and thus these groups become self-reliant in a manner that is very similar to the states in the international system. He explained that the rupture of states leads to a dilemma of regional instability, especially as the conflicting ethnicities seek to attract supporters from outside the states, which affects the stability of the international system, as what happened in the Yugoslav case. Thus, “Buzan” managed to find an approach to the interaction of international and non-international actors to explain the dilemma of stability extending from within to the international system.

It is important not to overlook the fact that the new pattern in the world, after the Cold War, stemmed from a structure linked to the economy, along with its continuous concern about the security dilemma. The concept of globalization itself is almost a reflection of a special type of leadership, and is in harmony with the decisions imposed by the flourishing liberal economy after the great victory over the values of socialism, as an alternative mode of economics. Therefore it might be asked about the role of the primary actor, i.e. the state, in the structure of the analysis of the realist school, in coordinating the interaction of globalization as a new phenomenon in international relations. Hence, the realism sought to renew itself in the context of preserving its traditional statements about the role of a state. This is in addition to understanding the influence of non-international actors emerged under globalization (such as multinational companies, international NGOs, etc.). In this context, the concept of the end of history was introduced with the victory of Western liberalism, led by America, as defined by Francis Fukuyama, undermining the basis of realism. He argued that the values, and not the template in which the values are placed, will survive. The predominant value was the democracy, so the idea and theory succeeded in impressing humanity.

The concept of “the clash of civilizations” failed due to the value contradiction, as it did not provide global stability, in light of a wave of ethnic conflicts in the world, especially in the 1990s. Ideas of “Samuel Huntington” and “Buzan” therefore emerged in the framework of realism, to shift the perspective of conflict in international relations from countries to the field of civilizations. However, everyone knows that this shift was arbitrary, and did not lead to offering

renewable alternatives through realism due to the influence of the primary factor, namely interests in the idea of international clash of civilizations itself.

The post-Cold War race produced a number of variables that reinforced the state of absence of system and declined stability. These variables include the end of the strategic stability imposed by the Cold War, and the geopolitical and economic struggle for power in international relations, as well as the growing space that has become “occupied by the identity course” in International politics, and the consequent increasing rates of violence, and the promotion of the statements of conflict and clash between civilizations and states.

The idea of absence of an international system leads to two main central problems:

1. Problem 1- The absence of international powers’ consensus on the existing international pattern, which leads to the unstable revolutionary model as called by Henry Kissinger, where one of the major countries in the international system rejects the distribution of powers, roles and features that constitute the legitimacy of the existing system, and then the international system tends towards more instability ([Davutoğlu, 2013](#); [Murinson, 2006](#)).
2. Problem 2- It is the problem of power, and the system disorder that can be associated with it, as the realist school has attached great importance to power, the balance of power, and the national interest as variables governing the stability of the international system. Thus, the achievement of stability depends on the balance of power among states. Therefore, (Organski) proposes the theory of the transformation of power, as he believes that stability is not dependent on the balance of power, rather the superiority of a major power (like the United States of America) over other countries, in terms of the amount of power it possesses. Such power creates a state of stability in the international system, so that a state that has a greater power is satisfied with its position, while the other powers cannot stand in the way of such power nor can they challenge the system ([Balkılıç & Teke Lloyd, 2020](#); [Moawad, 2012](#)).

American realism and the problem of instability in international law

As school, realism suggests that the existence and effectiveness of international law and the institutions resulting from it are associated with the interests of more powerful countries such as the United States of America ([Battistella, 2015](#)). Consequently, from the point of view of the realist school’s supporters, there should be no conflict between both tracks (international law and the interest of states).

For a long time, realists have been aware of the importance of this feature (non-contradiction), in order to formulate a reasonable and acceptable structure for international stability, based on the interests of the more powerful parties in international relations. Such parties were for a long time being the states, but they remained so in the structure of the current international system. To this end, a set of different approaches emerged in the context of defining realism that corresponds to a globalized world in which the state lost its authority, and it became impossible to ignore international law in international relations. The famous political scientist, Friedrich Schuman, the geopolitician Speakman, the sociologist, Max Weber, the philosopher, Carl Smith, and the famous historian, Edward Kerr were the most prominent scholars who contributed to this renovation process.

Approaches in the post-Cold War era, especially those related to reading and interpreting the concept of stability in relations among countries, have come more associated with a legal meaning, even if it is excessive and subject to the nature of the balance of power. Therefore, realism has become required to adapt the international law and formulate its implementation policies, and this is subject to the decision of the most powerful country in the international system such as the United States of America.

Consequently, the so-called “acceptable or legalized power” emerged, where international interventions in many cases such as in Iraq and Afghanistan have become legalized in the context of international law. Though this power may cause international instability, especially in its results, where such interventions resulted in international instability under a law-based power, it has reflected vision of the major powers, led by the United States, in exploiting international law for their interests. This is what actually happened in the last three decades, especially after the second Gulf War 1990-1991. Further, the USA exploited international law to achieve the greatest possible degree of its strategic and national interests in the Middle East region in particular.

Although international law contains a set of human values, human rights, and all types of freedoms, as a basis for international stability in the face of extremism, violence, and cross-border terrorism, it has remained a theoretical framework. This is specifically since the realism seems to have stopped introducing its statements that make these international laws and institutions the means of dominant powers. The foundations and extent of hegemony after the Cold War have not yet been defined except in isolated sectoral contexts, and accordingly, international law has not been able to achieve stability.

There are many models that form an attempt by the international law to refine the logic of the power that pursues its interests. For example, during the revolution against the Qaddafi regime, Libya witnessed the use of the principle of the responsibility to protect to dispel NATO intervention in support of the opposition in 2011, although the same principle was not accepted in the Syrian revolution, despite war crimes, and the heavy loss of lives. This makes it necessary for



the international community to undertake its responsibility by using appropriate means, diplomatic, humanitarian, and others, to protect the population from these crimes in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

Though the United Nations recognized the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, the reality of power in relations among countries witnessed several interpretations, which made the application of the principle an expression of the balance of world powers. In the same context, the annexation of Ukrainian Crimean to the Russian Federation, according to a controversial referendum held in March 2014, seemed to be an application of the principle of power rather than the values of international law. Therefore, we argue that realism has taken advantage of international law and did not address the problem of stability; rather, it has made the international system in a state of value confusion and chaos.

In principle, realism means that states and their interactions are the basic elements of the structure that defines the international system (Waltz, 2010). According to realism, international organizations and non-international units are not an independent actor because they only act with the mediation of the same state (Battistella, 2015), as some scholars want to include the sociological dimension of international relations in the vision to contain the role of the state (David, 2003). However, the international interactions did not depart from the state's effectiveness in arranging international relations, even after the end of the Cold War, where the manifestations of that period indicated a close link with the cultural, political, and economic interests of countries. This is as these interests are hidden within local or geographic interests in favor of groups that support the traditional concept of the state.

American realism has tried to explain stability in international interactions. Yet, the question arises strongly here: Has realism managed to exceed the framework of the nation-state with its structural transformations, which indicate the emergence of actors whose effects cannot be controlled by the state?

Thus, the state, including its power, has remained a post-Cold War standard for realists in viewing the international stability. Hence, the United States of America began to see itself authorized to do this in international interactions in the post-Cold War era.

However, there are changes in the nature of power in the current international interactions, especially after the rise of other powers to compete with the United States, depending on economic rather than military criteria, such as China, India, and others, and at the same time the decline of the American powers that represented the source of inspiration for the realism.

Based on the doctrine of responsibility, the United States must confront the problem of the absence of rules for the current international interactions, which may lead to instability. One of the possible solutions is, therefore, to push the rising powers to assume greater responsibilities, and to build strategic partnerships, so that there is a consensus among the multiple actors controlling international stability (Hachigian & Shorr, 2013).

The researcher argues that stability in international interactions has been associated with realism in that states can only defend their national interests through the powers that create an international balance. However, this constituted an introduction to instability in light of many transformations in the world for which realism could not offer explanations, rather it only produced its statements, and dealt with changes as it could be in the direct interest of the state, i.e., to obtain power in a state of international instability.

Role of the US Political System in Achieving International Stability

According to the realism, the levels of military progress and development of countries still play an important role in achieving international stability, and even in determining patterns of foundations of the new world order. It also defines patterns of the related parties to such world order, whether major powers or regional powers. As a sole major power or one of the major powers, the American political system would not be able to lead the international situation except through the huge qualitative superiority at the various military, economic, technological, cultural, social, and educational levels. As stated by experts and specialists, the USA, as a political system, possesses unparalleled military power, and its grand arsenal of precision-guided missiles and bombs can defeat any opponent without incurring major losses (Beckley, 2017). This explains that the US political system possesses the causes of power, and it is able to easily achieve stability due to a lack of any parallel power.

Role of the US military force in achieving international stability

Undoubtedly, realistic indicators show that it will take a long time to weaken the American army, the most powerful army in history, and to undermine the influence of the United States of America, as a political system, on the ground. The United States is the only country whose military spending that exceeds the overall military spending in China, Russia, Britain, Japan, France, India, Germany, Italy, South Korea, and Australia (Jung, 2019). Indeed, the United States maintains this superiority due to its excessive military spending of about one trillion dollars, which represents approximately 45-50% of the total defense spending in the world (Drezner, 2013).

The US political system gives priority to the international stability process, in order to achieve the greatest possible benefits for the United States in the first place, and the American people by preserving American interests. Therefore, we see that the United States has always made significant progress in technologies and military development that ensures

continuity of its superiority and dominance due to its large defense budget. While the defense budgets of most major countries are stable or low, the US military budget is constantly increasing. No other country or group of countries can keep pace with the US military technological progress within a generation ([Waltz, 2010](#)).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it should be mentioned that military power position has differed from the position in the pre-Cold War phase, i.e., in the bipolarity, where the relative importance of military power within the determinants of the overall power of states, basis for calculating the progress of states, is declining. This has rearranged the elements of the US power in the new world order, and the rise of a number of economic powers competing with the American system, including China, Japan, the European Union, and Russia, have contributed to diminishing the American economic power.

Shortly after the fall of the former Soviet Union, the USA sought to control the world. It attempted to establish a unipolar world, taking advantage of the vacuum caused by the absence of other major powers, such as the former Soviet Union, and the weakness of other capitalist powers. The USA sought to invest its victory - after the collapse of the communist bloc - by developing mechanisms governing international interactions politically and economically in order to maintain the global stability so that it can preserve its national interests, as the world became more stable and secure in the unipolar era. The USA employed its military supremacy in light of the new international variables in a way that achieves its political and economic interests ([Lake, 2019](#)). Further, such military supremacy ensures the US continued control over the new world order by making the liberal ideology, values of the democratic system, and the capitalist market economy an ideal model to be adopted by countries of the world in the footsteps of the American model, using the United Nations as a political and military tool, as well as the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank as tools to achieve its military and economic interests ([M. Saeed & Mahmoud, 2013](#)).

It is noticed that the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union on 25 December 1991, led to disorder in the global balance of power, which made the American political system take advantage of that disorder to employ its military capabilities on missions outside its borders. This would not have happened before fearing clashes with the former Soviet force.

The 2001 Afghanistan war and the invasion of Iraq on 20 March 2003 are two examples of the American military power that the USA has enjoyed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. NATO has become, therefore, a flexible tool used by the USA to implement its agenda directly and indirectly. Also, one of the results of the Cold War was the escalation of the role of economics in international relations as a result of the decline of the role of ideology due to the decline of Marxism-Leninism and the fall of most of the global security strategies that were based on power. This drove the major powers to re-examine their priorities and interests, and to transform from an economy that supports security to an economy that supports politics and interests ([A.-M. Saeed, 1991](#)).

The military campaign led by the United States and its allies against Iraq on 20 March 2003 is considered one of the main facts that confirm the end of the old international order that was established after the Second World War, and the establishment of a new world order. Under the pretext of achieving stability in the Middle East region, the Gulf in particular, the USA and its allies ignored international legitimacy, where the USA has become the most powerful country in a unipolar world ([Al-Dweik, 2004](#)).

The third Gulf War represented a translation of the new security strategy “the Bush Doctrine” ([Santos & Teixeira, 2013](#)). Bush Doctrine was considered an important shift in the American security doctrine and the way in dealing with international affairs related issues, where the trends of the Bill Clinton (deterrence and containment) were abandoned, and replaced by a strategy of pre-emptive strikes against terrorist organizations, and countries that support terrorism, enemy states, or even the countries that seek to possess power in a comprehensive sense.

In light of the foregoing, and regardless of the internal situation in Iraq in the times following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the phase that followed the collapse of the regime of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein demonstrated an excessive US feeling of power as an unprecedented major power. Manifestations of such power include possession of the latest types of weapons, conflicts in the twenty-first century under the pretext of achieving international stability and democratization, the short period in which the precise military operation against Iran was organized, the US technical information level, in addition to the large media and propaganda capabilities ([Kumar, 2006](#)).

After the invasion of Iraq in 2003, US realism contributed to achieving international stability, especially in the Middle East in order to maintain the US interests. After the 11 September attacks, the USA sought to implement its policy and project in the Middle East and began to call on the countries of the region to start democratic reforms, save Israel, which constitutes the optimal democratic model from the US point of view. Choosing the Middle East region to implement the US policy did not happen by accident. Rather, this region was chosen to achieve many short- and long-term goals, including those related to Israel and the US policy and interests, especially through the bilateral Israeli-American strategic agreement that was confirmed and insisted upon in the late era of Bush Jr. The Arab region has always been targeted by the major powers. It has been for centuries and decades a field of conflict between these powers, and has remained an area of intense competition for their interests. The western presence in general and the US presence in particular in the region have strengthened in terms of influence and bases since the establishment of Israel. Given the importance of oil and protection of its supplies.

The USA has not only interfered in inter-Arab relations and exerted pressure on a certain party to achieve a specific goal and impose a limited policy, but also exerted pressure to help the US presidents exploit and blackmail the Arab Gulf states, from Bush Jr., through Barack Obama, to Donald Trump 2017-2020.

International stability from the Arab Spring revolutions to the American-Iranian conflict in the Gulf 2011-2020

In order to achieve stability in the Middle East and in the world as a whole, The USA has realized that the US hard power policy must be replaced by a “soft power” policy during the era of President Barack Obama 2009-2016. According to Joseph Nye, if the USA wants to remain powerful, it must pay attention to its soft power, and if it can achieve its goals through hard power, this may pose a threat to the US goals and economic aspirations (Nye Jr, 2004).

At large, it is noticed that the US strategic approach changed remarkably after the end of the term of office of Bush Jr and under the presidency of Barack Obama. In his declaration of the end of the (Iraq war) on 31 August 2010, Obama declared the responsibility of the United States for the stability and leadership of the world through American influence throughout the world. This influence is not confined to the armed forces, preferably it includes diplomacy, economic power, and the power of the US model as well (Hoffman, 2008).

After the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and since Barack Obama took office in January 2009, the political discourse of the US system has remarkably moved away from “unilateralism,” and new US leadership patterns have emerged, though they are not fully clear. This was noticed during the international intervention in Libya, where the US leadership model was indirect, and the model of the USA administration in the Syrian crisis. This intervention reflected an international effort, in which the United States was the main player at the beginning, where it was keen to maintain the stability of the region and its strategic interests at the same time. This explains the USA role, where it quickly turned to play a supporting role (Blomdahl, 2016).

However, this change does not in any way mean a full return to the situation that prevailed before the Iraq war, which is practically the critical moment in which the USA’s situation declined from being a controlling state responsible for maintaining order and stability to an imperial power willing to change the rules of the game (Hoffman, 2008).

It should be mentioned here that whether the USA wants to maintain stability in the region (as it claims) in the main political discourses, or claims to do so, the USA has interests and a strategy in the region. The US strategy towards the Arab Spring revolutions (started from Tunisia at the end of 2010 and at the beginning of 2011) has been based on preserving its national interests, as the US policy and statements paid a great attention to strengthening democracy in the region. However, interests have always taken and still take precedence over the values of democracy and human rights. Yet, the United States failed since it did not replace Arab regimes by political systems that launch initiatives and take advantage of wealth so that the Arab world is able to deal with the USA, on equality, not dependency or inferiority basis. Such dependency and inferiority were established by the official Arab regimes in order to maintain security of such regimes.

During the Arab Spring revolutions after 2011, US interests in the region did not change, as US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, set the US goals in the region, which are agreed upon among all administrations. However, in her speech to the Munich conference, she wanted to remind European countries of such goals since they intersect with European interests. In the interest of the USA in safeguarding its interests and achieving stability for its interests, Republican Senator John McCain agreed on the points mentioned in Hillary Clinton’s speech in the Munich Conference on American interests in the Middle East, which include:

1. Strong security cooperation with Arab regimes that have been collapsing since the Tunisian revolution.
2. Peace between Israel and the Arabs in a manner that guarantees Israel’s security.
3. The Iranian nuclear file, i.e. preventing Iran from acquiring a military nuclear capability, bearing in mind that the behavior of the United States in the region has served Iran’s ambition in regional hegemony, and has weakened the role of Arab regimes.
4. Combating terrorism, i.e. Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Al-Nusra, and Hezbollah.

As for the strategy of Republican President Donald Trump (2017-2020), it sought to achieve stability in the Middle East, as it was based on his policy (security for stability) to protect Arab regimes in the Middle East, especially in the Arabian Gulf. In one of his tweets on 11 December 2018, Trump said “We defeated the Islamic State in Syria, and this is why we are there.” The decision of withdrawal of American forces from Syria was a shocking development. The European allies, Israel and the Kurds in Syria were also shocked since they thought that such withdrawal would undermine the US strategy and role in achieving stability in the region. This is since the role of the United States is not confined to combating ISIS; rather it includes confronting Iranian expansion in Syria, preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and preventing of Iranian expansion inside Iraq. When the role of Iran increased, the United States killed two Iranian leaders in Iraq and Syria, Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, on 3 January, 2020, to protect the US forces in Iraq as claimed by the USA, to deter any Iranian plans for future attacks and to maintain the security of the Middle East and Israel.



In the context of the American realism toward the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, and in preserving Israel's interests and security, at a press conference at the White House held on 28 January, 2020, and in the presence of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US President Donald Trump at long last revealed his promised plan for Palestinian-Israeli peace, known as Deal of the Century.

The plan provides for the continuation of Israeli control over most of the West Bank, which was occupied by Israel in 1967, keeping Jerusalem as a unified city under Israeli sovereignty, and the annexation of large settlement blocs in the West Bank to the State of Israel. Moreover, the plan states that the Palestinian state that will be established will have a capital bearing the name of Jerusalem anywhere else, but it does not exist in the city of Jerusalem. Under the Plan, Jerusalem will remain a unified city and a capital of Israel under Israeli sovereignty, while the Palestinian capital will include some remote suburbs of East Jerusalem occupied by Israel in 1967.

Further, the plan rejects any return of Palestinian refugees to Israel and extinguishes any future demands for compensation. It also provides that every Palestinian refugee who does not have citizenship rights in any country may: return to the new Palestinian state depending on the state capabilities, or settle in the country in which he resides upon such country's approval, or be listed in the program for distributing the Palestinian refugees to the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Under the said program, each state will receive five thousand refugees annually over ten years (BBC NEWS, 29/1/2020).

In sum, the USA used the neoclassical realism to build relations with countries of the world based on achieving the US national interest and protecting the security of Israel. Thus, the stage of this theory represents an important historical and political stage that was consistent and in harmony with the US political thought based on expansionism and, sometimes, hostility. This is the policy of double standards that serves both US and Israeli interests, as explained earlier.

METHODOLOGY

In light of the introduction of the study and the general structure on which it is based, and in light of the information that will be employed to achieve the general objectives it seeks, the study will use a complex methodological approach (Alarqan, 2020) consisting of:

1. An analytical approach that studies and analyzes the impact of US political development on the process of political stability in the Middle East.
2. A historical approach that tracks and monitors American policy in order to achieve political development and the political stability associated with it.
3. The decision-making approach shows the level of response of the decision-maker and his efforts to push the development process politics in the Middle East to reach the desired levels of political stability in the Middle East.

In dealing with the subject, the study focuses on the efforts of the American system in achieving political stability by initiating political development processes, by employing what a number of countries have been exposed to among most countries in the region. The study population will be intentional, as it will be limited to American political pragmatism in the Middle East region, and information is collected through official documents and relevant previous studies.

RESULTS

Certainly, the American project leads to regional subordination, not regional independence, as it aims to annex the entire region to the US strategy, and seeks to perpetuate the differences in Arab positions regarding all the issues that concern and confront the region, in a way that secures the region's sovereignty. The Arab world is of independent development. What is new in the United States' endeavor from its Greater Middle East initiative are the following:

1. It is now present directly in Iraq, which makes it interested in the changes taking place in Middle East. This results of this study are consistent with Park (2004).
2. In light of the neoconservatives' domination of American politics, the United States believes that it has a role in spreading democracy and a free economy, especially in building the world on its ilk through the Arab world, which it considers the source of extremism and terrorism. This results of this study are consistent with Tyler (2017).
3. The US administration believes that the conditions in the region have become favorable to it to impose its plans and dictates, especially after the occupation of Iraq and imposing its hegemony on the region. This results of this study are consistent with Mastanduno (2019).
4. The United States appears to be more assertive and intrusive in dealing with the region, not only with regard to political or economic affairs but also in the internal conditions of Arab countries and the orientations of the Arab regional order, considering that what is happening in the region affects their security. This results of this study are consistent with Cooley (2019).

CONCLUSION

The classical realism developed by Hans Morgenthau is based on two foundations; power and interest, which are essential in international relations. This is based on the chaotic and hostile tendency of the United States. However, this theory was renewed by Thomas Hobbes and Niccolò Machiavelli. Developed by Kenneth Waltz, the neorealism shredded the classical realism. This theory has been restored and developed to neoclassical realism since the end of the 1990s, on which the United States relied to achieve its interests and those of its ally in the region, Israel.

The United States strove, therefore, to dominate the countries of the region, taking advantage of the existing fragmentation between them, especially Arab-Arab disputes at times, and Arab-Iranian disputes at other times. It also tried to extort money from the countries of the region in order to accept Israel as an inevitable reality, as the United States created a new enemy (Iran) as an alternative to Israel. This is to extort money from the Gulf States, which was evident during the era of President Donald Trump, who was clear in his demand for the Arab Gulf states to pay for protection from the enemy made by the United States, which is Iran.

The foundations of realism changed clearly before and after the Cold War. The classical realism turned into a neoclassical realism that served to strengthen the situation of the USA so that it mainly aimed at achieving the US national interest and protecting those interests on the international scene. Realism reflects the US political thought and the hostile and expansionist spirit, and it reflects the secret of the United States' success on the international scene, where the principles of this theory are consistent with the spirit of thinking of the American expansionist political mind. The classical realism defines power in its material and moral sense, military and economic power, and the power of influence in the media and public opinion. As for structural realism, it views power in its material, military, and interest sense and the ability of the country (United States of America) to subjugate other countries by military force. In its dealings, the USA used defensive realism and offensive realism. Defensive realism created cooperative realism through economic cooperation with countries of the world to reduce the state of war. As for offensive realism, it is based on aggression that is based on the anarchy of the international arena and the conflict for interests among countries.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This current study is mainly focused on the nature of American realism in achieving international stability in the Middle East. This study can be replicated to ascertain an investigation of American realism in achieving international stability in the other regions in the world. Also, it can use another approach to explore and investigate the methods and tools that the American administration used to achieve stability.

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