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Arbache, Ziad Ayoub; Abu Abdullah, Bassam

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Promoting a New Path of Economic Policy for Regional Cooperation in the Middle East



ZIAD AYOUB ARBACHE*

PhD, Assistant Prof.
Faculty of Economics, Damascus University

BASSAM ABU ABDULLAH**

PhD
Head of the Ba'ath Party's Central Party School

**Ziad Ayoub Arbache holds a PhD from the Institute of Energy Economics and Policy (IEPE-INPG), Grenoble, France (1998). He worked as an advisor to several ministries in Syria and as a consultant for international development organizations and agencies. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Syrian Prime Minister. He is a lecturer in several postgraduate centers and a guest on several media channels. His main areas of research are geo-economics and strategic prospective studies, peacebuilding and recovery strategies, regional planning, and geopolitics of energy. He speaks Arabic, French, and English.*

E-mail: ziad-ay@scs-net.org

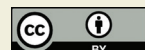
***Bassam Abu Abdullah holds a PhD in International Relations from the Academic of Sciences of Uzbekistan University (1993). He was a Diplomat in the Syrian embassy in Turkey (2004-2008). He is a writer and political expert who teaches as a lecturer at universities and other higher education institutions. He has made public appearances at several media outlets and participated in international conferences, including the Beijing summit on "One Belt One Road" in May 2017. He was a team leader at the Damascus Strategic Studies Center (2012-2014). In 2019, he published a book with Dr Ziad Ayoub Arbache and Malaz Moukada on China, *China: The Founding Act of a New World Order*, Orient Printing & Publishing, Damascus, 2019, in Arabic. He is a visiting researcher at the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, Shanghai University of International Studies. He speaks Arabic, English, Russian, and Turkish.*

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ABSTRACT

From the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to the current war between Russia and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries in Ukraine, international polarization and the struggles of influence between world powers towards the Middle East region have not been as intense as we see today. This article seeks to answer the following question: how can major Eurasian powers such as Iran, Syria, Turkey, and Russia build a long-term collaboration that could also engage the Gulf countries? Much of the attention regarding regional relations has focused on energy projects, from the Arab Gulf to the Mediterranean on the one hand and from the Russian Federation via the Turkish mainland on the other, as an international supply towards Europe and the Americas. Effective and long-term collaboration requires not only the leading role of major Eurasian powers but also a due appreciation of the importance of strategic commodities other than energy products and a stronger awareness of the common challenges these powers share. This calls for a new economic model based on state-led investments, production, and employment in the space of the “Five Seas”, whose prerequisite is respect for international law within the framework of the legitimacy of the United Nations to ensure stability and prevent the resurgence of extremism, facilitate the return of displaced persons, and encourage reconstruction and peace efforts throughout the region. Syria, which had previously promoted the “Five Seas approach” with Turkey as a driving force, as well as the other countries of the Levant (Lebanon, Jordan with Iraq), the Arab countries of the Gulf and North Africa, have the opportunity to take advantage of the change in the global context of world politics. They will assume a key role with Russia, China, India and other emerging countries in the multipolarization of world politics to bring into use the advantage of the region’s geographical position at the hub of energy supply, infrastructure investment, transport and international trade.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, Five Seas, geopolitics, Middle East, Syria

The Middle East Region in the Global Context

THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN RUSSIA and the West has had profound consequences for the economy and politics of Middle Eastern countries, including the impacts of the war on their food security, energy prices and labor markets, especially for countries that experienced the so-called “Arab Spring”.

After the 1990s, we witnessed an unprecedented victory for capitalism, particularly with the West dismantling the Soviet

Union (1988-1991). In reality, the United States has lost a historic opportunity to lead the world or at least to improve world peace and stability. Instead, American leaders have imposed their dictates on many countries through invasions, sanctions and the use of the “soft war” (Motaghi & Mahboobeh, 2012). Subsequently, the US invasion of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), the so-called Arab Spring (2010), international polarization, and the struggles of influence among world powers towards the Middle East have gravely disturbed global stability, peace, and prosperity (Gürcan, 2019b, 2020, 2022).

Indeed, geopolitically, the region's potential of at least 650 million consumers, energy wealth that amounts to 66% of proven global oil reserves, and strategic position as a transit corridor between the East (and its ascending path: China, India, and Russia) and the West, and between the North and the South, shows the importance of the current realignments in the status of the countries of the region (with their different geostrategic and geoeconomic weights). China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Türkiye, Iran, Arab countries, African countries, and Europe itself can secure real independence only by way of creating a geopolitical Eurasian alliance (Abbas, 2022), a multipolar alliance (Dugin, 2020), or "post-hegemonic multipolarity" (Gürcan, 2020). In reality, a better understanding of the potential for better alliances and improved cooperation requires identifying the dynamic developments that took place after the triumph of capitalism in its American form since the 1990s (The week UK, 2023).

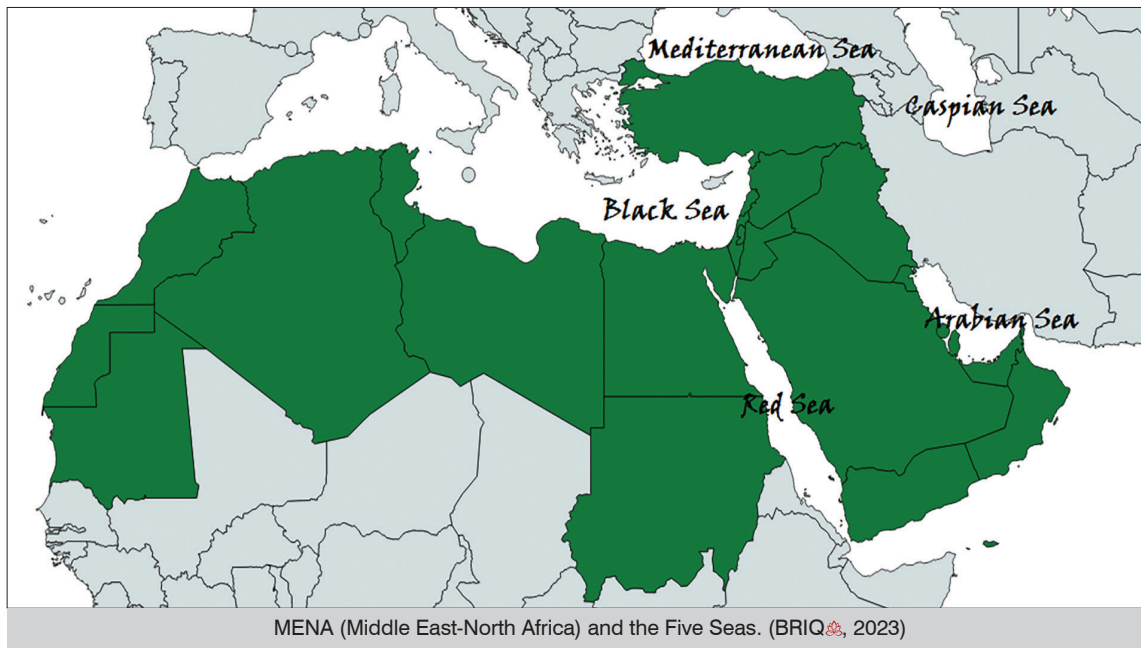
Emerging countries are increasingly favoring international trade based on national currencies and preferential exchanges in their international trade relations.

In examining the increasing weight of new economic poles and emerging countries globally, one could easily notice that a power shift has occurred from the West to the East and from the North to the South. This process

began during the 1990s with the emergence of new growth centers and the formation of a multipolar global economic system as the weight of players in emerging markets increased (Abdullah, 2019). In this process, however, oil and gas have remained two strategic commodities despite all efforts to develop a stronger potential for renewable energy (The World Economic Forum, 2017).

Since the late 1980s, the US has sought to impose a new global pattern as the sole global pole by direct military interventions or later by promoting the different components of soft power, such as using sanctions and the media. In the meantime, the BRICS, as the first non-regional alliance not based on a single culture, has strongly reasserted its demand for a "fair international order". With this understanding, it has established an investment bank and continues to strive to get out of the hegemony of the dollar (Gürcan, 2019a, 2019b, 2022). In this environment, emerging countries are increasingly favoring international trade based on national currencies and preferential exchanges (such as supplying fuel to China and India at a reduced price) in their international trade relations.

These global developments aside, the Middle East has remained a highly volatile region. Since 2010, the collapse of the peace process in the Middle East with Israeli intransigence in compliance with United Nations resolutions, the escalation of instability in the region and its multiple challenges, including the collapse of the concept of collective security, especially with the so-called Arab Spring have revealed the fragility of the status quo (Sun & Zhang, 2022). Moreover, the course of the war in Ukraine



showed the fragility of the global energy system and the failure of Western policies in relying on alternative sources. It led to Russia and the OPEC countries returning to the forefront, resulting in new positions and alliances.

Taking account of the challenges mentioned above, this article seeks to answer the following question: how can major Eurasian powers such as Iran, Syria, Türkiye, and Russia build a long-term collaboration that could also engage the Gulf countries? Effective and long-term collaboration requires not only the leading role of major Eurasian powers but also a due appreciation of the importance of strategic commodities other than energy products and a stronger awareness of the common challenges these powers share. This calls for a new economic model based on state-led investments, production, and employment in the space of the “Five Seas”,

whose prerequisite is respect for international law within the framework of the legitimacy of the United Nations to ensure stability and prevent the resurgence of extremism, facilitate the return of displaced persons, and encourage reconstruction and peace efforts throughout the region. Syria, which had previously promoted the “Five Seas approach” with Türkiye as a driving force, as well as the other countries of the Levant (Lebanon, Jordan with Iraq), the Arab countries of the Gulf and North Africa, have the opportunity to take advantage of the change in the global context of world politics and will assume a key role with Russia, China, India and other emerging countries in the multipolarization of world politics to bring into use the advantage of the region’s geographical position at the hub of energy supply, infrastructure investment, transport and international trade.

The Middle East at the Crossroads

The Middle East seeks a peaceful path, economically and politically, to overcome instability, despite the specificities of each country and its place in the world. The region is currently undergoing structural changes. The regional order is in transition amidst weakening governance in certain countries and growing power rivalries against the backdrop of American withdrawal despite the continuation of Western interventionism through a combination of different methods of soft power (sanctions, pressure, and media manipulation of public opinion). This new race for regional hegemony led by the Americans or its proxies calls into question the traditional hierarchy of power and the internal path of economic development, which is based, above all, on the internal capacity of each country in the region.

Many Middle Eastern states persist in their political and ideological biases when conducting their foreign policy without considering their national interests and regional benefits.

The economy, which guarantees sociopolitical stability through the generalized effects of oil, gas and other raw material and rents or indirect rents (for example, tourism, transit and remittances from workers abroad), has become a prominent political means in the relations between regional countries and its external “relations” with the international powers.

Many Middle Eastern states persist in their political and ideological biases when conducting their foreign policy without considering their national interests

and regional benefits. Moreover, the evolution of economic governance, external pressures, or the use of sanctions testify to an increasingly aggressive use of the economy in interstate relations, showing the intrinsic fragility of the rentier model and the impasse in the mobilization of wealth to ensure a conservative economy. From a macroeconomic point of view, despite the recent rise in hydrocarbon prices which has benefited the Gulf countries (Fitch Solutions, 2022), it could be argued that the human and economic security of the Middle Eastern and North African countries has deteriorated. A possible risk of protests in North Africa and the Levant cannot be excluded due to the galloping prices of many strategic and supplied goods (produced by these states or imported), increasing the risks to macroeconomic stability in the MENA region (IMF, 2022).

Indeed, all countries in the Middle East suffer from a failure to reform and open up their economies and mobilize all potential internal forces, including the private sector, as well as demographic pressures and acute problems in coping with an explosion of youth. Social tensions can become highly disruptive mass protests in parts of the Middle East. Admittedly, a distinction must be made between countries at high risk of social unrest, whose economic situation is difficult and exacerbated by conflict, countries at moderate risk of social unrest, which may again experience social grievances motivated by poor socioeconomic conditions, including high unemployment and inflation, and finally, moderate risk countries that are well equipped financially to mitigate socioeconomic pressures (Economist Intelligence Uni, 2022; World Bank, 2022). The overall macroeconomic indicators are uncertain because they depend on direct oil and other energy sources and rents, given rising inflation and unemployment, diminishing capitalistic assets, raised financial



Protests flared up in Lebanon due to the economic crisis. (CGTN, 2020)

sector vulnerabilities, and patchy implementation of corrective policy actions. Instead of seeking a self-reliant development model and regional cooperation with mutual benefits, some of these countries tend to align with the “collective western approach”, which only perpetuates regional problems, failing to face up to common challenges (Cordesman, 2020).

Beyond International and Regional Polarizations: Tensions between Powers as an Obstacle to the Economy

On behalf of their interests, Western states put diverse economic strategies into practice by pursuing an exclusionary economic development discourse. However, this leads to regional tensions rather than improves

regional welfare, as it fuels economic rivalries and a climate of instability at the expense of international cooperation. Unlike economic liberalism in the form of acute capitalism or rentier conservatism, a model of internal development and regional integration (in terms of pan-state infrastructures, trade, investment, transport, telecom networking, and tourism) remains the best way to achieve peace and a sustainable state of balance. Scholars studying the Middle East often underestimate the scope of economic determinants in the emergence and management of these same crises (Schmid & Benbernou, 2020). The political economy of the Middle East is more interesting as an element of understanding the evolutions and the relations between states.

The fragility of economies linked to commodity prices, sensitive to geopolitical shocks, and dependent on the choices of industrialized economies has shattered the enchanted dream of paid idleness. Financial and social difficulties are accumulating, causing major instability, both for the rentier states and those who have benefited directly or indirectly from their generosity. One thing leading to another, most of the major geopolitical developments that have recently upset the region, from the contagion of the “Arab Spring” to the inevitable rise in tensions between the great powers, can be analyzed through the prism of the economy.

If the “obsession with power” that accompanies the birth of the modern international system is crystallizing today in a spectacular way in the Middle East, it is in particular because the rivalry of external actors opens up the field of competition. The policy of Western hegemony has continued to contribute to modulating the national governance of the states of the Middle East according to the desires of this collective West (even if it is not totally homogeneous). Obviously, it has been done without diminishing the opportunity for some regional states to assume regional leadership, concerned about their corporate interests, through mobilizing enormous resources to serve an external objective to the detriment of the preservation of regional economic and social order. Each tries to capture a share of the regional influence market, increasing the antagonism between states.

The Middle East, as a bridge, occupies a strategic place in the world, connecting India to the Mediterranean, stretching to the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Caspian Sea. This location has always become a destination for colonial or post-colonial rivalries between American and

European powers. For the past three decades, the collective West saw the region as an arena and dividing line to prevent the success of multipolarity. Indeed, American leaders and many European leaders, who see themselves as representing the “international community”, constantly declare the importance of confronting the continuous rise of emerging poles in the face of global initiatives such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Russia’s efforts at developing the BRICS group, and breaking out of dollar hegemony, via India and other emerging countries.

Today, the countries in the region with the largest land and maritime surfaces and those endowed with hydrocarbon resources retain a decisive advantage; their territories must also be the subject of strategic investments (in infrastructure, transport, and economic development) to enhance this possible positioning advantage. The development of infrastructure, particularly ports and airports, can be part of a rational strategy for a large regional hub, a platform and route for airport transport, energy supply, telecommunications, and transit as a crossroads between Europe, Asia, and Africa. Furthermore, the regional demographics are on the cusp of a new age for economic development. If we look at growth models, two different models roughly coexist in the region: that of truly rentier countries, exporters of energy, raw materials like the Gulf countries, or dependent on rent (transit, tourism and expatriate flows), and that of countries whose economy is rather productive: such as Iran, Türkiye, which is integrated into the global production chain, or Syria, before the war orchestrated by a coalition of “collective west”, which produced diversified goods. Between these two models, Jordan and Lebanon are importing countries, dependent on aid and subsidies from



Chinese Ambassador to Jordan, Chen Chuandong, speaks in Amman on the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Jordan. (Jordan Chinese Embassy, 2022)

their neighbors and allies. But all depend on the evolution of international markets, through the price of crude and raw materials and the dollar exchange rate, and have less and less control over these elements. This explains why these states have concluded free trade agreements with several partners and the main financiers of the emerging world and have approached Russia via the OPEC+ cooperation or China and India. The subsequent Western presence in Afghanistan and Iraq did not assist, and the inability to stabilize the area resulted in an unclear outcome. The struggle was engendered by the process of polarization, which then took the shape of aroused ambitions. The great powers measured the weight of their means to influence the establishment of a new balance or at least exercise sufficient deterrence vis-à-vis

many states of the region, perceived as aggressive at the approach of this collective west.

The Middle East's economic system has long been considered on the fringes of globalization. The rise in importance of economic factors in the competition of powers in the Middle East and using economic tools in the race for domination does not automatically lead to a sustainable economic development model. The thwarted economic power means that the local actors ultimately have little control over the regional economic system, the growth trajectories are disrupted by internal and external factors, and the persistence of very high conflict thwarts economic logic. The economy finally appears as a rather poor ally in the context of growing polarization.

The structure of rentier economies, which is poorly diversified, also leads to dependence on external products and know-how. Worse still, the dependence on the price of hydrocarbons is extreme. The revenues garnered depend on the choices of the other major producers, such as the United States and Russia, and the maintenance of demand from the major customers, such as China or India. These games of interdependence intersect with the question of alliances and allegiances. The socioeconomic challenges, entry into the digital age, and climate change will inevitably force them to a radical change in economic functioning. The water resource, rare and coveted, is at the heart of increasingly significant geopolitical tensions, social inequality, delay in reforms and a conciliatory reflex.

US sanctions could also increase the participation of Russia and China in development, geopolitical reconfiguration and reconstruction projects in countries affected by wars.

Economic considerations like rapprochement and regional cooperation can dictate major political choices. Both the relations between Türkiye and Iran and the rest of the states of the Arabian Peninsula or other countries of the Middle East region can lead to exhaustion or support of economic cooperation projects to face these multiple challenges in societies. The effect of sanctions is difficult to assess precisely, but the tool can be politically

and economically counterproductive.

Ultimately, US sanctions could also increase the participation of Russia and China in development, geopolitical reconfiguration and reconstruction projects in countries affected by wars. We do not know how long it may take for a new configuration of equilibrium to emerge because, amid internationalist one-upmanship, no hegemon or disciplining power seems able to prevail. The United States has long assumed this responsibility on the political and military level but now wishes to multiply the pressures of all kinds, including soft power. The intervention of an external hegemon could never once be decisive. It remains ambiguous whether the decision-makers of the Middle Eastern states will still be able to define the rules of a virtuous economic game in the region or whether China, Russia and other emerging countries will play this role in the future.

The conviction is increasing among many world countries that transformation and prosperity are not exclusive to the Western powers and cannot come through oil rents, as there is a margin for adopting a self-propelled development model that considers the structural transformations in the world economy. The powerful countries friendly to Syria, specifically Russia, Iran and China, have prevented the hegemonic powers, mainly the United States and its regional proxies, from disintegrating Syria's geostrategic space and territory. Characterized by its proximity to Türkiye at the crossroads of three continents (Europe, Africa and Asia), Syria, with Iraq and Iran, seeks to regain its independence as long as everyone acts on international charters.



Relations with China, Russia and Türkiye

Syria is now shifting to the East, towards China and Russia, although it remains a Mediterranean country with a key seaport at Latakia. However, this does not mean that China, Russia, and regional players are all behaving according to a single, concerted strategy (Dorsey, 2020). While both may be driven in part by a common goal, their strategies diverge in some respects. Despite their shared desire to promote multilateralism, their priority to pursue their own interests shapes their actions.

China has actively participated in Iraq's economic reconstruction, with bilateral, practical cooperation making steady

progress. That experience will be invaluable in Syria. Syria's participation in the BRI would create a new corridor across the Middle East linking Iran to Syria via Iraq and benefit all regional states. Beijing and Moscow have been able to build a bridge between Iran and Iraq by developing cross-border rail with Iran at the border crossing point between the two countries on the Basra/Shalamchek corridor, which itself leads to the ports in the south of Iran on the Arabian Gulf and connects to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) (Silk Road Briefing, 2020). This multimodal route feeds east to India's west coast ports, north to the Caspian Sea, and to Azerbaijan and Russia, with a northeast branch leading to Afghanistan.

China aspires to enlarge and strengthen its presence in the Middle East because of its strategic geographical importance, large economic market and wealth of natural resources that China needs. Sino-Syrian relations are projected to grow in the foreseeable future due to the strategic political understanding between the two countries and Syria's active presence under the BRI, which enhances its geographical position in the Eastern Mediterranean (Zreik & Zhao, 2022).

Syria and Turkey are called upon to play an increasing role in their zone, located in the heart of the Middle East.

What is now more certain than before is that Russia's presence in Syria is not a mere strategic interest for Moscow but an existential necessity. Russia's military presence in western Syria should be considered in two contexts. The first is the context of the Syrian war and its regional dimensions, and the second is Syria's position overlooking the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Moscow attaches major importance to the Middle East, which cannot be ignored. The Kremlin has become increasingly involved in the Arab region. Russia's strategy is long-term repositioning and defending its national security with NATO extending its borders and the West's disrespect for the Minsk Agreement. In Syria, the Kremlin

has, in recent years, played the role of both mediator and negotiator in the internal political process that the UN sponsors. The Russian facilitation, which Moscow is currently offering, aims to persuade Syria and Türkiye to engage in talks to arrive at a security settlement framework and ease any regional tensions. The questions in play are enormous and are not limited to the region's borders. The Russian military presence in Syria, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, is often mentioned, which is highly strategic at the regional and global levels due to its geographical position. Nevertheless, it should not neglect the gas exploration projects in the eastern Mediterranean, or even make Türkiye a gas supply hub for Europe, which allows Russia to increase its scope of action on the regional gas markets and also allows it to exert influence outside the former Soviet Republics. In addition to intensified cooperation with OPEC, Russia aims to grow commercial markets directly or through the BRICS mechanism. This represents a break in Russia's isolation from the "international community".

Syria and Türkiye are called upon to play an increasing role in their zone, located in the heart of the Middle East, which is in direct contact with the region's countries and other regions. The region is then faced with a major transformation of its political order, creating an unstable security environment that will put additional pressure on the major powers and each country in the region. Ultimately, this ongoing transformation represents an opportunity for many countries in the region to concretize the concept of the



Growing ties between China and the Arab world unlock unlimited possibilities for cooperation. One of the largest industrial zones in Egypt was established by Sino-Egyptian cooperation. (CGTN, 2022)

five seas and actively engage in the future. Türkiye's leveraging role is decisive. It can cooperate with Russia and China in the reconstruction projects of Syria and Iraq and, more generally, make regional cooperation succeed. Syria's attractiveness lies within its "Five Seas" capability, a plan to link the Caspian, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea with the Persian Gulf.

A New Path for the Middle Eastern Countries

The US administration is making efforts to reorganize Middle East politics. This time it is no longer to supply itself with oil for its economy but to contain China and exhaust the Russian forces by trying

to push Russia into the quagmire of new battlefields. After the failure of the policy of reorganizing societies under a paternalistic attitude, it seems that the United States, as a global pole, can only use sanctions or other components of soft power. In this environment, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Russia, Türkiye, China, and others can rebuild the Middle East using the New Silk Road and the Five Seas. The New Silk Road lies at the heart of China's strategy for the decades to come. This will also usher in a new era for the Middle East region, which has always been coveted for its strategic position and wealth, disputed between the Eurasian and maritime empires.

For the rest of the world, China's peaceful development can be seen positively if the BRI and the BRICS grouping pursue win-win cooperation. The New Silk Road envisions a "green belt" in this region. It seems that the Chinese dream is already underway. The five countries constituting the core of the Middle East (Iran, Türkiye, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon) are also interested in being part of the BRI. Particularly, the BRI can help the rebuilding efforts for Syria's devastated economy on a new basis, shielding it from external threats. The BRI will provide Syria with a more stable environment, with South-West Asia being structured around two corridors (with major roles in particular for Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon), whether it is the road and rail corridor (going from Urumqi as the largest city in western China to coastal towns in the Middle East) or sea routes leading to the Mediterranean via Suez.

Despite its challenges and uncertainties, the Middle East can provide world politics with great opportunities and insightful perspectives.

Syria, despite of its economic weaknesses and the US's hostility, through its alliance with Russia and Iran, has been able to revive its political influence in recent years. Syria faces an uphill struggle for its economic strategy, but as Iraq's substantial energy resources come into play, this will enhance its vision (Raimbaud, 2017). One

should consider the possibility of restoring Syria's relations with Saudi Arabia (Kane & Gasseem, 2018) and Türkiye in favor of a more prosperous Middle East that could overcome its instability (Aytekin, 2022).

Ironically, the Biden-led US is giving up its role as the world leader and the champion of free trade and environmental protection while China has taken over this role. Prolonged by relentlessness, the Syrian tragedy has dispelled the West's pretenses and exposed its most devious strategies. But the worst of all has been to whitewash terrorism on the part of Western states. The exclamation point is: How can we resist nausea in front of these politicians who, with each attack on European soil, are poured out in indignant condemnations of terrorist violence they have fed and praised elsewhere? The war on Syria has been a large-scale international conflict in which a rival coalition has formed. The distinctions between "rebels", "democrats", "moderates", "seculars", "Islamists", or "jihadists" are but superficial divides promoted by Western powers and their allies. By now, everyone understands that the reality of the Syrian conflict, for the past ten years, has been the struggle between state-sponsored terrorist conglomerates and a national army that defends its country against foreign invasion (Guigue, 2020; Gürcan, 2019c). But it has also spread its miasma to the four corners of the globe, returning like a boomerang.

Despite its challenges and uncertainties, the Middle East can provide world politics with great opportunities and insightful perspectives. At the same time, there are very positive developments led by China

and the BRICS countries. It is very difficult to envisage the course of the current tensions. One thing is sure, though: shared development is the only way to bring peace to the Middle East, and a lasting solution can only be reached through the concept of Peace Through Development. In these wasted decades before and after the “Arab spring” and multiple tensions and wars, the Collective Western behavior towards several regions has been botched to ensure regional security and peace. If the West desires a more peaceful and democratic Middle East, it should develop friendly relations with the people and their legitimate representatives so that the West can well join the reconstruction efforts in the region and the promotion of world peace.

The Needed Perspectives


The ideological struggle for control is not productive for any of the countries in the region. Furthermore, historical lessons since the Sykes-Picot Agreement show that reliance on major powers or contradictions of interests among them only achieves temporary “gains”, especially when the cultural diversity that characterizes these countries is a tool of intervention that can be exploited for further division, rather than being a source of wealth, and an impetus for their constructive cooperation. Besides human losses or wounds, spending billions in absurd wars, which continued to play some countries by proxy on behalf of the “collective West” since the beginning of what was called the Arab Spring, has only

led to more fragmentation and the absence of collective security for the countries of the region. It is important here to emphasize that it would not be kept captive to the old methods of analysis and the mentality of American hegemony or the collective west in general (Barnes & Lovatt, 2022), especially since many countries, as a result of the experiences gained, have begun to emerge from this “cloak” in light of the emerging global changes (Culbreath, 2023). Syria does not think of revenge, nor is it driven by emotions and passions. On the contrary, instability benefits the external forces interfering in the region’s affairs for their own interests. Thereby, it is certain that solving the current regional slump and finding peace (which requires many painful concessions) will guarantee the collective security and interests of the peoples of the regional countries. The cost of peace and common challenges remains lower than that of continuing conflicts with human losses and more internal problems at each country’s level.

Conclusion

For the rest of the world, including Middle East countries, China’s peaceful development can be seen in a positive light as long as the BRI and the BRICS pursue win-win cooperation. Moreover, the “bone-breaking” battle between the Russian Federation, which defends its national security, and NATO, which is fueling the conflict, proves once again the importance of achieving world peace based on legitimacy rather than imposing Western hegemony by various means (Chris, 2010).

The war in Ukraine is a blow to relations between Russia and the West, and this situation will likely persist in the long term. However, its impacts on Middle East countries vary depending on their natural wealth, including hydrocarbons, their capacity to produce or import goods, in particular food and raw materials, and their development trajectory.

Syria, a close ally of Russia, like Türkiye or other countries in the Middle East, is more than ever concerned about the evolution of the positions of the various world poles and the repositioning of international and regional powers in the whole region. Indeed, each regional country could assume a stabilizing role. A cessation of ongoing extremism and violence, and eventual political reconciliation, including the reintegration of vital state institutions, would improve the operational environment for facilitating the reconstruction of the economy of regional states and the rebuilding of social cohesion. This means that regional countries could shift their alliances and move from the current state of engagement into a forthcoming state of partnership and cooperation. Building an economic model based on maximizing the gains of constructive cooperation and shared benefits in the space of five seas requires the utmost importance to guarantee stability, reconstruction and peace throughout the region. The question for western states is whether their antagonistic approach toward the region will achieve any long-term gains. After decades of instability, it is time to adopt full engagement by all concerned parties on an equal footing, which seems to be the best way to avoid wasting another decade to the detriment of all. 

Notes

¹ Many Western thinkers agree on the growing concern about the strengthening of the alliance between the rising poles competing with the United States, as the former US secretary of state and national security adviser Henry Kissinger said: “We are now living in a totally new era”, transcript of a discussion between Henry Kissinger and Edward Luce, which took place on May 7 in Washington Financial Times US national editor, May 9, 2022.

² Without adopting all the views presented, it is possible to refer to the analysis of a number of writers affiliated with the Carnegie organization: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: What the Russian War in Ukraine Means for the Middle East. MARCH 24, 2022. Retrieved from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/03/24/what-russian-war-in-ukraine-means-for-middle-east-pub-86711>.

³ As Mao Tse-Tung argues: “Therefore, to overtake the United States is not only possible, but absolutely necessary and obligatory. If we don’t, the Chinese nation will be letting the nations of the world down and we will not be making much of a contribution to mankind” (Marxist, 2004).

⁴ Effectively, shared development is the only way to bring peace to the Middle East, and a lasting solution can only be reached through the concept of “Peace Through Development”, as the German political activist Helga Zepp-LaRouche stresses: HARTMANN Alexander, The Peace Dividend of the New Silk Road: Global Reconstruction of the Physical Economy. Executive Intelligence Review, 13 November 2015. Retrieved from https://larouche.com/eiw/public/2015/eirv42n45-20151113/05-07_4245.pdf.

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