



Involvement of international coalitions in the management of conflicts in the Middle East

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Abstract

The Middle East region is one of the outstanding regions in terms of conflicts. Most of these conflicts are often protracted and the prospect of their resolution becomes quite difficult. There are several reasons for this. The most important among them is the involvement of external actors in these conflicts. They are trying to exert their political influence on the region. Their stated position prolongs the conflicts. Among the individual countries of the region, there were problems that could not be solved in time. This refers to the Persian Gulf Wars. These wars significantly damaged the political and economic situation of the countries of the Persian Gulf region. The harsh intervention of external forces in relation to the current problems in the region continues up to this stage. A good example of this is the civil wars in Syria and Yemen, which could not be resolved due to the conflicting interests of both internal and external regional actors. The countries of the Middle East region are again affected by these problems.

Keywords: region, conflict, external actor, problem, political, countries.

Introduction

The Middle East region remembers many conflicts that are still ongoing and still unresolved. The West often intervenes in these conflicts to end them peacefully, although sometimes all efforts are unsuccessful. For example, let's recall several conflicts and their results and analyze the existing ones.

First Persian Gulf War

The border war between Iran and Iraq started in 1980 and lasted for 8 years. The reason for the start of the war was that in 1975, according to the Algiers Agreement between Iran and Iraq, the border between these two countries passed through the middle of the river Shat-el-Arab. The Iraqi head of state at the time, Saddam Hussein, wanted to abrogate this agreement and establish total control over the Shatt al-Arab, as this river was one of the main points for transporting Iraqi oil abroad. In addition, Iraq and other Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, after the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and the establishment of the Ayatollah regime, saw the danger that Shiite Islam would spread more widely in the region. After the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Saddam Hussein took

advantage of the situation in Iran, which he considered a good situation to negotiate the terms of the Algerian Treaty, and started a war with Iran, which was primarily aimed at capturing the Iranian province of Khuzestan, which borders Iraq. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (1979-2003) hoped that other Arab countries would help him. Apart from that, the West and the Soviet Union provided diplomatic, military and economic assistance to Iraq. Also, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia gave huge financial credits to Iraq.

Israel took advantage of this war and suddenly bombarded Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor, which was under construction at that time. The fact that shortly after the start of the war, France and the USA took the side of Iraq in Europe is definitely worth noting. They supplied Iraq with weapons, poison gas, intelligence and helped them economically. Since 1986 (President Ronald Reagan), the US government has been secretly supplying Iraq with weapons.¹

¹ Persian Gulf wars - *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Persian-Gulf-War>

Therefore, the war turned out to be quite cruel and merciless. Both sides suffered huge losses in various fields. The export of oil was also stopped, which destroyed their economy even more. In 1988, the Iran-Iraq war ended. According to the truce concluded between them, Iran agreed to the implementation of UN Resolution 598 on ceasefire. This war has ended with the status quo. Iran and Iraq returned to their pre-war borders. Iraq got a huge debt from the Arab countries, which became the reason for attacking Kuwait in 1990.

Iraq and Kuwait War

The Iraq-Kuwait War is also called the Second Persian Gulf War. Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Iraq captured strategically important points of Kuwait, including Amira Palace. The control over mass media also passed into the hands of the Iraqi army. By the order of Saddam Hussein, a proxy government was appointed in "liberated" Kuwait, which he soon deposed and joined the country to Iraq. (Part of Kuwait joined Basra province, and part of it was transformed into the 19th Iraqi province). Immediately after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the UN Security Council passed "Resolution 660", which condemned the invasion and demanded that the Iraqi government withdraw its troops from Kuwait.² On August 6 of the same year, the United Nations decided to impose economic sanctions on Iraq by adopting "Resolution 661" (Security Council against Iraq).³ On November 29, under Resolution 678, the Security Council issued another ultimatum to Iraq, according to which it had to withdraw its troops from Kuwait by January 15, 1991.⁴

US President George Bush Sr. said that he and other countries should start the necessary military actions to protect Kuwait in order to prevent Iraq from invading the territory of Saudi Arabia, which it had already started. This US-led operation was codenamed "Desert Shield". The coalition of 27 states included most of the Western European states, Japan and a large part of the states of the Arab world. It is also worth noting the fact that the coalition was supported by the Soviet Union. The war was fought in the air, so it is also called air war. It was mainly directed against such military objects as: The Republican Guard in Kuwait, air defense systems, Scud missile systems, military aircraft and airports, espionage systems and the Navy. In addition, power plants, radio-television buildings, ports, oil refineries, oil pipelines, railways and bridges were bombed. As a result, Iraq's energy supply system was completely destroyed. Allied air forces flew more than 1,000 sorties per day and expended 10 times more weapons than during World War II. They used such bombs as smart-bomb, cluster-bomb, daisy-cutter.

As for the second part of this war, which was called "Desert Storm", it was already a combat stage, that is, a war on land. In this war, the contribution of the USSR appeared, which was to help convince Saddam to surrender and resolve the conflict peacefully, which he did. (He also stopped supplying Iraq with weapons and military equipment.) The US gave Iraqi soldiers 24 hours to

withdraw. They also promised not to attack Iraq. Subsequently, on February 24, 1991, US troops began a ground war.⁵

Ultimately, the Second Persian Gulf War ended with a US victory. Peace was restored in the region under his leadership. Before the operation began, many military experts thought that the expected large number of casualties would lead to the possibility that Saddam would use chemical or biological weapons, as he did during the war with Iran. The USA took good advantage of the Persian Gulf War and showed everyone how strong it was.

We must mention here that this war was not only to help Kuwait. It should also be noted that the prosperity in the form of oil, which was one of the four basic principles of the US foreign policy, was also at risk. The two previous wars and instability in the Middle East have disrupted the supply of oil on the world market, causing a catastrophic increase in prices. This war left Kuwait with a horribly devastated economy and a catastrophic environmental problem. The Iraqis were pouring oil into the Persian Gulf and setting fire to the oil fields. The economic sanctions imposed on Iraq have led to an increase in the level of hunger in the country and the death of many people every year. The Persian Gulf War established a new world order.

Iraq-US war

Since we mentioned Iraq and the USA above, let's consider the 2003 war between these two countries. This war started for several reasons. Let's start with the end of the Persian Gulf War. In April 1993, former US President George Bush Sr. was on a three-day visit to Kuwait. During this period, an attempt to eliminate him was planned, but the US special services managed to prevent the attack in time. According to the investigation, the identity of the mastermind of this case was going to the Iraqi authorities. Saddam Hussein is also accused of collaborating with terrorists, such as Abdul Rahman Yassin, Muhammad Zaydin, also known as Abu Abbas. Mehmed Zaidin was the founder and leader of the "Palestine Liberation Front" (PLF). He was known for organizing a number of attacks against Israel. Sabri Khalil al-Banna, another bloody person known to the public as Abu Nidal. He was the founder and leader of the Palestinian military-nationalist association "Abu Nidal Organization" (ANO). The organization has been linked to a number of brutal attacks that have left more than 1,500 people injured and killed. Among these, the most high-profile cases are the attack on Shlomo Argov, the ambassador of Israel to Great Britain, and the parallel terrorist attacks in Vienna and Rome in 1985. Abu Nidal, like Muhammad Zaydni, took refuge in Iraq. Saddam also supported terrorists financially, he even openly said in one of his statements in 2002 that he was happy for the heroic and suicidal nature of the Palestinian people. Another prominent figure here, who also had ties to Iraq, was the terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. He was such an important figure that we can consider him the most serious accusation for Saddam. After the 9/11 attacks, it was directly linked to the number one US targets, the Taliban and the terrorist group al-Qaeda.

Another reason was the "possible existence" of weapons of mass destruction in Saddam's hands. It is known that before the First Persian Gulf War, Iraq had started a nuclear weapons development program. A report by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, 2002) stated that Baghdad was trying to enrich uranium by various

⁵ The gulf war 1990-1991- operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm – History navy, 2014

² Resolution 660 (1990) / adopted by the Security Council at its 2932nd meeting, on 2 August 1990.

³ Resolution 661 (1990) / adopted by the Security Council at its 2933rd meeting, on 6 August 1990.

⁴ Resolution 678 (1990) / adopted by the Security Council at its 2963rd meeting, on 29 November 1990

means. Reports that Iraq had restarted its nuclear weapons program became more frequent. Regarding nuclear weapons, the US Central Intelligence Agency believed that despite sanctions and sanctions, Saddam still wanted to develop a nuclear program. Iraq's expanding foreign trade provided good access to nuclear technology, materials, and potential foreign nuclear expertise. The desire to create nuclear weapons was also indicated by the fact that Iraq was actively trying to obtain high-capacity aluminum tubes, which was caused by the desire to expand the nuclear program. From the size of the pipes, it was clear that Iraq was trying to build tens of thousands of centrifuges, capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium. Which in turn would be enough to get several weapons per year. The estimated time, during which time Hussein would be able to perfect nuclear weapons, was not precisely determined.⁶

According to the CIA report, the issue depended on when he would receive sufficient quantities of the necessary substances. A similar assessment was given by the British intelligence service. Their description coincided with that of the Americans, which stated that despite the material losses that Iraq suffered in the war with Kuwait, its government had begun work on nuclear weapons. As for chemical weapons, Saddam was no stranger to them. As a result of Hussain's use of it, approximately 20 thousand people died or were injured in the 1980s. Before the Persian Gulf War (1991), Iraq had a large stockpile of elements needed for chemical weapons. In the last period, Iraq did not refuse its production, and it was also said that it had the necessary equipment and documentation for the production of chemical weapons in a secret form. The production of chemical weapons was also indicated by the fact that Saddam Hussein rebuilt and re-armed several factories of this type.

Biological weapons program - a clear confirming example of its production is represented by his own 1995 "confessional testimony", according to which the Iraqi authorities confirmed the large-scale production of biological agents. Until now, representatives of Saddam Hussein's regime have constantly reiterated that the biological weapons program was small-scale and defensive in nature. Iraqi authorities have also confirmed the fact that before the Persian Gulf War they produced thousands of liters of anthrax for biological weapons, botulinum toxin (paralyzes muscle receptors and can be fatal within 24-36 hours), aflatoxin (a potent carcinogen that attacks the liver within a few years of ingestion) causes death), biological weapons projectiles, aerial bombs and aerial solutions.⁷

In summary, it appears that in the case of chemical and biological weapons, Saddam Hussein had an existing and non-destroyed stockpile prior to the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and he was actively engaged in the re-production of substances needed for the programs. At the same time, he had started a missile program that would cover 1,000 km. According to the UN Security Council resolution, it was prohibited and should not have ballistic missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometers.

Therefore, as mentioned above, the risks of possible connection with terrorists and the production of weapons of mass destruction programs led the US to the war of March 20, 2003, which was logical, because it threatened national security.

⁶ The 2003 conflict - *Britannica Online Encycloped* - <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iraq-War#ref231538>

⁷ CIA. (2002). Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs.

The March 2003 campaign against Iraq was conducted by a coalition of forces from various countries, some of which were NATO members and some of which were not. NATO as an organization had no role in the decision to launch or conduct the campaign.

The United Nations Security Council also rejected the invasion of Iraq, which Washington and London hoped would ignore the United Nations and exercise free control over the country. Iraq's fierce resistance, persistent economic and political problems, and relentless international criticism forced the US and Great Britain to seek international partners against Iraq.

A debate began between those who thought that the UN could become a wedge for internationalization and the exit of the US and Great Britain, and those who thought that the existence of the UN would only discredit the world organization. Following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1483, two months into the war, then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed a special envoy to Iraq, and the UN assumed some minor responsibilities. However, many critics have warned that the UN should not be identified with illegal war and occupation.

In August 2003, a massive bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad confirmed the fears of critics, killing fifteen UN staff, including the Special Representative. The UN withdrew from Iraq and kept its distance, but in February 2004, under strong US pressure, the UN had to agree to send a mission to the country to help form a new interim government. After the interim government was installed in June, the US pressured the UN to take a more active role in planning national elections, but security threats and reluctance by the Secretary-General and UN staff kept the UN role to a minimum.

As the situation spiraled out of control, Washington cited the humanitarian crisis as reason enough for UN intervention. But critics said the US intended to use the UN to force Iraqis to accept US-imposed reconciliation, including the controversial oil law and de-Baathification. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appeared to be more accommodating and supportive of the US. The UN in Iraq Despite strong opposition from the UN Staff Council, which represented 25,000 UN staff, the Security Council bowed to US and UK pressure and voted to expand the UN's role in Iraq on 10 August 2007. Only if the US occupation ends, can there be an important and politically viable role for it.⁸

Consequences of the Arab Spring in Egypt

The Arab Spring has reached Egypt. The 30-year authoritarian regime of Mubarak was overthrown by the military in the country, and there was hope that a democratic regime would be established through elections. The members of the "Muslim Brotherhood" hoped that after the elections they would be represented in the country's political life. Indeed, their power in Egypt increased for a while.⁹ "The Muslim Brotherhood got such an image as if they were an important part of political processes in the country. In the presidential elections held shortly after the overthrow of the Mubarak regime, the candidate put forward by the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Morsi, won. He became the country's first democratically elected president.

⁸ UN Role in Iraq –Global Policy Forum, 2011

⁹ Kerckhove F., Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the Arab Spring, CANADIAN DEFENCE & FOREIGN AFFAIRS INSTITUTE, 2012

The Arab Spring brought radical Islam to the fore in Egypt, in the form of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had previously suffered persecution. In Egypt, there was a threat of spread of Islamism, but for a short time. The Muslim Brotherhood's stay in power soon ended and the military took power in Egypt again, whose leader al-Sisi is still the president of Egypt.

The Syrian conflict and the involvement of external forces in it

On March 15, 2011, the protests started by the opposition forces against the government of Bashar al-Assad turned into the Syrian Civil War, which continues to this day. These events are also known as the Arab Spring. Demonstrators demanded the resignation of Bashar al-Assad and the end of Baath party rule. A few months later, the protest turned into an armed uprising. Clashes took place in different cities of the country. Jihadists from different countries joined the rebels. These events have caused great unrest in Syria.¹⁰

The terrorist organization Daesh was also involved in the conflict in Syria, as a result of which the situation became more tense. In the fall of 2015, a coalition against Daesh was formed with the participation of Iran, Iraq, Russia and the Assad regime. Russia has launched airstrikes directed against the Syrian opposition and Daesh. Russia's military intervention in Syria and US reluctance to get involved in the conflict have restored Moscow to its role as a major player in the Middle East.

The Middle East has been an object of conflict between the world's leading powers for centuries. Moscow's involvement saved the overthrow of the Assad regime.

Six years after the start of the civil war in Syria, the US launched a direct military attack on the positions of Syrian government forces (2018). The then president of the USA D. Trump said that the reason for the military attack was the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government against its own citizens in the territory controlled by the rebels, which killed dozens of people.

For the regional and non-regional players involved in the conflict (Iran, Arab countries, Turkey, USA, Russia), the war in Syria was not for the establishment of democracy, but for gaining advantage in the region, they were interested in democracy as much as it would give their group power. None of the participating parties was concerned about restoring order in the state.

A possible final culmination of the continuation of the revolution was to topple the Assad regime and replace it with a "democratic, inclusive coalition" government, but this failed because Assad did not cede power through his supporters.

Later, the Trump administration withdrew the American military from Syria and gave the arena to Turkey, and on the orders of the new US president Joe Biden, the US military launched an air strike on the facilities in eastern Syria, which, according to the Pentagon, were used by armed groups supported by Iran.¹¹

¹⁰ Inasaridze I. Arab countries after the "Arab Spring": first results, Journ. "Modern Middle East", (G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies of Ilia State University) ch. 2013;

¹¹ Gureshidze M. The Syrian Civil War and Escalation of Tensions in the Region, Journ. "Modern Middle East", (G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies of Ilia State University) ch. 2013;

The Yemeni Civil War

Yemen is no stranger to civil war and internal conflicts, and unfortunately they are frequent. Today's Republic of Yemen represents the union of two states that existed in the twentieth century and they were - the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (1967-1990) and the Yemen Arab Republic (1968-1990).

On February 25, 2012, as a result of the wave of the Arab Spring, the country's president, Ali Abdallah Saleh, was forced to resign from his position, and his place was taken by the vice president, Mansour Hadi, who promised the population to fight against corruption and economic progress, although these turned out to be only promises. He could not fulfill them because he was a weak ruler. Of course, other forces in the country took advantage of this weakness, and in 2004, the Shiite group supporting Sheikh Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi, who was killed by the Yemeni army.

Also, another major clashes took place in October 2013, where Houthis and Sunni Salafis clashed. The Houthis and their allied military have been advancing. This caused great concern in Saudi Arabia, as the success of the Shiite Houthis meant the strengthening of the influence of Shiite Iran in the region. In early 2015, Saudi Arabia formed a coalition to support Yemen's central government, which was transferred to the city of Aden (they are still there). Eight Arab countries joined it. The US, Great Britain and France provided logistic and intelligence support to the coalition. In March of the same year, the coalition launched the "Decisive Storm" operation, within the framework of which a massive military-air attack was carried out against the Houthis. This attack was not enough, it did not produce the desired result and it did not manage to significantly weaken the positions of the Houthis.¹²

In 2015-2017, the armed group, which was composed of members of the pro-Saleh Yemeni Republican Guard, fought on the side of the Houthis.

The former president of the country, Saleh, who contacted the Houthis and formed an alliance with them, wanted to transfer the power he gained later to his son in order to restore his rule. The Houthis wanted to create an independent state in the territory controlled by them. An agreement could not be reached between them, this was followed by a heated confrontation.

To summarize, the ongoing local civil war in the country has slowly acquired wide scales and it is possible that it will turn into an international conflict, causing significant changes not only for this country and the Middle East region, but also for the world. To prevent all this and to settle the conflict, it is necessary to actively involve the world community and implement the actions that will help to establish peace. First of all, the use of military force by foreign countries on the territory of Yemen should be stopped. This applies to both the coalition created by Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. reach an agreement on a ceasefire with the involvement of authoritative international organizations. Stability must be established within the ruling government of the country. Otherwise, peace will not be established in Yemen for a long time and it will remain as the most unstable and dangerous country.

Conclusion

¹² Yemeni Civil War - *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*-
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Houthi-movement#ref349614>

The ongoing problems in the Middle East, both within a specific country and between individual countries, tend to be quite long. The reason for this is often the harsh intervention of external actors.

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