

## НАПРЯМ 2. ВСЕСВІТНЯ ІСТОРІЯ

DOI <https://doi.org/10.36059/978-966-397-269-5-8>

**Zakharchenko A. M.,**

*Candidate of Political Sciences,*

*Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations*

*Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University*

### **BALANCE OF POWERS AND «FLEXIBLE ALLIANCES» IN THE SOUTH-EAST MEDITERRANEAN**

The region of the South-East Mediterranean (SEMED), which includes Arab and non-Arab states, is an important component of international relations and the world economy. This area is traditionally characterized by a high level of conflict potential. There are no completely isolated, purely national problems here: if they arise in one corner of the region, they often, in a more acute form, are reproduced in other places.

The formation of the current balance of powers here was launched by the Arab Spring in 2011. The revolutionary events have led to the destabilization of a number of Arab countries, including Syria, Libya, Yemen, with the further devastating civil wars. «Power vacuum» resulted in activation of radical Islamist movements and non-state actors, which play significant role in the formation of regional alliances. New centers of power of non-Arab origin have also emerged here: Iran, Turkey, and Israel. Nowadays, at least six countries – Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Israel, and Egypt – view each other as adversaries, friends, or potential allies in the regional balance of power. Competition between these states prevents any of them from becoming a regional hegemon. Finally, the gradual distance of Washington from the SEMED along with the growing influence of Russia and China here has led to greater autonomy of regional actors [2].

Under the influence of these regional and global transformations, traditional power structure in the SEMED has given the way to new types of interaction and various forms of ad-hoc collaboration. So-called «flexible alliances» arose here, which do not fall under the classic definition of an alliance. «Flexible alliances» are an informal blocks of states (and non-state actors) with common security interests. They respond sensitively to changes in the environment and adapt to the new political landscape. The rivalry between them also becomes flexible. Traditionally hostile actors can

temporarily unite around a specific threat without recognizing each other as allies [7].

The current balance of power in the SEMED is based on two axes of confrontation: the Sunni-Shia, which is traditional for the region, and the intra-Sunni, which is a relatively new phenomenon.

The first axis, the Sunni-Shia, is the 40-year struggle of Sunni states (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, etc.) against the so-called «axis of resistance» led by Iran. This confrontation can be viewed both through a religious prism and through the prism of the balance of powers. The religious factor is used by these powers as a tool for the implementation of political tasks, such as the mobilization of the population around their regimes and regional dominance. The confrontation between Shiite and Sunni blocs has intensified significantly since the Arab Spring [1].

Another axis of regional confrontation is the split within the Sunni camp itself, which was caused by the events of 2011. Since then, the Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the one hand, and Qatar and Turkey on the other, have started a struggle for regional dominance, supporting local proxies throughout the Sunni world. The boycott of Qatar has deepened the split in the Sunni block and strengthened the alliance between Doha and Ankara [3].

On this basis three alternative alliances were formed: Shia, pragmatic Sunni and radical Sunni. The interaction between these blocs in the form of diplomatic struggle, open confrontation or balancing explains all major political and strategic processes in the region.

The first alliance, the so-called «Shia axis», includes Iran, the Assad regime in Syria, and Iranian proxies in the region: Hezbollah in Lebanon, Islamic Jihad in Gaza Strip, Yemeni Houthis and Shiite proxies in Iraq. This alliance consists of only two countries, and the rest of the participants are non-state actors. Despite this, the Shia bloc is the most organized and cohesive among the three [5].

The second regional alliance is a bloc of Sunni pragmatic countries. It includes Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and other Arab monarchies, excluding Qatar. Israel has joined this group in 2020. They are interested in the containment of Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood (including Hamas) and their sponsors – Turkey and Qatar. This alliance, given the diversity of its members, is the most controversial and unstable one [6].

The third one is the radical Sunni alliance, represented by Turkey, Qatar, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. The members of this alliance support Muslim Brotherhood's Islamist ideology and maintain relations with Iran. This fundamentally distinguishes this block from pragmatic Sunni camp, which sees both the Brotherhood and Teheran as a threat to their stability and regional security [4].

The unstable nature of these alliances contributes increasingly to unpredictable nature of the region. The rivalry extends to all major regional conflicts, in particular, in Syria, Yemen and Libya, which greatly complicates the prospects of their resolution.

We can assume that the traditional axis of the Sunni-Shia confrontation in the region will remain relevant, as well as the Israeli-Iranian one. Tehran's destabilizing role in the SEMED, along with its nuclear program, will remain a powerful factor for the further consolidation of the anti-Iran bloc. As for the relations between the Sunni camps, there may be some shifts towards normalization. The end of the boycott of Qatar by pragmatic Sunni regimes and Turkey's attempts to normalize relations with them, as well as with Israel in 2021, are clear indicators of this tendency.

Relations in the US – Russia – China triangle will have an equally important influence on the regional situation. In this context, the change in the global security system as a result of the Russia's war in Ukraine is of particular importance. The international isolation of Russia will directly affect the dynamics of regional processes. Countries of the SEMED will have to adapt to the new international order, which may lead to another reconfiguration of the regional balance of power.

This research was conducted in the framework of «The Ring of Mediterranean: Region Studies» Project № 101047919 – MEDITERreg – ERASMUS-JMO-2021-HEI-TCH-RSCH.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Fathollah-Nejad, A. (2017). The Iranian–Saudi Hegemonic Rivalry. *Belfer Center*. October 25. URL: <https://www.belfercenter.org/publicationiranian-saudi-hegemonic-rivalry>.
2. Frisch, H. (2021). Rethinking the «Arab Spring». Winners and Losers. *Middle East Quarterly*. Vol. 28, No 3. URL: <https://www.meforum.org/middle-east-quarterly/pdfs/62397.pdf>.
3. Guzansky, Y., Lindenstrauss, G. (2020). A Dysfunctional Family: Disagreements and Clashes in the Sunni World. *INSS Insight*. No 1330. URL: <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/no.-1330-1.pdf>
4. Jabbour, J. (2022). After Parting Ways: The Coming Frosty Entente in Saudi-Turkish Relations. *Arab Center Washington D.C. Policy Analysis*. February 2. URL: <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/after-parting-ways-the-coming-frosty-entente-in-saudi-turkish-relations>.
5. Kausch, K. (2020). Debating Middle Eastern Alliance. *The KAS Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean Conference Report*. URL: [https://www.kas.de/documents/282499/282548/MDS\\_Conference+Paper\\_Debating+Middle+Eastern+Alliances.pdf](https://www.kas.de/documents/282499/282548/MDS_Conference+Paper_Debating+Middle+Eastern+Alliances.pdf).

6. Krasna, J., Meladze, G. (2021). The «Fore plus One»: the Changing Power Politics of the Middle East. *The Moshe Dayan Center Occasional Paper*. URL: <https://dayan.org/content/four-plus-one-changing-power-politics-middle-east>.
7. Lecha, E.C. (2017). Liquid Alliances in the Middle East. *Barcelona Center for International Affairs Report*. No 169. URL: [https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication\\_series/notes\\_internacionals/nl\\_169/liquid\\_alliances\\_in\\_the\\_middle\\_east](https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/notes_internacionals/nl_169/liquid_alliances_in_the_middle_east).

DOI <https://doi.org/10.36059/978-966-397-269-5-9>

**Каковкіна О. М.,**

*кандидат історичних наук, доцент,*

*доцент кафедри всесвітньої історії*

*Дніпровського національного університету імені Олеся Гончара*

### **ДНІПРОПЕТРОВЩИНА І КУБА У 1960-Х – 1980-Х РР.**

Зв'язки СРСР з «островом Свободи» у часи Холодної війни були «на вістрі» не тільки у політичному розрізі, а охоплювали практично усі напрями співпраці. Це відбилося на дослідженнях істориків, які радянсько-кубинським відносинам присвятили не одну сотню публікацій різного обсягу. Стосовно Куби, то відносини з нею України поглиналися союзним рівнем, що було властивим для дослідження міжнародних зв'язків СРСР з різними країнами (як, наприклад, дисертація кубинського дослідника, захищена в СРСР [5]). «Ювілейна» дата подій Карибської кризи 1962 р. актуалізує тему та спонукає вести розмову не тільки про глобальну політику та її провідних гравців, а й не таких помітних, і практично невідомих більшості, учасників відносин з Кубою.

Тема регіонального виміру українсько/радянсько-кубинських відносин запропонована у межах дослідження міжнародних зв'язків Дніпропетровської області у 1945–1991 рр. Мета цієї розвідки – висвітлити основні напрями зв'язків регіону з Кубою у 1960-х – 1980-х рр. Інформаційну базу дослідження склали матеріали регіонального походження – преси та фондів Державного архіву Дніпропетровської області (ДАДО).

Активна радянсько-кубинська співпраця розпочалася після відновлення дипломатичних відносин держав у травні 1960 р. і стрімко набирала оберти. Їх законодавчу основу склали низка угод, реалізація яких покладалася й на Україну. Матеріали, які розкривають особливості зламу великої політики на локальному/регіональному