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## **A Multi-Level Balance Model for an Inclusive and Sustainable Security Order in MENA**

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**Abstract.** From Morocco in the west to Afghanistan in the east, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has always been a scene for many various security problems. Multi-dimensional type of security, high number of actors, exogenous approach of residents towards security, fragile order, and diversity of discourses are among key features adding to these security problems. To overcome the problem, researchers and analysts from around the world have, since years ago, suggested different security models to create a stable situation in the region. None of these suggestions have ever been a viable model for the restive region of MENA. Considering shortcomings of all previously suggested models and architectures offered to realize a security order in MENA, the current research paper suggests a new model which can form a sustainable security order in the region. This new model takes all the influential domestic and foreign actors as well as their interests into account and forms a multi-layer balance all over the region. This new model provides security for all members of the MENA based on the division of sphere of influence and division of important areas of economy, politics, and military among all significant players of the region. This multi-level balance model gives a kind of dominance to every important player in one of the mentioned areas and spheres and it provides each member of the region with a specific jurisdiction. Subsequent elite and economy based ties will strengthen achieved security order; hence, a region-wide real peace and stability for the people.

**Keywords.** Security, Model, Balance, MENA, Order

### **1. Introduction**

Since very ancient times and throughout history, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has been a geographical region of great significance. Strategically located, it is a natural bridge connecting three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. It was the site of some of the world's earliest civilizations and the birthplace of three great religions--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In recent times, Middle East's enormous deposits of oil have made it more important than ever. As a result of existence of many characteristics of these kinds, the land has drawn attention of all world powers making it the most important field for confrontations between powerful countries' interests. These confrontations have endangered region's security first and that of whole world then. Presence of trans-regional countries and

looming regional rivalries in the region have prompted a number of MENA states for running an arms race in last decades.

Although a number of international regimes and organizations have been formed and many various accords have been signed to fulfill arms control, security is still a concern of high importance for many regional and international political systems. Taking recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa region such as the Arab Spring into account, the need for a sustainable security seems to be more crucial for this region. Tensions and internal conflicts created as a direct result of these regional unrests and the ongoing competition among regional powers such as Iran and the Saudi on one hand and old disputes such as those between Arabs and the Israelis on the other hand have sometimes led the MENA's situation into a war-like atmosphere. Large amounts of budgets spent for buying western weapons is also another source of instability in the land. Existent vicinity of the MENA region with other world plates such as South and East Asia, Caucasus and Central Asia, and Western Europe is a reason for the spillover of a possible war into surrounding regions; hence, leading to various security, political, social, and economic consequences. All the above make creation of a sustainable and inclusive security model for MENA region necessary more than ever.

## **2. Bolding Features of Security System in MENA**

Unique features of MENA region have made it and its security system different from others in the world. Almost all incidents and developments in all around the world have got a leg in this ancient land. Among various bolding features of MENA security system multiplicity of players, multi dimension aspect of security issues, countries' exogenous approach toward security, region-wide fragile order, existence of a balance between inside and outside of the region, and last but not least diversity of discourses can be referred to.

### **2.1. Multiplicity of Actors**

When talking about reasons behind importance of the region, one cannot consider MENA region's governments as sole actors on the ground. Therefore, different powers including non-state actors have to be taken into account as additional influencers of the region. All these realities bring us to this conclusion that there are many different actors with very contradictory interests in the region. As a result, one of the main roots of current tensions in MENA is diversity and multiplicity of actors and their existing contradictory interests. So, a general rule can be encountered, here: the more actors involved, the more difficulties in reaching to a permanent peace plan.

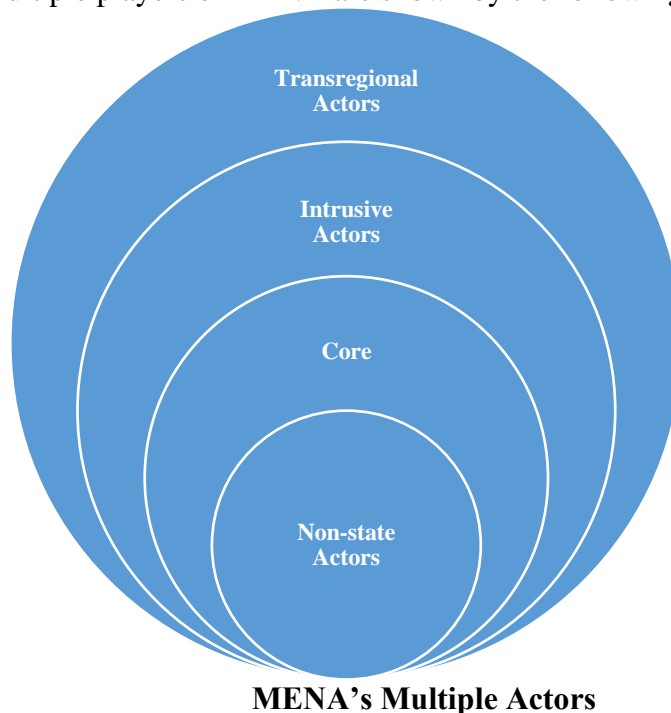
The region is comprised up of an Arab core and actors in periphery including non-Arab countries of the region such as Iran, Turkey, and Israel. These three play really important roles in region's balance of power (Cantori and Spiegel 1969: 375).

Non-state actors include non-state arm groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, al-Nosrah Front, Taliban, resistant groups of Hezbollah, Ansarollah, Hemas, and Islamic Jihad. Finally trans-regional powers involved in MENA include the US, Russia, China, and India.

Middle East and North Africa lies in a situation in which foreign threats are high and political and managerial capacities of the region are low (Ghasemi, 2015: 322). Considering internal weaknesses alongside with salient geopolitical features make foreign interventions the most important security dilemma for the region (Ghasemi: 2015: 322). Therefore, above mentioned trans-regional powers have had, since the collapse of Othamen Empire, significant role in the existence and non-existence of security in the region. Although the US, Russia,

China, and the EU have always been main foreign players, the role of Russia and the US in political, security and military developments have been more significant. Bilateral competitions and disputes between Russia and the US in Middle East geopolitics have reinforced existing poles of power, managed differences rather than solving them, and made selling arm shipments for the purpose of reaching economic benefits possible. It is worth mentioning that the two sides' competition in MENA is also used as a tool in increasing or decreasing existing conflicts in the east of Europe, Baltic region, an in military issues such as those related to NATO (Sarie'olghalam, 2017: 103).

Multiple players of MENA are shown by the following shape.



## 2. 2 Multi-Dimensional Security

In MENA, concept of security is made up of several layers and dimensions. It is the multi-dimensional character of the region and its problems that give such a feature to security in MENA. This region is a highly securitized region in the world with multi-dimensional security threats on several levels (Swain, Öjendal, Schulz, 2009: 2). All aspects of security emphasized in Copenhagen school of thought by Buzan and his colleagues can be traced in MENA. In other words, contemporary history of the land shows that alongside with military security other issues such as political, economic, social and environmental issues are among significant factors highly affecting security in the region (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 166). We do not have a one-dimension security in MENA, therefore. In fact, importance of these factors made many Middle East scholars to consider a shift from only military considerations to other issues in the region. Buzan, a keynote scholar of multi-dimensional security, believes that it is concept of security that brings all political, societal, economic, and environmental aspects close to each other and it is this concept which requires scholars to consider them through an integrative approach. He introduces security as a broad lens which is also “taken to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and

societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change which they see as hostile” (Buzan 1991: 432). So, lack of legitimacy and real democracy, recession an inflation, and water scarcity as well as last years’ dust storms are all evidences for existence of such a multi aspect security in the Middle East and North Africa.

### **2. 3. Exogenous Approach toward Security**

A big problem for the Middle Eastern countries in recent years has been their foreign based approach toward security of their region. A large number of MENA states have no belief in region’s indigenous capabilities in articulating security; they always seek for security from somewhere out of the region, therefore. Western countries are among those sources Islamic governments of the land rely on for enjoying a sustainable security. In other words, security issues are not seen through domestic eye glasses, rather foreign countries’ approaches are seen as best existing ideas when dealing with MENA region’s security. Based on this mentality, feeling of insecurity is usually responded by buying weaponries from western allies. Arms races taking place currently in the region is an evidence for this type of approach toward security. There are some countries which seek to buy security from outside and follow policies requiring buying of more weapons. These countries have usually wanted to show that they are in danger and they try to provide security through paying to the outside and employing flattery (Zarif, 2018).

### **2. 4. Fragile and Uncertain Order**

From Morocco in the west to the Persian Gulf in the east, the Middle East and North Africa have been a vociferous scene with a variety of genres. Most devastating incidents of the Middle East take place in a very short period of time and this characteristic makes managing of the situation difficult for the regional leaders. They usually don’t have enough time to make appropriate decisions. This intense situation also puts the politician at the brink of making mistakes and miscalculations which may lead to an all-out war.

Such a fluctuant situation originates from lack of a stable regional order. Today’s situation of the Middle East fluctuates between peace and war. This unstable atmosphere became even more augmented when US administration withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal officially known as joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA). Yemeni crisis, blockade in Qatar, disorders in international ship navigations, tensions between Kurdish groups and incumbent government, assassination of General Soleimani, internal riots, and regain of Taliban were some of the issues raised after US decision. All the above endanger any regional order and make the situation more fragile than before.

Lack of shared identity, political regimes’ lack of legitimacy, lack of regional cooperation, inequality in distribution of facilities, and social rupture are among other main sources leading to such a fragile order. Formation of Arab Spring in 2011 is a result of these problems. The fragility can also be found among poles of the region which has added to the more uncertainty of the land (Dorsey, 2020).

### **2. 5 Diversity of Discourses**

Another salient feature of the region originates from existence of different political perspectives each country or group of countries follow. Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia are among main powers of the region each of which look at the region through their own desirable eye glasses.

Emphasizing on six pillars of Islamism, independence, cooperation, unity, question of Palestinian, and expelling foreign forces from the region, Islamic Republic of Iran has encouraged a specific regional discourse which was totally different from that of Pahlavi regime (Bashir, 2009: 86). In fact, Iran and its allies look at the region’s ups and downs based on a revolutionary perspective of political Islam.

Discourses of Salafism and Muslim Brotherhood are other dominant perspectives of MENA, alongside with that of Iran. The first is mostly led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE and the latter by the Turkey and Qatar. Having their own perspectives of political Islam, each of these two teams have different views on question of Palestine and management of security issues of the region.

Political systems in each of these three regional poles have done their best to export their own values and style of governance to other countries in all over the region. Each of these poles want to have their own preferred security order in the region, therefore. In fact, with diminishing US presence in the region during recent years, regional powers became determinant in managing MENA crises and different competitions formed among them (Mezran & Varvelli, 2019: 10).

Many different actors are playing roles to secure their interests in the vast Middle East and North Africa. With regard to the significance of the region and with respect to the sources for tensions in different levels, these players are categorized into different groups and their behaviors affect current and future developments of the Middle East and North Africa. The following table summarizes the whole story.

**Table 1. Perspectives of Current Regional Orders in the Middle East**

<b>Islamic Groups</b>	<b>Regional Player</b>	<b>Regional Order Model</b>	<b>Viewpoint on Global Order</b>	<b>Relations with the US</b>	<b>Viewpoints on Israel</b>
<b>Islamic Democracy</b>	I.R. of Iran & Allies	Group Multilateral Management	Revisionist & Inconsistent	Aggressive & Believing in US Exit	Eradication from Matrix of Regional Power
<b>Salafism in Islam</b>	KSA & UAE	Balance of Power & Paving the way for Great Powers’ Foreign Intervention	Consistent & Bounding Regional and Global Order	Strategic Alliance & Security-Military Alliance	Peaceful Coexistence
<b>Muslim Brotherhood Islam</b>	Turkey, Qatar, Egypt	Concert of Regional Great Powers	Coexistence of Regional & Global Order & Affecting Global Order in Long Term	Regional Alliance with Serving US Interests	Tensive at declared Level, Tolerance at Level of Practice

It is worth mentioning that willing of regional powers such as Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia for becoming a hegemon in the region has added to the instability of the region. While these three countries are following this line, none of them have got a potential for becoming a regional hegemon on the one hand and the trans-regional countries do not allow them to reach to this goal on the other hand.

### **3. Key Features of a Viable Security Model for MENA**

With regard to unique features of the region, a security model for the Middle East and North Africa can be workable when and only when it has got four features of extensiveness, inclusiveness, sustainability, and balance between inside and outside at the same time. These characteristics can be considered as basics for any model addressing security issues in a chaotic like region.

#### **3. 1 Extensive Security**

The fact is that Middle East and North Africa is dealing with many various security issues; a security model for this region must cover all security aspects of the land, therefore. Determinant factors of security both as a theory and as a practice is related to cultural, religious, national, social, economic, familial and some other effective factors (Jacoby & Sasley, 2002, 9). The following covers some of these important aspects.

**Military aspect:** Since 9/11 and following US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Middle East has been engaged in many wars. Harsh competition among regional powers to expand their sphere of influence on one side and creation of extremist groups and erosive proxy wars between regional poles on the other hands as well as progressive trends of military expenditures all suggest that a security model should contain a military solution in itself first. This aspect becomes more important when one sees military expenditure of the region has almost always been increased as a result of growing terrorist attacks and conflicts in first years of 21<sup>st</sup> century (Perlo-Freeman, Ismail & Solmirano, 2010: 186). Being equipped with this feature, a security model will be able to direct whole regional and trans-regional countries toward a compromise.

**Political aspect:** The challenge of national identity or loyalty to the central government is a challenge most Middle Eastern and North African countries are facing with. This is actually a kind of challenge in which a small part of the community which is usually known as minority is directed and tilted toward subnational identities including those related to religion or ethnicity which are not in line with identity of the majority or the group of elites. Another challenge emphasized in this aspect is the lowering political legitimacy of the ruling political systems inside the countries and also contradiction and difference between various and sometimes contradictory political systems among Middle Eastern and North African countries. A security model has to pay attention to this aspect as well.

**Economic aspect:** There are many different challenges in economic aspect which are listed as follows:

- Rentier nature of most countries in the region and nonexistence of transparent structures have led to inappropriate distribution of wealth in the region's countries ending in a very deep class gap in the societies. This widening gap between different classes can be a pretext for turmoil in the country.

- Similar and non-complementary economies in the region: Most countries' economies have been built based on selling oil in a way that they are competing with each other over selling more oil, absorbing more foreign investment in oil sector, and also

extracting from shared oil and gas fields. These countries are even in harsh confrontations in some cases; economic cooperation is so weak among them.

□ Although the Middle East enjoys a very suitable position for transit and exchange of goods in the world, its environment has become very militarized and this feature has stopped this potentiality of the land.

A suitable security model must lead to economic cooperation among regional countries and it should facilitate economic interactions of the region with other parts of the land as well (inter-regional interaction).

**Social aspect:** In social aspect, what is of high importance more than other factors is the identity crisis; this crisis has emerged problems like lack of identity or a multiplicity of identities. Different identities are categorized in three levels of subnational, national, and transnational. Multiple identities of Middle Eastern people include Islamic, Arabic, national, ethnic and religious ones the contradiction of which may create a phenomenon called multiplicity of identity. A brief examination shows that almost all countries of the Middle East and North Africa suffer from problems related to their national identities and it can be said that the whole region has been unable to integrate its cultural diversity in way that its effort to impose identities from above has ended in failure as well as creation of sectarian tensions (Kumaraswamy, 2006: 63). One more thing is that new generation of the Middle East is now facing with a new type of identity called virtual identity which is a result of globalization and time and place compression. Virtual identity is sometimes called a state of lack of identity. Therefore, any offering security model must be equipped with a kind of tolerance so that it can encounter with various identities in this part of the world.

**Environmental aspect:** Difficulties originating from lack of water, newly formed phenomena such as dust storms and pollution of common water sources can lead to some conflicts between governments in the future. “The Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile Rivers provide enough water for farming communities and electricity, but the struggle over hydro-hegemony is visible. Conflict has potential to emerge from water allocation and disagreements” (Seagle, 2019: 3). Moreover, many anticipate that ‘water will be the source of next wars’ and Israel will defeat Palestinians over common sources of water in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Asser, 2010). This aspect of security must also be covered by a good model.

### **3. 2 Inclusive Security**

MENA region has been home to many various conflicts; it has been affected by meddling of global and regional powers and it has been a scene for sectarian and ethnic tensions for a long time. A security model for a region like this is successful when it is capable to provide security for all players in the region. “An inclusive regional security architecture should allow different actors to settle their disputes in a more peaceful framework which should serve all the people in the region.” (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019).

A security model for the MENA region must have the following characteristics to be considered inclusive:

□ For the reason of existence of specific situation in Middle East, the model must be a combination between from inside to outside and from outside to inside models in a way that security of all actors of the region can be provided. Such a model is satisfying for both regional and trans-regional actors and it will not end in elimination or ignorance of important actors.

□ This model must be able to restore stability to three insecurity centers of MENA including: Persian Gulf, Mediterranean, and North Africa.

□ This new model must direct the whole region toward a concept of *our* security and change the older definition of security which was on the basis of zero-sum understanding of the concept. This can be the most difficult act in introducing a new and inclusive security model for the Middle East region.

□ It is also of high importance to include minority groups and civil society actors in any initiative proposed for creation of lasting solutions (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019).

The idea of inclusiveness has been considered as necessary by various think tanks in all over the world, For instance, pointing to dangerous incidents of the region in 2020 and referring to the possibility of sparking an uncontrollable escalation, International Crisis Group reiterated that the time for launching a collective and inclusive security dialogue in the Persian Gulf is overdue. The center also adds that when established UN mechanisms has had halting progress to stop individual crises like those of Yemen and Syrian, the notion of inclusive and collective security dialogue must be operationalized now. Production of concrete ideas and attraction of international support are also introduced as first possible steps. The group also highlights the issue of miscalculation and says that the main threat Middle East faces today can result from miscalculation and misinterpretation (International Crisis Group, 2020: 22).

### **3.3 Sustainable Security**

What is meant by sustainability is nothing but durability for a long time and less vulnerability against future incidents. A sustainable security model is one which can save peace and stability of the region in case of any domestic, regional, and trans-regional turbulence. A security model can be equipped with powerful controlling mechanisms so that when a crisis happens in one level these mechanisms prevent spilling over of the crisis to other levels first and start to decline its deteriorating effects then.

There are many researchers who have rejected military force or balance of power politics as only approaches in security discourse. Chris Abbott and Sophie Marsden (2009), for example, have introduced sustainable security as a viable approach while dealing with security issues. They believe targeting the disease itself is more important than fighting its symptoms and this is what sustainable security exactly does. They say “such a framework must be based on an integrated analysis of security threats and a preventative approach to responses” (Abbott & Marsden 2009: 2).

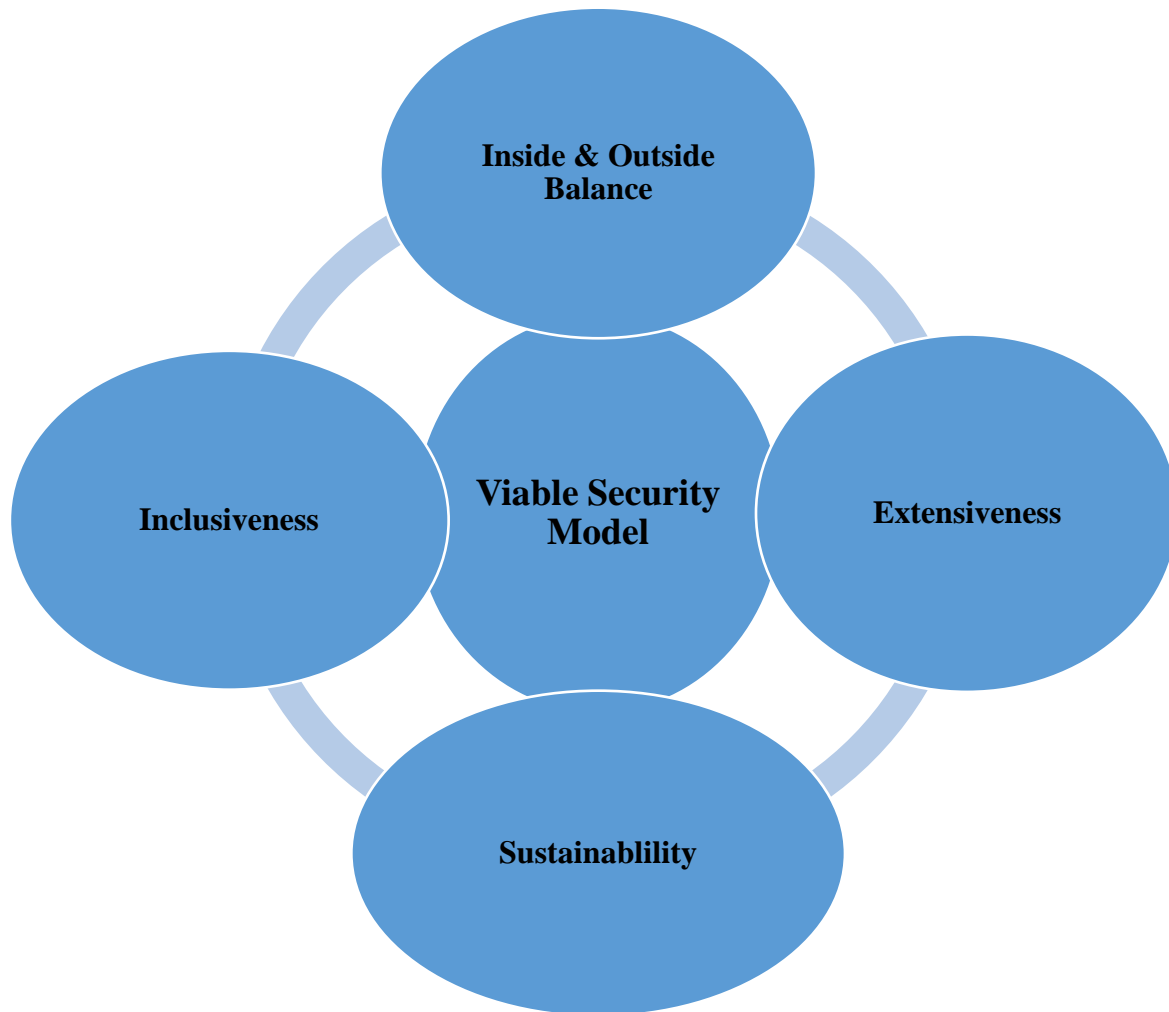
Also, the World Bank and German Cooperation Council have jointly emphasized on the necessity of following an inclusive engagement alongside with approaches centered on physical reconstruction and government institutions to create development and transition to sustainable peace in Middle East and North Africa region. Admiring character of sustainability, they believe policy makers must pursue a holistic approach that addresses layers of complexities. Supporting legitimate and inclusive institutions, creating sustainable economic opportunities for all, and building on resilient assets while addressing damages are points on which decision makers have to focus their holistic method to bring sustainable peace for MENA (World Bank & German Cooperation, 2020: xv).

Endorsing sustainable security as a great value for the international system, some commentators have emphasized on the importance of formation of security regimes when looking for sustainable security order. They believe a security order can become sustainable when changed into a security regime. Full observance of good faith by all member states, efficiency of the regime in supplying all sides’ interests, and execution guarantee of its provisions are important factors making a security regime successful. In other words, proper implementation of rules, supplying interests of all sides with respect to the principle of

cooperation, and punishment of any violator of regime's rules and norms will make any security regime a sustainable one. Therefore, reviewing existing literature makes it clear that sustainable security has received special attention of many scholars in all around the world.

### **3.4 Balance between Inside and Outside**

A notable feature in Middle East and North Africa which has always added to the complexity of the situation is an engineered balance between two inside and outside levels of each country. Such a balance happens when a political unit tries to guarantee its stability and longevity through making alliances with foreign countries. In fact, this move provides a kind of balance between inside and outside of a country when internal situation of a country makes an existential threat for the government. Many Arab countries in all over the region has repeatedly followed such a strategy. What Saudi Arabia and Bahrain did during Arab Spring unrests to save their political systems can be called an example of such a move. The concept of regional security is also affected by this balance between inside and outside. Many countries of the region provide themselves with security through agreements with powerful countries outside the region. So, security system in MENA has always been relied on and affected by outside and significant players of the region have all got powerful friends in the world. Russia, US, UK, China are among these powerful countries all of which have many various benefits and interests in the region. Some part of MENA security has historically originated from somewhere outside of the region. Articulating any system or model for MENA security must also cover interests of super and great powers. An interaction and balance between regional and international security systems have to be made, therefore.



**Figure 1. Viable Security Model**

Taking into account all the above criteria (extensiveness, inclusiveness, sustainability, and inside and outside balance), the authors of the present article suggest a new security model for the Middle East and North Africa region calling it a Multi Aspect Balance Model (Balance at domestic level, balance at regional level, and balance at trans-regional level). However, before introducing the new model, previously offered models are reviewed first.

#### **4. Existing Experiences and Previously Suggested Models to Overcome Security Problems in Middle East and North Africa**

As a heterogeneous environment, the Middle East and North Africa has been a scene for different extra-regional powers' rivalries; the region has encountered proxy wars between competing regional poles as well. Furthermore, this region suffers from escalating sectarian tensions and collapsing state structures. Long-standing political conflicts in the region and formation of terrorist groups have created a crucial situation which is considered, by many, as threatening for global peace and security. Also, rupture of confidence is another main obstacle in creation of peace and security in MENA.

With respect to the impact of MENA region's problems on surrounding lands such as Europe, some security initiatives have previously been suggested for this region. There are

several experiences and models of conflict resolution and pacific coexistence that have drawn attention while looking for an establishment of peace and security in the region. Most important ones follow.

#### **4.1 Westphalia Model**

The Westphalia for the Middle East project is a joint initiative of the Forum on Geopolitics of the University of Cambridge and the Körber Foundation to “open new creative approaches for resolving conflict in the Middle East by looking at solutions that worked in the Peace of Westphalia” (Körber Foundation International Affairs, 2017). What we can learn from the historical experience of the Thirty Years War, was the main concern of this shared endeavor. The importance of finding a political solution which addresses needs of all actors involved as well as an inclusive post-war order for all ethnic and political minorities was the optimal goal. Modeling Westphalia peace accord was found crucial to maintain existing borders and to ensure the integrity and sovereignty of all countries in the region.

This model prefers to reestablish the principles that are often associated with Westphalia: sovereignty of the modern nation state and non-interference. These principles were found necessary to restore the balance within the states and to protect minorities. Conditional or limited sovereignty of the Emperor and the states were mechanisms in the Peace of Westphalia which ensured protection of religious minorities. It is said that we can draw several parallels between the Thirty Years’ War and the current conflicts in the Middle East. Messy confrontations within and between states in today’s Middle East are found very much similar to those of Thirty Years War in Europe. Sectarian tensions and foreign interventions in different conflicts of Middle East particularly those of Syria are some of these specific similarities. “Peace in the Middle East cannot be imposed by external powers – it must come from the region itself. But mechanisms and techniques that proved effective in Westphalia can provide inspiration for how this might be done in practice” (Centre of Geopolitics & Grand Strategy, 2016).

This model maintains that a comprehensive solution for the region is possible based on power of persuasion and consensus building. The impetus for negotiations as well as ideas for a post-war order would have to come from the regional actors, and could only be supported or complemented by external actors. In this context, we should link the sustainable security to an inclusive development of the countries of the region in order to encourage them to adopt a developmental foreign policy and a constructive economic diplomacy.

#### **4. 2 Model of the Treaty of Rome**

Those who believe in power of economic growth and development in solving security problems turn their attention to the capabilities of Treaty of Rome when talking about security order in the Middle East and North Africa. Bringing six countries together, Treaty of Rome set up an economic community for Europe. By creating a common market among members, the deal also followed moves toward closer political unification of Europe as one of its main goal (European Parliament Official Website, 2020).

Treaty of Rome has been referred to, by some scholars such as Mallat, as a result of European countries’ endeavor for fulfillment of federalism in Europe. The same group of researchers believe the same move for federalism and a model like Treaty of Rome will appear among countries of the third world including those of Middle East (Mallat, 2003: P 4).

The Treaty of Rome, officially entitled “the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (TEEC)”, was an international agreement that brought about the

creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), the best-known of the European Communities (EC).

Based on the experiences left from this model, the peaceful coexistence can be realized if countries of the region endeavor to establish a custom union and a single market and to adopt a common transport policy. In this neo-functional framework, the cooperation on non-controversial issues such as trade and transport can be extrapolated and spilled over other areas especially the political and security issues putting in mind that confidence building is a two way issue. Therefore, European model of integration can be suggested as a template for peace in MENA. Based on this perspective, we should reinforce the interconnectivity of Middle Eastern countries and enhance their inter-regional interactions so that paths to security agreements can be opened.

#### **4. 3 The Model of Helsinki Conference**

Thirty-five states, including the USA, Canada, and all European states except Albania and Andorra, signed the Helsinki Declaration in an attempt to improve relations between the Communist bloc and the West. This process of negotiations is sometimes referred to as a possible model for realization of sustainable peace in Middle East and North Africa.

Although some believe that a mechanism like that of Helsinki Conference outcome is not appropriate for Middle East due to the fact that it is somewhere different, some think in another way. Benjamin Cardin, for instance, says embracing standards related to democracy and human rights existing in Helsinki accords could lead to a lasting peace and prevent more slaughters. He believes embracing commitments by newly formed governments of Iraq and Afghanistan can guide them toward most of reform. The adoption of principles like those of Helsinki Declaration by the Middle Eastern and North African countries would mark an important starting point for resolving ancient issues and bring peace and stability to the region (Cardin, 2004).

Endorsing capabilities of Helsinki Accords, some others have found other parties' participation as supportive in a move toward regional peace. In line with this idea, it is said that "to promote security, development, and democracy, the Middle East desperately needs its own Helsinki process, including a permanent, multilateral security organization. The impetus for creating such regional structures must come from within the region, but outsiders, including the United States, the European Union, and perhaps Russia and Canada, should also support the initiative" (Mcfaul, 2008).

When criticized, supporters of a Helsinki-like organization for the Middle East and North Africa refers to deep ideological divisions and ethnic tensions in Europe in first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and emphasize on competence of the European experience in bringing end to the MENA region's problems.

Emphasizing on the applicability of Helsinki process in the Middle East, some others raise issue of human rights and say that Middle East problems of human rights can also be solved like those of Soviet Union. These researchers believe that something like Helsinki process could be of considerable value in Persian Gulf countries. It is said that a Helsinki-like process can lead to a promotion of human rights issues in the Persian Gulf region like what human rights basket did during Helsinki negotiations (Feaver, 2009).

Referring to some opinions about potential of Helsinki process for avoiding political regression in the Middle East, Wigell, Aaltola, and Hägglund (2020) express that the model can provide some useful lessons for the Middle East, but the region must have its own model by using previous experiences. Considering lessons of the Helsinki process, some

recommendations are proposed for a possible Middle East process which include: establishing a regional initiative for building a security architecture in the Persian Gulf inspired by the Helsinki Process and its institutionalization, establishing a channel for Track 1, state-to-state-level consultations, focusing on the basic security guarantees that are common to the Persian Gulf states, and maximizing regional ownership with external facilitation (Wigell, Aatola, & Hagglund, 2020: P. 7-8).

The Helsinki Accords served as the groundwork for the later Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), established under the Paris Charter. Based on Helsinki model, dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia and their participation in the regional security arrangements should be promoted based on human face of diplomacy. Crisis management initiative based on impartiality of the third parties, inclusiveness, transparency, coordination, complementarity, shared values and interests, pacific resolution of conflicts, confidence building measures, trade and scientific cooperation, cultural exchange and the continuous organization of regional conferences would pave the way for mutual understanding.

#### **4. 4 Network Security**

Special situation of the Persian Gulf region with its bitter and destructive crises in last decades have led some analysts to consider engaging in bloc-formations and alliances as an impossible mission. They also believe differences in size, population and economic and military strengths have made some regional leaders concerned about their survival and created a kind of region-wide reliance on foreign powers. Taking a look at region's history in last two three decades endorses existence of this mistrust approach between regional countries which has resulted in formation of an illusion of buying security from outside and foreign sources. However, Iran's nuclear deal persuaded many in the world to find the UN backed agreement as an opportunity to take first steps toward shaping a new security architecture for the Persian Gulf, one that can upgrade relations between Iran and its southern neighbors and can supply world powers' interests as well (Wehrey & Sokolski, 2015).

Network security was an initiative proposed and followed by Islamic Republic of Iran's government to overcome miscomprehension of regional leaders and to trigger a new approach for the region's peace and stability. It's good to say that most previous attempts aimed to create collective security regimes have been unrealistic and led to almost nothing.

In his opinion article for Financial Times in January 2018, Iran's foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif referred to ISIS's defeat as an opportunity for coming together to battle common threats. He raised two concepts of strong region and network security to form a new security paradigm for West Asia. This approach "is Iran's initiative which ranges from divergence of interests to power and size differences. The initiative does not ignore conflicts of interests, rather it accepts differences and it fights against emergence of oligarchy among bigger members and provides smaller ones with participation". In fact, in this kind of security model, all big and small regional States participate based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including sovereign equality of States, refrainment from the threat or use of force, peaceful resolution of conflicts, respect for territorial integrity of States, non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States and respect for self-determination of States by their own peoples. Referring to lack of dialogue at different regional levels, Iran's network security also proposes establishing a Regional Dialogue Forum in the Persian Gulf to get its plan started (Zarif, 2018).

To sum up, within this conceptual and operational framework, hegemonic tendencies, unilateralism, confrontation and exclusion that lie in part at the root of the current difficulties in international relations, will lose any appeal. This framework also helps replace the inefficient and destabilizing doctrine of balance of power or reliance on military power blocs and dangerous and costly arms race with network security, which is based on participation and the promotion of cooperation in the areas of common interests as well as dialogue on areas of difference of interest and opinion.

### **5. What Factors and Parameters made these Models unfruitful?**

With regard to the Westphalia model, it should be considered that while this model insists on creation of a balance of power among regional countries and designation of sphere of influence for each actor as well as no seeking of hegemony by all regional sides, it has got different shortcomings.

- This model emphasizes on formation of nation-states in according to geographical borders, while many problems of the region comes from national or sub-national levels. A large number of these troublesome forces are main voice in many countries of the Middle East; usually fighting for ethnic or religious superiority.

- The model could respond to the Europe's problems of 17<sup>th</sup> century. It could make a compromise based on a regional balance. In the Middle East and North Africa, however, trans-regional powers are among pivotal influencers in a way that their impact on regional developments have to be taken into account seriously.

- What we are facing with in the Middle East are some trans-regional identities including Arab world and Islamic world. These problems which are not related to those between nation-states have sometimes ethnic or religious roots.

- Westphalia provides MENA with a balance system at the level of the region itself, while West Asia and North Africa sees many daily conflicts even between subnational powers and trans-national players. This model is not complete enough, therefore.

The Treaty of Rome is a convergence model based on functionalism starting from low politics and trying to spill over to the high politics. The whole process will be time consuming, therefore. This time consuming nature of this model is a pitfall by itself as Middle Eastern and North African tensions have reached their highest possible level and they must be declined in no time. In other words, addressing current issues of the Middle East by using Treaty of Rome model and trying to copy this model of peace making may lead to an all-out war before creation of any political and security outcome. MENA problems must be solved at high levels of politics first rather than going through economic or environmental cooperation as the first step.

Principles and provisions of Helsinki model can also be attended to while trying to reach to a comprehensive security model for the Middle East. As a direct result of complicated situations of the Middle East and North Africa only some aspects of Helsinki model can be used. We do need a model capable of providing a comprehensive solution to overcome national, regional and trans-regional challenges affecting security of the Middle East.

With regard to network security, less attention to presence of foreign influencers is still seen. The principles and purposes of the UN charter proposed as bases of the model have long been unattended in different conflicts, so considering these principles as a base seems to be too much optimistic. Formation of a regional forum for dialogue will not be that easy as

previous experiences such as Persian Gulf Cooperation Council have had insignificant gains in doing so.

Authors of the present research study have found a multilayer security model covering all the above shortcomings as a viable solution for the disordered MENA.

## **6. What We Suggest for Establishment of Peace and Dispute Settlement in Middle East**

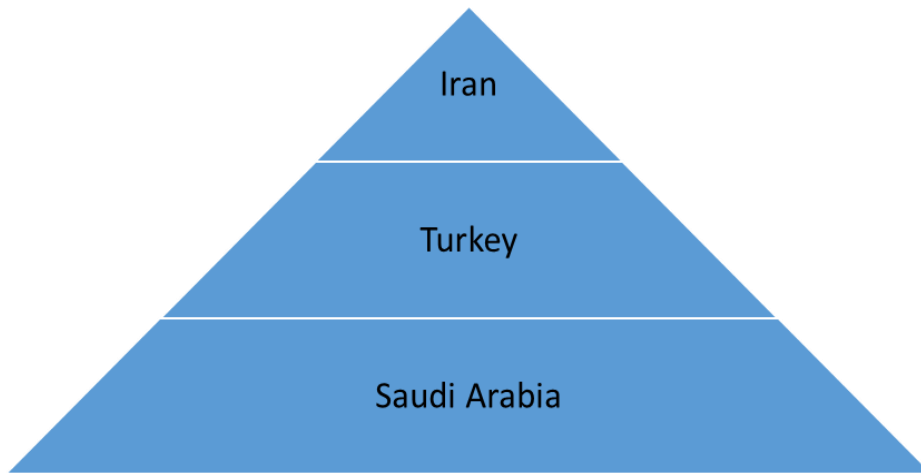
Considering all mentioned above, it is necessary to address entire aspects of region from every possible angle when trying to prescribe an inclusive security balance for the region. Therefore, creation of a multi-dimensional balance seems to be viable and effective. This kind of balance must meet needs of all sides of the incidents and stories throughout the region.

Such a balance considers all domestic, regional and trans-regional tensions and looks at the regional difficulties by synthesizing balance of power in all domestic, regional, and trans-regional levels.

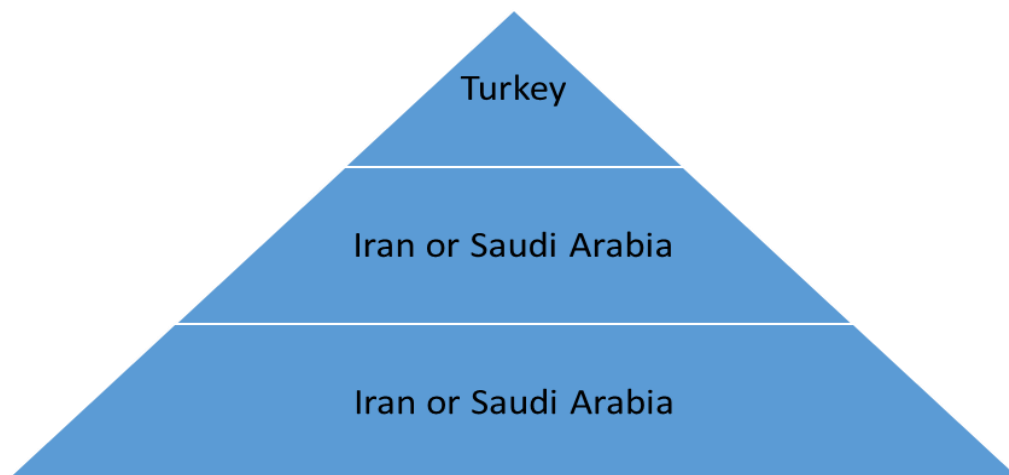
**6. 1 Domestic Balance:** Authors of the present research paper do believe that meaningful changes within political structures of some MENA countries can lead to symmetrical distribution of power and they will lower the domestic tensions, therefore. This will lead to a situation in which territories of countries are not changed into a scene for proxy and ideological wars among others. Yemen, Syria, and Libya are now suffering from a civil war. The solution to these wars can be balanced distribution of power between different political, religious, and ethnic groups of the country based on the current structures in Iraq and Lebanon (associative democracy) and a parliamentary system. In this kind of system, important governmental positions and posts of the country are distributed among various ethnic, religious, and political groups based on their population. This happens by forming political parties and taking rights of the minority groups into account.

**6. 2 Balance at Regional Level:** It seems that following creation of balance within the political structure of some destabilized countries of the region, it would be time to create a balance in the second layer which is regional level. According to some viewpoints, most tensions and conflicts of the Middle East comes from zero-sum approaches followed mostly by regional powers of Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, meaning ignoring other powers and following a hierarchical security order in line with their own interests.

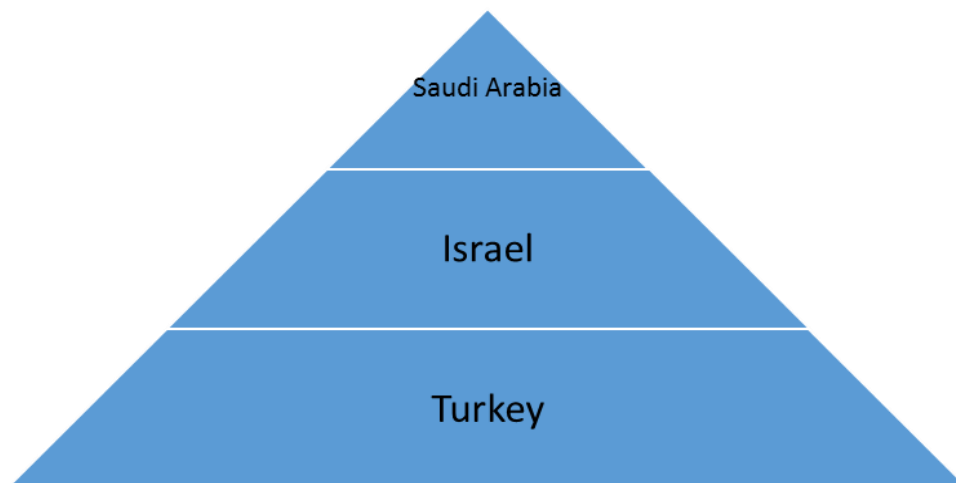
Optimal security model of each of these three countries can be depicted like the following:



**Figure 2: model 1: Iran's Optimal Model**



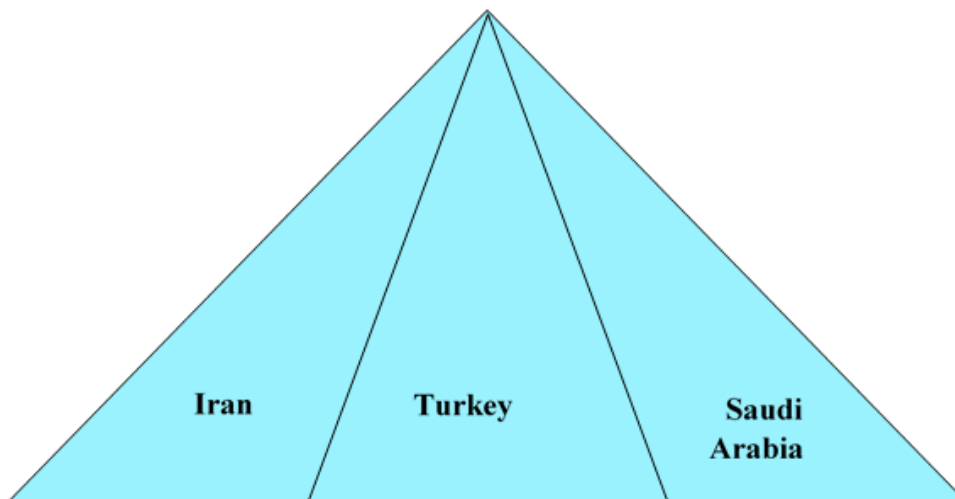
**Figure 3: model 2: Turkey's Optimal Model**



**Figure 4: model 3: Saudi Arabia's Optimal Model**

A balance of power at regional arena is in fact a restoration of stability to the Middle East in a way which three regional powers of Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia follow a satisfying security order instead of a hierarchical one.

The following figure shows a balance of power at regional level (Satisfying Model):



**Figure 5: model 4: Satisfying Model**

The necessary factor to form and to sustain this kind of balance in the Middle East is the intervention and observance of regional and international organizations such as UN and OIC on the transition process from state of turmoil to state of balance.

**6. 3 Trans-Regional Balance:** As presence of trans-regional powers and their interests have always impacted security situation of the Middle East, any new security model for the region will not be successful if it does not contain and cover presence and interests of trans-regional powers in the region.

Any suggesting process must guarantee interests of the great powers while supplying peace and stability of the region. Large arm shipments of great powers to the region must be lowered on one hand and behavior of the regional powers be monitored by great trans-regional powers on the other hand. These trans-regional powers must stop their regional allies in conducting destabilizing acts. By doing so, a kind of balance will be created among great powers' interests in the region; military tension will be declined in MENA region, and tension between regional powers and trans-regional powers will be declined as well.

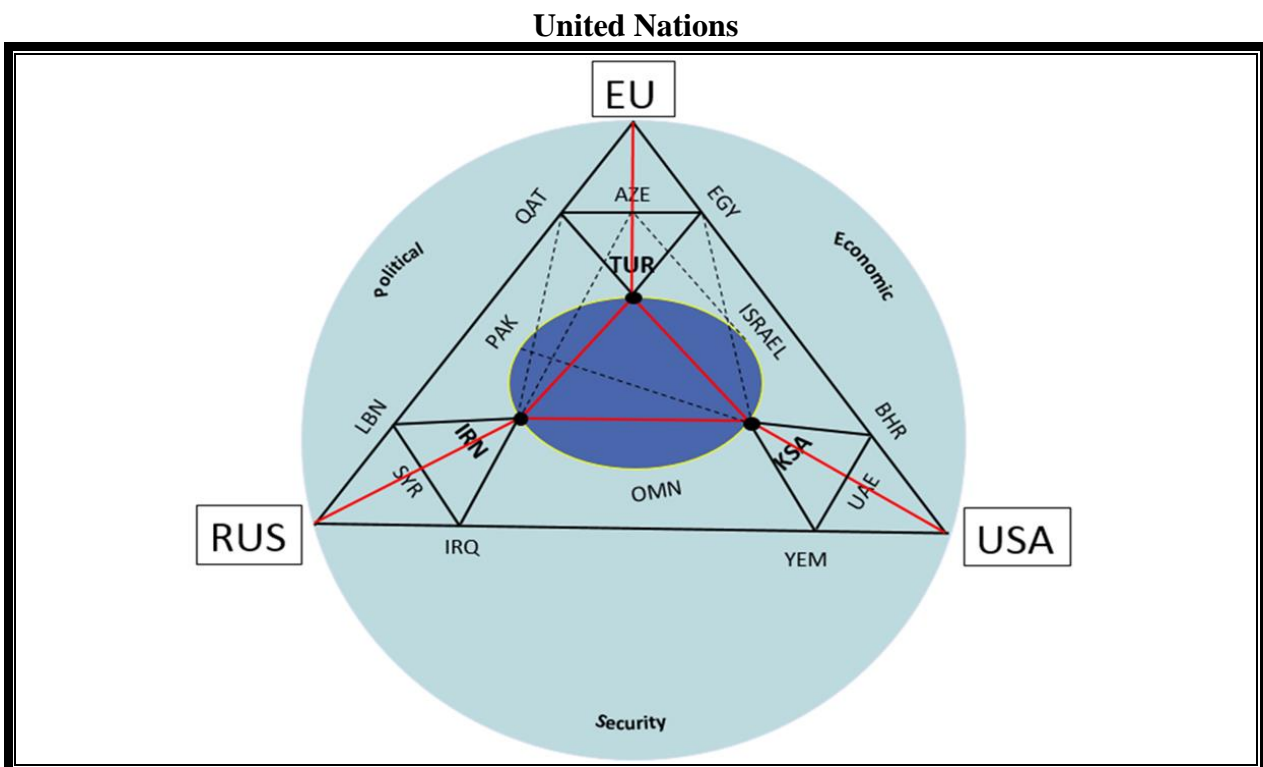
In fact, we are seeking for a model which creates a balance at three levels of national, regional, and trans-regional ones. This new model will lead to a multi-dimensional balance in a way that each dimension consolidates the other.

In this new promising model, regional powers will control domestic balance, trans-regional powers control regional balance, and international and regional organizations alongside with regional powers will control balance between trans-regional powers.

A kind of dialectical relation is formed in a way that balance in one dimension boosts the balance in the other dimension. This kind of balance can be called a multi-dimensional or

a multilayer balance tangible result of which would not be a zero-sum game in all over the region first and all around the world then.

This multilayer and multi-dimensional balance comes to reality when stipulation of two types of divisions receives serious attention. The first is to divide spheres of influence among key players of the region and the second is the divisions of areas of politics, military and economy among three important players of the region namely, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Observing these divisions will supply interests of all key players and their trans-regional allies. Recognition of spheres of influence and main areas of activities by each leading country of the region will lead to a comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable balance which supplies needs of not only key players but also those of less influential countries. The whole story can be inspected by international bodies such as United Nations. The following picture tries to depict what this multi-level balance model for an inclusive and sustainable security order in MENA strives to offer.



**Figure 6: a Multilayer Balance Model**

The balance which arises as a direct result of implementation of this model will meet security needs of almost all states in the region under an umbrella hold by the UN and its charter. Moreover, with respect to enough attention of this inclusive, balanced, and sustainable model to the economic issues along side military, security and political ones, prosperity, eradication of poverty and undermining terrorisms are kept in mind.

Taking current and past ups and downs of the region into account and considering all previous suggestions for the MENA region make one understood that this model can be a real way out of all these difficulties and problems as it does its best to supply the needs of all domestic and foreign players in Middle East and North Africa. This model provides all small and big countries of the region with a fair share of the regional interests. It is worth

mentioning that the further calmness of the region can lead to closer ties of communities of elites whose closer relations will prolong peace and stability in all over the region.

### **7. Conclusion**

Upon considering all the above-mentioned features about Middle East and North Africa, it becomes clear that this region has got its unique characteristics making it one of the most different lands in the world. Large reserves of oil and gas has drawn attention of transregional powers.

Connectivity situation of the region and its presence at a crossroad connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe to each other adds to this importance. Despite of all features of these kind, MENA has got no comprehensive order when it comes to security relations. Multi dimensional type of security, high number of actors, exogenous approach of residents towards security, fragile order, and diversity of discourses are among key features of MENA security system each of which fully explained above. Nevertheless the whole region and its 500 million people suffer from lack of a viable security order which can guarantee interests of all. In fact, past and current situations in MENA particularly during the years following Arab Spring made almost every one understood about a dire need of security model. One that can meet needs of all indigenous and foreign actors and players of the region. Existence of an extensive and inclusive security model was found essential. Complexity of the region made it clear that such model is viable when it is equipped with enough sustainability as well as regional and transregional balance.

Westphalia model, The Treaty of Rome, Helsinki Conference and Network Security are some suggested prescriptions for establishment of peace and settlement of disputes in MENA; each of these suggestions have their own shortcomings and can not be fully useful in addressing multi layer problems of the land. These shortcomings range from lack of attention to border disputes and presence of trans regional countries to superficial considerations of MENA developments. So, all previously proposed models have been ineffective and afflictions of the region are still ubiquitous.

Paying attention to the necessity of creation of balance at different domestic, regional and transregional levels, the new suggested model provides security for all members of the Middle East and North Africa based on the division of sphere of influence and division of important areas of economy, politics, and military among all significant players of the region. This multi-level balance model gives a kind of dominance to every important player in one of the mentioned areas and spheres and it provides each member of the region with a specific jurisdiction. Subsequent elite and economy based ties will strengthen achieved security order; hence, a region-wide real peace and stability for the people.

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