

## THE NEW STRATEGY OF THE U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY AND EGYPT

### Abstract

After the collapse of the USSR, the United States further activated its policy in different continents with the aim of replenishing the so-called “vacuum space” that had resulted from the collapse of the bipolar system. In the light of formation of new correlation of world forces, the American foreign policy focused mostly on those parts of the world that were of direct importance to US national security. In this regard, the official Washington proposed a new concept of geopolitical perception on the global region to regulate its vital issues and secure its influence in the Middle East and North Africa region, which at the same time would allow the United States to set direct control over specific countries, “managing” their key economic resources, as well as ensuring the security of its traditional ally Israel.

The new American concept assumed “reconstruction” of the Middle East and North Africa region and “modernization and transformation” of the countries in the region. By initiating the process, the United States tried to impose the so-called “American democracy” model in the region.

**Keywords:** *U.S. Strategy, “American democracy”, “The Great Middle East”, “Modernization and transformation Middle East and North Africa”, “The Middle East Reconstruction”, Egyptian Concept for the Development of the Arab World.*

### Introduction

For a long time, the Middle East was one of the most problematic components of bipolar international relations. The global confrontation between the USA and the USSR in the region was interwoven with local interstate, interpersonal, ethno-religious and other contradictions of the heads of states, as well as with the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli unsettled conflict.

Throughout the Cold War, the United States developed new tactics and even concepts in its Middle Eastern policy to isolate the USSR in the region and establish absolute dominant positions. However, in the region, the American strategy was hampered not only by official Moscow, but

also by rather solid ideology of political systems based on Arab nationalism in a number of Arab countries and anti-imperialist Zionist stance and policy of the leaders of these countries.

More favorable conditions for establishing American domination in the Middle East were created in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when globalization, making the borders of states more transparent, gradually began to absorb the world, and integration processes began to target the component of national identity. It was in this period that within the framework of global politics the spread of political concepts of the formation of new, modern systems of governance in different countries began to be implemented more often, which in essence should not only make these countries more democratic, but also dependent from the country that had spread these concepts. During this period, the borders of international terrorism also expanded, which enabled the United States to motivate this or that expansionist policy as well.

In this context, different expert centers of the USA, according to their perception, have proposed a more effective concept of disseminating American domination, first of all targeting despotic regimes, particularly in the Middle East, and aiming to collapse the existing political systems in those countries and introduce the American democratic model instead, establishing the official Washington's control over them.

### ***The vision of the new concept of the American strategy in the Middle East***

The concept of “The Great Middle East<sup>1</sup> or the Reconstruction of the Middle East” was first publicized by G.W. Bush Jr on November 6, 2003, in his speech<sup>2</sup> at the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Authors of “The Great Middle East or the Middle East Reconstruction” concept are H. Kissinger, G. Durpath, D. Rumsfeld, D. Cheney, C. Rice, R. Perl, P. Wolfowitz, M. Grossman and a number of other well-known American officials and politicians. Noteworthy is the fact that Arab-American intellectuals too have played an important role in devel-

<sup>1</sup> “Plans for Redrawing the Middle East: the Project for a “New Middle East,,” *Global Research*, October 24, 2018, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/plans-for-redrawing-the-middle-east-the-project-for-a-new-middle-east/3882> (accessed November 10, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> It is symbolic that the National Endowment for Democracy was established in 1983 by US President R. Reagan, “for the purpose of strengthening the democratic institutions in the world” See: Evseev V.V., Kontsepsia “Bolshoy Blijniy Vostok” pod uglom natsionalnoy bezopasnosti (in Russian) [The concept “Middle East from an angle of National Security”], *Natsionalnaya bezopasnost*, (4 (27), 2013), April 27, 2013, [http://www.nbpublish.com/library\\_get\\_pdf.php?id=25426](http://www.nbpublish.com/library_get_pdf.php?id=25426), (accessed September 15, 2017).

oping the following concept.<sup>3</sup> Participation of Arab intellectuals in the concept was also conditioned by the fact that the focus of the concept, first of all, was the issue of the “reconstruction” of the Arab world.

In his speech at the National Endowment for Democracy, Bush stated that within ten years, he was going to create a free trade zone between the United States and the Middle East which would enable to expand the economic opportunities of the countries in the region. Bush also noted that the process should be in pace with the democratization process of the Middle East countries. In his opinion, the United States had a worldwide mission of promoting freedom and democracy, the pillars of which were Woodrow Wilson’s “14 points”, which had found their summary in the 1941 speech of US President Franklin Roosevelt on “Four Freedoms”.<sup>4</sup>

The process of “modernization and transformation” of the Middle East, according to the American concept, should begin with the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq. Washington was also convinced that fall of Saddam’s rule would lead to a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue.

Generally speaking, a new American concept had provided a special place for Iraqi occupation.<sup>5</sup> In his speech of November 6, 2003, at the National Endowment for Democracy, Bush also pointed out that Iraqi democracy and the creation of free Iraq in the center of the Middle East would become the breakthrough episode of the global democratic revolution and that it would be the first phase of the implementation of “The Middle East Reconstruction” concept.<sup>6</sup>

Through the realization of the second phase of “The Middle East Reconstruction Framework”, it was supposed to impose pressure on Iran and Syria that were supporting various religious-political movements. One of the confidential points of the mentioned American concept envisaged

<sup>3</sup> According to certain information, Edward Said, a well-known politologist and Professor at Columbia University, founder of the academic field of postcolonial studies, too has had his participation in the development of this concept.

<sup>4</sup> George Bush, Commencement Address at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina, *The American Presidency Project*, May, 2003, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/WCPD-2003-05-12/pdf/WCPD-2003-05-12-Pg568.pdf>, (accessed December 20, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> After Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994) left the Jordanian-Israeli conflict, Syria and Iraq remained Arab countries that opposed Israel. The Syrian issue was more complicated for the United States, so Washington began its cleansing of the “Arab field” for itself and Israel, baselessly accusing Saddam Hussein’s power of supporting terrorism, creating weapons of mass destruction and lack of democracy. K. Gajendra Singh, “U.S. Guided reconstruction and Democracy in Iraq: But where are the weapons of mass destruction!,” *South Asia Analysis Group*, May 1, 2003, <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper676> (accessed November 12, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Tamar Cofman Wittes, “The New U.S. Proposal for a Greater Middle East Initiative: An Evaluation,” *Brookings*, May 10, 2004, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-new-u-s-proposal-for-a-greater-middle-east-initiative-an-evaluation/>, (accessed November 20, 2010).

physical liquidation<sup>7</sup> of the leaders of the above-mentioned countries if necessary, or applying the Iraqi scenario in those countries.

The statement of the US President's National Security Advisor, C. Rice made on May 17, 2004, too sheds lights on the content of the new American concept and that is: for nearly 60 years the USA had been perceiving different dictatorships, including that of the Near East, within the frame of the format "though dictatorships, yet stable". And according to Rice, versus to which the USA received Bin Laden with Al Qaeda and September the 11<sup>th</sup> of 2001. Consequently, according to Rice, availability of such dictatorships was no longer tolerable. Then, as an example, Rice recalled the policy of the first Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, K. Adenauer after World War Two that was anchored on the very democratic values which thereafter ensured prosperity for Europe. Rice emphasized that the United States would try to realize such a program in the Middle East too.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, through the American concept of "The Great Middle East or the Middle East Reconstruction", the United States made an attempt to transform the Arab world shaping it into pro-American "friendly democratic administrations"<sup>9</sup> that by no means would hinder the world possessing strategy of the USA in that region too.

In March, 2003, Bush initiated the "Liberty to Iraq" military action in Iraq, which as we have already mentioned was the first phase of the implementation of the new American concept.<sup>10</sup>

To be fair, it should be noted that despite the collapse of Saddam's regime by the launch of the military operation in Iraq, in reality, however, a chaotic situation was created in the country.<sup>11</sup> That was the reason that the concept of the «Middle East Reconstruction» with its "democratization

<sup>7</sup> "Middle East: Sentenced to Destroy," *Newsland*, May 28, 2012, <http://newsland.com/news/detail/id/964928/> (accessed November 20, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Cofman Wittes, "The New U.S. Proposal for a Greater Middle East Initiative: An Evaluation."

<sup>9</sup> "The Arab Spring: Implications for US Policy and Interests," *Middle East Institute*, January 13, 2012, <http://www.mei.edu/content/arab-spring-implications-us-policy-and-interests> (accessed December 25, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> After phasing out from the Arab-Israeli conflict of Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, Syria and Iraq remained as opposing countries against Israel. For the United States, the Syrian issue was more complicated; therefore it started the "Reconstruction" process from Iraq with the aim of creating a so-called pilot "regime democracy" in the country; See: K. Gajendra Singh, U.S. Guided reconstruction; Conrad C. Crane, Andrew W. Terrill, "Reconstructing Iraq: insights, challenges, and missions for military forces in a post-conflict scenario," *Army War College (U.S.), Strategic Studies Institute*, (February, 2003), <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub182.pdf> (accessed December 25, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> "US Attack on Iraq in 2003: Violation of International Humanitarian Law," *The Peace and Collaborative Development Network (PCDN)*, <https://pcdnetwork.org/blogs/us-attack-on-iraq-in-2003-violation-of-international-humanitarian-law/> (accessed February, 25 2017).

idea” was often perceived as a roadmap for US honorable exit from the Iraqi adventure<sup>12</sup> by different politicians and experts.

The West European countries, particularly France and Germany, expressed their stance over the American concept of “The Middle East Reconstruction”. According to the French-German standpoint, the Arabs must overcome their problems on their own and that “The Great Middle East” cannot be created combining in its meaningful perception such different countries, as Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Gulf Arab countries.<sup>13</sup>

The concept of “The Great Middle East” got more finalized outline on June 10, 2004, at the G8 session in the US state of Georgia<sup>14</sup>, where the document on Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Enlarged Region of the Middle East and North Africa. The document actually posted not only the provisions of “The Great Middle East” concept, but also became the roadmap of an expanded American strategy for the region.<sup>15</sup>

It is noteworthy that at the request of the European and Arab countries, an important point in the document was introduced: to direct the efforts of the G8 countries to the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Resolutions 242, 338 and 425 of the United Nations Security Council.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, in fact, the US proposed a Middle East Concept of Convergence that actually threatened not only to shatter the already traditional and relatively stable security system but also to exterminate it.

At the same time it should be noted that according to President Bush’s perception, the issue of the “modernization” of the Middle East was also a guarantee for the reduction of international terrorism.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Andreas Wimmer, “Democracy and Ethno-Religious Conflict in Iraq,” *Paper presented at the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, Stanford University*, May 5, 2003, <http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/mideast/IQ/wimmer.pdf> (accessed September 28, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Radwan Ziadeh, “The EU’s Policy on Promotion Democracy in the Arab World,” *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*, (2009), <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/chapters/the-role-of-the-european-union-in-democracy-building/eu-democracy-building-discussion-paper-32.pdf>, (accessed September 15, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp, “The Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: An Overview,” *CRS Report to Congress*, February 15, 2005, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22053.pdf> (accessed February 28, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> “G. Bush considered that in democratic countries there cannot be such a shameful thing as terrorism. President Bush’s Speech on Terrorism,” *The New York Times*, September 6, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/06/washington/06bush\\_transcript.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/06/washington/06bush_transcript.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) (accessed 10 September, 2006) Ivo H. Daalder, “President Bush’s Speech on Global Democracy and Freedom,” *Brookings*, November 10, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interviews/2003/11/10/globalgovernance-daalder>, (accessed February, 28, 2017).

**Egyptian concept for the development of the Arab World as an alternative to the American one**

Since the 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the context of globalization processes, certain steps were initiated by several Arab states to modernize political and economic system, more specifically, human rights protection committees, working groups, and even ministries were being created, which, however, were merely of formal nature serving as a backstage for international community. Such steps taken periodically by the Arab states were intended to maintain high their own authority and political reputation.

A number of Arab countries, Egypt in particular, represented by President Hosni Mubarak, described the US concept of “Modernization of the Middle East” as an attempt to intervene in the domestic political developments in the region and rejected it.<sup>18</sup>

Official Cairo expressed conviction that “modernization and democratic reforms” should be the result of the historical development of the Arab community and not dictated from the outside.<sup>19</sup>

President of Syria Bashar al-Assad, expressing his position on the American concept, noted that the Arabs were not sure in the document because it was impossible to speak of any reform in the realities of war and conflict (Assad meant collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime which resulted in the crisis in Iraq).<sup>20</sup>

Speaking about the concept of “Middle East Modernization”, Muammar Gaddafi, President of the Libyan Jamahiriya, too stated that “the Maghreb countries have nothing to do with the developments underway in Mashriq and therefore, the American concept is absurd if it includes also Maghreb”.<sup>21</sup>

Kuwait’s Prime Minister Sheikh al-Sabah announced that it was infeasible to accept the US concept of «reconstruction Greater Middle East» as it was threatening to shatter the security system of the region.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, by rejecting the American concept of “The Great Middle East or the Middle East Reconstruction”, several Arab countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria, as an alternative introduced the so-called Arab conceptual democratization vision for the Arab world.<sup>23</sup> It should be not-

<sup>18</sup> V. Evseev, The concept “Middle East.”

<sup>19</sup> Cofman Wittes, “The New U.S. Proposal for a Greater Middle East Initiative.”

<sup>20</sup> A. Volovich, “O planakh demokratizacii Blijnego Vostoka,” (in Russian), [“On the plans for the democratization of the Middle East”], August 19, 2004, *Institute of the Middle East*, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2004/19-08-04.htm> (accessed September 20, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Sergey Kurginyan, “Politicheskoe tsunami: Reformirovaniye arabskogo mira,” (in Russian), [“Political Tsunami: Reforming the Arab World”], [http://www.danilidi.ru/3-war/06\\_Kurginian-political-tsunami-arab-reform.html](http://www.danilidi.ru/3-war/06_Kurginian-political-tsunami-arab-reform.html), (accessed September 8, 2018).

ed that the initiative of Arab activism regarding that issue belonged to Cairo, which once again tried to emphasize its special role in the matters related to the Arab world.

Thus, at the initiative of Egypt, on May 22, 2004, the concept for “modernization” of the Arab world was presented at the Arab League summit in Tunisia.<sup>24</sup>

The concept for reforms aimed at the so-called “modernization” of the Arab world basically included the following provisions<sup>25</sup>: the reforms in the Arab countries should be carried out on the initiative of the Arab community, namely from the inside of each Arab country and not being imposed by external factors; the reform process should proceed in phases not to shatter the relative security and stability of the region; the reforms should tend to protect the interests of the region and not the political aspirations of different forces; the immediate precondition for the successful realization of reforms is the Arab-Israeli conflict settlement; during the reform process it is necessary to take into consideration the peculiarities of development of each Arab country, excluding the implementation of one common approach towards them; the reforms should not create fertile soil for the activation of various religious and political movements.

Despite the fact that the conceptual provisions of the so-called “reforms” of the Arab world initiated by Egypt did not completely reflect all the real problems those countries had and even led to skepticism among some of the summit participants, however, they were rather realistic and targeted:

It is worth mentioning that the lack of solidarity between the Arab states on various issues and the inability to act jointly further complicated the existing problems therewith creating a fertile ground for intervention by external forces.

The proposal made by President of Egypt Mubarak on setting up a special commission for implementation of the Arabic “reforms” concept was rejected by some of the countries having skeptic stance towards the Arab concept at the Arab League summit in Tunisia.<sup>26</sup>

To be fair, it should be noted that the Arab concept of the so-called “reforms” of the Arab world was condemned to failure from the very beginning: the reform of the political and economic systems of the Arab

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> The fact that only thirteen out of the twenty-two Arab countries were participating in the above mentioned session, already approved the failure of that meeting. It should be noted that only seven Arab countries participated in the final meeting of the League. The first among the Arab leaders who left the session was Mubarak, whose proposal had been rejected.

countries was directly stipulated with the lack of willingness of the existing regimes to regulate the existing problems and their fear of losing their own power, on the basis of which was their perception: “the stable crisis is safer than the unstable development accompanying the reforms” (the phrasing is by the author G.G.).

That was the reason why different Arab politicians thought, not without reason, that the Arab countries could not independently initiate a modernization process of the political-economic system as the issue of reproduction and self-preservation of the current government was on the focus. In this context, the judiciary factory of those countries is of no less importance, which quite often would modify and transform the existing laws for the ruling regime in such a way so that they would also continue hampering the process of civil society formation.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the “self-modernization” of the Arab world was simply an unsuccessful attempt of “external refurbishing” of the current situation in the Arab world. The Arab Reform Program was directed rather against the US’s “The Great Middle East” concept than to the fundamental problem of realization of the reforms, which was well-understood in Washington.

At the summit of Organization of the Islamic Conference (current name: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) held on June 16, 2004 in Istanbul, the participants noted that the successful pace of reforms in the Arab world was directly related to the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The participants with obvious restraint referred to the US ambitious “The Great Middle East” concept and noted that the problem of “modernization” of the Arab world was exclusively the matter of the Arab countries.<sup>28</sup>

### **In lieu of conclusion**

In June 2006, the US Secretary of State C. Rice put into circulation a conceptual definition called New Middle East. It was directed at securing American domination in the Middle East, which actually would replace “The Great Middle East concept”.<sup>29</sup> In 2006, at a meeting between

<sup>27</sup> Volker Perthes, *Arab Elites, Negotiating the Politics of Change*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 5.

<sup>28</sup> A. Kornilov, “Tureckaya diplomatiya v islamskom mire: problem i priority deyatelnosti,” (in Russian), [“Turkish diplomacy in the Islamic world: problems and priorities of activity”], [http://www.idmedina.ru/books/materials/rmforum/1/sect2\\_kornilov.htm](http://www.idmedina.ru/books/materials/rmforum/1/sect2_kornilov.htm) (accessed September, 15, 2018).

<sup>29</sup> M. Nazemroava, “Plany peredela Blijnego Vostoka: proyekt dlya “Novogo Blijnego Vostoka,” (in Russian), [“Plans for Redrawing the Middle East: The Project for a “New Middle East”], *Center for Research on Globalization*, November 18, 2006, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/plans-for-redrawing-the-middle-east-the-project-for-a-new-middle-east/3882> (accessed November 20, 2006).



Rice and Israeli Prime Minister E. Olmert in Tel-Aviv, Israel welcomed the new US-proposed concept, and Rice announced that the new concept would become a guarantor of the Middle East rebirth. In reality, however, the “New Middle East” concept created the so-called “constructive or controlling chaos” in the region that would give the United States a new opportunity to interfere in the affairs of these countries.

One of the authors of the theory of “constructive or controlled chaos” is S. Mann, according to whom in order to control this or that country there is absolutely no need to fight, but to create a chaotic situation. Within the framework of the chaotic situation-making tool, Mann suggests to support democracy in the target country, to support market reforms in the economy, to start activities on perception of upgrading the population’s living standards, to annihilate traditional values and ideologies.<sup>30</sup> These key points were put on the revised American concept of Rice.

Actually, the theory of “controlled chaos” was a kind of new ideological weapon, which could provide the US supremacy in different continents.

An integral component to the theory of “controlled chaos” can be considered the project on Future Boundaries of Greater Middle East States proposed in 2007 by Ralph Peters, the former lieutenant colonel of the US National Military Academy. The project was first shown by Peters in an article titled “Bloody Borders” released in the *Armed Forces Journal*.<sup>31</sup> According to the Peters plan, in order to control the national wealth of the Middle East, first of all, energy carriers, it is necessary to create a chain of non-viable, densely populated dwarf states, so said “to somalize” the Middle East.<sup>32</sup> Peters notes that it is necessary to create a wave of instability, chaos and violence in the region that will start from Lebanon, involving Palestine, Syria, Gulf Arab countries, Iran and reach Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup>

Analyzing the theory proposed by Peters, one can conclude that it is a “roadmap” for specific actions that secures the absolute dominance of the US-Israeli alliance in the Middle East.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ralph Peters, “Blood borders, How a better Middle East would look,” *Armed Forces Journal*, June 1, 2006, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/06/1833899> (accessed September 26, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Nikolay Sologubovskiy, “Somalization plus Qatarization,” March 8, 2012, <http://trueinform.ru/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=3671>, Some of the Eastern experts believe that the so-called Middle East unity should be smooth and global, and not spontaneous, since the political and economic situation in the countries of the given region varies. It is also necessary to take into account the social, cultural and educational levels in those countries.

<sup>33</sup> Ralph Peters, “Blood borders, How a better Middle East would look.”

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

In fact, the concepts introduced in the 2000s by the US administration with the aim of taking control over the Middle East region were manifested in 2011 in the Arab world, within the context of the “Arab spring” when the Islamists came forth to replace national dictatorships with the intention of creating a theocratic political system.<sup>35</sup>

The wave of massive protests that had started in the Arab world resulted in a change of power in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, created crisis in those countries, and in some cases a lasting war, particularly in Yemen and Syria. The situation that was shaped in the Arab world almost entirely got compatible with the provisions of the aforementioned concepts proposed by the US administration. Moreover, the USA began to control and coordinate the developments underway in the Arab world promoting not only the collapse of the traditional security system of the Middle East and the formation of the chaotic situation, but also the “Somatization” of the Arab countries, in particular, the establishment of the Islamic State.

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<sup>35</sup> Nikolay Hovhannisyan, Gor Gevorgyan, *The Arab Spring: The Pan-Arab Upheavals towards the Arab Society modernization (Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libia)*, (Yerevan, 2017).