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MIDDLE EAST INSTABILITY AND THE DECLINE OF THE WESTPHALIAN SYSTEM

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1. The Problem

The events in the Middle East put a number of questions regarding the existing political system of the world. A huge number of non-state actors including Islamic state (banned in Russia – Ed. Note), which clearly falls out of the Westphalian system despite the self-designation as a “state”, are acting now in the region; sovereignty of several states in the Middle East is under the question, etc. Are

these issues the problems of the region? If yes, then the question arises about the possibility of returning the region into the framework of the Westphalian system. Or is the question more global? If so, the problem arises not so much with the Middle East region, but with the political organization of the current world, and the Middle East would simply be the region where the crisis of the system is most acute.

2. Westphalian System. Its Main Characteristics

The Westphalian system is not only a set of principles, not only a combination of international treaties, a set of states, regimes, institutions, etc. The Westphalian system is primarily a system that organizes all these elements and generates some integrity.

Reflecting as it does its origins (conventionally fixed with the Treaty of Westphalia, 1648), the modern states system is centered on the absolute sovereignty of a state within its territory. In opposition to the medieval “two Suns” convention, i.e. the Pope and the Emperor, the cardinal principle of sovereignty differentiates territorial political units in terms of juridically and morally exclusive domains.

This grounding principle has characterized international politics for more than three and a half centuries, generating a number of secondary – very significant – norms of international law. Among them, the following derived principles stand out as particularly significant: a) no superior authority is recognized above the state (which produces an international system completely dependent on state consent), b) formal equality of status granted to each state, with de facto control

over the territory as the only accepted principle of legitimacy, c) indifference of international organizations to domestic political organization, i.e. the relationship between citizens and state is entirely relegated to national law, d) non-intervention, and e) the right to self-defense.

Later the system became much more complicated (with international law, principle of balance of power, etc.). However, it started with a very simple thesis: state is a key element of the system (state-centric system) and there is a distinction between internal and external relations. It is obvious that the creators of it could not even imagine, what will their offspring would be in the XXI century.

The creators of the Westphalian system not only solved the problems with which Europe was faced in the first half of the 17th century (as far as they could), but in the principle of sovereignty they laid the foundations of a new political system, as well as the possibility of its development. The Westphalian system has evolved and become more complex during for more than three and a half centuries.

The Westphalian system emerged in Europe. In this sense, it is, of course, Eurocentric

model. From the very beginning, it was not a global system. Even a pan-European system it can be called only conditionally. There were two different worlds: “the world of Westphalia” and the world “outside of Westphalia”.

There were other models of political organization of the world in the history: The Empire, Caliphate, etc. However, just Westphalian principles have covered the whole world and exist until nowadays. Why it is? It can be assumed that the Westphalian system allowed that other state, which became

a part of the system, could be very differently organized – it is its “sovereign right”. This kind of tolerance of Westphalian system to the internal organization of its structural elements allowed to unite very different states.

The principle of sovereignty (Westphalian principles) has been repeatedly violated and has undergone a transformation including in the recent decades. However, this is not amount to the replacement of the Westphalian system. Another thing, when it becomes difficult to follow the rules. This case, it seems, we face today.

3. The Evolution of the Legal Framework in the XX Century

The first change in the international legal framework emerges with the foundation of the United Nations in 1945, in the aftermath of the Second World War. Aiming to maintain international peace and security, and to foster cooperation on international problems and human rights (art. 1–3), the UN charter contains a number of innovative principles of international law that impose a shift in the international normative praxis. A first major step in this direction, based on the idea of collective security, consists in the expropriation, in favor of the UN, of the absolute right of states to resort to the use of force (art. 2). This led to the subsequent crisis in the classical institutions of international law concerning self-defense. A second important deviation from classic international law is the adoption of majority voting (albeit qualified by the non-procedural voting of the Security Council, giving veto power to the five permanent Council members) (art. 18 and art. 27.3). Finally, a further significant modification of previous international practice resides in the acknowledgement of the legal supremacy of the UN charter over any other

subsequent international treaty (art. 103). From a legal point of view, the new system generated by these changes has seriously affected the authority of state sovereignty.

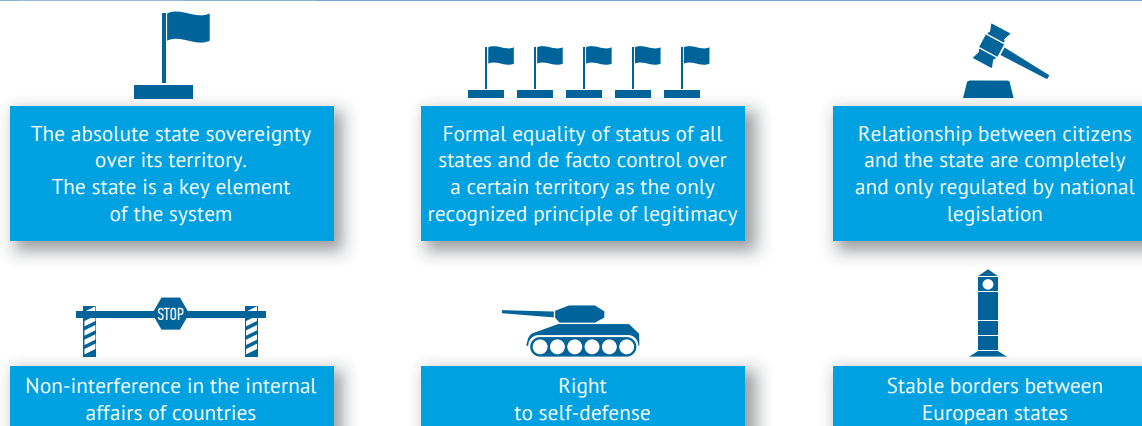
In the last few decades a significant change has taken place in the international institutional framework concerning the substantial increase and intensification of the mechanisms of global governance. The growing interdependence has created increasing need for wider and deeper international cooperation, which has finally led to the establishment of a dense network of hybrid and mono-functional organizations. A constant growth of political norms and legal dispositions has become increasingly characteristic of the institutional side of present-day society, eroding the legitimacy of both the state and classic international law.

There are three principal causes that explain the conspicuous interest in global governance during the 1990s: 1) the end of the Cold War and thus the expectation that international organizations would have a more significant role in managing the new world order; 2) the development of globalization intended

WESTPHALIAN SYSTEM

The Westphalian system is the system of international relations, established in Europe in connection with the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648 after the Thirty Years' War

BASIC PRINCIPLES



CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

- ▶ Expropriation in favor of the United Nations of the absolute right to use force
- ▶ Adoption of the majority voting (albeit with reservations relating to the Security Council: the Security Council permanent members were given the right of veto, Articles 18 and 27.3.)
- ▶ Recognition of the legal priority of the UN Charter over other international treaties
- ▶ Expansion and strengthening of global governance mechanisms
- ▶ Recognition of universal human

ELEMENTS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

- ▶ Merger of national and international factors
- ▶ Increasing role of non-state actors
- ▶ Emergence of private management
- ▶ Increasing complexity of the institutional horizon

See also <http://valdaiclub.com/multimedia/infographics>

as a significant increment in the flow of goods, capital, services and persons; 3) the growing realization that the planet is afflicted by a number of problems (as, for example, affecting the environment) that can be handled only through a globally coordinated approach.

Global governance is distinguished from classic government because it does not require the same level of centralization, formalization and integration. Global governance is based on norms, rules and procedures designed to solve problems at a global level, but it does not require a unique source of power. Among the characteristics of the current system of global governance,

the following are the most important. First, every form of governance covers an ample spectrum of actors, given that it directly regards a system of multilateral rules at global, transnational, national or regional level. The rules of governance tend to be much more intrusive when compared with traditional intergovernmental rules, and generate demands for increased legitimacy. Secondly, notwithstanding its wider spectrum, the system of governance is more limited in terms of inclusiveness and participation, since it concerns only specific issues and the agents involved therein (stakeholders). Third, by being multilateral (including three or more actors) it

induces generalized principles of behavior and wide reciprocity.

Moreover, governance is polyarchic, given that it includes different authorities, often on a formally unequal stage, such as states, sub-national groups, and special transnational interests. Global governance thus implies a change in the concept of international agency, insofar as states and the United Nations become increasingly more integrated with a number of other structures of multilateral governance.

E.O. Czempiel and J.N. Rosenau perceive global governance as a totality of regulatory mechanisms not emanating from an official authority, but generated by the proliferation of networks in an increasingly interdependent world¹. Global governance is seen not as a result but as a continuous process that is never fixed and has no single model or form. Regulation is not simply a body of established rules, but is the ongoing result of a permanent game of interactions, conflicts, compromises, negotiations and reciprocal adjustments.

Global governance has been variously interpreted in the recent past. For some, as H. Bull, it is a shift to a form of neo-medievalism characterized by the proliferation of multiple authorities, whose jurisdictional domains only partially overlap. For

others, as K. Ohmae, global governance represents the most advanced form of self-regulation of international affairs in terms of the privatization of public functions². For yet others, as M. Zürn finally, a post-national constellation is developing, characterized by the absence of a central authority, the presence of highly organized and specialized collective players (rather than individual citizens), and a functional differentiation between players that are not motivated by a common identity or a political principle but by the desire to solve problems³.

Five tendencies characterize the recent forms of global governance: 1) the fusion of national and international; 2) the increased role of non-state players; 3) the emergence of private governance; 4) the move to a new method of compliance; 5) the growing complexity of the institutional horizon.

The concept of global governance can be seen as the expression of a gradual departure from the classic Westphalian system (decentralized, with its emphasis on the rights of sovereignty and political independence, and on the principle of non-intervention) towards a less conflictual, more cooperative and consensual system. In this sense, the importance of global governance remains anchored to its level of efficiency.

4. What Happens to the Political Systems at the End of XX—beginning of XXI Century?

At the end of the twentieth century, the political organization of the world has been transformed at three levels: 1) Westphalian

system, 2) the bipolar system 3) and the political systems underwent significant transformations in many countries of the world.

¹ Czempiel E.O., Rosenau J.N. *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

² Ohmae K. *The End of the Nation State. The Rise of Regional Economies*. New York: Free Press, 1995.

³ Zürn M. *Global Governance and Legitimacy Problems*. *Government and Opposition*, 2004, 39(2), 260-287

Transformation of the Westphalian System

Economically the world is becoming unified, but it is divided into nation states⁴. The activities of non-state actors have grown exponentially⁵. The development of new technologies has contributed to the intensification of the process of transnationalization. States differentiated within a single political system of the world, which consists of three types of states: a) mostly Post-Modern states (Post-Westphalian states) with blurred lines between foreign and domestic policy, and mutual control and integration; b) mostly Modern states (Westphalian states) with territorial integrity and independence of internal and external policies; c) mostly Pre-Modern states (Pre-Westphalian states) with failure or formal compliance with the principles and norms of Westphalian⁶. Analysis of three types of states leads to the conclusion that “the nation-state is no longer a universal formula of nation-building”⁷.

The Collapse of the Bipolar System

There were several configurations of relations between states during the history of development of Westphalian system. They are known as systems

of IR (i.e. European concert, inter-war system, bipolar system and others). Unfortunately, often the distinction between the Westphalian system and the systems of interstate relations is not made.

If the differences between the two systems are not carried out, the Westphalian system disappears from the scientific focus. It was more or less fine until the mid of the XX century. As far as Westphalian system faces some problems, the ignorance of the difference between Westphalian system and the system of IR leads to incorrect analysis.

The collapse of the bipolar system in the late twentieth century changes inter-state relations (relations within the system of international relations). Many definitions of what is new configuration of these relations are proposed: unilateral system headed by USA; multipolar system; the post-bipolar system. The absence of a unified and specific name for the current system of international relations after the Cold War is one of the signs that this system has not yet been formed. However, open to question is the possibility of forming a system of interstate relations in the conditions of transformation of the Westphalian system itself.

The Transformation of Political Systems of Many States

Many states are under transformation starting from the end of the XX century: Eastern European states, post-Soviet states, the Greater Middle East. The greatest numbers of conflicts in the end of XX – the beginning of XXI century are in these areas.

States are not necessarily transformed in the direction of democracy. The more complex picture than represented by S. Huntington⁸

⁴ Strange S. *The Retreat of the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

⁵ Keohane R.O., Nye J.S. *Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction*. International Organization. 1971. Vol. 25. No 3. P. 329-349.

⁶ Poggi G. *States and State Systems: Democratic, Westphalian or Both? Review of International Studies*. 2007. No. 33. P. 577-595; Лебедева М.М. Политическая система мира: проявления «внесистемности», или новые акторы – старые правила. «Приватизация» мировой политики: локальные действия – глобальные результаты. Под ред. М.М. Лебедевой – Москва: Голден-Би, 2008. стр. 53–66; Харкевич М.В. Государство в современной мировой политике. Вестник МГИМО-Университета. 2010. № 6. стр. 160-166.

⁷ Тимофеев И.Н. Дилеммы государства в современном мировом порядке. Вестник МГИМО-Университета. 2016. № 1. стр. 29-41.

⁸ Huntington S.P. *Democracy's Third Wave*. The Journal of Democracy. 1991. No 2. P. 12-34.

(waves of democratization and their kickbacks to authoritarianism) is arising now. Some states go not just to authoritarianism or democracy, but to its traditional political culture. To some extent, it is a case for the Greater Middle East.

As a result, now we face the “perfect storm”. The transformation of the Westphalian system goes together with transformation of the interstate system and the transformation of the political systems of several states.

These changes have to do with the global political transformations associated to the phenomenon of globalization. At a general level, we might identify globalization as a phenomenon characterized by three intertwined macro-elements. Firstly, globalization is a dynamic that goes well beyond the traditional Westphalian system of states and thus goes beyond state-centrism. Secondly, globalization is animated by a large number of players, among which non-state actors fill a significant political space. Thirdly, globalization is structured on a growing interdependence between the various actors of the system: the image of a number of closed, monadic systems lacks heuristic validity. From this viewpoint globalization has to be intended as a multidimensional process of integration and convergence that relies on the creation of transnational networks and has the tendency to share and spread material and cognitive power across a plurality of differing actors.

In the context of globalization, we are witnessing a mixed world order.

On the one hand, we are experiencing, as a response to the eastward shift of the global economy, a new kind of bipolarism that is re-emerging with the West strengthening its alliances in a protective move. TTIP and TTP are just two major examples of how the US is trying to reinvigorate its “bloc” by excluding the BRICs (namely excluding Russia from the TTIP, and China, India, and Brazil from the TTP). On the opposite front, the creation

of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the New Development Bank (NDB, also known as BRICS Bank), and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), all headquartered in China, suggests a strong impulse towards a new institution building phase with Asian characteristics and often excluding the West.

On the other hand, the system is turning more and more a-polar: A world in which power is spread across many players, included non-governmental actors. This is a world strongly molded by globalization, a model that rejects realist state-centric exclusivity. On one side, the state as a unitary actor is seeing its central role wane in favor of a disaggregation into sub-state authorities with an increasing transnational agency. Transnational governing networks are acquiring ever more importance: courts, public authorities, inter-parliamentary assemblies, and central banks are all increasing their cooperation with international counterparts. On the other side, there is an increasing number and range of non-governmental actors which demand inclusion in the international decision-making process or directly acquire authority, expertise and power to influence international affairs in parallel to and regardless of the state authority. From international gatherings such as the World Economic Forum to the global terrorism groups such as Al-Qaeda or Daesh⁹, from the philanthropic foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to social movements such as Movimento Sem Terra, to international NGOs such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International to the Kurdish diaspora, from alternative media such as Wikileaks to the stars of charitable work such as Bono of the U2, to the think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations or the Chinese Social Science Academy, to the sovereign funds from the Gulf, from the rating agencies such as Standard and

⁹ *Banned in Russia – Ed. Note*

Poor's to the major global media players such as CNN or Al Jazeera or the new media such as Facebook and Twitter, from cities to regions, non-state actors are everywhere in global politics.

The traditional intergovernmental organizations appear today increasingly unable to manage the most important problems related to the global transformations. The multilateral commercial rounds are paralyzed and are going adrift towards bilateral or interregional agreements. A structural reform of global financial system is unable to takeoff. The multilateralist approach created after World War II and guided by an undisputable hegemon is now relegated to a corner in a world in which power is spreading in thousand rivulets. Problems arise from the divergent interests of the governing players and from the imbalance of power that characterizes relations among them.

Politics in the era of globalization is much more complex than in the previous eras. Phenomena in one location are often connected with phenomena in other locations. To have political control of such a dynamic that develops in multiple dimensions, levels and locations requires advanced skills in terms of understanding, judgment, and innovation. Unlike the past, in the world of today American mortgages are directly connected to the level of wellbeing of Icelanders, the Prime Minister of Iceland can be forced to resign after an angry employee of a Panamanian law firm leaks information on a fiscal safe haven, the health infrastructures in Indonesia influence flu deaths in Mexico, and the rate of cars ownership in China is central for the survival of the inhabitants of the Tuvalu islands. In such an intertwining world, it is understandable that the forecasts made by policy-makers often prove inexact.

5. The Role of Transnational Actors

The dynamics of globalization have accentuated the diminishing exclusivity of the states as actors of international relations. Globalization ties far away communities and de-territorializes the relations of power, while extending contemporaneously their reach beyond the traditional national borders. Diminishing the exclusivity of states as international actors, this process of globalization has opened up space for new social players. Beyond the states and the intergovernmental organizations that have occupied a central place in international life since their origin (let us think of the United Nations), the system of global governance is currently populated by a variety of other international and transnational actors that have a strong say on international affairs. To understand today's global politics we cannot certainly limit

ourselves to observe states' or intergovernmental action, but we have necessarily to take into consideration also the action of other non-state actors. Among these, four typologies are particularly relevant: the profit-oriented transnational enterprises, the non-governmental organizations of civil society that tend to have public goals, the local authorities, including both regions and cities, and the private or hybrid organizations that regulate specific sectors through the formulation of standards (the so-called standard setting bodies). While they are not exhaustive of the variety of actors of global governance, these types represent, however, an important and innovative component of the new world politics. Significantly, the sheer number of transnational enterprises, civil society non-governmental organizations, and standard setting

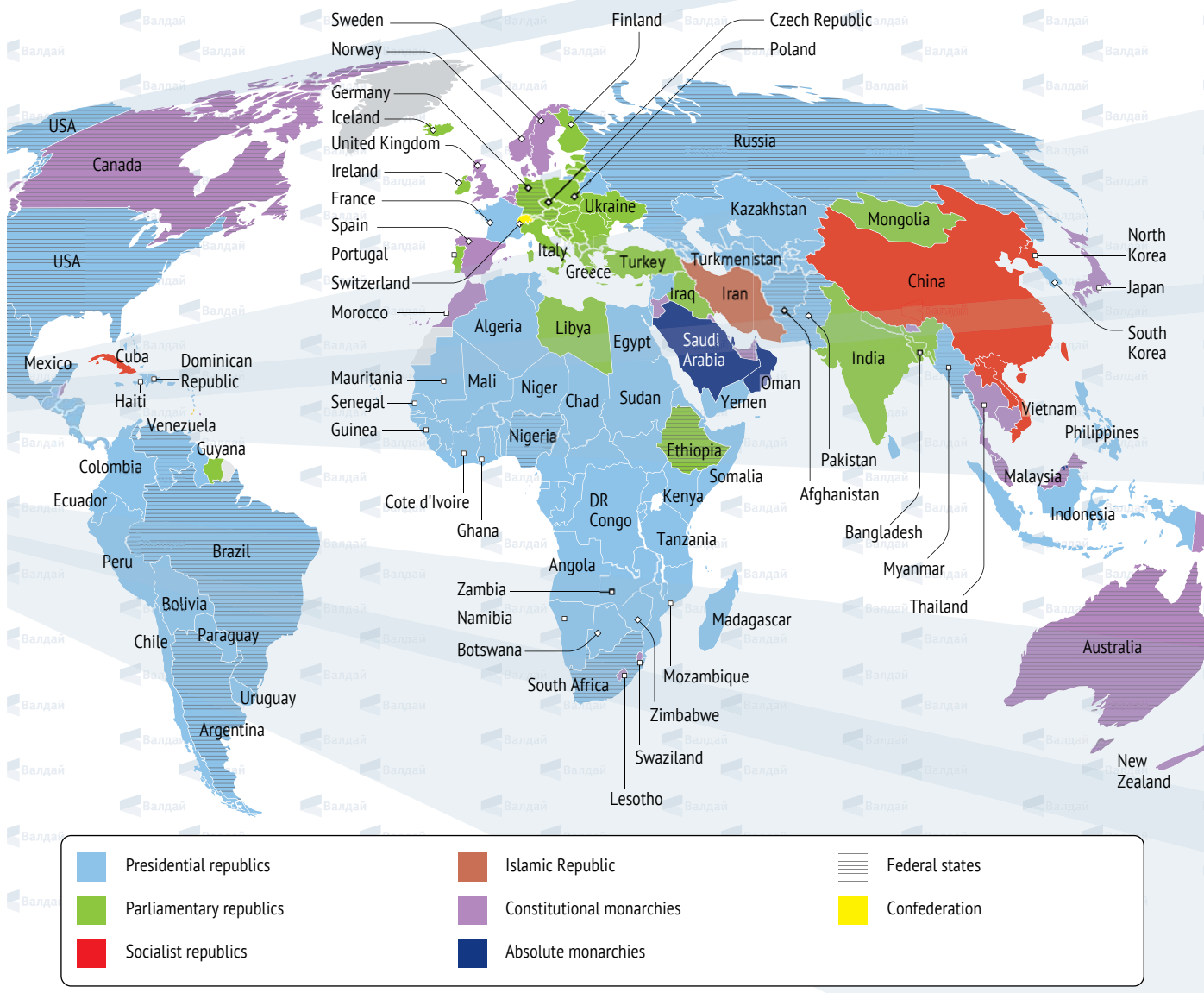
bodies has increased significantly in recent decades and follows a pattern which is very much in line with the spread of globalization. A similar pattern can be identified for the development of the international projection of cities and regions' diplomacy.

Non-state players have acquired an increasingly large role inside world politics by playing an increasing number of functions. They contribute to bringing to the attention of the public new issues and in so doing they participate in the formulation of the political agenda (just think of the recent campaign by civil society for abolition of the death penalty). They lobby policy-makers (let us think of the decision to waive the debt of the most indebted countries at the end of the millennium). They offer technical assistance to governments and to intergovernmental organizations (let us think of the example of the legal help provided by many NGOs during the conference that led to the Charter of the International Criminal Court of 1998). They provide funds for both private and public players (let us think, for the former, of the considerable resources allocated by the Bill and Melissa Gate Foundation for sanitary projects on a world scale, for the latter, to the incomes, fundamental for the functioning of the WIPO, which originate for the most part from the taxation of enterprises on their patents and trademarks). They formulate regulatory decisions (let us think of the various codes of conduct and to the Kimberly Process providing guidelines for the trade of diamonds). They implement programs and public policies (let us think of the whole sector of development aid, but also of conflicts and the role played by mercenary troops). They provide services (let us think of the private centers for the release of visas, in the past a sovereign prerogative of embassies). They monitor the respect of international agreements (let us think of the files compiled by the most important NGOs on human rights,

files that are then received by the most important intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations). They resolve disputes (let us think of the numerous chambers for arbitration that resolve international litigation in a totally privatistic way). They also apply the decisions, the so-called enforcement (let us think, for instance, of the strategy of numerous NGOs to enhance the respect of rules through campaigns to discredit governments and multinational corporations).

In global politics, transnational networks play a central role. In this context, a transnational network can be defined as a permanent coordination among actors that are in different countries, aimed at developing both protests and proposals in the form of campaigns and common mobilizations at both national and supranational levels. The form of the network is possibly the most common organizational form in the age of globalization. Transnational networks have an extremely important role in terms of aggregation of social forces and of development of common identities cross-nationally. Transnational networks might be hybrid with plural components including governments, IOs, MNCs, CSOs, local authorities, or might be sectoral, including only one type of actor. Transnational networking is a form of organization characterized by voluntary and horizontal patterns of co-ordination, which are trust-centered, reciprocal and asymmetrical. Networks are in fact eminently non-static organizations: flexibility and fluidity are two major features of the network's organizational form. A flexible organizational structure enhances the capacity to adapt effectively to changing social circumstances and political situations at the global level. A fluid organizational structure, conversely, allows for porous organizational boundaries that do not require enrolment ratified by formal membership, but are able to cross national and cultural borders. Network structure also varies in that connections can be direct as

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT



See also <http://valdaiclub.com/multimedia/infographics>

well as indirect, and linkages can be centralized or decentralized with differing levels of segmentation. The main activities of transnational networks include spreading information, influencing mass media and raising awareness. In this vein, they constitute a sort of 'global infrastructure' for global social movements. By sharing information, resources and costs, transnational networks generate value-added for all their participants

in terms of innovation, responsiveness and mutual support, thus achieving greater legitimacy and power in a positive sum manner. At the same time, lobbying, protest and supplying of services to constituencies are also the main functions and objectives of transnational networks. Hybrid networks, including both governmental and nongovernmental actors are particularly relevant in today's international affairs.

The relation between public institutions and non-governmental actors has conspicuously grown during past decades. However, such interaction has not received sufficient attention in the public discussion and its results have been constantly underestimated, or simply overlooked. While often pursuing different goals, political representatives and non-governmental actors are increasingly finding modalities of convergence which, although unstable, produce significant results. This growing intense relation is generating consequences that impact on the foundation of the political system in which we have lived over the last century. A profound transformation of the very nature of the political (especially international) system is also occurring. Such radical transformations bring socio-political benefits, but can also imply serious political costs. It is within this political constellation, which has facilitated the growth and consolidation of civil activism at international level, that we need to locate the emergence of the partnership between public institutions and nongovernmental organizations as a specific type of relationship between public institutions and private actors.

In the complex system of global politics, the relationship between governmental and non-governmental actors has become increasingly central¹⁰. In the last few decades, global governance has provided non-state actors with new opportunities to influence public decisions at the international level. Non-state actors are present in all phases of the international policy process – agenda setting, policy decision, implementation, monitoring, policy evaluation – and in a variety of different forms. They are to be found in the preliminary consultations of think tanks and interest groups; in the agenda setting for many issues in EU governance; in the participation of indigenous and farming groups in the revised

Food Security Committee at FAO; as experts in different private standard-setting bodies such as IOSCO or ICANN; as stakeholders in hybrid global initiatives – such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – which include philanthropic foundations, grassroots organizations and firms. They are active in the funding of international public policies, in the implementation of countless international public services, often through the formula of Private-Public Partnerships (PPP); active, too, in disaster relief, development aid and democracy-promotion, as well as in the monitoring and assessing of many international public policies such as those on human rights. Last but not least in political significance, they may participate in less formalized and more contentious contexts, where the relationship between governments and non-governmental actors is equally intense. Just consider the Syrian or the Ukrainian conflicts and the grey role played in them by rebel, combatant, and terrorist groups, often with strong identitarian or religious connotations. “Civil” and “uncivil” society is ubiquitous, and at times decisive, though its participation often remains very controversial.

The engagement with non-state actors is also increasingly practiced at the national level. It is clear that this represents a shift from classic Westphalian sovereignty. A famous political dynamic studied a few years ago by M. Keck and K. Sikkink is called the boomerang effect¹¹. The assumption is that we do not live any more (if ever we did) on islands. If a group is marginalized from the national decision-making process it can appeal to foreign actors (whether an NGO, a foreign government, or an international organization) for them to put pressure on the national government in order to open up the channels of access to the decision-making process. It is an inside-out-dynamic.

¹⁰ Marchetti R. *Global Strategic Engagement: States and Non-State Actors in Global Governance*, Lexington Books-Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

¹¹ Keck M., Sikkink K. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.

But the reality is more complex than this. There is also an outside-in dynamic, used by foreign actors (NGO, states, or international organizations) pushing for specific policy reform in a country: if they do not succeed in persuading the government, they ally themselves with local civil society actors in order to influence the government from below. This is a second kind of political dynamic that we see very often. And then, there is at least a third important mechanism that we should bear in mind: the inside-out led by a government. The national government itself can rely on foreign support to constrain local opposition.

The partnership between national governments and non-state actors is a central component of today's national foreign policies. Going beyond the traditional government-to-government diplomacy, with hybrid or public diplomacy (thus government-to-population of another government) governments try to influence the citizens of another state to promote their own goals of foreign policy. Among the different channels that can be used for the goals of public diplomacy, two are particularly salient: direct action through the internet and the indirect action through the nongovernmental organizations. Through the internet, especially for new media, governments are today able to open a channel of interactive and direct communication with foreign citizens with the aim of both receiving information to ameliorate their foreign policies and to offer non-intrusive help. Through civil society, whether this is constituted by local organizations or by international NGOs with national headquarters, the government is able to provide services locally but also to promote change in the society that are in line with its vision and interests.

As a matter of fact, boundaries are porous (the current refugee flows in the Mediterranean Sea and in the Balkans provide further evidence of that). Many items cross boundaries: ideas and

information, migrants, refugees and trafficked people, foreign investments and money laundering, political support and terrorist networks, traditional weapons and cybercrime, pollution and popular culture. The political question is: what is a legitimate border crossing? Ideas, people, money, political support, weapons – none of them cross-national boundaries with 100% legitimacy, and yet they all do, either independently or, more frequently, with the help of other countries. We are in a transition period, which has intensified in the last 20 years. But we do not have clear political guidelines on how to handle this. Suffice it here to ponder Ukraine, Syria, Hong Kong...all cases in which foreign influence is denounced by each party to the conflict. All major actors practice this, all major actors denounce it.

What remains highly controversial is the fact that hybrid diplomacy initiatives almost by definition bypass local governments and enter into conflict with sovereign nationality. Hybrid/public diplomacy in fact implies often little consideration of the local government that is seen as inefficient, corrupt or simply as an enemy. In order to provide services locally and to promote a political project, what many governments increasingly put into practice (but also recognize, within certain limits, as politically legitimate) is a kind of local action that goes well beyond the classic Westphalian intergovernmental diplomacy. This innovation is viewed positively by the Liberal perspective because societies are conceptualized as open and with porous borders that allow the continuous transnational exchange between actors who are part of separate political communities. Transnational actors, who are in a position to take advantage of the opportunities provided by these arrangements, are all in favour of them.

However, adopting a more realist position, the practice of hybrid diplomacy and of the soft diffusion of political values is immediately read as a threat. Consequently, hybrid and public diplomacy

is viewed suspiciously and interpreted as an attempt to impose foreign influence on national affairs on which instead the principle of sovereignty should reign. When such a position is argued, generally some countermeasures are adopted such as the censorship of the internet and limitations

(or in extreme cases the ban) on the activity of foreign nongovernmental actors. When this kind of radicalization happens, when the context becomes securitized, then the space for maneuver for any nongovernmental becomes narrow and the sliding towards forms of violence is common.

6. Features of the Middle East Region

How is what we so far said relevant to the Middle East case?

The “Non-Westplalian world”, being included in the Westphalian system, now “rebels” and tries to offer its own principles of construction of the world political system.

The Middle East always has been a region where many contradictions – religious, ethnic, territorial, etc. – were intertwined. Nevertheless, today the Middle East is the ‘weakest link’ in the current conditions of the “perfect storm”. Why it is? The answer to this question seems to be found in the peculiarities of the region.

1. The erosion of Westphalian system manifested in several phenomena in the region.

New actors based mainly on tribal and religious grounds appeared strongly. Often they acquire an extremist forms and aim at the terrorist methods of struggle for their ideas¹². Vividly it can be seen in Libya and Syria where many groups fight with each other and at the same time trade with each other. Oil and weapons are the most common products there. These actors usually act at local or regional levels. However, some groups, such as ‘Al-Qaeda’ and ISIS, become actors at a global level putting

forward the idea of global caliphate and creating cells in different states¹³.

Actually, Arab political culture since the 7th century formed their own ideas about political organization in the form of a Caliphate. The modern extremist groups revived the idea of the caliphate as a political organization, but they try to spread this idea on the global world. According to their views, the political organization of the world based on nation-states should be replaced. Their vision of a caliphate is based on the wrong understanding of the principles of Islam.

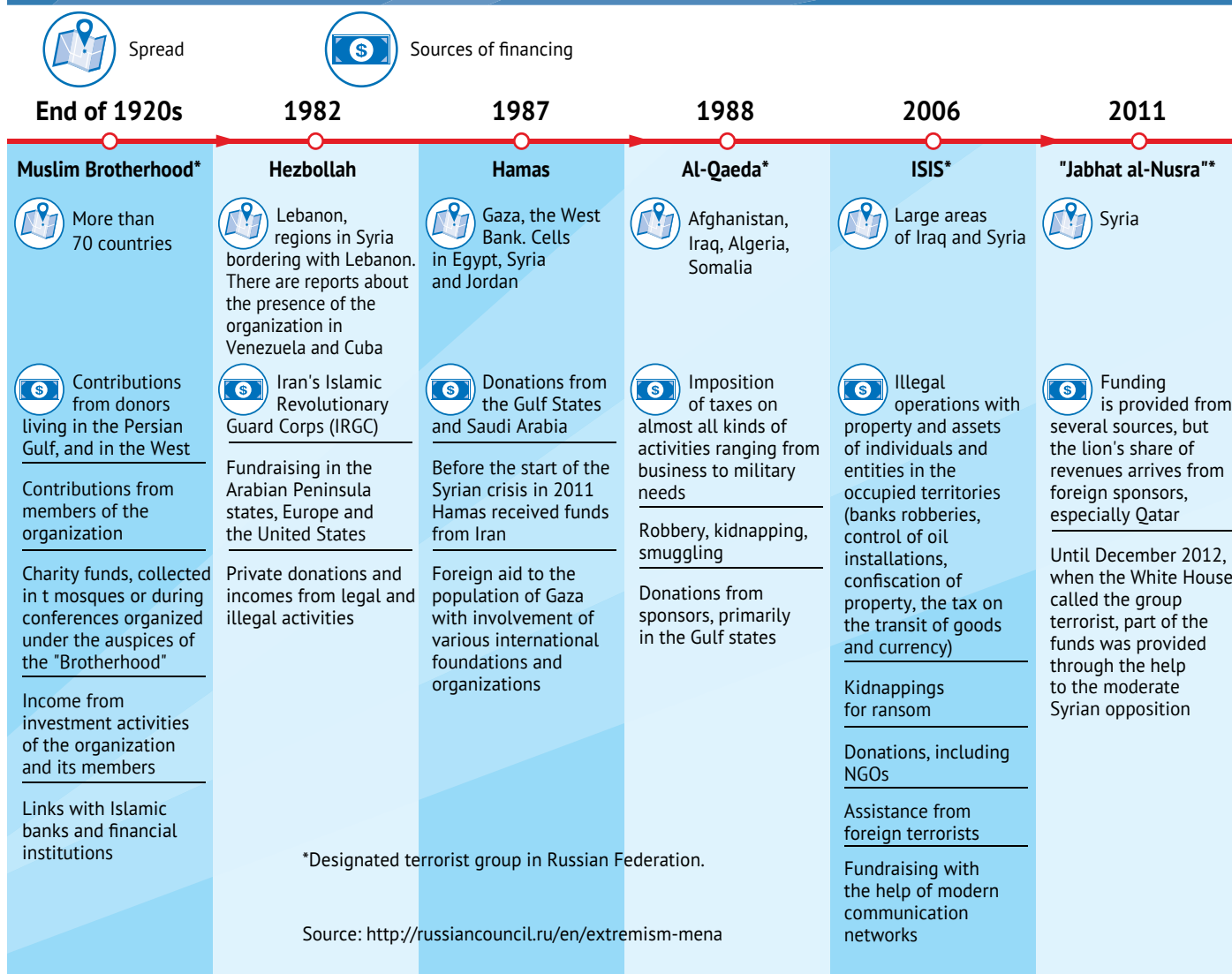
A number of Islamist non-state actors such as ISIS and others were able to manage the conquered territories, more or less successfully developing fund rising mechanisms, management, and ideology. Thus, for fund rising ISIS uses robbery, confiscation of property, control oil production facilities, oil trade, kidnapping, donations, including those obtained from or through various NGOs, collecting funds with the help of modern communication networks, etc.¹⁴.

¹² Политические экстремистские движения на Ближнем Востоке и в Северной Африке. Краткий обзор основных группировок и лидеров. Москва. РСМД [RIAC]. Доступно на: <http://russiancouncil.ru/extremism-mena>

¹³ Мирский Г.И. Радикальный исламизм. Идеино-политическая мотивация и влияние на мировое мусульманское сообщество. Москва: МДК Валдай, 2015. Доступно на: <http://www.slideshare.net/RussianCouncil/ss-50399197>

¹⁴ Политические экстремистские движения на Ближнем Востоке и в Северной Африке. Краткий обзор основных группировок и лидеров. Москва. РСМД [RIAC]. Доступно на: <http://russiancouncil.ru/extremism-mena>

SOME POLITICAL EXTREMIST GROUPS AND ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



See also <http://valdaiclub.com/multimedia/infographics>

Informational technologies are actively used in order to attract new supports not just from the region, but also from the other parts of the world. For active work in the media space, particularly the Internet, it has even created a special unit¹⁵. As a result, people from more than 80 countries come in the territory

¹⁵ *ISIS has a Really Slick and Sophisticated Media Department. Vice News. Mode of access: <https://news.vice.com/article/isis-has-a-really-slick-and-sophisticated-media-department>*

of Iraq, which is controlled by ISIS. Thousands of Europeans after accepting Islam go to fight in the Arab East¹⁶.

2. The collapse of the bipolar system also affected the political processes in the region.

¹⁶ *Мирский Г.И. Радикальный исламизм. Идеино-политическая мотивация и влияние на мировое мусульманское сообщество. Москва: МДК Валдай, 2015. Доступно на: <http://www.slideshare.net/RussianCouncil/ss-50399197>*

During the Cold War, the Middle East was largely the arena of confrontation between two blocs led by USA and the USSR. The states in the region remained the main elements of this system. At those days, the most significant threats to security were tensions and conflicts between states. External actors ensured relative stability in the region because the region itself for them could be of value in the economic, political and military aspects¹⁷. With the collapse of the bipolar system, the role of internal actors in the region significantly increased.

3. In the 21st century, national state in the Middle East is also beginning to erode. It has to be noted, that the idea of nation state was not accepted easily there. The nation state (i.e. the state of Westphalian system) formed only at the beginning of XX century. Moreover, “the development of the political framework of the nation state occurred in the region slowly... The Arab public consciousness is not immediately accepted the new political unity as a state and for a long time uses a term *kurt* (the country, the land, area)”¹⁸.

Meanwhile, in the second half of the twentieth century the main structural units in the region become the nation-state. However, they had their own specifics. In many ways, these states were formed as an authoritarian. The leaders or clans in these states were in power for many years.

In 21-st century, as a result of mass demonstrations, statehood in several countries

of the Middle East begins to break down. Vitaly Naumkin Scientific Supervisor of the Institute of Oriental Studies (RAS) and his colleagues emphasize the presence of mainly internal causes such changes. They write that reconstruction of the Middle East countries can be attributed to mostly internal causes, that are political, economic, cultural, and civilisation-related ones. At the same time, they indicate relations with external processes, although they do not specify these relations¹⁹.

In general, it seems to us that in spite of the fact that in the Middle East, apparently, domestic factors have a decisive role in the transformation, it is the combination of changes in all three levels of the world of political organization (the Westphalian system, the system of international relations and its Middle East subsystem, also in the countries of the region) produces the effect “domino”, which is observed today.

In addition, it is also clear that the transformation of the Middle East countries had an impact on interstate system, and on Westphalia system, enhance the effect of ‘blurring’. V. Naumkin showed it very well, however, combining the two systems into one – global international system²⁰.

¹⁷ Ivanov I. *Is a Collective Security System Possible in the Middle East?* Moscow, RIAC, 2016. Available at: http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=7183#top-content

¹⁸ Кудряшова И.В. *Формирование и развитие политических систем стран арабского Востока. Сравнительная политология.* Под ред. О.В. Гаман-Голутвиной. – Москва: Аспект Пресс, 2015. стр. 701-724.

¹⁹ Naumkin V., Zvyagelskaya I., Kuznetsov V., Soukhov N. *The Middle East: From Conflicts to Stability.* Valdai Discussion Club, 2016. Available at: <http://valdaiclub.com/files/10099/>.

²⁰ Наумкин В.В. Влияние «арабской весны» 2011 г. на глобальную международную систему. Наумкин В.В. *Ближний Восток в мировой политике и культуре.* – М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2011. стр. 288-307.

7. Who is to Blame? What to Do?

Classic Russian questions: what to do? and who is to blame? – become a worldwide today. The first question is easier to answer: no one is to blame (certainly, with the exception of terrorists). Political transformations are a part and a parcel of the process of development.

The second question is more difficult to answer. Two scenarios are possible: 1) The region will be back to Westphalian system, or 2) We need to search for new formats of political organization of the world.

The first scenario (back to the framework of Westphalian system) is the most obvious option. Furthermore, the history knows cases of alternatives to Westphalian system projects, which then they died out. For example, Communist project was. In accordance with Communist project the main structural unit of political organization of the world is not a state, but class. Nevertheless, later, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have become part of the Westphalian system and communist project as an alternative one has died. However, in nowadays conditions of transnationalization, it is much more difficult to get back to Westphalian system. First of all, it is difficult because of a “perfect storm” and an erosion of Westphalian system, which was not in the past. The second scenario is unclear. We have no idea of what political system/systems we need. Moreover, if there will be such idea it will take a lot of time to negotiate it.

In such circumstances both scenarios, most probably, will go together. There will be attempts (and there is a need for them) to eliminate the activity of ISIS. Anti-terrorist actions should be based on international law

under the auspices of the UN. Efforts also should be focused in the information field in order to show the unacceptability under any conditions the use of terrorist actions.

In addition, diplomatic activity is needed in order to push actors of the region to behave in accordance with Westphalian rules. It is important to use a multilateral and multilevel (to include business structures, religious leaders, etc.) mechanisms to the processes of conflict management in the Middle East. It is not a simple task, and it will take a lot of time and efforts. Therefore, it seems appropriate to use the step-by-step principle in solving problems and not try to solve them all at once.

At the same time, we need a series of negotiations on the future political systems (some kind of negotiations ‘Westphalia2.0’). It is obvious that this task is beyond the solution of the problems of the Middle East region and relates to issues of global governance. Apparently, it is necessary to intensify the debate on global governance, actively involving of practitioners. Of course, when discussing the various models, it is necessary to keep in mind that it is impossible to destroy the old structure, not having built through negotiation mechanisms, new ones.

However, the main conclusion that can be drawn by analyzing the problems of the contemporary Middle East lies in the fact that this region was a concentration of manifestations of “perfect storm” of modern political organization. This means that the problem is much more complex and global than the problem of one region of the world.



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