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The Impact of International Competition between Russia and NATO in the Middle East on Egyptian National Security

Introduction:

The Middle East represents a stage for competition and conflict between two powers: the Russian Federation, which aspires to return to the international arena and compete in all fields, aiming to gain allies in the Middle East using its political, economic, and military tools; and NATO, which places significant importance on the same region. This drives member states, led by the United States of America, to turn their attention to it. NATO has outlined a set of strategies and projects that reflect its interests and objectives in the region. Therefore, the alliance views Russia's policies as a threat to security and stability, negatively impacting NATO's goals and interests.

This situation, characterized by conflicting and tense relations between the Russian Federation and NATO, manifests in the emergence of two powers in the Middle East. This dynamic affects the balance of power in the region and poses a challenge to Egyptian national security in its various dimensions, as Egypt's security and stability are directly linked to the region's security and stability.

Research Problem:

It has been firmly established among nations that whoever controls the Middle East achieves a competitive advantage over other rival powers. From this perspective, the competition between the Russian Federation and NATO can be examined, as each party seeks to enhance its presence, expand its influence, and implement its plans and strategies, even at the expense of the security and stability of other states. The competition between the two powers is notably evident in their attempts to play the largest and most influential role in the region's issues, shape its political interactions, and determine the paths of events. This significantly

affects their positions in the international system. This competition increases the burdens on states, especially Egypt, as a key player in the region. The competition directly impacts Egyptian national security, as evidenced by Egypt's involvement in many issues at the heart of the dispute between the two sides, as well as those affecting Egyptian national security in various domains.

Research Questions:

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by international competition and national security?



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2. How does the Russian-NATO competition affect the requirements of Egyptian national security?
3. How can Egypt fortify its national security against the repercussions of the Russian-NATO competition in the Middle East?

Research Objectives:

1. To identify the essence of international competition and national security.
2. To analyze the impact of international competition between the Russian Federation and NATO on Egyptian national security across its various domains.
3. To anticipate ways to fortify Egyptian national security against the risks of Russian-NATO competition in the Middle East.

Research Timeframe:

The research focuses on the period from 2022 to 2024, considering prior years to analyze the reasons behind the Russian-NATO competition. The year 2022 marks the beginning of NATO's strategy that views Russia's role in the Middle East as the greatest threat to its allies' security since the breakdown of peace in Europe due to the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Research Methodology:

The research relies on the integration of multiple methodologies as follows: First, the descriptive-analytical approach, which is employed to accurately analyze and explain the nature of Russian relations with NATO and determine the extent of their impact on Egyptian national security. Additionally, the research draws on the realist school of thought, particularly neo-realism, which focuses on international political conflict for hegemony, significantly shaping the dynamics of these relations. States act based on self-interested orientations, with the anarchic and competitive international system pushing them to prioritize self-help over cooperative behavior. In essence, the anarchic system encourages or even compels states to depend on themselves for securing their interests rather than cooperating with others.

The research also employs the realist approach, which clearly emphasizes preserving national interests in international relations. Realism identifies three sets of interests: military-strategic,

political (including preserving political doctrine and national identity), and economic, represented in the state's welfare.

Research Content:

1. Axis One: The conceptual framework of international competition and national security.
2. Axis Two: The impact of Russian-NATO competition in the Middle East on Egyptian national security domains.
3. Axis Three: Proposed policies to confront and contain the implications of Russian-NATO influence on the Middle East.

Axis One: The Conceptual Framework of International Competition and National Security

First: Definition of International Competition

1. International competition is a natural state in the international system. It arises from states' pursuit of their interests and objectives, leveraging resources and capabilities that are often similar among them, in a peaceful rivalry. However, when one state exaggerates its dominance over these interests and prevents others from accessing them, this can cause tensions that may escalate from peaceful competition to violent conflict, eventually turning into a struggle or armed conflict.

2. A conceptual framework for international competition can be established as follows:

A- Linguistic Definition of International Competition: The term originates from the Latin Curn-Ludere, meaning "to play together." Linguistically, international competition refers to rivalry and striving among individuals, groups, and even states to achieve excellence and reach a specific value⁽¹⁾.

B-Terminological Definition of International Competition: Numerous terminological definitions have been provided. International competition is defined as "a process of interaction accompanying political decision-making, wherein two or more parties aim to achieve the same goal. Thus, competition varies in quantity and quality from one society to another and within the same society." Another definition states that it is "a political concept

referring to a state of disagreement among states that does not reach the level of conflict and takes economic or political dimensions to achieve interests at the international and regional levels.” This definition underscores that international competition is a precursor to conflict and encompasses various fields in the pursuit of international interests ⁽²⁾.

3-Competition is also defined as a state where two or more international parties engage in peaceful relations devoid of violence, tension, or conflict, in a manner that does not negatively affect their interactions, aiming to achieve mutual interests and benefits. Competition is a natural phenomenon among individuals that arises from interaction and the pursuit of goals and interests through available capabilities, often similar among parties. However, one party may attempt to monopolize interests or retain them exclusively, preventing others from gaining access. Competition may deviate from its peaceful framework and escalate into violent conflict when its parties are states ⁽³⁾.

4-Based on the above, international competition can be defined as the imbalances within the international community, which, if unresolved, may escalate into conflict. Moreover, competition is fundamentally economic, as interests are predominantly linked to the economic domain, though it is also connected to the political sphere, depending on the nature of the contested interest.

Second: NATO

1. NATO emerged through the expansion of the Brussels Treaty, signed on March 17, 1948, by Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Britain, and France. This treaty was a response to the intensification of the Cold War between the two blocs, especially the growing Soviet influence in Europe, which became a threat to Western European states. NATO’s primary goal during the Cold War was to pressure the Soviet Union. However, after the Soviet Union’s collapse, NATO affirmed its persistence to combat global terrorism and define its future objectives. This led to the alliance expanding its membership base to achieve these goals. There were other justifications, particularly from the American perspective, including stabilizing the Eurasian region and countering potential Russian dominance over former Soviet republics. Additionally, key motivations for expansion

included securing oil supplies and ensuring unobstructed access, as well as integrating unified European countries that feared Russian attempts to restore Soviet prestige, prompting them to join the alliance. All these factors contributed to curbing Russian influence in the region ⁽⁴⁾.

2. NATO is defined as an international military alliance comprising 29 independent member states across North America and Europe. Twenty-one additional countries participate in NATO’s Partnership for Peace program, and 15 others engage in institutional dialogue programs ⁽⁵⁾.

3- Accordingly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can be defined as a (military alliance established after World War II in 1949, embodying the U.S. containment policy aimed at countering the communist threat to the security and stability of Western European countries. However, after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the alliance was expanded, and its new objectives included combating terrorism, ensuring the stability of the Eurasian region, preventing the reassertion of Russian control over the separated republics, and containing the unified European countries that fear Russia’s return to its former status and its attempts to restore the prestige of the Soviet Union).

3. Third: National Security:

1- The term national security became widespread after World War II, but its roots date back to the 17th century, especially after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which marked the birth of the nation-state. The Cold War era provided the framework and climate for theoretical formulations and institutional frameworks, leading to the use of the term national security strategy ⁽⁶⁾.

2- The definitions of national security are varied. Traditionally, national security was defined as (protection from external attack, thus primarily viewed as military defenses against military threats). However, this perspective was found to be too narrow. National security encompasses more than preparing and using armed forces. Furthermore, such a view could lead one to believe that increasing military power is the best way to enhance security. While military power is indeed an important component of security, it represents only one aspect of it. History is replete with examples



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of arms races that weakened security rather than strengthened it (7).

3- Such races typically begin with a state strengthening its military power for defensive purposes to feel more secure. This action prompts neighboring states to feel threatened and respond by increasing their military capabilities, leaving the initial state feeling less secure, perpetuating the race. This dynamic highlighted the need for a broader definition of national security that includes economic, diplomatic, and social dimensions in addition to the military aspect. Arnold Wolfers offered such a definition, stating: (Security, in its objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values; in its subjective sense, it reflects the absence of fear that these values will be attacked) (8).

4- This definition clarifies that while security is directly linked to values, it is not a value in itself but rather a condition that allows a state to preserve its values. Therefore, actions that enhance a nation's security but undermine its values are of no benefit. Security is challenging to measure objectively, making it a subjective assessment based on perceptions of strength, weakness, capabilities, and intentions regarding perceived threats.

5- Henry Kissinger defined national security as (any actions through which society seeks to preserve its right to existence). Robert McNamara argued that (security is development; without development, there can be no security, and countries that fail to develop cannot simply remain secure). These definitions illustrate the diversity in conceptualizing national security and highlight a theoretical deficiency in the concept. The reasons for differing definitions of national security include(9):

- A- The complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept, making it less attractive to scholars who tend to focus on more flexible ideas.
- B- The intertwining of national security with the concept of power, especially following the rise of the realist school, which views security as derived from power and an instrument to maximize it.
- C- The emergence of idealists opposing the realist school, proposing an alternative goal of national security, which is peace.

D- The predominance of strategic studies in the field of national security, focusing on military aspects and catering to defense requirements and maintaining the status quo, thus narrowing the analytical scope and theoretical depth of the concept.

E- The role of politicians in perpetuating ambiguity around the concept to create greater room for maneuvering it for either domestic consumption or external conflict.

6- Hence, national security can be defined as (a state's ability to protect its resources, territories, and interests from all external and internal threats. National security is based on several aspects, including identifying all internal and external threats, formulating strategies and plans to enhance state power, and securing the necessary capacities to confront these threats).

Fourth: The Middle East Region:

1- The Middle East region is the geographical area located in the east and south of the Mediterranean Sea, extending to the Arabian Gulf. The term refers to the countries and civilizations within this geographical area. This region was named the old world during the age of geographical discoveries by explorers. It is considered the cradle of human civilizations and the birthplace of all monotheistic religions (10).

2- U.S. specialists have expanded the definition of the Middle East to include Ethiopia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and newly independent Islamic countries in Central Asia. Additionally, the U.S. uses terms like the Near East, referring to countries east of the Mediterranean, including Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, and Cyprus. Another term, the Greater Middle East, encompasses the Near East and Middle Eastern countries, along with North African states and Israel. This concept reflects the U.S. vision and strategy concerning its interests and goals in the region (11).

The Second Axis: The Impact of Russian-NATO Competition in the Middle East on Egypt's National Security

1. There are numerous points of agreement between Russia and NATO, such as the Partnership for Peace discussed at the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Germany in 1993. The partnership

option represents an attempt to address key issues related to expansion and the stance toward the Russian Federation, as well as the G8 and the World Trade Organization. There is significant cooperation between Russia and NATO countries in many areas, including counter-terrorism, military cooperation, and cooperation in Afghanistan. This has included Russian transport of non-military International Security Assistance Forces to establish security in Afghanistan, efforts to combat local drug production, industrial cooperation, and preventing the proliferation of weapons.

2. Russia collaborates with NATO in numerous sectors, including vital transportation and transit sectors crucial to international trade, energy security, and technology. This includes developing laser weapons, electronic warfare, anti-access space technology, environmental issues, climate change, water scarcity, increasing energy demands, and information exchange to ensure defensive capabilities against an integrated range of traditional and emerging security challenges, providing all allies with tangible reinforcements and guarantees.

3. Despite the convergence of policies between Russia and NATO, there are significant points of contention, notably the substantial disagreement surrounding NATO's expansionist policies, including in Georgia. This led to the Cuban Missile Crisis due to disputes between Russia and the United States in Georgia in 1962. There is also considerable disagreement between Russia and NATO countries over the inclusion of Baltic states, as the Russian Federation is highly apprehensive about NATO's eastward expansion, which restricts its ability to regain its influence in Eastern Europe.

4. A major difference exists between Russia and NATO in addressing American hegemony in the Middle East and globally. This is exemplified by the ongoing dispute over the military solution in Iraq against Saddam Hussein's regime and the conflict between the two sides regarding energy security threats. The United States sees a need to significantly reduce European countries' dependence on Russian gas exports to prevent Russia from using energy sources to pressure European Union countries, as has been evident in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

5. The Russian-NATO competition significantly impacts Egypt's national security across various domains due to the efforts of these two powers to establish influence in the Middle East and achieve their objectives, even concerning resolving the region's crises and issues. This stems from both parties' desire to benefit from the region's strategic value and position. Consequently, there are direct impacts on Egypt's security and stability, as Russia seeks to regain its lost status since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Conversely, NATO, led by the United States, aims to curtail Russian influence and maintain the unipolar international system without entering into new balances or fluctuations. The implementation of these objectives by either side results in conflict and tension that threaten regional security and stability, directly affecting national security, given Egypt's significant role in this equation. The impact on Egypt's national security will be outlined as follows ⁽¹²⁾:

First: The Impact of Russian-NATO Competition on Egypt's National Security in the Political Sphere

1. International powers play a pivotal role in shaping the regional balance within the Middle East through their relationships with influential regional powers and the related regional developments resulting from ongoing crises and issues. This is reflected in the regional balance of power, which is challenging to achieve due to conflicting interests within the region at all levels. The impact of Russian-NATO competition on Egypt's national security politically is evident in:

- A- The competition between Russia and NATO threatens the principle of balance adopted by Egyptian foreign policy, which is based on neutrality without favoring one side over the other. Escalating conflicts between the two sides could threaten Egypt's interests in the region, particularly its leading role, due to the potential decline in Egypt's close relations with both Russia and NATO.
- B- Russian-NATO competition necessitates a redefinition of the strategic balance in the region, presenting two possibilities: the first involves the restoration of close American presence in the region, which threatens Arab relations and undermines Egypt's role



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in regional issues. The second possibility involves forming political alliances that strengthen relations with international powers (Russia and NATO) based on their strategic interests amid regional upheavals, creating a state of conflicting interests and external orientations ⁽¹³⁾.

C- The Russian-Iranian alignment in numerous fields allows terrorist organizations, particularly Shia groups, to spread in the region, threatening regional security. Additionally, it could facilitate cooperation between the two countries in countering NATO, fostering mistrust between regional countries, especially Gulf states and Russia. These are parties that maintain close relations with Egypt, potentially pushing them to side with one party over the other ⁽¹⁴⁾.

D- On the other hand, the conflict between Russia and NATO might prompt Middle Eastern countries to form regional alliances, recognizing the necessity of addressing external challenges threatening regional stability. This is evident in the rapprochement between some countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as Turkey's alignment with Gulf countries and its negotiations with Egypt to enhance relations. These developments support consolidating Egypt's position in the region and safeguarding its national security.

Second: The Impact of Russian-NATO Rivalry on Egyptian National Security in the Economic Domain

1. Russia and NATO compete for the wealth and oil reserves of the Middle East, particularly as the share of production outside OPEC decreases, increasing reliance on the Middle East as a main competitor to Russia in energy markets. Both sides share geographical proximity to Europe and have access to maritime routes used for delivering oil and gas to the Asian market. Thus, the importance of the Middle East has escalated for Russian national security in its economic dimensions.

2. The impact of Russian-NATO economic competition on Egypt is evident in the following:

A- Russia's direct intervention in Syria reflects its affirmation of presence in the Middle East and its protection of vital interests, including

securing access to oil and gas supplies and their export points. This also highlights the complexity of the region's economic reality, exposing it to economic instability, which major powers exploit to implement expansive investment projects, consequently threatening the Egyptian economy.

B-Economic sanctions imposed by the United States on Russia, as a NATO supporter, and Iran, which increased its ability to sell oil abroad following the nuclear agreement, have led to a decline in foreign currency revenues for countries engaged in dollar transactions, including Egypt⁽¹⁵⁾.

C-Declines in oil prices result in varying levels of fiscal deficits due to the commitments of Gulf countries within their developmental plans. This threatens economic cooperation and reduces economic partnerships with Egypt, including modern developmental programs Egypt seeks to achieve ⁽¹⁶⁾.

D-Russia's continued threat to raise energy prices or cut them off to NATO countries to gain economic advantages by turning eastward and investing in energy agreements, particularly with Gulf states. These states have significant economic relationships with European countries, causing a decline in those relations and difficulties in diversifying exports, especially as Egypt seeks to attract foreign investments, threatening Egypt's economic security ⁽¹⁷⁾.

E-On the other hand, Egypt can represent a strategic partner for Europe in the energy sector in the long term, being a regional hub for energy trade, particularly electricity. Egypt possesses a surplus of approximately 26 gigawatts and is working on connecting its network to Europe via Cyprus and Greece⁽¹⁸⁾.

Third: The Impact of Russian-NATO Rivalry on Egyptian National Security in the Security/Military Domain

1. The Russian-NATO rivalry in the Middle East has influenced Egyptian national security and strategic interests in the region, particularly within the context of armed conflicts and the proliferation of terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq. Additionally:

- A-The emergence of foreign fighters and terrorist organizations, particularly in Libya, poses a significant threat to the region's security overall and to Egypt's national security in particular. This necessitates imposing protection measures on Egypt's borders, especially amid crises in neighboring countries that Russia and NATO seek to exploit, playing pivotal roles in these crises to achieve their interests through military force. This dynamic might push Egypt toward military intervention, accompanied by negative implications for national security.
- B-The intensification of disagreements among regional countries amid increased direct Russian military intervention in Syria and Iraq prevents them from reaching a shared vision for resolving the Syrian crisis, given conflicting interests with Russia and Iran in the region.
- C-Rising sectarian tension due to Russia's declared war on what it calls "Sunni terrorism," which it views as a threat to its national security. Russia believes NATO and its allies, including the United States, obstruct its regional interests by funding and arming militant organizations. This dynamic provides fertile ground for the spread of terrorism and extremism in the region, directly threatening Egypt's national security⁽¹⁹⁾.
- D-Russia views the Syrian crisis as an announcement of its reemergence on the global stage, while the United States sees increased Russian presence as a threat to its strategic interests, including NATO interests in Iraq and the Mediterranean. This rivalry hinders all efforts to resolve the crisis, where Egypt plays a key role, especially amid Russian-Iranian rapprochement. This development suggests Russia might allow Iran to activate its militias to escalate attacks against European interests, potentially extending to other ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, such as those in Iraq and Libya⁽²⁰⁾.
- E-The arms race between Russia and NATO transforms the region into a regional system experiencing frequent international interventions and various forms of security breaches. This escalation worsens Egypt's

security situation, especially amid efforts by both sides to establish military bases in the region and negotiate arms deals with regional states.

Fourth: The Impact of Russian-NATO Rivalry on Egyptian National Security in the Social Domain

1. Egyptian national security has faced numerous pressures and threats amid Russian-NATO rivalry in geographically adjacent areas to Egypt. This is because the national security of any state is not confined to its domestic conditions but extends to encompass prevailing regional circumstances. In this context, the social dimension of Egyptian national security emerges as the most impacted aspect, encompassing social integration, equal opportunities, living standards, and Egyptian identity. Thus, the rivalry directly influences these indicators, as demonstrated below:

A- Challenge of Egyptian social integration:

Social integration refers to reciprocal social relationships among Egyptian citizens. Amid escalating crises in Arab countries, Russian-NATO rivalry threatens this integration. The migration and displacement of citizens from crisis-stricken states to Egypt introduce new cultures to Egyptian society that may struggle to integrate with the dominant Egyptian culture, thereby threatening social integration. Additionally, these crises may create divisions within Egyptian society regarding the nature of these crises, potentially leading to biases favoring one side over the other, further undermining social integration.

B- Challenge to Egyptian identity:

Every society has an identity distinguishing it from others. Amid the growing Russian-NATO rivalry, each side seeks to attract as many supporters as possible, threatening Egypt's prevailing identity. Furthermore, continued security crises in neighboring states indicate the influx of different identities into Egypt, threatening its identity. The emergence of numerous terrorist organizations near Egyptian borders, particularly the Egyptian-Libyan border, has propagated extremist terrorist ideologies within Egypt, undermining the moderate Islamic religious beliefs prevalent



in Egyptian society, which form part of its identity.

C-Divine in living standards: According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Egyptian society has witnessed declining household incomes due to Arab crises and the increasing number of non-Egyptian labor forces, threatening Egyptian constants. This is because reduced wages compel many social groups to abandon societal constants to meet basic needs.

2. From the above, it is clear that Russian-NATO rivalry in the Middle East directly affects the social dimension of Egyptian national security. Destabilization in certain Arab states resulting from this rivalry has introduced different identities and cultures into Egyptian society due to migration and displacement from those states. These identities differ from Egyptian identity, with its constants, traditions, and principles, and have failed to integrate with Egyptian culture and identity, presenting direct threats to social integration.

The Third Axis: Proposed Policies to Address and Contain the Repercussions of the Russian-Atlantic Influence on the Middle East

1- Through what has been addressed in this study, it becomes clear the extent of tension in relations between the Russian Federation and NATO, as each party seeks to compete with the other and diminish its influence and interests in various regions of the world. In this context, the Russian Federation works to strengthen its role in areas where NATO countries are active in the region. Conversely, Western countries strive to impose political and economic isolation on the Russian Federation by expanding toward Russia and incorporating surrounding countries such as Ukraine, Finland, Sweden, and Norway. This threatens Russia's strategic depth, pushing it to engage in war in Ukraine to prevent NATO expansion.

2- In this context, the Egyptian state must adopt a set of policies to confront the repercussions of the Russian-Atlantic rivalry in the Middle East and the accompanying threats to Egyptian national security across political, economic, military, and social fields, as follows:

A. Political Field:

- Enhancing joint relations with the countries of the region, whether bilateral or multilateral, especially with the Gulf states, as they are Egypt's strategic allies in facing the threats imposed by regional changes. This includes formulating the Egyptian stance in all meetings that are held, which are linked to achieving mutual interests on one hand and interactions with non-Arab parties on the other.
- Attempting to establish a shared vision regarding pending issues and files that pose threats to the region's security by signing agreements and strategic partnerships based on principles of cooperation, mutual respect, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.
- Building a strategic alliance on a supra-regional framework, taking the form of Middle Eastern alliances that include all countries of the region. This allows for achieving mutual interests, especially as the widening scope of alliances generates various Egyptian regional equations, including adopting new formulas of political and strategic power in light of dismantling the pivotal affiliations of Egyptian foreign policy into broader and more comprehensive circles, enabling the enhancement of Egyptian relations with major powers within the principle of balance.

B. Economic Field:

- Exploring investment opportunities and addressing challenges arising from the global economy, including the energy and food security crises, by supporting cooperation in technological, agricultural, and food sectors and expanding infrastructure and energy projects while diversifying production sources.
- Deepening the benefit from available economic capabilities and consolidating economic partnerships with regional countries that have strong economic ties with Egypt, primarily Saudi Arabia, which represents a trade partner for Egypt in the Middle East, especially in light of both nations' efforts to establish joint investment projects.

- Leveraging the preferential advantages provided by cooperation and trade agreements, especially in attracting foreign investments on one hand and creating new markets for exports on the other.
- Focusing on the scientific aspect of the economy as a means to increase production and enhance the competitiveness of Egyptian products, contributing to achieving economic integration, including monetary policy integration and a unified monetary system as a way to address the oil crisis's impact on local currency value.

C. Security/Military Field:

- Forming military alliances with regional countries to exchange military expertise, particularly related to combating terrorist organizations.
- Enhancing Egyptian military capabilities by expanding arms deals and organizing joint military exercises with regional countries to secure borders with neighboring countries witnessing extremist group infiltration, accompanied by arms trafficking and human trafficking.
- Signing military agreements among Middle Eastern countries by consolidating the role of existing regional and international organizations in the Arab region, including

the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council, which contribute to mobilizing and developing the military capabilities of the region's countries.

- Engaging in armament agreements with GCC countries and regional powers amidst the ongoing arms race in the region, while increasing partnerships with foreign powers.
- Taking all military measures in case of any foreign intervention in Arab affairs and supporting Arab unity, including regular reinforcement of state power and supporting weaker states militarily to prevent them from becoming arenas for major power intervention, thereby reducing foreign interference in Middle Eastern affairs.

D. Social Field:

- Strengthening the system of shared cultural values among Middle Eastern countries.
- Adopting measures to manage the influx of migrants into Egypt and prevent the spread of ideas that conflict with Egyptian culture.
- Addressing any threats that may lead to ethnic divisions in the region.
- Promoting Egyptian identity to counter attempts to stir divisions or conflicts within Egyptian society.



Conclusion:

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above:

- 1- Russia and NATO compete in the Middle East due to its strategic importance in the regional and global political landscape, given its oil wealth. This importance may influence power balances in the region in favor of Russia, alongside its impact on Egyptian national security.*
- 2- The Russian-Atlantic rivalry produces various effects on Egyptian national security due to Egypt's leading position in the Middle East. Egypt seeks to maintain regional balance by enhancing its relations with other influential regional powers.*
- 3- Russia turned to the Middle East in its quest to regain its global position following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the accompanying decline in its role in regional and international affairs. Conversely, NATO, particularly the United States, works to undermine Russia's role and maintain unilateral dominance over the global system.*
- 4- The Russian-Atlantic rivalry in the Middle East threatens the principle of balance pursued by Egyptian foreign policy, which is based on neutrality without siding with one party over another while maintaining cooperative relations with all powers within the framework of mutual respect.*
- 5- Despite the negative effects of the Russian-Atlantic rivalry, it can contribute to forming regional alliances among Middle Eastern countries that have become aware of the need to face challenges threatening regional stability.*
- 6- Reliance on the Middle East's oil resources and wealth is increasing, especially amidst the declining production share of OPEC. This drives Russia and NATO to compete over these resources, exacerbating tensions and threatening Egypt's economy.*
- 7- The Syrian crisis provides fertile ground for Russia to regain its position in regional crises, demonstrated by its direct military intervention, which threatened NATO's interests on one hand and Egypt's efforts to resolve the crisis on the other.*
- 8- The arms race is a prominent feature of the Russian-Atlantic rivalry in the Middle East, exposing the region to security breaches by international powers, thereby threatening Egyptian national security.*
- 9- The Egyptian state must adopt a set of policies across political, economic, security, and social domains to address the threats to Egyptian national security posed by the Russian-Atlantic rivalry. This can be achieved by strengthening its relations and strategic partnerships with the region's countries in general and forming new foreign policy circles while resorting to the idea of bilateral and trilateral alliances.*

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The Impact of International Competition between Russia and NATO in the Middle East on Egyptian National Security

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Abstract:

It has become evident that we now live in a world driven by national interests, where nations seek to impose their will on relevant stakeholders to shape policies and strategies that serve their objectives. This applies to states, individuals, and various human groups. Major powers strive to maintain their status and unique strengths, leveraging relationships to advance their interests through various tools. This approach has become the new norm in international relations. A clear example is the relationship between the Russian Federation and NATO, and its impact on the Middle East.

This study aims to analyze the nature of the international competition in the Middle East between major global powers, particularly the Russian Federation and NATO. It also examines the implications of this competition on Egyptian national security across various dimensions. The study employs multiple methodologies, including descriptive-analytical and realism within the framework of national interest.

The study reached several conclusions, most notably:

- *The international competition between Russia and NATO threatens Egypt's leading role in the region as Russia seeks to regain its influence in the Middle East, which diminished following the collapse of the Soviet Union.*
- *This competition undermines the balance in Egypt's foreign policy.*
- *The arms race is one of the most prominent features of the Russian-NATO rivalry in the Middle East.*

Keywords: National Security, Competition, Middle East, Egypt, NATO, Russia.

تأثير التنافس الدولي بين روسيا وحلف شمال الأطلسي في الشرق الأوسط على الأمن القومي المصري

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المستخلص:

أصبح واضحاً أننا نعيش اليوم في عالم تُسيّرهُ المصالح الوطنية، التي تعمل على فرض إرادتها على المعنيين بها، من أجل العمل على رسم سياسات ووضع استراتيجيات لتحقيقها سواء كانت لدول أو لأفراد أو لمجموعات بشرية مختلفة، وبدأت الدول الكبرى تسعى لتحافظ على مكانتها وأسباب قوتها الخاصة وتعمل على استخدام علاقاتها لتحقيق مصالحها عبر الأدوات المختلفة، وتلك هي القاعدة الجديدة بعلاقات الدول، ولعل خير مثال على ذلك علاقات روسيا الاتحادية بحلف شمال الأطلسي وما تحدثه من تأثير على منطقة الشرق الأوسط، من هنا تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى محاولة تحليل طبيعة التنافس الدولي الذي تشهده منطقة الشرق الأوسط بين القوى الدولية الكبرى خاصة روسيا الاتحادية وحلف شمال الأطلسي، علاوة على تحليل الآثار الناجمة عن هذا التنافس على الأمن القومي المصري بمجالاته المختلفة مستخدمة عدداً من المناهج مثل الوصفي التحليلي ومنهج الواقعية في إطار المصلحة الوطنية.

قد نتجت عن الدراسة عدة نتائج، لعل من أبرزها أن التنافس الدولي بين روسيا وحلف شمال الأطلسي يهدد الدور الريادي لمصر في المنطقة حيث تعمل روسيا على استعادة مكانتها في المنطقة التي تراجعت على أثر انهيار الاتحاد السوفيتي، كما يهدد هذا التنافس مبدأ التوازن للسياسة الخارجية المصرية، ذلك بالإضافة إلى أن سباق التسلح من أبرز سمات التنافس الروسي الأطلسي في منطقة الشرق الأوسط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأمن القومي، التنافس، الشرق الأوسط، مصر، حلف شمال الأطلسي، روسيا.