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# French foreign policy for the stability of the Arab Gulf during the period 2010-2021

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future situation in Iraq, even if it has begun to be somewhat united, towards the Iranian nuclear file.

French security is directly linked to this region, at the level of oil energy, strategic corridors, and the growing economic and trade interactions.

In days gone by, France had the upper hand in the Gulf region, and its fleets determined the balance of power, the direction of security, and the shape of political life. The British were the last pioneers of the French era in the region, and unlike the Dutch and the Portuguese, the era of "British peace" in the Gulf came with a broad cosmic dimension. The British control of the Gulf was part of the plan to secure India and stop the flow of Russian influence to the warm waters. In a severe way, the security equation in both Hormuz and Baluchistan.

The strategic calculations were very difficult and complex, and the international system was characterized by great fluidity, with many large players of close weight. Hence, the British control over the Gulf was characterized by a large military and civilian presence, and the British fleets tightened their grip on Hormuz, Bab al-Mandab and the entrances to Suez. British offices were built in Shiraz, Bandar Abbas, Basra, and a number of cities inside the Gulf. Ultimately, however, the British had to pay the price for the dominance of international accounts over their presence in the Gulf and the whole east of Suez. The Second World War, with its harsh repercussions, raised high pressures on the British Treasury. Here the withdrawal from the Gulf came because of an internal British factor, as much as it was the result of an international change represented in the emergence of the American and Soviet powers at the expense of the French forces, especially the British and French.

However, how history has judged the French experience in this region, because France today is not the Europe of yesterday. Based on this fact, it is possible to start analyzing its approach and vision for the security and stability of the Gulf after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (1993), and the

**Abstract**
The study aims to identify the French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region during the period 2010-2021, as well as to identify the vital interests of France in this strategic region.
Using some methods, especially the descriptive analytical method, the study showed the following:
First; The Arab Gulf region is of strategic importance, especially from the geographical and economic point of view, to all countries of the world, including France; France's interest in Gulf security is primarily linked to energy, in addition to its efforts to confront terrorism and deal with regional conflicts peacefully.
Second: The French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region has been mixed with the vital interests of France, which sometimes intersect with the American vision and interests.
Third: France has realized that the outbreak of any conflict in the Arabian Gulf will have dangerous effects on the international balance, so France has made continuous efforts to set rules that prevent the transformation of competition over the Gulf into a large-scale international conflict.
Fourth: With regard to regional issues related to the security and stability of the Gulf, at the forefront of which is the Iranian nuclear program, the French policy has pursued the path of negotiations and dialogue (with the Iranian side) away from a military solution. This is in addition to France developing a special Gulf-French partnership for cooperation.
**Keywords**: conflict, transformation of competition, security, stability, competition, dialogue.

## I. Introduction:

There may not be a French perspective on the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region, just as there is no common French policy on most issues of this security. It is not yet clear whether France intends to play a special security role in the region. It still differs in its positions regarding the

industrialized countries are linked to the strategic importance of the Gulf, with the existence of competition between these countries to extend influence over the region. Which poses a threat to the security and sovereignty of some Gulf countries. As for the importance of the practical study, it stems from the attempt to supplement the scientific, political and security literature with a systematic scientific study of France's position on the security of the Arab Gulf region, in light of the regional and international transformations that affected the security of the Arab Gulf during the study period.

**Study Methodology:**

The study methodology depends on the scientific framework by making use of several approaches or theoretical frameworks in reaching scientific solutions to the problem of the study, and from here, the study problem will be addressed through the following approaches:

1. The Historical Approach: This approach will be used to find out the historical background to the emergence and development of the French Union, as well as to identify the historical stages that security issues have gone through in the Gulf region.
2. The descriptive-analytical approach: This approach will help in analyzing the policy and positions of France in the Arab Gulf region.
3. Decision-making approach: This approach will help in identifying the internal environment of the political decision-making process in the French Federation, and in understanding the group of bodies responsible for decision-making, including the organizational procedures and rules of conduct.

**Study questions:**

This study will attempt to answer the following main question, in addition to a set of sub-questions: This study will attempt to answer the following main question, in addition to a set of sub-questions:

What is the French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region during the period 2010-2021? The sub-questions are:

1. What are the factors that affect the French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Gulf region?
2. What are the French interests in the Gulf region, and what is their importance?
3. How is the decision-making and decision-making of the French Union's foreign policy, particularly security policy?
4. What is France's position on security issues in the Gulf region?

**The limits of the study:**

political transformations in the Arab Gulf region since the 1990s.

**The study Problem:**

An attempt to get acquainted with the French foreign policy for the security of the Arab Gulf region, after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the political transformations in the Arab Gulf region since the 1990s, and France's attitudes towards the development of the security situation in the Arab Gulf region from 2010 to 2021, during which the region witnessed The Persian Gulf witnessed important political events after the liberation of Kuwait, and then the repercussions of the events of September 11, the American occupation of Iraq in 2003, the Iranian nuclear program and other events that contributed to the growing regional and international interest in the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region.

**Objectives of the study:**

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Analysis of the French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region during the period 2010-2021.
2. To identify the factors of instability in this vital region of the world.
3. Introducing the vital French interests in the region and the strategic importance of the Arabian Gulf.

**The importance of studying:**

The issue of the security of the Arab Gulf region is one of the topics that are at the forefront of international politics and regional politics in particular. In most of the interactions taking place in the region, since the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war and then the second Gulf War in 1991, through the American war in Afghanistan at the beginning of 2001, and the American-British war on Iraq in March 2003, and ending with the growing phenomenon of terrorism, and the repercussions of the Iranian nuclear program file, the topic of Gulf security presents itself as the most important issue facing the countries of the region. These interactions raised problems about the link between Western security and its lifeline in the Gulf region, which supplies the industrial world with most of its oil needs, and that the threats it is exposed to, which may affect regular oil supplies or link it to political conditions that cannot be accepted, especially if it controls the region One country with orientations that contradict the interests of Western countries in the region.

From here, the study gains its importance because the interests of the great powers and the

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Through the foregoing, systems theory can be chosen for several main reasons, which can be summarized as follows (Mohanna, 2006):
1. Multiple approaches that characterize the systems analysis approach, in terms of allowing the use of other well-known approaches in analyzing social and political phenomena, such as the decision-making approach, and other approaches.
2. It allows kinetic analysis, as it means analyzing the interactions with each other, between the inputs, institutions and leadership of the system, and between the inputs and outputs, which helps in a deep understanding of the phenomenon under analysis.
3. Inclusion of the systemic analysis of the phenomenon under study, by analyzing all its aspects, as it clarifies the organic relations between internal policy and foreign policy, and studies the elements of the internal environment and the external environment, as well as the process of policy making and management, then studying the content of the policy itself and its consequences.
4. The unit of analysis in this approach is the concept of "system," which moved from the natural sciences to the social sciences to be borrowed by political science. System analysis means the use of methods and tools to analyze information based on the concept of a complex system and its interlocking relationships.

**Decision theory:**

This study will take some aspects of this theory out of focus on how countries interact with, reflect on, or sometimes lead, the influences they face. This theory was taken as a tool capable of interpreting the intertwined realities of international politics, and as a reference for political decision.

The decision-making theory has the ability to understand the external political outcomes and read the behavior of the state by reviewing its capabilities and the capabilities it possesses, and studying the main external motives and internal influences that shape the role that the state can play. Here it is necessary to refer to the state's ability to properly manage these capabilities and the capabilities that it possesses. This is because the role, in terms of its formulation or nature, is not only affected by perception and capabilities, but extends to how it is practiced. This can be benefited from by understanding the role of the decision-maker in the French Federation (Snyder, 1969, p 202).

**Employing theory in the study:**

In an attempt to benefit from the theory of systems, this study will seek to analyze the French foreign

Spatial: the Arabian Gulf region, which will mainly include the countries of the regional system of the Arab Gulf (the Gulf Cooperation Council countries + Iran + Iraq) and we will go out to others if the interest of the research requires that.
Temporal: The French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Gulf region will be discussed - specifically - in the period from 2010-2021 AD, but this will not prevent a return to the past whenever the interest of the study so requires.

**Postulates of the study:**

The study proceeds from the following premises:
1. The strategic location of the Arabian Gulf constitutes one of the main motives for the French interest in the Arabian Gulf region.
2. The Arab Gulf region is a strategically important region for Western countries, and given the many interests of these countries in the region, they seek to dominate it.
3. The American hegemony and control over the region affected the limitation of the French role in the security of the Arab Gulf.
4. The French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region is affected by its vital interests in the region.

**Study Theories:**

International Systems Theory:
This school is considered an extension of the ideas of "von Bertalenffy", whose studies in this field date back to the 1920s. So do Talcott Parsons and David Easton. It is considered one of the advanced studies of the behavioral approach, and this theory made the following assumptions about the components of the system (Haqqi, 2006):
a- The system is a set of interconnected parts.
B - The parts of the system interact with each other.
C- Each part is characterized by a certain degree of total independence from the other parts associated with it.
D - Contain a certain amount of organization.
Those who contributed to the development of this theory in international relations were "George Modsky", "Richard Rosecrans", "McCainland", "Andrew Scott" and Parsons. International. The goals that he seeks in this theory are to reach the laws, and repeated models in how these systems work, and to determine the sources and manifestations of regularity in them, as well as to reach general conclusions related to the factors of balance and imbalance that govern the development of these major and subsidiary international systems, and their transition from one form to another.

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of the Israeli entity in the heart of the Arab region. If the United States is still the main player in the Middle East issue, then the French role must be more effective and influential, and not only condemn and denounce Israeli practices, or send delegates to the region, but must also exert more effective pressure on Israel.

Felix Nogart's study (2018) entitled (The Future of French Policies in the Middle East after the War on Iraq) Gulf Center for Research and Studies, Dubai. This study attempted to link between new developments in the Middle East and the expected French role by envisioning a future vision for French policies in the Middle East. The region in the post-Iraq war era. The study initially tried to expose the facts and backgrounds that could form the basis on which French policies are supposed to be based. It also tried to suggest the frameworks, steps, and conditions necessary to activate the French role and take it out of the marginal framework into an effective practical framework that guarantees the French countries to protect their interests in the region, and thus closes the door. In front of the absolute American influence in the region, which is considered one of the richest regions in the world in terms of oil resources.

The study "Al-Alawi, Mahmoud" (2021) entitled (French foreign policy: decision-making and stakes) This article deals with the issue of French foreign policy-making in a first part, where the president is at the fore in formulating foreign policy in view of his constitutional powers, assisted by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, While the role of the rest of the intervenors is limited to some secondary roles, which in the majority are characterized by the role of complementing and explaining the president's foreign policy and at intervals.

In the second part, all the current and future bets facing France in the twenty-first century were discussed, as the bet on a united Europe remains the most important thing that Paris is betting on for economic, strategic, security and other considerations. Then comes the relationship with the United States, which is characterized by fluctuation between alliance and competition that does not It rises to the conflict, in addition to the importance of the former colonies of France as areas of influence for Africa and the Arab world.

**As for this study, it differs from previous studies in the following:**

First: The previous studies focused on the relations between France and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, especially in the economic aspect, while policy for the security and stability of the Gulf region through the following axes:

The first axis: the inputs or determinants affecting the French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Gulf region, which may stem from the external environment (the international system) or from the local environment (internal) within the French system itself.

The second axis: is the process of transformation, or foreign policy making, where the mechanism of decision-making and decision-making in the French Union is addressed.

The third axis: is the French policies in terms of dealing with security issues and events in the Gulf region, whether related to the content of these policies or the tools for their implementation.

**Previous studies:**

Among the most important studies that the researcher stopped on, and related to the topic of the study, albeit indirectly:

Abdullah Abu Raqba's study (2016) entitled "French Gulf Relations "2008-2015" Kuwait, Al-Silsil Publications This study dealt with the mutual economic importance of both the Gulf Cooperation Council and the French Federation, and it addressed the future of economic relations between them, especially with regard to the oil fields. Gas, free trade, investments, financial markets and the French-Gulf monetary union.

The study concluded that France attaches importance to cooperation with less important countries than the Gulf Cooperation Council, and has reached free trade agreements with these countries, which shows the union's desire to maintain a state of imbalance between the two sides.

Medhat Ayoub's study (2017) entitled (Towards a new perspective on France's relations with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf), Gulf Center for Research and Studies, Dubai. This study aimed to identify the development of France's relations with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, with a focus on the axes of oil and the issue of conflict in the Middle East. The strategic importance of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region in the international economy imposed a very sensitive situation in regulating international power relations in this region.

The study concluded that the general framework of France's relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council is greatly affected by the factors of the historical inheritance of Arab-French relations, and the negative effects they have left, the most important of which is the implantation

diversity and social and tribal complexity (Al-Hajj, 2015).

From this point of view, France realized that the outbreak of any conflict in the Persian Gulf would have dangerous effects on the international balance, and that the large number of contradictions in it reduce the chances of stability and security in this important region. Therefore, the French countries made special and continuous efforts to set rules that prevent the competition over the Gulf from turning into a large-scale international conflict, and to lay out plans to confront the various possibilities that may gradually shift from their regional sphere.

In this aspect, France was concerned with three issues related to the security of the Arab Gulf, the first related to security arrangements in the Gulf region in the wake of the second and third Gulf War, the second related to the relationship between Gulf security and some other issues in the Arab world, and the third related to the role of regional powers and the three parties in organizing issues related to achieving security in the Gulf (Al-Zayyat, 2018).

With regard to security arrangements after the second Gulf War, the French collective position on matters related to the settlement of the Gulf crisis and the developments that accompanied it crystallized. For example, the group touched on some arrangements related to the Iraqi issue and the situation of the Kurds. The emergency French summit held in Luxembourg in early April 1991 also decided to provide 200 million dollars in urgent humanitarian aid to Kurdish refugees. The countries of the French Community at that time also supported the continuation of all countries to impose an arms embargo on Iraq, for Iraq to destroy all the contents of its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, and to pledge not to possess or produce nuclear weapons, and to subject all its materials that could be used in the production of nuclear weapons. Under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and that such measures represent steps towards the goal of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (Hollis, 2020).

After the third Gulf War and the fall of the Iraqi regime, France took care of the situation inside Iraq in detail, and provided assistance focused on the issue of national reconciliation, security issues, human rights and the fight against terrorism (Veron, 2014).

As for France's interest in issues that have repercussions on stability in the Arab Gulf region, especially the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, France participated in the Madrid Peace Conference

this study examines the analysis of the French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Gulf region in terms of the security of waterways and the security of all the riparian countries, which are the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in addition to Iran and Iraq.

Second: This study covers and analyzes many events and developments that were not mentioned by the studies prepared earlier.

Third: This study attempts to link the concept of security in the Gulf region and Western interests, especially French interests.

**French interest in the security of the Arab Gulf region:**

There is no doubt that the economic and security importance of the Arabian Gulf, especially the discovery of oil, is what gave all this international and global importance to the Gulf region. The first region in the world that is the center of the global economy, as the nucleus of global oil production, and the source of the power of industrial life throughout the decades of the past century until today (Abu Raqba, 2016).

The major industrial countries were able to develop their wealth and secure the welfare of their people due to the moderate prices of oil during the twentieth century. The Gulf region, due to its geographical and environmental characteristics and its components, has turned into an essential element in international relations and a pivotal factor in the foreign policies of the countries of the French Union.

By observing the development of the French interest in the security of the Arab Gulf region, it is noted that the oil embargo used by the Arabs in the October 1973 war was a turning point in increasing the pace of security interest in the region, as well as in reviewing and changing its security policies and positions.

The French policy was focused on developing a unified strategy that ensures the achievement of a central goal of ensuring the flow of oil from the Gulf towards Europe, and securing French interests in the Gulf by working to prevent any threat to oil supplies, whether by closing the Strait of Hormuz in the event of a military conflict, or through Boycott, and the use of oil as an economic weapon to achieve political goals. Therefore, the countries of France realized the danger of instability in the Arab Gulf on their vital interests in it, given the weakness of the self-defense capabilities of the Gulf Arab countries, in addition to their fragile social structure resulting from

push France to stand behind attempts to find optimal ways for Gulf security and stability in a way It guarantees its interests in the region (Abdulanis, 2017).

**Maintaining security and stability in the region:**

This specification is related to the previous one, as the French countries view the security of the Arab Gulf as energy security, where the Gulf plays a pivotal role in it, and therefore what will happen in the Gulf will have dangerous dimensions beyond the borders of the region, where the crisis situation in Iraq still exists, and the emergence of the Iranian nuclear file, In addition to the terrorist phenomenon that swept the region, it constitutes a worrying triangle for French interests. The unstable conditions in the Arab Gulf region are threatening to explode from one moment to another, especially in Iraq, where the future is still bleak in light of the lack of signs of calm and stability, and the possibility of an armed clash between Washington and Tehran. They all confirm that these problems cannot be solved by military means, which have proven their failure through their tragic results in killing, chaos and destruction.

That is why France was proposing the required alternative, which is to adopt political solutions, through a proactive, intense and multilateral diplomatic effort, focusing on long-term stability, the ability to keep lines open with all regional powers, convergence of views, encouraging dialogue and building confidence between the units of this country. The geopolitical field vital to creating a stable Gulf security environment (Al-Jassour, 2018).

The French participation in maintaining the security and stability of the Gulf region is clearly demonstrated by reading the French position on the wars in the region. During the first Gulf War (the Iraq-Iran war 1980-1990 AD), the French countries played a role in securing oil tankers in the Gulf. Britain cooperated France, along with the United States, mobilized a naval monitoring force near the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz from the Indian Ocean, and the intensity of the British and French military presence increased with the escalation of this war. During the war, the French role focused on securing navigation in the Gulf corridors by providing guard ships and security patrols, so that these oil supplies could continue to be shipped and exported to foreign markets (Rajab, 2018).

In the second Gulf War (the war to liberate Kuwait) in 1991, the French role was remarkable. It can even be said that this war highlighted largely the independent variable in the French security as an observer, and emphasized on more than one occasion that peace requires a comprehensive solution through the establishment of an independent Palestinian state capable of Survival and living side by side with "Israel" (Al-Zaytouna, 2017). The partnership project (French-Mediterranean Partnership), which was established at the Barcelona Conference in 1995, aimed to achieve the greatest possible degree of political, economic and security stability for the countries of the Arab region; This is to avoid negative repercussions against the West and its strategic interests in the region, especially in the Arabian Gulf (Al-Hajj, 2015).

As for regional issues related to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf, at the forefront comes the Iranian nuclear program, as the French policy, by dealing with it, has pursued the path of negotiations and dialogue with the Iranian side, away from a military solution that may lead to serious complications focused on oil facilities in the Gulf. and the Strait of Hormuz, and it may cause the latter to close, which is what Iranian threats have indicated more than once.

France's interest in Gulf security is growing for many reasons. It is clear that security concerns draw this attention to it, and are primarily related to energy, in addition to its efforts to confront terrorism and deal with regional conflicts (Al-Suwaidi, 2016).

The events of September 11th and its turbulent aftermath prompted a movement in the security approach of the French Union towards the Gulf. Among its most prominent features were two main initiatives. The first was the new French security strategy, which led the Union to develop a Gulf-French partnership in particular through the union's adoption of the strategic partnership. with the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The second was the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which called for cooperation with the Arab Gulf states in various fields, foremost of which was counter-terrorism, border security, and planning for civil disasters (Al-Zayat, 2018).

France today is highly dependent on the oil of the Persian Gulf, as it imports from the Gulf states approximately 59% of its annual oil needs, and daily more than 50 oil tankers pass through the Strait of Hormuz to France, and this confirms the increasing security importance of the Arabian Gulf, as well as the exchange Trade, economic investments and the armament factor. France ranks second in terms of being the largest supplier of arms to the region after the United States, so it can be said: The huge French interests in the Arabian Gulf

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relationship between the peace process and the security and stability of the Gulf, but they differ in the premises behind this. France believes that the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict imposes security obligations on Arab countries, including the Gulf, which is not It would drain a large amount of its financial and economic resources, which could have been allocated to joint projects between the countries of the region, including Israel, if a just settlement was reached. While the GCC states stress that Gulf security is an integral part of the comprehensive Arab national security, and that Israel bears the stumbling block of negotiations due to its non-compliance with any agreements, as well as its failure to respond to the initiative presented by the Arab countries, and the last of which was the initiative put forward by the Saudi Crown Prince - at the time - Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, to resolve the conflict, and was discussed at the Arab summit that was held in Beirut in March 2002, as a joint Arab initiative that reflects the Arab vision for a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but Israel rejected this initiative, which confirmed to the whole world its lack of response with Efforts to bring peace to the region. Therefore, settling the conflict would preserve the security and stability of the entire Arab region, with the Gulf at the heart of it (see: Al-Ghad newspaper website 5/3/2019).

On the other hand, the regional influences in the current environment in the Gulf region represent a destabilizing factor for the Gulf security, which France fears from increasing its activity, as the historical disputes, which are still present, over water, borders, regions and oil wells, and there are, in particular, disputes about Sovereignty, between Iran and Iraq, between Iran and a number of countries in the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States, as well as between Iraq and Kuwait, despite the demarcation of the borders between them. Some countries of the region have also moved to the policy of fenced borders between them (Saudi Arabia and Iraq), which indicates a new pattern of challenges facing the region. Also emerging in the regional environment is the undeclared arms race between Iran and some countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, and Iraq has begun to enter the line of this race, in the last two years (Shakara, 2020).

Here, it must be noted that the French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Gulf has taken into consideration the importance of these regional influences in the security and stability of the region, as it calls for the need to respect the existing borders between its states, reduce dimension and proved the difficulty of distinguishing between the political and security dimensions. Since the beginning of the crisis, the countries of the French group resorted to The Union of West France, an organization for military cooperation that includes the countries of the group, within which a common position on the war was determined, where a collective decision was taken to agree to the use of force against Iraq if the economic sanctions did not succeed in achieving its purpose (Ali, 2013).

The French position in support of the United States in forming an international coalition to expel Iraq from Kuwait represented the beginning of thinking on the part of France and Washington in redefining the geographical scope of NATO, so that its role goes beyond the French borders to confront the threats facing its members outside its geographical scope, and thus the second Gulf War raised questions On how to build trust and achieve realistic unity aimed at achieving real security, the importance of adjusting the geographical scope of security has emerged, as it has become necessary to take into account the sources of threat coming from the south, and to confront them with a unified move, as the French future is no longer based on the variables of the Cold War that have passed to nothing but However, the southern dimension imposed itself as a fundamental variable during the war, in the emergence of a unified reaction to confront the dangers that might affect security and stability in the region, and thus threaten French interests (Al-Hiti, 2015).

In the third Gulf War (the war on Iraq) in March 2003, the French position was divided and two trends emerged. The first was led by Britain and with it Spain in addition to some French countries, and it fully agreed with the point of view of the United States, which believed that war and getting rid of Saddam Hussein's regime is the guarantee For the security and stability of the Gulf, which is why these countries participated with forces in the war. As for the second trend, which was led by France and Germany, its view was that the war without an international mandate, rather than leading to the absence of the Iraqi threat, would lead to new dangers that would have negative repercussions on the countries of the region, such as the growing influence of radical groups, and the growing threat of international terrorism, and this is what The last report issued by the International Institute for Strategic Studies for the year 2004 AD (Pro, 2016) warned of it.

On the side of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the French and Gulf sides agree that there is a

companies are among the top five international oil companies, namely: "Shell, BP Amoco, and Total Fina Elf" (Toukan, 2018).

Although Iran is subject to economic sanctions, statistics indicate that France is the largest foreign investor in the Iranian oil and gas sector, and the largest companies operating in it are French. The volume of trade exchanges between Iran and the EU countries in 2003 was nearly ten billion dollars. Of these, eight billion dollars is the value of Iranian oil imports (Afifi, 2013).

At the level of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, France is the first partner of these countries. Trade between the two sides accounted for 18% of the GCC's international trade, which makes France the largest trading partner. The volume of French hardware exports to the GCC countries amounted to more than (21.8) billion euros. The equipment of industrial facilities, such as power stations and petrochemical plants, in addition to aircraft and cars, occupies the first positions on the list of French exports to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC, 2018).

On the other hand, the banks of the Arab Gulf states enjoy a strong presence in the financial markets of the French Federation, especially the banks of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in addition to the establishment of many joint economic projects between the private sector institutions of the two parties, and these projects enjoy distinct investment advantages and incentives. The countries of the Arab Gulf region are also considered one of the most important regions for the global arms market, especially after 1990, and the French countries seek to benefit from this market, through official visits and diplomatic meetings in which it is agreed to sign contracts to purchase billions of dollars in arms with many French countries ( Mabrouk, 2008, p. 31).

With regard to France's investments in Iraq, the EU countries were among the most prominent partners of Iraq during the seventies and eighties, then the trade exchanges between the two parties decreased under the influence of the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq during the nineties. In fact, the decline in investments was exacerbated by the war on Iraq in 2003, as the value of French exports only fell to 143 million euros in 2014 to stabilize since that date to 173 million euros in 2018, that is, with a market share of less than 1 percent (see the official website of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10/3/2019). Perhaps this explains one of the reasons for the French opposition to the war on Iraq, as it saw that the American presence in the region might affect its armaments in the region, and deepen the bonds of economic, political and security cooperation (Hikmat, 2019 ).

In fact, the events in the entire region made the French Union, after the American occupation of Iraq, re-division its foreign and security policies through its semi-annual conferences, or within the framework of its affiliation with NATO, as the Istanbul summit created some of the foundations from which the Union proceeds in The development of its relations with the countries of the region by looking at the events, and the future variables that they carry, generated direct repercussions on French security and international security, especially since the region produces most of the world's consumption of oil (Al-Jasour, 2018).

**3- Securing commercial and investment interests:**

Securing commercial and investment interests is considered a top priority for the French interest in the Gulf region, and one of the main influences in French foreign policy for the security and stability of the region. The French realized that the Gulf region is a fertile field for French companies to invest, and therefore they sought to ensure that they continue to deal with the profitable Gulf markets and secure French investments in them. During the past twenty years, the Arabian Gulf region has become a major export market for France, as the oil boom in the mid-seventies and early eighties led to a sudden increase in demand for major infrastructure projects. To the major French countries, especially Britain and France, an important home for clients capable of paying in hard currency in the field of defense contracts; To purchase large quantities of advanced weapons and related training and support programs (Newgart, 2018).

Studies indicate that the countries of France do not view the Gulf region as a source of securing their energy needs, and an importer of French products only, but also consider it and consider it a fertile field for French companies to invest in all investment and commercial fields, especially in the field of energy, armament, utility services and infrastructure. It is also a good source of government income through the taxes imposed by the Union on imported oil and its derivatives, in addition to the invisible exports, represented in the remittances of the French workforce in the Gulf, Gulf tourism in the Union countries, and medical and education programs (Al-Nadawi, 2019).

Currently, there are more than (400) French companies operating in the Gulf permanently. In the field of energy, three French

other issues. Regardless of the conflicting speculations and divergent analyzes regarding the possibility of this confrontation between the two parties, especially after the release of the US intelligence report in December 2007, which confirmed that Iran halted its military nuclear program in 2003, regardless of that, the conflict over the Iranian nuclear program is In an important aspect, there is a conflict of wills between the United States of America as a global superpower, which suffers from an erosion in its ability to influence and decisively, whether at the military or political levels, which has negatively affected its prestige and global standing, and Iran as a rising regional power, with ambitions and aspirations in its surroundings. The regional balance of power, especially that Iraq's exit from the regional balance of power equation caused a major imbalance in this balance in its favour, although the option of armed confrontation between the two countries is unlikely at the present time, and perhaps during the foreseeable future, due to many considerations, most notably, the aggravation of America's predicament in Iraq, and the escalation of The internal criticism of the US administration because of this, but it is not completely excluded, especially in light of the state of extremism and the exchange of threatening words between the two sides (Ibrahim, 2018).

In this context, in the event that the Iranian nuclear file crisis is not resolved by peaceful means, the issue of dealing with Iran and its nuclear file will remain a major issue on the agenda of the French Union, and in any case, one of the worst future scenarios is for the Gulf to witness a new war between the United States The situation will become more complicated if Israel enters the line and becomes a direct party to the confrontation. It is conceivable in this case that the danger and threat in the Gulf region will increase, as Iran may respond by targeting American interests in some countries in the region, and may disrupt navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, which will greatly harm oil exports, and groups and elements loyal to it may fuel internal unrest and destabilize security in the region. Some countries of the region, and all of this and others, mean that some countries of the region may find themselves paying, even partially, the price of a war in which they have no elegance or camel. Hence, the French Union's foreign policy is keen on the necessity of settling the Iranian nuclear crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, and on adopting a policy that lures Iran with some economic and political gains to accept the cessation of uranium enrichment activities (Ibrahim, 2018).

interests and its relations with the Arab Gulf states in the oil, economic and commercial fields, and this is what actually happened later, when an American decision was issued in December 2003 It excludes French, German and Canadian companies from the reconstruction process, and stresses the need to limit competition in these contracts to companies from the United States, Iraq and coalition partners (see Al Jazeera Net website, 11/12/2019).

**4- Paying attention to the external sources of threat facing the security of the Gulf:**

Although France stands behind the United States in the Arab Gulf region in the role of assistant, and although it is the only guarantor of the security of the region and the interests of the ally at the present time, the French perspective on Gulf security realizes that the United States is at the forefront of the sources of external threats in this region. It is concerned about this guarantor. On the one hand, it considers him a factor of security and stability and a security officer in the region, and on the other hand, it considers him the source of danger. It feels fear and concern about the recklessness of this officer and his unreasonable rush towards Iran, which may raise problems, and may ignite the region without seeing. To the consequences, as it has done in the past with respect to Iraq.

The failure of US policy in the region is one of the important external influences that threaten the security of the Gulf, as US foreign policy in the Gulf region is characterized by confusion and ineffectiveness, which has been very clearly manifested in its dealings with the Iraqi issue since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 AD. It is based only on lies, but it lacked accurate planning for the post-Saddam Hussein era. In fact, Washington made mistakes in Iraq that led to it being on the brink of disintegration and division, and its policy towards Tehran lacks clarity, especially in light of the complexity and overlapping of files that concern the two parties. In addition to the Iranian nuclear file, there is the Iraqi issue, the Lebanese crisis, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The US policy in the Gulf and its dependencies has become a major source of tension and instability. This complicates the chances of consensus on a stable formula for Gulf security (Shakara, 2020).

Now, the nuclear program crisis is considered one of the main regional sources of threats to security in the Gulf, especially when it fails to resolve it by peaceful means, and an armed confrontation erupts between the United States of America and Iran because of this file, or because of

contribute to encouraging political and religious extremism, which in turn threatens its interests in the region, given that these extremist groups reject everything that is Western and resort to violence to express their point of view (Al-Ashaal, 2015).

Terrorism is also a major element in the security equation in the Gulf region, as it is present in the Iraqi arena. Indeed, post-Saddam Hussein Iraq has turned into an arena for al-Qaeda, and Saudi Arabia has suffered from terrorism for years, and its security services have been able to arrest many people accused of plotting to carry out terrorist acts in the country. The impact of terrorist organizations will become more dangerous if oil facilities and facilities are targeted in the countries of the region, which is what these organizations have tried to do more than once in Saudi Arabia. In light of this, addressing the threat of terrorism represents an important variable in any perception of security in the Arab Gulf, and it has become certain that the security solution alone is not sufficient to dry up the sources of extremism and terrorism, as this can only be achieved through an integrated strategy that has its economic and social aspects. Cultural, religious and security (Shakara, 2020).

In Iran, there are a lot of internal and domestic pressures due to sectarian, social, political, economic and other factors of conflict and internal strife, as the French fully understand the fact that the increase in internal disturbances that are organized and supported by external parties will in fact serve as a prelude that will come Then the American strikes.

The most prominent internal threats facing Iran are as follows (see the website of the Bahraini newspaper Al-Jamal 8/8/2018):

1. Social threats: originating from ethnic, sectarian and ethnic minorities.
2. Political threats: These are represented in the secular movements opposed to the project of the Islamic Republic, in addition to the differences between the supporters of the regime of the Iranian Islamic Revolution.
3. Economic threats: represented in the imbalance of economic development.
4. Security threats: These are represented by the client networks that operate inside Iran, for the benefit of the American intelligence, and the intelligence of allied countries of America.
5. Military threats: These armed movements have begun to emerge and carry out some assassinations and bombings in some Iranian regions.

With regard to Iraq, the French perspective realizes that the most prominent threats are

In this reality, it is also considered that the Israeli threat to the security of the Gulf is present in the French perception, as Israel has its steadfast ambitions in the Gulf region. It supports Hezbollah and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), and Iranian President Ahmadinejad's statements towards Israel provide justifications for incitement against Iran, and Israel has sought - and is seeking - to strengthen its presence in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, so that it has a foothold in the region Gulf. In addition to all that, Israel's possession of more than two hundred nuclear warheads makes it a source of threat to the Gulf region (Stansfield, 2008).

**5- Paying attention to the internal sources of threat facing the security of the Gulf:**

From a French point of view, the internal sources of threat are no less than the external (military) sources of threat. Despite the success of some Gulf Arab countries in achieving relative progress because of implementing some structural economic reforms, none of these countries has been able to carry out complete reforms, or to Stable foundations. The privatization process is still going very slowly, and there are still great obstacles to trade and investment exchange among the countries of the region. On the other hand, and on the social level, fluctuations in real oil prices, in addition to the expenses of wars and the failure to implement economic reforms capable of interacting with trends and demographic fluctuations, have led to a decrease in the annual per capita income, and the creation of young generations and societies whose population is growing rapidly. % of the population of the Arab Gulf states is under fourteen years old, which means that between 12-20% of the total population of the Gulf will enter the working age within the next five years, which raises the problem of unemployment faced by the Gulf states, where the unemployment rate is Between 25-40% is a result of reliance on foreign labor, which is the problem that the Gulf countries seek to solve (Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, 2017).

In fact, the apparent increase in the clash between heritage and modernity is one of the most prominent internal threats facing the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, as the ruling regimes seek to increase the welfare of their people, with urgent programs for economic and social development, which in turn represents a change in social behavior that is reflected in the different segments of the population, then it is formed in the eyes of the extremist movement as a threat and a challenge to their Islamic identity. France fears that these living conditions will

Afghanistan and others, and accordingly, If post-Saddam Hussein Iraq had become an arena for al-Qaeda, the situation would be worse if the Iraqi state disintegrated on ethnic, sectarian and logical grounds (Shakara, 2020).

Here, it should be noted that stability in Iraq does not reflect positively on French interests within the Arab Gulf only, but even in the French interior, as the improvement and stability of the situation in Iraq is considered an important factor, and will help to stop the flow of Kurdish immigrants to the countries of the French Union, while The deteriorating conditions will exacerbate this migration.

## II. Conclusion:

The French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region is largely consistent with its official position on the war waged on Iraq, and it is also not far from its position on the Iranian nuclear program crisis, as he stressed that political and diplomatic efforts can form pillars of the international situation instead of the option of force. In addition, threat.

Rarely has a French president known, since the launch of the "Fifth Republic", so many problems at home and abroad as those faced (and faced by) President Emmanuel Macron, who came to the presidency carrying reform projects that he wanted to turn France's situation upside down and prepare it to face the new decade. Despite his personal dynamism, his enjoyment of a comfortable majority in the House of Representatives, and the decline in the positions of the two traditional parties (the moderate right and the socialist left) that have ruled France for 60 years, Macron was unable to avoid social and economic crises, such as demonstrations and protest strikes against reform of the Labor Code and the Labor Code. Retirement, yellow jackets, and the transportation sector. He was described, as “the president of the rich” after the first economic-financial decision he took upon his arrival at the Elysee Palace was to abolish the wealth tax. Images of fires and hit-and-run operations between security men and protesters are still fresh in the French minds from the fall of 2018 until the spring of 2019. Then came the “Covid-19” pandemic, and the confusion that imprinted the health and political authorities’ handling of it, to further deteriorate the image of Macron and the government, if regarding the use of masks or vaccinations later. As for Macron’s foreign policy, he wanted to work wonders by revitalizing the European project with a new dynamism, accelerating integration among the countries of the

generally reflected in the deterioration of the security situation since the occupation in 2003, despite all efforts made to control lawlessness and impose order, and the failure of the political process in light of the continued absence of agreement between the main Iraqi forces and formations on a project related to The reality and future of the state and the political system in Iraq, as well as the continued dominance of armed militias, the spread of sectarian violence, the increase in forced displacement on sectarian grounds, and the deterioration of economic and social conditions, especially with the continued weakness of the authority’s organs and institutions and the spread of financial and administrative corruption. Iraq has become an open field for foreign interventions by countries and organizations across borders, and the communication of messages between some regional and international parties with great influence on the internal situation in Iraq, especially the United States of America, Iran and Al-Qaeda. The second is on many joints of the Iraqi state. As for Al-Qaeda, it was found in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq suffering from chaos and division, a suitable haven. In light of this, the continuation of the current situation in Iraq will make it a major focus of instability in the Arabian Gulf, given that Iraq is a pivotal country in the region, and has a great position in the global oil market, which makes its stability an essential element to achieve security in the Arabian Gulf (Shakara). , 2020).

If the instability in Iraq negatively affects Gulf security, the danger will be greater in the event of a civil war that may lead to the division of Iraq so that a Kurdish statelet appears in the north, a Shiite statelet in the south, and a Sunni statelet in the middle. What is worrying about the future of Iraq is that there are a lot of facts and factors that can help in that, especially since the current reality in Iraq - today - is closer to partition in practical terms, in the continuation of the cycle of violence and counter-violence that makes Iraq in a semi-civil war. As the disintegration of the Iraqi state will lead to more instability, the relationship between the aforementioned states will be mostly governed by the nature of conflict and confrontation, and each of them will seek to strengthen its position by linking to an external power so that in the last analysis it becomes just a tool for it. The disintegration will also make Iraq a focus for the export of extremism and terrorism outside its borders. Comparative historical experiences confirm that in the absence of a central state, the space expands for the growth and expansion of the role of extremism and terrorism groups, as is the case in the experiences of Somalia,

1. The French interest in the countries of the Arab Gulf region is linked to energy security and securing oil and gas supplies in the first place, and then in the second degree, trade and investment, as France sought to harmonize its political and economic positions in the light of this.
2. The Arab Gulf region is still one of the hottest spots in the world, and the interests of the European Union countries are still at risk, as the Iranian nuclear program file is still open, and the US military option against Iran is still valid.
3. The huge French interests in the Arabian Gulf push the countries of France to stand behind attempts to find optimal ways for the security and stability of the Gulf in a way that guarantees the continuity and security of its interests in the region.
4. The Arab Gulf region, with its stockpiles of energy, is still a factor of attraction and interest for the major powers and the active forces in the international system.
5. With regard to political issues of concern to the Gulf States, France does not have an independent and active role. On the contrary, its role is subordinate to the United States of America, and this is due to many factors, the most important of which is the weakness of its foreign policy.
6. The French foreign policy for the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region differs from the American vision; But do not collide with it; For many reasons, the most important of which is the US military weight in the region, the acceptance of the US vision by most Arab Gulf states, and the strengthening of this vision on the ground.
7. The differences and contradictions in the orientations of the member states of France led to the weakness of its foreign policy towards the Arab Gulf region.
8. The French military project is bound by institutional constraints. The military intervention is linked to the consensus of member states and the principle of coordination with NATO.
9. Britain's attachment to the American strategy led to the neutralization of most European efforts calling for addressing security issues in the Persian Gulf by peaceful means and diplomatic means.
10. In its vision of the security dimension in the Gulf region, France focused on the need to respect the existing borders between its countries, reduce armaments in the region, and deepen the bonds of economic, political and security cooperation.
11. The emergence of France as an active superpower in the international system depends largely on the Union's ability to compete in economic terms, as well as on its ability to formulate a common foreign and security policy.

Union, achieving “strategic independence” vis-à-vis the United States of America, building a “special” relationship with the American and Russian presidents, opening up to China, and restoring Moscow to the European embrace. He also wanted his country to play a leading role in regional conflicts, whether in Syria, Lebanon or Libya, or in the eastern Mediterranean files and the chronic conflicts between Ankara on the one hand and Athens and Nicosia on the other hand, which are the opposing parties over defining the continental shelf, the exclusive economic zone and gaseous resources and the underlying petroleum for each party. The file of the French military role in the countries of the African Sahel was at the top of Macron's concerns. But it must be noted his clear ambition to play the role of liaison between Washington and Tehran, by encouraging Donald Trump to remain within the 2015 nuclear agreement, in parallel with pushing Tehran to maintain compliance with its nuclear commitments... However, the result is known.

France's opposition to the war and occupation of Iraq, as well as his initiative to contain the Iranian nuclear program, was nothing but an expression of his vision for the security and stability of the Gulf region, a vision that does not depart from the framework of his security and foreign policy, which is based on strengthening the security of the Union and maintaining world peace. Strengthening international security within the framework of compatibility with the Charter of the United Nations, and strengthening international cooperation, democracy and the rule of law.

Through the war on and occupation of Iraq, the Gulf region emerged as one of the world's hottest, tense, and threatening spots for French interests, with a realistic and direct impact on its unifying and expansionist steps. Therefore, the French circles were concerned; Because the security and stability of this region has become very dependent on the military capabilities and American will; This will make matters worse and increase the level of tensions in the Gulf; As the American vision tends to use force and the military option, while the French foreign policy sees that the security of the Gulf is the responsibility of all the countries overlooking it, and calls for controlling conflicts, finding solutions to their political and economic problems, solving the region’s political and border problems by peaceful means, and relying on international law and nations United.

**The results:**

The study concluded the following results:

12. France sees Iran as an important country for France and with a strong influence, and the attempt to exclude it and limit its role in the region, as the United States seeks, is from the French perspective an invitation to provoke hostility against it.
13. France believes that adhering to any strict international sanctions against Iran is a better alternative to the consequences of any war that might be waged against Iran. Rather, it is this perspective, in addition to France's assessments of the Iranian challenge that prompts France to participate in the tightening of sanctions against Tehran.

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