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# Analyzing the Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy towards the Ukraine War

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The war between Russia and Ukraine is one of the most important developments of the new century, which has faced different reactions of international actors. In fact, The war between Russia and Ukraine is one of the historical milestones in the transition period of international relations, which can cause many changes in the international arena due to the presence of many actors involved in it. This war, which is referred as the beginning of the new order or the end of the transition period, although it took place in Europe, it has involved many regions and actors. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia, as one of the strategic players in the Middle East, has pursued a conservative approach despite its strategic partnership with the United States. This research seeks to answer the main question, what is the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia towards the Ukraine war and how and by the influence of which variables

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have it formed?

**Methodology:** The research methodology employed is qualitative. By using the descriptive-analytical method and in the framework of neoclassical realism, the data collected from internet and library sources have been analyzed.

**Discussion and Result:** One of the geo-strategic and geo-economic regions that directly and indirectly entered this crisis is the Persian Gulf region. The states of Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, due to their position and importance, especially in the field of energy, indirectly see themselves in the war campaign in Ukraine. Among these states, Saudi Arabia by considering of its place and role in the international system has acted and reacted more than other states of this council towards this crisis. This issue is mostly affected by the position of Saudi Arabia as one of the largest oil exporting states and its strategic partnership with the United States, which has also developed relations with Russia in recent years.

The available evidence shows that Saudi Arabia has displayed a balanced policy regarding the Ukraine war with regard to its internal and external variables. The foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, influenced by its strategic culture, is solely formulated and implemented by the authoritarian rules. Therefore, Saudi leaders' perception of their position and regional and international developments play a very important role in the country's foreign policy. The Ukraine war, from the point of view of the Saudi leaders, is affected by the expansion of NATO to the east, and practically the meeting point of the West and the East. Therefore, from the point of view of Saudi Arabia, which has always had a threatening perception of the expansion of Iran's influence in the region, especially after the Arab Spring and especially in Yemen since 2015, Russia's reaction in the form of an invasion of Ukraine to counter the expansion of NATO is completely understandable. Nevertheless, the importance of maintaining the special and strategic relations between Saudi Arabia and the West has caused this country to take a stand against Russia in its declaration policies and foreign policy positions. Another important point that should not be neglected is that the leaders of Saudi Arabia are dissatisfied with the policies of the United States in recent years, especially towards Iran and the pivot to Asia policy and decentralization from the Middle East, as well as realizing the declining position of the United States in the international system and the need to rebuild its foreign relations in the new world order.

**Conclusion:** The Ukraine war in 2022 is considered one of the most important proxy wars between West and Russia after the Cold War. The importance of this issue has caused different states to adopt different policies towards it according to their political, security and economic relations with each of the two sides of

the conflict. In the meantime, although many states, including Arab governments, have criticized Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but despite their political-security orientation towards the West, most of them, especially Saudi Arabia, have adopted a balanced foreign policy in this war between Russia and the West.

In sum, The findings of this research show that a set of variables such as the perception of the Saudi Arabia's elites about the nature of the Ukraine war along with the performance of the United States in recent years in response to the developments of the West Asian region, especially towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and the pursuit of the buck passing strategy and reduction of its obligations in this region, the requirements of Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision and structural changes in the international system caused Saudi to adopt a "balance" (not "neutral") policy toward Ukraine war in order to maintain relations with both sides of the conflict.

**Key words:** Ukraine war, Saudi Arabia, United States of America, Russia, foreign policy.