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The Arab East: Civil Aviation in the Light of Modern Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the features of the development of civil aviation in the Arab East with an emphasis on the beginning of the current century, as the most important period in the life of the Arab nations, on the one hand the time when they suffered huge losses as a result of the global financial crisis, the drama of the Arab Spring, the wars on terrorism, the pandemic and other circumstances, and on the other – the time when they managed to accumulate colossal oil revenues, which were invested in economic construction and especially in infrastructure, including its aviation part. The article is built around a description of the contrasts between Arabian oil exporters and the Arab outsiders, whose difference in growth potentials is exacerbated by the pitfalls and traps of the so-called catch-up development. This model a priori puts weak facilities at a disadvantage, since less wealthy countries experience the greatest difficulties in overcoming problems and challenges across the entire range of socio-economic development topics compared to those that form the basis of infrastructure construction, including the aviation services industry. The article emphasizes that the reduction of the gap in terms of the maturity of transport and logistics connectivity in the region, along with other advances and developments in the field of transport arrangement of the Middle East and North African economic space, could potentially in the future create conditions for a more representative presence of the Arab nations in the system of world economic ties, and at the shorter-range stages of growth it will more fully ensure the current and ongoing tasks and objectives of regional intersectoral and intra-economic connectivity in the interests of integration.

Keywords: airline; fleet; air routes; air services infrastructure; airport facilities; modernization; competition; market

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NEW BENCHMARKS

Infrastructure construction in the Arab region is now developing on many fronts, with a very uneven distribution of construction projects, which is now largely skewed towards the Persian Gulf region. Other sectors of the Arab economy are also experiencing some recovery, which has so far been limited to less intensive processes or very discrete, depending on how regularly credit lines are opened or how large the projects are that have been planned.

In general, the understanding in the Arab region that infrastructure paves the way for the exchange of information, capital, technology, etc. has already become quite firmly established in the Arab countries, which

have seen in it not only a means of further mobilising and improving the efficiency of their productive capacities, but also an opportunity to access world experience and knowledge. Following this course has become almost the most urgent requirement for Arab countries at the current stage of their socio-economic development. Therefore, they are now actively seeking various ways to integrate into the global economic space and to consolidate their presence in it, since their continued exclusion from the modern world economy risks isolation from knowledge-intensive means of production and advances in the latest technologies and knowledge, which jeopardises their successful socio-economic development [1].

Currently, the Arab region has begun to pay special attention to the development of infrastructure, as even the relatively advanced construction complex, which for a long time allowed for extensive capital and civil construction (which contributed to increased business activity in other segments of the economic base), began to lag behind, as it was unable to bring the region closer to the level of world leaders.

The new strategies of economic growth adopted by some Arab countries, especially the Gulf monarchies, have contributed to significant shifts in this process of shifting certain emphases of development. It would be more accurate to say that the Arab oil-exporting countries have adjusted their previous economic development plans by prioritising the creation of powerful infrastructure facilities. This approach has begun to reverse the previous course aimed at broad diversification of national economies and the stimulation of non-oil industries. The leading Arab oil exporters have made significant progress in this area, but soon realised that the narrowness of national and regional markets, as well as the scarcity of resources other than oil and gas, prevented them from making satisfactory progress in this area. They therefore turned their attention to other goals, notably the diversification of the service industry, in the hope of realising a significant return. The implementation of this idea, in the form of the construction of superinfrastructures for various purposes, should, in their view, make the Arabian monarchies more resilient in a globalised world economy. In the same way, movement in this direction should offset fluctuations in the liquid hydrocarbons market and ensure that the Arabian monarchies keep pace with the industrialised world in terms of the pace of development.

Few countries in the Arab region have been able to compete with the leaders of the world economy in this field, although some of

them have been able to follow global trends to some extent. They have done so by relying on external developments and solutions, partly by copying the lifestyles of economically advanced countries, borrowing their technology, and using the huge funds they had accumulated over the previous decades from oil and gas exports to boost the process.

In the current context, such choices have been available to a limited number of States in the Arab East, but the implementation of a number of projects in this small circle points other States in the region in a very promising direction, albeit with inevitable caveats and adjustments to the scale and pace at which they can achieve their goals.

FACTORS OF GROWTH

The largest medium-term project over the past 10–15 years has been the modernisation of the transport sector through a dramatic expansion of the modern civilian air fleet and the facilities required to support it. This is already transforming the Arabian Peninsula into a highly developed centre for world-class air services, passenger services and a concentration of modern aviation equipment, as the Gulf monarchies have set themselves the task of raising the importance of their civilian air fleet, increasing its role in international air transport by providing competitive services and thus “capitalising” on their geographical location.

Commercial aviation is expanding in this area of the Arab region for a number of reasons, the most important of which is the “oil” nature of their economies and the successive growth of revenues from the export of oil and gas abroad, because even at the stage of development of oil and gas fields, the latter circumstance allowed these countries to resort to the then inexpensive transport of people and cargo (initially in small consignments) mainly within the oil-exporting countries [2].



Another impetus for the relatively widespread use of air services in the Arabian Peninsula was the need to quickly transport growing numbers of foreign workers, which led to an increase in air traffic on routes already outside the peninsula countries. In a later phase, mass tourism, which demanded a new, higher level of service and appropriate aviation equipment, was a factor that fuelled the development of the aviation industry. In addition, due to the marked improvement in living standards in the Gulf States, the demand for quality components of the aviation business increased sharply, which began to be subject to higher and more sophisticated requirements.

The conviction of the leaders of the Arabian monarchies that air transport, as a technically sophisticated and advanced part of the infrastructure complex and the entire national economy, could become a means of modernising many sectors of the local economy was also a crucial factor. This is evidenced by the practice of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) or Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, which have consistently created conditions for entering the global air transport market. However, when assessing this phenomenon, it should be borne in mind that modern civil aviation as an industry is a relatively recent phenomenon, the aircraft fleet is formed at the expense of imports, and flight crews and technical personnel are staffed mainly by foreign personnel. The Arab side's own contribution is expressed in maximum financial support and project promotion, and it is consistently moving towards making its civil aircraft fleet a basic element of regional traffic and the Gulf region an important centre for intercontinental air services.

BUILDING UP THE INDUSTRY

It should be immediately noted that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries largely

succeeded in doing so, as in 2018 (the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic that severely disrupted global air traffic) they accounted for 97.6% of cargo and 83% of passenger traffic for all Arab countries,¹ with the former growing 9.4 times and the latter 6.7 times between 2000 and 2018. In the following two years, due to COVID-19, total Arab passenger traffic, although down 67.7% compared to 2018, nevertheless accounted for 8.6% of global air traffic. Meanwhile, Qatar Airways, which decided to continue full operations during the pandemic, even became the world's largest airline in terms of passengers carried.²

In addition to Qatar Airways, which has 182 aircraft operating to 164 destinations, several other Arabian airlines now claim leading roles in international air travel.

Two of them belong to the UAE, which has so far created a very strong foundation for strengthening its position, and the process has been so intense that it has even given rise to acute rivalry between the airlines of the two emirates. However, the serious competition between economic entities in the UAE aviation business, which has been going on for many years, is still creating new impulses for the development of the aviation industry in this country. We are talking about such airlines as Emirates (owned by the Emirate of Dubai, owns 278 passenger aircraft flying to 143 destinations) and Etihad Airways (owned by the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, has 105 aircraft operating regular flights to 86 cities of the world).³

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is also striving to become an aviation powerhouse of sorts in the region [3]. Its Saudia Airlines is one of the oldest air carriers in the Gulf region. At the same time, it is one of the largest airlines in the Middle East, which is

¹ Calculated according to: World Development Indicators Databank 2020.

² URL: <https://www.icao.int/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed on 09.01.2023).

³ URL: <https://aeroportpro.ru/airlines> (accessed on 07.01.2023).

constantly growing and modernising. But due to the rise of other airlines owned by GCC countries, the increase in their aircraft fleets and the explosive construction of airports, Saudia began to lose ground to the UAE and Qatar. It now operates 90 routes typical of other regional airlines, i.e., to the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe and the US, and the number of aircraft at its disposal has reached 145. The flights are mainly operated on fixed routes, with domestic charter flights and international traffic of this category mainly during Ramadan and Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca [4]. The number of passengers carried, which grew very rapidly in the previous decade, has now stabilised at around 10–12 million per year.⁴

It is clear that the intensive expansion of the aircraft fleet in the GCC countries and the dramatic increase in passenger traffic have required them to make serious efforts to expand the capacity of existing airports, build new passenger and cargo terminals, etc.

For example, the new airport that opened in Doha (Qatar) in 2014 with the capacity of 29 million passengers per year required a major renovation and increased capacity to 50 million passengers per year for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.⁵

Kuwait's plans to increase its own share in international air travel led to the announcement in November 2021 of its intention to implement eight new projects worth \$ 14bn to renovate the country's main airport, including the construction of a new terminal, runway, aircraft refuelling facility and so on.⁶

All GCC airlines are constantly developing new routes, with a particular focus on the

possibility of increasing flight frequencies, and are therefore concentrating mainly on the implementation of major projects. In fact, their management, making ample use of the strong support of the authorities, has set itself highly ambitious goals of turning airfield complexes into terminals of global significance, which is coupled with their idea of surpassing their US, European and Chinese competitors in a number of air service industry development indicators. With the new wide-body airliners, GCC companies hope to have a real chance, if not to dominate the world's major air routes, at least to significantly displace competitors on some of them, including by gradually transforming a number of their cities into centres of international passenger and cargo services.

In any case, to date, cities such as Doha (Qatar), Al Kuwait, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi (UAE), Muscat (Oman), Manama (Bahrain), Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam (Saudi Arabia) have already become owners of such airline complexes, resulting in, for example, the fact that Dubai (3rd after Atlanta and Beijing), Doha (61st) and Riyadh (81st) were among the top 100 airports in the world in 2019.⁷ In addition to the Arab airlines mentioned above, other major airlines include FlyDubai (61 aircraft, flying to 99 destinations), Air Algerie (56 aircraft, 72 destinations), Egyptian Air (54 aircraft, 50 destinations), Royalair Maroc (54 aircraft, 96 destinations) and Oman Air (51 aircraft, 50 destinations).⁸

AVIATION OUTSIDERS

As for some other Arab countries, where the aviation industry had been doing very well until the early 2000s, many of them were caught up in a series of violent internal and external conflicts called the Arab Spring, some of which turned into protracted armed

⁴ URL: <https://aeroportpro.ru/airlines> (accessed on 07.01.2023).

⁵ URL: <https://nppmeridian.ru/bilety-i-registraciya/doha-aeroport.html> (accessed on 02.02.2023).

⁶ URL: <https://ru.rayhaber.com/2021/11/Кувейтский-аэропорт-будет-отремонтирован-компанией-Limak-Construction/> (accessed on 02.02.2023).

⁷ URL: https://www.airlines-inform.ru/rankings/world_airports_2019.html / (accessed on 02.02.2023).

⁸ URL: <https://aeroportpro.ru/airlines> (accessed on 02.02.2023).



confrontations, compounded by foreign military intervention and opposition to aggression by the terrorist organisation Islamic State (ISIS). As a result of these and other negative developments in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Lebanon, and Tunisia, the aviation industry was left in a shattered or semi-destroyed state. Although some of them have started to gradually recover from the crisis, due to limited or outright lack of financial and material resources, the practical absence of the necessary qualified personnel, etc., even their former positions in regional and international aviation markets have not yet been restored. For example, at the end of 2022, Syrian airlines had only nine aircraft operating to 22 destinations, Libyan airlines had nine aircraft (18 destinations), Sudanese airlines had four aircraft (21 destinations), Yemeni airlines had four aircraft (12 destinations) and Somali airlines had ceased operations altogether.⁹

It can be assumed, of course, that the plans to build up aviation infrastructure in these countries (especially in the context of a gradual recovery from the current crisis situations) could lead to accelerated development of their national aircraft fleets and modernisation of airport facilities. However, this process is hampered by such factors as ongoing internal political instability, sanctions imposed by the US and EU, lack of ability to make independent decisions on strategic issues related to the development of national aviation industries, and others.

On the whole, it can be said that in creating and developing an extensive air services infrastructure and building large facilities that could revolutionise the economic landscape of the region, almost all Arab countries, although very ambitious, are not yet in a position to compete with the leaders in this field — Abu

Dhabi, Dubai, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain, which are currently among the world's largest buyers of wide-body aircraft and customers for airport construction and modernisation of airport facilities.

THE COMPETITIVE FIELD

It should be noted that at present there are a number of things that promise certain problems for all Arab airlines, of which there are currently more than 40. For example, it is clear that Western countries are hardly going to leave their long-won positions, which help them to maintain large air fleets [5]. In addition, many Arab airlines are little known to a wide range of consumers (especially on the American continent and in China) and therefore, attracting potential passengers, have to overcome the very persistent predisposition of the Western and Chinese population to their own companies. For this purpose, they, in particular, conduct an extensive advertising campaign in the Western media and the Internet, while the leading Arabian airlines also invest heavily in some of the most popular European football clubs, whose players' jerseys (as well as in the stadiums of some European countries) now bear the names of, for example, Qatar Airways or Emirates rather than, say, Air France or British Airways.

Arab air carriers are also constrained by the international Open Skies agreements (The Treaty on Open Skies) on the principles of commercial air transport and liberalisation of the air services market, which force them to strictly follow the competition rules established by Western countries, limiting the room for manoeuvre to capture certain niches in the global air transport market.

The leading Arab carriers are striving, if not to catch up, at least to seriously approach the main Western and Chinese competitors before the volume of offers exceeds the needs of the air services market. In the short term,

⁹ URL: <https://aeropro.ru/airlines> (accessed on 05.02.2023).

this is unlikely to happen, as the recovery phase of the global aviation industry after the COVID-2019 pandemic and the transition to super airliners in transcontinental transport has only just begun. Therefore, the Arabian calculation is clearly built taking into account the need to fit into this process, and the most modern airliners purchased in 2019–2022, as well as an increased level of comfort of service even on budget flights are offered to passengers.

It seems that Arab air carriers can do it, because, spending billions of dollars on prestigious projects, they are able to occupy a niche, the size of which may eventually be determined not so much by the real state of affairs on the market as by political manoeuvres around this area.

It is obvious that, given the overall success of their aviation business, Arabian airlines are all together actively working (each — to the best of their abilities) to turn the subcontinent into one of the world centres of air services, and this process is not without internal competition (which is quite natural), which does not destroy the business, but moves it forward [6]. But it should be borne in mind that the expansion of their capabilities may be perceived as a challenge by major Western air carriers, who will hardly react favourably to the emergence of powerful high-class Arab airlines in the market of aviation services, capable of acting as their direct competitors. It is clear that the relations between companies in a global context are clearly regulated by international agreements, as mentioned above. But, if we take into account the current trends that are reversing the polarity in global economic and political practices, encouraging the mutation of the unacceptable yesterday into the permissible today, such a “dodge” will “blur” any efforts and will contribute to turning the subcontinent into a zone of competition between aviation giants. The Arabian, much less the rest of the Arab

aviation industry, can hardly by itself pose a threat to the activities of the European or American aviation industries. Rather, it is logical to assume that it is the West, if it finds it useful for itself, that will start applying sanctions against any “renegades” in order to get what it is looking for. And Arabian companies, as potential competitors, may be the first to attract its attention.

The Arabs are aware of the possibility of such a development and therefore pursue a cautious policy, realising that, for example, an excessive increase in the share of airlines, primarily Arabian, in the global transport market could threaten the interests of Western companies. But at the same time, the Gulf monarchies themselves, which have clearly been expanding their positions in this market in recent years, are keen not to saturate it, as such a development could lead to undesirable consequences for them in the form of a drop in load efficiency per aircraft, reduced profitability of flights and even the forced decommissioning of a certain number of aeroplanes.

So far, there has been a kind of extensive competition between the Arab participants in the aviation business, mainly related to the build-up of capital assets by expanding the aircraft fleet through the construction and modernisation of airports, upgrading flight control systems, etc. Launching this process to create an advanced platform that demonstrates the highest level of technological sophistication in the aviation industry can be seen at this stage more as a manifestation of ambition, as the equipment saturation of these facilities is already high and further investment of resources in them may be excessive in nature.

But the movement in this direction can also be regarded as preparation for the transition to real competition for passengers and aircraft capacity, which is likely to be a more serious stage in the inter-Arab market competition, although it seems that at the moment the



roles between the main Arab “players” are to a greater or lesser extent distributed. So far, this has been facilitated by the situation on long-haul flights, in which the outstripping demand for air services on spot markets (such as Tokyo) allows the four major Arab airlines to operate simultaneously without much damage to their economic performance or to their Western competitors.

In general, at the moment, the balance of interests on various positions is maintained and no resonant conflicts are seen in the near future, but if the balance of interests is disturbed, they may become a reality, and then open rivalry can hardly be avoided.

THE PLANS OF THE ARABIAN MONARCHIES

Competitiveness, and perhaps even latent competition, is accompanied by activity on different fronts and is expressed in the desire to be ahead of the curve. For example, Emirates has invested heavily in Western development of environmentally friendly engines for the A-380 airliner, considering them preferable because the attention in the West to “green” issues may create additional preferences for the air carrier in organising flights with these engines to those countries that pay more attention to environmental protection measures.

An environmentally friendly approach seems very promising for GCC airlines, especially in light of the successful experience of Qatar Airways, which, back in 2009, flew the world’s first commercial biofuel flight, demonstrating its suitability as an alternative fuel for aircraft with reduced carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere.¹⁰

It is also important to note that by purchasing significant quantities of aircraft, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf simultaneously seek to receive dividends from their investments in such deals in the form of opportunities to establish

their own aircraft maintenance bases and to carry out preventive and overhaul repairs of aircraft [7]. This is part of their plans to diversify their production activities and create alternative industries for the period when the demand for oil and gas resources will decline.

In this context, the GCC countries are endeavouring to create a kind of “network structure” in the aviation business. Their airlines are cost-consciously endeavouring to participate in the development of the aviation industry and its infrastructure at different levels and in different directions. In transcontinental aviation, they have already laid the foundation in the form of modern aircraft and the ground base for their use. Relying on their accumulated material and financial assets, they seek to short-circuit and appropriate any processes in their area of responsibility and try to extend their influence towards the rest of the Arab countries, leaving fewer and fewer chances for foreign business to penetrate the Arab region by restricting the activities of external “players”.

In particular, the GCC countries are claiming their own vast niche in the long-haul passenger transport market, which already enjoys good positions on the world’s major routes. In addition, while pursuing the idea of creating a national long-haul air fleet, Arabian carriers are not overlooking charter and discount services in other Arab countries, saturating their markets with their services wherever possible.

When planning to expand their airline business, the GCC countries are paying great attention to low-cost companies, which traditionally have a significant share of the airline market. After all, discounters operate in the Arab region on routes with flight times of less than four hours, and their stay at arrival points is minimised due to the efficiency of local services, simplified passenger flow patterns in the airport area, and the precise actions of maintenance staff.

Another characteristic feature of the GCC aviation business is the presence of a number of

¹⁰ URL: www.aex.ru/inform/1728/ (accessed on 12.02.2023).

private companies with fleets of luxury image aircraft that cater to government delegations and corporate clients.

The Arabian monarchies' plans to retain their leading positions in the air transport system in the region will remain relevant, as the nature of development of the most advanced forms of this business is determined here. Its support at a high governmental level serves as an impetus for the growth of the economies of these countries, and also serves as an example for other states in the region, where the problem of economic modernisation is of paramount importance. It is obvious that the aviation sector in the GCC countries has already developed into an industrial complex, which is now gradually becoming one of the leading elements of modern economic growth in these countries, where local development strategies are aimed at moving away from a unilateral focus on energy exports and maximising the diversification of sources of accumulation. These objectives and plans are even more relevant for the "underfunded" countries of the Arab region, which are searching for additional resources to lift their economies out of stagnation.

Foreign capital, represented by companies and firms from the industrialised centres of the Western world, is also actively involved in the modernisation of the Arab air transport system. They not only take part in the modernisation of national fleets, but also lay the foundations of ground infrastructure that corresponds to them in terms of quantity and quality, being particularly active in the GCC countries, considering them as a solvent source that guarantees payment for the supply of equipment and materials and the receipt of orders.

For Western manufacturers, involvement in large-scale production processes means, first and foremost, actively expanding the capital-intensive segment of the currently largest regional market for aircraft and other related products, as well as securing sustainable long-term employment and bulk orders at their

industrial plants for the long term. Equally important is the additional opportunities to realise the latest engineering ideas in the field of engine building and aircraft equipment while relying on Arab capital.

For Arab countries, co-operation with foreign capital means access to the most advanced segment of modern production, the possibility of transferring some of the advanced technologies to the national soil and creating new economic sectors with a large innovative component. In addition, they form a very significant launching pad for successful operations in the global airspace and have guarantees of growth for future commercial activities in the lucrative intercontinental connectivity system. The Arab region, especially its most financially secure part, has thus sought to carve out a niche for itself in the international division of labour. This result can be seen as an example of skilful planning and implementation of large-scale projects and deep strategic calculation, as well as a testimony to the success of Arab entrepreneurship.

It is clear that the importance of the measures taken by the Arabian monarchies in their aeronautical endeavours should not be exaggerated, since their effectiveness can only be proven by subsequent events and the practical results of the transactions that have taken place. Nevertheless, it is reasonably certain that the beginning of the high-tech phase of the Arab economy is closely associated with civil aviation, which is now a clear reflection of the economic achievements of the Arab regimes and has made it possible to bring to the forefront sectors that were previously in the deep shadow of the oil business in those countries.

However, civil aviation should not be perceived as a universal means of achieving high growth rates and solving transport and logistics problems. Civil aviation itself is an important component of the national economy, which is also visually appealing, attracting attention by the expediency of engineering solutions, as well



as fulfilling a propaganda function, giving the local population an inner sense of belonging to the state, which has the ability to maintain powerful aviation, luxurious airports, provide the highest level of service, etc. But it should also be realised that aviation is, first and foremost, a complex mechanism for the production of important services, and as such it can only work effectively in close conjunction with other sectors of infrastructure and the economy as a whole that are equal in technical level.

AVIATION COMPONENT AS A FACTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The very attractive example of the Arabian monarchies is encouraging other countries in the Arab region to look for new ways to modernise their reproductive mechanism, although many of them are still not ready to make breakthroughs in world markets, especially in a high-tech industry such as aviation.

However, the modernisation of economic structures in the Arab region does not necessarily follow the trend of increasing air services, although a number of these States suffer from “aviation insufficiency”, primarily due to a lack of financial resources and a weak ability to mobilise savings from domestic sources, which significantly limits measures related to the development of their civil aviation. The relatively small size of the territory of some Arab States is important, as a result of which their demand for domestic air transport of passengers and commercial cargo is relatively low. However, the situation may be different for external air services (as evidenced, for example, by the experience of Qatar or Bahrain), but again it depends on limited material capacity, and the demand for international air services is currently met mainly through a combination of different financing options.

It is no coincidence that in Arab countries, capital-intensive industries, including aviation, and other productive infrastructure continue to be owned by the state, which acts as a guarantor

of their maintenance and future development. This situation has two dimensions. The first has to do with the speculative nature of a significant part of Arab national private capital, which is very often oriented towards a quick turnover of invested funds and therefore generally avoids participation in socio-economic development projects with long payback periods. The second “emerges” in the form of government bureaucracy, corruption, and inertia, which create serious obstacles to attempts at technical re-equipment of the sectors on which the progressive socio-economic development depends.

Both of these factors have a negative impact on the economic infrastructure in those Arab countries where the need for such facilities is particularly great. At the same time, transport infrastructure has become one of the main issues for the full existence of several states, including Syria, Libya, Yemen, Lebanon and Sudan, whose economies have lost most of their facilities as a result of uprisings, wars and devastation. In fact, they are deprived of even the prospects for the restoration of their infrastructural potential and are particularly dissonant against the background of their antipodes in the form of the monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula, which are intensively building a whole range of transport and logistics enterprises, which have become an effective means of finding their own niche in the global movement of goods, capital, and services.

The affected countries are also different from those classified as medium-developed countries, but they cannot mobilise sufficient resources to follow the prescriptions of the leaders of the transport revolution in the region. They have relatively recently come to realise the need for urgent measures to close the gap with global practice in this area of economic activity. Of course, in their case too, it is difficult to find a single link capable of synthesising the merits of several divisions of the industry, by investing in which other structures could be gradually reanimated. However, all the objects are

individualised and specialised in areas which only in the form of the totality of all enterprises and systems can ensure the viability of the productive forces and society.

In many cases, Arab outsiders have alternatives to air transport in the form of water, road, or rail. Nevertheless, they favour the re-establishment of aviation as an organic and necessary complement to reproductive mechanisms, helping to significantly speed up the delivery of passengers, cargo, and other items to their destination.

Today, virtually all but a few of the most disadvantaged member countries of the League of Arab States are focusing on projects to revitalise or improve infrastructure, including civil aviation, in accordance with their objectives and circumstances. With its presence, the whole project of infrastructural development of national economies becomes universal and can contribute to the solution of many fundamental problems, including the optimisation of the domestic market, a more rational distribution of productive forces, and more efficient international trade and economic relations. Arab national and regional infrastructure, coordinated and modelled on the GCC template and aligned with domestic needs and modern norms, has the potential to significantly boost inter-Arab economic integration, which will have crucial implications for better positioning all Arab countries in the global economic nexus.

The general trend today is that transport and logistics infrastructure, in all its diversity, is likely to be the vehicle that will set the Arab region on a more sustainable development path. It is no coincidence that virtually all the capable States of the region are taking a comprehensive approach to the subject and are endeavouring to expand such sectors as rail transport, maritime transport, air transport, power lines, pipelines for various purposes and irrigation infrastructure in parallel. In other words, the infrastructural development of the Arab

economic space is clearly becoming the most talked about issue on the agenda of the Arab East, reflecting the desire to bring the region's logistical base to a new level and the intention to orient the countries towards an accelerated growth mode, which can be achieved by promoting its transport components.

It is this approach that gives the Arab reproduction system a noticeable mobility and manoeuvrability, as it creates prerequisites for facilitating the region's interaction with the outside world [8] and within the region itself, as well as for increasing employment through the creation of many jobs in large-scale and multifunctional infrastructure and other projects, expansion of centres for training qualified personnel in new specialties, etc. [9].

A broad approach to aviation and other components of infrastructure support of development processes is also important from the point of view that the Arab region over the past two or three decades has begun to lag economically behind a number of other developing countries in the East, which has posed another challenge to local residents.

Removing it will be a new challenge for most Arab countries, as it will require the mobilisation of additional resources to overcome the difficulties. This situation is reproduced on an ongoing basis, and at each stage it is important to recognise which approach is more necessary and useful for a particular Arab country — gross or breakthrough in certain areas, as in the case of civil aviation [10]. The option of developing the airline business along the lines of the Arabian monarchies is generally quite harmonious and does not disturb the growth proportions. In other cases, it will require a precise understanding of what the state is striving for — development without growth or growth without development, and what approaches to this topic will be preferable in terms of raising the overall level of production and modernising the mechanisms of management of the national economy of each particular Arab country.

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