

# The Era of Major Transformations: A Turning Point Between Dependence and Leadership

(Translated)

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Amidst the profound geopolitical shifts dominating the world today, where established norms crumble and alliances are forged under the weight of brute force, the Muslim World finds itself at a pivotal moment: either to anticipate these transformations and chart its own course, or to await marginal roles dictated by others. America's insistence on holding the "Exercise African Lion" military exercises in Tunisia for the ninth consecutive year, and the deployment of its troops and equipment, is no longer mere routine military cooperation. It has become a de facto entanglement of the country in America's network of security objectives in Africa. This Tunisian scenario is not isolated. Instead, it reflects a broader Arab reality, where the foundations of alliances with Washington have become points of vulnerability rather than bulwarks of protection. Does the Muslim World still possess a strategic answer to protect it from complete subservience, or will the price of waiting prove too high for any role that can be salvaged later?

## **Exercise African Lion: When Subservience Becomes a Political Project**

In Tunisia, participating in part of the Exercise African Lion military exercises annually has become a political tradition passed down through successive governments since Beji Caid Essebsi signed the agreement in 2015 designating Tunisia as a strategic external ally of NATO. However, what is presented as a strategic partnership reveals, upon closer examination, to be merely an entanglement of the country in an American plan that serves only its own interests in Africa. In America's lexicon, "strategic partner" does not mean friend or equal, but simply an actor performing a specific function within the American hegemonic order. What is happening in the Gulf States confirms the danger of this alignment: the American military bases scattered there have been repeatedly attacked, and those countries found no support, neither internal nor external. Instead, the Arab world viewed them as hostile bases complicit in aggression. Tunisia is important to Washington today as a strategic location in the heart of the Mediterranean, between Europe and Africa, but the price of this may be exorbitant. Islam forbids seeking military assistance from non-Muslims, as evidenced by the Messenger of Allah (saw) who said, « لا تَسْتَضِيئُوا بِنَارِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ » **“Do not seek light from the fire (meaning war) of the disbelievers.”** Military alliances allow armies to fight together against a common enemy and exchange information and military equipment. America today, suffering from megalomania, political turmoil, and a deep domestic division between Democrats and Republicans, can no longer be trusted even by its allies. This is the same America that has made its primary war against Islam, as evidenced by the situations in Gaza, Iran, and Lebanon.

## **Tunisia and the Risk of Polarization**

Amid the storm shaking NATO, Tunisia stands out as a direct front line in these major transformations. The Libyan and Sahel issues are all areas dominated by the United States. Indicators between 2024 and 2026 reveal a clear strategic duality on the part of the Tunisian authorities: ostensibly, Tunisia maintains an independent discourse rejecting foreign bases and foreign dictates, and affirms its commitment to neutrality. However, in practice, it is deepening its security cooperation with the US, allowing an increasing presence of American military advisors and experts, while remaining organically linked to Europe.

This delicate equation — Europe for the economy, America for security, and a political discourse for balance — could suddenly collapse if the transatlantic rift intensifies. In a scenario of open conflict, Tunisia could find itself under double pressure: Europe threatening economic sanctions or freezing aid, and the US demanding a larger military role that could expose Tunisia to violent regional reactions, especially from Algeria, which considers any American presence near its borders a red line. The crucial question then becomes: Will Tunisia succeed in remaining a balancing player, or will it be forced into alignment? Certainly, the equation of “Europe for bread, America for weapons, and Algeria for neighboring countries” is no longer sufficient. Tunisia needs a completely new strategy if it wants to avoid becoming a hostage in a conflict over which it holds no control.

### **From Subservience to Civilizational Leadership**

The biggest question remains: Where does the Islamic Ummah stand amidst these transformations, we who possess all the elements of strength and dignity? How can we escape this state of subservience and attain the position that the Lord of the Worlds, Allah (swt), has obligated for us? The undeniable truth is that the conflict raging today between the major powers is no longer a conflict of ideologies, but instead a pure struggle for power, influence, and hegemony. There is no longer on the global stage a comprehensive, ideological project that offers a holistic vision for solving humanity's problems except for the project of Islam. The Ummah today possesses a civilizational alternative that it is obligated to implement. Allah (swt) said, ﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾ **“No, by your Lord, they will not truly believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge between them concerning that over which they dispute”** [TMQ Surah An-Nisaa':65]. It is also obligated to convey this alternative to all of humanity. Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ ۗ عَلَى النَّاسِ﴾ **“And thus We have made you a just Ummah that you will be witnesses over mankind”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah:143]. This alternative is based on a rationally evidenced belief, through which we carry the Risaalah message of guidance and mercy to the world and establish evidence for all of humanity. Furthermore, the Ummah's sources of strength are immense: wealth, resources, lands, vital corridors, geographic location, youth, and the history of the Khilafah (Caliphate), which ruled the world for nearly thirteen centuries and brought Europe out of the Dark Ages. All these assets remain mere words on paper without the political will to unite them.

In conclusion, in an era of unprecedentedly rapid international transformations, it is no longer acceptable for the Muslim World to wait its turn on the sidelines. The Exercise African Lion maneuvers in Tunisia, the security dependence on America, and the fragile balance between Europe and America are all early warnings that subservience is no longer just costly, but has become deadly to sovereignty and the future.

Wars have demonstrated the Muslims' capacity for resistance; in Iran, and before it in Iraq and Afghanistan. All these factors confirm that the time for change has arrived, and it will not be in the game of balancing between quarrelsome partners, nor in speeches of regret, but instead in practical steps: taking pride in identity and gathering the scattered forces of the Ummah into one entity, and refusing to submit to any major power, no matter what the price of boycott or isolation may be temporarily, because whoever cannot bear the costs of leadership will pay the heavy price of subservience.