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## THE OLD/NEW MIDDLE EAST

*by Bahgat Korany*

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## ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

INTRODUCTION


Times of change and crisis (note the association) encourage reflection, affirmed R. Aron just a few months before his death in 1984. But ever since then, change - at both the global and regional levels - has been abrupt, accelerating and cumulative. The resulting crisis affect even our conceptual tools, our mental boundaries.


For more than a generation the Cold War and East-West bipolarity have defined our world mental map and honed our conceptual lens. The great power conflict specified the way we could arrange intellectual categories and establish their linkages to make sense of our international environment. The Cold War was not the only organizing framework of events, but with the balance of terror and the multiple power resources (I.E.M.P.: ideological, economic, military and political, Mann 1987, 1992) the North mastered, it was certainly one of the most potent mental categories. In November 1989 with the destruction of the Berlin Wall, and two years later with the disappearance of the USSR, this basic category was no more. Our global 'conceptual geography' now required reordering. Is also our regional conceptual geography - now faced with the traumatic consequences of the 2$^{nd}$ Gulf War and

the accelerated Arab-Israeli peace process - equally in need of basic retooling?

To attempt to achieve conceptual relevance while capturing the essentials of a constantly evolving regional situation, the paper focuses on regional dynamics through the use of two sets of dialectics:

1. At the conceptual level, two apparently competing conceptual lenses are applied here in a sequential form: the traditional high politics associated with the power paradigm, and 'low politics' (or the new high politics) associated with the interdependence model. While at first used in sequence, they are later brought together in a dialectical form that show analysts' divisions (and preferences) about the region's future evolution (the debate about Arab versus Middle East regional arrangement).

2. At the empirical level, the emphasis is on two vectors governing regional dynamics:
   a) the pattern of Arab/non-Arab political distinction
   b) the pattern of inter-Arab interactions.
   Both these patterns seem to be cyclical rather than linear.

The conceptual and empirical dialectics are combined at the end of the paper through the discussion of the evolving regional institution: Arab or Middle East?

Thus Part I synthesizes and evaluates the balance of power model, Part II applies the dichotomy 'Arab/non-Arab' as a zero-sum vision of regional politics. The debates in the 1950s over the Baghdad Pact and alliance politics generally resulted in the political assertion of a distinct Arab regional entity. Thus Part III focuses balance of power analysis on this entity. Arab regional dynamics until the 2$^{nd}$ Gulf War are periodized into three more or less identifiable patterns (with sub-patterns) : unilateral hegemony (1954-1967), power-diffusion 1967-1971 and 1977-1988. The third pattern - seeming Arab complementarity - characterizes the in-between period of the 1970s. Part IV concentrates on the period following the Gulf War, dubbed here os that of Arab balance of weakness.

Part V throws its net to include what is going on at present and how it could influence the future. Tentatively, it raises the issue about whether we are witnessing yet another pattern of wider regional (i.e. Middle Eastern) politics. The projected 'new' Middle East, overlapping and also competing with the old, still follows a pattern of balancing not only of power but also of benefits. This is the language and premises of the 'interdependence' model, whose dominant reasoning emphasizes mutual gains rather than zero/sum power conflict. Differently from the 1950s, the present new Middle East debate takes place in a context marked both by a post-Gulf War Arab trauma and also by (over)

optimism concerning an institutionalized and accelerating Arab-Israeli peace process. Part VI synthesizes each party's (opposed) interpretation of the new interdependence. Through data on five indicators of Arab integration, this part also evaluates the bases and the fragility of a distinct Arab (international) regime. Part VII raises a point for discussion: the possibility of an Arab international regime as a basis of - and not instead of - an emerging Middle East one. The six appendices at the end of the paper include the data tables and diagrams at the basis of the paper's reasoning.

## I- THE PRECEDENCE OF HIGH POLITICS;PRIMACY OF POWER BALANCING.

At the basis of the 'Realist' conceptual lens are at least four propositions: a) states are the main - if not the only - international actors, b) their objectives turn around the struggle for, and maximization of, power, c) they are thus engaged - wittingly or unwittingly - in the (in) security dilemma; and d) hence the prevalence of the process of balancing and counterbalancing of power and threats to maintain state survival and a minimum of inter-state stability.

In 1836 Richard Cobden - in talking about Russia - condemned the balance of power concept as a fallacy, a mistake, an incomprehensible nothing:

"(the theory is) mere chimera - a creation of the politician's brain - a phantasme, without definite form or tangible existence - a mere conjunction of syllabus, forming words which convey sound without meaning" (Cobden 1903,Moul 1990).

About 117 years later, a prominent specialist of International Relations - Ernest Haas (1953 ) - found that the concept has a meaning, or rather more than one, in fact two many. He counted at least eight distinct meanings ranging from any distribution of power, to parity in distribution to dominance. He attributed the ambiguity of the concept to the fact that people use the same words but intend different meanings.

The confusion is in a sense logical since there is no standard unit of power comparable to pounds weights or pounds sterling. The heated debate about whether there is American decline or not (Kennedy 1987, Nye 1990) reflects this ambiguity in power measurements.

In addition to these problems in the measurement of power of states, we have other basic issues in the theory that are shrouded in ambiguity: e.g. the role of the balancer :  is it an eternal bystander like Britain in the 19th century, or rather an active third party in conflict-resolution like the U.S. during the Camp David Accords as well as between Jordan, Israel, Syria...? Another ambiguity is whether the balance of terror that characterized the

Cold War period is also a balance of power, and whether wealth means necessarily strength (e.g. the oil-producing Gulf countries).

Though power is not fungible or flexible in its use as money is, its analysis and use make intervene geography and technology, a multitude of actors and factors including the crucial intangibles (e.g. a state's will, its organization, and even specific circumstances).

To put a temporary end to this conceptual discussion and concentrate on regional dynamics themselves, we can agree that power among states is not uniquely military and that it is always relative, never absolute. In fact, such an understanding of power could help in saving the balance of power concept and make it useful in discussing present structure and processes in the Middle East.

II- THE EVOLVING REGIONAL BALANCE OF POWER AND THE ARAB/NON ARAB DICHTOMY.

Traditionally, the basic structure of regional relations in the last 50 years and even earlier has been dominated and shaped by the distinction Arab/non-Arab. The revolt of the "Arab Provinces" against Ottoman rule on the eve of the First World War and the evolution of the Arab national movement generally, was based on this Arab/non-Arab distinction. It was, however, the 1948-

establishment of the state of Israel that made this distinction politically acute and indeed bloody. Typically, Heikal (1978) put this conditioning frame of reference in clear-cut terms, and it is worth quoting his detailing of this continuous struggle for predominance;

"The advocates of the two systems have spared no effort, using all the means at their disposal, both overt and covert, to advance their cause.

1. *The Middle Eastern System.* First advocated by Britain, France, the United States and Turkey, the real architect of the system was, in fact, the United States, backed by Great Britain. This system saw the Middle East in geographical terms, as a vulnerable land mass lying close to the Soviet Union. Wholly preoccupied with the Soviet threat, the architects of the system held that the countries of the area must organize themselves against this threat by joining an alliance with others who were concerned for the region's security. This alliance would have to coordinate its defense with other countries exposed to the "Red Peril" in Europe and Asia. A Middle Eastern alliance would be the final link in a chain of alliances (including NATO and SEATO) encircling the southern frontiers of the Soviet Union. In the logic of this system, the Arab countries were expected to join in an alliance with Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, even Israel – that is, the Middle Eastern countries directly concerned with the region – as well as with the United States, Britain and France, the international parties concerned with the region's security as well as being the major participants in NATO and SEATO.

2. *The Arab System.* Based on a different outlook toward the region, this system saw the Middle East not as a hinterland lying between Europe and Asia – a simple geographical expansion – but as one nation having common interests and security priorities distinct from those of the West. According to this logic, the countries of the area, which enjoyed unity of language, religion, history

and culture should - indeed could - create
their own system to counter any threat from
whatever source. And the main threat, as the
advocates of this system saw it, came from
Israel, not only because it cut across the
African-Asian land bridge but also because,
with its seizure of the Auja area
demilitarized under the Rhodes armistice
agreement, it was clear that it harbored
expansionist aims. At the same time, while
admittedly the Soviet Union did represent a
threat, it was felt that there was no
immediate or direct danger from that source.
Many people in the area, including Nasser,
held that the lack of common borders between
the Arab nation and the Soviet Union would
deter the Soviets from undertaking any
military act against it. And in any case,
Nasser felt that the answer to communist
infiltration did not lie in joining Western-
sponsored alliances with their imperialist
overtones, but rather in promoting internal
economic and social development and in
affirming the spirit of nationalism and
independence.

If the advocates of the Arab system required
any proof of the validity of their theory,
this was amply provided by the 1956 Suez War,
an operation launched by two discredited
colonial powers, Britain and France, in
retaliation for Egypt's nationalization of the
Suez Canal. Although it is hard to see how
this particular settling of accounts could
have concerned it in any way, Israel
nonetheless joined the ill-fated attack, in a
spirit compared by Moshe Dayan in his book on
the 1956 campaign to that of a cyclist
peddling uphill who grabs the back of a
passing truck that happens to be going in the
same direction".

Much more than the Suez Crisis, it was the 1954-55 debate over

the Baghdad Pact that shaped the structure of regional relations ,

not only with the big powers but also among Arab countries as well

as with their neighbors (Korany 1976: 198-300).

The Baghdad Pact project started formally with the Turco-Pakistani Treaty on April 4, 1953 followed by Anglo-Saxon attempts to incorporate Iraq and Iran into the new "anti-communist" organisation destined to stretch from the Bosphorus to the Indus. Britain was enthusiastic in its welcome of this arrangement, because it offered Britain a new treaty instead of the existing Anglo-Iraqi one which was to expire by 1957. Thus on February 24, 1955, Turkey and Iraq signed their mutual assistance pact, Britain joined on April 5, 1955, followed by Pakistan and Iran in September and November respectively.

Nasser reacted violently to Iraq's 'defection', and this issue was to dominate policies in the Arab subsystem for almost the whole year. Nasser's arguments were diffused through the widely-heard Cairo Radio, which gave them added weight. He also contacted Arab nationalists throughout the subsystem, explaining that Iraq had violated the solidarity of the Arab League in committing itself to outside obligations and he threatened to withdraw from the League - a move which would have brought its demise. Nasser's line of attack was simple. He emphasised Pan-Arabism against "imperialism and Zionism" and said that the Baghdad Pact was not aimed at the "real" enemy of the Arabs -Israel - but was instead an alliance with those who had created and still supported this "imperialist base" against the Arabs, i.e. the Western states.

Not only was the pact unrelated to the Arabs' defence against their "real" enemies, but also it was an "imperialist formula" permitting "imperialist forces" to come back into the Arab world through the backdoor. The appeal of this argument to ex-colonial people was even strengthened when "material evidence" was cited to "prove" its truth. For according to the agreement governing British accession to the Turko-Iraqi pact

> "the airfields in Iraq occupied by Great Britain in accordance with the 1932 treaty were to pass under Iraqi sovereignty; but the existing facilities of overflying, landing and servicing British aircraft in Iraq were to be maintained and British military personnel would remain in Iraq, under British command, for this purpose, and would enjoy appropriate amenities. Furthermore, the installations on the airfields retained for British use were to remain British property." (Barraclough & Wall 1960: 28).

Consequently, as a British analyst summarised the new agreement,

> "The effects of the new agreement were therefore juridical rather than practical; in other words, although sovereignty and legal ownership passed to Iraq, effective use by Great Britain remained largely undisturbed." (Ibid).

Thus, Iraq's step - as far as the relationship between the Arabs and the Western powers and their "regional stooges" was concerned - meant (Nasser insisted) a return to the old treaty relationships which brought the newly-independent state back into the "imperialist sphere of influence". Instead, an alternative Arab strategy could achieve the Arab nationalist aim of

independence by materialising Arab solidarity on the basis of the 1950-Arab League Collective Security Pact. In practice, as Salah Salem expressed it:

1. Efforts have to be focused on arranging and organising the "Arab house", consolidating Arab military and economic capabilities and coordinating Arab efforts and plans. At this stage, no commitments should be concluded with foreign states. This is why Arab states should not participate in the Turko-Pakistani alliance or any other defence arrangements outside the 'Arab homeland'.

2. This "unification of an Arab policy" (as Turkish newspapers expressed it) would put an end to the Arabs' dispersion of their capabilities and their "wasting of energy" through disunity. Moreover, a 'unified Arab stand' would make of the Arab states a 'weighty' interlocutor, and give them an elevated status in the international system.

And Nasser emphasised why such an "Arab strategy" would appeal to the "masses" *psychologically*: "The Arabs have been colonised for a long time and they are always afraid of falling back again under Western Domination." This is why "defence of the area... has to spring from the area itself", otherwise the Arabs would not feel that "they are defending their own families, their own children,

their own property ... (but) British or American interest". (Nasser 1959).

Consequently, if the Western powers were really interested in having independent states which would provide Middle East defence against "communist danger", they should supply the Arabs with weapons without pressure and without requiring political commitments. Especially they should not insist on retaining the power of command in this field; this the Arabs themselves were capable of providing without any alignment.

The Baghdad Pact controversy is significant in at least two respects:

(a) According to Nasser, he was not only talking for Egypt, but also in the name of a unified Arab strategy. What is characteristic of his speeches at that time is his identification with nationalist Arab aspirations and the transcendence of the interests of individual states and governments.

(b) The controversy between the supporters of pro-Western alignment and those of non-alignment was depicted as synonymous with the battle of 'imperialism, zionism and their stooges' against the forces of independence and Arab nationalism. If anyone questioned this equation, the Israeli attack of February 28th on the Egyptian-controlled territory of Gaza (killing 38 people and

wounding 31), was to 'prove' that Egypt was paying the price for its opposition to "imperialist" alliances. This 'confirmed' that Nasser - an 'Arab champion' - was the "target of the Arabs' enemies" and this strengthened his position in the Arab world enormously.

## III- INTER-ARAB BALANCE OF POWER

Within the Arab world itself, and though many Arabs might be adverse to such a (militaristic) connotation, the dominant pattern has been varying forms of balance of power. These variations ranged from hegemonic behavior by one actor (e.g Egypt 1954-1967) to increasing power diffusion among regional members (e.g. 1967-71, 1988-1990) with some attempts at effective partnership (1971-1977, 1991-1992). These variations can be commented on to make them clearer.

### A- Unilateral Hegemonic Behavior 1954-1967

The above-mentioned controversy over the Baghdad Pact was crowned with Egypt's success in establishing its pre-eminence. This pre-eminence rested on important bases of power - both tangible and intangible. Egypt's population at the time constituted no less than a third of the whole Arab population. (In fact, at the height of their petro-power in 1975, the six countries that coalesced in the Gulf Cooperation Council contained not more

than one quarter of the population of Egypt). Historically, Al-Azhar Islamic University radiated enlightenment all over the Arab and Islamic world; Egypt's many famous authors, poets and journalists set the literary and intellectual pace; and Egypt's teachers flocked to socialise future Arab elites. Egyptian Universities were the aim of promising Arab intellectuals, and the story goes that many Arab high school students felt they had to work hard and earn high grades to get admitted to Cairo University, or otherwise they would be forced to accept admission to Oxford or Cambridge!

Egypt's multi-faceted pre-eminence in the region was reflected in the Arab League. It was in Alexandria that the meeting was convened to establish the League and to approve its protocol. The minutes of this meeting are full of speeches affirming Egypt's accepted pre-eminence. And it was in Cairo that the headquarters of the new regional organisation was located. Until the late fifties, Egypt's share in the League's budgets was between forty and fifty percent, and in 1974, of the two hundred and fifty three permanent and non-permanent staff members of the League, one hundred and sixty-two were Egyptians. Until the League was forced to movre from Cairo to Tunis after Egypt's separate peace with Israel, the three Secretary-Generals had all been Egyptians.

Various quantitative indicators that span a long period in the evolution of the Arab inter-state society confirm Egypt's

centrality. For instance , the pattern of official visits for the period 1946-1975 confirm Egypt's pre-eminence among Arab and other Third World countries.(for details Korany 1988: pp.164-178). Similarly , at the civil society level, in the mid-fifties when Jordan's leaders showed an inclination to join the Pact with their Hachemite cousin Iraq, huge demonstrations (mainly at the instigation of Egypt and its Arab supporters ) erupted within Jordan as well as in other Arab countries to prevent Jordan's participation. Consequently, Arab membership in the Pact was limited to Nuri's Iraq, and when this regime was bloodily overthrown in 1958, one of the first measures of Iraq's Free Officers was to withdraw from this military alliance (which had then to change its official name to CENTO - i.e. Central Treaty Organization).

Egypt's prestige was increased and its leadership confirmed when it managed in 1956 to nationalize the Suez Canal Company, and politically defeat the "Tripartite Aggression of Britain, France and Israel". This rising political hegemony was reinforced when Cairo was explicitly solicited to lead the Union with Syria in the United Arab Republic (Korany 1991, Riad 1986: 193-222). Not only were two main states combining their capabilities but also two Pan-Arab organizations - the Ba'ath and Nasserism - were joining forces to establish an imposing influential pole projecting the future blueprint of Arab society.

Even though the U.A.R's existence came to an end after only three years and a half, Nasserism continued strong. It manifested its tangible power by sending troops across the Red Sea to assure the survival of a revolutionary regime in one of the most inhospitable parts for revolutionary change in the Arab World: Yemen. Egyptian troops were thus amassed in the backyard of the leader of Arab conservatism and traditionalism: Saudi Arabia. More than once these troops crossed this country's frontiers in hot pursuit of Yemen's royalist forces. Increasingly, Arab interactions were polarized and - with the main Western powers actively involved on the Saudi side - the Arab world echoed the global bipolar structure. As at the global level, bipolarity did not mean complete parity between the camps. For Algeria's 1962 independence, the 1963-coups in Syria and Iraq, followed by tripartite unity talks in the spring and summer of that year, showed that Nasserism still represented the regional dominant pole, both at the state and civil society levels. The cracks within the Saudi regime - from the defection of some Saudi pilots, some "liberal princes" as well as the departure of King Saud himself for asylum in Egypt - confirmed this country's apparent hegemony. However, differently from the theory of hegemonic stability (Gilpin 1987: 86-92), this hegemony did not last long.

For Egyptian hegemony was becoming overstretched and even exhausted. The humiliating defeat in the third war with Israel -

the so-called Six-Day War - confirmed this exhaustion (Korany 1988: 164-178).

What Nasser said at that time is still valid. "After this great catastrophe", he stated in November 1967, "we were like a man who went out in the street to be hit by a tram or a car and lay both motionless and senseless on the ground". Six months later (25 April 1968) he described himself as "a man walking in a desert surrounded by moving sands not knowing whether, if he moved, he would be swallowed up by the sands or would find the right path". Indeed, on 23 November 1967, Nasser had admitted that his country's direct losses - at the hands of a state with one-tenth Egypt's population - were 11,500 killed, 5,500 captured, eighty percent of Egypt's armor and 286 of its 340 combat aircraft destroyed. The chaotic collision between two divisions of the Egyptian army in their disorganized race to withdraw to the mountain passes showed that the army as a military corps had ceased to exist. To add insult to injury, Israel's casualties were comparable proportionally to yearly road accidents in any industrialized country or even in Israel itself.

Worse still, there was no diplomatic victory (as in the 1956 Suez war, for instance) to compensate for this military disaster. On the contrary, to this Arab military defeat was added political humiliation; as observers noted :

> "The pre-war picture of Israel as a
> beleaguered fortress... had earned the

Israelis wide international sympathy... By
the discrepancies between their threats and
their performance, the Arabs had invited the
world's derision. This had been skillfully
encouraged by Israeli psychological warfare
and propaganda which stressed the cowardice
rather than the lack of skills of the Arabs
and took every opportunity of showing the Arab
and especially the Egyptian armies in a
humiliating light - for example, by
photographing Egyptian prisoners stripped to
their underwear or in other unheroic
situations"(Stephens1971:497,504).

Arab speeches of the time are crammed with the themes of the
"ordeal", the "cruelty of our situation", "our great pains", "the
greatest test and crisis of our modern history". These expressions
are in fact reminiscent of the first wave of writings by
Constantine Zureik and others after the first so-called
"catastrophe", that of 1948. Similarly, the so-called "setback" in
1967 led to a second wave of lamentation literature (Korany 1988
:167-178).

In an atmosphere of tightening political control by the
existing regimes, it seemed that mass protest and lamentation could
be expressed only through novels and other literary forms, and thus
publications of this genre increased noticeably. For instance,
between 1961 and 1966 the number of novels published in the Arab
world was ninety-two, but increased between 1968 and 1973 to one-
hundred and sixty-three; i.e. a yearly average of fifteen novels
for the first period compared to twenty-seven in the second".

As if to confirm - even in distress - Egypt's hegemony , the
Arab inter-state society's fortunes - both in their rise and demise
- correlated with Egypt's. Did not Nasser, with his drawn and
haggard features, his half-choking and uncharacteristically
hesitant voice, symbolize the state of nervous disarray across the
post-1967 Arab World?


B-    Increasing Diffusion of Power 1967-1971, 1977-1988


The demise of the Egyptian pole was confirmed and even
legitimized during the August 1967 Kharthoum Arab Summit. Nasser's
Egypt and the radical Arab order was to be subservient to what we
can call "political petrolism". Two immediate indications
demonstrate the retreat of the radical order:   the hurried
withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and Egypt's financial
dependency on subsidies from the oil-rich states. Neither the
emergence of a ferverous Qaddaffi (1969) in his fragile state, nor
the stateless Palestinial revolution could provide an alternative
base for the radical order. The 'power vacuum' - to use the
language of balance of power adherents - was to be filled by
'petro-powers' - at least by default (Korany 1988: 164-178).


Some quantitative indicators, such as those below, confirm the
primacy of the oil states in inter-Arab politics (Dessouki1982:326-
347)

1. By 1979, 55 percent of the capital of inter-Arab economic joint ventures was contributed by oil-rich Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Libya; and usually the country that contributes the most capital is the host country for the project's headquarters.

2. Thus, the oil states were becoming the locale of an increasing number of new Arab organizations. In 1970, Cairo was host to twenty-nine, or 65 percent, of these organizations, Iraq hosted none and Saudi Arabia only one. Eight years later, Bahgdad had become the locale for twelve organizations, thus occupying the second place after Egypt, and Saudi Arabia was in third place with eight organizations.

3. Fewer Arab League meetings were held in Egypt and more in the oil states. The proportion of meetings held in Cairo decreased from 70.5 percent in 1977 to 42.2 percent in 1978.

4. Egypt's share in the Arab League budget dropped. That share was above 40 percent until the late 1950s but declined until in 1978 - the year the Arab League moved to Tunis - it was only 13.7 percent, equivalent to the contribution of Kuwait.

Yet, the rise of oil states created a golden opportunity for a balanced, less monocentric Arab inter-state society to develop , since the shortages of the new rich powers were offset by the "excesses" of the old, declining powers in that the former created a demand for the surplus labor of the latter (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 - MOBILITY OF LABOUR AND CAPITAL

Moreover, the huge oil revenues were partially redistributed through remittances to the poor labor-exporting countries, with the result of more equal widespread benefits to the region as a whole (see table 1). What better basis for an integrated system could be asked for?

C- SEEMING ARAB COMPLEMENTARITY IN THE 1970s

With the exception of Algeria and Iraq, the so-called "rich" countries were lacking in everything from food to arms. There were huge deficiencies in infrastructure and in established bureaucracy as well as manpower. Once development projects were envisaged, both skilled and unskilled labor was acutely needed, and importing it was beneficial to the Arab society as a whole, for the problem of most Arab countries has been the reverse: a labor surplus.

TABLE 1 - REMITTANCES IN SELECT LABOR EXPORTING AND

IMPORTING COUNTRIES (in millions of U.S. dollars)

Thus, the complementarity between the factors of production, labor and capital, provided an excellent prod for integration and thus a higher level of resource exploitation. Moreover, the acceleration of the laborers' movement across state frontiers showed the fragility of legal state barriers, and made the different strata of Arab society very aware of their interdependence.

Why did this integrative process stop half-way despite the factors in its favor? This question touches on one of the most nagging issues of recent social analysis: the transformation of political systems. Although some studies have addressed themselves successfully to the transformation of nation-state systems, analysis of the transformation of inter-state or international systems is still in an embryonic stage. Consequently, in a period

of dizzying global change the discussion of the ups and downs in
the Arab inter-state society can shed light on the conceptual
issues of system transformation while also providing information on
the important regional dynamics that concern us here.

Two preliminary explanations can be given in answer to the
question: 1) the inability of oil states to act as an alternative
system base; and 2) the absence of a pan-social project to give
normative direction and hold the system together. The result of
this fragility of a petro-based hub would not be another hegemony
but power diffusion.

For the oil states were neither powers nor even states in the
conventional sense of these concepts. If they were powers at all,
it was purely in the financial sense. They lacked almost all other
attributes of power: sizable population, solid administrative
structures, well-trained effective military manpower, and pan-Arab
political organizations. Even though Saudi per capita income was
sixteen times that of Egypt, Saudi Arabia is basically poor in most
indices of development. In 1975 Saudi Petroleum Minister Ahmed
Zaki Yamani described his country in the following way:

> "... We are still a poor country ... we lack
> industry, agriculture ... manpower ... we have
> to import engineers, technicians, specialized
> workers that we don't know where to house
> because we lack hotels. To build hotels we
> need contractors, but the contractors
> themselves need hotels to live in. It is a
> vicious circle that exhausts us. Among other
> things we lack cement. We lack harbors

because we lack cement to build them. Last,
but by no means least, we lack water. We
haven't a single river, a single lake. We
depend on rainfall alone. For one hundred
years, it has rained less and less frequently,
for the last twenty-five years hardly at all".
(as in Ayubi 1982).

Even in purely financial terms, Saudi per capita income was
comparable to that of Finland, which is not a particularly rich
country, and has lent its name to the political term
"Finlandization", indicating almost total marginality and
dependence. Until the gigantic projects at Jubail and Yanbu'
manage to give an industrial base to the Saudi kingdom, it remains
dependent on the outside world. In fact, in all of the oil states,
even basic infrastructure is still in the making, and that thanks
to foreign labor. For instance, in 1975 the percentage of foreign
labor was 81 percent in Qatar and 85 percent in the United Arab
Emirates.

Another reason for the fragility of the "petro-based hub" is
that historical patterns of social organization and the process of
state-formation render those countries family-states rather than
nation-states. The economist Hazem El-Beblawi is to the point when
he writes:

"Though oil wealth has transformed (the Gulf
States) into advanced welfare states, they
still remain patriarchal in a distinctly
familial way. The Sa'uds, the Sabahs, the Al-
Thanis, the Qasimis, the Al-Nahayans, the Al-
Maktums, the Al-Khalifas, are not only the
ruling families: they embody the legitimacy

of the existing regimes". (El Beblawi 1982:
210-211).

Pan-Arabism retreated in front of the *raison d'etat*, which was
then indiscriminately mixed with *raison de famille*. Two results
follow from this situation: a) the leadership is characterized by
a limited time horizon and an extremely personalized perception of
national and international events; and b) inter-Arab relations are
contaminated with the long history of interfamily feuds. In a
word, family frictions impose extreme limitations on political
coordination. Unfortunately, the rising technocratic elite has not
been able to change this situation drastically. Consequently, Arab
finance has not been up till now a complement to pan-Arabism. The
oil states are unable or unwilling to devise an Arab strategy. If
they seem in control, it is not so much that their achievements
have won out, but that the outcome has been determined by the
failure and exhaustion of the so-called "radicals". Thus, the oil
states' primacy in the Arab inter-state society represented victory
by default.

This is not a strong base for an international regime. Even
if Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam, has become armed with a
barrel of oil and was increasingly becoming the site of secular as
well as religious pilgrimage, it has not been able to keep the
inter-state society together. As has been said, "the hegemony of
mere money unsupported by manpower, cultural attainments, military

strength or industrial development may be something of a mirage".
(Kerr & Yassin, 1982: 11).

The increasing labor-capital complementarity was not
correlated - as the functionalist theory of integration insists -
with equivalent political integration. All that could be achieved
from 1971 to 1974 was a Cairo-Riyadh axis, based on a trade-off of
Egyptian capabilities and Saudi money. And a predominant
characteristic of a relationship based on money is constant
haggling which could break the relationship at any time. A general
mood of "affairism" rivaled nationalist commitment, penetrated the
highest echelons of society, and even trickled down to the masses
in former revolutionary centers like Egypt and Syria. Heikal
(1978: 261-62) summarized the change in his typically vivid style:

> "For a generation the men who directed the
> course of events in the Arab world had been
> ideologists or officers from the armed forces
> - or sometimes officers who turned into
> ideologists or ideologists who tried to behave
> as if they were officers ... (for example,
> Sadat, Assad, Boumedienne, Qadhaffi, Michael
> Aflaq, Saddam Hussein) ... Many of these were
> still there, but they were now being joined by
> the first installment of a new breed of power
> brokers, the middlemen, the arms dealers, the
> wealthy merchants who flitted between East and
> West, between royal palaces and the offices of
> royal companies ... (for example, Kamal Adham,
> Mahdi Tajjir, Adnan Khashoggi) ... and by
> royalty itself, for who in the Arab world now
> exercised more power that Prince Fahd or
> Prince Sultan of Saudi Arabia? Could not
> individuals such as these, it was argued,

achieve more for the Arab world than mass
movements and radical revolutions?
It is not surprising if in this changed
atmosphere menand women in Egypt and Syria
felt that the time had come for them, too, to
see some improvement in their material
circumstances. They had known hardhip; now
they looked for their reward - for more to eat
and for better houses to live in. Of course,
money would have to be found to pay for this,
but who would dare to suggest that the Arabs
were short of money? It was being said that
the Arabs possessed the power to bring the
rest of the world to starvation; surely
they must have the power to feed themselves?
So eyes turned to the oil-producing countries.
Oil fields began to loom far bigger in the
public mind than battlefields; *tharwa*
(riches), it was said, had begun to take over
from *thawra*(revolution)".

The end-result was not then another cycle of hegemony but

rather power diffusion. Within this pattern of power diffusion,

there were attempts at <u>partnership</u>. Though issue-specific and

consequently short-lived, they still went beyond axis-building. A

well-known example of such partnership was the Egyptian-Syrian-

Saudi coordination for the launching of the 4th round against

Israel: the 1973-October War.

This October War was based on minute planning, systematic

information gathering and analysis , and detailed discussion and

bargaining among the different participants, notably between Syria

and Egypt. These two countries' various negotiations and

discussions resulted in January 31, 1973 in the setting up of a

unified command for their armed forces (Korany 1986: 87-112).

Continuous and intense coordination at both the top political and

military leadership levels aimed at fixing the specific day - and hour - of the attack on the cease-fire lines with Israel: Saturday/Yom Kippur October 6, 1973, 2 p.m., Middle Eastern time.

In addition to this politico-military coordination, the October War decision was coupled with another decision cluster of wider impact on the global economy: the Arab decision to impose an oil embargo. This oil embargo decision included, in fact, several decisions:

(a)   The announcement on October 17, 1973 by the oil ministers of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries of a monthly 5% cut in the flow of oil to the USA and other countries supporting Israel against the Arabs;

(b)   Saudi Arabia's decision (announced on October 18) to cut oil production by 10% at the time the USA especially was pressing oil-producing countries to increase their production to meet the demand of an increasingly oil-thirsty world; and

(c)   Saudi Arabia's decision (announced on October 20) to stop all oil exports to the USA following President Nixon's demand to Congress for $2.2 billion in emergency security assistance to Israel (announced October 19) and the continuation of a massive U.S. airlift (beginning October 13) to compensate Israel's war losses.

This partnership across state frontiers and ideological divide was already reaching its limit by 1975. In September of that year,

Egypt initiated formally its going-it-alone diplomacy with Israel by signing its second disengagement agreement with a political clause amounting to a state of non-belligerency. The rift between Egypt and Syria was patched up temporarily in a 1976-tripartite summit in Riyad. Saudi mediation facilitated an Egyptian-Syrian reconciliation where Syria toned down its critique of the Egyptian move and Egypt accepted the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon. But Egypt's go-it-alone diplomacy with Israel was confirmed and consolidated on the occasion of Sadat's 1977-"sacred mission" to Jerusalem. Egypt's membership in the Arab League was suspended and the League itself moved its headquarters from Cairo to Tunis.

The attempt at partnership was revived again on the occasion of the second Gulf War. The partners were almost the same, except that Saudi Arabian participation was enlarged to include other oil-producing Gulf countries, and Syria brought along Lebanon. In 1992, the number of visits exchanged within this group was 131 visits-- compared to 38 visits for the 9-country pro-Iraqi partnership ( Arab Strategic Yearbook 1992: 192-196). But this partnership around the March-1991 Damascus Declaration was even more short-lived than the first one. For even though the Damascus Declaration is not formally abrogated, it was never carried out and seems now in an eternal coma.

In addition to partnership, this pattern of power diffusion has also witnessed an institutionalized coalition-building. The

most notable examples are the various sub-regional organizations. These were three on the eve of the 2ᵐᵈ Gulf War:   the Arab Cooperaton Council (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Yemen), the UMA (Union du Maghreb Arabe:   Algeria, Lybia, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia).   The fifteen Arab countries that were divided among these different sub-organizations represented two thirds of all the Arab population, sheltered the highest number of universities and research centers, controlled 90% of traditional energy resources and 75% of water and agricultural resources.

These organizations were on the surface  active and dynamic. The Arab Cooperation Council, for instance, held no less than 27 formal meetings (at the summit or ministrial level) during 1989 (Arab Strategic Yearbook 1989:   259-269).   Yet this Council precisely broke down on the occasion of its first policy challenge: Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.   The Council members were never consulted or even informed of this decision, and Egypt joined the international coalition against Iraq.  Equally divided was the UMA, with Morocco sending troops to Saudi Arabia.  Only the GCC kept its ranks unified, but failed to prevent its founding member, Kuwait, from being attacked and occupied.

Regional power diffusion often invites claims for hegemony. The most notable is of course Iraq's, of which the 1990-Kuwait invasion was part and parcel.


IV- THE 1990's AVORTED HEGEMONY AND THE ENSUING ARAB BALANCE OF WEAKNESS


A traumatizing context of avorted hegemony - like the one following Iraq's eviction from Kuwait - is not simply a return to the previous pattern of power diffusion. To start with, Saddam's Iraq has violated a taboo. It has not only initiated an inter-Arab warfare on a large scale, but also sought to cancel out one Arab League member. Moreover, it justified its action by appeals that were attractive to the majority of Arab populations: correcting colonial frontier-demarcation, achieving Arab unity and redressing flagrant inter-Arab inequalities. Arab divisions did and still do run deep, both at the state and civil society levels.

Consequently, the end of the military confrontation did not mean the end of inter-Arab warfare, both between states and within their societies. Mutual recriminations of "stoogism", "treason" and "adventurism" as well as vendettas still linger on both sides. In a word, Arab society is seriously bruised, with the marks there to stay for a long time. This is not a political or psychological context conducive to possibilities of Arab partnerships.

The result at present is a pattern not only of power diffusion but also of weakness diffusion. A minimum of inter-Arab coordination has not only declined but more often than not has been replaced by primacy of narrow state interests and inter-state competition even in the face of core Arab issues: such as the Arab-Israeli Conflict. A prevailing atmosphere of lack of credibility among many Arab leaders - especially between the PLO and Jordan - has been dutifully exploited by Israel's negotiators to emphasize diversity of Arab state interests (Arab Strategic Yearbook 1992: 211-231). Burning Arab issues - like Somalia's disintegration or the civil war in Yemen - have been the occasion to show a glaring absence of any Arab mechanism of conflict-resolution or even conflict-management.

In this context, it is more appropriate to talk of an Arab balance not of power but of weakness. This becomes clear when we go back to the earlier distinction of Arab versus non-Arab clusters in the region. Already during the 1980s, Iran threatened the Arab status quo not only by virtue of its physical size and strength but also because of its revolutionary Islamic ideology. The support extended by Arab Gulf states and other Arab regimes to Iraq during its eight-year war against Iran stemmed especially from the hope of undermining the credibility of revolutionary islam. During the 1990-1991 Gulf Crisis, Iraq found it necessary to rebuild bridges to its erstwhile enemy. In a desperate bid to minimize the destruction of its military machine, Iraq sent part of its air

force - 23 planes according to Iran, 135 according to Baghdad - to the safety of Iranian airfields. Tehran's Islamic Republic - after long being considered a pariah state - seemed to be rehabilitated in the wake of the Gulf Crisis at Iraq's expense. With Iraq still in disarray, the potential for future regional muscle-flexing by Iran must be seen as high.

The Gulf Crisis further consolidated Israel's military predominance in the region. Conventional indicators establishing Israel's military superiority over the Arab world are too well-known and numerous to be repeated here. It suffices to point out that Iraq's defeat obviously tilted the balance even more in Israel's favor. More important, however, is the degree to which the Gulf Crisis furthered Israel's political integration within the region. A few years ago, few would have imagined the signing of formal agreements or even the convening of multilateral Arab-Israeli talks. Visions of Omani delegates speaking publicly with Israeli counterparts in Moscow corridors would have seemed far-fetched as would suggestions that Saudi Arabia's Prince Bandar might coordinate moves with U.S. Jewish leaders or that his country would host visiting Jewish delegates. These events have occurred, and the ongoing Middle East peace talks have moved from discussions of military and political matters to technical and cultural issues. The fact that all of this has transpired with no radical transformation of Israel's approach to some basic conflict issues - the application of the principle of self-determination to the

Palestinian people, and the status of Jerusalem - starkly shows how far the balance of power has moved against the Arabs.

Turkey was one of the greatest winners of the 1991 Gulf War. After the end of the Cold War, Turkey was in danger of losing its strategic importance between East and West. The Gulf War gave Turkey a new strategic role at the expense of its Arab neighbors. Again, the military gap is too clear to be labored, but Turkey is now capitalizing on a much more important strategic asset: water resources.

In a region of overuse and undersupply, as is the case of the Arab world, water is literally a factor in survival and is at the basis of any program of food security. It is, therefore, notable that 67 percent of the Digla's sources and 88 percent of the Euphrate's sources originate in Turkey. With the decline of Iraq's military power, Turkey is in an even stronger position to exercice substantial pressures for political concessions on both Iraq and Syria. Turkey's blockage of the Euphrate's water flow for a month in early 1990 not only affected agriculture in Syria and Iraq but also led to frequent electricity cuts in both countries. At present, there are serious concerns over the effects of Turkey's planned $20 billion water control project, a massive undertaking that envisages the construction of twenty-one dams and seventeen power stations. If Turkish hopes of extending water pipelines to Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, and the Gulf are eventually realized,

Ankara will be in a good position to barter water for oil and, more important, to dominate daily life in much of the Arab world.

Thus with the elimination of Iraq as a military power for years to come and Arab dispersion, erstwhile Arab power levels have declined in both relative and absolute terms. The result is a higher level of Arab insecurity and multiplicity of threats - military and otherwise: e.g. Syria in relation to Turkey and Israel. Moreover, for some Arab countries threats come now from within the family. Kuwait and other Gulf countries have now to face up to the multiplicity of threats from both Iran and Iraq, including subversive activities. Possibly, such multiplicity of threats could balance each other out, giving rise to what we can call a new balance of threats. Some Pentagon officials talk already in the context of small Gulf countries of a strategy of dual containment as between Iraq and Iran(Indyk et al1994.)

But if this line of thinking is adopted among Gulf countries, this means that the Arab/non-Arab distinction in regional politics is an increasingly fading line in the sand. The alternative might then well be a reorientation of regional politics toward the adoption of a new conceptual lens: a balance of benefits.

V-    FROM BALANCE OF POWER TO BALANCE OF BENEFITS:    CAN WELFARE REPLACE WARFARE?

Power politics and the interdependence models offer competing visions of the political world. Power politics emphasizes the continuity of (violent) history since Ancient Greece and the Peloppensian War. The interdependence model, on the contrary, attracts attention to international change. As a result of this change , increasing inter-societal interconnectedness becomes more characteristic of the emerging global village than state sovereignty. For such a global village is, firstly, inhabited by states and actors other than the states, and, secondly, those actors are concerned about issues other than those of traditional high politics. These issues have conventionally been dubbed 'low politics'; they could well be the new high politics of our era. They cannot be easily settled by conventional warfare and are not necessarily zero-sum. On the contrary, their pursuance can benefit all parties and incite them to collaborate. Whether based on a bilateral trading relationship, an integrated global market, or the international nature of corporate finance, the political world of interdependence promotes comparative adavantage and interconnectedness for all parties while demoting military leverage as a basis of their relations.


Interconnectedness is not only inter-governmental but also inter-societal, hence the importance of emphasizing multiple channels of interaction between both states and their civil societies. In a word, it is multifaceted :

"Interdependence in world politics refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries". (Keohane & Nye, 1977:8).

According to this vision, actors' priorities could change: from obsession with military security to finding means to cope with (non-military) sensibilities and vulnerabilities of being mutually dependent or interdependent. Thus given this interconnectedness with its various consequences for all concerned, it is mandatory to coordinate, i.e. to cooperate, and increasingly devise institutions. These emerging institutions, i.e. international regimes (Keohane 1984, Krasner 1983) are governing arrangements to render inter-governmental and inter-societal relations regular, predictable and transparent. Keohane and Nye's following table (1977:37) synthesises well the differences between Realism based on balance of power and Interdependence based on cooperation and the possibility of a balance of benefits.

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TABLE 2 - POLITICAL PROCESSES UNDER CONDITIONS OF REALISM AND COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCE

Similarly, the 'interdependists' emphasizing the 'New Middle East' on the "brink of peace" (Perez 1993:5) draw attention to analogous binding blocks.

Thus in the region itself, some Arab analysts emphasize the primacy of international change as a result of the third international revolution (Said 1994: 21-36). The unprecedented growth of electronics and information networks results in new international concerns as evidenced , for instance, in the agendas of international conferences. This interdependence-cum- change is pushed further by prominent Israeli analysts and decision-makers.

> "Peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors will create the environment for a basic reorganization of Middle Eastern institutions ... It will change the face of the region and its ideological climate. (For) the problems of this region of the world cannot be saved by individual nations, or even on a bilateral or multilateral plane ... Our ultimate goal is the creation of a regional community of nations, with a common market and elected centralized bodies, modeled on the European Community". (Perez 1993:62).

Briefly it is the importing of the "Jean Monnet approach" to the region to reorient it from an economy of strife to an economy of peace. Two prime candidates of this targeted economy of peace are tourism and water.

It is true that the many sites of the Middle East from the snowy mountains of Lebanon or Turkey to the Mediterranean or Red Sea beaches, passing by the Pyramids and the Sphinx, holy places of

Jerusalem or historical Omayyad or Abbassid sites, make of the Middle East a magnet for tourism all year long. It is also true that when the region is dominated by a balance of power and sabre-rattling approach tourists would turn elsewhere. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Gulf War was very instructive in this respect. Bankruptcies in the private sector as well as crippling governmental budget deficits were the result. An atmosphere of peace would not only lure these tourists back, but also could increase their numbers through " open borders, a sophisticated transportation and communications infrastructure, joint marketing of popular tour packages and a well-developed tourist industry" (Perez 1993, 153).

The second benefit of changing the mind-set from balance of power to interdependence is the water shortage problem in the barren Middle East. The challenge is first to halt the browning process (desertification).

> "The Enemy to-day is the desert. The desert is taking over more and more of the fertile land on which we all depend. The Arab world controls a considerable portion of the earth - 13 million square kilometers - but 89 percent of this immense area is already desert. If we stand idle, another quarter of the remaining 11 percent will be lost by the end of the decade (Perez 1993: 116-117).

Thus the long-term objective is to reverse the creeping desertification process and change the Middle East color from brown to green. Since wars did not solve anything, least of all water problems, and since water flows do not follow state frontiers,

water issues need to be regulated regionally. A potential water regional regime would deal with water distribution from areas of plenty to areas of scarcity and would study the possibility of desalination (to make it technologically feasible and attractive cost-wise). Such transformation necessitates huge capital and technology infrastructure (*i.e.* international cooperation - both regionally and internationally).

The same blueprint applies and is consolidated by shared region-wide transportation and communication. In this case the Middle East could regain its previous historic role as a trade and communication link between East and West, North and South.

> "Building roads, laying railway lines, marking off our routes, connecting transmission networks, advancing avenues of communication, making oil and water available everywhere (according to economics, not politics), and computerizing production of goods and services will breathe new life into the Middle East, just as the blood coursing through our veins distributes the oxygen necessary for life" (Perez 1943: 134-135).

## VI- BALANCE OF BENEFITS; HEGEMONY BY OTHER MEANS?

Undoubtedly, the present context is propitious for a reorientation of regional dynamics. Moreover, at the analytical level the balance of power as a conceptual lens has demonstrated its lacunae and thus 'interdependence' seems the more logical alternative. But at this analytical level, two caveats have to be borne in mind when importing this interdependence model to the

Third World generally, and especially to a conflict-ridden region like the Middle East.

1. The term "interdependence" or "mutual dependence" could be misleading because it hides one important characteristic of international relations, especially as regards the international periphery: the problem of hierarchy (Korany 1986). Rarely are relations between states and within societies symmetrical in all sectors. Even prior to the post-Gulf War Arab disintegration and its balance of weakness, Israel - solo or with the help of the U.S. - had been a regional hegemon. The results of the various military encounters between Israel and any or all of its Arab neighbors are evidence of this military power inequality. The Gulf debâcle has increased this gap for the Arabs, not only with Israel but also with other non-Arab countries like Turkey or Iran. Consequently, the new model of interdependence for the new Middle East could result in maintaining and legitimizing Israel's hegemony. After all, many influental leaders in Israel think that - either because of the spread of medium-range missiles (e.g. Scuds) or internal war (Intifada, Hamas) - traditional military means have reached their limits. Investment in military defense is in this case costly, both politically and morally:

> "In response to stabbings of Israel's
> employers and innocent bystanders, we were
> forced to close the border with Gaza. There
> was no historical sense in our policing Gaza,
> when every Israeli soldier who defended
> himself against a knife-wielding or rock-
> throwing Palestinian was blamed in the world

> press for violating human rights. It was a
> hopeless task and no good could come of it.
> The Palestinians would have to run their own
> lives, elect their own leaders, and hold
> weapons legally for their self-defense."
> (Perez, 1993:21).

'National security' through hegemony has to adapt to the changing

world and regional context and "shift course". That is it shifts

> "...course from the traditional concept of
> national defense, which depends mainly on
> military and weapons systems, to the modern
> concept, which is of necessity based on
> political accords, and embraces international
> security and economic considerations. ... And
> the process of change compels us to replace
> our outdated concepts with an approach
> tailored to the new reality" (Perez 1993: 33-
> 34).

It follows that there is a need to move to "an alternative

approach" which capitalizes on new components of power in the "new

world order".

> "... The key to maintaining an equitable and
> safe regional system is in politics and
> economics. To-day, maintaining a high
> standard of living requires competitive trade
> relations, open borders, and reliance on
> science and technology. True power - even
> military power - is no longer anchored in the
> boot camp, but on the university compuses.
> Politics should pave the way from pure
> military strategy to an enriched political and
> economic repertoire".

For

> "...(I)n the past, national relations were
> contingent on quantitative factors: size of an
> area, natural resources, population density,
> location. Countries competed to own or
> control these resources... Toward the end of
> the twentieth century, relations between
> nations began to take on a new, qualitative

dimension. There was increasing significance in scientific progress, rapid communication, methods of data collection, higher education, artificial intelligence, high technology, and fostering a peaceful environment that creates wealth and goodwill. These are the elements of contemporary power. The scale has tipped in the direction of economic rather than military might. Armies might conquer physical entities, but they cannot conquer qualitative ones. At this stage of the game, objects that may be subject to military take- over are no longer of value" (Perez 1993: 34-35).

In all these new elements of power, Israel has a decided advantage over its neighbors. Regional integration could then be - intentionally or not - another name for further Arab distingeration and marginalisation. While some gains would accrue to some Arabs, especially businessmen, Israel would gain the lion's share. It would also avoid the trap of "political victories not accompanied by economic benefit that can make..( these victories) stand on very shaky ground" (Perez 1993: 30).

2.   In addition to glossing over asymetry in social relations, the interdependence model is ahistorical, if not anti-historical. Yet the Middle East region, cradle of old civilizations and three most important world religions is, as De Gaulle nicely put it, older than history. As a result, nations tend to live in their memories. The weight of history - real or imagined (Fero 1987) - tends to shape attitudes and influence decisions. Thus if the project of a new community of nations in the new Middle East is perceived as a ploy to bypass the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state or to foil the objective of maintaining an "Arab core" in the

region, the number of its opponents in the Arab world is bound to increase. A return to the concept of the Middle East as a mosaic region, a pure agglomeration of different races and cultures - where Arabs are to be treated interchangeably with other groups like Kurds, Berbers or Armenians - would revive old powerful memories of "divide and rule" tactics.

This is indeed the dominant regional polemic on the eve of the 21st century. The basic question is thus formulated: in a world of big blocs from NAFTA to ASEAN is the objective an exclusively Arab or rather an expanded Middle East institution?

Often, the different advocates are more passionate than operational or specific, and the debate turns into a dialogue of the deaf. The pros and cons for the two schools - the 'Exclusivists' privileging a purely Arab entity and the 'Expansionists' favoring a wider Middle Eastern one - can be roughly synthesized in the following way (Arab Strategic Yearbook1993) .

| THE 'EXCLUSIVIST' ARAB ENTITY | THE 'EXPANDING' MIDDLE EAST SYSTEM |
|---|---|
| 1. The so-called new Middle East regional arrangements are the old colonial ploy in a new form. At least since Herzel's project and the 1943-Zionit-American | 1. A new future-oriented Middle East aiming at common pooling of all its resources is in keeping with a new world based on globalized markets and |

Organization for a 'Middle East Union', Zionists aimed to put Arab manpower and raw material at the service of Israeli technology and Jewish brains. The objective is to achieve Arab subordination by other means. In the mid-1980s Shimon Perez and ex-Prime Minister of Egypt - Mustafa Khalil - explored the possibilities of a Middle East Marshall Plan to integrate the whole region in the world Western-Neocolonial hegemony. The present Arab dispersion and weakness are the occasion to codify once for all Arab subordination.

transnational networking. It is a scenario in keeping with the the spirit of the time and aims t satisfy contemporary and emerging group interests. The challenge is to go beyond na- navistic and anachronistic ideo- logies.

2. This is why the Middle East project aims in some way to achieve Israeli hegemony by other means. For peace agree- ments have not by themselves succeeded in achieving this

2. The region's economic land- scape - especially its resources and human capital - makes of such transnational arrangements the only efficient way to satisfy developmental demands and in-

hegemony - as the experience of Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty showed. The new Middle East project thus legitimizes Israeli expansionism, its nuclear monopoly, all with the support of the U-S.

creasing human needs. This is th the case whether we are talking about joint hydraulic projects or facing environment pollution problems. None of these problems can be effectively tackled within existing state frontiers.

3. This is why the potential windfalls of Israeli technological power are exaggerated to suck up Arab and international capital and thus facilitate the penetration of Arab markets. In reality, Israel's technology is more imported than generic and is more suited to Israel's specific position as a small, 'extra-territorial' developed country. It is thus inapplicable to the situation of most Arab countries.

3. As world experiences show, going beyond the limits of state frontiers might well be the only means to achieve economies of scale, higher growth and make the whole region attractive for both local and international investors.

4. The real objective then behind the new Middle East scenario is not primarily the

4. Israel's potential economic danger should not be exaggerated. Its $60 billion GNP in-

development of the region, but
essentially the dilution of its
Arab identity while Israel keeps
its 'pure' Jewishness. The Arab
world ends in fact by losing its
own soul - i.e. the essential
shield that allowed it to re-
sist previous invasions. With
a mosaic Arab world, its basic
community is reduced to a group
of underdeveloped states or
treated at the same level as
other Middle Easterners like
Kurds, Armenians, Berbers...
This is the essence of 'divide
and rule' foreign hegemony.

5. Consequently, the contest
against this new crusader pro-
ject is a fight for the very
survival of what is basic in
the Arab community:  to keep
its identity intact.

cludes a big percentage of fo-
reign aid and other resources,
which might dry up or at least -
decline once the issue of 'Is-
rael's existence' is no longer
a propaganda ploy. In addition
with the decline of foreign
aid, Israel's cultural hetero-
geneity might very well come to
the fore, with Palestinians and
Arab jews increasing their de-
mands on the state. Cultural-
ly, Israel might be too busy
defending itself rather than
threatening anybody.

5. Israeli technology and other
supplies would be in competition
with Japanese and Western sour-
ces, whereas the Arabs will be
in the comfortable position of
comparing offers and making a
choice. In addition, they will
continue to enjoy monopoly of
financial, human, and market

resources. Thus the Arabs will end by accumulating a substantial bargaining power.

As stated above, what is characteristic of the present particulars of the debate is that even at the level of quantifiable economic indicators, the 'polemical' tone dominates any data-based statements about the present and the future. We are not even clear whether the issue debated at the wide regional level is mutual and gradual tariff reductions, a common market or a full economic union. The EEC, for instance, after almost forty years of hard work and cumulative institutionalization is not yet an economic union. Even in a country like Canada (formally set up in 1867) its provinces occasionally have to negociate issues of complete trade and labor mobility among them. We are thus talking about long-term projects rather than immediate plans to be carried out overnight.

Moreover, both sides have been ahistorical in their arguments. For instance, those for a Middle Eastern system tend to underestimate the impact of Arab collective memories of earlier conflicts and their trauma. These earlier conflicts and traumas are the bases of the existing wide front bringing together otherwise estranged bedfellows of Leftists, Nationalists and Islamists - all in opposition against increasing Western-Israeli hegemony in the region. In this case purely economistic cost/benefit analysis and the merits of neo-functionalist

integration theories are to be subordinated to the parties' 'basic' priorities. As Lowi (1993: 165-276) concludes after reviewing the problems of resource development, "despite a looming water crisis in the region, adversarial relations make it difficult for the parties to pool their resources and help each other, even in ways that would help themselves". For their part, the 'Exclusivists' still think in terms of the zero/sum relations of the 1950s à la Heikal's above-mentioned Arab vs Middle East basic opposition. But since then political and social change has continued unabated: the Shah's Iran is replaced by that of Islamic Revolution, the USSR is no more, the Arab territorial state is increasingly accepted as a frame of reference, and a new generation of its citizens with different demands is coming of age.

The 'Exclusivists' especially seem to be facing serious odds, mainly because the Arab entity they have been projecting as an economic-political alternative has not yet taken off beyond the cultural level - not yet from <u>Kulturnation</u> to <u>Staatnation</u>. Different <u>INDICATORS</u> seem to confirm this kultunation/staanation lag.

1. In terms of culture and massmedia circulation the existing data do confirm the existence of this kulturnation at the mass level. Thus a 1984 UNESCO document indicates that before 1967 and to meet the demands of Yemen's tribesmen to listen to the Cairo-based Voice of the Arabs, the Egyptian government distributed 100,000 receivers

(Bakr et al.,UNESCO 1984: 12); that between 1969 - the year the Arab Union of Radiodiffusion was established - and 1984 - the year the data were available - more that 4 000 hours of listening were exchanged through the Union's secretariat. But it should be noted that many Arab countries have short and medium-wave transmitters which are directly picked up across the region. Even in the case of television, some of the 116 telediffusion stations existing in 1984 were interlinked, e.g. Maghreb vision.

Written media are not as widely diffused, though the Kuwaiti cultural periodical Al-Arabi sold a half-million copies in 1984, the highest level of any periodic publication in the Arab world at the time (UENSCO, 1984). By 1989 at least 10 national newspapers (from the Egyptian Al-Akhbar to the Lebanese El-Nahar passing by the Kuwauti Al-Anba'a) had important circulation outside their country's frontiers, three (Al-Ahram, Al-kabas ,Al-Siasa) had international editions from Paris or London and thirteen others were published only abroad to address all-Arab concerns (Strategic Yearbook 1989: 270-284).

Exchange of cinema films has been both a reflection and a cement of this Arab cultural togetherness. As the UNESCO documents indicate, this film exchange explains the coloring of many far-off Arab societies (in the Gulf or Morocco) by Egyptian humor, dialect, music, songs and even way of life.

As non-Arab scholars noticed, this linguistic and cultural homogeneity encouraged political links based on a sense of kinship and larger Arab identity that transcended individual identities. The result is inter-Arab permeability and connectedness across formal state frontiers, in fact influencing some state political processes. Differently from the traditional state model of billard balls and hard-shelled sovereignties, the Arab world resembled (at least in the 1950s and 1960s) - as Paul Noble nicely put it - "a set of international organisms separated only by porous membranes or, alternatively, a large-scale domestic system divided into compartments of varying degrees of permeability" (in Korany, Dessouki et al.: 57).

But even at this linguistic-cultural level, this trans-state interconnectedness is competing with foreign influences. For instance, in Tunisia of the books published between 1964 and 1976, 22.5% were published only in French (Bakr et al, UNESCO 1984: 18). Similarly, the analysis of a sample of TV programming in 1986 in five Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and South Yemen) showed the percentage of national production at 58%, while 42% was imported. Of the imports, 30% came from Arab countries and 70% from non-Arab countries (U.S. 32%, France 13%, other Western countries 21%, socialist countries 4%) (Varis, UNESCO 1986: 42-45).

2. The same trend of retreating inter-Arab connectedness in the face of foreign influences seems to plague even inter-Arab labor

migration. In 1980 the percentage of Arab migrant labor in oil-producing Gulf countries and Libya constituted 62.6% but was to go down five years later by 12% to 50,6% - whereas European and Asian percentages went up (Saad Eddin and Abdel-Fadil 1983:63).

3. The partial data available on Arab tourism (MENA: 1959 to 1994) do not show (perhaps with the exception of Lebanon) a great difference between the percentage of Arab versus non-Arab visitors. Tourism is much more a reflection of geographic proximity. Thus more Syrians than Algerians or Moroccans visit Jordan, and Algerians and Moroccans visit each other more than they do Iraqis. In fact, to visit some Arab countries, other Arab citizens have to have visas whereas many Europeans and even North Americans do not need any. Thus to visit Morocco or Tunisia, for instance, Canadians do not need visas whereas Syrians, Egyptians or Palestinians do.

4. Data available on inter-Arab trade since 1958 show a similar lag with linguistic-cultural interconnectedness. It is true that inter-Arab trade as a percentage of their total trade rose on the whole: from 6.3% in 1958, to 6.7% in 1968 but declined to 4.9% in 1978, and then reached its peak of 11% in 1988 only to decline again to 9.6% in 1992 (IMF: Trade Statistics, various years). Even at this level, the concentration is more geographic than all-Arab (see graphics).

5.   At the trans-state institutional-political level, the Arab
world pioneered an age of regional organizations.  It managed to
translate politically its cultural togetherness and established the
1945-Arab League.    Despite   its   elaborate   and   multifaceted
structure,   or  perhaps  because  of  it,  the League suffers from an
all-too-clear credibility gap.


The League's problem has been prevalent through the different
phases of the evolution of the Arabs' inter-state society, and in
the different issue-areas; high politics as well as low politics.
In the field of conflict-resolution (Selim 1983: 167-85), for
instance, the League intervened in less than 9% of the conflicts
taking place in the period 1945-1981.   In some cases - as in
Sudan's complaint against Egypt in 1958 - the League did not even
respond to a member's complaint and demand for help.  And when the
League's rate of intervention later increased, this intervention
was very slow _ almost coming too late.


More damaging for the very credibility of the League is the
fact that 90% of its resolutions, usually passed unanimously, have
not been carried out.   In the period 1945-1981, this meant 90% of
the 4 000 resolutions approved (Tazy 1983: 93).   This clear gap
between "say" and "do" is not even limited to high politics issues
involving complex state security sensitivities.  At last count, not
even one single resolution of those voted unanimously at the 1980-

Amman Summit purporting to hasten Arab economic unity, had been fully carried out.

Even when the League tried to reduce the lag and be in keeping with the times, this attempt did not translate into cashable credibility bonds. For instance, institutions were added, to meet new demands, a very good thing in itself. Thus, a political committee was established in 1946, and the Pact of Common Security was signed in 1950. Moreover, specialized agencies proliferated until they reached 22 by the time of writing. However, coordination among the different organs added a new problem to the League's structure and increased the bones of contention in its functioning. More importantly, the pending issue of enforcement mechanism at the heart of the League's credibility problem remained unchanged. Even at the level of yawning growth differentials among the members - the Have/Have-nots problem within the Arab family' - the League has been absent, specially at the civil-society level.

The result of such a regional vacuum is that a new regional conception - the New Middle East - might achieve triumph rather than victory. In other words, the 'new Middle East' might come to birth not because of its own merit but rather by default. The project's lack of mass conviction and legitimacy from the very start could very well be an effective barrier, if not to its initial establishment at least to its effective functioning and reinforcement. It might even backfire reminding the majority of

the population of 'projects', 'doctrines' and 'plans' devised by others and imposed on the region from outside.


VII - <u>CONCENTRIC CIRCLES AND REINFORCING INTERNATIONAL REGIMES</u>


The alternative is not to have a Middle East system <u>instead of</u> but rather with - if not posterior to - an Arab international institution or regime.


It should be remembered that the present League was the 1st regional organization of the post-1945 era. In fact, the 1944-Alexandria protocol that evolved into the 1945-Charter predated even the establishment of the U.N.. Consequently, and apart from the unsuccessful experience of the League of Nations, the Arab League had neither a model to follow nor a pool of international experience to draw from (Hitti 1992). Yet this League managed to face up to formidable odds imposed by state sovereignty obsession and the fast-changing Arab context. Some of the assets of the present League to be capitalized upon are(Korany:forthming):


1.     The Leage not only managed to survive in the stormy waters of inter-Arab relations, but developed a precious learning experience in coping with acute crises. It even survived the traumatic moving of its headquarters to Tunis and back to Cairo.

2.  Despite the initial ambiguity and controversy concerning the status of the Secretary-General, he is now accepted as a political personality rather than purely an administrator. This evolution of status through practice increases his weight in the function of good offices and his intervention as a third party in conflict situations that poison inter-Arab relations.

3.  In a hierarchical society where political decision-making is dominated by the "great man" at the head of the state, the League's customary institutionalization of Summit Conferences brought top decision-makers together. The first meeting was held in January 1964 and the 17th (an emergency one to discuss the invasion and the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq) was held in August 1990. Thus a new organ was instituted to manage - if not to settle - acute inter-Arab crises and/or chart new directions for Arab policy. For instance the twelfth Summit Conference (Fez, Morocco, 1981-1982) approved the Fahd Plan which included not only the Arab demands on behalf of the Palestinians, as approved by the U.N. General Assembly, but also an implied _de facto_ recognition of Israel.

4.  On occasions, the League's action in conflict-resolution moved from passive reaction and timid good offices to pressure on the parties or even condemnation of recalcitrants. For instance, following Egypt's persistence in its peace with Israel, the League's Council meeting in Baghdad (March 1979) resolved to withdraw Arab ambassadors from Egypt; to recommend

severance of political and diplomatic relations with Cairo; to suspend Egypt's membership of the League on the date of the signing of the peace treaty with Israel; to make the city of Tunis the temporary headquarters of the League; to halt all blank loans, deposits, guarantees or facilities, as well as all financial or technical contributions and aid to Egypt; to prohibit trade exchanges with the Egyptian state and with private establishments dealing with Israel. Similarly, the 17th Summit held in August 1990 condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi forces and the reinstatement of Kuwait's government. Out of 21 member states, 12 expressed support for the Saudi Arabian Government's invitation to the USA to send forces to defend Saudi Arabia; they also agreed to impose economic sanctions on Iraq, and to provide troops for an Arab defensive force in Saudi Arabia.

5. The League even performed successful peace-keeing operations in inter-Arab conflicts. We should probably discount the fig-leaf cover given to the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon as only Arab in name. However, the League sent peace-keeping forces to Kuwait in 1961 to prevent an Iraqi invasion and to permit the departure of British occupation forces from this country.

6. What about the present League's formal rigidity as evidenced, for instance, by its respect of the unanimity vote? This is again a reflection of the specific context of the origins of

the League and the prevalence of sovereignty obsession by
newly-independent states. It has, however, reassured the
small countries in the organization that their voice would be
heard, and thus prevented the League from being automatically
monopolized by the "big brother". More importantly, the
League on many occasions exploited the Charter's loopholes to
reduce rigidity in its functioning (Matter & Hillal 1992).
Examples abound:

a)   In the case of many newly-created bodies, the League
     learnt lessons and applied majority vote: e.g. the 1950-
     Common Security Pact, the 1962-Economic Unity Agreement.

b)   In cases when the Charter was silent about the mode of
     voting, the League applied the majority vote.

c)   In other cases, the League interpreted the charter's
     unanimity vote to mean not unanimity of all members but
     only of members present. This interpretation permitted,
     for instance, the admission of Kuwait to the League in
     1961 without putting either the organization or the Iraqi
     government in an impasse.

7.   The present League even innovated in its practice in
     situations not envisaged by the Charter e.g. dialogue with
     other international organizations and regional blocs; the
     European-Arab dialogue (Dagani 1983: 459-82); the Arab-African
     cooperation meetings (Hammad 1983: 509-37).

The result of these measures of adaptation and even innovation is that in many cases the charter stayed as it was and was interpreted liberally to permit new facets of behavior. Subsequent behavior was then based on previous action and the power of precedent. As a result, the League established a body of customary practice as a way of modifying or adding to legal texts to overcome their rigidity (Hitti 1992, for systematic tracing of this aspect). This is obviously the way of the future for the renewed inter-state organization, with the possibility of bringing legal texts up to the level of practice, i.e. codification of existing customary practice.

But given the above-mentioned impediments on many aspects of the functioning of the present Arab League the rejuvination cannot be limited to cosmetic face-lifting in face of the serious competition of an alternative regional arrangement. The rejuvination has to be a real adaptation to a new context on the eve of the 21st century. Two major issues seem to top this inter-Arab agenda in this respect.

1. Facing Up to Increasing Salience of Arab-Arab Conflicts (i.e. the ones within the family).

There is even a thesis that argues that Arab-Arab conflicts have become a ritual both to emphasize the existence of the state in the face of use or abuse by pan-ideologies, and to consolidate

the eroding legitimacy of governing elites (Matter & Hillal 1992: 52-82). I have counted no less that 12 potential conflicts over border-demarcation in the Gulf area alone, without including the Iraq-Iran case that truggered the 1980-88 war. This is an area where a renewed Arab League - with or without an Arab court of justice - could control passions and stop them escalating into inter-state hot conflicts. By initiating data-collection on the contested areas and basing the issue on legal contention and counter-contention, the League could set in motion a procedure to defuse a highly explosive issue by "legalising", "technicalising" and adjudicating it. The new organ should not be limited to instant diplomacy, but should nip this conflict in the bud: <u>i.e.</u> by initiating preventive diplomacy.

This involvement will not, however, put an end to an increasing tendency toward Arab-Arab conflicts. For the causes of many of these conflicts go beyond the capacity of even the new League, and the difficulty is related to the specific nature of some of these conflicts. For instance, the Syrian-Iraqi rift is a reflection of an interncine conflict between two factions of the Ba'ath Party. It is dividing two political elites in relation to pan-Arab ideology and regional leadership (following Egypt's earlier Arab retreat toward peace with Israel). However, the new League can still control and manage such general conflicts to prevent them from 'spilling-over' to poison the whole Arab arena. And if it succeeds in controlling the extreme politicization of the

other specific conflicts, this action would have a contagion effect. The conflict-management process would thus be bolstered region-wide.

## 2. Involvement in the Rising Arab Civil Society

Such involvement would make of the renewed League an active participant - rather than an absentee - in influencing one of the basic dialectics dividing both governments and Arab civil society at large. This active presence will help the renewed League overcome one of the impediments that plagues the old one: the problem of irrelevance. And when "representatives" of civil society are indeed representative, this could go a long way to offset a principal basis of the League's lack of credibility. Such a new civil society component presupposes that the League's official is less a parrot of his own government and more of an Arab (supra-state) civil servant. Whereas expecting his complete independence could be unrealistic at this stage, he sould be guaranteed a minimum autonomy. During his tenure at the League, he should be more its representative and less that of his own state.

This new civil society component of the renewed League could be of use to both member states and to the regional organization at large. To member states, the presence of a link with civil society (with its multiple groups) is a political necessity to manage the transition toward democratization (Gamil 1983, for the human rights

dimension ;Salame 1994). It is needed to discourage a mood of national disenchantment and inertia, and especially to provide rules of elite-mobility during the bottlenecks of transformation (Korany 1994). Indeed, one of the dangers inherent in transition without the presence of strong opposition forces and viable political alternatives is the possibility of anarchy. For with improvised political liberalization, the multiplication of parties included "sofa parties", i.e. political parties so tiny that all the members can sit together on one sofa (e.g. 59 parties were already registered in Algeria by 1992, and 44 in Yemen). This type of democratization could lead to a Hobbesian world of war of all against all. The difference with the classical Hobbesian world is that actors are not individuals but social groups of various sizes, compositions and interests.

(Korany;Brynen and Noble 1995 &1996).

But the renewed League's involvement in the murky waters of state/civil society relations could benefit it in ways other than coping with the problems of relevance and credibility. For instance, it can bring private sector representatives together, thus emphasize and increase common bonds among these civil society groups. The result could be joint ventures and an increase in various types of economic exchange among members, thereby reinforcing their interdependence. This 'people's participation' in economic planning of interstate exchanges could revive the too elaborate but still ineffective specialized agencies of the present

League (Zalzala 1983: 211-262). And the experience could be generalized to other functional, 'low politics' levels.

In an era of 'people power' and democratization, effective functional involvement would prevent the renewed League from continuing in the 'splendid isolation' of the present one. This involvement will confer on it a representative aspect and, through some achievements at the civil society level, a performance legitimacy; hence reinforcing it. For the present League - and the Arabs' inter-state society at its basis - are increasingly harassed from below and from above. From below there is the pressure of sub-regional groupings and 'primordial sentiments' - religious or ethnic. From above, there is the pressure - from inside and outside the region - to establish a wider regional system: Middle Eastern, Mediterranean or Islamic. The link with different components of Arab civil society will serve to create a supportive constituency, well-informed of the dangers of diluting too much the Arab core.

This will bring the new Arab regional organization - a new or a renewed Arab League - into the center of Arab dynamics. It will make of it not only an inter-state organization - i.e. an elaborate formal structure - but also an international regime.

Whereas some basic elements in the definition of an international organization and international regime overlap, there

is a subtle but crucial distinction. An international organization is a _formal_ arrangement transcending national boundaries that provides for the establishment of institutional machinery to facilitate cooperation among members in the security, economic, social or related fields. The U.N. system is one of the most well-known in this respect. An international regime, on the other hand, is a set of widely accepted norms, rules, procedures _or_ institutions (Keohane & Nye 1977, Keohane 1984, Krasner 1983, 1985; Young 1980). It is essentially a set of "governing arrangements" to allow an international community to function in the absence of a supra-state government.

My underlining of the words "formal" and "or" aims to attract attention to the distinction between an international organization and international regime. This latter could be formal or not, accompanied by explicit organizational arrangements or not. What is basic to an international regime is not its explicitness but its effectiveness, that is to say its capacity to make members' attitudes, expectations and rules of behavior converge. As a result, an international regime could evolve to be explicit in the form of an international institution (_e.g._ the Law of the Sea Treaty) but the opposite is not necessarily true. Thus an international organization could stay imprisoned in its elaborate formal structure without being an effective international regime which acts as a common standard to harmonize the attitudes and expectations of its members. In so doing, an international regime

does not only facilitate common behavior, but also reduces uncertainly about the future.

This is indeed the ultimate challenge facing the renewed League, being transformed into an international regime, for the existing one never managed such a transformation. Passing Arab international regimes, when they existed, developed outside the League even if they were occasionally in its name (Matter 1983: 989-901, Matter & Hillal 1983). A few examples from the evolution of the Arabs' international society will drive this point home.

Thus during the Nasserist phase 1954-1967, revolutionaruy protest and charismatic leadership were offered as the basis for a potential international regime. Had such a regime been successfully maintained, it would have been based on hegemonic stability by the regional power. Dominant Nasserism aimed to make the region function through the exclusion of intrusive powers. But since all hegemons tend to wane after a time, Nasserism's strategic overstretch amidst the mountains and tribes of Yemen (1962-1967) and the Six-Day War resulted in its exhaustion, demise and the decline of the revolutionary ethos. "Thawra" was retreating in the face of rising "Tharwa". (Heikal 1978: 262).

The oil powers in fact tried to establish an alternative international regime dominated by political petrolism in the region. As previously mentioned, the 1967-Khartoum Summit was a

crucial demarcation line preparing the change in regimes, in at least two respects. The erstwhile revolutionary hub accepted a) the withdrawal of its forces from Yemen (obeying an insistant Saudi demand), and b) subsidies from the oil rich states to compensate for Suez Canal closure, thus initiating Egypt's financial dependency on its earlier adversaries. Indeed, the movement of capital from oil-producing countries toward densely-populated countries and the movement of labor in the opposite direction (Ibrahim 1982, Kerr & Yassen 1982) created the basis of an economic interdependence regime in the region, which was translated in rising influence for political petrolism in regional affairs (Korany 1988). But, as previously mentioned , oil-rich countries could not manage to establish a hegemonic stability regime for two main reasons. The first is related to the limitedness of their power: it is one-dimensional, being mainly financial. Secondly, because of the tribe-based character of their domestic governments their worldviews tended to be narrow in horizon and could not manage to act as a political rallying point or value pole for the rising new middle class in other Arab countries. If "raison de la nation" has retreated in the face of "raison d'État", now this latter was retreating later in the face of "raison de famille". (Beblawi 1982).

The result is ,at present , an Arab interstate society with its own League but without its own international regime. It is a rgion symbolized by an inter-governmental organization both out of
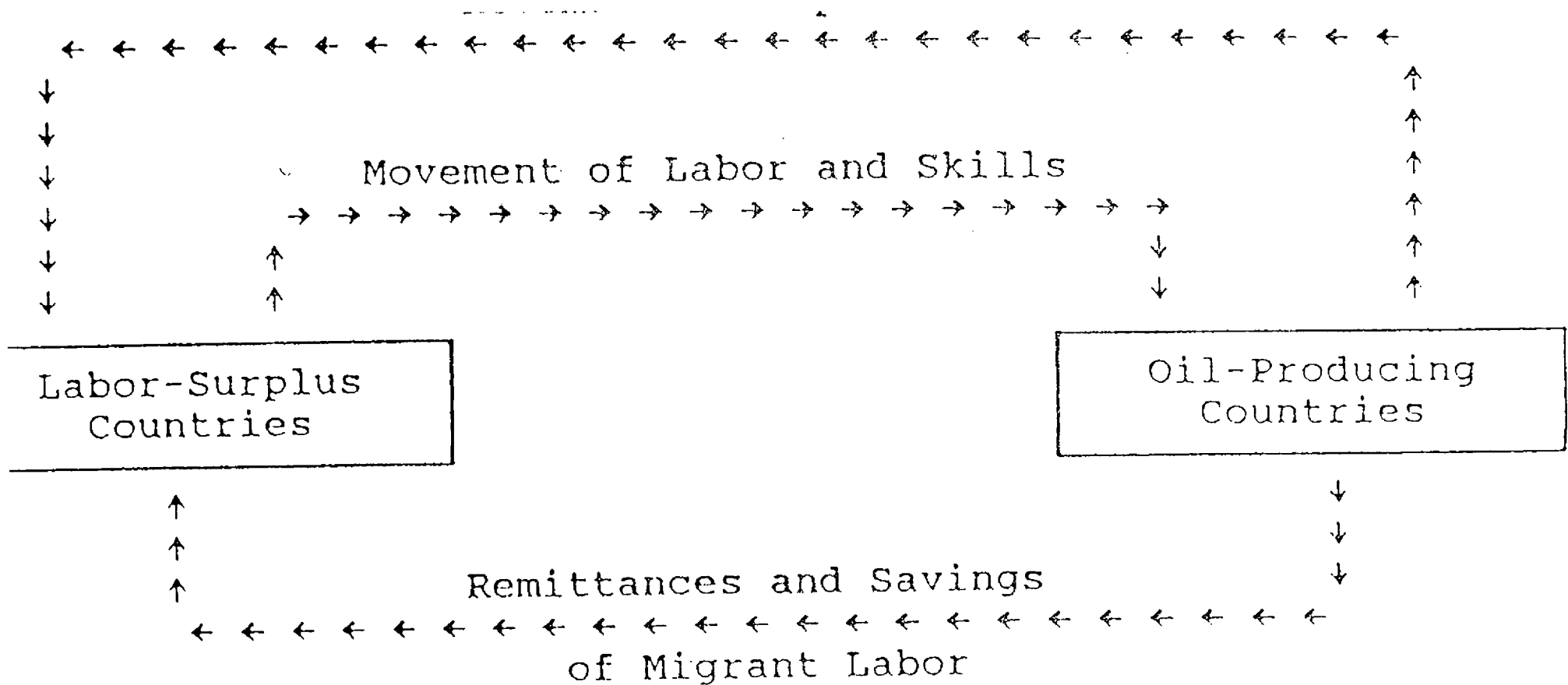
touch and out of joint. This is what I analysed elsewhere as Arab Lebanonization or extreme fragmentation (Korany 1990). Instead of this framentation the ultimate task that the renewed League has to carry out is to establish an Arab international regime. It is not impossible for it to succeed.

As explained in tracing the different patterns of the Arabs' inter-state society two moments represented embryonic international regimes. These attempts were based not on hegemonic stability engineered by one actor, but on collective leadership. This collective leadership transcended types of political systems and ideological cleavages.

Both these moments were based on a coalition of a monarchical salafi political system (Saudi Arabia), a pan-Arab Ba'athist one (Syria) and a Republican moderate third (Egypt). The first case is the 1976-mini-Summit in Saudi Arabia which contained the Egyptian-Syrian rift and ended by establishing the rules for the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon. But the most prominent example remains that of October 1973, which allowed the semi-military victory against Israel and especially the oil-embargo against Western supporters of Israel, including the U.S. (Korany 1986). This case came to be an important moment in the rehabilitation of Arab credibility and the regaining of self-respect. It tended to show what political results the Arabs could gain at the regional and

international elvels when they mobilized their resources, harmonized their complementary assets and coordinated their moves.

Could these governing arrangements be repeated and more durable, this time on the eve of a break-out - not of state wars - but of peace?

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←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←
↓                                                                          ↑
↓                                                                          ↑
↓              Movement of Labor and Skills                                ↑
↓            →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →  →               ↑
↓          ↑                                                    ↓          ↑
↓          ↑                                                    ↓          ↑
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| Labor-Surplus Countries | | Oil-Producing Countries |
|---|---|---|

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      ↑                                              ↓
      ↑                                              ↓
      ↑          Remittances and Savings            ↓
      ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←  ←
              of Migrant Labor
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ırce:   Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, <u>Oil and Arab Unity</u>, in Arabic
        (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1979), p. 161.

TABLE .1 Remittances in Select Labor Exporting and
Importing Countries (in millions of U.S. dollars)

| Country | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Export Labor | | | | | | |
| Sudan | 6.3 | 4.9 | 1.5 | 36.8 | 37.0 | 66.1 |
| Egypt | 123.0 | 310.0 | 455.0 | 842.0 | 988.0 | 1824.0 |
| N. Yemen | NA | 135.5 | 270.2 | 675.9 | 987.1 | 910.1 |
| S. Yemen | 32.9 | 42.8 | 58.8 | 119.3 | 187.3 | 254.8 |
| Jordan | 55.4 | 82.0 | 172.0 | 401.8 | 420.8 | 468.0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Import Labor | | | | | | |
| S. Arabia | -391.0 | -518.0 | -554.0 | -989.0 | -1506.0 | -2844.0 |
| Bahrain | NA | NA | -227.6 | -252.8 | -300.5 | -387.7 |
| Oman | NA | -111.0 | -208.0 | -220.0 | -222.0 | -212.0 |
| Libya | -273.0 | -350.0 | -260.0 | -257.0 | -856.0 | -557.0 |
| Kuwait | NA | NA | -276.0 | -315.0 | -370.0 | -433.0 |

| Country | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Export Labor | | | | | | |
| Sudan | 115.7 | 209.0 | 322.7 | 107.1 | 245.8 | 275.3 |
| Egypt | 2269.0 | 2791.0 | 2230.0 | 2116.0 | 3315.0 | 3611.0 |
| N. Yemen | 936.7 | 1069.5 | 777.4 | 911.4 | 1084.4 | 995.5 |
| S. Yemen | 311.5 | 347.1 | 406.2 | 429.7 | 436.3 | 479.3 |
| Jordan | 509.0 | 666.5 | 921.9 | 932.9 | 923.9 | 1053.3 |
| | | | | | | |
| Import Labor | | | | | | |
| S. Arabia | -3365.0 | -4064.0 | -4100.0 | -5211.0 | -5236.0 | -5284.0 |
| Bahrain | -278.8 | -282.8 | -317.6 | -311.4 | -300.0 | -345.7 |
| Oman | -249.0 | -326.0 | -452.0 | -684.0 | -692.0 | -819.0 |
| Libya | -371.0 | -622.0 | -1314.0 | -1597.0 | -2098.0 | -1544.0 |
| Kuwait | -532.0 | -692.0 | -689.0 | -702.0 | -906.0 | -855.0 |

Source:     IMF International Financial Statistics Yearbook, December
1980, February 1983, December 1985, as adapted from Nazli
Chaucri, "The Hidden Enemy: A New View of Remittances in
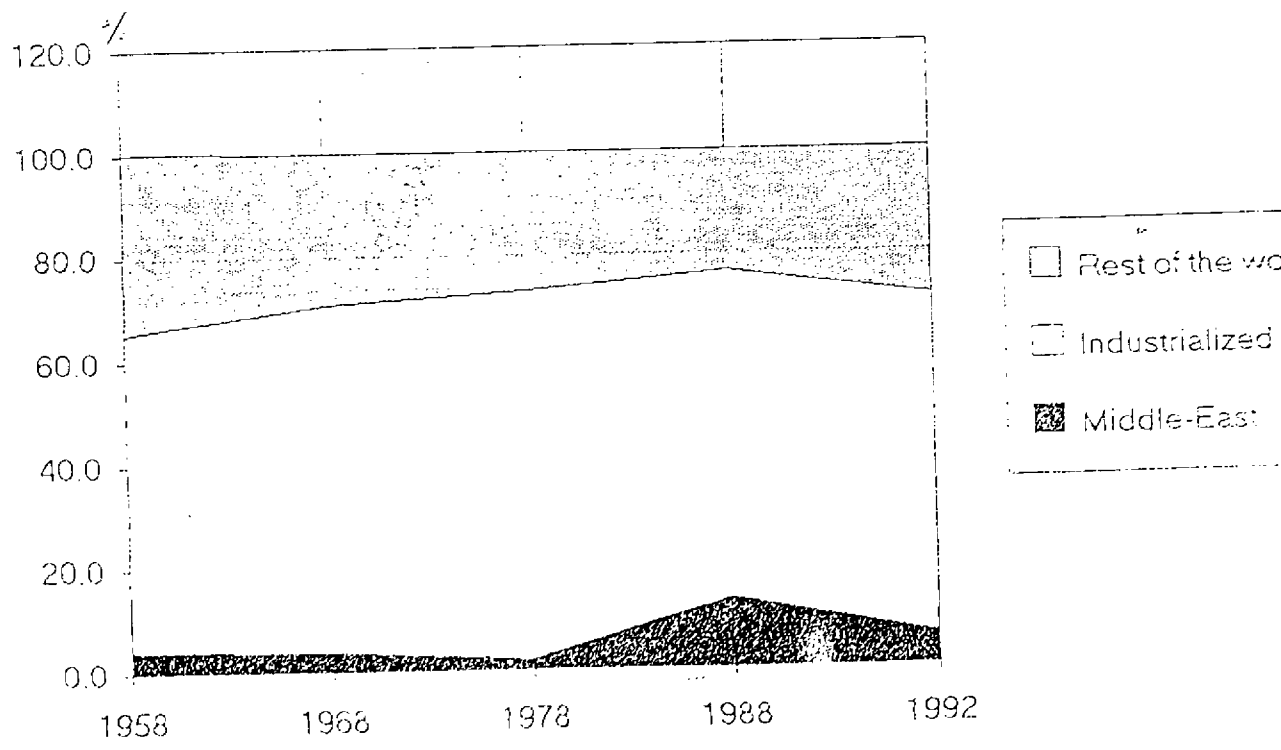
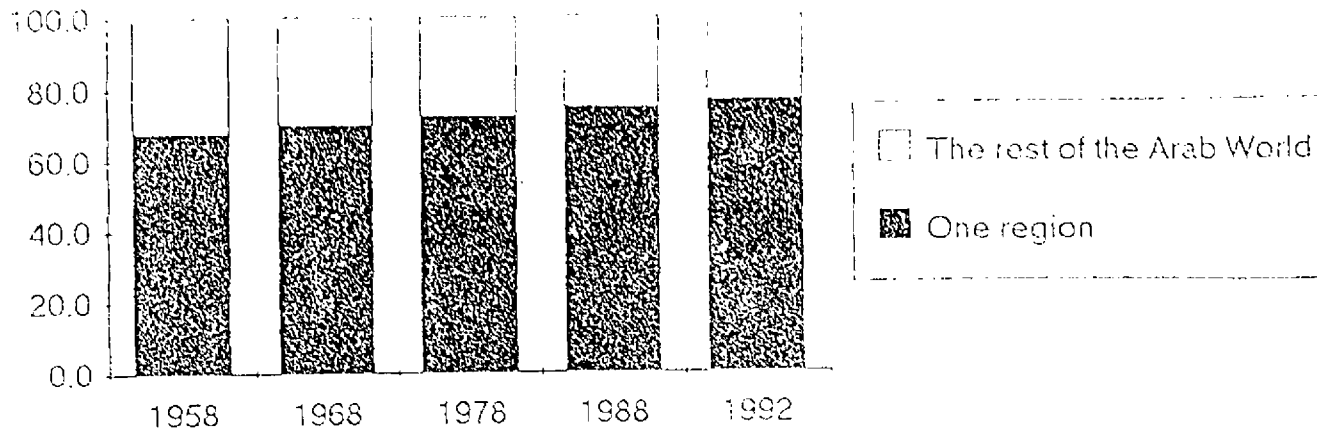| | *Realism* | *Complex interdependence* |
|---|---|---|
| Goals of actors | Military security will be the dominant goal. | Goals of states will vary by issue area. Transgovernmental politics will make goals difficult to define. Transnational actors will pursue their own goals. |
| Instruments of state policy | Military force will be most effective, although economic and other instruments will also be used. | Power resources specific to issue areas will be most relevant. Manipulation of interdependence, international organizations, and transnational actors will be major instruments. |
| Agenda formation | Potential shifts in the balance of power and security threats will set the agenda in high politics and will strongly influence other agendas. | Agenda will be affected by changes in the distribution of power resources within issue areas; the status of international regimes; changes in the importance of transnational actors; linkages from other issues and politicization as a result of rising sensitivity interdependence. |
| Linkages of issues | Linkages will reduce differences in outcomes among issue areas and reinforce international hierarchy. | Linkages by strong states will be more difficult to make since force will be ineffective. Linkages by weak states through international organizations will erode rather than reinforce hierarchy. |
| Roles of international organizations | Roles are minor, limited by state power and the importance of military force. | Organizations will set agendas, induce coalition-formation and act as arenas for political action by weak states. Ability to choose the organizational forum for an issue and to mobilize votes will be an important political resource. |

120.0 %

100.0

80.0

60.0

40.0

20.0

0.0

1958    1968    1978    1988    1992

☐ Rest of the worl

☐ Industrialized
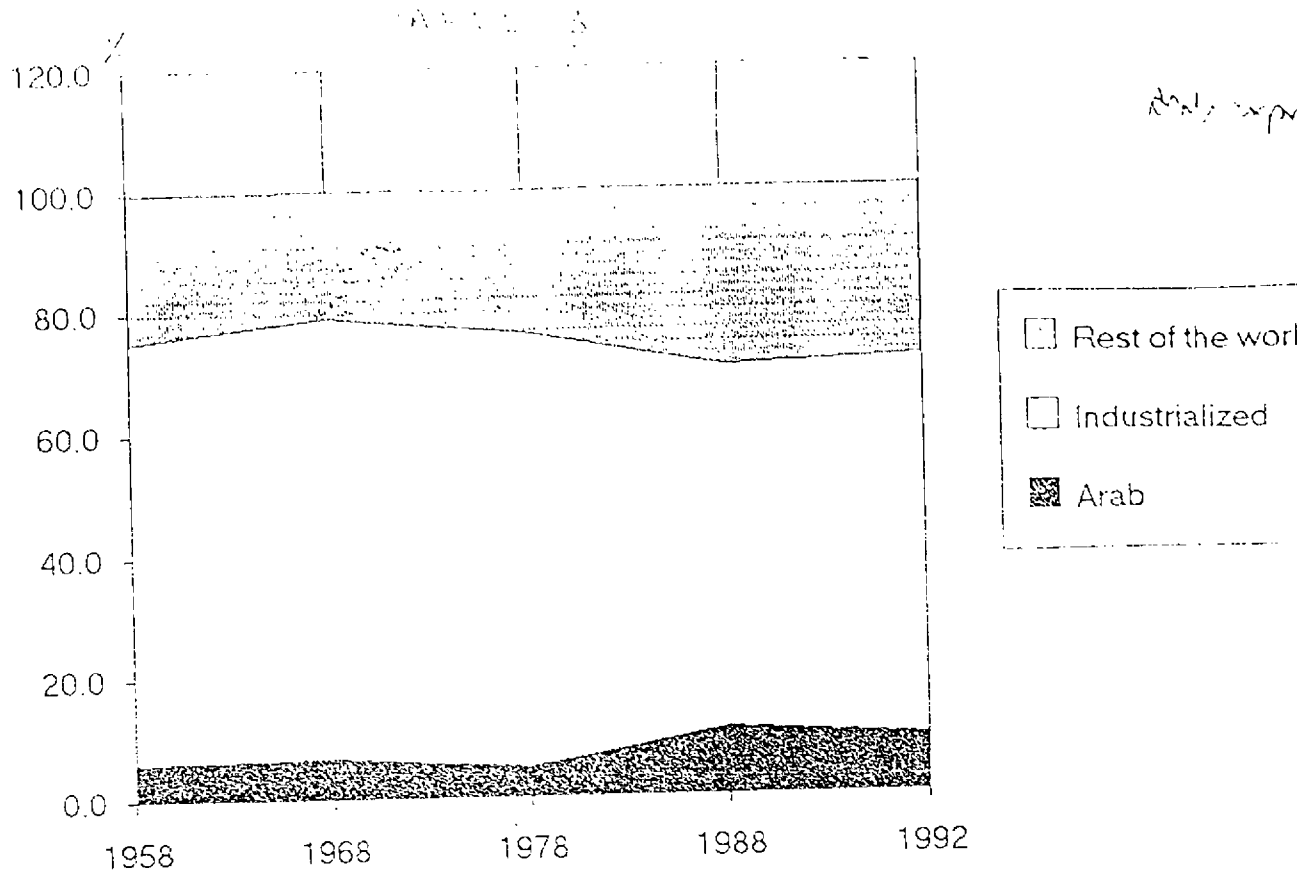
▨ Arab

Evolution of the direction of the three non-arab Middle-
Eastern States: 1958-1992



120.0 %

100.0

80.0

60.0

40.0

20.0

0.0

1958    1968    1978    1988    1992

☐ Rest of the wo

☐ Industrialized

▨ Middle-East

## The share of one region of the total inter-arab exports: 1958-1992



Legend:
- The rest of the Arab World
- One region

X-axis: 1958, 1968, 1978, 1988, 1992
Y-axis: 0.0, 20.0, 40.0, 60.0, 80.0, 100.0

## The share of one region of the total of inter-Middle-Eastern exports of Iran, Israel, and Turkey: 1958-1992



Legend:
- The rest of the Middle-East
- One region

X-axis: 1958, 1968, 1978, 1988, 1992
Y-axis: 0.0, 10.0, 20.0, 30.0, 40.0, 50.0, 60.0, 70.0, 80.0, 90.0, 100.0
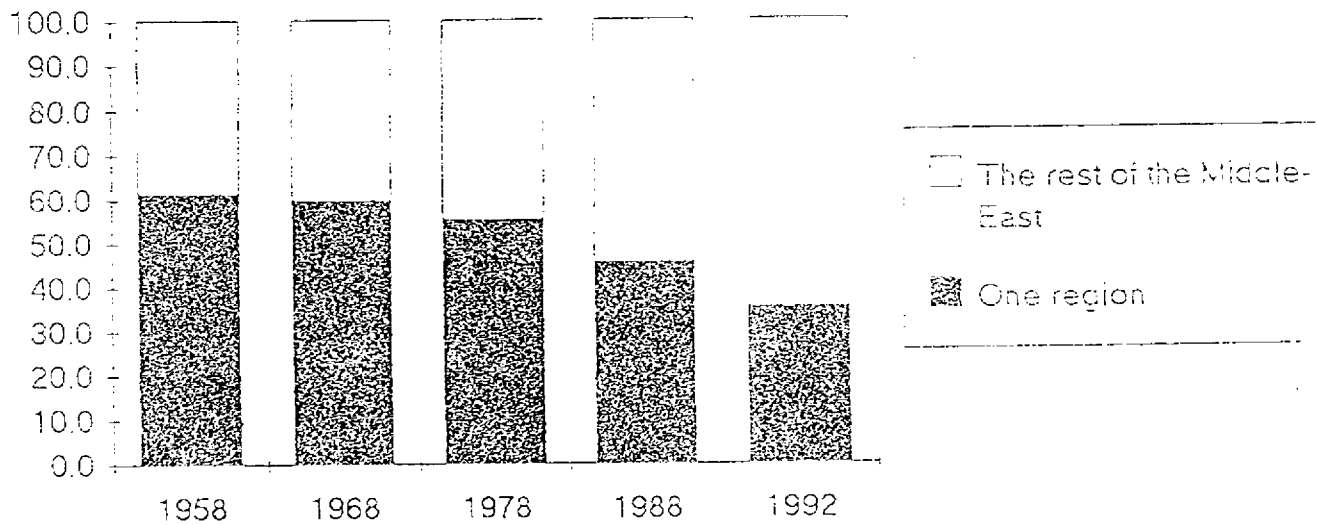
Figure 2    Destination of Arab exports: 1992



Rest of the world

Arab

Industrialized