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## **THE SHATTERED CONSENSUS ARAB PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The major thesis of this paper is that Arab security perceptions are witnessing a major transformation since mid-1970s , and certainly in the 1990s , from a consensus based on geo- political concerns that are based on fears of western hegemony to a much more pluralistic notions of security that include geo-economic dimensions . This change in the national security perceptions is corresponding to major transformations in the world and regional orders from geo-politics to geo-economics . Geo-politics here is understood as the traditional national security threats that emanate from geography as well as history of the nation state(s) .The survival of the nation and protecting its territorial integrity are the main objectives of national security policy .Power politics and the balance of power are the means to achieve these objectives .Geo-economics, on the other hand,is much more complex concept . The survival of the state and safeguarding its territorial integrity are not the subject of external threats but rather its economic well being, its social cohesion and ability to withstand economic competition .Raising productivity , economic reform ,integration into regional and international markets , and protecting sources of income are the means to protect national security in geo- economic terms .

Geography as well as history has defined -to a large extent- the traditional national security problems of the Arab world .Situated at the south and eastern sides of the Mediterranean Sea, at the crossroads of the three continents of the old world, controlling major sea roads in the Red Sea , ,the Atlantic and Indian oceans and the Persian Gulf through straits and waterways ( Gibraltar, Bab el-Mandab , Hormuz , and The Suez Canal ) ,and controlling major reserves of oil ( 61.8% of world reserves ) , Arab security has become sensitive to the moves and capabilities of external powers .

On the other hand, one of the main features of Arab history is foreign domination . Ever since the Persian conquest in 525 BC of the Arab Mashrik states and Egypt , foreign domination has been a marked feature of Arab history. Arab evolution as a nation States have occurred under the shadow of conflict with external powers . From the north, over the Mediterranean, came the Macedonians, Romans, Crusaders, and later the Spanish, Italian, French and British colonizing forces; from the north and east, Persians, Byzantines, the Mongols , Turks and finally Israelis, marched towards different Arab territories. This legacy moulded the fears of the Arabs.

In contemporary terms, the threats to Arab security have been defined in terms of the fear of Western domination. The Arab struggle against British , French and Italian colonialism and US hegemony, operating under the disguise of the Baghdad Pact or the Eisenhower Doctrine, were long the main features of Arab security perceptions. Even more important, the creation , with Western

support, of the state of Israel in 1948 constituted a major security threat to The Arab World . The Arab World fought Israel in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 , 1982 and in lesser forms of violence since its establishment . The facts that Israel had been created on the basis of a biblical notion of history, had a significant influence over Western policies, and until very recently had no defined borders had increased the Arab sense of insecurity.

The Egyptian - Israeli peace Treaty in 1979, and the current peace process in the Middle East that produced the Palestinian-Israeli and the Jordanian-Israeli agreements in 1993 and 1994 have reduced considerably the Israeli security threat to several Arab countries. The peace treaties did not only define Israeli borders with Egypt and Jordan, reduced the possibility of an Israeli surprise attack, but also made the US as the guarantor of a peaceful and secure Arab-Israeli relations. However, the peace treaties did not end the Arab fears regarding Israel. These fears are based on political as well as military reasons.

**Politically** , Israel continues to have a fanatic and fundamentalist right wing that has the support of about one third of Israeli public which refuses to withdraw from Syrian occupied territories and puts obstacles in the road of implementing the Palestinian - Israeli agreements . The last event of the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Isaac Rabin has been only one testimony of this reality . This right wing looks at the Israeli position in the Middle East not only in biblical terms, but also emphasises fears and suspicions concerning Arab positions towards Israel. Military superiority and the use of the armed forces are its first tools to achieve Israel's political objectives. Since the peace treaties have imposed various military constraints on Arab territories they have become hostage to any Israeli change of mind through elections or violence.

More important, **militarily**, Israel has secured to itself a position of superiority in conventional and non-conventional weapons. Israel, with American and Western support, has emphasised the need for its qualitative superiority against the entire Arab World. Israel has been capable of producing a wide range of advanced weapon systems in addition to importing highly sophisticated ones. In addition to the Israeli qualitative edge in conventional weapons over its adversaries, Israel has developed two areas of absolute superiority. First, during the 1980s, Israel has introduced the space arms race into the Middle East. The launching of the Israeli satellite 'Ofeq-1" on September 19, 1988 and "Ofeq-2" on April 2, 1990, started a new era in the technological race in the Middle East . At least in the Arab perceptions, Israel is developing its space assets to enhance the use of its conventional and unconventional machine through spying, jamming, reconnaissance, command, control, and battle management. . There is no Arab program comparable to the Israeli one in space.

And if the conventional race covers most of the Middle East, the nuclear race is almost entirely one-sided. Most experts on the subject agree that Israel possesses not only a nuclear capability but nuclear warheads , and their delivery systems. With Iraq's nuclear program destroyed during and after the Gulf War, the Arab world has virtually no nuclear capability. In spite of all the predictions made in

the 1970s that Libya and Iran would have a nuclear bomb by 1985 and Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria by 1990, and in spite of the prediction that Egypt, Iraq, and Libya would be small nuclear powers before the end of the twentieth century, the reality has proved to be quite different. With the exception of small research reactors , the Arab world has no nuclear capability .

Moreover , as major Arab countries are totally dependent on external resources of water , the Arab world has become security sensitive to the moves and alliances of their neighbours particularly Turkey and Ethiopia. Both Iraq and Syria are dependent on the first and Egypt and Sudan are dependent on the second for their water life lines . The case of Egypt is particularly acute since it's very existence depends on the water of the Nile. As J. Waterbury stated " **No other major river valley is shared by so many autonomous actors and no other downstream state utterly dependent for its livelihood as Egypt is upon its river**" . The case of unjust distribution of water resources in the Israeli occupied Arab territories in the West Bank and the Golan heights are often mentioned as an example for the more to come . In fact, Israel does not hide its intentions of keeping Arab territories under its control for that reason only.

Finally, in the eastern flank of the Arab world, Iran stand as a potential adversary . The history of Arab - Persian relations had been tense and sour since pre-Islamic times . The coming of Islam from Arabia to Persia did not lessen the geo-political adversity between the two peoples . By early 16th century the Gulf constituted a sectarian divide between Sunni and Shi'a Islam . In contemporary terms , historical and geo-political apprehensions has been compounded with additional factors . **First**, there is a large imbalance between the wealth of GCC states and Iraq individually and collectively and the small number of their population in one hand and Iran on the other. The GCC countries and Iraq have a total population of 34.6 million compared with 54 million for Iran. And while the GCC states are surplus money countries, Iran has \$ 30 billion foreign debt . **Second**, the citizens of each GCC country are a minority in their own country with the exception of Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Further more, the ethnic and religious compositions of the populations in the two sides of the Gulf are quite diversified. While Iran, a Persian Shi'a dominant country, has considerable Arab Shi'a and Sunni minorities, the other seven Arab countries have Shi'a and Iranian minorities, with the Shi'a are the largest ethnic group in Iraq and Bahrain .The Shi'a minorities in the GCC states and Iraq have been under a cloud of suspicion from the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's. This was mainly because of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the first Gulf war (Iran-Iraq war) and the Shi'a subversion in Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. As a result of this situation, the Shi'a in the Gulf states remains susceptible to external influences especially from Iran. The latest dispute between Iran and the UAE over the islands of Abu Musa , Lesser Tumb , and Greater Tumb is a good example , especially since mid-1992 when Iran decided to take full control of the Abu Musa island. Since 1971 Abu Musa has been subject to a sharing agreement between Sharjah and Tehran and the Iranian step would add more fuel to the problem and

would affect the domestic position of the Shi'a communities in the Gulf states. **Third**, and probably the most important, the Islamic revolutionary ideals of Iran is a radical threat to the status quo states of the Gulf. In the name of revolutionary Islam, Iran casts doubts on the legitimacy of the Arab states in the other side of the Gulf.

If all the above define to a large extent the dominant Arab perceptions of security, the events and the transformations in the world and regional orders have inspired the greatest debates ever witnessed among Arab intellectuals and politicians about security threats in the light of the new situation. It has to be said here that in spite of the fact that different Arab countries have their own security perceptions which emanates from their geo-political and geo-strategic positions, it will be very difficult to find any conceptualization of security perceptions that avoid being coloured by a Pan-Arab perspective. In fact, regional security in the Southern Mediterranean area has been defined traditionally only by Arab writers and academicians from a Pan-Arab posture.

For example, Arab scholars in general are very apprehensive and sceptical about the notion of the Middle East region as a point of departure for regional security arrangements. Dessouki and Matter argue that : (1) The term Middle East does not refer to a geographical area but rather it represents a political term in its creation and usage; (2) the term is not derived from the nature of the area or its political, cultural, civilizational, and demographic characteristics; and (3) the term tears up the Arab homeland as a distinct unit since it always has contained non-Arab states. The western portrayal of the Middle East is based on the assumption that the area is an ethnic mosaic, composed of a mixture of cultural and national groupings. Dessouki and Matter continue to argue that the goals of this western image are basically to reject the concept of Arab nationalism, the call of Arab unity, and to legitimate the Israeli existence in the area.

If the Middle East concept appears to be vague and western-oriented, Dessouki and Matter and other Arab scholars offer, instead, the concept of the "**Arab regional system**" as a key for the analysis of interactions among Arab states, their neighbours, and the international system at large. In their point of view, the Arab states, in addition to geographical proximity, exhibit a striking homogeneity which qualify them to be a region. They share a common culture, history, language, institutional forums ( the Arab League and an extensive network of governmental and non-governmental organizations ) and a religious tradition. They also share, along with the states of the third world, the goals of economic development and a viable political order. They have a common experience of foreign domination, including a common response to certain global issues, notably colonialism. They are attached to nationalism and the symbols of independence. As a result of these important intangibles, they are psychologically knit together as a community.

Whether this view of the region is true or not is not the issue here. Indeed many scholars will question this point of view. The seminal analysis of the rejectionist approach is Foad Ajami's "**The End of Pan-Arabism**", and his

longer work "**The Arab Predicament**". What is at issue here, however, is that most of the Arab literature on security perceptions is based on the notions that Arabs have a common security needs even when it represents the much more narrower security perceptions of one Arab state or another. Major research centers in the Arab world take it as a point of departure and analysis. The annual "Arab Strategic Report" of the Al-Ahram Center For Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo take the Arab world as a point of departure to analyse Arab relations with their neighbours and the world. "The State of the Arab Nation" annual report of the Center for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut takes a similar approach. Studies of the Arab Thought Forum in Amman do not deviate from the same tradition.

More important, the main Arab regional institution, the League of Arab States (LAS) spouse the same strategic concept. Established on 22 March 1945 in Cairo, the LAS originally grouped seven states and by 1990s they become 21 Arab states. The League's charter purposes to work "towards the common good of all Arab countries the improvement of their status, the security of their future, and the realization of their aspirations and hopes". The charter embodied a guarantee "to safeguard the independence and sovereignty" of each member state. Although, the original charter did not include collective security or mutual defence articles, Article 5, however, prohibited member states from using force to settle disputes. Still, in October 1949, the League "adopted the principle of collective security" targeted at defending the Arab states from Israel, with a formal Joint Defence Pact added in April 1950. The pact was called for by Arab states during the many Arab - Israeli confrontations, the Iran - Iraq war, and utilized by Egypt, Syria, and the GCC states during the second Gulf war against Iraq.

However, in the last five years the Arab consensus about threat perceptions has been shattered. Arab writings on the topic refer to a break on the agreement on what constitute a threat to national security depending on the perceptions of the transformations in the world and regional orders. This paper will attempt to represent three types of security perceptions: the conservative radical, the idealist liberal, and the pragmatic realist. It should be understood that these types will be "ideal" for analytical purposes. They should not in any way be understood as the only ones in the current Arab debates, nor they should prevent the possibility of crossing over from one type to another as the subject of debate may need.

The paper, therefore, will be divided into six sections: the first two will outline the changes in the regional and global orders. The next three will analyse the three Arab perspectives of security in terms of their perception of the changing security environment, their perceptions of security threats, and the possible courses of action to deal with them. The sixth section will conclude the paper by comparing the three perspectives and recommending propositions that may elevate Arab - Western tensions.

## **II.A WORLD TRANSFORMED : THE VICTORY OF GEO-ECONOMICS**

The birth of "The New World Order" came as a declaration of forces and processes that had started since World War II and even before. In theory, any world order entails a mood of technology, a power structure, and an agenda . Technologically, the "new" in the world order is the increasing dominance of the third industrial revolution over world affairs. This revolution evolved from the wombs of the first and second industrial revolutions. The world had known its first television in 1934, its first computer in 1941, its first space ship in 1957, and genetic engineering before all. However, only in The 1970s and 1980s, revolutions in electronics, informatics, genetic engineering, and space ... etc. reached an intensity level that changed fundamentally the lives of individuals, the status of states, the harmony of peoples, the ways of production and the moods of distribution and consumption .

Structurally, the "new" in the world order is not really the change from a bipolar world to the much "older" unipolar or multipolar worlds, but the fundamental change in the nature of polarity itself. Traditionally, polarity was defined in terms of power distribution among nation-states or blocs of nation-states. They are engaged in eternal pursuit of hegemony and dominance that involves the use, or the threat of use, of force . Now, it seems, that polarity can be defined in terms of the prevalence of a whole system of political-socio-economic interactions in world affairs. This system is the Western and Capitalist (and also liberal) order, as it dominates the world at the final years of the 20th Century. It represents the powers of North America, Western Europe, and Japan plus the Pacific rim. This order, is highly integrated through a large networks of institutions, (G-7, GATT, IEA, OECD, IMF, IBRD), multinational corporations, trade, and investments .

The third industrial revolution released a historical process of significant proportion. In one hand, economically, it has generated production capacities unprecedented in human history. No state in the world can be satisfied with its internal market. Even the United States which took pride until the end of the 1960s that its external market generated small proportion of its GNP , by the 1980s that became no more the case. The search for larger markets, thus became relentless. Through mechanisms such as interdependence, "global factory" structures, multinational corporations, world financial markets, international financial institutions, regional and transcontinental integration in the Western Hemisphere , Europe Northern America and The Pacific, the world economy became more and more integrated. Within this system, power is distributed not only by military capabilities but also by the ability to innovate and to market. The U. S. may have a leading position, because of its \$ 6 trillion GNP, but by no means a hegemonic place. The competition, so much claimed, in the system is

actually feuds that are dealt with through cooperation, compromise, institutions, bargaining, and market forces .

Naturally, a change in the world structure means a new agenda. While the post World War II order was dominated by issues of arms race, and arms control, regional conflicts, and Soviet-American contestations, the new order is looking for new issues. The new agenda is basically an economic one. Unemployment, inflation, exchange rates, stock-markets, trade barriers, population are the issues of the day. Global issues such as pollution, environmental safety, communication, air trafficking are increasingly getting their place in world summits. Transnational social problems such as drugs, refugees, AIDS, are getting global attention . The "Earth summit" in 1992, followed by similar summits on human rights , population , and women have been testimonies for the change in the global agenda.

The new world order, as has been described, could not have come to being without other socio-economic-political processes that took place in different regions in the world. In the socialist bloc, particularly in the USSR, the socio-economic-political systems could not adapt to the change in world environment. The uniformation of man, the public ownership of the means of production, and the dictatorship of the proletariat led to a stifling command political and economic systems which were not capable in dealing not only with the impacts of the technological revolution, but also to keep its rate of development. In the 1950s and 1960s socialist countries achieved impressive developmental results in technology, industry, GNP ... etc. However by the 1970s, it became evident that these societies had reached a developmental halt. By the 1980s, the socialist countries went on the road of regression that led in the end to their final collapse and disintegration.

In the western bloc the socio-economic-political systems were much more capable of adapting and adjusting to the new developments. After facing serious socio-economic and political difficulties in the late 1960s and the 1970s,. by the 1980s, western countries were able to recover economically, deal with the energy crisis, have better handling of the environment .... etc. This could not have happened without the ability to absorb the third industrial revolution and creating mechanisms which are capable of dealing with the necessities of regional and global economic integration and better handling of political disintegration.

In the Third World, the socio-economic-political systems which emerged after decolonization mostly failed in dealing with their internal and external environments. Many Third World countries, particularly in Africa, became more underdeveloped than they were before independence. The third industrial revolution have led to their marginalization in the world's political and economic systems. The collapse of the Soviet bloc has deprived them from the advantages of the cold war. The end result of this development was a decline in their economic fortunes and a decay in their political institutions. However, it has to be said that some Third World countries in Southeast Asia, Pacific, and Latin America succeeded in using the opportunity of the need for the enlargement of the world



market to associate with the rising unipolar order. They succeeded in adjusting their socio-economic, and lately political, systems to deal not only with the third industrial revolution but also in dealing with the complexities of competition in a largely integrated world economic system.

### **III. TRANSFORMING THE MIDDLE EAST : TOWARDS A NEW REGIONAL ORDER**

If the world order has been transformed, the Middle East has witnessed major changes. The most important development in the region was the Second Gulf War. The war changed the behaviour of the major parties to the Arab - Israeli conflict. For Israel, the war manifested the results of the arms race in the Middle East. Iraq's missiles of Scud-B hit Israel's population centers. In spite of the minimum damage they occurred, the prospects of another war in which chemical weapons would be used made Israel more inclined to search for a process that will curtail the Arab mass destruction capabilities. The discoveries that Iraq was developing biological and nuclear capabilities made this process an urgency. In Israel's eyes, the Arabs, in spite of their technological gap with Israel, will continue to try to catch up with her and will be able to inflict serious damage in the case of a new war. Furthermore, the American-Arab coalition in the war has minimized the Israeli strategic value to the United States. Israel, after all, was a burden for the coalition not an asset. Israel, consequently, found it was more appropriate to get into a peace process in a time that its standing in the U.S. still high. The fact that Syria, the arch enemy of Israel, participated in the war side by side with the U.S, created worries in Israel. The growing Saudi and Egyptian ties with Washington were no less worrisome. In the meantime, Israel has estimated that the general Arab position was weak because of the Arab divisions and the destruction of Iraq's military capabilities. In a way, the Arabs fought a war with one of Israel's most radical foes thus creating a common interest though indirectly.

For the Arab states parties to the multinational coalition in the war, there were risks and opportunities. The risks came as a result of Saddam Hussain's initiative of August 12, 1990 when he linked his withdrawal from Kuwait with the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. The initiative worked well with the Arab masses. The accusation of "double standards" was raised not only against the U.S, but also against the coalition Arab partners. Fearful of losing credibility in the Arab world, Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia found it imperative to use the opportunity of their coalition with the U.S to harness a "consequential linkage" between the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, peacefully or by force, and the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Finally, these countries found that unless there is a resolution to conflict, radical forces in the area will continue to use the Palestinian and Arab grievances to destabilize the Middle East.

For pro-Iraq Arabs, particularly, the PLO and Jordan, the defeat of Iraq left them much weaker. Their participation in an Arab-Israeli peace process will work as an avenue to return to the majority Arab fold and allow them Arab and international aid. After all, the defeat of Iraq has proven the fallacy of radical solutions for the ills of the Middle East. Time has become essential for them to reach a resolution of the Arab-Israeli questions or to accept an erosion to their negotiating positions.

For the U.S, the major mediator in the Middle East since 1973, credibility was at stake. The defeat of Iraq was the opportunity for American President George Bush to declare the birth of a "New World Order" led by the U.S. The resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict became a test case for American leadership. For Washington, furthermore, the resolution of the conflict was an essential part of a strategy to secure oil resources and fight radicalism in the Middle East. Finally a resolution of the conflict will put a cap on the Middle East arms race particularly in the field of mass destruction weapons which became alarming in recent years.

The second most important development which encouraged the peace process in the Middle East was the collapse of the Soviet Union. The story of the Soviet collapse is not of concern here. What is important is the ramifications of this collapse on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The end of the cold war has changed the attitudes of the Arabs and Israelis alike. For Syria and the PLO, they lost an important diplomatic, political and military ally. Loosing a constant and reliable arm supplier narrowed their options to only look for the U.S help to launch a peace initiative. For Israel, although the collapse of the USSR has made a formidable foe disappear, and a flow of Jewish migration went to the Hebrew state, the new situation created incentives to move towards peace. The end of the cold war has minimized the role of Israel as a strategic asset for the U.S in the global confrontation. Furthermore, the massive flow of Jewish migration put pressures on the Israeli economy which could not be dealt with without American and western help. This, in turn, could not be guaranteed without an involvement in a serious Arab-Israeli negotiations. For the U.S, the end of the cold war meant an American de facto monopoly over the Arab-Israeli peace process; a policy the U.S has tried to accomplish since mid 1970s.

Although the Second Gulf War and the end of the cold war were the most decisive factors behind the launching of the Arab-Israeli peace process, it has to be mentioned that the parties to the conflict were also changing their positions. The Palestinians, encouraged by the intifada and fearful of the Israeli settlement policy in the West Bank and Gaza, opted for peace with Israel. In 1988 the Palestinian National Council adopted a resolution to accept the 242 Security Council Resolution, recognize Israel, and accepted a two states solution to the Palestinian question. Syria gave a de facto acceptance of the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel by restoring diplomatic relations with Egypt. A reality that allowed Egypt to return to the Arab League. For Israel, the arms race in the Middle East started to make alarms. The Palestinian intifada made the Israeli

occupation more costly. The economic problems, which was serious enough before the massive flow of the Jewish migration, became even more serious. The Israeli needs for water could not be met without some form of regional cooperation. All these factors, in addition to others, made gradual shift in the Israeli public opinion. This shift was to show later in the Israeli elections in June 1992 when the electorate opted for a Labour led Coalition instead of the Likud right wing and intransigent coalition. All in all the parities were changing, and the Second Gulf War and the end of the cold war created an opportunity that no body wanted to miss.

And the opportunity was not missed . Through an active American mediation efforts the Madrid peace process started in October 1991 and by 1994 a Palestinian - Israeli agreement and an Israeli - Jordanian peace treaty were in place . What is important about the new Arab - Israeli reconciliation process is that it introduced geo-economic dimension to its traditional geo-political concerns of territory and security . In addition to the bilateral negotiations, another layer of negotiation was to be a multilateral one to discuss five issues of interest to the parties: arms control, water, refugees, economic development, and environment. The negotiations started at the end of January 1992 in Moscow with 35 states participating including 13 Arab countries and Israel. Syria and Lebanon declined to participate until a serious progress took place in the bilateral negotiations. Not waved by this setback, the participants agreed to form five sub-multilateral committees to discuss the five issues under consideration. Although the results of the multilateral negotiations are still limited , it has inspired a host of initiatives to accelerate development and economic cooperation in the Middle East , the most notable of which was the economic Middle East summit in Morocco in the end of October 1994, and the Amman economic summit in October 1995. More elaborate vision was represented to the interlocutors of the area by Shimon Peres, now the Israeli Prime Minister in his book " **The New Middle East** " in which he argued for a new way of thinking and moving the economy of the region " **From an Economy of Strife to an economy of Peace** " .

In the bilateral agreements the economic dimension were even more concrete .Although the Palestinian - Israeli agreement entailed a gradual " political " separation between Israel and Palestine that may include the birth of a Palestinian state , it contained provisions for consolidated linkage between the two sides . The linkage is manifested in a highly complicated network of coordinating committees in the areas of security , economics , and infrastructure . More important , Annex III of the agreement ( Protocol on Israeli-Palestinian Cooperation and Development programs ) contains provisions not only for legitimating the existing linkages between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza but also to consolidate them in the areas of water , electricity , energy , finance , transport and communications , trade , industry , labour and welfare issues , human resources , environment , and communication and media . Annex IV even went furthermore to make the Israeli-Palestinian linkage a corner stone in a very

ambitious regional developmental and cooperation plan .The Jordanian -Israeli peace treaty listed seven areas for cooperation : water , refugees , natural resources , human resources , infrastructure , economic fields , and tourism .

What is even more important than the signed agreement between Israel and the Arab parties is that it created the suitable climate for regional and economic cooperation among them . Bi- and multi - lateral negotiations between Israel , Jordan , Palestine , and Egypt have produced a process of identifying and promoting projects for joint economic development . Some projects are already underway in terms of preparing the legal framework and physical infrastructure for their implementation . Some has gone as far as the feasibility stage . And some smaller projects have been implemented particularly those related to the crossing points between Palestine and Israel , Jordan and Israel and Egypt and Israel ..Among the major projects that already went beyond the " idea " stage are : Taba - Eilat - Aqaba Macro Area ( Egypt , Israel , Jordan ) , The Jordan Rift Valley ( Jordan , Israel ) , Sinai - Gaza - Ashdood ( Egypt , Palestine , Israel ) , The Aqaba - Eilat ring road ( Israel , Jordan ) , Mafraq - Haifa railway line ( Jordan , Israel ) , Addassiya storage / diversion dam ( Israel, Jordan ) , Storage Dams on the Jordan and Side Wadis ( Israel , Jordan ) , Wastewater treatment plants ( Israel, Jordan ) , Regional System Design for Electricity ( Egypt , Israel , Jordan , and Palestine ) , Zafit - Amman Electricity Interconnection ( Jordan , Israel ) , Eilat - Aqaba electricity Interconnection ( Jordan , Israel ) ,Electricity Interconnection at the North Jordan Valley ( Jordan , Israel ) .

#### **IV. THE CONSERVATIVE - RADICAL :** **OLD HABITS DIE HARD**

For Arab nationalists , Islamic fundamentalists , and some Arab governments such as Syria, Libya, Sudan, and Iraq the world and the region are hardly changing . Politicians, intellectuals, writers, and journalists either attacked harshly " The New World Order" , or denied its existence completely. President Assad of Syria was heard to have said "There is no new world order, but there is a new world situation". The prominent Arab political writer M.H. Heikal mentioned in his very controversial book **The Gulf War: Illusions of power and victory** : "what appeared after the end of the cold war was not a new world order, rather it was close to a new arrangements invented by old world order to affirm its role in a changing circumstances".

Those who recognized that there is something "new" in the world did not spend much time in defining it. Instead, they launched a harsh attack on the "new world order" criticising it as being unfair, unjust and in contradiction with the basic interests of the Arab and Islamic worlds and the Third World in general. Islamists conceived the new world order as being anti Islam and anti Muslims. Its goal is to ignore their problems, dominate them, and partition their land. The new

order, it was said, has targeted Islam as a new enemy instead of communism. (The most cited example is the events of Bosnia-Herzegovina); Arab nationalists, in their part, went in the same direction. However, the target for partition and domination is Arabism and The Arab nation (The most cited example is The Gulf War). Leftists and Marxists did not find in the new order nothing but an extension of the American imperialist power after the demise of the other superpower, the USSR. Even some Arab liberals could not find another point of view. A prominent Arab liberal like M. Asfour considered the new world order as a "deception" to cover the American hegemony over the world. Arab academics did not escape the same position. In their evaluation of the pros and cons of the new world order, they found nothing but net losses of Arab interests. In the words of Walid Kazziha, a political scientist of the American University in Cairo; "The New World Order has portended to be a bad omen for the Arabs".

At the heart of the Arab denial or criticism of the new world order is a deep fear and apprehension from all world orders. Since the beginning of the 19th Century, different types of world orders spelled nothing but disasters for the Arab nation. The Arab experience with The British dominated world system in the 19th Century had given the Arabs colonialism of different forms. The post World War I world order partitioned the Arab World. The post World War II order created Israel, divided the Arabs, and put them in a constant state of underdevelopment. So, it was said by many Arabs.

In one of the very recent studies of the perceptions of the Islamic movements in Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Sudan and Algeria concludes with the following :

**For them all, the world order is formulated by the great powers of each international episode with the one and only aim of fulfilling the interests of these few powers at the expense of the rest of the international community. The Muslim world never gained any thing from the successive world orders but humiliation, manipulation and subordination. The world order is unjust and adopts double standard measures when dealing with different cases and different peoples. The world order, in any of its phases, is motivated by one goal, that is, suppressing the Muslim world so as to prevent any possibility of Islamic revivalism.**

They all use the theory of conspiracy to interpret this persistent attitude of the world order(s). The Muslim world has always been the target of international conspiracies nourished by feelings of hatred and animosity which the "other" carry to the Muslims. International legitimacy, represented in international institutions and international law has always been an effective tool in the hands of the great power(s) dominating the world order(s) to successfully implement their policies of looting and suppression. The consequence is that despite the fact that all studied movements demonstrate

considerable awareness of the changes that are taking place in the world order, they all reject this world order and refuse its arrangements , institutions and powers .

Their rejection is directed mainly to the United States , head of the new unipolar world system, as well as , its confederate : Israel . However , for the Algerians the west is mainly France ....

For the Arab conservative radical the present is a mere continuation of the past . Forms may change , but the essence and substance are the same . For him , the West's aggression against Arabs or Muslims or both is continuing in the forms of unjust and unequal agreements between the Arabs and Israel . The Western keen on keeping Israeli superiority militarily and economically is a definite position to keep the peoples of the area under hegemony and subjugation . Allowing Israel to have the right of return to all Jews of the world while depriving the Palestinians from the same right is an indication of the Western intrinsic injustice against the Arabs . The status of the Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza , the Israeli unequal distribution of water between Arabs and Israeli only indications of an unjust settlement that Israel could not have without an unwavered support of the West . The Western , particularly American , position towards Jerusalem as indicated by the American Congress to remove the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is an old held position from the times of the crusades to the present . In fact , the correspondence between King Richard the Lion Heart and Saladin will be quoted to prove the point :

Richard the Lion Heart :

" The only question is about the Holly City , the Cross , and the land . As for Jerusalem , we are firm; we will not recede , no , not if there were but a single man of us left . As for the land, give us back to the further side of Jordan . As for the Cross , to you it is only worthless wood , but to us it is priceless ; let the Sultan then be gracious to us concerning it , and there shall be peace , and we shall rest from this weary toil ."

To this appeal Saladin answer :

" Jerusalem is holly to us as well as you and more so , seeing it as our Prophet's journey , and the place where our people must assemble at the last day . Think not that we shall go back therefrom, or that we can be compliant in this matter . And as for the land, it was ours to begin with , and you invaded it; nor had you taken it but for the feebleness of the Moslems who then had it , and so long as this war lasts God will not permit you to set a stone in it . And as for the Cross , our holding it is a point of vantage , nor we can surrender it

except for the benefit of Islam . "

The conservative radical can move with ease from the 11th century to the 20th . In its analysis of the American Congress's resolution on Jerusalem , the National - Islamic Conference , a gathering of pan - Arabists and Islamists in the Arab world , repeats almost the same arguments . The resolution is a flagrant aggression on international legitimacy embodied in Security Council resolutions , the Arab nation and the Palestinian people , and even a denial to previous American commitments status of the sacred city . " **The resolution is based on a false Zionist claims that has no scientific nor historical bases " .** " **The resolution deliberately denys the fact that Jerusalem and Palestine are the home of the Arab Palestinian people... which is a part of the great Arab homeland " .**

The worst fear of the Arab conservative radical comes with enunciation of the Middle East market . After all , the aggression on the Arab and Islamic peoples by the West in the name of colonialism or Zionism is a long historical process that called for resistance among Arab masses . The Middle East economic cooperation through the multilateral negotiations , the Casablanca and Amman process , and the Partnership with Europe is nothing but a comprehensive penetration and domination of Arab societies . In booklet titled " The Middle Easternism : A Zionist Hegemony of the Arab Homeland " , Fawzy Mansour outlines the fears of economic cooperation with Israel in the following arguments :

(1) The Middle East project is a byproduct of a long prepared for American and Zionist plan to force " the Hebrew peace " on the Arabs .

(2) The project has nothing to do with peace " any peace , just or unjust , comprehensive or incomprehensive , complete or incomplete " , since it has no relationship to the progress in solving the major issues of the Arab - Israeli conflict regarding the occupied Arab territories and the basic components of the Palestinian question : Palestinian statehood , right of return to the Palestinians , removal of Israeli settlers , and Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state .

(3) The project is the negation of Arab nationalism . It has nothing to do with international transformation , nor the new world order . It is a continuation of a repeated attempts to kill the Arab awakening that started with the strangulation of Muhammed Ali's project to unify Arab countries , and ended with Nasser's . " It springs from the fear of the repetition of these attempts . Therefore , it is the natural extension of the Balfore declaration , the creation of the state of Israel , and the final stage to make Israel the greatest dominant regional power " .

(4) The Arabs can not do any thing of substance to modify the project to serve their interests . Because of the Arab weakness and fragmentation , particularly after the Gulf War , and the Israeli superiority , an Arab involvement in the project will mean nothing less than total surrender .

(5) The project final goal of a Middle East common market is a justification

to the principle of Israeli participation in owning Arab resources . The Middle East common market , as projected , has nothing to do with similar experiences in Europe , because Israel will not accept the free movement of goods , commodities , labour , and capital . The principles of common markets are in direct contradiction to the basic ingredients of Israel as a close Jewish state .

(6) The project is tailored in such a way that makes Israel the nerve center of economic activities in the region . The projected infrastructure plans are all aimed at making Israel the controller of the Middle East since all transportation , communications , energy , tourism ..etc will run through Israel , reflecting an equal mood of exchange .

(7) The project will allow Israel to penetrate and dominate Arab markets . The Western pressure on Arab countries to move towards market economies and the privatization of their public sectors is aimed at paving the road for Israel to create " economic settlements " that work to weaken Arab economies and liquidate its national industrial base . In this regard the proposed Middle East Bank will use Arab money and resources to benefit only the Israeli economy .

(8) The United States and Israel will not accept an Arab economic tigers as in the Asia - Pacific region to compete in the world market . The Arab region is only marked for domination as a condition for the American hold on Arab oil and Israeli hegemonial role in the area .

(9) The project will not give , as promised , to the Arab countries stability , prosperity , or progress . In the contrary , it will give them more poverty , unemployment , marginalization , foreign domination , more contradictions between classes and Arab states .

To answer the question what is to be done to face these calamities , the Arab conservative radical will have no shortage of answers . Most of them , however , are drawn from the past . Saladin reference to **feebleness of the Moslems** is currently replaced by the feebleness of Arab regimes which accepted what they have no right to accept . Removing the current Arab political regimes from power by democratic ways for some, and by violence for others, is a necessary prerequisite for an Arab resistance to the modern day western onslaught . Resistance through the continuation of the intifada and armed confrontations , and mobilization of Arab masses and resources are called for to boycott the current process and work instead on reviving Arab integration plans. A resurrected Arab League is required in this stage to face the impending dangers of the Middle East project . And , to neutralize the influence of the US global dominance , it is important to watch carefully the new rising powers in Asia like Japan and China which can work as balancers to American hegemony . After all , the world still under the process of transformation and the seeming American unipolar world is not going to last . All the Arabs need is steadfastness , resolve , patience, and not to commit themselves in a time of weakness to arrangements that will not lead to any thing except dismantling their identity and recolonizing their home land . After all the US is showing serious signs of fatigue and weakness .



So , the Arab conservative radical believes . And in so doing , he is totally consumed by the past and unable to see the magnitude of historic changes in the world and the region . For him , the " clash of civilization " is not a new Huntingtonian formulation for the post cold war era , but the wisdom of all times. As his vision seems to gather the storms and anger of contradictory ideological forces of Islamism , Arabism , and Marxism , the counter force of the Arab Idealist liberal has to emerge to look more closely at the new world and its future .

## **V. THE IDEALIST - LIBERAL : JOINING THE NEW ORDER**

If geo-politics motivates the national security perceptions of the Arab radical conservative , geo-economics drive the perceptions of the idealist Arab liberal . His fears are not the new forms of domination from the West or Israel but from marginalization in the world system . This marginalization is partially due to the great transformations in the world order and the political, social and economic deficiencies in Arab societies and states . For him , the transformations in the world and regional orders may involve risks that calls for avoidance, but certainly they have opportunities that need not to be missed.

For the Arab liberal , whether he is coming from a small portion of the intelligentsia , or from some parts of the business community, or from the growing Arab civil society, the greatest threats to Arab security is coming from within not necessarily from without . Saad E. Ibrahim has noted that even the Arab- Israeli conflict, as important as it is, has not been the greatest danger to Arab security .And, for sure , the Arab - Israeli conflict was not the only conflict in the region during the same period . In fact , the Middle East , with only 8% of world population , has had 25% of all the world's armed conflicts since 1945 . The Middle East has Known all sorts of conflicts during the same period such as regional wars , wars of intervention , civil wars , intra - Arab rivalries and conflicts with devastating consequences to the human and material resources of the region . Most notably in the past two decades alone , the region witnessed two major wars in the Persian Gulf , civil wars in Lebanon , Yemen , Somalia , and Sudan , and waves of violence and terrorism .Table (1) below shows the devastating impacts of these conflicts on the resources of the region . Still these estimates excludes the opportunity cost lost for the area if these resources were put for a better use than armed conflicts . Table (1) also shows that the Arab - Israeli conflict , though considered the principal conflict in the region , has claimed some 200,000 lives in forty years . In contrast , during the same period , ethnic conflicts have claimed several times as many lives . The Lebanese civil war alone matched the same number of casualties as all Arab - Israeli wars . The Sudanese civil war has claimed at least five times as many lives as all Arab - Israeli wars . The same relative costs apply in terms of population displacement , material devastation , and financial expenditure .

**Table (1)**  
**The Cost of Armed Conflicts IN The Middle East And North**  
**Africa (MENA) Region :1948-1993)**

Type Of conflict	period	No. Of Casualties	Estimated Cost in billions of \$ US (1991Value)	Estimated Population Displacement
<b>A) Inter - State</b>				
Arab - Israeli	1948-1990	200,000	300.0	3,000,000
Iran-Iraq	1980-1988	600,000	300.0	1,000,000
Gulf War	1990-1991	120,000	650.0	1,000,000
Other Inter-State	1945-1991	70,000	50,0	1,000,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>940,000</b>	<b>1,300.0</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>
<b>B) Intra-State</b>				
Sudan	1956-1991	900,000	30.0	4,500,000
Iraq	1960-1991	400,000	30.0	1,200,000
Lebanon	1958-1990	180,000	50.0	1,000,000
N.Yemen	1962-1972	100,000	5,0	500,000
Syria	1975-1985	30,000	.,5	150,000
Morocco	1976-1991	20,000	3,0	100,000
S. Yemen	1986-1987	10,000	.,2	50,000
Somalia	1989-1991	20,000	.,3	200,000
Other Inter-State	1945-1991	30,000	1,0	300,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>1,690,000</b>	<b>110,0</b>	<b>8,000,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b> (All Armed Conflicts)		<b>2,630,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>14,000,000</b>

Source : Files of the Arab Data Unit (ADU), Ibn Khaldoun Center for Developmental Studies , Cairo , 1993 .

Reasons behind this propensity for inter - state and intra - state violence in the Arab world are abundant : the nation - state building process with what it entails in terms of the legitimacy of political regimes , the colonial heritage of borders , super and great powers contestations in the region , transnational ideologies of Pan -Arabism , Pan - Islamism and Zionism , sharp differences in wealth and resources among states ... etc. All these reasons have made power politics and geo-political concerns the dominant factors in influencing state

behaviour .

No matter what are the results of violence within and among Arab countries in human and resource costs, more important still is that the Arab world is facing five types of internal pressures which are threatening its politico - socio - economic fabric as it approaches the last years of the 20th century : population explosion , declining resources , economic problems of all sorts , political violence and radical Islamic fundamentalism .The Arab world has one of the highest rates of population growth in the world ( 2.7 % in 1993 when the Arab population was 240 million ) ) . Arab population was 100 million in 1965 . The number doubled to 200 million in 1988 . It is expected that the Arab world will have 280 million in the year 2000 and 390 by the year 2015 , surpassing the population of the USA . This population explosion exerts pressures on the increasingly limited resources . Further, the structure of the explosion makes it even more ominous . In 1992 , 45% of Arab population , were below the age of fifteen . Moreover , as a result of the expansion in education , an increasingly large numbers of professionals have been getting into the economic as well as the political markets . In 1970 there were only 760,000 Arab university graduates . This figure reached 1.4 million in 1980 . Projections for the year 2000 calls for 12 million. The newly emergent youthful and more educated but less employed population is bound to challenge the present equilibrium between the state and the society in the Arab world.

In the mean time , Arab resources are getting more and more limited . The decline of oil revenues has been the mark of the 1980s . The oil returns of Arab OPEC members in 1965 were a mere \$ 2.169 billion . By 1970, returns reached \$51.5 billion , and 1980 they skyrocketed to \$ 204.244 billion. Since then, revenues have declined annually to \$ 182.9 billion in 1981 , \$ 134.7 billion in 1982, \$ 101.7 billion in 1983 and 102.4 billion in 1984 . By 1990s , Arab oil revenues further declined to \$ 97.383 billion in 1990 , \$ 85.449 billion in 1991 , \$93.492 billion in 1992 , \$ 87.193 Billion in 1993 , and estimated at \$81.930 billion in 1994 . In real terms , oil prices in 1994 were only 29.6% percent of its value in 1973 . As oil exports account for more than 90% of the total exports of six Arab countries , more than 80% for eight, and about one half for twelve , it is possible to imagine the magnitude of the damage to Arab economies as a result of declining oil prices . The spill over effect for this decline covered the rest of of the Arab world as work opportunities and consequently migrant remittances deteriorated as well . All in all Arab economies have declined since mid - 1980s . In 1987 , the Arab GDP declined by 14% compared by 1980 . In 1986, Arab exports were about one third of what there were in 1980 . Arab debts to the outside world reached a total amount of \$ 210 billion in 1987 with Egypt, Iraq, Algeria , Morocco, and Sudan taking the lead . Inflation and recession were therefore the major characteristics of the Arab economies in the second half of the 1980s .

In the 1990s they become even worse . The second Gulf war has been devastating to Arab economies withan estimated cost of \$ 670 billion . In real

terms Arab GDPs either grew by modest rates or grew negatively . Arab exports which reached \$ 255 billion in 1980 declined to 160.6 in 1993 and imports increased from \$ 151 billion in 1980 to 161.6 in 1993 . In fact Arab non - oil exports ( with 240 million ) are now less than Finland's ( with 5 million ) . The Arab surplus of \$ 104 billion in the first year had turned into a deficit of a billion in the second . The end result of this decline in economic fortunes is that the Arab world has become lagging behind many third world regions . In terms of human development index , although the Arab world with 0.6443 is still above the developing world average of 0.5700 , it is now lagging behind the world average of 0.7589 , East Asia excluding China average of 0.8736 , Southeast Asia and Pacific average of 0.6506 , and Latin America and the Caribbean average of 0.8226 .

With the decline in the economic fortunes of the Arab world, political violence emerged . Political violence by opposition groups has been pervasive . During the 1980s, food riots occurred in Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan and Morocco . Demonstrations were common feature in most Arab countries . State violence, emergency laws and violations of human rights became the established norms in most of Arab countries . In the 1990s , the trend of violence and counter violence have been remarkable in many Arab states. The rise of the " Islamic alternative " to the existing Arab regimes has taken different forms . The general rise in the religiosity of the population , the increasing influence of the traditional religious institutions , the reemergence of the Muslim Brotherhood as a political force and the more radical and violent groups all aimed at using political power to apply the " shi'a " laws . Among all these elements the Muslim brotherhood remains the most powerful opposition group in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, the Gulf states . They managed, except in Syria and Libya, to have a legalised and semi legalised status within the political system . Other Islamic groups, however, function as underground movements and spouse violence for political actions . Parties of God, Al-Gihad ( Holly War ) , Al-Dawaa ( the Call ) and tens of Islamic factions and movements are the ones responsible for violent acts in all Arab countries .

This rise of radical fundamentalism in most Arab countries has caused setbacks top the process of democratization in the Arab world . Before the Gulf war, the winds of democratization in the ex-Soviet bloc seemed to have touched the Arab world mildly. Democratization took hold in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan and Yemen. In Egypt, the process started early in 1976. The process has stood the test of time. The post-Sadat assassination crisis, the differences between the government and the opposition over the elections of 1984 and 1987, the mutiny of the Central Security Forces in February 1986, and the declining economic fortunes of the country since 1985.

In Tunisia, a constitutional amendment in February 1988 put limits on the duration of the President in office (12 years maximum). Political parties were allowed to function and more freedoms for the press was granted. In Algeria, following the riots of October 1988, a new constitution was made which allowed

for the freedom of the press, the establishment of a multiparty system, and the separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers. Morocco which has controlled multiparty system has been further liberalized. Jordan which did not know political parties since 1957 and an election for parliament since 1967, elected a new parliament in November 1989 and the government announced its intentions for allowing political parties to be formulated. In Yemen, a new parliament was elected in 1989 and the new unity constitution established a multiparty system and allowed for the freedom of the press. In the rest of the Arab world, the pattern of democratization did not take hold. However, democracy and respect for human rights has become increasingly dominant in the Arab intellectual circles. The Arab organization of human rights was established in 1985 and since then it has stood against violations of human rights in the Arab world.

The record for democratization and human rights in the Arab world in the 1990s has been modest. In the positive side the Gulf states started to venture into the first steps of democratization. Oman has elected its first consultative assembly. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain announced intention to follow the step. Their assemblies, however, will be appointed. Saudi Arabia also announced that it will give provinces more powers. The most bright spot in the Gulf has been in Kuwait which has a constitution that contain provisions for an elected parliament, and freedom of the press. The last elected parliament was dissolved in 1986. In October 1992, a new parliament was elected freely and the opposition gained 60% of the seats.

Outside the Gulf, however, it seems that the democratization process in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, and Yemen are facing considerable challenges. Most notably is the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist forces. These forces succeeded to sweep the elections in Algeria which led the military to intervene and cancel the results of the elections. In other countries, the fear of Islamic fundamentalism has curtailed the democratization process and led to major violations of human rights. In Egypt, major opposition parties boycotted the elections of 1990 and since then the relations between the government and the opposition has been tense and sour even after they agreed to participate in the 1995 parliamentary elections. Similar characteristics are in Tunisia, Jordan, and Yemen.

For the Arab idealist liberal, therefore, the real dangers for Arab security lies in the Arab states not coming from without. The decline in economic performance, the rise of fundamentalism, the retardation of the democratization and the decay in political institutions are the major sources of the vulnerabilities of Arab societies and states. The reasons behind this regretful state of affairs can be traced to multiplicity of sources. However, the dominance of the geo-political agenda over the Arab world is partially at least responsible. The Arab-Israeli conflict, the other regional conflicts and disputes, and the inter and intra - Arab conflagrations have contributed massively to this realities. The geo-politics of the region, as important as they are, diverted resources from building Arab societies

and states to the service of geo-political concerns . Between 1976 and 1985 , the Arab world spent more than \$ 380 billion or about eight times the Israeli military expenditure on modernizing its armed forces . Between 1984 and 1991 , Iraq , Saudi Arabia , Egypt , Syria and Libya alone spent more than \$ 130 billion in purchasing arms . Following the Gulf war , the Arab arms bill exceeded \$ 100 billion . Ironically , most of the arms for cash transfers of the Arab world have occurred basically with the west .

This diversion did not only made Arab states less capable of meeting their traditional security challenges , but also loosing their global standing as outlined above and in fact are threatened with increased marginalization in world affairs . What is needed for the Arab world , therefore , is a major transformation of their strategic posture from geo-politics to geo-economics . This need does not require from the Arab world to forgo its geo-political concerns , but rather to have a different approach to realize them . This approach does not only emanates from the basic transformations that are taking place in the global order , but also from the necessities and vulnerabilities of the Arab order itself .

What the Arabs need more than any thing else , not more armed resistance and steadfastness to western challenges , but rather to make peace through integration and interdependence with the global capitalist order . The essence of the challenge here is the ability of Arab states to compete in the world markets like the rest of the NICs in the developing world . Peace , therefore , in the Middle East is essential not only to make better use of Arab resources but also to give Arab societies and states the opportunity for socioeconomic and political evolution that has been arrested by geo-political confrontations . In the words of Muhammed Sayed Ahmad :

**" the replacement of war by peace has to mean at the end the replacement of scarcity by abundance ,and the feeling of the residents of the area that the share of every individual of the goods should not mean aggression on others , because there is enough for all . This conflict ( the Arab-Israeli one ) in the 20th century took the image of a conflict over territories . But barren territories are not territories . To make territories large and expansive , not the object of conflict , it has to be a source for life ... Then territories will be the source for amity and peace instead of being the source of confrontations and wars " .**

The essence of the Arab idealist liberal argument is to call for the replacement of a zero-sum-game in the Middle East by a non- zero-sum-game that allow all the parties in the area to flourish and prosper , and,hence, be able to compromise and reach historical accommodation . The major challenge that faces the Middle East is the same one that faces the other regions of the world in which " competitiveness " substitute conflict , and raising productivities replace arms race . As this could not be achieved without prevalence of peace in the area , peace also could not be achieved without a common geo-economic venture to the future . In other words , if the Arab side of the conflict in the Middle East seek to

restore territories occupied by Israel , it could do that not only through acceptance of Israel in the region , but also through creating economic stakes to Israel in the region .

Here, the idealist liberal Arab does not have the scare of the Arab conservative radical from the Israeli economic prowess and the Israeli ability to dominate Arab markets . First , economics is not like politics a zero-sum-game . In economic activities all parties can benefit . Second, although Israel has an impressive GDP of \$ 65.59 billion , it is still much less than the Arab GDP of \$ 507.7 billion in 1993 . Even , if Israel will be compared with the Arab countries surrounding it plus Saudi Arabia alone it will count only for one quarter . In fact , if Israel compared with one Arab country , Saudi Arabia , it will count for half . That by no means deny the dynamism and the vitality of the Israeli economy , but the point here is that the ability of the Israeli economy to dominate the area is not only overly exaggerated but also outright wrong . In fact in an open Middle East market and under the new regulations of GATT , the Israeli economy , as well as the Arab economies will have to compete with major industrialized powers which present a fundamental challenge to both sides of the Arab - Israeli divide .

Of no lesser importance , a geo-economic approach to Arab relations with Israel will make the latter less inclined to define its security needs in terms of territories . Projects to increase the water resources of the area will make Israel less inclined to keep territories in the West Bank for fear of Arab over drawing on the limited amounts of water available for consumption . Projects of similar importance can not only put the formula of land for peace into implementation , but also change the Israeli society from an armed fortress mentality to an open community with a welfare mentality that is ready to compromise on issues such as Jerusalem and Israeli nuclear capability .

But as Israel is not the only problem for the Arab world , peace is essential in the same way with the Western world and other regional powers like Iran and Turkey if they accept the same approach for regional interactions . Even the same approach is more needed among and within Arab countries . For democratization and economic development , the politics of geo-economics should replace power politics . It is a rational choice for the Arab countries to make in order to face the modern day essence of security . However , the choice will depend on the abilities of Arab countries to adjust to this essence . The adjustment will require nothing less than the restructuring of the domestic environment of these countries and massive reeducation of the public . Elsewhere , the author has suggested that for Egypt to get into the geo-politics of the region it will have to undergo basic political and economic reforms to upgrade its regional assets if it is determined to keep its leading regional role .

I have argued that up to the end of the 1960s Egypt formulated its regional role on the bases of its geo-political position , power capabilities , and the model it built for others in the region to inspire , emulate , and sometimes fear . As the Egyptian power position started to decline starting from the 1970s , Egypt relied on daring and courageous foreign policy to keep its regional role alive . However

, as the end of the 20th century approaches , and as a result of world and regional developments this could not be longer the case . Egypt has to increase and substantially so its regional power capabilities through an energized and more speedy economic and political reforms along the lines demonstrated before . This will give Egypt important assets that could utilize in regional affairs .

**First** , Egypt with a market of sixty million of consumers is one of the largest in the Middle East providing that the Egyptian economy will get out of its slow pace of growth . Currently , Egyptian imports account for more or less \$11 billion , and exports stand at \$ 3.8 billion . This does not make Egypt a lucrative trading partner . Nor it make a seductive investment opportunity . However , if Egypt could resume economic growth at the rate of 7% the coming ten Years , which it achieved during the period 1974-1984 , Egypt will increasingly be an influential economic partner . If the Egyptian tourist attraction , that no other Middle East country can match , is added , and its transnational human resources are consolidated , Egypt will not be any more an arena for fundamentalist terrorism nor it will be an economic burden on its regional or international partners . But rather Egypt will restore its power position in the area in economic as well as political terms .

**Second**, the end of the Arab - Israeli conflict , and the international commitments to the development of the triangle of Israel, Palestine , and Jordan should create not in the too long future a vibrant economic area . Egypt should not be away from this development . It should take an active part in the development of the Palestinian economy and energize economic relations with other parties of the triangle . The development of north Sinai and the coastal line of the Gulf of Aqaba and probably the whole of the Sinai peninsula should act as developmental bridge between the Egyptian hinterland and the economic growth in the East of Egypt and probably in the future with the rest of the Mashrik , Turkey , and the Arabian peninsula .

**Third** , the geographical site of Egypt has made it viable a strategic as well as economic transportation point for three continents . The establishment of the Suez canal in the 19th century has added considerably to these assets . The creation of the Sumed oil pipeline , with the capacity of 1.6 million barrels a day , has showed the potential of Egypt as a passage for oil and possibly gas in the future . This could be consolidated through sophisticated networks of roads and railways that could be extended via Israel to the Mashrek states and the Gulf . In fact the Camp David accords has envisioned the establishment of a high way that link Sinai to the city of Aqaba in Jordan via Elat in Israel . More important, in the long run, when Libya and Sudan have been integrated into the new developments in the Middle East , Egypt could be the transit point , as it always was , between the Mashrek , Maghreb and African countries .

**Fourth** , and probably the most important , Egypt has the largest cultural industry in the region . No other country in the Middle East has the capability that Egypt has not only in cultural influence but also in the making and manufacturing of cultural products . Before 1952 revolution , Egyptian movies were the second



exporting commodity after cotton . Although Cairo continue to be the major seat in the Middle East for Arabic cultural products , it has been working in the minimum of its potential . In the areas of news papers , books , films , video , television and broadcasting , Egypt has the traditions , the talents , the tolerance, and the institutions that can not only enhance the Egyptian position in the region but also create a virtual economic monopoly . In the past decades , bureaucratic difficulties has stifled this potential . The liberalization of Egypt politically and economically will give Egypt much expanded possibilities in this direction . And as development of education in the area takes place , and as using audio-visual material will expand as a result of satellite transmission , Egypt will be the best equipped and qualified to fill the pages , the papers , and hundreds of television hours .

The same need is pronounced in other Arab countries particularly those heavily engaged in the Arab - Israeli peace process . As one recently published paper about the Jordanian threat perceptions concluded :

**Jordan is going through a process of change and adjustment at its political and strategic levels . The new era , characterized by a peaceful relationship with an old enemy - Israel - requires a through reshuffling of the structures , relationships , and perceptions of most groups and centres of power in the country . The articulation of wholly new terms of reference for the various political groups and actors is an unavoidable consequence . There is a need to modify attitudes , convictions , and behaviours . The entire system is trying to adjust to and adopt the new realities .**

But adjustment with the magnitude needed in the Arab countries is not an easy matter . It requires major policy choices and fundamental alternative strategies . Those by definition create dilemmas and convulsions that the Arab idealist liberal has no much answers .

## **VI. THE PRAGMATIC- REALIST: THE FEAR OF THE FUTURE**

If the Arab radical conservative is captivated by the past, and the Arab liberal idealist is fascinated by the future , the pragmatic realist Arab is arrested by the present . And as the present is a byproduct of the past and a preparation for the future , the pragmatic realist is caught between nightmares and dreams , between risks and opportunities . Nothing can illustrate the dilemma of the Arab pragmatic realist , who is located in the Arab bureaucratic and think tank circles , than a Jordanian perspective on national security perceptions in the Middle East published by UNIDIR which concludes :

**One major element missing in the course of the entire ( Arab - Israeli ) process is predictability . This lack of predictability is coupled with a deep sense of disappointment , due to the outcome of the Arab struggle against Israel during the past fifty years .**

Uncertainty about the future and frustration , nurtured by past failure , are rendered more complicated by chronic economic problems . There lies the most serious source of fear to the ordinary Jordanian .

In the new era , Jordanians have to reconcile the new requirements of peace with Israel with the old commitments and the attachments to their past - politically , territorially , culturally , and strategically . A serious tension exists , at least in the view of the public , between the push of a new Middle East and the pull of the deeply held sense of belonging to the Arab nation . The prospects of a potential conflict , as well as the inevitable choice between these two poles of attraction represented in the political environment , are the most serious sources of threats perceived by the Jordanians .

Musa Braizat in another study published by the Center for Strategic studies in Amman reiterates the dilemma of the pragmatic realist and offer the way to deal with it :

In conclusion, Jordan has succeeded in the past in reconciling conflicting goals and managed to preserve its two principle objectives of ( Jordanian ) national survival and the ( Arab ) nation's revival . With the entering of Israel into the picture one has to wait and see before reaching any particular conclusion . For requirement of survival may change as well as Arab nationalism . But regardless of any changes of circumstances Jordan should not abandon its balanced approach toward new developments . Such an approach has helped it cope with the adverse circumstances successfully . And for that it is worth the others' attention, as well as continued vigilance on the part of the leadership to avoid being dragged , unwillingly and/or unintentionally , into the morass of the status-quo within the Arab world , or drifting into the unknown of Israel's strategic calculations; either one would lead to its losing its soul .

The dilemma of the pragmatic realist in Jordan is not totally new for the likes in Egypt and Palestine who went in the same road before . Neither would like to lose its soul by foregoing old geo-political attachments , nor to move to an uncertain future . As no body is certain about Israel's , or the West's for that matter, intentions for the future , going slowly and linkage between geo-political concerns and geo-economic interests will be the name of the game . The fear of the pragmatist realist will have two folds : First, Israel may have its acceptance and legitimization in the region with peace treaties with major Arab countries, and still refuses to give the Palestinians their statehood , insists on occupying Arab territories including Jerusalem as the " eternal" capital for Israel , having unjust share of available water resources and keeping its nuclear arms intact. Second , Israel with the help from the West as happened in the past will have the lion share of the "peace dividends" leaving only crumbs to the Arabs . In either cases the West feeling that Israel is totally secured will stop caring about the rest of the region .

To avoid both pitfalls , Egypt opted for a cold peace with Israel that warms with every move forward towards Arab demands from Israel . In the meantime Egypt continued to raise its basic security demands regarding the Israeli nuclear weapons at every corner of the peace process at the cost sometimes of raising anger in the West . In the Amman economic summit , the Egyptian foreign Minister Amre Musa while offered 85 projects for regional cooperation condemned those Arabs who " rushed " towards Israel . The Egyptian document to the conference emphasised the linkage of economic cooperation to security concerns and the necessity of equitable distribution of the returns of peace . The preface to the document titled " **Egypt's Perspective : Regional Economic Development and Cooperation** " included the following :

- " Egypt believes that for peace to deepen and prevail , an accelerated economic development strategy should be in place . This strategy must be **equitable** and sustainable . "

- " This document highlights Egypt's perspective on development region . The underlying question is whether or not peace can help countries in the region to formulate and implement strategies for **equitable** and sustainable growth . "

- " An economic tiger can emerge if the countries of the region adopt an accelerated , **equitable** and sustainable economic development strategy . "

- " The programs and projects to be implemented should effectively lead to :

- \* more jobs and more opportunities for people to make a living , develop and grow ;
- \* Reduced poverty ( absolute , relative and dual ) ;
- \* Minimizing and eliminating suffering of the people ;
- \* **Attaining a comparable standard of living eliminating gaps ;**
- \* Profit for business , economic and social value added for nations . "

- " Finally, we hope that the Amman forum will revisit the Agenda set in Casablanca and propose a new agenda which contributes towards a lasting and just peace , sustained development , faster growth , long term cooperation , deeper business involvement , and better standard of living for all people . "

The Executive Summary of the document moves forward to emphasize the same principles :

- " Peace is rooted in the principle " Land for Peace " and is based on three fundamental principles :

- \* **Political settlement;**
- \* **Arms control and regional security ;**
- \* **Regional economic cooperation . "**

- " It is Egypt's perspective that only through political settlement as well as arms control and regional security will the path be paved for inter - regional development and cooperation ....Such cooperation will only be achieved if the countries of the region adhere to a number of principles , rules and guidelines including :

\* Relations between countries of region should be governed by international law , the core of which are the purposes and the principles of the United Nations Charter;

\* Regional cooperation should be in the context of comprehensive peace and security for parties concerned;

\* Regional cooperation should reduce economic disparities;

\* It should be balanced with all parties gaining in the process and receiving equitable reciprocal advantage with due consideration to their levels of development ;

\* It should promote the integration of the region into the global markets ;

\* Regional cooperation should promote and actively involve the private sector ;

\* Transparency is an essential element of regional cooperation ."

- "Thus we see a new Middle East free of war and weapons of mass destruction , with all its peoples accorded equal rights which must be respected and guaranteed , and where the realities of economic development surpass the most wishful dreams of past generations ."

In the Political Perspective of the document the following has been emphasized :

- " Comprehensive peace in the wider sense , will not be viable unless we change archaic perceptions and doctrines of ensuing security through deterrence , military stockpiling and the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction . Consequently , the arms control and regional security pillar should ensure equal security for all the lowest armament levels . Future security must be built on regional cooperation and the rule of law , not on cheer force . Egypt is thus advocating a new Middle East where a regime for arms control and regional security reigns supreme . Confidence must be built through the collective contribution of all states of the region to this regime , providing equal security for all and with all parties taking upon themselves the same obligations and commitments . It is unrealistic to expect regional stability to prevail if any of the parties persist in maintaining a preferential security status . In this vein , and in the

light of the serious threats of mass destruction pose , particularly nuclear weapons , Egypt has called upon all states of the region , including Israel which has unsafeguarded nuclear facilities , to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and apply full scope IAEA safe guards to its facilities , in order to facilitate the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East , and free the region of all weapons of mass destruction ."

- " Progress in the two pillars of political settlement and arms control is however imperative to achieve optimum economic interaction . Without progress in these areas , regional economic cooperation will remain shackled by suspicions and crippled by private sector fear of political instability , thus tremendous potential will have gone to waste ."

We have deliberately used these long quotations to show the Egyptian attempt to overcome its fears through the management of geo-economic affairs to be reconciled with old geo-political concerns . Although the Arab - Israeli peace process has achieved noticeable progress in the past two years three factors continue to highlight geo-political concerns and threaten to reverse the entire process . These are the delay in the implementation of the Palestinian- Israeli agreement , the slow progress in the Israeli-Syrian ( and hence the Lebanese ) front , and the current arms race in the area particularly in mass destruction weapons .

And if the uncertainty of the future and the commitments of the past formulate the security dilemmas of the pragmatic realist in Jordan and Egypt , they are even more so for the Palestinian .After all ,as Yazid Sayigh will argue , the Palestinians have achieved only an interim arrangement with their former adversary " which the terms of the end - result have not defined , let alone agreed . Moreover , there is an immense asymmetry of power and other capabilities , unlike in any other bilateral Arab - Israeli strategic relationship . More specifically , the Palestinian enjoy neither political sovereignty nor territorial integrity . Therefore , their vulnerability to pressure is extremely high , and their ability to determine their own security requirements correspondingly low " . So , it is not surprising that the Palestinians still look at their security as being under an " existential threat" from Israel and probably other Arab countries .However , the current peace process in the Middle East has opened for the Palestinians , with a territorially based political entity , opportunities that were previously unthinkable .For these opportunities , the Palestinian pragmatic realist will have to pursue his old dream of statehood or to find out his destiny in a much wider regional arrangements .

In making the choice between the bleak past and the uncertain future , between risks and opportunities, lies the dilemma of the Palestinian and the rest of

his pragmatic realist Arab fellows. To that dilemma the West has to come up with a solution .

## **VII. WHAT THE WEST CAN DO ? : FROM GEO-POLITICS TO GEO-ECONOMICS**

To repeat , the above mentioned perceptions are only "ideal types" . They represent , however , a broad spectrum of opinions with possible cross overs depending on the subject matter . They share the fears of possible further decline in the Arab position in world affairs and apprehensions from Israeli superiority and its connection with the West . They defer , nevertheless , on the ways and means of dealing with this fears . and the priorities of actions internally and externally . There are very little indicators about the extent of support these "ideal types " have in the general Arab public . Most likely , the Arab masses have a mixture of the three .

To deal with these security perceptions , the West is faced with a strategic option between benevolent indifference and constructive response to Arab security concerns . The case for benevolent indifference can be supported by the fact that the West itself is undergoing a process of transformation of its own . In the last few years , the foreign policies of Western countries have been concentrating on four areas : a) the consolidation of the world capitalist system through the administration of cross Atlantic and cross Pacific relations by building networks of free trade areas towards the full globalization of the system; b) neutralizing possibilities of destabilising international security that may have resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union , and attempting to integrate the ex-Soviet bloc into the world capitalist order; and c) developing major and giant markets particularly in China , India , Brazil and Argentina ; and d) preventing regional crises from disturbing world development as the possible case with the Bosnian War , the Arab- Israeli conflict and the conflict in the Gulf .

The Western attitudes towards the Arab world have put Arab countries and the rest of the Middle East in the last area of concern . All in all Western policies have been successful . As Israeli security and acceptance in the area have been attainable , and Gulf security and the cheap oil flows to the West have been guaranteed , the West's major interests have been secured . Over and above , the Arab world , with its level of development , does not offer a tempting lucrative market except in arms supplies which is also achievable . As the oil prices declined sharply and as the West has learned to deal with the energy crisis of the 1970s , the Arab world has become less important . Arms supplies , however , particularly from the US , France and UK , have been flowing to the Arab world in large sums in the past two decades .

The case for constructive response should , however , be more tempting . First , the Western need for the Arab and Middle Eastern oil will continue well to the coming century . A recent study by the Houston- based consulting firm indicates that world oil demand is forecasted to continue rising in the future . In

East and South Asia alone demand is projected to grow by 3.5% per year through 2000 before levelling off to around 2% annually in the fifteen years to 2015 . The study expects the Middle East to provide a full 80% of this incremental demand , or about 8.5 mn b/d in the next 20 years , over and above what is providing today . Also , the US Defence Department issued a report in May 1995 outlining " enduring strategic interests " in the Middle East . The study points out that the world will become even more dependent on Gulf oil in the early 21st century than it is today .

Second , the Arab world is undergoing a painful process of transformation that breeds violence and disintegration . No matter what are the reasons for this state of affair , the West particularly Europe will not be far away from the results . Fundamentalist , and nationalist violence of all sorts will not be confined to the Arab states nor to the Arab region . The case of Algeria will not but a rehearsal for more to come . For their proximity to Europe geographically as well as historically , the events in the Arab world have always a spill over impacts in the North of the Mediterranean .

Third , the Arab world has the potential of being a lucrative economic partner . It has been in the past during the oil boom days and it could be even more so in the future . With major economic reforms , which some of it is already underway , the Arab GDP that stands at more than half a trillion dollars will be even more lucrative . In fact , if the purchasing power of the dollar is accounted for , the Arab GDP will be more than double its current value .

Yet , the choice is for the West to make . But if the West opted for constructive response , it will have to address Arab perceptions of security particularly those pertaining to the credibility of the West and the confidence in the future to give the Arab idealist liberal the hope he looks for , to provide the Arab pragmatic realist the daring he needs , and shake the faith of the Arab conservative radical in the eternal adversity of the West . To do that , the Western efforts should upgrade the Middle East from an area for crisis and conflict management to an area of economic management in the road of development , interdependence , and integration into the world capitalist system . This could not be achieved without helping in putting the foundation for a regional order that is characterized by geo-economic relations more than geo-political ones . This could take place along the following guiding principles :

1- The completion of the current agenda of the peace process particularly in the Syrian and Palestinian fronts. On the Syrian front , the West can spouse a more active initiative along the following lines :

a-Israel reaffirms Syrian sovereignty over the Golan and commits itself to full withdrawal from the Golan during acceptable period of time .

b-Syria commits itself to recognize Israel and its rights to security . Syria pledges its commitment to full peace which include the following : establishment of full diplomatic relations , the end of economic boycott , and the development of economic and cultural relations .

c-Israeli withdrawal and Syria's steps to normalize relations will be in

parallel stages and phased in accordance with a schedule negotiated by the parties . These phased steps will be simultaneous and interdependent , and will be accompanied by the introduction of mutual security measures .

On the Palestinian front , where the negotiations for the final status for the Palestinian question will commence next year , the West should refrain from giving Israeli claims for territory or Jerusalem a helping hand . Assurances on the highest level to Arab states that Western countries will abide by international commitments regarding the Palestinian question and Jerusalem in particular should be granted by major Western institutions .

2- A commitment by the West for an arms control process in the Middle East that account not only for Arab capabilities but also for Israel's . A western initiative in this area should have two folds .The first is to link arms control measures with a political timetable for the overall settlement. The second is to eliminate the most devastating weapons from the area. This could not be achieved without transparency of information about mass destruction weapons in the inventory of both sides of the conflict. Transparency also important for negotiations on conventional weapons. Both sides should provide information about not only the existing inventory of weapons under their disposal but also about weapons under development. A moratorium on the acquisition and development of high technology weapons should be implemented during the negotiating process. Another alternative is to make the moratorium on the deployment of these weapons. This particularly important for long range (more than 150 km) ballistic missiles and ABMs such as the Israeli Arrow. A ban on exporting cruise and long range` ballistic and cruise missiles should be arranged among arms exporting countries. The present Israeli plans to expand their sea projection capabilities, particularly sea launched long range conventional and nuclear missiles and advanced submarines should be halted during the Arab-Israeli negotiations. This step will prevent triggering a new naval race that may make arms control measures difficult in the future.

3- A Western commitment for including the Middle East in its global capital investment posture. This commitment should upgrade the Middle East from an area for crisis and conflict management to an area of economic management in the road of development , interdependence , and integration into the world capitalist system . All aid to the states to the region should involve a portion for regional cooperation projects. The current American sponsored economic cooperation in the Middle East , and the European oriented Mediterranean initiative helpful in that direction . However , countries and peoples in the region should be assured by words and deeds that cooperation will be for the benefit of all countries not only the West and Israel .

4- The West should help , and pressure if necessary , to build a substantial strategic and geo-economic understanding among the major regional powers in the area. The Western European integration projects in the post World War II era were not to be built without American pressures on France , Germany , Italy , and Britain , The West should do the same for the major regional powers namely



Egypt , Saudi Arabia , Turkey , and Israel . The agenda for the four regional powers can very much be the consolidation of peace in the area , promoting different forms of interdependence , and integrating the Middle East into the world economic system , and reincorporating the still radical states in the region into an ambitious regional economic development . Luckily , the four countries have close association with the west for different reasons , and thus they could bridge the Middle East to the new emerging world order . A special attention from the west for creating this understanding among the four regional powers is needed .

5- The West could help in building , or rebuilding , regional institutions could be one of the functions of the regional strategic understandings among the four major regional powers . So far , Middle Eastern countries are belonging to different regional institutions such as the Arab League , the Organization of Islamic Conference , and the Organization of African Unity . Only Israel does not belong to any of these institutions . In fact these institutions tended to take an anti - Israeli stand as a part of the Arab efforts to balance the Israeli strong association with the West . Integrating Israel into a regional institutional framework could be part of a regional effort in a new era . Recently , Israeli foreign minister Shimon Perez suggested that Israel and Turkey should join the Arab League providing that the League will change its name to be a Middle East regional organization . The idea was negatively received in Arab countries because it seems to replace an organization based on the Arab cultural identity and replace it with a Middle Eastern one . Solving these contradictions through creating observer and association status in addition to membership in the Arab League that allow non-Arab states to participate should overcome this obstacle. The same principal should be allowed in any other regional arrangements. The purpose of this type of arrangement is to create the largest possible web of networking in the region.

