

American University in Cairo

## AUC Knowledge Fountain

---

Faculty Book Chapters

---

1991

### The United States, the Arab World and the Gulf Crisis

Dan Tschirgi

Follow this and additional works at: [https://fount.aucegypt.edu/faculty\\_book\\_chapters](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/faculty_book_chapters)



Part of the [International Relations Commons](#), and the [Near and Middle Eastern Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

##### APA Citation

Tschirgi, D. (1991). *The United States, the Arab World and the Gulf Crisis*. American University in Cairo Press. , 5-57

[https://fount.aucegypt.edu/faculty\\_book\\_chapters/901](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/faculty_book_chapters/901)

##### MLA Citation

Tschirgi, Dan *The United States, the Arab World and the Gulf Crisis*. American University in Cairo Press, 1991.pp. 5-57

[https://fount.aucegypt.edu/faculty\\_book\\_chapters/901](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/faculty_book_chapters/901)

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by AUC Knowledge Fountain. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Book Chapters by an authorized administrator of AUC Knowledge Fountain. For more information, please contact [fountadmin@aucegypt.edu](mailto:fountadmin@aucegypt.edu).

**CAIRO PAPERS**  
**IN SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**PERSPECTIVES ON THE GULF CRISIS**

**By**  
**DAN TSCHIRGI**  
**BASSAM TIBI**

**Volume 14, Monograph 1, Spring 1991**



With Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, he initiated a series of events that may well mark a watershed in the modern history of the Middle East. As of this writing (February, 1991) Saddam's assault has not been fully played out, though it has already led Iraq into battle against the largest international force assembled in the region since World War II. Only over the ensuing Gulf War is over, and even then only with the limited passage of time, will the full significance of the crisis followed by the invasion of Kuwait become apparent.

This work does not try to assess the full range of implications arising from the Gulf War, but rather to provide a historical context for the crisis.

## THE UNITED STATES, THE ARAB WORLD, AND THE GULF CRISIS

The following pages examine the historical context of the crisis, and the political context of the crisis. The historical context is both chronic and episodic. It is chronic, but not linear, and episodic, as it assigns responsibility for the crisis to a single, overriding factor of United States politics, the context in which it operates is all levels, from the level of the power elite to the level of the masses, and the level of the masses. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis.

In examining the history of the crisis, we will explore the historical context of the crisis, the political context of the crisis, and the historical context of the crisis. The historical context is both chronic and episodic. It is chronic, but not linear, and episodic, as it assigns responsibility for the crisis to a single, overriding factor of United States politics, the context in which it operates is all levels, from the level of the power elite to the level of the masses, and the level of the masses. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis.

Dan Tschirgi

The following pages examine the historical context of the crisis, and the political context of the crisis. The historical context is both chronic and episodic. It is chronic, but not linear, and episodic, as it assigns responsibility for the crisis to a single, overriding factor of United States politics, the context in which it operates is all levels, from the level of the power elite to the level of the masses, and the level of the masses. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis.

The historical context of the crisis is both chronic and episodic. It is chronic, but not linear, and episodic, as it assigns responsibility for the crisis to a single, overriding factor of United States politics, the context in which it operates is all levels, from the level of the power elite to the level of the masses, and the level of the masses. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis. It is chronic, as it is a process, and it is episodic, as it is a crisis.

highlighted in other texts several thousand Kuwaiti hostages by forbidding their entry from Iraq or occupied Kuwait.

Led by the United States, the international community rejected any possibility of "linking" Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait to other issues. The stage was set for the showdown which took place. Over the following months, apart from permitting the presence of foreign hostages, the Iraqi government showed no signs of moderating its position. On January 17, some twenty-four hours after the expiration of a United Nations deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, Coalition forces were not hesitating to invade occupied Kuwait.

At this moment (February, 1991), the conflict has not ended. However, even should the projected levels of destruction within Iraq, Kuwait, Iraq's neighbors and the economic infrastructure appear to suggest that the Gulf Crisis will be resolved in the

## THE UNITED STATES, THE ARAB WORLD AND THE GULF CRISIS

... it is possible to expect that the crisis will be resolved in the near future. The United States, in particular, has been instrumental in the process. The role of the United States in the Gulf Crisis will be examined in this paper. The author is Professor of International Relations at the American University in Washington, D.C. He has also served as a consultant to the United States Government in the Gulf Crisis. While the author does not take any particular position on the crisis, he does believe that the United States has played a significant role in the resolution of the crisis.

The United States has been instrumental in the process of resolving the crisis. The author believes that the United States has played a significant role in the resolution of the crisis. The author does not take any particular position on the crisis, but he does believe that the United States has played a significant role in the resolution of the crisis.

The author believes that the United States has played a significant role in the resolution of the crisis. The author does not take any particular position on the crisis, but he does believe that the United States has played a significant role in the resolution of the crisis.

What was in the Gulf region at that time, as it is currently, is a complex one. It is difficult to hope for a definitive resolution of the Gulf Crisis and its implications. However, it does not seem overly ambitious to hope that the author's position in this work can be a contribution to the development of such an understanding.

The editors of *CAIRO PAPERS* gratefully acknowledge an important role of Dr. George Gibson, Professor of the American University in Cairo, without whom this project could not have materialized.



## Introduction

When Saddam Hussein ordered Iraqi troops across Kuwait's frontier on August 2, 1990, he initiated a series of events that may well mark a watershed in the modern history of the Middle East. As of this writing (February, 1991) Saddam's gambit has not been fully played out, though it has already led Iraq into battle against the largest international force assembled in the region since World War II. Only once the ongoing Gulf War is over, and even then only with the further passage of time, will the full significance of the crisis fomented by the invasion of Kuwait become apparent.

This work does not try to assess the full range of implications arising from the Gulf Crisis. Instead, it has the more modest goal of putting the current critical situation into a perspective predicated on the assumption that neither the government of Iraq nor its adversaries acted in a vacuum. In trying to do so, the following pages essentially address a single, but fundamental, question: what was there in the political context of the Middle East that led to the Gulf Crisis? The suggested answer is both simple and complex. It is simple, but one hopes not simplistic, in that it assigns responsibility for the crisis to a single, overriding reality of Middle East politics: the extent to which politics at all levels has become void of purposes other than the mere acquisition and expansion of power. It becomes complex in its effort to explain how, and why, political activity in the region has on the whole taken on this characteristic.

In attempting the latter objective, this work argues that the contemporary Middle East's political environment has arisen over time because of four factors, while being conditioned by a fifth. The four generative elements are directly related to the region. They are: *first*, what is termed here "the Arab crisis"; *second*, the development and nature of the Arab World's ties to the global economic system; *third*, the development of the role of the United States in the Middle East; and *fourth*, the Palestine issue. The final, conditioning, factor is identified as the overall contemporary international political environment--an environment whose chief characteristic is presently found in the end of the Cold War.

Extrapolating from the analysis that follows, the work's final pages attempt to identify imperatives implied by the Gulf Crisis for more positive relations between the international community--with special reference to the United States--and the Arab World. That there is need for thought along these lines seems to me evident from the nature of the crisis itself. For while the current conflict arose from, and continues to be a manifestation of, intra-Arab frictions, it also rapidly became seen by many in the Middle East as a clash between the Arab and non-Arab worlds.

This ominous development should not be lightly dismissed, particularly since the more unlovely aspects of Saddam's record are well known at all levels in the Arab World. His ability to command a significant degree of sympathy as Iraq confronted the international community is an issue that cannot be ignored. Addressing it implies the necessity of looking broadly at the modern history of



relations between Arabs and non-Arabs. The following pages therefore delve into aspects of the recent background to ties between non-Arab actors and the Arab World. The lesson drawn is that principle and self-interest are far more mutually reinforcing than is often recognized in the normal course of political interaction. It remains an open question whether that lesson--rather ironically, one now energetically being acted upon as the International Coalition wages war against Saddam's regime--will be retained once the present conflict in the Gulf is settled.

### The Crisis of the Arab World

The term "crisis" has been regularly linked to the Arab World since the Nineteenth Century. Frequently applied to specific and more or less acute problems, the label also has been an enduring description of a general plight gripping the region as a whole. In this latter sense, an incomplete list of characterizations of the Arab World must include those describing it as undergoing an "identity crisis," a "moral crisis," a "cultural crisis," a "psychological crisis," or a "spiritual crisis."<sup>1</sup>

Possible diagnostic differences implied by the several adjectives are unimportant here. The point is that the notion of endemic crisis reflects a reality that Arab and non-Arab observers have repeatedly stressed. It is, moreover, a crisis whose nature basically involves the Arab appraisal of its collective self and of its collective relationship to the non-Arab world. The former aspect of the Arab crisis subsumes various troublesome questions that have yet to produce a consensus. Among these are: What is, or should be, the relationship between Arabism and religion; between individual freedom and communal responsibility; between rich and poor sectors of the Arab World; between society and the state; between government and citizenry; and between the existing Arab polities themselves?

Similarly, the other half of the Arab crisis incorporates a broad range of unresolved issues related to cultural, economic, and political ties with the non-Arab World. Among these: To what extent, and in what specific ways, if any, should Arab culture be modified in accordance with, or accommodate, non-Arab cultural patterns, values, and norms? How should the Arab World relate to the world economy, and how should it work to bring about the desired relationship? How should the Arab World relate to the global political system and how should it bring about that relationship?

Although this broadly existential crisis has roots extending at least to the Nineteenth Century, its politically unsettling impact increased following the full measure of independence gained by most of the Arab World after World War II. The cause of this is found largely in that very independence, a condition that not only soon undermined dominant elites in key Arab countries but also saw competing socio-political preferences grow and struggle.



Much of the Arab World's history since World War II comprises the chronicle of this competition. Yet, as Malcolm Kerr noted years ago, events moved not toward reconciliation but toward greater tension; toward greater reliance on violence, on extremist stands, on zero-sum posturing.<sup>2</sup>

Leading Arab thinkers recognized the challenge facing their region in the first rush of emerging full independence, as well as the diverse menu of options proffered by those who would meet it. Four decades ago Habib Amin Kurani argued that "the key to the future of the Arab World" lay in the nature of Arab response to Western civilization and reviewed the alternatives as he saw them:

In their attitude toward the cultural aspects of Western civilization Arabs may be placed on a scale varying between two extremes. On one end of the scale, there are those who advocate...turning westward, and breaking away completely from Arab traditions and beliefs....

On the opposite end of the scale, there are those who have not reconciled themselves to the superiority of Western culture, who chafe at the greater power of the West and in self-defense reject the West and all it stands for....

Most educated Arab youth, however, fall midway between the two groups. They believe that Western civilization has possibilities for making significant contributions to the Arabs, but that there are virtues and elements of strength in Arab civilization which are worth preserving. But precisely what elements of Western civilization should be borrowed, or what are the elements of strength in Arab civilization which should be preserved? Is this process of conscious and deliberate cultural selection practical or possible? These are questions which educated Arab nationalists have been able to answer only partially.<sup>3</sup>

Writing at the same time, Constantine Zurayk upheld Pan Arabism and attempted to identify both the requisites for attaining Arab Unity and possible obstacles to that goal. Zurayk cited industrialization, secularism, scientific training, and the assimilation "of what is best in Western civilization" as four steps necessary for the Arab Nation's development. None of this would be easy, and success would very much depend on whether Arab nationalism:

becomes broad or narrow, tolerant or exclusive, progressive or reactionary-- whether, in other words, it becomes the outward expression of an inner civilization or contracts upon itself and dies of suffocation....<sup>4</sup>

Zurayk offered this as a necessary (though not sufficient) basis for Arab development:

In facing the difficulties that now stand in the way of their national progress, and to be able to tackle the serious problems that are confronting them, the Arabs are in need of two things: enlightened and capable leadership and a radical change in



their attitude toward life. From them the new attitude requires searching self-examination; merciless rejection of all weakening and reactionary factors in their national life; objective appreciation and cultivation of universal values in their culture; readiness to assimilate Western technique and, above all, the positive intellectual and spiritual tradition of the West....Furthermore, the leaders of the revived Arab nation must be capable and progressive. They must have a real understanding of the political and social conditions of the modern world, and must be able to adjust to the requirements of those conditions.<sup>5</sup>

Exactly thirty years later another Arab scholar, Fuad Ajami, surveyed an Arab World in which the problem of defining the nature of Arab-Arab and Arab-non-Arab relations remained unsolved. However, it was also a world in which competition among diverse visions had increasingly degenerated to a Hobbesian level:

The seemingly harmless games played by the preceding generation, the hair-splitting arguments of Arab ideologues gave way to a deeper and more terrifying breakdown. One generation had sown the wind and the other was now reaping the harvest. The stock-in-trade of men like Nasser, the Syrian Ba<sup>c</sup>thist theoretician Michel Aflaq, the braggard Ahmad al-Shuqairi of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was symbols and words. There was ample room for maneuver, a margin for errors. In the decade or so that followed the Six Day War, words were replaced with bullets, which now seemed the final arbiter. This generation, writes one observer, split into two groups: those who saw authority growing out of the barrel of a gun and those who packed up and left....

The 1970s of Lebanon, wrote an analyst in a bitter commentary, are the 1980s of the region as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

Things did not improve. The Arab World's fevered malaise, punctuated by throbbing stabs of violence, progressively eroded the chance of purposeful consensus, and with it the possibility of meaningful discourse and effective action on the myriad concrete problems assailing the region's inhabitants. Throughout the Arab World, public authority became more glaringly preoccupied with its own preservation rather than with the betterment of life conditions for the masses. At best, government legitimacy tended to rest increasingly on public resignation. At worst, it rested on fear. It took no great acumen for me to describe the region in these terms near the end of the 1980s:

Riddled by various crises and deep divisions, the Middle East now witnesses its major actors fighting against a variety of pressing problems, as well as against each other. Iraq has not yet made peace with Iran; Syria plods on in Lebanon, alternately contributing to chaos and a modicum of order in that country; Egypt must cope with grim and growing economic problems and a population that produces an additional one million mouths to feed every ten months; Jordan



confronts mounting economic pressures. To one degree or another, all existing regimes find their legitimacy challenged internally. Divisions between rich and poor grow. Most regimes are also charged in one way or another with having corrupted essential national and cultural values. Whether in Beirut, Baghdad, Cairo, Amman, Damascus, or Riyadh, Arab leaders carefully watch the burgeoning popular appeal of reformist currents, particularly those characterized by fundamentalist Islamic orientations.

It is impossible to know how long this state of affairs may last, or what will replace it. All that is certain is that someday, in some way, it will change.<sup>7</sup>

Whether events unleashed by the Gulf Crisis will mark a beginning of this change remains to be seen. However, it cannot be doubted that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, as well as the reactions to which it gave rise among Middle East actors, manifested in fundamental ways the broader Arab crisis discussed above. Saddam Hussein's blitzkrieg and subsequently proclaimed incorporation of Kuwait into the Iraqi polity raised to acute levels the chronic discord among Arabs over the values and political structures that should guide their destiny. It also starkly underscored the wide differences with which Arabs approach relations with the non-Arab world.

The polarities affected the region as a whole, dividing governments, ideological and political movements, and, at the individual level, frequently producing confused and anguished thinking. Saudi Arabia's acceptance of international military support heightened the intensity of contradictory stands.

Saddam Hussein, enjoying the political support of Yemen, the Sudan, the PLO, and--to an extent--Algeria, Libya and Jordan, wrapped himself in the banners of Pan Arabism and Islam, called for a *jihād* to expel foreign forces from the Gulf, and generally boosted xenophobic passions throughout the area. His Arab opponents, principally the exiled Kuwaiti government, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Syria and Morocco, proclaimed Saddam to be the single greatest threat to Arab unity, brandished statements from religious leaders affirming that the presence of non-Muslim forces in Saudi Arabia was religiously correct, and generally adopted an internationalist stance applauding foreign intervention in the crisis.

No party failed to justify its stand as truly in keeping with "Arab brotherhood."

That the Gulf Crisis profoundly shook Arabs in all walks of life was evident. On a personal plane, the signs were sometimes painful to view. One recalls the gentle Sudanese intellectual at a social gathering a month or so after the invasion of Kuwait quite seriously confessing his fervent hope for a general war in the region. His reason? He had become convinced that what he saw as the rampant hypocrisy, venality and ineffectiveness of Arab governments and the corrupt, stagnant and divisive features of the societies tolerating them needed to be "burned out" before enduring social and economic advances could be made. On the other hand, there was the highly articulate Lebanese businessman who concluded a



scathing denunciation of Saddam Hussein by also expressing a sincere hope for war in the Gulf. His reasoning was rather different: bitterly remembering the 1982-84 U.S. intervention in Lebanon, he relished the possibility of an American defeat in the desert.

At a more public level, the verbal dance of despair and cynicism sometimes acquired a bizarre tinge. A reported conversation between Adel Hussein, editor of *Al Sha'b*, the Islamicist publication of Egypt's Socialist Labor Party, and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad during the Arab Summit conference that countenanced foreign military intervention in Saudi Arabia illustrates how Pan Arabist premises have been used to support both xenophobic and internationalist positions. According to Hussein's account, the exchange was as follows:

[Hussein]: Will you condemn...the interference of foreign forces?

[Assad]: Naturally no....

[Hussein]: Are you...of the opinion that the foreign forces will withdraw...once they are able to hit the Iraqi military power?

[Assad]: What may we then do since Iraq is insisting on continuing its occupation of Kuwait? What would anyone of you do were he in the position of the Gulf rulers? Their sense of panic due to the Iraqi threat would justify anything...to save themselves.

[Hussein]: Do not, Mr. President, Pan Arab security interests rise above these considerations?

[Assad]: In actual fact, I do not see any means before the Gulf people except call the foreign forces in for help.

He [Assad] then offered a curious theory. He said if force is to be used against Iraq, then it will be for [our] own good that foreigners should be fighting against the Iraqi army instead of having the Arab killed by an Arab.

We naturally put in: "The killing of the Arab by an Arab is ordinary in our history[,] civil wars occurred in the history of every nation. However, the national commitment would prevent any party to the war to call in foreigners for help in any way."<sup>8</sup>

No compressed event can be expected to produce a broad consensus over answers to the questions involved in the Arab crisis. At best, the current Gulf problem may help further a process through which Arab political actors ultimately arrive at an essentially stable understanding regarding the values and structures that will determine their relationships at the state, regional, and international levels. If



it is to be enduring, such an understanding must above all encompass acceptable procedures for working to alter established relationships at each of these levels.

In the meantime, the Gulf Crisis ensures that the United States and the rest of the international community cannot but relate to the Arab World with greater recognition of the region's political vulnerability. For leading international actors to avoid this--to turn their backs on the area--in order to avoid potential complications arising from its inherent instability is not an option. There are, therefore, only two avenues open to them: to dominate the region and impose a political order congenial to their interests or to work in less superficially sure terms to reduce possibilities of upheaval and promote prospects that what will eventually prevail in the region are indigineous forces favoring dialogue over violence, reason over passion, universal over particular values, individual freedom over communal conformity, and responsible rather than arbitrary government.

Attempts by outside powers to dominate the Middle East have a lengthy history. Modern history, at least, offers sufficient evidence to convince many serious students of the region that the ambition is futile.<sup>9</sup> Political leaders, however, may be quite another matter.

### The Arab World and Global Political Economy

If the "Arab crisis" is a constant that has helped shape Middle East politics prior to and during the Gulf Crisis, and which in all probability will continue do so after the crisis is resolved, the same is true of the Arab World's role in the global political economy.

Though historians may differ to a degree, it is generally accepted that the process of directly incorporating the region into the mainstream structure of global political economy shifted to high gear nearly two hundred years ago with Napoleon's landing in Egypt.<sup>10</sup> Whatever the actual date of origin, there is no doubt that the Nineteenth Century witnessed the Arab World's sustained absorption into the related patterns of Western political and economic interaction that dominated the globe.

The history of this process is too well known to require detailed review here. However, it is useful to recall the rapidity and major consequences of the Arab World's penetration. Within just over eighty years of Napoleon's landing, the region had changed irrevocably. The French had taken Algeria and won determining influence in the Levant; Great Britain was master of Egypt as well as of the Gulf; and other European powers were busily seeking ways to consolidate their own presence in the area.

The process of penetration was not limited to the abstract plane of political influence. It was manifested in hard, concrete terms. By 1876, for example, over 100,000 Europeans resided in Egypt; the French colonial population of Algeria had grown to nearly 200,000; in Syria, where the foreign population never grew numerous, European entrepreneurs had become highly influential, owning, for



example, the largest factories engaged in the vitally important silk industry; and in the Gulf a growing network of treaties and military outposts assured Great Britain's supremacy.<sup>11</sup>

In the interval, advances in technology and transport, primarily but not exclusively the introduction of steam navigation in the 1830's and 1840's and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, accelerated the forging of links between the Middle East and the global economy. Thus, between 1830 and 1886 annual shipping tonnage entering the port of Beirut grew from less than 50,000 tons to over 600,000 tons, while between 1873 and 1882 the average value of annual exports from the Palestinian port of Jaffa doubled in comparison to the years 1857-1863. At the same time, the Suez Canal became a vital connecting link between East and West.<sup>12</sup>

Western penetration soon affected established trade and production networks as well as patterns of social segmentation and political hierarchy. The commercial impact is vividly shown by changes in Egypt, where the 1838 Anglo-Ottoman treaty undermined state monopolies by allowing British concerns to deal directly with Egyptians. Within thirty years, Great Britain supplied some 41% of Egyptian imports and accounted for 49% of the country's exports. A similar process occurred in the French-dominated Levant, where in 1830 Turkey and Egypt were involved in about half of Syria's trade only to find by 1910 that they accounted for less than one third of the region's commerce, the rest having "shifted to Europe."<sup>13</sup>

The demands of the broader global economy presented a mixture of opportunities and dangers. For example, the growth of Egyptian cotton farming and Syrian silk and citrus production as key economic activities was a Nineteenth Century phenomenon. By the same token, global linkages occasioned dislocations, as for example the American Civil War's boom and bust impact on Egypt's cotton production and the rapid growth of Syria's raw silk exports at the expense of its textile industry.<sup>14</sup>

The processes that incorporated the Arab World into the global system inevitably affected existing social structures. Throughout most of region the historical record is much the same, though allowances must be made for local variations on the central theme. The theme itself was that of fundamental modifications in either, or both, existing stratification patterns and the processes through which these had arisen and been maintained.

In Egypt, the rise of a new landed aristocracy and urban entrepreneurial class--the latter largely composed of minority and foreign elements--followed on the heels of Mohammed Ali's efforts to modernize the country and the dependent economic connection with Europe that, despite his aims, was well developed by the end of his rule. Algeria saw the destruction of its native social system and the emergence of a tiny elite of "notables" tied to the French colonization effort. In Syria, there arose a new class, largely dominated by minorities and tied by



commerce to the international system. Iraq also experienced the emergence of minority domination of finance, commerce and the professions. In the Gulf, the Nineteenth Century witnessed the demise of traditional mechanisms providing for fluidity and adjustment in social segmentation and their replacement by more rigid hierarchies headed by local dynasties backed by British power.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, international pressures led the Ottomans into the era of Tanzimat, an attempt to enable the Empire to meet the challenges of the modern world system. In various ways this indirectly made the international system responsible for profound social changes in the Arab World. For example, in both Syria and Iraq the Sublime Porte's effort to place land tenure on a new footing after 1858 gave impetus to the creation of a small, but powerful, class of large landowners and the reduction of the traditional peasantry to veritable share-cropper status.<sup>16</sup>

The restructuring of Arab society effectively weakened existing forms of inter-group relations. Competition between traditional and emerging elites, as well as the dissatisfaction of those who were most rapidly marginalized by the new order, help explain the nature and frequency of localized violence that afflicted the Arab World in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the Gulf all witnessed such outbreaks.<sup>17</sup>

Against this backdrop of ongoing change, European governments and financial interests effectively divided the Arab World into de facto spheres of influence by the end of the century. The lines that formed the region's political map after World War I did little more than crystalize arrangements reached in the preceding decades.<sup>18</sup>

The bulk of the Arab World did not achieve real independence until after World War II. In the interval the region's incorporation into the global system was for all practical purposes fully achieved.

The decades after World War II were tumultuous ones in the Arab World, a condition largely related to the unleashing by independence of heretofore suppressed or dormant social forces. In some countries, Egypt and Syria for example, the assault on the socio-political structures that grew out of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century experiences occurred rather quickly. In others, such as Iraq, Algeria, and Libya it came more slowly. In Lebanon, it has not been fully played out even now. And finally, in yet others-- Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States--it remains an open question whether forms of socio-political organization developed in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries can successfully meet modern challenges posed by existing, or potential, demands for broadened political participation.

The interwar period saw the development of two historically significant phenomena that in fundamental ways would become determining factors in the Arab World's fortunes. On the one hand, there was Great Britain's pursuit of its



wartime commitment to Zionism; on the other was the development of the petroleum industry in the 1930s.

British support of Zionism set in motion the train of events that led to Israel's creation, the displacement of Palestinian Arabs, and the ongoing frustration of even modified Palestinian nationalist hopes. Although strategic considerations were among the welter of calculations and emotional predilections underlying Britain's initial sponsorship of "a national home for the Jewish people," the subsequent history of London's involvement with Palestine demonstrates that no clear and comprehensive long-range vision guided its approach. Indeed, by the time of Israel's establishment in 1948, British (as well as predominant American) concepts of strategic requirements rendered Western support of the Jewish state an embarrassing political drawback in the pursuit of objectives in the Arab World.<sup>19</sup>

Chief among these, of course, was that of preserving the security of access to the region's oil supplies.

Oil and Palestine provide the melody and counterpoint essential to placing in perspective the politics of the Arab World since World War II. Oil, concentrated in the Gulf area, linked traditional regimes ever more strongly to the strategic and economic requirements of the West. The cause of Palestine not only became an ideological litmus test of "Arab solidarity" but also served to categorize Arab actors according to the extent of their readiness to uphold or challenge the regional status quo. In this sense, the "Palestine issue" came to reflect much more than the basic struggle between Zionists and Arabs. To Arab "radicals"-- those upholding various ideals of fundamental, rapid, and comprehensive change in the prevailing values and structures defining the Arab World's contemporary political reality--the struggle against Zionism was an inseparable part of the struggle for a basically new order.<sup>20</sup> Pro-status quo Arab currents could not, of course, share this orientation, but the ideal of Arabism, of an essential commonality of values and interests among Arabs, proved sufficiently widespread and ingrained to ensure their involvement in the Arab-Zionist conflict.

It is hardly accidental that states demonstrating the least radical approaches were in the main oil-rich, mono-economic entities found in the Gulf. Relatively distant from the tensions of Palestine, and blessed with small, relatively homogeneous native populations, these remained under the control of governments primarily interested in avoiding the dislocations of radical change at the local, regional, or international levels. Indeed, they were linked to the global system as "rentier states"--polities whose incomes stem not from production but from external payments for natural resources, and whose regimes maintain power largely by distributing benefits derived from the arrangement.<sup>21</sup>

Nor was it mere chance that more radical orientations had greater impact during the post-World War II era in countries of the Arab heartland: Egypt, Syria, Iraq (after 1958), and Lebanon (after 1975). In each of these, the socio-political structures erected during the global economy's penetration of the Arab World have now been destroyed. Each, far larger, or, in Lebanon's case, at least far more



heterogeneous, than its Gulf counterparts, was required to develop governing systems that in one way or another sought to achieve some form of popular mobilization. Each therefore proved more susceptible to the need to satisfy--or at least to give the appearance of satisfying--popular values. In contrast to their Gulf brethren, most of these states also suffered far more directly in consequence of the Palestine conflict. Finally, in varying degrees, most of these states also faced endemic economic problems that condemned large segments of their populace to perennial poverty. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the recent history of the Arab World has been marked by a widespread dissatisfaction with the regional status quo and that this has been reflected both in popular movements and official ideologies.

On these multiple bases, the division between what the Western press came to call "radical" and "moderate" Arab regimes proceeded to develop over the last forty years within the global context of the Cold War. That context proved seminally important, and does much to explain the proportions reached by the crisis created by Iraq's seizure of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

During the years that it subsumed the Middle East, the Cold War directly or indirectly exerted a ubiquitous impact on the region's politics. From today's vantage point, three specific aspects of the nexus between global and regional politics seem particularly significant.

First, of course, is the fact that East-West tensions were reflected in inter-Arab divisions. However, this never resulted in a fully frozen regional polarization. Nor, for the most part, did it produce absolute alignments of Arab regimes with either of the contending superpowers. Instead, the Cold War context generally provided Arab governments with a degree of maneuverability in pursuing their objectives through international politics. Not even the most solidly pro-Western regimes of the Gulf were impervious to the allure of occasionally trying to play off the competing global power blocs against each other. The same was true of most radically inclined Arab states.

The second major consequence of the link between regional and global rivalries was the inordinately high degree to which the Arab World became militarized during the past forty years or so. In principle the dangers inherent in this development were quickly recognized by major Western powers. However, the rapid collapse of the arms control measures embodied in the 1950 Anglo-French-U.S. Tripartite Agreement stemmed from those same powers' inability to resist seeking regional influence through weapons transfers.<sup>22</sup> The Soviet Union's entry into the Middle East arms market after the mid-1950s had a multiplier effect, furthering the influx of weaponry that makes the Middle East the most highly militarized region of the world today.

The third significant feature of the Cold War's impact on the Middle East was its constraining influence on local actors. Mindful that regional conflicts might draw them into direct confrontation, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union sought to avoid that danger by restraining their respective clients. Given the Middle East's



violent recent history, it is obvious that the superpowers were not consistently committed to this end. It is also evident that even when they tried to promote restraint, their success was often incomplete. Yet, it cannot be doubted that Washington and Moscow regularly, and to a large degree effectively, militated against what they considered adventurist initiatives by regional clients.

Each of these Cold War legacies seems particularly relevant today. The apparent end of U.S.-Soviet Cold War rivalry has altered the global environment and in the process changed the context in which Middle East politics must be conducted. The puzzle is whether, and if so, how, Saddam Hussein understood this when he invaded Kuwait. This will be considered more closely in the concluding pages below. For now, it is sufficient to stress that Saddam's decision to attack Kuwait cannot be explained without taking into account the Cold War's decline as a factor in international politics.

There is nothing surprising in this. Political interaction in the Middle East has long been conditioned by the broader international environment. Thus, divisions within the Arab World have tended to reflect major global political currents. Although analysts frequently exaggerated this by simplistically categorizing Arab governments and movements as "Pro-Western" or "Pro-Soviet," the parallelism between regional and global alignments has been significant.

By the same token, however, it is equally true that the nature, persistence and importance of more cooperative ties among the actors of the Arab World have also been largely shaped by the relationship between the Middle East and its international environment. In short, the various parts of the Arab World developed and maintained patterns of political and economic interdependence that reinforced the region's incorporation into the global system.

The most striking and significant of these has been the network of political/financial trade-offs between ideologically incompatible forces that developed after the Arabs' crushing defeat by Israel in 1967. Not fully absent in earlier years, the phenomenon became a key feature of inter-Arab relations after the Khartoum summit of August, 1967. That conclave laid the basis for a "radical"- "moderate" modus vivendi as oil producing states undertook to subsidize the wrecked economies of their "front line" counterparts. The essential elements of the exchange were clear: in return for much needed financial infusions, radicals in effect legitimized business-as-usual links between the oil producers and their global markets as well as the existence of the oil regimes themselves.

No essential deviation from this pattern occurred during the next decades, with the significant exception of the suspension of aid to Egypt when Cairo moved toward peace with Israel in the late 1970s. Egypt's fate in this regard provides an example of both the relative weakness of declared ideology as a factor in inter-Arab relations and the Palestine issue's strength as a constraint on Arab political behavior.

As the defeated leader of "progressive" or "radical" Arabism after June 1967, the Nasserist regime emerged from the Khartoum Conference with assurances of a



subsidy amounting to some \$378 million annually from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>23</sup> After the 1973 War, as Anwar Sadat's dedication to the Arab status quo became more apparent, the use of oil funds to secure political support was more dramatically shown. Annual Arab aid to Egypt was boosted by Saudi Arabia's extension of a \$1 billion credit. It is estimated that by 1978 Egypt had received something on the order of \$15 billion from its oil-rich Gulf counterparts.<sup>24</sup> Paul Jabber has cogently explained the dynamics:

The essence of the "special relationship" between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which had its gestation at the Khartoum Arab Summit of August 1967, gradually developed in the interwar period from 1967 to 1973, and which reached full maturity following the October conflict...consisted [of] a trade-off of mutual expectations between Cairo and Riyadh. As the Middle East entered the petrodollar era, an Egypt under relentlessly increasing economic strain henceforth expected substantial and continuing access to the growing riches of the oil states. In exchange, a Saudi regime acutely conscious of its multifaceted vulnerability, and for years under ideological, political and even military attack by the "radical-revolutionary" camp now looked forward to, indeed demanded, relief from such pressures. It expected from Cairo... abandonment of revolutionary confrontation, supra-national appeals, unduly close ties to the Communist world, the promotion of socialism with the Arab World and other such policies and practices subversive of the status quo.<sup>25</sup>

As Jabber points out, the collapse of Egyptian-Saudi relations after Cairo's peace with Israel in 1979 was due to several factors, involving both Saudi outrage over Anwar Sadat's break with the traditional Arab position on Palestine and Saudi reluctance to be seen as associated with the Egyptian departure. However, none of this completely undermined the basic interest of Saudi Arabia and other traditional Gulf regimes in having Egypt as a strong counterweight to radical tendencies in the region.<sup>26</sup> Thus, no steps were taken to curtail the infusion of Gulf money into the Egyptian economy via remittances, tourism, or private investment.

The PLO and Syria, the principal inheritors of the mantle of Arab radicalism after Egypt's turn to the West, also benefited from the largesse of conservative oil producers. Although it is impossible to be precise about the PLO's financial connections to these regimes, the latter are known to have contributed generously prior to the Gulf Crisis. One estimate places Gulf contributions to the PLO since 1980 at around \$10 billion. Four months after the invasion of Kuwait, Palestinian sources reportedly claimed that the cutoff of Kuwaiti subsidies and a sharp curtailment of Saudi Arabia's standard contribution had already cost the PLO \$2 billion.<sup>27</sup>

Precise figures indicating the extent to which Syria was supported by conservative Gulf states are also unavailable. Following the rise to power in 1970 of Hafez Al Assad, whose relatively more pragmatic leadership replaced that of the doctrinaire Salah Al Jadid, Gulf aid began to grow. In 1969, for example, Kuwaiti



aid was highly restricted, coming in the form of a small loan for a variety of development projects. However, by 1972 Kuwait was providing Syria with a grant of some \$30 million to offset military expenditures and this was matched by a similar grant from the United Arab Emirates. Following the 1973 war against Israel, Arab aid expanded notably. By February 1974, Damascus claimed that Arab contributions had made good approximately a quarter of the financial losses--estimated at well over \$2 billion--suffered by Syria during the October War. Later that year, Arab states decided at the Rabat Summit Conference to grant Syria an annual subsidy of \$1 billion for a period of four years. Nearly a third of that amount was to be provided by Saudi Arabia. Although Syria apparently had difficulty in collecting the full pledged amount, it is estimated that official Arab funds flowing to Damascus during the mid-1970s amounted to \$500-\$600 million annually. In 1978, the Baghdad Summit led to increased subventions, coming to nearly \$2 billion annually. During the 1980s, Assad was able to capitalize on Syria's close relations with Iran to press successfully for even more support from traditional Gulf regimes.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, Iraq--an oil-rich radical Gulf state--also received financial help from neighboring conservative governments in its hour of need. Estimates of the debt incurred by Baghdad, largely to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, during the war against Iran vary widely, ranging from \$30 to \$50 billion. Whatever the case, there is no doubt that the traditional Gulf regimes funded Iraq largely in hope of deflecting Saddam's ambitions away from their own territories. The dangers inherent in this sort of ideological accommodation-by-cash--nexus were brought home on the eve of the invasion of Kuwait. Claiming, with not little justification, that it had protected what it saw as the corrupt, effete regimes in the Gulf from Iran, Baghdad demanded that Kuwait forgive \$12 billion in war loans.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the dangers they entailed, the patterns of financial/political trade-off among the Arab states spanned the oil boom of the 1970's, the decline in oil prices and the worldwide recession of the early 1980's, and the tentative recovery of the oil market in the late 1980's. However, despite providing "radical" and "moderate" Arab actors alike with direct or indirect access to oil funds, the network of intra-Arab funding was neither the sole nor most important factor linking Arab states to the Western dominated global system.

As one recent study of the region notes, the "increasing predominance of the West, including Japan, as a source of imports and a destination for exports characterizes the trade patterns of all types of Middle East regimes, 'moderate' or 'radical', 'socialist' or 'capitalist.'"<sup>30</sup> In particular, food imports constitute a fundamental bond to the global economy, though at the same time the area's international dependency in the realms of high technology, arms, and higher education should not be overlooked.<sup>31</sup>

There is, however, the proverbial other side of the coin. If the Arab World in all its complexity is dependent on the international system, the reverse is also in



large measure true-- though quite obviously in a strikingly different form. The collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the end of the Cold War now, as never before, underline the interconnectedness of the global economy. Containing an estimated 60% of the world's oil supplies, the Middle East is obviously of vital concern to the international community, none of whose members would long remain unaffected by changes in the terms or processes currently governing access to the region's petroleum. It does not diminish the case for global dependency on Middle East oil to point out that interdependence between the region and global system is asymmetrical. The point is that unless and until sufficient alternative energy sources are developed this situation will remain unchanged.

To argue, as some have, that the asymmetry between global dependence on Middle East oil and the multiple international dependencies of the Middle East implies "Arab dependency" rather than a state of "interdependence" is to muddle the issue almost beyond clarification.<sup>32</sup> The argument itself rests on an erroneous assumption that something approaching a single Arab economic order exists.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, of course, the connection between "the Arab World" and the global economic network is essentially two-tiered, with the relationship between "oil elites" and the world economy being the principal direct link and that between the world system and "non-elite" Arab elements being far more indirect and derivative.

This bifurcated relationship is not merely, though it is in part, the result of a geographical division between states that are large oil producers and those that are not. It is simultaneously constituted by a functional divide: the very real gap between Arabs upon whom the world depends for the orderly supply of oil and Arabs who are not in a position to affect the flow of oil. The former are what are termed here "oil elites." They stand in a real relationship of interdependence with the global system. The latter are for the most part mired in dependency.

Who, in less abstruse terms, are these "elites" and "non-elites"? The former, I would argue, include two broad categories, the first of which embraces not only the major oil producing regimes but also the considerable portions of the populations of oil producing states whose loyalties are secured through government largesse--a basic mechanism of "rentier" regimes. The second category of "elites" is formed of Arab regimes and activist movements that benefit directly from the oil-based wealth of others. In this category are found actors whose own interests in terms of a broad range of ties to the international environment (Egypt, for example) incline them to support the established Middle East oil linkage to the global system as well as basically more "radical" actors who have found it expedient (Syria and the PLO, for example) to restrain their potentially disruptive impact on that linkage. However, whether oriented toward actively protecting the status quo or merely refraining from attacking it in return for what amounts to "protection money," all such actors can be labeled "elites" insofar as they have the capacity to influence in one way or another the nature of the Arab World's oil connection with the international system. In this sense, elites stand in an interdependent relation with the world community.



On the other hand, non-elite Arabs are affected by, but essentially powerless to affect, the oil linkage. These too are not limited to any single geographic area. They include Arab workers in oil-rich Gulf states who, since they are not citizens, are not on the receiving end of rentier generosity, as well as the masses of the Arab World whose ability to influence the political systems under which they live, much less anything so grand as the region's oil linkage, is severely limited. It is here that Arab dependency, as opposed to interdependency, is stark.

In part, but only in part, per capita income patterns reflect the dependency-interdependency dichotomy. In regional terms, national per capita income broadly indicates the more immediate importance of oil-rich rentier societies to the global system. Qatar enjoys a per capita income of \$15,770, Kuwait of \$13,400, and Saudi Arabia of \$6,200. On the other hand, Syria's per capita income is \$1,680, Jordan's is \$1,500, and Egypt's is \$660.<sup>34</sup>

Such figures tell but the barest part of the story, indicating only in broadest fashion the key connection between large oil producers and the world economy. A clear and detailed breakdown of income distribution at national levels would be far more illustrative of regional divisions between interdependent and dependent sectors of the Arab World. Sadly, this data is not available. The closest approximation to it comes in the form of questionable estimates that are usually not directed toward the comparative study of the Arab World but rather focused on single states. A major recent analysis of Middle East political economy reviews this difficulty at length, and while acknowledging the dearth of reliable data, nonetheless agrees that income distribution patterns in the region are seriously skewed and that the numbers falling below the level of absolute poverty are massive.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the absence of reliable concrete data on socio-economic conditions, observers have of course long noted that the Arab World's unbalanced income distribution relates to vastly different quality of life opportunities, and, in most cases, to a decided separation between state and society.<sup>36</sup> Such conditions have not only helped produce widespread political cynicism among educated segments of the populations of Arab states but also activist ideological movements that have retreated into one or another xenophobic channel.

Until it invaded Kuwait, Saddam Hussein's government presided over an economy that was thoroughly integrated into the world system. Led by the United States, Iraq's main export markets were all Western industrialized states and the same was true of three of the four leading sources of Iraqi imports.<sup>37</sup> The fifth largest oil producer in the world, and second only to Saudi Arabia in proved reserves, the Iraqi regime's interdependent status was clear.

Obviously, however, Iraq stood as an exception to prevailing patterns in the Arab World. The regime that ruled over this oil-based economy was neither traditional nor conservative, but rather ideologically violently radical. It may also be true that in its more than two decades in power, the country's Ba<sup>c</sup>thist rulers managed far more than any other contemporary Iraqi government to forge organic



links between the organized state and society and, by doing so, to create the vital human element that in combination with Baghdad's material resources enabled Iraq to become the most powerful, and possibly one of the most internally stable, of Arab countries.<sup>38</sup> If this debatable proposition has any validity, a question that must be addressed by scholars in the future is why the xenophobic mystifications of Ba<sup>c</sup>thist ideology proved so politically potent when combined with Iraq's oil wealth?

Despite his regime's radicalism, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait does not appear to have aimed at altering the basic nature of Iraq's (or the Arab World's) oil connection with the international system. Badly pressed for additional funds under the combined burdens of international debt and national reconstruction after the costly war against Iran, Baghdad appears to have seen the Kuwait adventure as a straightforward opportunity to increase its profits from the existing system.<sup>39</sup> In light of its past performance, both internationally and domestically, there is no reason to believe that the seizure of Kuwait represented anything substantially more than a bid by the Iraqi regime to increase its own resources and power. Surely, nothing in Saddam's history suggests that he planned to alter the basic structure of Arab society by offering greater and more effective political participation or, in other words, by radically expanding the degree to which Arabs as a whole enjoy an interdependent rather than dependent relationship with the international system.

Yet, it was from the Arab World's marginalized segments that Iraq received its most notable support. While most Arab governments either actively opposed or at least did not support Iraq, popular feeling was far more sharply divided. The most visible sign of this was, of course, the PLO's decision to align itself with Saddam Hussein, a stand that all evidence indicates won overwhelming approval among the Palestinian rank and file. By the same token, popular demonstrations in various parts of the Arab World showed something of the breadth of support accruing to the Iraqi regime. Because of its relatively free press, Egypt served as a rough barometer of broader Arab sentiment. Commentary in opposition newspapers not infrequently expressed marked sympathy for Iraq's position as the crisis unfolded.<sup>40</sup>

From the outset of the Gulf Crisis, Saddam Hussein did not hesitate to appeal to the reservoirs of bitter frustration that mark wide segments of the Arab World. A secular Ba<sup>c</sup>thist, he cloaked Iraq's aggression in Islamic garb; a tyrant, he claimed to act against autocrats in the interests of the masses; a man who divided the Arab World to an unprecedented degree, he presented himself as the epitome of Pan Arabism.

The extent to which public sentiment responded favorably to such transparent posturing did not signify blindness to Saddam's gambits so much as pervasive dissatisfaction. Saddam was kicking the West and established Arab regimes alike, and to many in the region this was a thoroughly positive trait.



Even so, neither regional nor international opposition to the takeover of Kuwait can be assigned primarily to fear that Saddam would place the region under the sway of popular radical forces, whether religious, leftist, or nationalist. It can be taken as given that Saddam's regional and international opponents knew his history sufficiently well to discount the possibility of his sharing power with such partners.

Despite a great deal of rhetoric about international law and morality, Saddam's immediate neighbors were moved by a far simpler and more basic concern, the prospect that Iraq would tip the political balance of power in the Arab World decisively in its favor. In the personalized politics of the Middle East, this reduced itself to fear that Saddam would emerge as the unchallenged arbiter of the region's destiny.

A variety of reasons for opposing Saddam were also advanced outside the Middle East. In the West, these generally formed a mixture of positions based on moral principles and *real politik* that could be related--albeit not always very convincingly--to practical concerns of the "man-on-the-street." Thus, adding to the condemnatory chorus aimed at Iraq for committing aggression, violating international law and flouting world opinion, Western leaders also tried to offer more concrete and immediate arguments. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher scathingly condemned Saddam's violation of basic human decency, describing his holding of British, American and other hostages as an effort "to hide behind the skirts of women."<sup>41</sup> U.S. Secretary of State James Baker characterized Iraq's actions as a direct threat to the jobs of American workers. President Bush penned an article in *Newsweek* arguing that American national interests could not afford to allow Saddam "a stranglehold over the world's economic lifeline."<sup>42</sup>

Though it can be accepted that such considerations--very likely together with some degree of real concern for the role of principle and accepted norms in world politics--were not totally absent in international policymaking circles, in themselves they do not explain the extent and depth of global reaction to the fall of Kuwait.<sup>43</sup> Principled denunciations of Saddam's violation of that country's sovereignty, smashing of international law and subsequent disregard of UN calls for withdrawal were simply not fully credible. Saddam's major international detractors had engaged in similar practices too often and too recently.

The core of more "practical" arguments against Iraq's move into Kuwait was the claim that any other alternative would expose the world community to "blackmail." This too, however, failed to be totally persuasive. Many of those around the world who took to the streets protesting what they saw as a headlong rush into a war for cheap oil, appeared willing to see higher prices rather than violence. Others concluded that cries of potential "blackmail" were unduly alarmist since the interdependence between oil suppliers and the global system would inevitably impose realistic restraints on an enlarged Iraq's pricing policies.<sup>44</sup>



The latter view was solidly rooted in long established Western analyses of the role of oil in the global economy. Indeed, pursued to its end, the argument saw nothing necessarily detrimental to the global economy even were Saddam to expand his influence beyond Kuwait. From a strictly economic viewpoint, this position had some logical support. That a Saddam-dominated Arab World would be autocratic, unresponsive to its populace and headed by a regime relying on oppression and payoffs to remain in power could not--were any weight given to past and current trends in oil-producing Arab states--in itself be taken as necessarily leading to poor relations with the world's leading oil consumers. On the contrary, a single, or at least predominant, mediating rentier regime in the Middle East could be seen as an asset, a link that would maximize possibilities of rationalizing the region's oil-supplying function on a long-term basis.<sup>45</sup>

What is notable is that this theoretical prospect was not tested, though it was, of course, immediately recognized.<sup>46</sup> Led by the United States, international reaction swiftly and categorically demanded Iraq's withdrawal and the return of the pre-invasion Kuwaiti government. Nobody was interested in exploring what oil policies might be pursued by an expanded Iraq.

This underscores a large part of the problem as perceived by the world community: Saddam's drive into Kuwait was not considered a credible bid to increase Iraq's effective power. On the contrary, it was seen as emphasizing the great probability that his ambitions, even were he left facing only local actors, could only plunge the region into chaos. In short, Saddam's policies were taken to promise not the emergence of a single or predominant system mediating orderly relations between the Arab World and the international system, but rather the prospect of profound and prolonged regional destabilization.

There were good reasons for this conclusion. The point has already been made that Saddam's ambitions were hardly congenial to his regional neighbors. Neither Syria, nor Saudi Arabia and the other oil producers in the Arabian Peninsula, nor Egypt could have been expected to countenance the growth of Iraqi regional hegemony. The same was even more true of Iraq's non-Arab neighbors, Iran, Turkey and, above all, Israel. At the same time, of course, Saddam's march into Kuwait reinforced his existing image as an unpredictable opportunist with a penchant for relying on the sudden application of force. In the light of Kuwait's fate, the admixture of Saddam and his local enemies created dire prospects for regional tranquility.

The immediate objective of the International Coalition that opposed Saddam Hussein was to confront the Iraqi leader with overwhelming force in order to bring him to abandon a potentially destabilizing policy or, failing that, to participate actively in Iraq's military defeat and thereby have some degree of control over the nature and duration of hostilities. The fundamental, and long-term, objective, however, was to ensure that the Arab World continue to fulfill its primary role in the global economy: the orderly and regular provision of oil.



To emphasize this point is not to lapse into simplistic economic determinism. Imperatives of the global economy constitute broad directions that are revealed over time by aggregate effects of specific policy decisions. The latter can be, and frequently are, arrived at on the basis of immediate, non-economic factors. It is here that subjective perception, historical memory, idiosyncratic preferences, and normative stances have their widest scope. Because of this, it is at this lower level of analysis--the level of policymaking by particular governments--that elements of miscalculation, misunderstanding, misperception and contradiction in politics become more visible.

### The United States and the Arab World

Discussions of U.S. policy in the Arab World take a variety of forms, some of which are more misleading than revealing. An idealistic view, frequently but not always marking or limited to official Washington pronouncements, portrays American regional objectives as almost equally altruistic and self-serving.<sup>47</sup> A polar opposite outlook constitutes what might be called the "conspiratorial school." No single ideological orientation prevails here, though more simplistic Marxists, Pan Arabists and Islamicists tend to share its basic premise: that from the time of its emergence as a major actor in the Middle East after World War II, Washington has consciously and consistently sought hegemony.

Both broad approaches are faulty, primarily because they violate the historical record as well as fail to take into account the complexities of the processes through which U.S. foreign policy is formulated. They also share a basic disdain for empirical investigation, favoring instead selective argumentation and reliance on circular reasoning that simply converts premises into conclusions.

More balanced analyses have long held that Washington pursues various objectives in the Arab World and that sustaining a consistent relationship among them has been a perennial and difficult problem. This view typically identifies all or most of the following as longstanding U.S. regional goals: containing the Soviet Union; securing access to oil; enhancing U.S. political and economic influence in the Arab World; and ensuring Israel's security.

While it is true that these have been key U.S. regional goals since the late 1940s, observers often seem unable to go beyond shallow fascination with a supposed "remarkable continuity" of purpose in Washington's approach to the Middle East.<sup>48</sup> What they overlook is that the operational meanings of the labels assigned to U.S. Mideast policy objectives have not remained static. To obscure this is not only to be ahistorical but also to distort the nature of American involvement in the contemporary Arab World.

I have shown elsewhere that U.S. Middle East policy since 1967 has alternated between defining objectives operationally in "optimizing" and "maximizing" terms.<sup>49</sup> The difference is significant. An optimizing orientation is predicated on the assumption that foreign policy goals must be continuously approximated rather



than fully realized and that their pursuit therefore entails compromise, flexibility, and a capacity for accommodation in the interest of "the best possible" result. Maximizing perspectives, on the other hand, have a far greater tendency to see foreign policy objectives as fully attainable. The pursuit of international goals is commensurably more rigid and less informed by willingness to compromise.

Applying this dichotomy to the course of U.S. involvement in the Middle East over the last forty years, it becomes apparent that the nominal consistency attributable to American objectives is misleading. What has to be taken into account is the element of variation in how those objectives have been understood and acted upon by succeeding administrations.

Any analysis along these lines reveals an irregular chequered pattern, with optimizing and maximizing tendencies alternating in the ascendancy but with neither so far having gained unchallenged supremacy in U.S. policymaking circles. However, at the same time it is clear that the last two decades have on the whole seen U.S. policymakers more frequently operating within a maximalist framework. The following brief overview of U.S. policy over the past four decades explores this point.

**The Soviet Union.** With the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, the U.S. made clear its hope of excluding the Soviet Union from the Middle East. However, the pursuit of that objective was undertaken with the acceptance of British primacy in the Arab World, specifically in the Gulf and in Egypt. When Western efforts to incorporate Egypt into a military pact failed and the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser began developing close links to the Soviets, Washington sought to contain rather than eliminate Moscow's presence in the Middle East. American support of the British-led Baghdad Pact was one feature of this approach. Yet, a more important aspect of American policy over the next fifteen years was Washington's willingness to compete politically with the Soviet Union for Arab support. Despite Soviet gains in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, the vicissitudes of American relations with those countries were carefully managed to avoid a complete breakdown and to retain channels for cultivating U.S. influence through political and economic incentives.<sup>50</sup>

The willingness to avoid making Arab-Soviet relations an inflexible criterion for U.S.-Arab relations was most clearly demonstrated in the first years after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Today it is almost forgotten that U.S. efforts to devise a framework for peace immediately after that conflict relied heavily on active consultations with the Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup> Although those early signs of U.S.-Soviet cooperation soon evaporated, the Johnson administration eventually began exploring the possibility of enlisting the Soviet Union as a full partner in peacemaking. That optimizing approach dominated U.S. policy until the early 1970s, leading Washington through the by-ways of the "Two Power-Four Power Talks," various confrontations with Israel, and exploratory contacts with Arab



governments. Its high point was the ill-fated "Rogers Plan," which still stands as the most specific Middle East peace plan yet advanced by the United States.

The maximizing shift to the goal of expelling the Soviets from the Middle East was marked by Henry Kissinger's successful bid to replace Secretary of State William Rogers as the Nixon Administration's paramount Middle East strategist. By 1973, Kissinger not only retained his early post as National Security Adviser but had also taken Rogers' place in the State Department. Kissinger perceived the Middle East in terms that differed strikingly from those that had prevailed in Washington since Israel's creation. Instead of fearing that the Arab-Israeli conflict would redound to Moscow's benefit by alienating the Arabs fully from the West, he saw the situation created by Israel's 1967 victory as fraught with opportunity. U.S. resources could be put to good use by upholding the post-war situation indefinitely until Arab regimes recognized that recovery from their recent defeat depended on Washington rather than Moscow. Within this framework, the long stalled "peace process" was perfectly acceptable as an instrument to pressure Arabs into jettisoning Soviet support. At the same time, Kissinger and Nixon undertook to give serious meaning to the president's strategy of relying on regional allies by significantly increasing arms supplies to Israel and Iran.

The immediate results of this maximizing approach were mixed, but on the whole successful. Movement toward an American-Egyptian alliance was set in motion and radical Arab governments, together with the Soviet Union, were increasingly marginalized from the main political currents that seemed likely to determine the Middle East's future. A large part of the price paid for this, however, was the continued stagnation of the Palestine problem. With the conclusion of the 1975 Sinai II Agreement, the so-called "peace process" ground to a standstill. In the Gulf area, U.S. support led to Iran becoming a formidable regional power.

Jimmy Carter entered the White House concerned by the festering problem of Palestine and prone to follow an optimizing strategy. In the end, however, his attempt to promote a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, and to involve the Soviet Union in the process, was frustrated by a variety of domestic and international factors. Carter's administration eventually proceeded along the track already mapped by Kissinger. The outcome was the significant, though limited, Arab-Israeli peace signalled by the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Almost simultaneously, the Iranian revolution in 1978, coupled with Moscow's invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979 and the failure of U.S.-Soviet talks on limiting naval deployments, heightened Washington's concern over a Soviet threat to the Gulf. Washington responded with the "Carter Doctrine's" pledge to resist any attempt by an "outside force" to gain control of the region. Hoping to give meaning to the declaration, the administration undertook a number of military measures, including establishing the Rapid Deployment Force.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of Carter's presidency, then, the U.S. had not only abandoned efforts to reintroduce the Soviet Union as a party in the search for Arab-Israeli peace but also launched a program to project significant power into the Gulf area.



However, the high point of U.S. "maximizing" in the Middle East came with Ronald Reagan's assumption of office. Convinced, as Secretary of State Alexander Haig proclaimed in the spring of 1982, that this was "America's moment in the Middle East," the Reagan team was determined to complete the elimination of the Soviet Union as well as "radicalism," in its view the handmaiden of the "Evil Empire," as relevant regional factors. Its first attempt to effect this failed when grandiose plans for an anti-Soviet "strategic consensus" among Egypt, Saudi Arabia, other Arab moderates and Israel foundered on the reluctance of the parties themselves and the persistent intrusiveness of the Palestine issue.

The administration's next major Middle East initiative came in the form of tacit support for Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, which it saw as a means of undercutting radicals throughout the area. There ensued the U.S. military entanglement in Lebanon, through which Washington futilely sought to restructure the country politically. Following the more or less ignominious withdrawal of American troops in 1984, the United States lapsed into a fixed rigidity on the intertwined issues of the Arab-Israeli and Lebanese conflicts. U.S. immobility was only partly and reluctantly abandoned in late 1988 when international pressure helped convince the Reagan administration that the latest in a series of PLO concessions provided grounds for the first direct official contact with that organization in over thirteen years.

In the interval, the Reagan administration's policy was largely devoted to a campaign against terrorists and their government sponsors in the Middle East. It also increasingly focused on the Gulf. Apart from continuing to strengthen and refine the Rapid Deployment Force (renamed the Central Command), Washington became embarrassingly entangled in the Iran-Contra scandal at the end of 1986 when revelations of covert arms shipments to Iran appeared in the world press. The affair undermined the administration's credibility in multiple ways, not least of which was by demonstrating U.S. readiness to violate its declared neutrality toward the Iran-Iraq war by dealing with the former--which was branded as a state sponsor of terrorism--at Baghdad's expense.

Even as "Irangate" was pushing the Reagan presidency into its greatest domestic crisis, and generating confusion and "a profound sense of betrayal" among Arab regimes friendly to Washington, Iranian attacks on Kuwaiti shipping were leading the United States into yet another role in the Gulf.<sup>53</sup> When Kuwait asked the United States and the Soviet Union to re-flag several of its tankers, Washington's determination to prevent the growth of Soviet influence in the area resulted in all the ships being placed under the American flag. Following Iraq's apparently inadvertent attack on the U.S. warship *Stark* in May 1987, U.S. naval forces in the region were considerably increased. At the same time, the United States became the leading element in the multinational naval force that began to patrol the Gulf.

Although by the late 1980s the Soviet Union's new, glasnost-inspired diplomacy was making some progress in cultivating ties with traditionally pro-



Western Gulf regimes, the decade ended with the United States firmly entrenched as the dominant outside power in the region.<sup>54</sup>

**Israel.** As is true of stated U.S. objectives vis-a-vis the Soviet Union in the Middle East, it is not particularly illuminating to point to the consistency of Washington's declarations when trying to understand the "security of the state of Israel" as a concern of U.S. regional policy. Here too the stated goal's meaning has changed substantially over time.

Indeed, a major feature of the history of U.S. support for Israel's "security" is that it was only with the progressive shift to a maximalist approach to U.S.-Soviet competition in the Middle East that U.S.-Israeli relations could harmonize more fully with other aspects of American policy in the region. In turn, the new congruence led to a strategic alignment between the United States and Israel that at least rivaled, if it did not exceed, that between the United States and any other state.

When Israel was established in 1948, diplomatic and military planners generally looked askance at U.S. support of the Jewish state. While domestic considerations and personal preference drove President Truman to push for Palestine's partition and then to extend recognition to the newly born state of Israel, professional diplomats and strategists long fretted that ties with Israel would undermine the U.S. in the Middle East.

It was not long before Washington settled on an approach designed to simultaneously satisfy domestic pro-Israel forces and the necessity of politically cultivating the Arab World. The strategy's keystone was a commitment, enshrined in the 1950 Tripartite Declaration, to uphold the "territorial integrity" of all states in the region. In effect, the United States sought to dichotomize its relations with the Middle East by adopting a "neutral" stand supporting the generally acknowledged principle of "territorial integrity." The implication was that as "territorial policeman" the U.S. would impartially succor any victim of aggression and castigate any aggressor. From this morally lofty perch, Washington hoped to compartmentalize its approach to the Middle East so that relations with Israel would not impede the strengthening of links to the Arab World.<sup>55</sup>

U.S.-Israeli relations developed within this framework during the 1950s and most of the 1960's. While the relationship was frequently exalted as resting on the common interests of two democracies, there were also instances of serious friction. The most outstanding confrontation came just after the Suez War, when the Eisenhower administration exerted strong pressure to force Israel to withdraw from Gaza. However, neither rhetorical flourishes nor occasional clashes reveal the real nature of the U.S.-Israeli relationship during the first two decades after the Jewish state's creation. This, of course, was that in keeping with the aloof approach to regional tensions sought through the "territorial integrity" formula, Washington's support of Israel was limited. Not until 1961, for example, did the United States become involved in Israeli weapons procurements--and then only indirectly by



promoting arms transfers from West Germany. By 1967 the U.S. had supplied arms in limited quantities to Israel but was far from being a principal supplier.

U.S.-Israeli relations entered a new phase in the aftermath of the 1967 war. However, the revised relationship was not initially very harmonious. The outbreak of the war had forced Washington to acknowledge that "containing" Arab-Israeli enmity would not lead to its dissipation and, further, that the conflict could confound--as it had on June 5, 1967--any "neutral" policy predicated on an objective identification of aggression.

Believing that Israel's victory offered an opportunity to settle the perennial Arab-Israeli problem through the exchange of occupied territories for political commitments within the existing regional state system, the Johnson administration ran headlong into Israeli recalcitrance. The upshot was a fairly stormy sixteen month period that ended in October, 1968 with Washington's decision to provide Israel with F-4 Phantom warplanes. The move was taken reluctantly and precipitated by the realization that the United States was in no position to pressure Israel into a process of bartering occupied territories for peace.

This beginning of the U.S. role as Israel's arsenal occurred against the backdrop of signs that key Arab states (particularly Egypt) were vacillating between preferring a negotiated peace settlement and "another round" of hostilities--and all the while being rapidly re-armed by the Soviet Union. The Johnson administration concluded that a negotiated settlement required that Arabs see no other option for regaining their lost territories; that, in turn, required that the regional balance of power be maintained in Israel's favor.

The paradox was that the most effective potential means of overcoming Israel's reluctance to bargain away the occupied lands lay precisely in the threat to deny it arms. Throughout most of 1968, the Johnson administration tried to apply this sort of pressure. The effort was futile because the threat was not credible. Israeli leaders fully understood that in the context of the times Washington could not overlook the high probability that a serious break between the United States and Israel would not only reduce Arab interest in a political settlement but also be credited by the Arabs to Soviet support. This assessment was vindicated when Washington finally agreed to provide Phantoms without receiving any commitment that Israel would heed Johnson's call for the initiation of a bargaining process.

The situation presented Washington with a bleak picture. In view of the Soviets' ongoing re-arming of the major Arab protagonists and Washington's own inability to force Israel into negotiating for peace, there emerged the spectre of an accelerated arms race that would ultimately lead to clear Soviet predominance in the Arab World, making Israel virtually Washington's only friend in the region.<sup>56</sup>

Recognition of this dynamic (and presumably an understanding that the dynamic itself could only be viewed as eminently satisfactory by Israel) propelled the Johnson administration into embarking during its final months in office on something akin to a revolutionary departure from the established American



approach to the Middle East. In effect, the administration engaged the Soviet Union in a private dialogue on the requisites for regional peace. This implicit acceptance of an equal Soviet role in Middle East peacemaking was a far cry from the traditional American objective of reducing or eliminating Moscow's influence in the region.<sup>57</sup>

The Nixon administration built upon the eleventh hour turn taken by its predecessor, developing it into the "Two-Power, Four-Power" framework and ultimately producing the Rogers Plan. Not surprisingly, the process generated rising levels of friction between the United States and Israel. It was not until the Rogers Plan's demise in early 1970 that tensions in their relationship began to abate.

However, only with the ascendancy of Kissinger's perspective could the U.S.-Israeli connection be placed on a foundation that brought the two states into far greater alignment than had existed at any time in the past. The corollary to Kissinger's view that the Arabs' 1967 defeat offered a golden chance to push the Soviet Union out of the Middle East and to undermine the position of local radicals was obvious: increased American support of Israel would drive home the lesson that the two countries' alliance made Washington's influence the only doorway to a settlement that would take Arab interests into account.

Kissinger's argument that Israel was a strategic asset rather than a liability gained credibility in official circles following the Jordanian crisis of 1970. Israel's role in deterring Syrian intervention during King Hussein's clash with the PLO deeply impressed Richard Nixon. From then on, U.S. support of Israel increased noticeably.

By late 1971, Kissinger's influence over U.S. Middle East policy was in the ascendancy and he was in a position to test his calculations. Yet, while moving to strengthen the U.S.-Israeli relationship, he failed to respond to clear signals that Egypt's new president, Anwar Sadat, was eager to become involved in a peace process under American auspices. There ensued the limited war initiated by Sadat in 1973, an event that galvanized Washington into energetic peacemaking efforts. Under Kissinger's guiding hand, U.S. policy during the remaining years of the Nixon administration and those of the Ford administration focused overwhelmingly on working toward an Egyptian-Israeli settlement.

The nature of U.S.-Israeli relations during that period was mixed. On the one hand, Israel pressed for and received increasing amounts of military and economic support. On the other, the amply demonstrated reluctance of Israeli leaders to part with occupied territory produced periodic clashes between Washington and Jerusalem. In the end Kissinger mid-wifed the 1975 Sinai II Agreement, an accord that left Israel still in control of the bulk of the Sinai Peninsula and left Egypt in the status of having in effect renounced war as a potential means of recovering the rest.<sup>58</sup> Sinai II seemed to yield some clear benefits for the United States. Washington had established itself as the sole effective channel in the Arab-Israeli peace process; Egypt was now solidly in the American camp; the wisdom of



Kissinger's preference for dealing with limited issues incrementally rather than seeking a comprehensive settlement of outstanding issues between the Arabs and Israel appeared vindicated.

Kissinger's critics, however, pointed out that peace had yet to be concluded between Israel and any Arab party and argued that the cost to the United States of Sinai II's limited gains was exorbitant--Israel and Egypt respectively having initially been allocated \$2.2 and \$1 billion in U.S. foreign aid and given expectations of continuing support. Other skeptics pointed out that if the U.S. aimed to resolve the Arab-Israeli problem by promoting the exchange of territory for peace, Sinai II was not necessarily positive. Their concern was that if the Agreement led to a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace, Israel's incentive to part with further territory would be reduced. Kissinger did not face these considerations, leaving them to his successors.

The Carter administration took office in 1977, convinced that an overall Arab-Israeli settlement was in the long-term interest of the United States and that a comprehensive approach would increase chances of achieving this. Carter's was the first administration to directly acknowledge Palestinian nationalism as a reality that required some sort of satisfaction in any viable and enduring settlement.

After nearly a year in office, Jimmy Carter was forced to abandon efforts at comprehensive peacemaking. Israel had bitterly opposed the initiative. Congress and articulate U.S. public opinion also balked, both on grounds that Carter's approach was prejudicial to Israel and would needlessly reinstate the Soviets as a factor in the Middle East's future. Moreover, Anwar Sadat evidently preferred to focus on peace between Egypt and Israel.<sup>59</sup>

Forced back into the mold of piecemeal peacemaking, Carter acquitted himself admirably, presiding over Camp David in 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty of 1979. However, his administration did so with serious misgivings. Shortly after Camp David, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski discussed the outcome with the president. They agreed that Israel's objectives in the negotiations with Egypt were "essentially to have a separate peace, then U.S. payments, and finally a free hand in the West Bank." Brzezinski then raised the key question:

...whether we should in fact be pushing so hard for an Egyptian-Israeli treaty if it is our intention to resolve also the West Bank issue. Once such a treaty is signed we will have less leverage.<sup>60</sup>

By then it was too late for second thoughts. Increasingly preoccupied by the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Carter distanced himself from the Palestine issue during the last part of his term.

Ronald Reagan had none of the optimizing tendencies of his predecessor. Perceiving the Middle East through the lenses of its own brand of *real politik*, the Reagan administration thought primarily in terms of immediate, tangible power



resources. It was a framework that inculcated the heady conviction that Washington stood on the brink of a new era in the Middle East, an era that would see the full realization of U.S. goals in the region. It was also a framework that gave great importance to Israel's role as a strategic ally, and which greatly underestimated the strength of local actors opposed to the growth of U.S. regional influence. Not surprisingly, it consigned the Palestine issue to the backburners of Washington's attention.

This was the basis of the administration's curious futile pursuit of a "strategic consensus" among Israel, Egypt, and moderate states in the Arabian Peninsula. The same cognitive foundation was operative when the Syrian Missile Crisis of 1981 and PLO-Israeli tensions along Lebanon's southern border forced the realization that Palestine was not a dead issue.<sup>61</sup> The consequence was the Reagan administration's tacit approval of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and its subsequent decision to employ direct American military intervention in that country.

Though burned in Lebanon and ultimately cajoled by international opinion into opening a dialogue with the PLO, the Reagan administration never wavered from the conviction that Israeli power was a vital U.S. asset. Reagan's eight years in office are unrivaled as a period during which ties between the two states were strengthened. The comment made by a former staff member of the pro-Israel lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) at the close of Reagan's first term could just as well have come at the end of the second:

a...powerful force--the personal views of Mr. Reagan. Even his harshest critics in the liberal Jewish community acknowledge he is the most viscerally pro-Israel president since the founding of the state.<sup>62</sup>

Washington has always approached its relationship with Israel on the basis of a commitment to that country's security. However, the import of that commitment altered profoundly over the years. For over three decades the operational significance of supporting Israel's security essentially entailed the goal of ensuring the country's survival as a sovereign state within lines approximating those encompassing the Jewish state at the end of its "War of Independence" in 1949. Allowing for relatively minor territorial alterations in the interest of military defense, this remained the dominant U.S. concept of Israeli "security" until the early 1970s.

With the growing belief that the Soviet Union could for all practical purposes be expelled from the Middle East, the meaning of Israel's "security" took on a new color. The added tint was a form of instrumentalism in terms of global American interests: Israel's security now meant its viability as a tool in U.S. rivalry with the Soviet Union. Despite the Carter administration's attempt to revive the earlier concept, the trend set by Kissinger was not reversed. It emerged with renewed energy during the Reagan years, as Israel's "security" was ever more clearly defined



in terms of the Jewish state's capacity to serve as a strategic ally--an instrument not only to sever Arab connections with the U.S.S.R. but also to cow unfriendly regional radicals.

Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix I chart this evolution of official American thinking. More telling than the absolute increases in U.S. aid to Israel are the proportions of overall U.S. global aid that went to Israel and, secondly, the percent of aid to Israel assigned for military purposes. Table 1 demonstrates that for nearly two decades after 1952, American aid to Israel was usually pegged at 1% of annual worldwide U.S. aid. Thus, between 1948 and 1970 the average annual aid package came to less than 1% of global American aid. However, between 1971 and 1974 the proportion surged upward, ranging between 7% and 29% and coming to an annual average of 11.25% of global aid. These figures continued to increase. Between 1975 and 1983, aid to Israel ranged from a low of 10% of total U.S. annual aid to a high of 35%. During that full eight year period, the annual proportion of aid received by Israel from the United States averaged over 23% of total U.S. aid commitments. During the rest of the 1980s, the average annual proportion of worldwide aid assigned to Israel was just over 21%.

Table 2 illustrates the proportion of aid devoted to military support. No such aid was extended during the first decade of Israel's existence. In later years, Washington's growing inclination to see Israel as a strategic asset was reflected in the expanded military component of aid packages. Between 1959 and 1967, an average of some 20% of U.S. aid was in the form of military support. This proportion rose to over 67% between 1968 and 1974, increased to 69% between 1974 and 1983, and then leveled off at an average of nearly 56% for the rest of the decade.

George Bush's administration, though having studiously tried to minimize its involvement with Middle East tensions until Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, did nothing in its quiet way to lessen U.S. support of Israel. Fiscal Year 1990 saw \$3 billion assigned to Israel--an amount coming to 20% of allocated U.S. foreign aid, of which 60% was military support.<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps the most significant factor for the future of U.S.- Israeli ties is a phenomenon with roots far beyond the confines of the Middle East. The end of the Cold War has undermined the original *raison d'etre* of the strategic relationship. To the extent that the altered international context injects more flexibility into Washington's approach to the Middle East, it would seem that fundamental changes in the U.S.-Israeli relationship might well follow. Whether this will prove to be so depends very much on the balance Washington strikes between political influence and power as instruments in its future approach to the Arab World.

**The Arab World.** The enhancement of American influence with governments of the Arab World is the third generally cited objective of U.S. policy in the Middle East. Again, the tendency has been toward the expansion of this



definition into maximalist channels; that is, into realms approaching the border between "influence" and "determining control."

Although discussions of the distinction between "influence" and "power" are standard features of political science textbooks, this grey, quasi-psychological area of politics still leaves much room for theoretical debate. Nonetheless, at least one element of the line between "influence" and "power" ("determining control") seems evident: the attempt to exercise "influence" presumes the non-use of compulsion. On the other hand, the attempt to exercise "power" relies on potential or actual sanctions to compel desired behavior.

From this perspective, alterations in the goal of enhancing U.S. influence in the Arab World over the past four decades become recognizable. The direction of change--toward more effective control--is also visible. The signs are not, of course, so much in terms of decisions taken by Arab governments in accordance with U.S. wishes--for to abstract the U.S. factor in such cases must ultimately rest on conjecture--but rather in the application of U.S. sanctions as a result of objectionable Arab actions.

The military dimension of U.S. policy in the Arab World is the most obvious indicator of the changing operational definition of "enhancing" U.S. influence. In this regard it is notable that in the first thirty-five years after the end of World War II, American military intervention in the Middle East was an infrequent and bloodless occurrence. There were, in fact, only three instances, if one counts the minatory use of U.S. Air Force patrols along the Saudi-Yemeni border during Egypt's Yemen War as intervention. The other two were unquestionably interventions, though in neither case did U.S. troops engage in combat. The first was the 1958 landing of American marines in Lebanon; the second was the clandestine use of U.S. Air Force photo-reconnaissance planes during the 1967 Arab Israeli War.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, the past decade witnessed far more frequent and active instances of American military intervention in the Middle East, not counting the current deployment in the Gulf. Most resulted either in combat or the deaths of U.S. servicemen. They include: the ill-fated 1980 attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran; the deployment in the Sinai desert of U.S. troops as part of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), which functions as the peacekeeping force called for by the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty; the 1982-84 intervention in Lebanon; the 1985 use of American warplanes to "skyjack" a civilian Egyptian airliner and force it to land in Sicily; various naval deployments in the Gulf of Sidra and a clash between U.S. and Libyan warplanes; the 1986 bombing raid on Libya; and U.S. leadership of the multinational naval force that sought to protect non-belligerent shipping in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war after 1987, an enterprise that led to armed clashes between American and Iranian forces.

This increased reliance on military options reflects the growth of American involvement in the region's affairs. In each case, with the exception of U.S. participation in the MFO, the immediate cause grew out of a context linked to



reactions of local actors against the increasingly significant and visible U.S. role in the Middle East. Thus, the holding of hostages by the revolutionary Iranian regime cannot be understood apart from the growing support Washington extended to the Shah once the United States became the leading non-regional power in the Gulf after Britain's withdrawal in 1971; the reaction against the U.S. presence in Lebanon must be seen against Washington's support of Israel, and particularly against U.S. complicity in the 1982 Israeli invasion; and the wave of terrorism that produced the American attack on Libya and the sequestration of Egypt's civilian airliner must be understood as fueled by national and religious passions rampant among politically frustrated groups who came to resent the rising penetration of the region by the United States.

It is ironic that after the early 1970s the U.S. presence in the Arab World expanded steadily on the wings of the two assets most likely to have heightened Washington's political influence in friendly Arab capitals: economic resources and potential military power. The prospect of American help to overcome Egypt's economic crisis was, for example, a fundamental consideration leading to Anwar Sadat's realignment of Egyptian policy.<sup>65</sup> In the Gulf, the U.S. commitment to replace Britain as guardian of the status quo, and the multiplication of signs in the 1970s that Washington would not shy from employing force toward this end formed the basis of growing Arab security dependency.<sup>66</sup>

The paradox, then, is that the very growth of American political influence in the Arab heartland and the Gulf during the 1970's furthered circumstances leading to the increased use of U.S. military force. The dynamics of the phenomenon are not obscure. They sprang largely from the fact that Washington's emergence as the major outside power in the Middle East not only exacerbated local divisions but also generated heightened anti-American sentiment among progressively weakened forces opposed to the regional status quo. At the same time, the growth of U.S. influence in the Middle East resounded in the halls of Washington in ways tending to further reliance on military options. "Credibility," the political commodity of prestige, gained importance as a key underpinning of the U.S. position in friendly Arab capitals. Increasingly challenged by unfriendly, though often relatively minor, regional forces, the United States became increasingly unable to tolerate such challenges. To a degree, the greater frequency of U.S. military intervention is explicable in these terms.

At the same time, however, Washington showed signs of beginning to suffer from a malady identified long ago by Thucydides--the hubris of power, the tragic inclination to overestimate the extent to which greater military and economic capacity can shape political reality. Apart from Washington's growing readiness to rely on the political benefits of Israel's military might after the early 1970s, this reached its culmination under the Reagan administration--particularly in the futile, costly, and indeed tragic, adventure in Lebanon.<sup>67</sup>

In sum, for the past two decades the dialectical relationship between burgeoning U.S. influence in the Arab World and rising opposition to the



American presence has been the central historical theme of American involvement in the Middle East. Added to this has been an occasionally dominant tendency in Washington to conclude too readily that military means can work where political influence fails.

It must be stressed however that the Bush administration showed little evidence of lapsing into simple hubris in reacting to the Gulf Crisis. On the contrary, during the months that led to the outbreak of war in early 1991 Washington made every effort to enlist and sustain broad international support for the application of economic sanctions and the creation of a massive military threat to force Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait without resorting to hostilities. Although it seems highly probable that at some point between August and January the administration became firmly committed to the proposition that Iraqi military power would have to be reduced as part of any resolution of the crisis, this never became part of the minimal package of demands that, if met by Baghdad, would have prevented war between the International Coalition and Iraq. That the U.S. ultimately had no need to search for ways short of war to undermine Iraq's military strength and potential must be laid squarely to Saddam Hussein's adamant refusal to withdraw from Kuwait.

At this time, it is impossible to know what the war's final impact will be on the U.S. position in the Arab World. However, it seems almost beyond question that the area's future will continue to be much affected by the regional role of the United States, local reaction to that role, and the nature of Washington's calculations regarding the use of influence and power as political instruments.

**Middle East Oil.** Two major features have marked U.S. interest in securing access to Middle East oil. The first is that the direct importance of imported oil to the United States has increased notably in the past decades and that this pattern also holds true for oil brought from the Middle East. During the early part of World War II, the Roosevelt administration rejected pleas by U.S. oil companies to take a more active interest in the regime of Ibn Saud. Roosevelt himself opined that the area was "a little far afield for us." However, by the end of the war Washington had no doubts over the strategic and economic importance of Middle East oil.

In later years, American consumption of foreign oil followed a pattern that in the aggregate established increasing dependency. During the 1960's imports from all sources accounted for an average of some 20% of U.S. oil consumption. This proportion grew during the next decade, peaking in 1977 when imports accounted for approximately 47% of national requirements. The 1979 oil crisis led to more rigorous conservation efforts as well as to greater use of domestic resources, factors that helped produce a relatively short decline in import reliance. This bottomed out in 1985, when imports filled only approximately 32% of U.S. oil needs. After that date, the pre-1979 upward trend was renewed. It has not yet stopped. In 1989, foreign oil accounted for nearly as much of U.S. consumption as in 1977. During



the first six months of 1990 imports accounted for a record breaking 50% of American oil consumption. Some analysts now predict that this figure will rise to 75% by the end of the decade. Since oil currently fills 43% of overall U.S. energy requirements, and with the Gulf now providing 25% of U.S. oil imports, the United States has clearly become increasingly reliant on direct access to the region's petroleum resources. Moreover, the same pattern has generally obtained in Western Europe and Japan. The latter currently depends on the Gulf for some 64% of its oil while France and Italy rely on the area for 35% of their oil needs (see Appendix II).<sup>68</sup>

The second striking feature of the oil factor in American involvement in the Middle East is that until 1990 U.S. access to oil was never seriously threatened.<sup>69</sup> The embargoes of 1967 and 1973-74 were openly limited and temporary measures, not intended to deny oil to the U.S. or its allies on a sustained basis. The loss of Iranian oil after the situation in that country deteriorated in 1979, initially caused a good deal of needless panic in Washington but rapidly proved non-threatening. The shortfall was largely made up by other producers and Iranian production was relatively quickly resumed, which in turn assured the United States of easier access to alternative sources. In a similar vein, early worries about the impact of the Iran-Iraq war were groundless. Finally, of course, despite the brooding concern that periodically surfaced in U.S. speculation over Soviet intentions, Moscow never actively challenged the West's oil lifeline.<sup>70</sup>

Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait was taken as a credible threat to continued access. Yet, as discussed earlier, the nature of the threat did not fundamentally lie in the possibility that Iraq would willfully deny oil to the United States or seek to "blackmail" the West. Instead, the danger was that the combination of Saddam's ambitions and regional opposition to Iraq's bid for hegemony would lead to an uncontrolled and extended disruption of oil supplies.

In a post-Cold War context, this appears to carry significant implications for the future pursuit of American objectives in the Middle East. The most likely challenges to continuing American access to oil in the region are rooted in local conditions underlying the area's inherent instability. The chief regional problem that Washington will confront in the region in the wake of the Gulf War will therefore be to determine how this danger can be minimized.

### **The Palestine Problem**

The problem of Palestine is the fourth major factor that directly led to the Gulf Crisis. The essence of the Palestine issue is the unresolved question of whether Arab or Jew, or somehow both, will achieve unquestionable political dominance in that ancient land. From this core question have sprung myriad sub-issues that have generated an unending series of debates having various degrees of practical importance for possible political solutions. Forming this tangled skein of controversy are the legal, historical, and moral claims to ownership advanced by



Zionists and Arabs, conflicting interpretations of Palestine's significance for the security of the Middle East, and therefore for the security of major global actors, and differing conclusions regarding the very possibility of any sort of political settlement.

The history of the struggle for Palestine in this century demonstrates that neither of the two great powers most responsible for the country's fate were able to settle upon a firm and comprehensive set of answers to the issues at stake. Thus, the essence of Britain's contradictory, vacillating, and ultimately rejectionist approach to the mandate was captured in the title of John Marlowe's study, *The Seat of Pilate*.<sup>71</sup> By the same token, *The Politics of Indecision* illustrates the tortuous path taken by the United States between 1939 and 1948 in becoming the de facto, if rather reluctant, midwife at Israel's birth.<sup>72</sup> The story of Washington's growing projection of itself as Middle East "peacemaker" in later years is very much that of the continuing failure of the United States to devise an integrated, consistent, and purposeful stance vis-a-vis the issues raised by the Palestine question.<sup>73</sup>

On the level of absolute moral, ethical or philosophical debate, it is possible that even Solomon would not have sneered at the quandry faced by third-party decisionmakers. Each of the primary protagonists' claims are pregnant with persuasiveness, and the examples of inhumanity and injustice with which each frequently charges the other carry sufficient validity to reinforce this.

However, the specific question that history, in the form of the development of power relationships and political attitudes, has long thrust to the fore can be approached on relatively more solid and objective grounds. The question itself, of course, is whether the political interests of Middle East actors and those having interests in the Middle East, would be served or undermined by the creation of a Palestinian state that would neither detract from, nor threaten, Israel's own sovereign existence.

Put this way, there is clearly no "absolute" answer. Involved actors must form judgements according to their particular goals. From the start it is all too obvious that extremist Israeli or pro-Israeli partisans and their Palestinian or pro-Palestinian counterparts can only see their interests jeopardized by such a settlement.

On the other hand, rational thinking--by third parties as well as by those segments of Palestinian and Israeli societies and their respective supporters who do not in principle reject such a compromise--requires constant efforts to appraise the value of a "two-state" solution in the light of political realities. Underlying this imperative is the simple fact that "political realities" change as "history moves on," and in doing so provide lessons that are overlooked only at peril.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was a historical event, one that has so shaken the Middle East and the world community that even now its emergent lessons are almost impossible to ignore. While resolving the Palestine issue cannot be



expected to eliminate all causes of instability in the Middle East, the Gulf Crisis has highlighted Palestine's importance to regional affairs.

What has been established beyond doubt is that Palestine is unrivalled as a focus of general concern in the Arab World. It runs as a pulsating current, now flowing in some quarters, now ebbing in others, but in one way or another actually or potentially penetrating and affecting all other issues of regional significance. None of the area's three major political determinants discussed so far--the "Arab crisis," the nexus between the Arab World and the global economy, and the U.S. presence in the Middle East--is an exception. Although the links between the Palestine question and these issues are multiple and complex, they are not difficult to identify.

It is impossible to separate the Arab search for identity from the Palestine problem. Clearly, the weight of efforts to locate Palestine within postulated psycho-social Arab universes has fallen overwhelmingly on the side of those giving it critical, or at least great, importance. This virtually unanimous insistence on Palestine's essential linkage to Arab reality has roots both in deep historical memory and the circumstances that attended the Arabs' trajectory from "awakening" under the Ottoman Empire to independence from European imperialism.

Yet, it is obvious that no amount of consensus over Palestine's significance has produced much harmony in practice among Arab regimes. The chasm separating Arab rhetoric about full solidarity and identity of interests with Palestinians from the practices of Arab political actors has long been patent. So too has been the fact that in large measure this gap has been sustained precisely by competition among diverse ideologies claiming to define the "Arab community." In short, loyalty to the beleaguered Palestinians has long been a touchstone of legitimacy in the Arab World. As such, it is a prime commodity in "political mythology"--that admixture of objective representation and resonant values that results in meaningful symbolism. To speak of myth in this context is not at all to diminish either the seriousness or the reality of the cause itself. Anyone familiar with politics will instantly recognize the ubiquity of political mythology. Politics, at least as so far played out in human history, cannot do without it. No society has so far been free from it.

It is in this sense that the frequent contradictions between rhetoric issuing from Arab governments and their actual decisions can be understood as responses to pressing realities. If Arab elites have vied for support by trying to validate political programs in terms of commitment to the cause of Palestine, it is because of an awareness of the issue's strong emotional impact at the popular level. If Arab governments have sought to control or manipulate the Palestinian cause for their own ends, it is because they understand its capacity to elicit enormous amounts of energy and sacrifice. And if Arab leaders have occasionally moved to limit or suppress Palestinian activism, it has been out of fearful recognition of the



Palestine issue's independent potential to generate powerful responses throughout the Middle East.

The Gulf Crisis offered only the latest example of the Palestine issue's use as a rallying cry. Saddam Hussein pointed to Kuwait's Western supporters, associating the regime of the Sabahs with Israel's sponsors, and argued that only his brand of Arabism retained the purity of purpose required to uphold the Palestine cause. As evident in popular reactions in Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, North Africa and elsewhere, these arguments were not without effect.

Saddam's Arab opponents accused Iraq of provoking internecine conflict that weakened all Arabs and therefore only undermined the cause of Palestine. These arguments also were effective.

While it is easy enough to brand the regular use of the Palestine problem by Arab elites as a cynical and self-serving exercise in political manipulation, the continuing use of the tactic eloquently underscores the profound and widespread nature of real Arab concern with the issue.

The most obvious and consistent connection between the Palestine problem and the Arab World's primary role in the international economic system has been the former's constant potential, and sometimes actualized, ability to disrupt the supply of oil. Although oil producers have made only limited use of the "oil weapon," tensions between particular and Pan Arab interests have nowhere been more sharply drawn than in this realm. Oil producers have sought to establish Pan Arabist credentials while simultaneously securing and justifying their own economic interests by subsidizing Palestinian activism. The arrangement's inherent instability was emphasized by the rapidity with which the Palestinian movement reacted to the Gulf Crisis by turning on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

In doing so, the PLO leadership responded to a growing conviction that the minimal demands of Palestinian nationalism would not be satisfied within the existing Middle East environment. The organization's recognition of Israel and reiterated renunciation of terrorism in 1988 led to a dialogue with the United States that produced no movement toward Palestinian statehood and which Washington terminated some weeks prior to the invasion of Kuwait. In the meantime, the three-year old *intifadah* blazed on, imposing enormous burdens on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza but showing no sign of reducing Israeli or U.S. opposition to any form of Palestinian statehood. Moreover, the end of the Cold War not only removed the Soviet Union as a potential balance to Washington's impact on the struggle for Palestine but also led to the massive and ongoing influx of Soviet Jewry into Israel, a phenomenon threatening a rapid and decisive alteration of the occupied territories' demography.<sup>74</sup>

Quite literally, PLO support of Saddam's aggression against Kuwait constituted a move to promote an "Arab solution" to the Palestinian problem; that is, to futher a local effort that might shift the regional status quo into a configuration more conducive to the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state. It is doubtful that PLO leaders could have envisaged with any confidence just what



avenues toward the realization of this end might be opened by the invasion of Kuwait. The obvious riskiness of Saddam's ploy probably precluded that. They seem to have followed a type of reasoning succinctly captured in Bob Dylan's maxim: "When you ain't got nothing, you got nothing to lose."

This rationality-of-desperation initially seemed borne out by events as Jordan's King Hussein broke his traditional pro-Western mold and pro-Saddam sentiment sprouted throughout the Arab World. Forces militating for fundamental change in Middle East political reality were unleashed. If that new reality led to a generalized war from which none would benefit, the PLO's original stance would be upheld by the dire logic of another maxim: "Misery loves company."

The Palestine issue's relationship to the remaining major factor that gave birth to the Gulf Crisis is obvious. For over forty years, Washington has neither been able to insulate itself from that problem nor help resolve it. Although many elements shaped U.S. policy toward the Palestine issue, the fundamental source of difficulty has been Washington's failure to ground its approach in a firm, consistent, and relevant set of principles. The upshot has been a series of far-reaching but short-sighted decisions; the unfolding of policy-by-expediency. Inevitably, this produced the parallel series of regular mini-crises that have marred U.S.-Arab and U.S.-Israeli relations over a variety of issues, including arms supplies, U.N. voting patterns, and the use of military force. More importantly, there has long since developed a glaring set of contradictions between the principles Washington regularly claims to uphold in international politics and major aspects of its approach to the Middle East. International law, respect for the United Nations, the upholding of individual human rights and the national right of self-determination are all among key guidelines to international conduct which the United States in principle supports. In practice, American commitment to these values has been regularly undermined by Washington's staunch support of Israel's economy and military power. Thus, violations of U.N. resolutions and international law constituted by Israeli practices in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, the mounting incorporation of those areas into Israel through persistent Jewish settlement, and Israel's continuing occupation of south Lebanon, are not realistically separable from the overall course of U.S. policy in the Middle East since 1967.

Declarations of outrage by U.S. policymakers over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait have centered mostly on the very principles violated by U.S. policy in regard to the Palestine issue. President Bush arrived in Cairo in mid-November to carry the tune. He justified his policy in the Gulf Crisis by condemning Iraq for violating Kuwait's national integrity, for abuses of human rights, and for ignoring U.N. resolutions. At a major press conference, his largely Arab audience was polite enough to refrain from asking embarrassing questions.

However, in the wake of the Gulf Crisis, Washington should expect the principled chickens it loosed during the affair to return home to roost. The



reception awaiting them will do much to shape the coming years in the Middle East.

### **Conclusion: Political Context and the Morality of Self-Interest**

Individually and in concert the four constant features of the Middle East political context surveyed here created conditions that blossomed into the Gulf Crisis. The most salient of their contributions was the furtherance of a political environment virtually void of moral content. For far too long, the Middle East has been an arena in which leading local and international actors have pursued power for its own sake. Purported principled ends have routinely been contradicted by practice. Political rhetoric has become increasingly, and increasingly obviously, distanced from political motive. When attained, power has generally served the narrowest of purposes.

This dreary pattern has become the hallmark of the region's politics, epitomized at the micro-level by the personalized, treacherous cupidity of Lebanese factional interaction and at the level of macro-politics by longstanding and callous American disregard of flagrant inequalities and injustices perpetrated by regimes supported in the name of U.S. national interests.<sup>75</sup> The outcome has been the development of a thoroughly cynical political milieu, an environment in which power is generally taken as its own justification. The condition is manifested at all levels in the gap between political oratory and political reality. Thus, the division between state and society in the Arab World is sustained through two channels of contact: the generally empty discourse of public politics and the actual structures that effectively maintain existing power relationships between manipulatory governments and alienated citizens. At the regional level, claims of brotherhood and common cause are little more than empty facades behind which the reality of intense rivalries and shifting alignments of convenience among elites grinds on. For their part, major international actors in the Middle East have long pursued policies that in practice belie the universal human and political values they claim to uphold.

It is not overly difficult to suggest in broad terms how these environmental constants have interacted to produce the currently grim Middle East scene. The ongoing crisis of Arab identity not only divided the Arab World but also brought forth a type of compromise that in fact requires the continuing separation of political rhetoric from political action. The nature of the compromise has been to allow each proponent to cling to a particular view of Arabism as universally valid while simultaneously espousing the common, and so far empty, theme of "Arab brotherhood"--a theme pregnant with the siren song of mutual tolerance. In effect, however, this has perpetuated intra-Arab divisions by preventing resolution of the competition among value systems claiming absolute legitimacy as grounds upon which Arabs should relate to each other and to non-Arabs. Just as importantly, it



has led to virtually all sides acting with notable inconsistency when judged by the values they claim to uphold. Multiplicity of political values has to a great extent become the absence of meaningful political values, apart, that is, from the basic value assigned to power.<sup>76</sup>

The Arab World's role in the global economy has so far meshed neatly with the raw edges of intra-Arab divisions to sustain this situation. The role of rentier regimes has been of paramount importance. A major factor sustaining the crisis of Arab identity has been the selective extension of rentier wealth throughout the region as a means of securing the status quo. The practice has proved effective, not in converting opponents of the rentier value-system but in buying (more accurately, renting) the uneasy acquiescence of the more powerful of those who are most threatening. The result is that with few exceptions neither pro nor anti status quo elites have shown much consistency in adhering to the values supposedly defining their respective visions of the Arab World's destiny.

As has been true of all great powers seeking ascendancy in the Middle East, the United States entered the region with little understanding of, or concern over, problems facing the area's inhabitants. However, Washington's entanglement in the Palestine question, and its subsequent commitment to Israel's security, rapidly placed it in the unwanted but unescapable position of a protagonist in the region's most virulent conflict.

Even so, the willingness--indeed, the determination--of key Arab regimes to quietly ensure that the American stance on Palestine not block the development of ties to the United States permitted Washington to consolidate and progressively enhance its regional influence.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, as the U.S. found accommodating regional partners, it inexorably became an indirect, and frequently direct, partisan in a variety of intra-Arab tensions. It seems almost superfluous to point out that American policy has on the whole been guided by the perceived demands of immediate U.S. objectives rather than long-term considerations of principle.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the U.S. approach to the Palestine issue. There is no surprise in this, for by its very nature--its historical development, its duration, its human costs--the Palestine question forces recognition of the relationship between principle and action in political behavior. For the United States, this has progressively come to mean an almost unbridgeable gap between actual decisions and the values supposedly underlying American foreign policy. For the Arabs, Palestine has fulfilled much the same function, with the Palestinians' cause not only serving as the touchstone of Arabism but also forcing measurable responses (whether by action or inaction). Here too, the gap between proclaimed values and real policies has been stark. The Palestine issue, then, has become an uncomfortable mirror reflecting a more general truth about the predominant orientation to politics of all major actors involved in the Middle East: their pursuit of power in the absence of guiding principles beyond that of its mere attainment.



In this sense, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait was consonant with regional political "rules of the game" long since developed by others.

At this point an analysis of the Gulf Crisis must search for causal underpinnings lying beyond the theater of Middle East politics. Since the regional factors examined here have long been pillars of the area's political environment, there is need to suggest why they proved so explosive by the summer of 1990.

The answer appears to lie in the ongoing and profound changes that have occurred in the global political system during the past few years. The rapid decline of the Soviet Union's status as a superpower protagonist in world affairs and the much heralded "end of the Cold War" shattered the post-World War II international order without replacing it. Quite naturally, the current transitional period is marked by far greater uncertainty regarding the limits of acceptable political action than is the case under any sort of established order. Under such circumstances, political ambitions--and the high probability of acute political tensions--are inevitably unleashed. Evidence abounds in the proliferation of separatist and revanchist movements within the Soviet Union's own borders as well as in Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans.

The Gulf Crisis has shown that in the Middle East the altered global political context removed constraints that hitherto had prevented the region from falling into generalized instability of the proportions threatened by Saddam's invasion of Kuwait.

Future historians will almost certainly agree that the current international environment underlay the miscalculation that led Saddam to his fateful decision. However, they may very well debate the nature of that miscalculation. On the one hand, it may be argued that Saddam failed to appreciate the extent to which the post-World War II global system had deteriorated and that by doing so wrongly concluded that fear of providing the Soviets with political advantage in the Middle East would inhibit Washington from reacting strongly to a *fait accompli* in Kuwait.

On the other hand, a completely different--and far more plausible--explanation is likely to emerge once scholars have time and opportunity to amass and examine hard evidence. This would hold that Saddam understood far too well the nature of the changed international environment but that he failed to sufficiently understand the complexities of U.S. foreign policy making.

In short, the argument maintains that in light of the "end of the Cold War," Saddam consciously concluded that the United States would find no compelling reason to challenge his takeover of Kuwait. Indeed, he would have had cogent reasons for believing the United States--now no longer preoccupied by rivalry with the Soviet Union--would, perhaps somewhat ruefully but nonetheless realistically, discover grounds for accepting the new order in the Middle East. Chief among these would have been a recognition that market forces would prevent Baghdad from pricing itself out of business as an oil supplier and a willingness to test Iraq's sudden dominance for possible benefits to be derived from a new regional force that



might impose long-term consistency in production and pricing policies throughout the area.

If Saddam's calculations flowed along these lines, they rested on three related assumptions: first, that the U. S. approach to the Middle East in the post-Cold War era remains fundamentally directed toward the goal of securing oil; second, that U.S. policy in the Middle East is essentially expedient--that is, that the primacy of oil considerations would nullify other considerations were sufficient difficulties placed in the way of alternative actions; and third, that the formulation of American foreign policy decisions is essentially "rational,"--that is, devoid of emotional, irrational, or principled elements that may complicate strict cost-benefit analysis.

Credibility appears to be lent to this interpretation of Saddam's thinking by what is known of his personality and the autocratic power he wields within the Iraqi regime. More serious analyses of the man--those rejecting the easy labeling of him as a "madman"--find him characterized by a sober, calculating political mind.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, Saddam functions within the regime in a condition of virtual political solipsism. "Rational," as opposed to "informed," policy calculations are always more feasible in an autocratic setting.

Within such a framework, Saddam's miscalculation cannot convincingly be attributed to failure on his part to perceive the relative importance of oil or expediency in U.S. Middle East policy as it has unfolded since World War II. It can, however, very much be assigned to a gross misunderstanding of how U.S. foreign policy decisions are formed.

Determining whether or not Saddam Hussein actually engaged in the thought processes just described must be left to historians after they examine evidence that will hopefully be available in the future. At the moment it is sufficient to point out that such calculations would not only have contained a recognizable degree of rationality in themselves but also have proved consonant to a large degree with the American response to the Gulf Crisis.

The strongest support for this contention is found in domestic U.S. reaction to the Gulf Crisis. By the fall of 1990, American public opinion was strongly questioning the basis of possible U.S. military intervention in the Gulf. The prospect of human and material losses led to visible uncertainty regarding purpose. Symbolic of the generalized unease were the opposed views of two former key policymakers. Henry Kissinger was a prompt and vociferous advocate of military intervention.<sup>79</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, however, urged that any response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait be decided only on the basis of the need for oil.<sup>80</sup> Neither managed to provide a popularly compelling principle calling for the spilling of American blood against Iraq.

Kissinger's contention that an Iraqi success would "usher in a series of upheavals certain to culminate in a general Middle East war" may have been analytically correct, but evidently carried no clarion impact. The same was true of his warning that were Iraq "allowed to prevail," the significance would be



"America's abdication at the very moment when the old East-West conflict has been won." Many Americans clearly reacted by asking "abdication of what?" The question was particularly relevant in view of the Soviet Union's apparent abandonment of a challenging role in the Middle East.

Brzezinski's position represented a stand that called U.S. military intervention further into question. Oil, he argued was the paramount American interest in the Middle East. Saddam's aggression was lamentable and the U.S. should support international norms opposing such raw use of power, but only to the extent that the "international community" led the charge. Shorn of rhetoric, it approximated the sort of rational assessment Saddam may well have counted upon.

The Kissinger-Brzezinski debate, and the lukewarm response of the American public to the prospect of war against Iraq, was evidence of widespread doubt about American goals in the Middle East. The status quo in the Gulf provided little by way of persuasive moral imperatives: democracy was absent; traditional regimes worked in ways utterly mysterious to the American rank and file. The inevitable question was why should Americans fight and die to prevent one Arab regime from eliminating another?

By the end of 1990, congressional reaction made it clear that the Bush administration had yet to provide an answer that fired enthusiastic support. Yet, despite growing domestic disquiet, the U.S. had committed something on the order of 400,000 troops to the confrontation with Saddam Hussein, and the American public, though rent by questions, acceded to Washington's lead.

It was, one guesses, a problem that puzzled Saddam Hussein. Certainly, this was a case of a government not obviously acting strictly in accordance with rational cost-benefit analysis.

But from the first, assuming the indicated scenario of Saddam's "rational calculation," Iraqi thinking was flawed by an unwarranted assumption of strict rationality in U.S. foreign policy decisions. To extend Harry Truman's metaphorical allusion to policymaking, the U.S. system has many cooks in the kitchen. Washington's reaction to the Gulf Crisis proceeded accordingly.

At a minimum, given the effective roles of congress, congressional committees, the foreign policy bureaucracy, the press and the public, this inevitably meant that a variety of values would affect the U.S. response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

What Saddam seems to have sensed was that the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a factor in U.S. policy toward the Middle East would throw Washington's definition of its primary objective in the region into confusion. He was correct. Anti-communism, and its concomitant anti-radical stand lost credibility once the Soviet Union was removed from contention for supremacy in the Middle East.

What Saddam apparently failed to understand were the implications of the multifaceted U.S. system of policy formulation; that because of its structure, which allows, indeed provokes, inputs from various sources, it is hardly "rational" in the sense of straightforward calculations relating "cost" to "benefit." That is,



because the process of defining U.S. national interests incorporates actors having different, and not necessarily compatible, values, the very definition of "cost" and "benefit" in any given case may become a messy and unclear affair. This inherent problem of democratic foreign policy making is greatly exacerbated when an issue arises that cannot easily be related to a national value that enjoys a widespread tradition of acceptance.

The Soviet Union's abdication of its role as America's *bête noire* in world affairs caused the Gulf Crisis to throw into high relief rampant contradictions that have long beset Washington's approach to the Middle East. These had previously been largely hidden from general view by the Cold War's moral mythology. American support of less-than-democratic (and worse) regimes was justified as part of the lofty principled struggle to protect the "Free World" and the "American Way of Life" from the menace of Communism and its radical allies. The moral mantle also blanketed a stunning array of violations of international law, human rights, and U.N. resolutions as well as outright acts of massive aggression (viz. the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon) by Washington's chief regional ally.

The end of the Cold War stripped away this increasingly threadbare cloak of high purpose, as the Bush administration discovered in the face of rising debate over the justification for military intervention. However, this did not prevent Washington from pursuing its military build-up in the Gulf; nor did it deter the United States from going to war when Iraq failed to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait.

What, then, generated and sustained this powerful response? The answer appears to involve a number of considerations that operated within the U.S. political system. Keeping in mind the multiple inputs at work in the complex realm of American foreign policy making, the record of public discussion of the Gulf Crisis highlights four persistent themes that in all probability guided Washington's confrontation with Iraq. The four are not mutually exclusive and cannot be presumed to have been given equal or consistent weight by policymakers as the crisis unfolded. Yet, they appear to have been the primary determinants of U.S. policy.

*Fear of Long-Term Implications of the Growth of Iraqi Power.* To some sectors of the U.S. public and government, this primarily took the form of fear that an Iraqi success in Kuwait would permit Saddam to impose exorbitant increases in oil prices and that he would use that power to "blackmail" the West in a variety of areas.<sup>81</sup> In other quarters, excessive oil prices were not considered likely because of Iraq's dependency on oil income. However, the prospect of a wealthier Iraq under Saddam was feared on grounds that its increased economic capacity would be translated into even greater military power, including the rapid development of a nuclear capability. In each case, whether focusing on oil "blackmail" or possible future aggression by Iraq, the fear was that Baghdad would ultimately pose a far sharper threat to the region and the world.<sup>82</sup>



*Fear That Regardless of the Iraqi Government's Future Inclinations, the Invasion of Kuwait Threatened General Instability in the Middle East.* Proponents of this view focused on possible regional reaction to the growth of Iraqi power. The underlying concern here was that local opposition to Iraq would destabilize the area regardless of policies pursued by outside actors.<sup>83</sup>

*Fear That Failure to Challenge Saddam's Occupation of Kuwait Would Alter the Middle East in Unforseeable, but Nonetheless Dangerous, Ways.* In effect, this was manifested in terms that essentially called for upholding the pre-invasion Middle East status quo for its own sake, a position one observer accurately described as based on "unexamined premises--the naive thought that somehow the old order could be maintained."<sup>84</sup>

*Fear That the Successful Violation of Accepted Principles of International Behavior Would Lead to a Breakdown of World Order.* Ironically, given the history of U.S. policy in the Middle East, the argument that Iraq should be opposed as a matter of principle rapidly became the cornerstone of the Bush administration's approach to the Gulf Crisis. It also, of course, became the focus of debate between forces in the United States that rejected military intervention for any purpose short of securing the flow of oil and those seeing fundamental political value in upholding international norms.<sup>85</sup> The extent to which Bush relied on arguments of principle as camouflage for other, more "practical," considerations must remain in question for now. The point, however, is that by brandishing international principle as the primary source of his Gulf policy, Bush in effect acknowledged that neither immediate tangible interests such as oil nor analytical calculations indicating possibly greater danger in the future were likely to produce the domestic support he required. This is hardly surprising. Raymond Aron succinctly outlined the necessity of abstract values, "glory," or "the idea," as he called it, in galvanizing communities into international action:

Whether it is a question of land or men, of security or force, the stake [in international relations] is ultimately material....But neither security nor force satisfies the aspirations of communities....Political units have their amour-propre, as people do; perhaps they are even more sensitive.<sup>86</sup>

As does any other political actor, the United States also needs its mythology.

**Prospects.** It is as yet impossible to determine the precise reasoning that shaped the American response to the Gulf Crisis. Still, even now, long before key official documents come to light or leading decisionmakers are ready to reveal the full nature of their calculations, several conclusions can be offered. For example, it seems obvious that many of the various arguments advanced in the name of *real*



*politik* were analytically sound. This is particularly true in view of conditions in the contemporary Middle East--the region's endemic instability and the demonstrated willingness of powerful regimes to rely on naked force to attain national goals; the prevalence of authoritarian rule and the circumstances that allow leaders of Saddam's calibre to rise to power; and, finally, the existence and probable spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Thus, the argument that Iraq's takeover of Kuwait, if successful, was the harbinger of future, and probably much greater, confrontations in the region cannot be casually dismissed. This remains true whether one believes that Saddam himself or his regional adversaries would have been the more likely catalyst for further upheaval. Nor can rational projection view lightly the additional "realist" argument that a success in Kuwait would have prompted Saddam to push more strongly for a nuclear capability. Nuclear proliferation in the Middle East has, of course, almost certainly already become a reality in the case of Israel, and the danger of the spread of nuclear weapons is not confined solely to Iraq. But Saddam's penchant for sudden power plays and his longstanding determination to acquire such arms made his regime the most perilous regional actor in this respect.

In short, the opposition to Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait by the United States and the global coalition was rational and politically sound.

Was it, however, also in some sense "moral" or "principled"? The preceding pages have already explored the irony of Washington's claim to have been motivated primarily by a desire to uphold international norms in the Middle East. Yet, irony need not necessarily turn into farce. Nor does virtuous action necessarily require a virtuous actor.

If political morality and principle are understood instrumentally, that is, not as transcendent absolutes but rather as pragmatic imperatives for attaining identifiable ends, the question raised here must be answered affirmatively. At least this is true if one sees no valid reason why the unappetizing politics of the Middle East should continue to threaten the lives of millions in the region and beyond. The Gulf Crisis was a terrible reminder that levels of armaments already in the area as well as weapons brought to bear by external actors do just that.<sup>87</sup>

Those more removed from the region, being also removed from the passions at work in the area, are more likely than many within it to recognize this. They should, then, act so far as possible accordingly. The International Coalition led by the United States did so in confronting Saddam Hussein's bid for regional dominance, moving--for whatever immediate reasons--to remove the threat of even greater disruption to the Middle East and the world. Thus, the moral and principled arguments evoked in support of this stance served a useful and valid purpose.

However, the lesson to be drawn is much broader. It includes, or should include, recognition that there is danger in a prolonged international context in which power is its own justification and the relationship between political rhetoric and policy is marked on all sides only by contradiction. Iraq's policies were outgrowths of such a setting. It should not be doubted that the Baghdad regime



was surprised by the force with which normative considerations were suddenly granted a prominent role in Middle East politics. A second major lesson, then, is that the injection of principles into politics cannot be ad hoc. If international norms are to promote orderly political intercourse, their relevance must be predictable.

The importance of this to the Middle East is apparent. The end of the Gulf Crisis will not in itself fundamentally alter the chief factors in the region's unstable political life. The "Arab crisis" will continue to unfold as Arabs seek to define and act upon commonly accepted bases for relationships among themselves and with the non-Arab world.<sup>88</sup> Middle East oil will remain vital to the global political economy, and major centers of power in the world will still be prepared to use force if that is necessary to ensure its orderly availability. The United States will in all likelihood continue to be the most influential external actor in the region for the foreseeable future. Finally, unless and until it is resolved, the Palestine issue will continue to be an explosive destabilizing element.

Almost as soon the Gulf Crisis began to develop, official and unofficial analysts in the West, and particularly in the United States, began speculating on the nature of a new post-crisis "security regime" for the Gulf. This was inevitable given the renewed attention drawn by Saddam Hussein to the Middle East's basic instability. It is also very likely inevitable that the post-crisis period will witness a search by the United States, and possibly other powers, for new ways to project military force into the area in a bid to prevent further disruptions of the sort sparked by Saddam.

Whatever may come from such efforts, it would be fruitless to hope that regional "stability" can be produced by force. On the contrary, any effort by the U.S. and its allies to impose longevity on a congenial Middle East status quo through the application of sheer military power would produce the instability it sought to avoid. Then too, American public reaction during the Gulf Crisis makes it questionable whether the West would find the political will for this exercise.

On the other hand, it is neither likely nor desirable that the world community simply renounce military options for dealing with contingencies in the Middle East. In this volatile area, the possibility of some future replay, in one form or another, of the crisis caused by Saddam Hussein cannot be discounted.

This indicates the pressing necessity of placing the relationship between the Middle East and the world community on a footing that simultaneously accomplishes two goals. It must, on the one hand, establish mutually acknowledged limits defining acceptable political action; that is, parameters beyond which politics can be expected to be replaced by confrontation. On the other hand, these same parameters must ensure that no particular regional status quo in itself becomes a definitive limit to politically induced change.

In short, any viable "new order" in the Middle East arising in the aftermath of the current war must not only burnish to pristine clarity the circumstances under which the world's key power centers will once again resort to war against local



forces but also acknowledge that within those limitations no external restrictions on the scope of regional political activity and change are acceptable.

In concrete terms, this implies that the basis of post-Gulf War relations between the Arab World and the broader international community must be rooted in an understanding that the former is undergoing, and cannot be prevented from experiencing, a historical developmental process that may perhaps be constrained but certainly not controlled. In itself, such recognition would "constrain" the objectives, the forms, and the content of political ambitions held by non-Middle East actors toward the Arab World.

Recent history indicates two limits which the international community will inevitably set to developmental processes in the Arab World. Neither is novel; both have long been basic demands of the centers of world power. Still, their clear reaffirmation would contribute much to reducing chances of further tragic miscalculations after the Gulf War. First, of course, is the international system's interest in the Arab World's role as oil-supplier; that is, that the region continue to provide oil through regular and orderly processes. Second, is the existence of Israel as a sovereign state. However, a means must be found to ensure so far as possible that these broad international demands on the Middle East are linked to a framework that will also impose limitations on the scope of acceptable action by non-Middle East powers in the region.

The solution appears to lie in the very body of political principles that served to justify the International Coalition's resistance to Saddam Hussein. These--chief among which are respect for national sovereignty, and the upholding of international law, the United Nations, and human rights--form a plausible framework for predictable and relatively harmonious interaction between the Arab World and the global community that would not detract from productive dynamism in relations between Arabs and non-Arabs or necessarily limit the course of relations among the Arabs themselves. Thus, while establishing relatively clear criteria for identifying types of political activity in the region that would call forth international opposition, the same framework allows full scope for the orderly development by Arabs of their own political destiny.

It cannot, of course, be expected that in the Middle East (or anywhere else, for that matter) an utterly new order of international politics based on universal principles can arise. International relations remain far too linked to particularistic self-interest for this to be possible. Yet, as shown by the Gulf Crisis, the conduct of politics in the Middle East by regional and international actors alike has been overly colored by the absence of principle. The Gulf Crisis underscored the dangers of this. It is in the self-interest of all parties to redress the balance. What is needed is something along the lines of what Raymond Aron termed "the morality of prudence": approaching international politics on the basis of an effort not only to consider each case "in its concrete particularities, but also not to ignore any of the arguments of principle and opportunity, to forget neither the relation of forces nor the wills of peoples."<sup>89</sup>



It is evident that no attempt to mitigate the danger of future major instability in the Middle East by giving more weight to considerations of principle can work if it is not applied consistently--that is, to all issues of regional importance. Obviously, this implies a fundamental change in U.S. policy toward the Palestine issue. Just as obvious is the fact that even if that issue is resolved, the dangers of instability in the Middle East will not be obviated.

Yet, if the U.S. and the international community approach the Palestine problem in the aftermath of the Gulf War as the main outstanding threat to the region, and if, moreover, they do so with anything approximating the commitment to principle evinced against Saddam Hussein, chances of removing a major source of disquiet in the Middle East will be enhanced. To the extent that this is accomplished, an environment will have been created that is more conducive to the growth of responsible, responsive and productive politics on the part of all who interact in the Arab World.



## APPENDIX I

### TABLE 1 PERCENT OF TOTAL U.S. AID GOING TO ISRAEL

Year	\$Amount	%	Year	\$Amount	%
1948	-----*	0	1970	71.1	1
1949	-----	0	1971	600.8	7
1950	-----	0	1972	404.2	4
1951	0.1	0.0022	1973	467.3	5
1952	86.4	2	1974	2570.7	29
1953	73.6	1	1975	693.1	10
1954	74.7	1	1976	2229.4	35
1955	52.7	1	TQ**	278.6	11
1956	50.8	1	1977	1757.0	23
1957	40.9	1	1978	1811.8	20
1958	61.2	1	1979	4815.1	35
1959	50.3	1	1980	1811.0	19
1960	55.7	1	1981	2189.0	21
1961	48.1	1	1982	2219.0	18
1962	83.9	1	1983	2497.5	20
1963	76.7	1	1984	2610.0	23
1964	37.0	1	1985	3350.1	18
1965	61.7	1	1986	3621.0	22
1966	126.8	2	1987	3000.0	21
1967	13.1	0.2034	1988	3000.0	22
1968	76.8	1	1989	3000.0	21
1969	121.7	2			

\* Dollar amounts in millions

\*\* Transitional Quarter

Sources: Bernard Reich, *The United States and Israel*, (New York: Praeger, 1984), Table 4.2; Office of Planning and Budgeting, Bureau of Program and Policy Coordination, U.S. Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas loans and Grants*, Cong-R-0105, (Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, n.d.); Congressional Quarterly, *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, Vol. XXXIX, 1983, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1984), pp. 521-561; *Ibid*, Vol. XIV, 1988, pp. 676-80.



**TABLE 2**  
**PERCENT OF MILITARY AID FROM U.S. TO ISRAEL**

Year	%	Year	%
1959	1	1976	67
1960	1	TQ**	72
1961	*	1977	57
1962	16	1978	55
1963	17	1979	62
1964	0	1980	55
1965	21	1981	64
1966	71	1982	63
1967	53	1983	68
1968	33	1984	65
1969	70	1985	42
1970	42	1986	86
1971	91	1987	60
1972	74	1988	60
1973	66	1989	60
1974	97		
1975	43		

\* Less than \$50,000.

\*\* Transitional Quarter

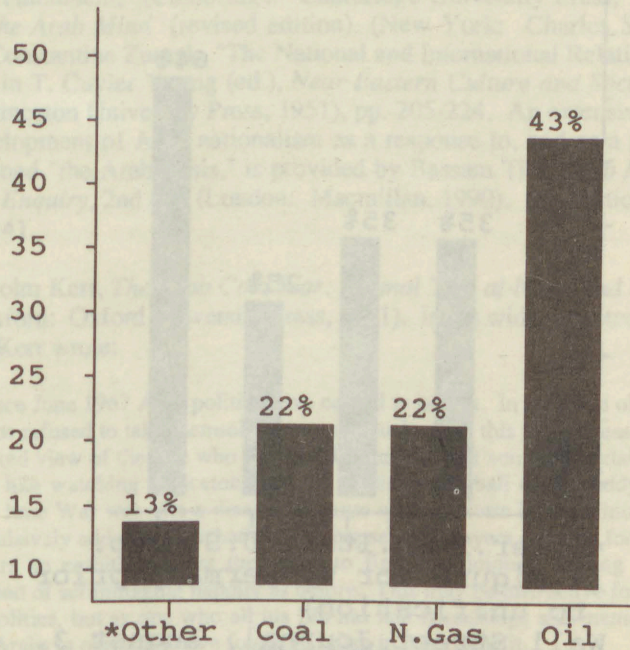
Sources: Bernard Reich, *The United States and Israel*, (New York: Praeger, 1984), Table 4.2; Office of Planning and Budgeting, Bureau of Program and Policy Coordination, U.S. Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas loans and Grants*, Cong-R-0105, (Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, n.d.); Congressional Quarterly, *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, Vol. XXXIX, 1983, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1984), pp. 521-561; *Ibid*, Vol. XIV, 1988, pp. 676-80.



## APPENDIX II ENERGY CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

### U.S. ENERGY SOURCES, 1990

Percent



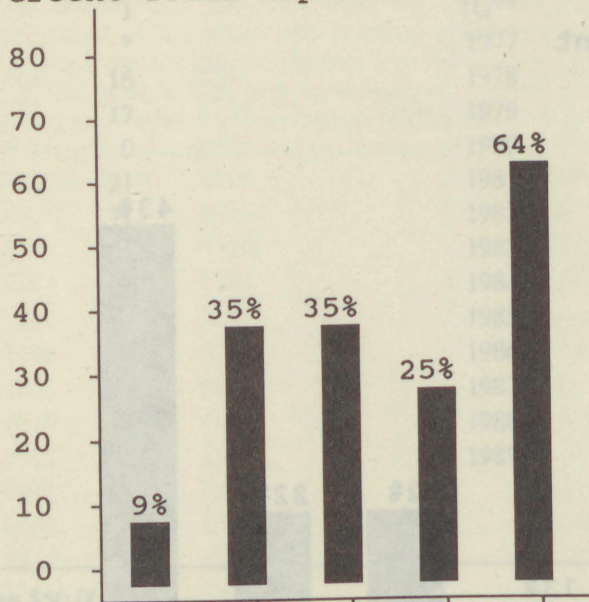
\*Other Coal N.Gas Oil  
(\*Other comprise Hydro,  
Renewable and Nuclear)

Wall Street Journal, August 20,  
1990.



## RELIANCE ON GULF OIL IMPORTS, 1990

Percent Total Imports



\*W.Ger.Fran.Ital. U.S. Jap.  
(\* Figure for W. Germany prior  
to unification)  
Wall Street Journal, August 3,  
1990.



## NOTES

1. For what is arguably the best brief discussion of crisis in the Arab World, see Hanna Batatu, "The Arab Countries From Crisis to Crisis: Some Basic Trends and Tentative Interpretations" in *The Liberal Arts and the Future of Higher Education in the Middle East: Papers Presented at the Conference on 'The Liberal Arts--A Neglected Dimension of Middle East Development' Sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences American University of Beirut October 23-27, 1977*, (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1979), pp. 3-15. See also Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (revised edition), (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983); Constantine Zurayk, "The National and International Relations of the Arab States," in T. Cuyler Young (ed.), *Near Eastern Culture and Society* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 205-224. An extensive discussion of the development of Arab nationalism as a response to, and as a part of, what is here termed "the Arab crisis," is provided by Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Enquiry*, 2nd ed., (London: Macmillan, 1990). See particularly, pp. 1-26 and 94-141.

2. Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals*, (3rd ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). In his widely quoted *Preface* to this edition, Kerr wrote:

...since June 1967 Arab politics have ceased to be fun. In the good old days most Arabs refused to take themselves very seriously, and this made it easier to take a relaxed view of the few who possessed intimations of some immortal mission. It was like watching Princeton play Columbia in football on a muddy afternoon. The June War was like a disastrous game against Notre Dame which Princeton impulsively added to its schedule, leaving several players crippled for life and the others so embittered that they took to fighting viciously among themselves instead of scrimmaging happily as before. This may be instructive for the student of politics, but as one who all his life has had friendships and memories among the Arabs to cherish, I have found no relish in describing it.

3. Habib Amin Kurani, "The Interaction of Islamic and Western Thought in the Arab World," in T. Cuyler Young, op. cit., pp. 148; 157-58.

4. Zurayk, op. cit., p. 222.

5. Zurayk, op. cit., p. 223.

6. Ajami, op. cit., p. 4.



7. Dan Tschirgi, *The American Search for Mideast Peace*, (New York: Praeger, 1989), p. 238.
8. *Al Sha'ab*, August 14, 1990, quoted in *Arab Press Review*, August 16, 1990.
9. See L. Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 268-77.
10. Bahgat Korany correctly criticizes social scientists' frequent habit of using the term "structure" without clarifying their meaning. In this case, I use the term to signify the following: regular patterns of interaction. See Bahgat Korany, "Unwelcome Guests: The Political Economy of Arab Relations With the Superpowers," in Hisham Sharabi (ed.), *The Next Arab Decade: Alternative Futures*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 75.  
For an analysis dating the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire as whole into the capitalist world economy to the period extending approximately from 1750 to 1815, see Raset Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century*, (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1988), pp. 11-35.
11. On Egypt's European population, see Richard Allen, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Fertile Crescent: Sources and Prospects of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (New York: Oxford University Press 1974), p. 163. On European ownership of silk factories, see Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth Century Beirut*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 65-66. On Algeria, see Mafoud Bennoune, *The Making of Contemporary Algeria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Table 2.2, p. 48. On the Gulf area, see Khaldun al Naqeeb, *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula: A Different Perspective*, (London: Routledge, forthcoming, 1991), Chapter 4; see also, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Middle East: A Political and Economic Survey* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950).
12. Fawaz, op. cit., p. 61. On exports from Jaffa, see Alexander Scholch, "The Demographic Development of Palestine: 1850-1882," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (November, 1985), pp. 503-04. On the Suez Canal, see Allen, op. cit., pp. 161-65.
13. On British trade with Egypt, see Allen, op. cit., citing Aramajani, p. 215. On the Levant, see Fawaz, op. cit., p. 62. The impact of the opening of the Suez Canal on established trade patterns is discussed by Issawi, op. cit., *infra*, see particularly, pp. 5-6; 14; 139-40.



14. On Egypt's cotton industry, see Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 67-68. See also, Patrick O'Brien, "The Long-Term Growth of Agricultural Production in Egypt: 1821-1962," in P. M. Holt (ed), *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 183-84. On the Syrian silk industry, see Fawaz, op. cit., p. 63. For a detailed examination of the impact of French economic penetration in Syria, and particularly Lebanon (with emphasis on the silk industry), see, Boutros Labaki, *Introduction a L'Histoire Economique Du Liban*, (Beyrouth: L'Universite Libanaise, Section Des Etudes Economiques: 1984), pp. 27-76.

It bears mentioning that small-scale manufacturing of silk cloth continued to be practiced, albeit on a continually declining scale, in the Levant during the mandate period. See Roger Owen, "The Study of Middle Eastern Industrial History: Notes on the Interrelationship Between Factories and Small-Scale Manufacturing With Special References to Lebanese Silk and Egyptian Sugar, 1900-1930," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (November, 1984), pp. 475-87.

On the growth of citrus production in Nineteenth Century Syria, see Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914: A Documentary History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 277.

The impact of international factors was, of course, not limited to the examples cited here and, in connection with the point made above about the impact of the American Civil War on Egyptian cotton production, it should be noted that an identical syndrome occurred in Syria. See: Issawi, op. cit.

15. On Egypt, see Marsot, op. cit., pp. 55-88. See also, Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!: The Socio-Political Crisis in Egypt, 1878-1882*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), pp. 28-36, 306-15. On Algeria, see Bennoune, op. cit., pp. 35-98. On minorities in Syria, see Fawaz, p. 67. See also Brue Masters, "The 1850 Events in Aleppo: An Aftershock of Syria's Incorporation into the Capitalist World System," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (February, 1990), pp. 3-20. See also Faruk Tabak, "Local Merchants in Peripheral Areas of the Empire: The Fertile Crescent During the Long Nineteenth Century," *Review*, Vol. XI, No. 2 (Spring, 1988), pp. 179-214. On Iraq, where Jews and, to a lesser degree, Christians came to prominence in finance, commerce and the professions, see Issawi, pp. 25-27. On the Gulf, see Khaldun al Naqeeb, op. cit., pp. 58-59. Al Naqeeb notes that:

One of the most important results of the collapse of the natural state economy in the Gulf and Peninsula society was the bringing of the era of the tribal elites to an end and the crystalization of the system of dynastic rule in the region. This was the inevitable, natural result of foreign influence, especially of the treaty of 'Perpetual Truce' of AD 1853, since the effect of this treaty was not limited to the



preservation of peace between the shaykhs, emirs and sultans, but led, rather, to the consolidation of their authority and the recognition of the legitimacy of their control as ruling families over their areas and peoples....it [provided] full protection for them and their families from their peoples and their competitors among other rulers.

16. Issawi op. cit. pp. 23-24. See also Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq, 1870-1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (November, 1985), pp. 491-505. The Slugletts underscore the fact that in Iraq the consolidation of this trend occurred under the British mandatory and Iraqi monarchy administrations.

It has frequently been pointed out that there was no real "peasantry" (in the European sense) in the traditional rural societies of Syria and Iraq, particularly in light of the prevalent communal ownership of land.

17. For an incisive overview, see Immanuel Wallerstein, Hale Decdeli, and Resat Kasaba, "The Incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the World Economy" in Huri Islamoglu-Inan (ed.), *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1987), pp. 88-97. On Syria, see Masters, op. cit. On Iraq, see Faruk Tabak, "Local Merchants in Peripheral Areas of the Empire: The Fertile Crescent During the Nineteenth Century," *Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 2 (Spring, 1988), p. 198. On Egypt, see Schlock, *Egypt for the Egyptians!*, op. cit. See also Philip K. Hitti, *The Near East in History*, (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand and Company, 1961), pp. 438-39. On the Gulf, see al Naqeeb, op. cit., pp. 54-60.

For an article suggesting that the divisive and provocative impact of foreign penetration of the Arab World has manifested itself strongly in the modern age due to the oil economy's furthering of a sense of exclusiveness among Gulf Arabs, see Kasturi Sen, "Nationalism in the Gulf," *Review of Middle East Studies*, Number 4 (1988), pp. 86-106.

18. Rashid Khalidi, "The Economic Partition of the Arab Provinces of the Ottoman Empire Before the First World War," *Review*, Vol. XI, No. 2 (Spring, 1988), pp. 251-64.

19. Dan Tschirgi, *The Politics of Indecision: Origins and Implications of American Involvement With the Palestine Problem*, (New York: Praeger, 1983).

20. "Radical," another of those very overworked terms in political discussion whose meanings seem to become steadily cloudier, is used throughout this paper precisely in the manner indicated here. The hallmark of radicalism is taken to be a commitment to "fundamental, rapid, and comprehensive change" in prevailing values and structures. Obviously, "radicals" can, and do, promote a variety of



values--whether religious or ideologically secular--that in themselves may be, and frequently are, incompatible.

21. For a penetrating exposition of the concept of the rentier state and of its implications for the politics of the Arab World, see Hazem Beblawi, "The Rentier State in the Arab World," in Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 85-98.

Dirk Vandewalle has noted that:

The rentier nature of state revenue thus militates against the creation of a strong state or the involvement of its corresponding society. In this light the massive revenues accruing to the government in a rentier state are a double-edged sword, allowing the local government to dole out revenues with minimum attention for representation, on the basis of the reverse principle of no representation without taxation.

See, Dirk Vandewalle, "Political Aspects of State Building in Rentier Economies: Algeria and Libya compared," in Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luiani, *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 160. Cited in James A. Bill and Robert Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*, (Glenview IL: Scott, Foresman/Little Brown, 1990), p. 79.

James Bill and Robert Springborg point out that:

These states have sought to buy the loyalties of their populations by distributing a vast array of goods and services. They...have been unwilling to permit widespread political participation...

Rentier states have sought to depoliticize their populations and to prevent the spread of political ideologies, which they perceive as potential challenges to their power and legitimacy....What typically passes as semiofficial ideology in these rentier states is a mix of Islam and loyalty to the ruling family, with a thin veneer of Arab nationalism, which governments are seeking to replace with state-based nationalisms.

Bill and Springborg, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

22. Paul Jabber, *Not By Arms Alone: Security and Arms Control in the Middle East*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

23. M.S. Daoudi and M.S. Dajani, *Economic Diplomacy: Embargo Leverage and World Politics*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 44-45.

24. Paul Jabber, "Oil, Arms and Regional Diplomacy: Strategic Dimensions of the Saudi-Egyptian Relationship," in Malcolm H. Kerr and El Sayed Yassin (eds.)



*Rich and Poor States in the Middle East: Egypt and the New Arab Order*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1982), p. 424.

25. Ibid, p. 430.

26. Ibid

27. For the estimate on contributions from Gulf states (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) to the PLO during the past decade, see "Support of Invasion Creates Deep Rift in PLO Leadership," *International Herald Tribune*, August 14, 1990, p. 3.

On reported Palestinian estimates of PLO financial losses in the aftermath of the invasion of Kuwait, see "PLO Income Halved Since Iraq Invasion," *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 5, 1990.

28. On Kuwait's aid to Syria in 1969, see *Arab Report and Record*, 1-15 August, 1969, p. 321. For the 1972 figures, see Ibid., 16-31 May, 1972, p. 257; 16-30 November, 1972. For 1974 figures, see Ibid, 1-14 February, 1974. See also, Middle East Research and Information Project, *MERIP Report*, Number 51; Moshe Ma'oz, *Asad: The Sphinx of Damascus*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), p. 111 and pp. 191-92. See also Alasdair Drysdale, "The Asad Regime and Its Troubles," *MERIP Reports*, Number 110, Vol. 12, No. 9 (November-December, 1982).

29. Roger Owen, "Capture of Disputed Islands Takes Pressure Off Tehran," *The Times*, August 3, 1990, p. 2.

30. Bill and Springborg, op. cit., p. 419.

31. Ibid, pp. 405-09; See also Korany, op. cit., pp. 64-87.

32. Korany, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

33. For a critique of this assumption see Bill and Springborg, op. cit., pp. 416-18.

34. World Bank, *World Development Report 1990*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

35. Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East: State, Class and Economic Development*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1991), pp. 277-87.



36. Jean Leca, "Social Structure and Political Stability: Comparative Evidence from the Algerian, Syrian and Iraqi Cases," in Luciani, op. cit., pp. 150-88.
37. "Iraq: Country Report," *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, No. 2, 1990.
38. For a fascinating analysis of contemporary Iraq suggesting that the ultimate effect of pervasive and coordinated state terror upon a population may enhance a regime's legitimacy and therefore give rise to this conclusion, see Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
39. According to some estimates, Iraq ended the war with Iran with an international debt reaching perhaps to \$70 billion, about half of which was owed to Arab states. *Third World Economic Handbook*, (London: Euromonitor, 1989), p. 202.
40. See *Al Sha'ab* for multiple examples. Under its outspoken editor-in-chief, Adel Hussein, the newspaper did not moderate its opposition to Egypt's official policy once the Gulf War broke out. In late January, it gave wide prominence to a declaration issued by the Labor party in conjunction with five other political movements condemning "The American-Zionist attack on the sisterly country of Iraq...." *Arab Press Review*, January 29, 1991, p. II, 7. See also *Al Ahali's* report on dissenting views of prominent Egyptian artists, writers and actors, two weeks prior to the outbreak of the Gulf War, which, among other things, emphasized the view that Washington's opposition to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait was "merely implementing the old imperialist law of preventing the emergence of power in the Arab region except that of Israeli imperialist existence." *Al Ahali*, January 2, 1991, cited in *Arab Press Review*, No. 483, January 7, 1991.
41. *The Daily Telegraph*, August 30, 1990.
42. George Bush, "Why We Are in the Gulf," *Newsweek*, November 26, 1990, pp. 30-31.
43. The reference here to the role of "principle" and "accepted norms in world politics" as factors in the international community's reaction to the Gulf Crisis is based on the implications of the pluralistic structure of foreign policymaking in much of the West. Though abstract considerations of "justice," "morality," and "proper political behavior" need not be taken as necessary determinants of policy making in such structures, neither can they be considered totally absent.
44. See for example James Schlesinger, "America Has to Build a Military Deterrent," *International Herald Tribune*, August 7, 1990.



45. The relatively greater importance to Western economies of *stable* oil production and pricing policies in comparison to lower, but unstable prices susceptible to sudden upward surges has often been stressed by analysts. See, for example, J. W. Wilkinson, "The World Oil Market: Stability or Continued Cycle?," *American-Arab Affairs*, Summer, 1985, pp. 95-103. For a similar view arguing that oil producers also benefit more from stable prices rather than higher, but unstable prices susceptible to sudden plummets, see Ali T. Johany, "There is No Logical Reason for \$30 Oil," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, November 19, 1990.

46. See, for example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Goal is Assuring Oil Supply," *International Herald Tribune*, August 17, 1990.

47. See, for example, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' speech, broadcast to the American people, upon his return from the Middle East in the spring of 1953, in United States Department of State, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 28, June 15, 1953, p. 834. See also President Richard Nixon's 1971 address to Congress. Richard Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s, Building for Peace: A Report to the Congress, February 25, 1971*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 121-34; 142-44.

This "idealistic" view is not only found occasionally in government statements. Critics of actual U.S. policy toward the Middle East sometimes consider it a realistic basis upon which to advance prescriptive suggestions. See, for example, Mohammed T. Mehdi, *An Arab Looks at America: A Nation of Lions....Chained*, (San Francisco: New World Press, 1962).

48. Walter Lacquer, "The Middle East, the United States, the USSR and Europe," in A. L. Udovitch (ed.), *The Middle East: Oil, Conflict and Hope* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1976), pp. 251-68.

49. Tschirgi, *Search for Mideast Peace*, pp. 221-36.

50. I have discussed this point at some length in "The United States and Egypt: The Understandable Case for Having Your Cake and Eating It Too," unpublished paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Middle East Studies Association, November, 1989, in Toronto, Canada.

51. It is, for example, hardly remembered that one of the earliest efforts along these lines came in the form of a joint call by the U.S. and Soviet ambassadors to the United Nations for an Israeli withdrawal from the recently occupied Arab territories in return for declarations of non-belligerency and recognition of Israel's legitimacy by Arab states.



52. For a discussion of the events leading to the Carter Doctrine see Gary Sick, "An American Perspective," in Paul Jabber, Gary Sick, Hisahiko Okazaki, Dominique Moisi, *Great Power Interests in the Persian Gulf*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1989), pp. 16-42.

53. For a good overview of U.S. policy in the Gulf during this period see, Robert E. Hunter, "United States Policy in the Middle East," *Current History*, 87: No. 526, (February, 1988), p. 49.

54. Dominique Moise, "A European Perspective," in Jabber, et al, pp. 73.

55. Tschirgi, *The Politics of Indecision*, pp. 263-66.

56. It should be recalled that on a public level the issue between the United States and Israel during this period revolved around the nature of possible "negotiations." Israel insisted that it wished to negotiate with its Arab adversaries, but only in a face-to-face context. Realizing that this stand in effect negated any prospect of negotiations since Arab governments considered meeting directly with representatives of Israel tantamount to recognition of the Jewish state's legitimacy, and therefore to be an unacceptable initial concession, the Johnson administration pressed for indirect bargaining. This American position underlay remarks made by President Johnson in September, 1968, when he issued his first major Middle East policy statement after the June War:

...the peacekeeping process will not begin until the leaders of the Middle East begin exchanging views on the hard issues through some agreed procedure...I urge them to put their view on the table....

See U.S. Office of the Federal Register, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, IV, no. 37 September 16, 1968), p. 1342.

57. Tschirgi, *Search for Mideast Peace*, 47-51.

58. Ibid, pp. 94-95.

59. Ibid, pp. 115-18.

60. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memories of the National Security Adviser*, (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983), p. 276.

61. Dan Tschirgi, with Georges Irani, *The United States, Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*, Research Note No. 8, (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for International and Strategic Affairs, 1982).



62. Richard B. Strauss, "U.S. Policy of Mideast Has Altered," *International Herald Tribune*, April 30, 1986.

63. Congressional Quarterly, *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, Vol. XLV, 1989, pp. 780-88.

64. Stephen Green, *Taking Sides*, (New York: William Morrow, 1984), pp. 204-11.

65. Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in Bahgat Korany and Ali. H. Dessouki, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1984), pp. 119-46.

66. See, Hussein Sirriyeh, *U.S. Policy in the Gulf, 1968-1977: Aftermath of British Withdrawal*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1984).

67. An early sign of this sort of hubris occurred just prior to Reagan's first inauguration, when a prominent individual who was later given a high post in the administration addressed the California Seminar on Arms Control and Foreign Policy, a Los Angeles-based group sponsored by the California Institute of Technology and the Rand Corporation that includes both business executives and academics. The speaker discussed plans for the security of the Persian Gulf, stressing the incoming administration's determination to strengthen the Rapid Deployment Force. During the ensuing discussion, one participant complained that the threat against which the speaker apparently felt the Rapid Deployment Force should be aimed was unclear. "Was it," she asked, "external attack on Gulf regimes or was it internal opposition to those regimes?" The speaker's answer was blunt: "That," he said, "is an academic question."

68. On early official U.S. reluctance to become politically concerned with the Arabian Peninsula, see Benjamin Shwadran, *The Middle East, Oil, and the Great Powers*, (New York: Council for Middle Eastern Affairs, 1959), p. 297. On U.S. oil consumption patterns and the role of oil in the U.S., see "U.S. Counts Its Energy Alternatives to Arab Oil," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 20, 1990. See also *The Wall Street Journal* of August 3, 1990. On projections of the growth of U.S. reliance on Gulf oil, see Melvin A. Conant, "Recognizing U.S.-Arab Interdependence: The U.S. Stake in the Gulf," *American-Arab Affairs*, No. 20, (Spring, 1987). On patterns of U.S. oil consumption and U.S. and Western reactions to the 1979 oil crisis, see Hossein Tahmassebi, "The Changing Environment of the World Oil Markets: Can OPEC Face the Challenge?," in Shireen Hunter (ed.) *Political and Economic Trends in the Middle East: Implications for the United States*, (Boulder: Westview, 1985), pp. 1-12; Ali



Ahmed Attiqa, *Interdependence On the Oil Bridge: ; Risks and Opportunities*, (Petroleum Information Committee of the Arab Gulf States: 1988), pp. 78-79; Benjamin Shwadran, *Middle East Oil Crises Since 1973*, (Boulder: Westview, 1986), pp. 147-71.

69. See Conant, op. cit., p. 59. Although it may be debatable whether Iraq's occupation and declared annexation of Kuwait actually constituted a "threat" to American and Western access to oil, the same cannot be said of the ensuing crisis.

70. Conant, op. cit., p. 57; Schwadran, op. cit.; Tahmassebi, op. cit.

71. John Marlow, *The Seat of Pilate*, (London: The Cresset Press, 1959).

72. Tschirgi *Politics of Indecision*.

73. Tschirgi, *Search for Mideast Peace*.

74. By the fall of 1990, the *Intifadah* had led to the deaths of some 750 Palestinians at Israeli hands. *New Outlook*, Dec. 1990/Jan. 1991, p. 35. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, some 185,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants arrived in Israel during 1990. *Jerusalem Post*, January 12, 1991.

75. For an account of the economy of war in Lebanon after 1975, see Salim Nasr, "Lebanon's War: Is the End in Sight?," *Middle East Report*, January-February, 1990, pp. 5-8.

76. This statement is purposely formulated in less than categorical terms. There are, of course, "political actors," both individuals and groups, in the Arab World to which it does not apply. However, my contention is that such actors have not in recent times attained significant political influence.

It is notable in this respect that so-called "extremist" groups generally share an insistence on their own "purity of motives." The proliferation of such groups in the Middle East over the past two decades very probably can be taken as an inevitable outgrowth of an environment richly marked simultaneously by ideological diversity and contradictions between ideology and behavior. Notable also is the violence associated with "extremist" groups. Violence can probably also be taken as an outgrowth of an environment in which other possible avenues to political "significance" require the compromising of "purity of motives."

77. Tschirgi, *Politics of Indecision*, pp. 189-90.



78. Typical in this regard is the assessment of Jerrold Post, a psychiatrist at George Washington University specializing in the construction of psychological profiles of political figures:

This is no psychotic megalomaniac....He is a highly rational man--dangerous but well focused.

"Saddam Hussein: Some Forecasts," *International Herald Tribune*, September 3, 1990.

79. See, for example, Kissinger's "Bush Has Crossed a Rubicon in the Saudi Sands," *International Herald Tribune*, August 20, 1990.

80. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Goal is Assuring Oil Supply," *International Herald Tribune*, August 17, 1990.

81. See, for example: "The Stakes in the Gulf," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 16, 1990; Karen Elliott House, "U.S. Can and Must Stop Saddam," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 7, 1990.

82. See, for example: Richard Perle, "Keeping the Bomb From Iraq," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 23, 1990; William Safire, "Then if the Iraqi Went Ahead It would Be a Last Roundup," *International Herald Tribune*, August 21, 1990.

83. For example, Henry Kissinger raises the point in his article "Bush Has Crossed a Rubicon in the Saudi Sands," *International Herald Tribune*, August 20, 1990. See also, Gary Sick, "The World Must Exact a Steep Price for the Charge Over the Line," *International Herald Tribune*, August 4-5, 1990.

84. Richard Cohen, "Poor Man's Sarajevo in the Middle East?," *International Herald Tribune*, August 22, 1990.

85. See, for example: Joshua Muravchik, "Realists Are Missing the Point," *International Herald Tribune*, August 29, 1990; Gerald F. Seib, "Bush is Encountering Problems Promoting U.S.'s Broader Goals in Middle East Crisis," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 30, 1990.

86. Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (New York: Anchor Books, 1973), pp. 68-69.

87. For an interesting preview of the U.S. approach to the Gulf War manifested after January 17, 1991, see *MERIP Report*, January, 1983. See particularly



articles in that issue written by Christopher Paine, Martha Wenger, and Michael T. Klare.

88. The impact of the Gulf Crisis on debates related to the "Arab crisis" was, of course, immediate and will in all probability take years to sort out. While proponents of Pan Arabism were divided, some seeing their cause directly furthered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and others seeing it as benefiting from the cooperation that developed among Arab regimes opposed to Saddam Hussein, other Arab observers happily concluded that the Gulf Crisis marked the end of false and pernicious "dreams and aspirations of Arabism." See, Abdulazziz H. Fahad, "Thanks to Saddam the Arabs Outgrow Arabism," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 23, 1990.

89. Aron, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-37.

THE GULF CRISIS AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF  
THE MIDDLE EAST: THE POLICIES OF EGYPT,  
SYRIA AND JORDAN

BARBARA TIBB



77. In the past, the United States has been criticized for its policy of containment of Communism in the Middle East. This policy is now being re-examined in light of the Gulf War crisis.

78. The impact of the Gulf Crisis on debates related to the "Arab crisis" was, of course, immediate and will be remembered for years to come. While proponents of Pan Arabism were divided, some seeing their cause directly furthered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and others seeing it as distancing from the cooperation that developed among Arab states opposed to Saddam Hussein's Arab oil embargo, many observers happily concluded that the Gulf Crisis marked the end of false Arab promises and aspirations of Arabism. See, Abdulaziz H. Fakhri, "The Gulf Crisis: A New Dawn for Arabism," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 23, 1990.

79. See, for example, "The Gulf is Amazing Oil," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 17, 1990.

80. See, for example, "The Sucker in the Gulf," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 16, 1990; Karen Elliott Hess, "U.S. Can and Must Stop Saddam," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 7, 1990.

81. See, for example, Richard Perle, "Keeping the Blood from Iraq," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 23, 1990; Walter Rabin, "Thus if the Iraqis Want About It would Be a Last Roundup," *International Herald Tribune*, August 21, 1990.

82. For example, Henry Kissinger makes the point in his article "Bush Has Created a Rubicon in the Gulf Crisis," *International Herald Tribune*, August 20, 1990. See also, Gary Sick, "The World Must Exact a Swap Price for the Check Over the Line," *International Herald Tribune*, August 4-5, 1990.

83. Richard Cohen, "Pow Not a Scapegoat in the Middle East," *International Herald Tribune*, August 22, 1990.

84. See, for example, Joshua Muravchik, "Realists Are Missing the Point," *International Herald Tribune*, August 28, 1990; Gerald F. Seib, "Bush is Encountering Problems Translating U.S. Strategic Goals in Middle East Crisis," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, August 30, 1990.

85. Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), pp. 68-69.

86. For an interesting preview of the U.S. approach to the Gulf War, announced after January 17, 1991, see *MESOP Report*, January, 1991. See particularly