

Change and Stability in the Persian Gulf Sheikhdoms “GCC”

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Preface

This thesis is the result of an intense and comprehensive effort aimed at reaching a concurring and inward understanding about the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms. In this classification, Saudi Arabia is also considered as one of the Sheikdom. Other countries in this category are Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman; a group of countries that are known as member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Despite their importance arising from their geographical location, oil wealth, and enormous oil and gas resources, there is little knowledge about these countries. They are not willing to fully and comprehensively present themselves; it even can be said that they prefer to remain unknown. This attitude is motivated by their traditional culture and tenets that have also been corroborated by their experiences of the modern world. These countries have the feeling that their stability and sustainability depends on denial and concealment; an inclination to hide whatever that relates to their inner individual and social realities.

The psychological backgrounds of such concealment can be traced in a deep belief in the harms caused by evil eye, and that others might be jealous about their wealth and welfare and might grab this wealth. Such beliefs are shared by almost everybody, from the rich and the people in power to the ordinary citizens. This general attitude, in itself, is an element of social cohesion.

Taking these into account, it is not an easy task to find an understanding of these intimate issues. One cannot find such understanding solely through reference to normal sources. Sometimes certain texts might be found that cannot be considered as reliable sources of information *per se*.

However, such texts could be of utmost significance due to their

references to the mysterious social and cultural realities. Sometimes, a sympathetic dialogue can also lead to the unveiling of such realities.

To write this dissertation all such elements have been duly utilized to the maximum extent possible. The main objective of this study was to find out about the inner realities and to understand how these realities contributed to the developments and ultimately what elements are behind the social and political stability of the south part of the Persian Gulf countries.

Having the above points in mind, it was quite evident that I had to interview different people from all walks of life, from diplomats and well educated people, to Muslim clergymen, religious researchers and ordinary people, from the elderly people who have witnessed the times of poverty and difficulty before the modern era of wealth and welfare, to the young people that have been born and grown up in the new era. In this essay, I have made reference to some of these people; however it is evident that not all could have been mentioned. In any event, many of the views expressed here are influenced by such conversations.

2- The topic of this thesis was accepted and approved in January 2009 at a meeting in the Faculty of Political Science of Pisa University in the presence of Prof. Maurizio Vernassa. The topic is extensive in terms of both geographic and temporal scopes of application. The main objective was to study the change, development and stability in the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the modern era; an era beginning from the time that oil was discovered and exported. Moreover, a more accurate study of this topic required that it should be seen within the framework of regional developments in general, and the current Arab World in particular.

The objective was to conduct a macro-level scrutiny on the stability of these countries taking into account their historical, cultural, religious and political backgrounds; these are the elements that could not be neglected or underestimated. The ruling regimes in these countries are traditional and old-fashioned, as are their social structures. The leaders are selected according to tribal customs and distribution of power is made on the basis of the tribal and family traditions and customs. Social relations among

individuals or between the individuals and the rulers continue to fall under such traditional frameworks.

No doubt, significant layers of the society are modernized. Thanks to the oil wealth, these countries have become one of the most modern, wealthiest and well-off areas of the world. This required that modern institutions and infrastructures should also be established; however, the political and social structures remain traditional.

It is interesting to note that this structure has practically shown its acceptability, efficiency and a sort of popularity. Despite enormous criticisms in recent years directed against these regimes for their traditional and undemocratic nature, the experience of the Arab Spring has practically proved that these Sheikhdoms are more stable than the other more modernized Arab regimes, with regard to their social and political structure.

Therefore, all these issues required neutral and impartial study and analysis of these political systems that could be possible through an overview of their historical, cultural and religious backdrops. The structures are based on such realities and could not be well understood if such realities, as well as their actions and reactions are not deeply explored.

This approach is important as the majority of the people who conducted studies on these countries had a pessimistic attitude for the previously mentioned reasons. Being old-fashioned and undemocratic is the main reason for the pessimistic approach towards these countries, although other factors are also involved. Even, the majority of the Arab analysts, whether being leftist, pro-Arab nationalist or rightist, have followed a similar approach.

In any event, every effort has been made in this research to study and analyze this issue at macro-level with complete impartiality. Those topics that went beyond the overall framework of the subject matter of this study have been studied separately and in a different manner. Apart from the fact that these countries are generally studied as a homogenous group by observers, whether Arab or not, because of their similarities and interdependence as well as their rather similar experience with the modern

time, they cannot be considered separately.

Sometimes it happens that the subject matter of a study is such that it should be viewed from a macro level, and not a micro and restricted, perspective. The accuracy and validity of such a study depends on such an overall perspective. However, this approach is not meant to stick to generalizing or inaccurate statements; it is something that is required, and even obligated by the nature of the topic.

3- One of the problems in writing this book was how to make it as brief as possible. This thesis should have covered many more pages than it currently does, because there are numerous reference sources each containing specific notes, and also the temporal and geographical scope of the book are extremely vast and deep.

To achieve this objective, I have tried to study all issues solely in the framework of how and why they have an impact on the stability of these countries. Other issues will be discussed only to the extent that they contribute to a better understanding of the questions of evolution and stability.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation thus took shape to deal with this issue and also to find the relationship between Wahhabism and the Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, how and where they use this ideology, and what has developed over time, and more important, how this ideology has been instrumental to the expansion, or better to say, creation of Salafid and Wahhabi radicalism. In this chapter, attention has also been paid on how the conservative and anti-communist Wahhabism and Salafism turned into an ousting, destructive and anti-western Wahhabism which fights anything apart from itself, even if it is of Islamic nature.

The fact is that for good reasons, the theological radicalism, as clearly manifested by Al-Qaida ideology, is an Arab phenomenon, or better to say a phenomenon from the Persian Gulf region. Although it is true that this ideology nowadays has many followers in the vast Muslim territories, its founders were Arabs. Even if there were non-Arab initiators, they were deeply influenced by the Arab culture and thought.

For other good reasons, this ideology has more consistency, even within the Arab world, with the Saudi history, culture, traditions and spirits.

However, it is not solely an ideological indebtedness; it also involves various financial and advocacy supports. Not only the first and most influential founders were from Saudi Arabia, but also the wealthy Saudis and even the wealthy people from other Sheikhdoms significantly helped the creation, expansion and sustainability of this wave. Otherwise, this wave would have settled down long time ago.

The same chapter mainly seeks to explain these points, which relate to the situation of these countries. Moreover, their social and political developments as well as their stability could not be well understood without due consideration to this ideology. Other chapters also discuss the main issue, in one way or another, although it might be that they serve as an introduction for better understanding of the subject matter without specific relevance to the main topic.

The last chapter deals with the links between the Arab Spring and the political and social stability of the Sheikhdoms. The Arab Spring has emerged quite some time ago and is a continuous movement. It is not clear if there will be an end to this movement, and if so when that could be, what changes it will bring about, and what would be the internal situation of the Arab world and each Arab country.

Taking into account the nature of the today's world which resulted in the quantitative and qualitative increase in the mutual interdependence at global level and also the speed and depth of the current developments, it is hard to foresee the future of the Arab Spring. However, this issue has been discussed in this chapter to the extent it related to the stability of these countries. This chapter was drafted in the summer of 2011, and it can be studied as it was appeared at that time.

4- A reference seems appropriate to be made now on the methodology used in this research. Noting what was mentioned earlier, I have done my best to utilize the original sources more or less all being in Arabic language. There have been certain sources that may not be considered as reliable sources for a research; however they might be used as indicating the views of the author or others who had similar ideas.

I have also extensively resorted to newspapers, magazines, and also the news and analytical websites of the Arab World. As concerns the news and

analytical articles, the comments of the readers, which sometimes are even more important than the articles themselves, have also been taken into consideration. It was not possible to make a reference to all such articles, but effort has been made to refer to the most sensitive ones.

After the subject of the thesis was approved, I met and talked with Prof. Maurizio Vernassa every now and then and kept him updated to the progress of my research. He was informed about, and expressed his views about, almost all parts of what I have written. He constantly told me that this region is unknown, but at the same time, remains vital and critical for us. It is important for us somebody from within this region describes it. The author does not claim to have full knowledge about this region, but hopes that his efforts could be the starting point for a better and further understanding of this region. Surely, the Department of Political Science and Geopolitics of a university, like Pisa, cannot be indifferent towards these issues. I also hope that proportionate to the time spent for its preparation; this thesis could be useful, for the respected professors, students and other readers.

Mohammed Masjed Jamei

November, 2011

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A Historical Glimpse: Past and Present

The history of Saudi and the five Sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf are deeply influenced by nature and geography of the region. All these countries fall in the Arabian Peninsula. This is a vast desert region, arid and burning. Only Yemen and Oman falling in the southern fringe of the Peninsula is suitable for farming and has a better climate. However, there is one big exception, thanks to potable water gushing from springs in Bahrain, this island country is suitable for farming. In the same way the mountainous regions within Saudi Arabia such as Ta'if enjoy a far better living condition.¹

With the exception of a very few and small regions the vast Arabian Peninsula plateau is one of the most arid and severely harsh regions in the world. Actually such features have shaped its history. Its scattered inhabitants have always been engaged in fierce war against sullen, rigid and helpless nature people whose common feature was perpetual hunger, poor security and lack of comfort.²

The region was completely differed with regions such as Mesopotamia, Syria and Yemen. Ample water, large rivers and fertile earth allowed the formation of big human settlements in the later region, and thanks to such favorable conditions, science, art, culture and method of exploitation of water and land flourished and moved towards perfection. But in a realm like Saudi Peninsula such conditions did not exist.³

Human settlements developed in the desert country in the form of

tribes, and having lineage from a single father encouraged them to live together. Thus, the gathering of individuals inside a tribe was a natural congregation and family buildup and nothing less. Moreover, it was the climatic factors which necessitated such a trend. No one was able to live and survive outside the boundary of the tribe because he would lose his security.⁴

The Arab in this desert peninsula was compelled to live with others to earn his living. The endless desert did not offer food. To such a lone man separation from the family exposed various sorts of dangers. He neither enjoyed monetary security, nor was his life safe. The individual found security because he was dependent on his tribe and once such patriarchal dependence was severed he would lose his security.⁵

In fact, the Arabian Peninsula was the habitation of various tribes, but the meaning and quality of such tribes differed very much compared with the meaning of tribal life in other lands. The difference was due to different living conditions and nature. Of course during the course of history, such features gave birth to a peculiar culture and values and naturally such culture was not tribal life culture.⁶

The arid and harsh conditions in the plateau prevented a big power or adventurous ruler to feel the need to conquer it. First of all the region did not incite a desire for conquest. Secondly, there were so many preventative factors to discourage a wise man to attempt such a risk. No big or small army was able to march in the arid desert void of vegetation. It was the dry climate that defeated him and not the defendants of the realm.⁷

Although, through history it is clear that there were many starving tribes in the Saudi Peninsula. In those times the boundaries of the Iranian and Roman empires extended to the east and north of the Arabian Peninsula respectively. In order to protect themselves from such invasion, these empires had installed local vassal governments to resist the aggressors, and this policy proved successful.⁸

As long as we are to do with the inhabitants of Arabian Peninsula; the importance of these two local vassal governments lay in the fact that they were a good source for to give boost to culture, ideology, and customs and rites. Naturally these two regions were under the influence of Iranian and

Byzantine culture. Therefore, the latter cultures were able to penetrate the region from that channel. Of course the Bedouin Arabs in that region were also under the influence of other neighboring cultures such as Yemen, Abyssinia and to some extent Egypt.⁹

Deep in the Arabian Peninsula there was a hub which was respected by all, this capital was probably the only independent town located in the vast plateau, and the majority of Arabs looked at the town with humbleness and reverence. This town was Mecca which enjoyed so much religious, commercial, literary and cultural respect. Moreover being the center of attention Mecca contributed to the region's internal solidarity and succeeded to dictate, under its umbrella, its own doctrines, customs and rites and traditions to various adjacent tribes until the birth of Islam.¹⁰

Islam in fact revolutionized life of the inhabitants of the Peninsula in all aspects. Islam broke the closed door barrier of the secluded community. The scattered Arabs in this enormous land became united with each other and after that they spread to neighboring regions. Mecca more or less continued to retain its significance and Medina also found much credit and respect and became the capital of Islam. Such centralization continued for almost 36 years, but despite the significance of Medina, after accumulating power, the fourth caliph was compelled to shift his capital elsewhere in order to stabilize his government.¹¹

Since then, neither Medina, nor Mecca nor any other towns within the Arabian Peninsula were able to be chosen as the capital of the Muslim empire. Despite the fact that these two towns always retained their elevated rank and were converted into a central Islamic hub and dictated part of the Islamic doctrines, but they remained only as dispensers of ideology and actually lost their universal center of activity.¹²

The main reason for shifting power elsewhere was that the climate of Arabian Peninsula and its remoteness did not permit power buildup. Such a center was bound to be shifted to Baghdad, Damascus, Merv, Cairo, Istanbul, Isfahan, Neyshabur and Cordoba whose natural aptitude and geographical status permitted the rulers of such towns to expand and develop. The limitation for progress in Arabian Peninsula and even in the sacred Mecca and Medina was such that these towns received the list from

Islamic art and architecture. No justified Islamic architectural monuments existed in Mecca and Medina and throughout Arabic Peninsula, and the few monuments that existed had been built by alien artists and architects. That which existed in these two regions towns, especially in Medina, was literature, traditions and *hadith* (traditions from the Prophet) and many master craftsmen were non-native artists. Accidentally, these Islamic literature and *hadith* had developed in harmony with the past tradition of the Arabian Peninsula and was the continuation of such heritage. These two towns paid very little attention to other branches of Islamic sciences because there were no grounds for accepting and developing such sciences.¹³

Despite the changes that Islam brought to the plateau, the natural and geographical conditions prevailed and again the Peninsula sunk into the historical web. Now let us see what the conditions in this region were in the contemporary times because the history of the six countries in the plateau is closely associated with this historical époque.

From fifteenth century onward, the Ottoman Turks added Arabia specially Mecca and Medina to their territory. The sultans of the Ottoman Empire knew well that such an annexation was not economically justified and they were compelled to only spend in the newly conquered region. Their willingness to annex the Peninsula was partly due to their religious belief and partly for stabilizing and authenticating their authority as the great caliph of the Islamic world. According to the Muslims, both Mecca and Medina continued to be significant. It was also important for the pilgrims who flocked to these two towns every year for holy pilgrimage to have a safe trip. Naturally a person who governed these two towns and provided for the security of the pilgrims enjoyed a lofty rank.¹⁴

Since the governors of Mecca and Medina were appointed by the Ottoman sultan on the basis of a special customs and arrangements, they acted as the sultan's succor in this important task. Sharif Hossein was the last of such governors who revolted against the Ottoman Turks at the onset of the First World War, hoping to be the head the Arabian empire which was supposed to be born after the war, and declared himself independent from Istanbul.¹⁵

The next problem was provision of security and welfare for the pilgrims. The Ottomans tried to seek help from the nomadic Bedouin Arabs living in the desert with the help of the emirs of Mecca and Medina who were respectable and influential figures, to render the roads safe and provide for welfare of the pilgrims. Instead they promised to help them or to pay tools in order not to disturb the peace and security of the region. Such arrangements proved successful and during the Ottoman rule the Arabian Peninsula was having one of the most peaceful periods of its history.¹⁶

But all these things were handled by such tribes which fell in the route of pilgrims. The tribes living in other regions in the plateau were leading a very, very difficult life. It was their extreme poverty which provoked these tribes to migrate to distant places and at times very, very far from their original habitation. During the past two or three centuries some of these tribes migrated to regions which are now known as Arab Sheikdoms.¹⁷

To be specific Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates were the countries which these tribes had moved and settled. These countries had no historical background and the settlement of people in these countries was due to migration of tribes in the course of the past two or three centuries even earlier.¹⁸

Of course Oman and Bahrain have a longer history, but during the course of such relocations, mentioned above, some tribes including the family that governs Bahrain, moved into these two countries and settled there.¹⁹

Living conditions in the first three Sheikdoms mentioned above continued to be difficult because it didn't differ much with the mainland. Although conditions in Bahrain and Oman were far better, there were other factors which adapted the inhabitants with the new environment and gave birth to new ethics, customs and mentality.

They occupied large places to settle and tried to arrange the conditions in such a way as to earn their life from the new country to which they had immigrated, especially because they had approached the Persian Gulf and affluent regions. The sea by itself was a source of blessing. At least the sea supplied fish to them and they were living at northern shores of Iran, west

of Mesopotamia, east of Bahrain, Oman, and neighbored India albeit at a farther distance.²⁰

From the time they settled in these Sheikhdoms the Persian Gulf route witnessed increased traffic of barges and big and small ships. The big vessels mostly belonged to European countries which transported different commodities or were warships. Such flow of ships incited them to plunder the ships. Competition between different European powers was another factor to incite them to loot the ships. They tried to make the passage difficult for their rivals with the help of inhabitants of the coastal regions, and therefore provoked them to attack their rivals.²¹

The temptation to plunder, stimulated them – or at least part of them – to become buccaneers and it led to bloody conflicts which continued for many years, but in the end, the coastal inhabitants were defeated and subdued. But they were not defeated by the common and conventional weapons or method of warfare. The British were the main challengers and they benefited from modern technology and military tactics. Such new weapons and tactics surprised the Arabs.²²

In the same way the strength of the British and correct understanding and assessment of internal problems and inter-tribal rivalry and their strength to put an end to such disputes and skirmishes was another cause for their surprise. Perhaps it was for this reason they accepted the English domination and were even willing the English to govern them.²³

During the absence of Iranian presence in the nineteenth century when Tehran had little power the United Kingdom swayed the Persian Gulf and they gradually continued augmenting their power. From the middle of nineteenth century, India officially became a British colony. The routes leading to India at those times were mostly through Persian Gulf. After a telegram line between India and England crossed from the Persian Gulf, the significance of the waterway was doubled.²⁴

But despite the above factors London did not want to colonize the Sheikhdoms like India. India was a populated and rich country and had become a good pray for the British. They had small population, an arid and warm realm and Bedouin inhabitants who were shy of foreigners. Therefore, the English authorities did not give the Sheikhdoms and their

meager inhabitants any credit except as ports falling in the route of their vessels. What mattered to London was that the residents of the coastal towns would not disturb their marine security or disrupt the shipping lines.²⁵

As a consequence, although they were under the influence and domination of the British adventurers, it seemed that they escaped the sting of colonization, and they did not witness the bitter changes that happened with the arrival of colonial powers. Although Bahrain was an exception to some extent, but others were not colonized.

From the beginning of the twentieth century conditions gradually changed and it was as a result of the colonization of India by English imperialists. The relationship between the two countries intensified from the end of the nineteenth century as the United Kingdom was trying to immunize India from invasion of European rivals. As commercial tie between India and England was strengthened as fast as possible, the British presence was more acute in the Persian Gulf, all of which gave more vigorous traffic in the Persian Gulf region.²⁶

The traffic of Indians who were the British servants to the Sheikhdoms made trading in the region increase to a remarkable level and gradually the Indian rupee became popular. Simultaneously the Americans, the Russians and the Germans also found a foothold in the region. These were in addition to other European countries which had been traditionally present in the region from old times. Traffic between northern and southern ports i.e. between Iran and the Sheikhdoms had increased.²⁷

What mattered in between was the influence such new atmosphere had left in the Sheikhdoms. The peaceful traffic and interaction converted the savage Arabs in the Sheikhdoms into mild, realistic, and patient folk and more or less free from Arab pride, whereas their ancestors who had immigrated to the Sheikhdoms from the Arabian Peninsula had opposite qualities - like the tribes that lived inside the Arabian Peninsula.²⁸

Compared to other Sheikhdoms such a change happened earlier in Kuwait and Bahrain because these two countries were more exposed to traffic and communication. Kuwait emerged as one of the important points for transit of goods. British and Indian goods flowed to the eastern

territories of the Ottoman Empire through Kuwait. Likewise the commodities from the latter regions flowed to India and other eastern countries through Kuwait. A considerable number of Indians and citizens of other nations were living in Kuwait and they were mostly engaged in trade and brokerage.²⁹

The possibility of transit from Kuwait made it richer than other Sheikdoms, and the emir of Kuwait welcomed the boom. Gradually Arabic magazines, newspapers and books infiltrated into Kuwait and this attracted the people's attention. Shortly after that, a new educational system, which was a mixture of traditional and modern models, was introduced to Kuwaiti citizens and the wealthy people eagerly sent their children to such schools. As we can see in the following chapters, these western-inspired schools brew a series of problems which frightened the regime and compelled the Kuwait authorities to take a series of steps to control the schools.³⁰

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the emir of Kuwait was a staunch friend of the governors of Basra and Khorramshahr. The weakness of the Ottoman Empire and Iran had helped Basra and Khorramshahr governors to rule with some sorts of autonomy. They wished to build a tripartite union. The position of Kuwait, however, was a matter of significance at that time because Basra and Khorramshahr formed part of Iranian and Ottoman Empires and were naturally influenced by their historical heritage and the ideology and politics of their countries, especially because during those years there was much talk of Arab solidarity and unity. But it is doubtful to presume that Kuwait harbored such aspirations because Kuwait didn't feel such a need or did not share such history or political atmosphere.³¹

This shows that like other Sheikdoms Kuwait was not distant from Arab mental influence and political upheavals in the Arab world and was exposed to such aspirations and inclinations. Kuwait received their imported codes and reacted to them. The main reason for such developments was their perpetual and close contact with the Indians, Iraqis and with the Western nationals to some extent. These were pioneers of social (*enfetah*) and cultural opening within the Sheikdoms, although

they had to pay huge compensation for it both during the reign of Abdolkarim Qasem and during the occupation of Kuwait, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.³²

But Bahrain is an exception. The country enjoys a rich culture mostly derived from Shia citizens who form the main inhabitants of the island country and the majority of them were farmers, and thanks to continued historical link with Iran they are deeply influenced by Iranian culture specially by the culture of the inhabitants of the southern regions of Iran, whereas the Sunni minority are Bedouin Arabs who have immigrated to the island in the past two centuries from the confines of the Arab desert, settled there and have accumulated power.³³

As a consequence the social and cultural structure of Bahrain is not like other Sheikdoms, although the minority immigrants with tribal customs resemble the inhabitants of other Sheikdoms. Moreover, because of existence of potable water and agriculture and relatively better climate Great Britain chose Bahrain as its main base in the Persian Gulf region which process called for closer contact with its inhabitants specially their Indian vassals who lived in large numbers in the country.³⁴

In addition among the six Sheikdoms in Persian Gulf, Bahrain was the first country in which oil was discovered – during the second decade of the twentieth century - and after that Bahrain was seen with an extra interest. Thousands of workers from other countries and the country itself were employed to exploit and refine oil and this gave birth to such conditions in the island. Meanwhile the majority of the foreign manpower came from India, Iran and Iraq.³⁵

Here we must emphasize that despite similarity between Bahrain and other Sheikdoms mostly between Sunni governors the difference between the inhabitants of Bahrain and other Sheikdoms were far acute than the affinity between them. Bahrain's history and culture, its fertile earth, ample water, farming and culture and the features emanating from its culture and religion and their continued link with Iran and mutual interaction between the countries has caused the country's inner structure to be different with other Sheikdoms.³⁶

It is only by chance and its geographical location that has made it a

neighbor of other Sheikdoms, and of course it is better to say that because of different reasons especially for preservation of its security, Bahrain has been arbitrary classified with other Sheikdoms. The fact is that because of its instinctive features and identity, Bahrain is deeply influenced or rather pressured by its geographical position and has suffered such pressure from the on set of its independence – a problem which has worsened in the past two or three decades. In fact, one may say that compared to other Sheikdoms, Bahrain has a far different culture and identity.³⁷

With Bahrain and Kuwait as pioneers, the doors of the Sheikdoms were opened to the modern world. The influx augmented slowly, gradually and with caution. After Abd al-Aziz seized power in Saudi Arabia, the doors which had been opened during the reign of Sharif Hossein were shut down. It was an ideological and political necessity.³⁸

In fact, the Wahhabi resented the modern culture and civilization. As a consequence for a long time they quarreled with Abd al-Aziz, about which we will speak in subsequent chapters. On the other hand Abd al-Aziz, who didn't want to provoke them, dealt with the modern world with excessive caution. Of course his Bedouin temper made him look at everything with suspicion, and personally did not wish to open the doors to his country. As a result, he closed all the channels to the outside world and this policy continued until the end of the Second World War.³⁹

Kuwait welcomed such changes that did not cause danger or tension. Kuwait's experience about modern education was bitter and provoked the suspicion of its authorities and the conservative strata, but at the same time the relative open atmosphere was such that they welcomed changes and by such modernist inclinations satisfied their pride and quest for glory.⁴⁰

Qatar and the Sheikdoms that formed the United Arab Emirates were both sunk in their historical traditions, but to some extent Dubai was an exception. They weren't even eager to see changes. Love of seclusion and conservatism which had been imposed by conditions in the nineteenth century was absolute in the United Arab Emirates.⁴¹

Conditions in Oman were different. The country enjoyed an ancient history and culture and its soil was different from other Sheikdoms.

Because of invincibility, the Abadhiyah Muslims who were not favored by other Muslims and had ill reputation, sought refuge in Oman. These immigrants had no intention for propaganda and lived in the remote and relatively wealthy land completely shut to the outside world and created a closed door and isolated type of culture and government. They were farmers, merchants, fishermen and sailors who in the past had ties with neighboring countries, especially with Iran.⁴²

During the eighteenth century an Iranian army commander led his army to Oman and conquered a great part of the small country and built famous castles which are still intact. After this conquest, the migrants from Iran especially from Iranian Baluchistan, settled in Oman and were dissolved with the Omani population, but since Oman was mostly in touch with the Indian Subcontinent, its culture is deeply influenced by India.⁴³

Due to unknown reasons during the seventeenth century the Omani citizens moved to East Africa and occupied part of that continent and settled there. Along with the native Africans, the Omani migrants began cultivating spices which fetched very good income and they left their monuments in Zanzibar and Mombasa and the eastern shores of Africa, all of which display their very pretty art and advanced architecture.⁴⁴

Despite the above development due to instinctive Abadhiyah doctrine, the Abadhiyah governor in Oman closed all the doors of his country to the foreigners. As a consequence, during the twentieth century Oman was converted into a completely compact community, shut to the outside world. The closed-door nature of United Arab Emirates and Qatar was natural. The community was a closed community. But this was because of the governor's wish although the Abadhiyah nature, character and community is not open (*monfateh*).⁴⁵

Discovery of oil in the south of Iran during the first decade of the twentieth century and in Bahrain in next decade tempted the British and other European powers to explore oil in the region until during the 30's, the efforts of the American drillers in the Arabian Desert bore fruit. After that, they understood that the untapped oil resources in Saudi Arabia were the richest in the world. Although the United States had not become a superpower in those times or was not known as a superpower in the

international circles, Washington decided to monopolize the Saudi oil.⁴⁶

World War II began simultaneously with such developments and everything was under shadow of the war and was being used for the war machine. During the first years of the war a sudden outburst of anti-British sentiment boiled in Iran, Iraq and the Arabian part of the Middle East, which benefited the Germans. The willingness to approach Germany was due to their hatred of British influence in the region. Although the Germans had left a positive impact in the region since they implemented their industrial projects faithfully and with precision, the masses had an optimistic opinion about them.⁴⁷

Nevertheless such an outpouring of anti-British sentiment didn't influence the six Sheikdoms. The number of pilgrims fell drastically because of the ongoing war and put the Saudi government in hardship. The Saudis requested the British and the Americans to grant loans, and the inflow of capital indirectly impelled the oil companies to operate far vigorously. The Saudi government which suffered from economical deficiency insisted the oil companies add to their effort and discover new oil wells. Yet one can hardly say that the war caused a specific problem in the other Sheikdoms.⁴⁸

After the end of World War II, conditions in the world changed, both from political and economical standpoint. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the two major superpowers, rivals and uncompromising enemies. Their biggest preoccupation was acquirement of oil and oil resources. What mattered to them was that oil should flow smoothly and the rival power should not be able to threaten the oil wells.⁴⁹

In those years, oil became a very valuable commodity. After the war, the economical and industrial growth had accelerated and the rehabilitation of the war-stricken countries was a matter of paramount importance, the rehabilitation engine was powered by oil. Oil, which was regarded as the most important energy source become an instrument, rather a strategic weapon. From that point of view, a real winner owned more oil wells and could prevent its rival from obtaining resources.

As a consequence, without being aware, or without their wish the six Sheikdoms and the Persian Gulf became core matter in the strategic

calculations of the superpowers. Even in those early years the price of oil or revenue from oil was not that important. The main question was merely the existence of oil and safe access to the oil wells.⁵⁰

As mentioned above, until World War I the above six Sheikdoms were living their traditional life. The big exception was the Saudi Arabia, whose peaceful atmosphere owed to the doctrines of Sharif Hossein, his children, his small circle of friends, and the famous British captain Laurence who played his own role. He secured the confidence of Sharif Hossein and his friends and acted as Sharif Hossein's advisor.⁵¹

Sharif and his comrades wished to set up an Arab caliphate. But the fact is that the idea did not originate in Saudi Arabia but was imported from outside and was merely in harmony with the ambitions of Sharif Hossein and his descendents. The importance of such assertion emanated from two sacred towns, namely Mecca and Medina. If the Arabs were to set up an Arab caliphate the most suitable place to make such declaration and to operate as the centre of the empire were these two towns from historical, religious points of view and the respect which these two towns were able to incite among Muslims. These two towns represented the brilliant history, the grandeur and greatness of Arabs.⁵²

But the flame kindled for such an empire was extinguished at the end of World War II and was wholly forgotten when Sharif Hossein and his family were sent to exile. It was an imported idea that was not originated in the Saudi Arabia community in those years. After that, Abd al-Aziz seized power and as we explained before, due to religious and political reasons he converted Saudi Arabia into a closed-door country.⁵³

In the interval between the two world wars, the six countries were sunk in their historical/traditional culture, whilst during this period we witness extensive political, social and cultural activities in the Arabic part of the Middle East and even North Africa, especially in the Middle East in which the anti-imperialist hatred was rampant. All ranks in the society starting from religious elites down to social and cultural elites and intelligentsia, Christians and Muslims, both were engaged in these activities.⁵⁴

But we do not notice such a burning hatred in the blood of the inhabitants of the Sheikdoms. However Kuwait and Bahrain were, to

some extent, exception from such lethargy – Kuwait, because of its geographical location and neighboring Iraq and Bahrain because of its advanced culture and close relation with Iran. During these years Iraq was wretched under the burden of British imperialism and was struggling hard to liberate itself from the yoke. And all of these developments influenced Kuwait. The historical and cultural grounds in Bahrain and the gap in the island's society incited ideological and political thoughts, especially because the majority of the population was Shia followers and suffered from tyranny and discrimination.⁵⁵

After the end of World War II, the conditions in these countries was like before, whilst the Arabian wing of Middle East was involved at the peak of political, ideological and anti-imperialistic activities. Despite British domination in these countries we cannot trace any evidence of anti-British colonial rule among these countries. Noteworthy, the anti-imperialistic activities of India, their great eastern neighbor with which the Arabs were in close contact, did not stir them to covet a change.

The fact is that they had become accustomed to the strong and clever presence of London and even welcomed the British rule. Not only the dominating regimes, but the people at large also welcomed the British domination. As a result we don't see any anti-imperialistic movement in these countries.⁵⁶

It was in this manner, these countries achieved independence. The move towards independence progressed smoothly with mutual agreement of these countries with England. On several occasions they asked the British government to leave part of their troops in the Sheikhdoms at their own expense in order to provide for their security and peace of mind. When London said it would leave the region in 1971 they asked them to stop moving away and if the reason for their departure was money the Sheikhdoms would pay all the expenses for their stay.⁵⁷

Yet we cannot deny that the developments in the Arab world especially during the 50's and 60's incited some of the population in these Sheikhdoms to break from their historical isolation and some of them started to move towards political movements. The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait were the most notable countries which were

motivated by such nationalistic aspirations.⁵⁸

Unrest in Saudi Arabia was kindled mostly among the laborers who worked in the oil drilling regions. During the 70's the wealth from oil increased enormously and every day more laborers were hired by the oil factories southeast of the kingdom. All the wealth from oil flowed to the pockets of the Saudi Royal family. They considered the huge wealth as their personal property and they spent very extravagantly.⁵⁹

Abd al-Aziz died in 1953 and Bin Saud seized power, Bin Saud harbored Bedouin ideology and sentiments, and governed the country like the chief of a tribe. His extravagant spending paralyzed the country to the extent that they were compelled to borrow from outside. Such acts were due to his Bedouin sentiments and so much unacceptable that his brothers and influential figures in the Saudi family decided to remove him and replace him with Faysal. Faysal seized power in 1964.⁶⁰

On the other hand, the workers were sweating in the most severe conditions. Poverty and deprivation was rampant everywhere. Such factors were expected to lead to unrest in big labor communities, which actually happened. Discontent was not possible in other labor communities. Saudi Arabia was a big country with little population scattered here and there. They were leading a tribal life and suffered from utter illiteracy and ignorance. The poverty and deprivation had contained from old times and they were ignorant of the oil wealth, and did not expect to benefit from the wealth.⁶¹

But this was not so in big labor communities. The workers had abandoned their desert and tribal environment and were working and living under new conditions. Moreover, the amount of their awareness had increased. Most of them listened to the radios broadcasted by other Arab countries specially the Sawt al-Arab coming from Cairo, which in those times had emerged as the most important promoter of political awareness.⁶²

Naturally they were expected to protest in gild, social and political forms. On the other hand, the Saudi regime reacted against such demands with Bedouin brutality which added fuel to the unrest. After Faysal seized power, the conditions changed to some extent and he was able to check the

expanding wave of unrest, crack down and control the nucleus of unrest when it became alarming and dangerous. As we can see in the following chapters the defeat of Gamal 'Abd al-Naser and his ideology was a great blessing for the Saudi rulers and the other emirs of the Sheikdoms. After extinction of the flame of Arabic nationalist propaganda, the rulers of these regions were able to control and manage the labor problems with less strain and they succeeded to do it.⁶³

Bahrain was another subject in the spotlight. Aside from their abstract cultural and social features, Bahrain discovered oil during the second decade of the 20th century and the oil rapidly revolutionized the sparsely populated island state. Bahrain was the only country after Iran in which oil had been discovered and this was a welcome opportunity for the British to fill their pockets. Because the new regime in Iran demanded a series of changes in the original contract and London was worried about the safe flow of oil from the region. They needed a safe source to quickly replace the Iranian oil wells and Bahrain was considered a happy replacement.⁶⁴

Contrary to the other countries in which it took a long time between oil discovery/exploitation and export of the oil immediately started in Bahrain and thousands of native and migrate workers were hired by the oil companies.⁶⁵

Now the salary of native workers was below the other workers and even migrate ones. The British personnel enjoyed the highest salary and living conditions Bahraini native workers while received the lower wages and lived in the most unfavorable conditions. Naturally such discrimination could not continue for a long time. Thus unrest flared up even before the World War II. But it was curbed and checked by the British managers by brewing discord between Shia and Sunni workers.⁶⁶

After World War II, unrest in Bahrain was further aggravated. Progressive and leftist ideology was rapidly spreading. Even the Tudeh Party, or the Iranian Communist Party, became very active after the fall of Reza Shah, and found sympathizers in Bahrain. The secluded class difference in Bahrain, social and political discrimination, deprivation of the Shia Muslims compared to the dominant Sunni minority that were supported by the British authorities added fuel to the fire.⁶⁷

Bahrain's citizens were the largest and the most ardent listeners to Nasser and Arab nationalistic propaganda. That which helped to check the unrest was the peculiar difficulties that bothered Bahrain's inhabitants most originating from religion and the fact that some Bahrainis were inclined towards Iran and some towards the Arabs. This complicated clash between the two groups along with the more complicated policies of London was the main level that controlled the situation.

Of course the defeat of 1967 and the recognition of Bahrain by the Iranian parliament as an independent state had a remarkable role in calming the political atmosphere in the island. Despite all these developments Bahrain was the only country in which unrest continued. Although other levers were used in subsequent years to diffuse the tensions among which the Saudi dominance was the most important factor.⁶⁸

Kuwait was another sheikhdom which had enough ground for domestic turmoil. This readiness for turmoil was related to the experience that they had during the nineteenth century and mid-twenties. More than other countries, Kuwait were exposed to developments in the region and the traffic of foreign nationals for commerce. Kuwait was an important stopping port between India and commerce with England and Ottoman Empire, Arab eastern territories and Iran. These countries had revolutionized the social and cultural atmosphere of that sheikhdom.⁶⁹

The anti-imperialist struggles by the Iraqi citizens during the interval between the two wars were rampant in that country and Iraqi and Arab radical rhetoric during the Second World War had its supporters in Baghdad. Kuwait increased its oil exports very vigorously during the 50's and converted that country into the biggest oil-producing country in the Middle East. This significance was mostly due to the fact that Iran had discontinued exporting oil, and had nationalized its oil industry in the beginning of the 50's. These development made the unrest more Arabic and to some extent radicalization of part of Kuwaiti community, and this was an exception amongst Sheikhdoms.⁷⁰

That which controlled this unrest was the claims made by Abdolkarim Qasem. The territorial claim struck a severe blow to the Kuwait's regime

and inhabitants. Of course the regime managed to thwart the treat by taking a series of measures, but the Kuwaiti community became united, realistic and nationalistic. Perhaps the Kuwaiti citizen understood for the first time that in the first place he was a Kuwaiti subject and the other facts should be defined and analyzed from the perspective of his Kuwait citizenship. It is true that we belong to the Arab nation, but such a slogan should have served his Kuwaiti citizenship and not otherwise, and others should not deny their Kuwaiti citizenship or loosen their national bond.⁷¹

In fact, Kuwait's territorial claim strengthened the Kuwait community and solidarity and protected the Kuwaiti citizens from radical and Arabic inclinations and threats. The next bitter experience of Kuwait was the occupation of the country. The occupation was so painful and outrageous that during the first few years after the occupation many scholars of Kuwait hated their Arabic root and Kuwait, which at one time was the most active member of the Arab League became the most isolated and pessimist member of the alliance.⁷²

That which has been mentioned above is related to the social and political developments in these countries until 1967. After that and especially after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the developments in these countries took another form and quality, as we will explain later.

The 1967 defeat had in fact killed the seeds of any possible unrest. The general conditions in the Arab world and their political condition was such that radical and nationalistic and Arabic anti-imperialistic feelings could destabilize the Sheikdoms. Oil wealth was flowing into the pockets of different classes of the society. The society was opening at a very quick pace, their traditional culture and customs were rapidly evaporating and there was no acceptable culture to fill the gap. The consequences of such developments were threatening the country's sound and smooth life and stability. It was possible that the disturbed society or part of the society would be attracted by radicalism, or pro-Western and anti-traditional ideology.⁷³

Such a thing had happened in the majority of Arab countries in the Middle East and even North Africa. The younger portion of the community was attracted by imported ideas and this led to many problems

and much unrest. Whether the inclination originated by communist or socialistic doctrines or right or liberalistic trends, these countries resisted took a hostile stance against religion and religious traditions and culture. In subsequent stages they tried to reconcile Islamic principles and standards with their modern ideology which gave birth to a series of new problems.⁷⁴

Compared to these countries as a whole, the Sheikhdoms like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar did not face such problems. The magnitude and depth of the problem was far less and was not in a form that could turn to a national disaster. The conservative nature of the community in the Sheikhdoms and their late arrival into the modern history, their strong belief in tradition and customs, strong link to tribal system of movement, realistic political approach resulting from lack of ambition and their bitter experience of colonial rule and using the experience of other Arab countries helped all the citizens of the Sheikhdoms to have a share in their method of dealing with modern civilization.⁷⁵

This meant that social and cultural developments emanating from oil wealth had impelled them from the last years of the 60's to strengthen their cultural identity, fortify their social stability and the power of the ruling regimes, and as mentioned before such inclinations grew stronger after the 1973 war and continued until the 80's.⁷⁶

Although during this period we can see agitation in some Arab countries, as a whole the unrest was exceptional and was limited in scope, or like Bahrain the unrest was because of historical reasons which had little to do with the developments after flow of oil wealth into the Sheikhdoms and the awakening of new political inclinations. Although these problems were less acute in Kuwait than in Bahrain, this led to the dissolution of the Kuwait's parliament. Another example of revolt in the region was the Zofar insurgency which must be analyzed from the scope of cold war rivalry and the provocation of the leftist Yemeni activists, although the social and cultural factors in Zofar contributed actively to the revolt.⁷⁷

An interesting development in this regard was the exit of the British

troops and the rapid accumulation of power by the Shah in Iran. Because of his bitter experience of foreign intervention, the Shah was very interested in strengthening his war machine after ascending the throne. Such a possibility was more viable during the last years of the 60's and reached its peak during the 70's.⁷⁸

In those years Iran was moving towards industrialization and wealth and the drive found impetus from the beginning of the 70's. Such militarization changed Iran into one of the most influential countries in the region. Along with Shah's anti-communist drive, and the fact that he thought he was committed to fight with communists throughout the region, this encouraged Washington to strengthen its tie with Tehran. Because of their defeat in Vietnam the Americans were pursuing the Vietnamization policy and wished to delegate the regional powers that they were united with and ask them to fight their enemies and the communists. Shah was the most ideal choice for Washington in this connection.⁷⁹

Thus, Iran became the nucleus of the American military strategy. Shah considered that notion as an ideal notion. Iran was rapidly gathering power and the Shah took over the duty of protecting the security of the region, especially the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman. Practically taking over the British role in the region before 1971 was within the same framework that the Shah accepted Oman's king to interfere in the Zofar region and to calm the revolt.⁸⁰

All the Sheikdoms felt that the region needed such a power to take shelter. It was for the same reason that they did not insist the British troops to leave the region. Moreover, the Shah was not only anti-communist but anti-radical too. In fact the Sheikdoms were afraid of the brutal Iraqi radicals, expansionist and interventionist tendency – a radicalism which had hidden itself under the cover of Arabic nationalism and had gained added vigor with the emergence of Baath regime in Baghdad.⁸¹

Despite the above developments, Iran was not an Arab country. Due to perplexed historical reasons and especially in the contemporary times whenever something came up between Iran and Arabs it kindled their negative historical history and hostility. But it would be right to assume that Arab hostility versus Iran was the leading attitude.⁸²

At the top of such hostility, Saudi Arabia was the more sensitive against Iran and because of the strong presence of Arab nationalistic aspirations in the Kuwait; media and propaganda machines, Kuwait also displayed symptoms of discontent against Iran. But deep in their hearts the other emirs of the Sheikhdoms were happy with the prevailing situation and displayed no sign of discontent. Although for a series of reasons which was briefly explained here they did not wish to openly claim that they were happy with the status quo in the region.⁸³

But this was one side of the story. The other side was the leftist and Arab nationalist regimes and Arab media. The leftist Arabs and their media did not favor the Iranian power and always provoked the Sheikhdoms to show reaction against Tehran. Although the Sheikhdoms demonstrated no reaction, such propaganda pushed the Sheikhdoms and the rest of the Arab world into each others' arms. Since then the Sheikhdoms regulated their ties with Iran in a manner that would not provoke Arab sensitivity and hostility.

In 1979, the Islamic Revolution triumphed in Iran. In fact this was a domestic affair, but after the revolution Iranian foreign and regional policies were completely changed. Although the Islamic Republic had repeatedly announced its willingness to have close relations, on the basis of mutual respect, with its neighbors, the fact was that the revolutionary regime in Iran acted completely different compared to the Shah's pro-western policies. The complicated things were the change of Tehran's attitude and not their heartfelt wishes.⁸⁴

The GCC countries understood, albeit a little late, after the victory of the revolution the new regime did not want to go to war with them or to blackmail them and was even welcomed, because of Tehran's strong emphasis on Islamic culture and values. But, the question was the new security arrangements which in the past had been shaped by Iran's commitment with the collaboration of the United States. Yet the new Iran was completely opposed to the Shah's policies.⁸⁵

Security was vital for the Sheikhdoms – both inside the Sheikhdoms and in their relations with the world at large which was made possible through the Persian Gulf. Oil was flowing from that waterway and whatever they

needed arrived from the same waterway starting from foodstuff up to other consumable commodities.

The Sheikdoms were unable to provide for their internal security alone, the security of the Persian Gulf. In between there were other subjects of worry for them. The emirs in the Sheikdoms believed that the Soviet Union had been looking for such power vacuum in Persian Gulf. The communist regime in Afghanistan and Moscow's intervention was an alarm signal which proved that the Soviet Union was moving towards the warm waters in the south. Their allies and Arab friends of USSR were their neighbors stretching from southern Yemen to Iraq and Ethiopia.⁸⁶

Moreover revolutionary Iran was regarded by the GCC as a gateway for the Soviet Union to spread their influence and move toward south. In those frantic years, they did not believe much in the independent nature of the Iranian Revolution, and even some Arab rulers believed this revolution was a product of communists. Their main dilemma was how and by what mechanisms they could ensure their internal security and the security of the Persian Gulf.⁸⁷

Iraq invaded Iran under such circumstances. It was a large scale and all-out war to topple the Islamic regime or segregate part of Iranian territory. In short, the Arab wanted to punish and unfetter Iran's strict policies. During the first days of the war which coincided with the rapid advance of the Iraqi troops into Iran, some Persian Gulf countries lauded Saddam Hussein and when Iran began its resistance following the post-revolutionary chaos the sheiks started to worry.⁸⁸

Following the outbreak of the war, a series of steps were taken by them. One of their most important steps was their firm determination to help Iraq, although they had started the assistance by sending money, weapons and logistic support to Baghdad and initiated their anti-Iranian propaganda and religious and political harangue. Iran's unexpected resistance changed the scales. Khorramshahr was retaken and after that it was Iraq which was threatened by Iran. The collapse of the Baathist regime in Baghdad and its consequences was too dangerous than they could imagine. They could not tolerate the bitter consequences of Saddam Hussein's fall.

Another important step was the formation of the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC). The Council was established when the Arabs were at the peak of their anxiety at the beginning of the 80's and its objective was to integrate the Sheikhdoms in a manner that they could defend the security of each other.⁸⁹

In the beginning this innovative step targeted the security of the member states, although later on the Council was active in other fields too. What is important to note is that the formation of the Council led to a series of changes among the member states. Despite much similarity between the Sheikhdoms, practically it was after the birth of the GCC that their destiny, regional role, pan Arabic and international role were so closely interconnected and they emerged more or less like a united confederation.

It is true that the majority of the native inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms were the offspring of those who had migrated to the Sheikhdoms deep from the Arabian plateau, but presently these two are made of different textures.

This is because of their different history. The Saudis were the children of the desert and the others dwelt in the shores of Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman. Their geographical situation, their living condition and the dominating power of Great Britain in recent years had bred a sort of spirit among the natives which differed with the savage and bigotry temper of the Saudi Bedouins. Aside from the fact that the capacity and the power of the Saudi Arabia was far above the other members, it was natural for the bully Saudis to tame the peaceful Arab inhabitants who lived for a long time at the margin of the Persian Gulf.⁹⁰

Despite the above developments GCC was established, and they succeeded to assemble. Such a confederation gave birth to a new political culture. It was perhaps for the first time in the Arab world that a council composed of strong countries and smaller and weaker states had formed a treaty which was able, to some extent, to cooperate with each other.

Saudi Arabia was the biggest member. In other words, like a big brother in this confederation, and they had far larger population, capacity and resources. Their internal problems were not like the internal problems of the other member states which were due to the nature of the Saudi regime

and society. And this led to troubles. The other members suffered their peculiar problems and some of them had border clashes with each other and clashed with Saudi Arabia itself. But despite such rift, they suffered a common enemy threat and common points of interest, which impaled the countries to assemble and become the most firmly consolidated and lasting federation in the Arab world.⁹¹

The new Council suffered from its peculiar weak and strong points and was not able to resist against tangible and real threats. This became evident, during the occupation of Kuwait and under American pressure after the September 11. They couldn't take the least action against the advancing Iraqi army and to push them back from Kuwait.⁹² When George W. Bush pressed them to make internal reforms, the Council was not in a position to adopt and to protect its members within the framework of the GCC. Every country chose its own policy and reacted in a different manner.

Despite this fact, under ordinary circumstances and not alarming conditions were able to preserve their solidarity and unity and assume a united stance. This united stance was mostly aimed against Iran in the past three decades. As a matter of fact because of different reason Iran was the most suitable country to help them to move closer to each other. Neither Arabs nor Yemen, as neighbors of the Council, had such capacity and there was no other country or source like Iran which could further consolidate them.⁹³

Iran was a Shia and non-Arab country and because of being neighbor to Arabs and having mixed with them in the course of the history, the Arabs had a series of positive and negative recollections from Iran and their culture and such negative parts of relationship could be the employed for foreign policies and propaganda.⁹⁴

On the other hand, Iran was continually criticized by the big powers in the world. Therefore, taking a united position against Tehran was something these countries wanted and it fitted their policies. As consequence, by raising such accusations the Persian Gulf littoral states were accumulating privileges. Moreover, they were sure that Tehran did not wish to risk adventurous policy against them like arrogant Saddam.

This possibility was perhaps the most important factor that impelled them to resort to fiery rhetoric and media propaganda against Tehran.⁹⁵

Thus, the GCC whose members before 80's had followed a conservative Arab policy – nay far conservative policy –resorted to a relatively radical Arab stance against Iran. The main reason that led to this radical drive was only Iran. The Arabs in the Council felt that under such a policy, they could secure the support of Arab states and they would find a better position among the Arab masses and scholars, by pretending to be faithful to their Arab nationalistic roots. Which to some extent checked this radicalism drive was the wish of some members to preserve a passive and shy attitude against Iran and not the heartfelt wish of the members of the Council.⁹⁶

The years Iran and Iraq were waging war were years of fear and alarm for the members of the Council especially for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. These two countries had gone too by linking their destiny with that of Iraq, and for this reason, as a patron of the warmongers they showed reaction. The fact is that the four other Sheikhdoms in the Council did not harbor such attitude and policy, although all of them supported Baghdad.

This difference was due to the nature and makeup of Saudi and Kuwait regimes. We will deal with this subject in forthcoming chapters and will explain the special features of these regimes and will point out the factors that led to their stability and instability. We will also explain what their idea about Islamic regime was and what threats they felt from Iran and how they analyzed the attitude of Iraq and its war against Iran. For a better understanding of such fear we must examine the nature of the war and its progress, especially where it has to do with the Iraq war policy.⁹⁷

The war broke out at a time that the Baathist regime was at the peak of power and Iran was excessively troubled by chaos and internal problems. The revolution had triumphed only two years ago and Iran was sunk into a whirlpool of domestic and foreign problems. Revolution moved quickly and triumphed. From one aspect this was positive, but since the revolution had not set up necessary administrative structure for the country it faced enormous problems. It was as if the problems which had to be solved before the victory of the revolution had been postponed to the post-

revolution era. It was possibly due to the popular nature of the revolution and unarmed struggle for victory.⁹⁸

Contrary to Iran the Baathist regime was in its most favorable and strong position. The regime had suppressed domestic unrest and the leader of the Baathist Party had eliminated all real and possible rivals. Saddam was in full control of the army, the Baath Party and the nation's internal and foreign policies. Iraq was in the best shape in the region, inter-Arab web and international level in its contemporary history.

Baghdad started the war in such favorable circumstances. The war was openly and explicitly or tentatively supported by all the countries in the region and many powers outside the Middle East. This made it necessary for Iraq to achieve a definite and quick victory. The conditions were such that both Iraq and its main supporters expected a blitz.

Taking all the above into account, the battle was not limited to certain fronts at the borders with Iran. Baghdad had to inflict a big blow on all fronts in order to achieve a rapid and definite victory. Simultaneously with the advance of Arab troops inside Iran they bombed Tehran and other cities. The strategy to expand the battlefield during the war was the fixed strategy of Baghdad. At first the war stretched to the Iranian inland and seas, and after a while Baghdad targeted the whole Persian Gulf, which became known as war of oil tankers.

The thing that was worrying the Sheikdoms was the war in the Persian Gulf. They felt that the battle was spreading to their borders and every moment was likely to pull them into the whirlpool, especially because Baghdad had such a wish, only by dragging the Sheikdoms into war, could save its skin. The best way was to push the other countries into the war and to shift part of the burden of the war to them.

After regaining Khorramshahr Iraq was exposed under Iranian pressure. While on another side, Baghdad continually attacked the Iranian ships in the Persian Gulf and Tehran was compelled to retaliate likewise. This meant chaos and lack of security in Persian Gulf.

Since then, there were three factors that worried the Sheikdoms. Firstly, the fall of Saddam, would have leave evil consequences for them in general and specifically for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Secondly, cause of

fear for the exports and imports, and thirdly, arbitrarily being dragged into the battle. In short, they were afraid that the war would lead to unrest and conflict in their countries. All these three factors were likely to shatter their fragile security.

Iran took back Khorramshahr and inflicted heavy defeat to Iraqi troops, this made the Sheikhdoms seriously nervous. After that, they tried to encourage Iran to cease the hostilities, but Iran did not wish to stop the war as long as its conditions were not fulfilled. As result in order to save itself Baghdad decided to bring more and more countries into the battle and to expand the front to new regions. Among the countries in the region the best countries which could contribute to Saddam's war goals were the six Sheikhdoms. Countries such as Jordan, Northern Yemen and Egypt supplied the biggest help to Baghdad but they were unable to open a front against Iran and take part in the onslaught, but they were not able to act like Sheikhdoms in this polity.

Thus, the Persian Gulf was exposed to new conditions. The most important question was the stability of the Sheikhdoms. Contrary to former decades such as security was threatened from outside and not from inside. During those turbulent years, they enjoyed good internal stability even their traditional dissidents such as the Shiites in Saudi Arabia or the western-oriented Saudis, liberals and leftists were silent because of the war conditions. But despite all their silence they felt that they were being threatened from abroad.

The formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council was partly due to such reactions. A bigger part was to invite big powers to move to the region and support them. Another idea was to buy massive weapons which were happening for the first time. As a result, the region was moving towards militarization.⁹⁹

Considering the wealth of these countries and the significance of oil and its continued flow, the geopolitical and geo-economical importance of Persian Gulf, such an invitation was received warmly by Washington and major powers in Europe and even the Soviet Union. Various weapons started to pour into these countries and military contracts were inked, with military bases built. This was a policy that remained effective post-war

and changed the regional situation altogether.

In fact this militarization process fetched them security and stability, although the anxiety remained till the end of the war. In the same way they succeeded to change the conditions to such a mode that the continuation of the war would have been detrimental to Iraq and Iran. The war ended and a ceasefire was proclaimed. The Sheikdoms were relieved of their anxiety, but peace didn't continue for a long time and suddenly, Kuwait was occupied by Iraq.¹⁰⁰

After the end of the war, Tehran focused on its infrastructure, reconstruction and repair of the damages that had been inflicted during the war, and tried to encourage the Sheikdoms to forget supporting Iraq and establish friendly and positive relationship. But conditions were different in Baghdad. The Baathist regime felt that all the Sheikdoms and especially, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were indebted to it because they had defeated the Arabs and the Arab cause. Therefore, at this stage of economical and social crisis Saddam expected the Sheikdoms to help him.¹⁰¹

In addition, the Iraqi war machine could not easily be used for the reconstruction of the country. During the war, in Iran, a sort of spirit of resistance, innovation and self-devotion developed among the masses and that could easily be mobilized such powerhouse to the reconstructional process. Whereas Iraq had in fact a giant war machines well – a machine which was equipped with modern weapons which had exploited all the resources of the country and therefore, could not contribute to the country's progress. After the cessation of hostilities the war machine had become a conundrum for the government and needed another battle. The most ideal scenario would have been a definite swift and end up with complete victory.¹⁰²

Along with such developments, there was the temptation of Arabic nationality having an ideology of using everything towards Arab nationality. Furthermore, Baghdad's proclaim of Kuwait being an integrated part of Iraq. Thus, the regime tried to use it as a national slogan and demand. Hence, from the viewpoint of internal politics, Baghdad needed all these elements.¹⁰³

Aside from such realities, years before the occupation of Kuwait, Saddam's regime had betrayed symptoms of discontents against the Sheikdoms. But those who thought that the end of war would put an end to all the problems and fears did not realize or were perhaps unable to understand such evil discontents. It was as if the Iraqi optimism and trust of the regime that prevailed in the 70's had returned to the country and there was no ground for pessimism and upsetting the joy of victory.¹⁰⁴

The occupation of Kuwait was a severe issue. Perhaps it was for this reason that some Sheikdoms tried to distance themselves from Kuwait and defend Kuwait. The active force behind such unwillingness was Saudi Arabia because Iraq was openly and directly threatening that country and its propaganda targeted Saudi Arabia.¹⁰⁵

The most important result of the blow was the change of the relations between the Sheikdoms and other Arabic states. In the subsequent chapters, we will explain that after the 1967 war and the defeat of Nasser and Nasserism the center of power of the Arab world had shifted towards the Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms. And after the 1973 war such a shift was accelerated, and with the accumulation of wealth by Sheikdoms and the weakness of other Arab leaders, the centre of political balance had inclined to Persian Gulf region.¹⁰⁶

This led to many results including attraction of millions of migrants from various Arab countries which were employed in various sectors and at times, in key positions.

The occupation of Kuwait opened a gap between the Arab states. Some countries filed behind Saddam while some stood against him. The reason for such political stand had its perplexed background. What is important to note is that such positions were not merely political, rather due to public pressure. Even a regime like Jordan which always had a very close tie with Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms stood behind Saddam Hussein.¹⁰⁷

This excited confrontation between the Persian Gulf States and the migrants from those countries who supported Saddam Hussein consequently resulted into their mass expatriation. Moreover it incited gross pessimism about Arab nationalism and Arab nation in which the immigrants were their staunch supporters. Above all, the Sheikdoms had

spent billions of dollars for fortification and stabilization of their nationalism ethnicity. They felt that such slogans and ideology would serve as a weapon against them and their wealth by Arabs who believed to be committed to comply with Arabic nationalistic goals.¹⁰⁸

The occupation of Kuwait ended with severe defeat of Iraqi army, but the result of the ugly nightmare had spread in the entire region and they all sweated dumb and undecided, especially because the Arab world was ruptured between the supporters and opponents of Saddam. Such a process inflicted severe damage to the international dignity of the Arabs in the world and this process continued for a long time.¹⁰⁹

What mattered was that Saudi Arabia had lost both its popular support. In forthcoming chapters we will explain how, in the beginning of the 60's, they established religious and propaganda stations in the Muslim and non-Muslim states which pursued different goals, but at the behind all these machines were at the service of the Saudi foreign policy. The majority of these religious centers supported Saddam during the occupation of Kuwait. Actually, in those bleak days the conditions were such that even regimes that were the enemies of Iraq and had joined the war against Baghdad did not expose their hostility fearing internal discontent.¹¹⁰

Under such chaotic circumstances the Arab inhabitants of the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms gave up their past Arabic slogans and were no more willing to be gravitated to the Arab nationalism or become one of the important centers of such Arab aspiration. They felt that their stability and security necessitated them to stay away from such aspirations. Such conditions led to many difficulties in the Arab world, especially among countries which from political viewpoint before the occupation of the Kuwait were in line with the Arab Sheikdoms and many of their citizens were working in the Sheikdoms.¹¹¹

After the 1991 War, we face new conditions in the international arena. The Eastern Bloc had collapsed and the giant Soviet Empire disintegrated. The two-polar situation had vanished. In the interim, Palestine emerged as one of the priorities of international politics and even the public. The Arab world and especially Arab leaders, politicians, intelligentsia and the Palestinians themselves were ready to have a new approach to the

Palestinian issue. The defeat of Iraq, and Baghdad's failure to hit a blow to Israel had an important role in this feeling of disillusionment.

Under such circumstances, the world powers demanded the Arab world to start negotiation to pave the way for peace between the Palestine and Israel and normalize their relations with Tel Aviv. Now they did not know who they had to address and with whom in the Arab world the West had to speak. The Palestinian Authority and leadership were too small to be addressed directly. Moreover the West wanted to solve the dispute between the Arabs and Israel and not the discord between Palestine and Israel, and they thought that Palestine was part of the problem.

Taking into account every consideration Egypt was thought to be the best choice. Egypt which up to the end of 80s, often due to domestic problems and pan Arab drives, was willing to play an active role in the talks and for this reason, it was looking for economical and political assistance. Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms too had left aside their former claims and did not want and were unable to speak on behalf of the Arabs. Above all the new Egyptian foreign policy adapted to the expectations of the western powers and Cairo itself had enough potential to play the role of a peace negotiator.

This encouraged Mubarak's Egypt to step into the field. As to the Arab Persian Gulf countries they preferred such a choice, and the political magnitude of the Arab world once again inclined towards Egypt. The inhabitants of the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms welcomed such a role by Cairo and tried to stabilize Egypt's position from political and economical viewpoints. According to an old belief, they thought that the welfare of the Arab world owed to the welfare of Egypt and naturally, Egypt should become their mouthpiece and leader of the Arab world.¹¹²

The 90's ended in this manner. From the point of view of potential world powers and a great part of the world the most important dilemma bogging the Arab world at that time was peace between Palestine and Israel for which a series of innovative plans had been envisaged. The Sheikdoms were standing outside their dialogue and efforts and in fact wished to stay clear from that subject. The Sheikdoms stood out of these talks and they preferred to remain neutral. Neither the regimes nor the

inhabitants of the Sheikdoms desired to participate in the talks. The lack of interest was because of the recent occupation of Kuwait, but the talks contributed greatly to their stability.

The reason for lack of interest among the sheikhs was that from the very beginning many groups both among the Palestinians and other Arab countries had looked at such peace efforts with suspicion, and regarded the process with pessimism on the basis of their bitter past experience. As a matter of fact the peace partisans too had a negative look at the inhabitants of the Sheikdoms. Had they participate in the peace talks they would have been surely criticized by these groups of Arabs and the peace supporters, and such an involvement was likely to brew internal problems. But they escaped the trouble by delegating the responsibility to Egypt probably without their wish or expectations.

Other things happened during that decade including the war in Bosnia and Chechen against which the Sheikdoms because their reclusive attitude showed no reaction. It was only Iran which worried them. The Sheikdoms moved so far in their conservative and lethargic attitude and fear of Iran that they recognized the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were the two out of three countries that recognized the Taliban regime. The reason for the reorganization of Taliban government in Afghanistan was merely because of pressuring Iran and of course, they gave lots of money to the Taliban government in Kabul.¹¹³

From the mid 90's normalization of relations between the Sheikdoms and the Arab countries, which had supported Saddam Hussein, began. They continued their secluded and closed-door attitude as before and were not willing to be present in Arabic troublesome spots or in international skirmishes, yet such neutrality did not conflict with their good relations with such countries. The end of 90's their relations with radical countries were more or less normal. Even Kuwait acted like the Sheikdoms or was perhaps forced to do so.¹¹⁴

Yet they could not ignore their Arabic origin. They lacked a history or civilization to rely upon and in the meantime remained aloof from Arabs or pretended to be non-Arabic. They were compelled to return to the Arab

camp and they did so, of course with a different policy and approach. The only exception among the Sheikhdoms was Qatar. The crown prince of Qatar revolted against his father in the mid of 90s, deposed him in a bloodless coup, took over the reigns and completely revolutionized his country's policies and laid down the needed structures for open and active politics within the region and on international level. Of course, Qatar enjoyed the support of influential world in its new open policies.¹¹⁵

The most urgent issue which undermined the internal security and stability of these countries during the 90's was the widespread protests against the nature of the governments which at last ended with the formation of Salafid approach. Such protests mostly flared up in Saudi Arabia inhabitants.¹¹⁶

The Saudi rulers were compelled to seek western military assistance to cope with Saddam Hussein and to give quarter to western troops in the mainland Saudi Arabia - a land which according to traditional Arabs was sacred and non-Muslims were not permitted to enter. Such an attitude must be examined from the scope of ideological and religious changes which had developed during the 80's. Without such traditional sentiments neither an ideology would have developed nor would the ideology gain strength and spread.¹¹⁷

At this juncture, it was the religious theologians and orators in the mosques of Saudi Arabia who had a critical tongue and rebuked the passive policies of their leaders against the Americans, and this was happening for the first time. Such a censure was not only leveled against the Saudi leadership but against all the clerics and official organization of the Wahhabi organization, which added to the significance of the matter. More or less it was the first, that a traditional religious establishment was being criticized on such a large scale by the theologians.¹¹⁸

The criticism was welcomed by young citizens and the government was not in a position to openly show reaction. There were only two opinions available to deal with the threat. The first option was for the Saudi authorities to put more emphasize on Wahhabi principles inside the country to prove to the people that they were committed to their religious obligations. The second option was to send the dissident youth whose

blood boiled with religious zeal and fire to regions such as Bosnia, Chechnya, Central Asia and Afghanistan.¹¹⁹

These two alternatives proved a good solution. Open criticism by clerics grew less and the tone was softer, but the main ideology which provoked the criticism was influencing the masses and was spreading. It ultimately ended with a new branch of Wahhabi Sect differing with the official Wahhabi doctrines and its existing teachings. The difference lay both in the understanding of religious edicts and people's thoughts and political ideology.¹²⁰

Another problem was the unrest in Bahrain, which will be discussed later on. The problem was tyranny and discrimination, which the minority Sunni in power had imposed on the majority Shiites. The Shiites were the real owners of the island and had lived in the country for centuries. The ruling class belonging to the Caliph Family (Al-e-Khalifeh) had immigrated to Bahrain about two centuries ago and had grabbed power. This, itself had disturbed the balance of power, and during the British dominance the English repeatedly benefited from such discord and hostility. In order to cope with the criticism, the Bahraini authorities fanned the flame of sectarian disputes and tensions.¹²¹

The unrest during the 90's was the fruit of criticism that usually flared up in the sheikhdom, but the protest that erupted in the 90's had another aspect. It was a protest against the change of the dimension of the population. The ruling regime was trying, with the help of its confederates, to bring in Sunni migrants into the island and impose them upon the Bahraini citizens and on the other hand, they deprived many Shia followers of their right of citizenship. Such offensive measures incited a general protest among the Shia community which led to violence and was brutally curbed.¹²²

As mentioned above, after the occupation of Kuwait a large number of the migrant Arabs were expelled from the six Sheikhdoms. The most cogitative thing was that the Kuwaiti rulers had placed new laws and very hard conditions for accepting workers from Arabic countries. This policy decreased the number of Arab applicants. This discrimination lessened the number of Arabs in the Sheikhdoms - a circumstance that will influence

more obviously in the future.¹²³

Alongside, such problems gave birth to a serious desire for economic presence outside the region among the inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms. United Arab Emirate and Dubai were the harbinger of such a trend, but after a while, the other members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council joined those who wanted to invest outside the region. They understood that in order to preserve their security and interest they were compelled to rely on Americans and to some extent to European countries, although their choice of Europeans was made to remove the blame that they were in league with Americans. Of course, due to historical reasons and their deep knowledge of the region the British played their specific role.

Various factors contributed to such a wish for foreign presence. The object was to merge in the free global economy, but in this region economy was treated as commerce and commercial brokerage. In order to achieve that end it was not necessary for them to acquire industrial and economic mechanisms and trained personnel, technology and science. The aim was to have a transit of goods.¹²⁴

They were pursuing such goals at a time that both manufacturers and consumers needed them especially because the conditions in the region was such that many consumers, because of sanction and lack of information with the vast network of production and main suppliers of goods, were unable to meet their needs.

On one side there was Iran and Iraq. The first was under relative sanctions and the other bore the brunt of complete sanctions. On the other hand, there were Russia, Ukraine and Central Asian States, which after collapse of Communist had suddenly grown wealthy but had no way to purchase their needed commodities. Principally, were not familiar with trade. Countries like, Pakistan and Afghanistan and some other countries in the region suffered more or less from the same problem.

In the meantime, there were the European and Southeast Asian and even American, Australian and Canadian manufacturers and exporters which preferred to sell their goods to countries like the Sheikhdoms. Trade with the sheikhdom was done smoothly and they were able to secure the legal consequences of such trade.

Under such circumstances Dubai, which had a good background for trade stepped in the field. The British advisors who saw their profit in the new haven assisted the Dubai merchants. Dubai's successful and profitable experience incited the other towns in the United Arab Emirates to follow the same policy. After a few years the same stream spread to all Sheikhdoms.

No doubt, the enormous revenues from oil, the security achieved with the presence of foreign powers, their positive approach to such foreign support, their interest and knowledge of the inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms with trade, the flexibility of the responsible authorities, their lack of interest in bureaucracy, their lack of political ambition and a sort of realistic approach to things, all contributed to such economic boom.

In their next phase, they tried to expand their service substructures especially in the field of aviation, education, medical services, to some extent banking and commerce as well as their tourist industry. Ultimately, they tried to build modern residential complexes which become a nucleus that attracted the wealthy people from within and outside the region.¹²⁵

Such innovative steps began during the 90's when their successful experiments in trade gave boost to their economy. Surely their strength identity which was a mixture of their religious identity and ethnic tendencies played a big role for their stability. Had they lacked religious identity and ethnic teachings they would not be able to march the arduous path with an acceptable degree of success. We will discuss this issue again.¹²⁶

All these countries are now members of the World Trade Organization and are active in the international commerce. Despite all the changes that have happened in this big and highly consuming region, the Sheikhdoms continue to be the most important transit bases for import and even export of commodities. Due to sanctions imposed on Iran many Iranian goods are being exported to foreign countries through the Sheikhdoms.

Eventually, the last ten years of 2000 ended and the new millennium began. The Sheikhdoms more or less continued their former domestic and foreign policies. The big shock was the explosion of the twin towers in New York on September 11 that shook the whole world. The United States

blamed the Arab world, in particular, the Sheikhdoms and Saudi Arabia.

During the crisis Saudi Arabia showed its peculiar reaction which is not like the attitude of the Sheikhdoms. In this instance too Saudi Arabia acted in the same manner. We will discuss about Saudi reaction in the forthcoming chapters. But the other Sheikhdoms remained silent and tried to betray no reaction. What mattered for them was to evade crisis and not confront with it. They wish to thwart every crisis with silence and denial and do so as long as they could. This is a quality that history and especially modern history has instilled in them and has strengthened it. Their approach to the New York catastrophe was not like other Arab states.¹²⁷

After the first shockwaves and excitement had blown over, several questions loomed in the political circles. Where the mistake had happened? Why the catastrophe had happened? What were the reasons and factors behind the sabotage? Did the Americans adopt a correct policy against Arabs? What could be done to prevent similar incidents? And what policy Washington had to follow?¹²⁸

Extensive studies with different methods were conducted about the Arab world. In the meantime, the Saudi society, culture and policy and government were more than other places under scrutiny. A big list of problems, deficiencies and shortages was prepared. A true example of this incident was the problems suffered by Saudi Arabia. According to the Americans and observers the other Sheikhdoms suffered in the same manner.¹²⁹

In all such research works the main problem was discovered to be the compacted and traditional nature of the political system. The criterion for evaluation of good and bad regimes was in harmony with their modern and non-traditional nature of political system and not their acceptability or legitimacy. In such classification, a country like Tunisia was found to be far more acceptable than countries like United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

Among Arab states the above six Sheikhdoms were at the bottom of such classification and for this reason the pressure on them was heavier. The regimes preferred to remain silent, but the ordinary people felt the brunt of the pressures in different forms. They felt themselves, their

history, culture and religion was being humiliated and insulted.¹³⁰

The result was consolidation of social solidarity. One of the objects of Washington was to find individuals and groups who could think like them and try to reform their community, government and culture in a way that may satisfy their style, and in return they promised to support them. But such attitude had a contrary effect and all other countries more or less sided or supported the governing regimes.¹³¹

As we said Saudi reaction was quite different, but these pressures led to a series of changes in the Sheikdoms. The most important thing was to see the changes according to the local community. For example, the active presence of woman in the society which the U.S. had called for could be seen and the new conditions accelerated and facilitated the process.¹³²

After the September 11 blast, Afghanistan was attacked and the Taliban regime was toppled. This incited the traditional Afghans but the political systems showed no reaction to the change of regime in Kabul. After that Washington spoke about attacking Iraq and although, such a war conflicted with the stability of the Sheikdoms no sheikdom approved the aggression except Kuwait. As a matter of fact the other Sheikdoms had no specific policy about that matter.¹³³

Among the Sheikdoms it was only Kuwait which welcomed the fall of Saddam Hussein. The remaining Sheikdoms remained silent. After that they expressed their anxiety about the Shia government in Baghdad and the increasing influence of Tehran in Iraq and tried to cope with that problem using different methods.

In all these cases, it was Mubarak who was the spokesman of the Arabs and the Sheikdoms. The Sheikdoms preferred to convey their demand and opinion through Egypt, although Saudi continued its former policies, and had harmonized its stance with Cairo and sometime it expressed its own opinion.¹³⁴

During his second term, George W. Bush showed a softer, far respectful and realistic stance versus the Arab world and the members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. This change of position helped a lot to relieve the anxiety of the Sheikdoms. They were assured that Washington was not after changing the regimes and tried to cooperate with the U.S. plans.

In fact, the blow that fell on New York on September 11 helped to intensify the solidarity of the Sheikdoms.¹³⁵

As a whole Barak Obama, the next U.S. president had a different attitude about the region and his approach delighted the Sheikdoms. Actually the inhabitants of the Sheikdoms wholeheartedly favored a president with the doctrines, slogans and character of Obama, although a few months after his election Obama understood that there are many factors in the region which he could not overlook and that he had to adapt his policies accordingly. The Sheikdoms too understand that change of president cannot change the U.S. policies to the extent that they wanted.

In the recent decade, we do not see any important problem threatening the security and stability of the Sheikdoms. What is notable is the question of Iran and its problems with the United States and American threats. But instead of treating the crisis between Tehran and Washington as a threat against their security it has served as a tool for political propaganda. In fact the U.S. threat has further consolidated the Sheikdoms and has pushed Arabs, the United States and Europe closer to each other. Furthermore, it has given a pretext to Washington to expel their rivals under the pretext that they are cooperating with Iran and are in league with Tehran. Moreover, we must approach and analyze the question of Iran and the Sheikdoms through the process of history and historical relations between the two.¹³⁶

The last important incident was the impact of fall of Bin Ali and the beginning of Arab Spring. The Arab Spring proved the falsity of presumption of the researchers who attributed the problems in the Arab world including the six Sheikdoms to their compacted and traditional systems of government. In fact, it was the modern regimes which collapsed and suffered problems and it was the traditional regimes that remained calmer and more stable. At least, the traditional regimes possessed the mechanism to overcome and digest their problems to an acceptable level.¹³⁷

The members of the Gulf Cooperation Council are among these traditional countries. No doubt the systems governing these Sheikdoms are the most traditional and non-democrat governors. This system is a

tribal system which was used in the past centuries and their rulers are thinking, deciding and acting on the basis of the same principles.¹³⁸

At a first glance, GCC does not adapt with the modern world especially thanks to oil dollars. They are becoming more modern and wealthy but call the modernization of their system of government.

This is in fact the core issue. We must not forget that in many respects these systems are in harmony with the conditions in which their people are living and the history, culture, religion and structures, which they have inherited from the past, form part of such conditions. In the forthcoming chapters we will study and analyze all these factors.

Among them Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are two big exceptions. Bahrain suffers from division in the society and not from traditional or modern system of government. If the governors of the island country had tried to solve or lessen the gulf and difference in the population on the basis of its traditional principles and culture the Bahrain dilemma would not have grown so much complicated and brutal.¹³⁹

Kuwait too suffers from a similar problem, albeit at a lower scale. The Shia Sect in Kuwait form a big minority and the regime in Kuwait does not differ much with other Sheikdoms, but those on the helm of power in that county are trying to solve the social division and conflict on the basis of their old and traditional system of government and have succeeded in this respect to some extent.¹⁴⁰

But there is no such determination in Bahrain. Instead of incompetent tribal and traditional systems, the real problem bogging that country is lack of realistic approach to the problem, bigotry and a sullen willingness to suppress. Of course, there is another factor which prevents the solution of the social difference or discrimination and that is the Saudi government. The authorities in Saudi Arabia see their interest in the present statuesque because if Bahrain tries to solve the discrimination or lessen the difference between the inhabitants of Bahrain, the Saudi rulers will be compelled to adopt similar stance towards the Shia followers living in the east of that country. As a whole, Saudi Arabia doesn't want or is unable to accept such methods either with regard to the Shia community or others.

Another exception is the system of Saudi government. Despite

similarity of Saudi population, culture, politics and regime with the other Sheikdoms there is a fundamental difference between these two. In fact, one might examine and analyze the problems in Saudi Arabia separately and without comparing to the conditions in the Sheikdoms.¹⁴¹

To summarize the matter, we must say that the internal structures and networks in the Saudi system have been formed in a manner which does not allow any serious change or modernization. Accepting any change in such system will immediately lead to crisis and cause the fall of the regime. The regime has always tried to give concessions to those who will contribute to the preservation of the existing system. This is mostly related to excessive use of Wahhabi codes for the administration of the country. In the first instance the Wahhabi faith has a rigid and severe psychology. Secondly, it does not favor any change and thirdly, the ultimate decisions in the country rests with the Wahhabi theologians and not the regime. The regime must act in a way that will not provoke their antagonism and this cleric influence limits their power more than one can expect.¹⁴²

All these countries can digest the excitement of the Arab Spring as far as it is related to their country. Their internal and external policies are not such that would provoke the discontent of a vast majority and incite them to protest or succumb to unrest. They have the capacity and possibility to digest such protests of course, in case the developments in the Arab world will not upset the existing conditions.¹⁴³

In between the condition in Bahrain and to some extent Yemen is threatening. The common fate which the men on the helm of power have defined for themselves has pushed the conditions in Bahrain into deadlock. The regime and the Bahraini opposition cannot have dialogue with each other within the framework of internal means and demands. Moreover, change in a country must not be regarded as a dangerous model for another country. Those in power in the Gulf Cooperation Council have so much existed the overcharged atmosphere in their countries that they look at every change in any of these Sheikdoms as an alarm bell for other Sheikdoms and they assess the matter from that angle.¹⁴⁴

If the conditions were not such, the question of Bahrain could have been controlled by more suitable methods. Aside from that, a feeling of

common fate can be converted into a big dilemma in the future and can prevent freedom of action by countries which due to various reasons are willing to effect political changes.

Despite all these factors in fact it is the Saudi regime which is the architect and supporter of the idea of common fate of political systems in the GCC. The Saudis are suffering from their own problems and feel that in order to control their internal discontent they are compelled to take steps outside their borders. The first immediate point outside Saudi border is the Sheikhdoms. According to Saudi politicians the Sheikhdoms most not take such steps to solve their problem and make reforms which they cannot use. They believe that such unpleasant steps will push them into difficulties and compromising.

From that angle the GCC member states are considered by Saudi Arabia as safety margin instead of being their partners and allies. The idea of common fate of regimes in the Sheikhdoms instead of originating from the realities in the Sheikhdoms or the will of the governors of the Sheikhdoms is an invention of Saudi authorities in order to secure their internal security and to further strengthen themselves against foreign pressures and threats.

Although Bahrain is facing a big crisis and many problems, we witness shy or less mounting protest inside Saudi Arabia and the regime in Kuwait because of open and extensive protests by those who have stepped into the field to protest the financial corruption among the authorities, they are faced with a series of problems. But it is doubtful whether the Arab Spring will cause a big change in the Sheikhdoms. As a whole they have the capacity to preserve their stability.

The question is not of only money or the benevolent financial help of the regimes in the region. Such privilege incites mounting demands and expectations, and leads to further instability. The question is that the acceptability of regimes is at the lowest ebb and they cannot keep their balance against such turbulent waves of protests – a legitimacy resulting from coordination with the historical, social and cultural realities.¹⁴⁵

Although, most probably the Sheikhdoms will face new problems which will differ with things which incited the Arab Spring, among which the question of expatriate workers who are working in the Sheikhdoms and

often their wage is far below that which they deserve to receive. The question is more applicable when we consider the common and non-expert workers. The tribal culture and the tribal regime more or less treat them like slaves who before the abolition of slave trade labored in this region.¹⁴⁶

The foreign manpower forms almost 80% of the inhabitants of the Sheikdoms. The majority of which are the workers who are working with the lowest salary and means and often in the most difficult conditions. The government or the employers do not feel any commitment against their welfare. These workers are working in exceeding fragile circumstances and might be dismissed any moment, even without a plausible reason.

Moreover such a condition makes the real citizens of the six Sheikdoms lethargic, indolent and urges them to seek excessive fund to the extent that they are not prepared to do any regular work. Although, sometimes it is said that in these countries, especially in Saudi Arabia, the youth like other Arab countries suffer from unemployment, but the problem is that many young people do not wish to engage in serious jobs. Instead, they are seeking such jobs which they want and not the jobs available in the business market.¹⁴⁷

Such a condition cannot continue for ever. If one day this massive workforce demands its rights and succeeds to mobilize all the workers and international organizations responsible to defend human rights and the right of migrant workers, everything will suddenly deteriorate. Although such a collapse is unlikely to happen under the existing circumstances; however we must not overlook the quick pace of developments and upheavals in the region.

Their fragile status is not from domestic movement. It is from factors which bring welfare and a balanced and modern life to them. The danger will be thwarted only when the regime adopts a new approach versus the workforce and especially common workers.

2

Politics and Tribal Structure

In order to correctly understand the social and political developments in the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms, we must understand their political structure first. This is a tribal structure which, because of late entry into modern history, had absolute authority for a long time, and still enjoys considerable strength and influence. The developments of the Arab Spring has clearly shown that in many Arabic countries still tribal structure is one of the important stimulants, and above all developments grows in this spectrum and finds its shape and progresses within this framework.

In order to better understand the situation and developments in the Sheikhdoms is to focus on their ethnical structure. It doesn't mean that the ethnic structure is still strong and is a determining factor as in the past in all fields and cases. On the contrary it means that these countries have entered the new history under the shadow of such structure and this structure has played the biggest role during transition from traditional community to modern community, although presently, various factors shape their foreign policy. The essence of this policy is the nationalistic structure and tribal education and culture.¹

As mentioned before, the inhabitants of all these Sheikhdoms were the surplus population of the main peninsula, who gathered at the fringe of the Peninsula because of difficult living conditions, hostile and unbearable nature, poor fertile land and endless domestic skirmishes which had no output, sought refuge in these regions. Moreover, due to historical reasons and the arbitrary geographic conditions looming over this vast Peninsula from the first time they were become known they always lived within tribal framework and culture.²

In this burning land of hardship every person belongs to a tribe. No one lives there without a tribe and one who doesn't belong to a tribe is doomed to die. For a man who has fallen apart from his tribe must undergo a sophisticated process to seek shelter in another tribe and receive support from the new tribe, because if he is rejected by the new tribe he will lose all sorts of security and opportunities to live.³

Here, the tribe forms the social cell and not the individual. Everything is defined and is limited on the basis of this reality. The prevailing culture and customs are the tribal culture and customs, in the same way that the structure is a tribal structure. The chief of the tribe is accepted and elected according to this structure and tradition. The position, duties and ethnics and commitments of the chief is determined by this ethnic structure. In rare cases, when the chief of the tribe is dismissed still the criterion for action is this tribal tradition and custom.⁴

This means that the chief of the tribe is acceptable and legitimate. The factor that determines his acceptability (and legitimacy) is the ancient and acceptable tradition of the tribe which has neither opponents nor it occurs

to anyone to oppose it. Maybe a person or several persons can complain or criticize a tribal chief, but in all these cases, the special tribal tradition always prevails.⁵

Now, the question is that the significance and status of this tradition and structure differs with its status in other communities and even other traditional communities. In this region, the rank and status of a person accepted in the tribe is the person himself. He exists because his tribe exists and he finds dignity and importance because he is attached to the tribe. The man finds social prominence through the tribe and since this is the prevailing procedure whatever is related to the community is accepted without question, including the tribe's tradition and culture.⁶

Notwithstanding the above the relationship between an individual and traditional society and even the most closed-door societies is not so anymore. The individual exists and of course is dependent on his tribe's traditions and customs. He can protest or disobey orders, or least think about such things. But due to the practical dissolution of the individual's character within the realities of the tribe such a protest is not possible.⁷

Such features have strongly shaped the society and history and the modern history of the Sheikhdoms. Despite this fact, the social developments and political conditions in Arabian countries closely resemble that of the inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms. The developments in Sheikhdoms in fact differ with other countries. Such a claim is acceptable even compared to countries which enjoy tribal traditions and structure. Although in countries such as Yemen, Iraq and Libya the social structure is ethnic structure, in these cases the tribal structure has acted as a part of social reality, and it has never shaped the political and social structure of such countries.⁸

But with regard to the Sheikhdoms and of course with some difference with regard to Bahrain and to some extent Oman, the whole political and social setup is influenced by tribal structure. One can say that the political and social structures are the culmination of the foreign structure of ethnic tradition on national level throughout the country. No doubt, the most important reason for the late entry of these countries into modern history is the fact that until the beginning of the 20th century and even until the end

of World War II they lived in their ancient historical format which is an important reason for such lifestyle.⁹

Now we must see how this culture and structure operates. Here we will study only two parts of such reality. The first part zooms on the social dimension and the second part examines the political results.

When the tribe's cell is the community and not the individual transition from traditional society to modern society happens with far less difficulty. At least with an eye to the strong tradition and culture in the Sheikhdoms such an assertion seems to be correct.¹⁰

All the problems resulting from such transition which ends up with the social and political instability is because under the shadow of the developments during this period, individuals and various classes of the community are influenced in different manner. The result is that after the transitional period, each individual or group of individuals belonging to a traditional society who have more or less enjoyed the same social position, have fallen into a different condition and such a difference of class has led to unrest, insurgency and quarrels, and all of these helped them to fall deeply apart from each other from the point of view of social position and wealth.¹¹

The eventual result become thus, each of these individuals develops their peculiar personality, opinions, and ideal goals, and for the same reason, their opinions, profits and interests are defined. Even sometimes they may be changed to individuals align from their identity or persons who are in full conflict with their past traditions and suffer from a sort of mental and idealistic disorder, and benefit from such factors as a lever to destroy each other and emerge as enemies. This is a dilemma which many countries in the Third World have encountered.¹²

Such problems either did not exist in the Sheikhdoms or was faint compared to other countries, and this is because of the reasons we mentioned before. It was through its entirety that the tribe was passing the transition period. During this critical period, the tribe was transiting its members. Under such circumstances the individuals were impressed by new developments in the same way and in the same direction, and therefore many of the problems which were the result of different

impression of individuals from the transition did not happen to them.¹³

In traditional communities, especially ancient communities dependent on ancient civilizations, in the surface the individuals seem to be similar and live a similar life. Yet, potentially these individuals differ with each other, and only the absence of suitable conditions which prevents such difference to come to the surface. In a closed society there is little possibility for class difference. But when the traditional boundary of the society breaks down, various individuals in keeping with their mental, spiritual and material benefits and closeness or distance to the hub of changes that has started, are influenced in different ways. Such a process leads to ideological, social, political and economic factions and the gulf widens gradually, and hurls the society into chaos and tension.¹⁴

But facts are not such in a tribe. The individuals in the tribe as a whole and from all angles are thinking in the same way and have the same potential. They think like each other and have the same aspirations. Their imagination about the past and future are the same and all of them are sunk deep in tribal culture and customs. They have grown with the tribe, and the mother tribe has fed its children reared them in the same manner.¹⁵

And since this is so, the new wave influences all of them equally. Therefore, we do not witness the problems and fragile nature we have seen among others in the Third World. Moreover, the power buildup and distribution of opportunities, resources and wealth is done in such a manner that more or less all individuals benefit from economic and financial resources under the new conditions. Maybe the individuals' share of these resources is not the same, but the difference is based on the acceptable tribal tradition and as a result it brows no problem.¹⁶

Another point is related to the social structure of the tribe, and this also is affected by its thousand-year old tradition. Instead of being the commander the head or the sheikh of the tribe is the supervisor and the manger of the tribe. The individuals in the tribe look at him with this mentality and he looks at his subjects in the same way. From that point of view, this title in proportion which is a rank confers a responsibility to the chief which all have accepted and since it is thus, the sheikh has seldom rivals or is envied and he seldom tries to trample the rights of his

subordinates. These are two subjects which have led to all historical, social and political tensions.¹⁷

But this is not the whole story. Tribal tradition has also fixed the quality of the successor. Therefore, such a matter is settled according to tribal traditions and often without any quarrel. Whether the successor is the son of the sheikh, one of his relatives, friends or another person.¹⁸

These two factors in fact play an important role towards the stability of Sheikdoms particularly because giant wealth has flowed to these countries in a short period of time and these states are located in the most unsettled geographical location in the world. Besides, they belong to the Arab world and are influenced by these countries, - a world full of change and chaos. But notwithstanding all these factors they succeeded to preserve their balance.¹⁹

Surely many factors have had a role to preserve such balance on top of which we can see the will and determination of big powers. But one cannot ignore the very significant and sensitive role of domestic factors in this process. It was in fact these factors which gave the Sheikdoms strength and endurance and enabled them to preserve their internal solidarity, and on top of these factors it was their tribal structure and culture which contributed to their stability.²⁰

Still this tradition and culture is strong. Although their political and power buildup and the method of transfer of power in the Sheikdoms has been censured, often by Western observers, the inhabitants and even the elites agree to that which has existed in the past and that which exists at present in the Sheikdoms. At least they don't oppose the system or are not prepared to practically take action against it. Despite the present rapid developments which threatens the power of such traditional system of government still the tradition seems to continue although it might continue in the future for other reasons, which we will explain in the future pages. What matters is that this fact has shaped their political destiny and has practically protected them, and most probably, it will be emphasized and will prove useful.²¹

They know well the significance of this factor and are aware that a slip in this matter will not only damage their dignity but their survival even.

For this reason presently those who are defending the traditions are more than those who defended them in the past. The influence and power of this principle in the past was based on an unwritten colloquial consensus, but presently to a large extent the tradition owes to its defenders. This is a process which may gather force in the future.²²

3

Politics and Social Changes

Until the beginning of the twentieth century all these countries were living with their historical traditions. One might even assume that some of these countries were sunk in their past until the years following Second World War. Thus we can maintain that their changes were not due to internal changes in the society but were the result of decisions and changes in the hand of the authorities.¹

Due to Kuwait's geographical and geo-economical conditions from the closing years of the nineteenth century this sheikhdom was influenced by various developments, which spread deeply and on a large span. The main reason was because this country had fallen in the route between England and India.²

Such a process gave Kuwait, which in the past was a dissident dependent of the Ottoman Empire, found a semi-autonomous status and fall under London's influence. This happened simultaneously with the economic and commercial bloom in the sheikdom. During this period commerce between India and eastern of Kuwait increased and the trade conducted through Kuwait. More or less Khorramshahr and Basra also enjoyed the same opulence. Khorramshahr was owned by Iran and Basra was owned by Iraq – which in those years was dominated by the Ottoman Empire. By relying upon their historical heritage and their ideal aspirations for the future these two towns were influenced by the communication and

commerce as well as the economical and commercial boost. All these factors encouraged the governors of Khorramshahr and Basra and Kuwait to move close to each other. Moreover, the weakness of the Qajar kings in Iran and the weakness of Ottoman Empire in these years gave a far better chance the governors of Khorramshahr and Basra to maneuver.³

Such a tie with England and India influenced Kuwait more than its two neighbors because Kuwait enjoyed more freedom of action and the other ports were under the rule of two alien countries and eventually joined their parent mainland. It is exactly at this point that Kuwait emerges as an independent state.⁴

The main reason for social changes in Kuwait was because of the educational system of the blooming sheikhdom. In other words, the emir of Kuwait decides to open new schools and was compelled to invite teachers for the schools. In those years suitable Arabic speaking teachers were invited to Kuwait from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. These teachers were under the spell of the ideology and activities of their nationalist countrymen and therefore, opposed the presence and influence of United Kingdom and above all, they censured the British policy with regard to the question of Palestine.⁵

Such ideas left their impact on the students in these schools, and for the first time in Kuwait's history, the authorities were faced a sort of political inclination that demanded them to change their behavior and policy. At that time, Kuwait was virtually a colony of the United Kingdom but the students had been taught anti-British tendency.⁶

The problem resulting from the presence of these teachers impelled the Kuwaiti authorities to dismiss them and invite Iraqi teachers instead, but the Iraqi teachers who had lived and breathed in an environment pregnant with anti-imperialistic and anti-British domination harbored the sentiments of the former teachers. Above all they were Iraqi nationals and this had intensified their wish to see Iraq and Kuwait united and such a desire had found root in the hearses of the Kuwait students who had been educated in that system. Moreover one must note that in those years the government in Baghdad wished to annex Kuwait to Iraq.⁷

When the Kuwaiti authorities sensed the danger emanating from the

Iraqi teachers, their textbooks and method of teachings, they again tried to invite Egyptian and Syrian teachers⁸, but this time they were opposed by the Kuwait citizens⁹ because they desired Iraqi teachers and Iraqi teaching system which incited unrest and demonstrations.¹⁰ Since the agitation was the result of lessons which was somehow linked with Arabic history, culture, civilization, and Arab and clannish identity, the emir of Kuwait said that Kuwait only needed accountants and oil technicians and nothing else, and these schools must zoom on accounting and oil industry and not others subjects.¹¹

As a sheikdom which had earlier link with the modern times Bahrain must also be examined. These two countries enjoy two important features. Without taking these to factors into account we cannot understand their contemporary history.

First of all, the majority of the population in Bahrain are Shiite, although the ruling system is composed of Sunni Muslims. The Shiites are the real inhabitants of Bahrain and the Ale Khalife family who now holds power in the Island have migrated from the inner recesses of Saudi Peninsula and accumulated power in the island.¹²

The second point is that during various periods in the course of history Bahrain has belonged to Iran¹³ and being a province of Iran and the citizens of Iran and Bahrain have always and often moved to the sheikdom and Iran – a process which continued on a large scale until the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁴

From that standpoint the developments in Bahrain if not as an integral part of Iranian it must be regarded as a region which has been deeply influenced by the developments in Iran, aside from the fact that the culture, civilization, art and architecture, folklore and methods of farming and handicrafts in Bahrain are deeply impressed by Iran and Iranian culture.¹⁵

To examine the contemporary history, the new schools in Bahrain have been established either by Iranian residents or Bahraini Iranian-origin nationals. In the beginning, the educational curriculum was under the influence of the Iranian educational system of those times¹⁶, although because of language difference these teaching methods were later on

influenced by Arab states.¹⁷

The result of introduction of modern teaching methods in Bahrain differed with that which happened in Kuwait and this was because of two factors which we mentioned above. Since the Bahraini rulers had come to the island state from an alien country and dominated its main Shia inhabitants, and the historical influence of Iran was declining. The authorities made life difficult for the Bahraini citizens, and the sort of relationship between the ruler and the ruled which was influenced by tribal traditions, and culture that prevailed in other sheikhdom did not exist in Bahrain.¹⁸

This had led to a sort of perpetual dissatisfaction and when anti-colonial, leftist and nationalistic ideology flared in the region, more than any other groups the Shia Muslims were attracted to the propaganda at the southern side of Persian Gulf¹⁹, and from the moment that such thoughts was blended with Arab nationalism the Shiites were attracted to that ideology. They even laid more emphasis on such doctrines than the Arabs to prove their loyalty to Arabs and to deny the allegation that they were the vassals of the Iranian government.²⁰

Social developments in Bahrain happened under the shadow of such developments, but despite the importance and deep impact of such changes, the changes influenced the internal and foreign policy of the authorities in Bahrain far less in scale compared to Kuwait and other Sheikdoms. This is because in order to defend itself the regime in Bahrain had changed the population into two-pole or tribal zones. These two zones and tribes were the Sunni and Shia Muslims. According to the regime in Bahrain the Sunni Arabs were faithful to the country, the Sunni rulers and the interest of the people and Arabs in general, but the Shia sect was aligned to Iran and was opposed to the ruling authorities and the interest of the Arab nation. Furthermore, the regime tried to portray Iran as the enemy of Arabs and the Bahraini Shiites as Iran's paid agents and vassals.²¹

No doubt, the assistance of the British officials and other powers in the region whose interest owed to the stability and continuation of the existing Bahraini regime was a very strong determining factor, but as we said

earlier, the social changes did not apply too much pressure upon internal and foreign political realities in the sheikhdom. Most probably the biggest impact of these changes was reflected on the culture, ideology and internal realities in Bahrain.²²

Now we must see how Saudi Arabia entered contemporary history and how much social changes affected the process?

The appearance of Saudi Arabia as an independent and unified country was due to the steps taken by Abd al-Aziz²³. Before that a series of tribes were living in the Arabian Peninsula most of which were engaged in useless and endless skirmishes. Although the Ottoman Empire was tentatively in charge of affairs in Mecca and Medina and the governors of these two towns which were chosen from Sharif family and use to discharge their duties under the supervision of the Ottoman sultans and were appointed governors by their mandates, it was mere formality²⁴. One of the important factors which helped the Ottoman sultans to add to their influence and legitimacy was the fact that they governed these two sacred towns through Sharif family which had retained that position from generation to generation.²⁵

Of course, during the reign of Sharif Hossein, who was the last emir of Mecca and Medina, rather of Hijaz region a series of small changes happened in that region, most of which was because of British influence and the steps they took to separate these two towns from the Ottoman caliphate. Moreover they promised Sharif Hossein and his children to help them to become Arab caliphs, and naturally such promise was likely to leave its impact and attract individuals who had such dreams within the Arabic world, and indeed, it happened.²⁶

Despite all these things, the conditions in Saudi Arabia were such that such innovative measures did not bring social change, even to a scale comparable to Kuwait. The vastness of the realm, the scattered nature of the people, and scarcity of fertile land, and lack of communication between the people, continued hostility between the tribes, lack of wish to associate with others and many other factors helped all these dangerous developments to pass over Saudi Arabia without influencing or agitating them.²⁷

Aside from the above facts, every year Saudi Arabia hosted tens or perhaps hundred thousands of pilgrims who flocked to the country from various countries and lived for a considerable period of time in Mecca and Medina, and even settled in these two sacred towns. These people came from relatively higher classes of the community who enjoyed the least wealth and culture and religious commitment, to suffer such long and dangerous journeys. No doubt many of these pilgrims were learned scholars and were more or less educated in the sciences of the modern world, but as we said earlier the conditions were not such that their presence could change the conditions in Saudi Arabia.²⁸

This trend continued until Abd al-Aziz seized power and laid down the foundation of the Saudi Arabia, as a unified realm, in the early 1930's. The opinion and ideology of the supporters of Abd al-Aziz and his pragmatic character was such that discouraged any change in Saudi Arabia unless he was obliged to accept them. Of course the country's empty treasury was another reason to prompt such attitude.²⁹

Such an attitude continued until the end of World War II. Up to then one can seldom find a factor that points to social change in this vast country, but things changed after World War II. After years of exertions oil was discovered and it was proven that the country possessed vast oil resources. The Americans who had played the biggest role in this discovery were now facing a new atmosphere. The United States was not merely a single country but the leader of a big bloc and Washington felt committed to defend its allies against communist which were their sworn enemy. This made Washington to ponder far seriously about the oil reserves in Saudi Arabia. Washington not only wanted the oil wells to remain immune from the intrusion of Soviet Union and its allies, but to exploit from the wells as much as possible and in the best possible manner. This meant that Saudi Arabia was placed at the top of the U.S. strategic goals.³⁰

The Saudi regime too quickly understood Washington's intentions, and understood that they could no more survive with their old closed-door policy. Therefore, not only they didn't resist the modern realities but tried to take the initiative because some members of the Saudi family supported

the idea among which Faysal and Fahd were the most prominent figures and both of them succeeded to accumulate power.³¹

Contrary to Kuwait and Bahrain, the opening of the Saudi community was not only because of new teachings. Contrary to the two former Sheikdoms, Saudi Arabia had accumulated considerable wealth at that time and of course, the mounting number of pilgrims called for the state to spend part of its income for hajj affairs and to build necessary substructures for easy traffic of pilgrims. Which processed gradually revolutionizing the inner mentality of the Saudi inhabits. In fact, hajj pilgrimage and facilities and accommodations needed for the pilgrims affected the inner circle of the traditional Saudi community.³²

With regard to modern teachings, in the beginning the authorities tried to dispatch the youth to other Arab states, especially Egypt³³. These young Saudi Arab students were affected by an atmosphere which was deeply charged by politics, revolutionary zeal and leftist and clannish aspirations in Egypt and upon their return they brewed a series of problems. After that the authorities decided to invite professors and teachers in order to be immune from former troubles.³⁴

The teachers and professors were invited especially by Fahd who, for a long time, had been the minister of education. He established many schools and imported teachers from various Arabic states who later, conveyed revolutionary and anti-traditional slogans. The conditions in Saudi Arabia differed with Kuwait. Kuwait was a thinly populated, weak and small country and few teachers were able to undermine its social balance, but not Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the experience of other countries had taught them how to deal with such problems.³⁵

Due to the aforementioned facts social changes that could influence the Saudi Arab population and policies were effective. Although the new teaching subjects had a role in the changes, the biggest change emerged from other factors especially economic and sometimes from propaganda and politics.³⁶

The fundamental steps taken for the development of the substructure of hajj pilgrimage ended up with the emergence of a new class of wealthy elite from outside the Saudi royal family circle³⁷, including the big and

wealthy Bin Laden family. These people accumulated fame and wealth during the first years of the development measures which had helped the Saudi family to become rich. Later on, these wealthy individuals and families caused big changes in the Saudi community. Although one can say that the Saudi community had succeeded to a great extent to make them conservative as was the style of the Saudi family, but the matter becomes important when we compare their principle, inclinations and expectations with their non-Saudi counterparts.³⁸

Another reason for the agitation is related to the oil industry and other industries which were set up with the strength of oil wealth. The personnel and the laborers in the oil industry who had been discriminated and poorly exploited, during the 50's and 60's, gave a good pretext for advertising at the hand of Radio Cairo at the time, when Nasser was enjoying the peak of his popularity. In fact, the unrest and anti-government demonstrations in Saudi Arabia happened during the 50's and 60s in the oil rich regions.³⁹

But above all, it was the vast propaganda that had been started by Arab progressive circles and Nasirite cohorts against the so called Arab reactionary regimes⁴⁰. In their opinion Saudi Arabia was the personification of such reactionary trend. Although according to the progressive elements, there were many other reactionary regimes in the Arab world that served the interest of the West and the United States in particular. Due to many reasons they criticized the Sheikdoms in the Persian Gulf and Saudi Arabia in particular were charged to be reactionary, backward and servant of the western powers⁴¹. It was the Saudi anti-leftist, traditional and conservative attitude which emboldened their enemies to label them with such qualities and propaganda that left their influence on the countries domestic and foreign policies.⁴²

Social changes in UAE, Qatar, and Oman started late and at a time, when the other three Sheikdoms had already experienced several stages of changes. The experience of these Sheikdoms and the special status of UAE, Qatar and Oman who earned oil wealth lately led to relatively similar social changes in the six Sheikdoms which we will describe in the following discussion.

Before entering this topic, we need to make a few observations. As

mentioned before, the experience of the six Sheikhdoms were different before the 70's and most of the change occurred in their social conditions and is related to their entry into modern history with different approach and the extent of oil reserves they had discovered. Nevertheless, the whole region braced with the excitement caused by Nasser and his supporters. During the mid 50's especially after the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, the war between Egypt and Israel and between England and France. In fact this was their first serious encounter with such revolutionary developments which left its impact in all the Sheikhdoms.⁴³

However there was an important element added to this influence. In order to understand that element and its deep impact we must reexamine the Nasirite philosophy during mid 50's. According to Nasser's supporters, Nasirite movement was anti-imperialistic and anti-Israel. During the 50's, they looked at Israel as a country which had occupied the Arab territories when the Third World was boiling at the peak of excitement in their quest for freedom and anti-imperialistic activities. All these converted Cairo into the capital of Arab world and Egypt were considered a cause for dignity and pride for the Arabs.⁴⁴

This movement had other peculiarities in view too. It was a movement against the reactionary regimes and colonial powers in which the United Kingdom and the United States were the prime targets. It was a nationalistic movement, but within the framework of Arabic nationalism that called for Arab unity, liberation from colonial rule and backwardness. It aimed at the unity of Arabs by means of united struggle against colonial powers, backwardness and reactionary traditional governments. Moreover, they wanted to topple royal regimes and regimes which chose their leaders on the basis of old traditions. Of course, due to certain reasons, the movement had worn the garb of socialism, and they believed that Arabic nationalists should be faithful to the drive for progress and socialism.⁴⁵

Such definitions of nationalism helped the strong wave of excitement, bubbling from nationalization of Suez Canal, to conflict with the Saudi authorities and their social and traditional background. What was more dangerous was that due to certain reasons there were groups of activists in the Sheikhdoms who were deeply under the influence of the new wave of

nationalism and a larger group used to listen to such fiery propaganda with interest, although the larger mass had not adhere to their exhortations.⁴⁶

Such a scenario more or less was shaking all the six Sheikdoms and was undermining their stability and their traditional social and political background. The peak of the unrest was in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and provoked their governments to react firmly to such alien aspirations.⁴⁷

In the beginning of 60's, we can observe a series of incidents that to some extent controlled the Nasirite sentiments. Egypt's military adventure in Yemen and direct or indirect confrontation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Abdolkarim Qasem's claim that Kuwait belongs to Iraq (although Qasem's territorial claim was not related to Nasser and his supporters) led Kuwait and other Sheikdoms to feel that during those years Egypt that claimed to be the guardian of sovereignty of Arab states was not supporting Kuwait.⁴⁸

Aside from the above factor, all these regimes were trying to improve their relations with Egypt in order to escape from the evil consequences of the propaganda, continuously aired by Radio Cairo and its supporters, and that policy proved successful, especially in Cairo; because during that time a remarkable number of Egyptians had flocked into the Sheikdoms while their warm and active relation with Egypt was controlling these workforce, the Egyptians did not want to say things against the regimes in the Sheikdoms. Their policy and attitude was quite different as compared to teachers who had gone to the Sheikdoms earlier.⁴⁹

Here, we need to focus on another subject. During the 50's and 60's, there were signs of inclination towards communism among the Arabs which was gathering force. In those years, only Bahrain and Saudi Arabia suffered from the leftist rhetoric because the authorities in these Sheikdoms were tyrannizing their citizens⁵⁰. Since during those years Arab nationalism was containing ant-imperialistic and anti-socialistic slogans and had quest for justice, naturally it overshadowed inclination towards communism. Above all, they didn't allow the communist supporters to maneuver because Arab nationalism responded to all their demands and was faithful to Arab legacy and aspirations. Naturally, under such circumstances the Arab nationalists looked with suspicion at those

who supported communism.⁵¹

Moreover, the good relationship between the Sheikdoms and Egypt and lovers of Arab nationalism satisfied both sides. Now Egypt, Syria and their allies were not openly criticizing the Sheikdoms and they seldom provoked the public agitation in the Sheikdoms. On the other hand, the lovers of Arab nationalism did not wish to spread the seeds of unrest because of their close relations with the Sheikdoms. And of course their policies nullified and defeated communist propaganda.⁵²

These two developments succeeded, to a great extent, to control the brittleness and instability of the Sheikdoms during the 60's. A turning point at this juncture was the war of 1967 and the heavy and unexpected defeat of Arabs from Israel, to which neither the Arabs nor Egypt had anticipated. The defeat of the Arabs left surprising impact in the Sheikdoms as far it was related to their social and political stability. We will discuss about this subject later on.⁵³

Here, we need to call the reader's attention to another point. Since 50's we can witness calm, continued and increasing social and cultural changes in the Sheikdoms. Communication between them was intensified and more books were imported in Arabic language, the newspapers and magazines in other Arab countries such as Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt now reached the people. In the meantime, because of the need for education and accumulated oil wealth gradually paved a way for inviting scholars and religious theologians to the Sheikdoms from advanced Arab countries and some of them settled there. Gradually, local newspapers and publication houses were established and this gave birth to a new class that were familiar and interested in media and alongside, a small group of writers also flourished within the countries.⁵⁴

Since the public in Bahrain and Kuwait were more ready to digest the news, the press rapidly expanded and influenced the people who gradually, began speaking about parliament and election of representatives for the parliament in these two countries.⁵⁵

The spread of press in the Sheikdoms gathered force by 1960. In the 60's, we witness new institutions in these two Sheikdoms and daily newspapers started publishing, preliminary foundations for establishment

of universities were laid and educational system, parliament, medical and service centers, administrative institutions and nearly every institution related to modern society existed in Kuwait and Bahrain.⁵⁶

King Faysal accumulated power after the dismissal of King Saud. King Saud was deposed because he objected to the modernization of the management of the nation. It is said that King Saud objected to the establishment of ministries and naturally he didn't tolerate any control of his method of governance and he acted exactly like a traditional tribal chief.⁵⁷

King Faysal and his sympathizers seized power in Saudi Arabia 1964. He was in fact, the new architect of Saudi Arabia and was trying to set up necessary institutions for the management of the nation in the new world and he succeeded in his exertions. It was exactly from that period that Saudi Arabia stepped into the new world in its new shape.⁵⁸

Thus during mid 60's Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia lived under different conditions and they paved the way for change in the other Sheikdoms. What is important to note is that despite all the threats from outside these Sheikdoms underwent the change with an acceptable degree of stability.

This process continued until 1967. The severe defeat of the Arabs in that year created a completely new atmosphere in the Sheikdoms. The Nasirite nationalistic drive began to peter out and this meant the collapse of the foundations of radical doctrines which had opposed the regimes of the Sheikdoms more than other regimes in the Arab world.⁵⁹

As we can question is not that the Sheikdoms' most dreaded rival or enemy had collapsed. More than anything else, things in the Arab world changed in a manner that the centre of the Arab world was shifted from Egypt to the Sheikdoms. The change of the centre started in 1967 and reached momentum in 1973 and has continued ever since, although after the 1967, conditions in the Arab world were such that capital of the Arab in another country would have not been as influential and strong as Cairo when Nasser was the most favorite leader among Arab countries.⁶⁰

It was under these circumstances that the Sheikdoms accumulated wealth. Global development called for more oil and the big oil magnets

attacked the rich oil fields in the region. Oil exploitation was augmented in the oil producing countries and new explorations were made in new countries such as Qatar, UAE and Oman. This necessitated rapid development of the region in every dimension.⁶¹

The fact is that the rapid development of the Sheikdoms did not conflict with their political and social stability. If the Arabs had not been so severely defeated in 1967 such an inference could not be right. In the absence of a potent ideological and political rival of Arab stock the Sheikdoms succeeded to plan for their development, in a manner that the development should not affect themselves.⁶²

If an Arab capital like Cairo was going to criticize their tribal and political system and blame these factors for their backwardness and blame them to be traitors to the Arabs and Arab nationalism, surely all these Sheikdoms, especially the Saudi family, would face many difficulties and much unrest. In the same way if Cairo was to continually criticize the Sheikdoms for hiving agreement with oil companies and non-oil companies used for the development of the substructure of Sheikdoms the Sheikdoms could never take any initiative.⁶³

In fact, Arab nationalism in the sense which was known during 50's and 60's backfired, exactly at a moment, when it could prove dangerous for the Sheikdoms. Although during several periods before 1967, Arab nationalism had endangered the Sheikdoms, the danger were transient and were merely political and had little to do with the policies that led to their development, because first of all, there were no such politics in those early years and secondly, a huge wealth which could provoke such policies had not been accumulated. Moreover, the tone of the criticism was political and was mostly emanated from their hostility and nothing else.⁶⁴

Thus, social development in its broader sense began almost in all the Sheikdoms, but instead of undermining their stability the changes contributed to their social stability, albeit with a few exceptions.

A series of unrests happened in Bahrain. That was the continuation of the unrest which had always existed in the island country and still going on due to discrimination and violation of the rights of the Shia majority by the minority ruling Sunnis. From that angle, the unrest in Bahrain was not due

to new social and economic changes. It was the continuation of unrest which had existed in the past.⁶⁵

The worsening conditions were mostly due to leftist activities of the dissident groups that contain mostly Shia Muslims. As we have mentioned earlier that the decline of Arab nationalism in the 50's and 60's had overshadowed the supporters of Marxist movement. The defeat of Arabs in 1967 and the downfall of Nasirite system had paved the way for the emergence of leftist groups in the whole Arab world and Persian Gulf. Thus, we can see these leftist activities in Bahrain and even Oman and to some extent Saudi Arabia.⁶⁶

But unrest in Bahrain led to unrest in the parliament in Manama and eventually ended with its dissolution⁶⁷. We can witness a new scenario in Kuwait, but that which happened to Kuwait was not like Bahrain. Because of Abdolkarim Qasem's territorial claims and threat that Kuwait always felt from Baghdad it had attained an acceptable level of social solidarity and due to various reasons contrary to Bahrain the politics in Kuwait was not sectarian politics. In this sheikhdom tribal inclinations and lack of parliament was the main factor that had given rise to tension which eventually led to the dissolution of the parliament.⁶⁸

The unrest happened mostly in the oil-producing regions and in oil refineries and installations in Saudi Arabia. The accusation, at those times, inside Saudi Arabia and by Saudi allies and supporters of Saudi regime justified the regime's harsh suppression of the dissidents by blaming the dissidents to be communists for brewing unrest and provoking government action against them. It is not clear whether the protesters who were hanged subsequently were really communists. Perhaps it was merely an allegation.⁶⁹

Anyhow from 1967 until 1973 which coincided with the fourth Arabs and Israel war we can notice how these Sheikhdoms became important, wealthy and their rapid pace towards modernism in the Arab world – developments which contributed to their stability and not instability.⁷⁰

One important incident during these years was a wish by the British government to withdraw from the Persian Gulf. With the appointment of the labor government in London and due to other economic problems and

mostly due to money shortage London decided to withdraw its forces from Persian Gulf. The withdrawal of the British troops stirred much alarm in the Sheikhdoms.⁷¹

Although Nasirite nationalism was not considered as a threat by the Sheikhdoms and even Nasser dominated Cairo was trying to improve its relation with the Sheikhdoms because of the financial crisis that Egypt was going through, there were other threatening factors in the region. According to the emirs of the Sheikhdoms the biggest threat was Iraq and the country's territorial claim versus Kuwait, as well as the danger of spread of communism and Soviet Union and their sympathizers in the Middle East such as Southern Yemen and Iraq. Although the Shah was also considered a threat because of others reasons.⁷²

As a result of such anxiety the Sheikhdoms suggested London to retain its troops in Persian Gulf at their own cost, but the labor party government refused their request because the Labor Party's policy and approach to the region was otherwise. But they promised the Sheikhdoms to hurry to their rescue whenever they needed military support, and this calmed the sheikhs.⁷³

The British officials had noticed that that which ensured the territorial integrity of Kuwait against arrogant Abolkarim Qasem was dispatch of British troops. The mere movement of the British troops and even without armed struggle with Iraq thwarted the attack and turned the scale to Kuwait's favor. In fact, they felt they needed such support – a need which has continued until today.⁷⁴

Eventually, London withdrew its troops from Persian Gulf in 1971. Immediately after the removal of the British troops the United Arab Emirates, composed of seven emirates which had been under British domination earlier, was established and they achieved independence and Iranian troops settled at Greater Tomb, Smaller Tomb and Abu Musa islands.

Such shift of power incited a series of changes in the Arabic region of the Middle East either politically or socially, and after that the result became far more significant than earlier.

In those times, the only power which could fill the British vacuum in

Persian Gulf was Iran, not because of Tehran's military power but for its special features which the countries located at the south of Persian Gulf needed. Their biggest concern was the expansion of communism and provocation of the Moscow's allies. From that point of view the Shah was an ideal ally. The Shah was in fact against communism and Soviet intervention. He always resisted such Soviet adventurism and always encouraged others to adopt a similar stance.⁷⁵

Apart from being his anti-communist, the Shah opposed radical movements, either Iraqi Baath radicalism or clannish Arab radicalism, or Nasirite or Mu'ammarr al-Qaddafi radicalism. The Sheikdoms too hated Arab radicalism. We will explain this subsequently that how they welcomed Arab tribal traditions as far as it was related to history and culture of Arabs, but were not ready to accept it while discussing the issue of revolution and social changes.⁷⁶

From that angle the Shah was a favorable power and they needed such a power. Moreover, the Shah was not Arab and would not pose danger against the Sheikdoms. The sheikhs had seen Arabic nationalism and radicalism as a pretext for the expansive aspirations of strong Arab powers. They wanted such Arabs which could support them against possible danger instead of posing a threat.⁷⁷

While on the other side, the Shah enjoyed all these good features. Moreover, because of constant and historical communication with the northern and southern ports of Persian Gulf and reciprocal cultural impacts, the majority of the Sheikdoms had positive regard towards Iran. Although we must accept that due to historical and religious reasons the Arabs had no positive view about Iran or there were many negative factors to consider Tehran as enemy. But such a verdict is not completely right with regard to the Sheikdoms during the 50's and 60's. The opinion of the Sheikdoms was under the influence of their peculiar culture and they saw very little negative and worrisome points in their relations with Tehran. Even we can say that in many instances they didn't look at Tehran with a hostile eye. The negative opinion of Arabs against Iran, which will be explained later, started at the end of the twentieth century.⁷⁸

The fact is that to some extent with the exception of Saudi Arabia the

Sheikdoms regarded Iran as a support and tolerated Tehran's presence in Persian Gulf as long as it did not offend the Arab nationalistic pride, because they always were afraid of evil Arab nationalistic propaganda. The Shah was strong enough at that time and loved to play the role of a gendarme in the region. He openly spoke about his regional role and candidly expressed his wishes. His policy for Iranian army was designed in a manner to make it strong enough to play a dominant and protecting role in the region, and of course such a policy was acceptable Washington which was the Shah's big ally.⁷⁹

But there is more to come. There were many elements in the Arab world who could not tolerate such a role by the Shah among which the Arab nationalists were at the top. There were many sophisticated historical, religious, political or ideological reasons for Arab nationalism that had developed in the new era especially those allied to radical or nationalist elements.⁸⁰

According to these radical Arabs Iran of the Shah's era was an expansionist or probably racist regime which was looking for political expansionism and territorial gains in the Arab world. Moreover they always thought Tehran was looking for an opportunity to avenge the historical defeat from Arabs which had destroyed the Iranian glorious Sassanid Empire.⁸¹

Of course, the revolutionarily nationalists had a big pretext to blame Iran. They maintained that Iran was an instrument in the hands of the United States and global imperialism in the region and was fighting against progressive Arab factions or supporters of the socialist bloc.⁸²

No doubt there were many other reasons for such hostility. The historical neighboring of the two ancient nations reminded them of bitter and sweet recollections about each other, and in order to aggrandize and justify their apathy they looked for a suitable atmosphere to rekindle their unfavorable recollections about Iran's hostile attitude versus Arabs. But that which the Arab nationalists had in their minds or based their rhetoric and propaganda was not like the calm, peaceful and long centuries of popular intercourse between the northern and southern shores of Persian Gulf and the spirit of fellowship that prevailed between the two camps.⁸³

Thus these Sheikdoms confronted with a new propaganda machine which was formerly used to fight imperialistic powers in the region and now have taken arms against Tehran, but contrary to the movement which had directly challenged the imperialists such a radical propaganda could not cause social instability. The Arab anti-imperialistic propaganda in the 50's and 60's could at least impress the educated strata and the elite among the Arabs, but Iran was not in a position where the evil propaganda could antagonize the Arabs in that period.

As we mentioned before in the face of such hostile propaganda and during the process of modernization of traditional Sheikdoms the new generation of Arabs harbored a completely different attitude toward Iran which was closer to Arab nationalist ideology than their ancestors' traditional opinion especially during the post-revolutionary era in Iran when the new regime moved with a completely different mentality and very close to Arab tribal inclinations. Thus the new conditions in Iran paved the way for new ideological and social changes which eventually undermined their policy versus Iran.⁸⁴

Although the 1973 war was not as fierce as the 1967 war, it created new conditions for the Arab world and left its deepest impact upon the Persian Gulf littoral states. The reason is that the 1973 war was fortified by a large scale Arab oil embargo and scarcity of oil that helped the oil prices jump four times compared to pre-war period, and it proved that oil could be used as a weapon, and that the security of the big countries and the whole world depends on natural, uninterrupted and smooth flow of oil.⁸⁵

These factors enhanced the strategic position of Persian Gulf as a region which preserves the most important oil sources, and allows oil pipelines to pass through it. Under these circumstances it was natural for Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Sheikdoms to be examined from another angle.

Thus, the dignity that these countries had achieved during the 1967 Arab-Israel war in the Arab world reached its momentum. Despite the fact, that the halfhearted Arab victory had been achieved by Egypt and Syria during the 1973 war, due to Sadat's post-war policies this half-hearted victory actually benefited the Saudi Arabia, specially King Faysal, and to some extent the other Sheikdoms.⁸⁶

Of course, such a prominence which was besides shifting of the capital of the Arab world from Egypt to Persian Gulf Arab states left other important consequences. The rise of oil prices four times before the war in these wealthy countries made them more and more rich. Moreover this war fetched a new dignity for the Arabs. Above all, the oil embargo slapped against the West helped to boost their strategic significance, to the extent that in those years industrialized countries tried to satisfy the Arabs and the Sheikdoms in the Persian Gulf in order to ensure smooth flow of energy, even if they were blamed to be acting unilaterally and overlooking their commitment to their allies.⁸⁷

Under these circumstances it was natural for the Arab center of gravity to shift to this region. The fact is that these Sheikdoms did not take any special step to shift the capital of the Arab world. The nature of the post-war developments necessitated such a shift and of course the Sheikdoms, especially Kuwait and then Saudi Arabia welcomed the shift of power.⁸⁸

The rise of strategic international position of the Arabs happened during this period. The question was not that oil producing nations had gathered immense wealth in a short space of time. The conditions were such that the whole world - both poor and developing countries in Africa and Asia and developed countries in the western bloc - felt that they needed the oil.⁸⁹

In addition to the above the importance of continued and safe flow of oil reached such proportions that it became the top priority in the strategies of the two major blocs and it became one of the most important grounds for rivalry between the two superpowers and impelled them to plan to occupy and seize oil-generating regions.⁹⁰

All these things helped to boost the significance and the position of the Arabs. The things that occupy the minds of the western authorities and the world as a whole about the Arabs was shaped more or less in these years, starting from their wealth up to anything spoken against, and all of these things have strong link with the wealth accumulated from the sale of oil.⁹¹

Naturally under such circumstances those countries are considered the more important which possess more oil. Therefore, the question was not that the shift of gravity of the Arab world towards the Sheikdoms. On the contrary the general opinion of the world versus Arabs was such that they

practically looked the center of the Arab world in the Arab part of the Persian Gulf.⁹²

Such a process even changed the mentality of the Sheikhdoms about themselves. They no more looked like their fathers or compared themselves with their fathers. They felt that the whole world was eager to see them step into the scene of action or were eager to communicate with them and in return the Sheikhdoms were expected to help them.

Aside from such talks and the position of the authorities and political leaders of the West such things can be seen in the media and the press of these countries during the 70's. This means that the new conditions had influenced various classes of the society. Their universal outlook, their expectations, behavior, personality, pride, propaganda, ideal goals and methods, domestic and foreign policies, regional and inter-Arab policies and their international policies had all been affected and influenced.⁹³

What matters to the researcher is that such developments as a whole benefited their ongoing policies and consolidation of such policies. The new conditions not only failed to conflict with their policies but even endorsed and strengthened them in the end. The general condition of the region after the 1973 War and victory of Islamic revolution in Iran was such.

Two contrasting factors beset such a process. The first was the question of Zofar and the armed revolt of that leftist camp. In those years Oman was not in a position to curb that revolt or to come to compromise with the insurgents, because the Zofar activists were supported by South Yemen, an ally of the communist bloc in the East.⁹⁴

Sultan Qabus requested various countries as well as Arab states to help him in his dilemma, but none of them offered to help him⁹⁵. Eventually he asked the Shah to help him and the Shah complied with his request⁹⁶. The question of Zofar uprising that had become a menacing was settled, but the Iranian intervention increased suspicion against Tehran. These augmented suspicions was the propaganda aired by the nationalist Arabs especially the leftist camp, which awakened the past bitter and favorable experience, Iran's mounting military power and the change of the attitude of the sheikhs from their traditional beliefs and customs and their modernization.

This suspicion did not change the parameters much during the Shah's rule, but it had a big role in shaping the relation between Iranians and Arabs after victory of revolution in Iran.⁹⁷

Another factor was the steps taken by the Sheikdoms and specially Saudi Arabia to set up Islamic centers and institutions in other Muslim and non-Muslim countries, developed or developing countries. The giant wealth they had acquired from oil had raised much expectation among the Muslims. Meanwhile the most natural channel for these countries to emerge in the world arena was the religious channel. The Sheikdoms felt that not only they had become the center of Arab world but a gravitating nucleus in the Islamic world.⁹⁸

The weakness of traditional religious centers in the Sunni world, starting from al-Azhar University in Cairo down to Fas and Zeituneh and Baghdad, Damascus and Aleppo and the many Islamic institutions in the Indian Subcontinent and Afghanistan and Far East contributed greatly to such propaganda. Moreover, the need to cope with leftist inclinations and a wish to better lure the Saudi authorities assistance called for supply of further facilities and funds to these religious institutions.⁹⁹

The result of such missionary activity is also notable after 1980 which deeply affected all the religious, mental, social and political fields and gave birth to extremist factions and often subversive groups. We will discuss about this subject in detail in the forthcoming chapter.

Here, it is necessary to refer to another factor which although foreign, but made important ideological and religious upheaval among a group of youth in these countries especially Saudi Arabia. After the Arab defeat in 1967 the Egyptian regime, which had been severe against Islamic factions to the extent that they hanged Seyyed Qotb, their important figure, offered more freedom to them.¹⁰⁰ After Sadat seized power the regime offered more freedom and the Islamic groups were better organized and consolidated¹⁰¹. Simultaneously with such developments most the young people who had been trained in traditional and religious families entered universities and deeply shocked by the 1967 defeat and the prevailing conditions and the doctrines of Qotb and other demands which turns back to the beginning of the Islamic history and the formation of the first

preliminary pious groups, developed extremist ideas.¹⁰²

The eventual result of their studies led to the following conclusion: the problems, the defeats and the failures of Muslims were the result of estrangement from Islam and resorting to non-Islamic strategies. The community that existed was Islamic superficially, while deep in their hearts the people were non-Islamic and heathen and therefore, it was necessary to fight with such enigma. They maintained that such non-Islamic and apostate groups must be excommunicated and the Muslims must avoid them. Furthermore, those who are engaged in such a pious religious war will form the preliminary nucleus of a society whose goal is to mend and rectify ignorant and heathenish communities. After receiving enough education and organizing themselves such groups can implement their mission. No one and nothing can stop them from discharging their responsibilities and accomplishing their mission, and religious scholars thinking otherwise are not true clerics but flatters of kings and servants of the kings and their interests and they must be destroyed. There is no way to act towards the interest of true Muslims except by such methods.¹⁰³

Such extremist doctrines during the 70's when the conditions were ripe for change in Egypt was expanded and consolidated and they succeeded to take a series of measures that was curbed by the governments' intervention. But this method and doctrine penetrated into Saudi Arabia and attracted the attention of the young Wahhabi sect whose opinions and behavior were similar to them.¹⁰⁴

The reason for being attracted to this extremist camp was not because of similar social and cultural conditions but ideological resemblance and affinity. This ideology which had been born in Egypt greatly resembled the excommunicating attitude of the Wahhabi sect, although it had been suppressed by Abd al-Aziz and the clerics who supported him, and this was why they were attracted to the Egyptian movement and brought about big changes in the Saudi Arabia.¹⁰⁵

Such a process continued until the last part of 70's but suddenly during 1978 and 1979 we face a new phenomenon which deeply changed the internal and foreign policies in these countries and that was the victory of Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Although some observers and experts of Iranian politics in the 70's had predicted a great change in Iran, none of them expected a revolution with the volcanic shape that happened in the country. No one in the Sheikdoms too expected such a rapid change in Iran.

The developments that had happened before the revolution in Iran were such that led observers to expect the fall of Shah's regime, but we have no evidence that the Sheikdoms had such an expectation. Even evidences pointed to the contrary. King Fahd, who was the crown prince in Saudi Arabia at that time, had said two days before the victory of revolution that the Shah would remain and would control the revolution which was provoked by the communists.¹⁰⁶

The main reason must be attributed to the opinion of the authorities in the Sheikdoms in the Persian Gulf about the Shah and his regime. According to them Iran was an island of stability which presented stability and calm to other countries and strongly resisted against communist advance or extremist individuals and groups. In the same way they believed the unrest in Iran was provoked by the communists and the Soviet Union and for a long time maintained that the Iranian religious leaders, who had actually directed the revolution, had been deceived by the communists.¹⁰⁷

The Shah's regime collapsed under such circumstances. The Shia Muslims in the region who had been impressed by months of struggle of their Shia brethren in Iran expressed their heartfelt joy. Some non-Shia followers in the region who, for various reasons, had monitored the developments in Iran joined their voice to the jubilation not as delighted as the Shia Muslims. Most of them observed the developments in Iran in awe and surprise and had no distinct imagination of the outcome of the revolution. The excitement of distant Muslim-populated countries was deeper than in the nearer countries.¹⁰⁸

The prevailing regimes felt unsafe because they had lost their big support in the region. Moreover, they thought that the Shah's regime had been toppled by the communists and that the revolutionary agents were the communists which they had always feared.

Aside from these things this revolution was against the royal system

and the Sheikhdoms possessed a kind of royal system and were surprised when they saw that the United States did not sufficiently support its big and staunch ally in Iran, and this provoked their suspicion about the commitment and allegiance of the United States to their allies upon which they had much hope, although to U.S., they were much less important than Shah.¹⁰⁹

As mentioned before, the Shia Muslims in the region were excited with the revolution in Iran, especially in Bahrain, east of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Although similar sentiments were notable in other Sheikhdoms who had Shia minority, the boiling fervor in Bahrain and east of Saudi Arabia was dangerous, because these Shiites were always discriminated and oppressed and from that standpoint they were more prepared to side with the Iranian revolution, and Tehran's support could create serious problems both in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and other countries.¹¹⁰

It took a long time until the sky cleared up and the conditions became clear to the Sheikhdoms. During that period no special social change happened in the Sheikhdoms with the exception of the excitement in the Shia camp, but the prevailing policy was to understand the nature of the unrest and cope with it - either in a positive manner and treating them in a friendly manner and by cooperating with them or take negative stance i.e. preserving their authority and suppressing them. However, they soon understood that they must change the social and cultural realities in keeping with their political interests.

In between another hostile element was actively operating in Iraq. The majority of the people in Iraq were Shia Muslims and from 1968 onward when the Baath Party had accumulated power in Baghdad the Shiite majority living in very difficult circumstances and the pressure in Shia populated towns and Shia seminaries was quite evident.¹¹¹

Furthermore, from the moment the Baath Party took over the reigns in Iraq they spoke of iron fist against the Shia sect, but their hostile stance against Shia clerics and Shia religious institutions was reached such proportions that they treated Ayatollah Seyyed Mohsen Hakim, their greatest religious leader, in the worst possible manner, although contrary to many first class religious scholars in Iraq Ayatollah Hakim was not

Iranian and was an Arab.

This severe confrontation with the Shia masses had thrown Iraq into crisis and the Shia Muslims and even non-Shia Muslims were looking for an opportunity to express their discontent and this became possible with the victory of Islamic revolution in Iran. In fact, the victory of revolution in Iran provoked their ire and they tried to show their discontent and anger by various methods, which provoked severe and ruthless retaliation from the government.¹¹²

Taking into account all the factors in Iraq it must be added that during the first few months after victory of Islamic revolution Iraq was much affected than other countries and the people's blood boiled for the Iranian revolution, yet social conditions, historical recollections and individual psychology in Iraq did not permit the authorities to permit demonstration similar to that which had happened in Iran and had put an end to the Shah's regime. As a matter of fact civil revolt in Iraq was meaningless and the smallest protest was being crushed with most violent response.

Thus, the regime succeeded to keep the people calm by using iron fist, but this was not enough. Therefore, the Iraqi regime decided to cope with the Iranian revolution outside Iraq by different methods. One of their first goals was to spread the seeds of fear and pessimism against the new regime in Tehran in the Sheikdoms and make the sheikhs understand that Baghdad was strong enough to protect them from the new enemy.¹¹³

Such repressive steps and false propaganda proved successful to a large extent and paved the way for a war which continued for eight years. Surely in the absence of such evil propaganda relation between the Sheikdoms and Iran would have been otherwise.

Iraq's policy was to show to the Sheikdoms that they were far vulnerable and fragile than they were and instead they zoomed on the historical, cultural and religious hostility between Iran and Arabs to prove that Tehran was looking for an opportunity to avenge the defeat from Arabs in the past. They said Tehran had an expansionist attitude against Arabs and Arab interests. In order to prove their theory they resorted to every negative element in the course of history to create a volatile atmosphere and to make the Arabs understand that they were the Iraq's

first bastion and defender of Arabs at the eastern border of the Arab world and was strong enough to cope with Iranian threats and defend the Arabs and the Sheikhdoms, and in fact they succeeded to a large extent in their negative propaganda.¹¹⁴

Of course, in a chaotic tense atmosphere, void of trust and indecision in these years were many other factors that could magnify Iran as a big threat. The influential western powers in the region had adopted a policy of dual contentment. They controlled Iran and assured their friends and allies of their support. The Soviet Union and its agents which treated the Iranian revolution as an anti-imperialistic revolution tried to find a stronger foothold in the region. The Islamic groups with or without political inclinations and Arab progressive factions each showed a different attitude and each left their impression in the Sheikhdoms in a different manner.¹¹⁵

During this juncture the extremist elements with radical religious ideology and culture and Arabic nationalistic slogans were suddenly awakened. Among the six Sheikhdoms the religious extremists flourished in Saudi Arabia and the cultural and nationalistic aspirations also boiled in Kuwait. The other four Sheikhdoms tried, as far as possible, to keep them away from such boiling overtures and to rebuild their relations with the new Iran on the basis of their traditional fellowship.

Such an attitude was considered acceptable even in Bahrain where majority Shia population was excited with the Iranian revolution. Although the enemies of Iran and Iranian revolution in Bahrain tried to misrepresent the statement by some Iranian officials to the effect that Bahrain has always belonged to Iran to prove that Iran has always wanted to occupy Bahrain, Bahrain's policy versus Iran was mostly within its traditional framework.¹¹⁶

Even in the most difficult years of Iran's isolation relation between Iran and Oman was always stable and steady because of historical and sympathetic relations. The authorities in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar had descended from a generation who had always had a positive opinion about Iran and believed Iran to be a cradle of blessing and magnanimity, and despite all the pressure and propaganda against Tehran

they tried to rebuild their bilateral ties on the basis of their traditional affinity towards Tehran. Moreover, at the end of the seventh century and beginning of the eighteenth century they had not stepped into the modern world like Kuwait.¹¹⁷

Such volatile atmosphere continued until autumn 1980. Meanwhile the sudden rise of oil prices resulting from the Iranian revolution brought lots of wealth to the Sheikdoms. During this short but turbulent period we don't see any notable social change except those we have mentioned above.

The biggest and most shocking event during these years was the occupation of al-Haram Mosque in Mecca by a group of Wahhabi extremists on Muharram 1, 1400 A.H. The revolt was led by Juhayman Al-Utaybi who had been jailed in 70's because of his radical religious views and behavior. He was a student of 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Baz, an influential Saudi mufti, who criticized Ibn Baz because of his affiliation to the ruling government in Riyadh.¹¹⁸ Interesting enough he was released from jail because of the intercession of the grand mufti. After three decades still the reason for the occupation of the above sacred mosque and the consequences of the occupation is not clear. Saudi authorities, who always try to hide and deny any unpleasant thing happening in their country were silent about the occupation, and did not permit the supporters of Al-Utaybi faction to identify themselves and explain their mission.¹¹⁹

We will speak in the forthcoming chapters about the ideological consequences and the process of the change in the Wahhabi doctrines and why Al-Utaybi decided to take such a drastic measure, but where it has to deal with the social matters surely such a movement was inspired by the religious zeal that the Islamic revolution in Iran had fed into his blood.¹²⁰

Although the Iranian revolution was a Shia revolution it excited the religious sentiments of all the Muslims and warned them not to remain indifferent to such attitudes and events which insulted their religion and tried to push them out of the scene of action. After the victory of Islamic revolution in Iran we can clearly see an ideology and behavior ripe with a deep desire to return to the roots of Islam.¹²¹

According to rare evidences available al-Utaybi and his faction were

trying to promote such zeal and respect for their religion. Of course they maintained that true Islam was the Islam that the first Wahhabi clerics had preached. Meanwhile they had mixed politics to their religious zeal which provoked them to oppose those who tried to solicit help from the West and the United States and that sort of hostility had made them political minded.¹²²

Considering the above factors it is not from reason to believe that they had been influenced by the excommunicating attitudes of the Egyptian activist during the 70's, but actually what they were seeking was deep rooted in the original Wahhabi doctrines. Such thoughts and demands have been quoted from al-Utaybi during the 70's and it was exactly for that reason that he was jailed.¹²³

The big question in the move to take back the grand mosque in Mecca was that the occupiers came from different tribes and many individuals, police officers, army officers and the special royal guards belonged to these tribes, and in a tribal community like Saudi Arabia they could not fight with their brethren who were of their own tribe.¹²⁴

Thus, a relatively small incident emerged as a big dilemma for the Saudi government. Al-Utaybi was resisting and the Saudi officials were trying to prevent the news from licking into other countries. It is rumored that the Saudi regime succeeded to put an end to the crisis with the help of Jordanian and French commando forces. These killed many activists who had occupied the al-Haram Mosque in Mecca including Mohammad ibn Abdollah Al-Qahtani who thought that he was paving the way for Imam Mahdi's resurrection.¹²⁵

The fact is that this incident didn't leave a big impact even among the Saudi inhabitants, but it warned Saudi authorities to reconsider their domestic and even foreign policies.

Before entering this subject we need to refer to other incidents such as the unrest in Shia populated regions located in the east of the Saudi Arabia. The unrests had happened during Muharram 1400. But despite the unrest the agitation had nothing to do with the occupation of Al-Haram Mosque.¹²⁶

Normally and especially during the first ten days of Muharram, the Shia

Muslims mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A.S.). Such lamentation which reaches momentum on Muharram 9 and 10 and the groups of mourners marches in the streets and observe special religious rites.

During the Islamic revolution in Iran, mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and his comrades on Muharram 9 and 10 both in Tehran and provincial towns and even villages provoked demonstrations against the Shah's regime. During these two days in a nationwide demonstration millions of protesters poured into the streets and accelerated the fall of the Shah's regime.

The Shia population living in the east of Saudi Arabia was fused with the nationwide Shia demonstrations in Iran and tried to convert their mourning ceremony into demonstrations, but were faced by strong resistance by the Saudi police and security forces. During this confrontation many people died or more people were wounded or arrested. Similar demonstrations and confrontation with the demonstrators happened in Bahrain.¹²⁷

Although, the occupation of the al-Haram Mosque in Mecca and the demonstrations taken place in the east of Saudi Arabia happened almost simultaneously, the two incidents were wholly unrelated to each other. These were two different incidents with different reasons and motives in mind.

This was a big blow to the Saudi regime. The main blow was that which al-Utaybi had inflicted and threatened the legitimacy of the regime. The most important factor which contributed to the regime's survival and stability was its religious legitimacy. Contrary to other Arab regimes the Saudis believed to be legitimate sons of Islam and the revolt of Al-Utebi was exactly aimed to undermine that legitimacy.¹²⁸

Although, the unrest in the Shia quarters of the east of Saudi Arabia was considered a nuisance it was not considered a threat against the government because the unrest had been brewed by a minority group who were first of all Shia Muslims and secondly they could blame them as Iranian agents and mercenaries and that allegation was enough to condemn them.

In order to confront with the crisis and make the regime immune from

attack the Saudi authorities decided to insist that they strictly followed Wahhabi canons and doctrines. In other words, first of all they decided to enforce the Wahhabi doctrines and jurisprudence strictly, and secondly to contribute the expansion of Wahhabi teachings both in quality and quantity, educational viewpoints and academic research and during the implementation of the canons inside and outside the country. With this method they tried to coerce the critics and dissidents to comply with their orders and stole from them their tools of resistance.¹²⁹

The fact is that during these years (the beginning of the 80's) there were many activists who were dissatisfied. Some demanded an open Saudi community, and modernization and exercise of western ethics. The group which had gradually emerged since 60's was gradually finding more supporters and had even advocates inside the Saudi family and government departments. Fahd, who had seized power in the beginning of the 60's, supported such aspirations and was seriously seeking amendments in the community and the Saudi governing body.¹³⁰

Compared to this group there was a small group of leftists. Their operation reached momentum during the 50's and 60's when the regime was acting by discrimination and iron fist, retained the nation's wealth and the masses were living in complete poverty. Meanwhile the Saudi regime was being bombarded by the propaganda of the Arab progressive factions which blamed Saudi authorities for being tyrants and corrupt, reactionary and backward and dependent on the imperialist powers. Under such circumstances some people supported the leftist ethnic and traditional principles and some supported the Marxist camp. But as we said before the 1967 Arab defeat changed everything and the half-hearted victory in 1973 completed the change. As a result the residue of progressive partisans the leftist camp lost their power and influence in the 80's.

The Shia sect was the other opposition. When the Saudi regime decided to exercise a more open economic policy and help the people benefit from the oil wealth and the living condition of the Shia citizens was improved alongside other Saudi nationals, still the Shia population suffered from social discrimination. They were treated as second class or at times as third class citizens. They were not allowed to the universities or scientific

institutes and they were almost banned from being hired in government departments.¹³¹

Such conditions opened the way for them to listen to opposition ideology and voice. Due to many reasons they quickly and with great zeal became interested in the Iranian revolution and even tried to start a similar uprising.

Despite all these problems and the large number of dissidents the conditions were such that emphasis on Wahhabi teaching could neutralize all these dissident groups. At first the main goal of the regime was to disarm the extremist groups which fused by a strong religious current erupted by the Iranian revolution had become excited and were trying to expel and invalidate everything which conflicted with genuine Wahhabi doctrines. But such a move practically silenced the other groups in the country.

There were many reasons for such developments which are related to the nature of Saudi community and the strong link between Wahhabi doctrine and the Saudi identity. In fact, Bin Abd al-Aziz and Abd al-Aziz's version of Wahhabi doctrines helped Saudi Arabia to emergence as a single country within their present borders and it was the Saudi family that gave birth and meaning to Saudi nationalism. It was the same family that helped Saudi Arabia to become acquainted with the new world and provided welfare, security and pride.¹³²

And above all, it was the same family which had converted “the rough Bedouin Wahhabi faith of Abdul Wahhab” and the Ikhwan group into a mild, tolerable and enforceable “Abdulaziz Wahhabi faith”, and it was the same family that could prevent the extremist measures of the remnant of Akhavani partisans and ensure a moderate and healthy community.¹³³

These factors, some of which we discussed above, changed the quality of the protests by modern Saudi dissidents and to some extent other Sheikdoms against the authorities. The authorities in Saudi expressed their demands by a sort of caution and shyness and in the meantime quickly retreated from their demands. In the meantime, they were never willing to oppose the masses. It was perhaps for this timidity that their difference and discord with the culture of the ordinary people is far less

than other Arab countries and those in the Third World.¹³⁴

As to their treatment of Shia community the process was far easier. The ruling government was able to blame them of deviating from the edicts of religion and pessimism, and instead of looking inside the boundaries they were looking abroad and Iran.

From that point of view confrontation with the Shia community not only did not brew problems but contributed to stronger social and religious solidarity, and made the regime more popular.

Anyhow the policy of insistence on Wahhabi tenets was the government's agenda in Saudi Arabia. When Fahd had just accumulated power and showed symptoms of opening the Saudi community he was silent and secretly subscribed to that reserved policy, although Fahd had no record of such a personality, ideology or executive qualities.¹³⁵

But this was part of the scenario. The Saudi family understood that in order to preserve and defend their position and authority they had to adopt a far active foreign policy. The nature and the various dimensions of the Iranian revolution were such that conflicted in all fields with the Saudi Arabia's policies. The Iranian revolution opposed monarchy, dependence on great powers, and was anti-traditional and anti-reactionary. In the meantime, it was a revolutionary that had flourished on the basis of Islamic ideology and had Islamic goals and aspirations in mind. The slightest blow from the Islamic revolution was likely to cast doubt over the legitimacy of the Islam practiced by Saudi Arabia. From that angle the new development in Iran was far dangerous than Nasser's ideology when he enjoyed the peak of popularity. The weak point was that it had happened in Iran and in a Shia territory.¹³⁶

This weakness was to serve as a strong lever for Saudi Arabia and the best means of achieving such strength was their emphasis of Wahhabi tenets in their foreign policy, because Wahhabi was something that the Saudi's had inherited to the extent that among the Muslims Saudi regime was a manifestation of Wahhabi faith. Secondly, among the various branches of Islam the Wahhabi sect was the more opposed and conflicting with Shia ideology.¹³⁷

Thus the consequences of the Islamic revolution in Iran also left its

impact both on the Saudi social realities and foreign policy. After that the Saudi government transferred huge funds abroad for establishment of Wahhabi institutions, such as Wahhabi seminaries, mosques, libraries and Wahhabi propaganda and press.

During the 80's such investment was made mostly in Islamic countries especially in Pakistan and its border with Afghanistan. Their first goal was to confront with the Islamic revolution and Shia ideology. Thus the political struggle between the two countries changed to religious war. If Saudis could prove that Shia faith was nothing but deviation from orthodox Islam and had nothing to do with Islam at all and was even opposed to Islamic tenets, they would emerge victorious in their political rivalry with Iran.¹³⁸

Above all with such mechanism the Saudi regime could blame all the Sunni Muslims who were criticizing them for various reasons as expounders of sophistry and falsehood and claimed that they were under the domination of Shia tenets. Of course their next goal was to introduce themselves and their ideology as defendant of the Sunni nation and genuine Sunni teachings. If they succeeded in that attempt not only they would make themselves immune against the Islamic revolutions hostile propaganda and ideology, but put their rival into shame and defenseless situation and blame them of blasphemy.¹³⁹

The situation that we have described above continued during the 80's with little ups and downs, and practically the Sheikdoms too were under the influence of such policy. With the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq the said policy was pursued with much vigor both inside and outside Saudi Arabia. As we can see it left important consequences both inside and outside Saudi. The emergence of extremist subversive inclinations and radical extremist groups in subsequent years was the fruit of such policies.¹⁴⁰

Such a situation continued during the 80's. In 1985 the price of oil sank below 10 dollars, but despite such slump we do not see any change in Saudi religious outside Saudi Arabia. In the same way the same policy continued after the war between Iran and Iraq until 1988.

The next shock was the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in mid 90's.

Although Baghdad continuously applied pressure on Saudi Arabia and other Sheikdoms to obtain privileges and more money and the pressure continued after the end of the war too, the Sheikdoms did not believe that Iraq would completely occupy Kuwait and threaten Saudi Arabia or resort to military measures against them.¹⁴¹

The occupation and threat put the Saudi Arabian regime in a very difficult and uncomfortable position. Beside many problems that the occupation had caused Saudi Arabia had to suffer a sort of stalemate which had its root in their legitimacy and more than any other time before the 80's the Islamic nature of the regime was under scrutiny and pressure. In fact all decisions and grounds for decisions were based on Islamic principles in Riyadh and there was doubt whether the country that claimed to be the guardian and protector of Islam in the modern times was faithfully following Islamic principles.¹⁴²

The case was so when they had to deal with the general opinion of the Sunni Muslims both inside Saudi Arabia and outside it. A cruel and despotic ruler like Saddam, who was in the meantime a Muslim, had occupied a sovereign country and had threatened another country. The question was this: was it lawful for the sheikhs to ask non-Muslims to help them against aggressive Saddam? The other question was whether they should allow non-Muslims into the sacred realm of Saudi Arabia?¹⁴³

These two questions placed Saudi Arabia in an awkward situation and they felt that they could not compel Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops by any method except by military method and by any country other than the United States and West. From the beginning of the crisis and based on their concept of Iraq's regime they had been thinking about U.S. intervention, but in order to convince the world specially the inhabitants of Saudi Arabia they tried to resort to other methods of defense both through the Arab League and Organization of Islamic Conference as well as legitimate Islamic parties and personalities. But none of them were found to be effective and useful.¹⁴⁴

The only solution was to seek assistance from West, but an intervention by the West conflicted with all the doctrines which they had advertised earlier. The Saudi authorities were compelled to refer the case to religious

scholars. The clerics said that under such circumstances they were permitted to ask help from non-Muslim countries and mentioned historical examples.¹⁴⁵

These steps succeeded to some extent to convince the inhabitants of Saudi Arabia about the wisdom of foreign intervention because the people were afraid, and the Saudi officials did not mind such intervention although, later on, Saudi and non-Saudi clerics criticized the foreign intervention and joined those which the U.S. intervention had impelled to make radical change about the political role of Islam.

But when they had to deal with outside Saudi Arabia the problem still existed and was even aggravated. The main reason for the censure was because of the scale propaganda that the Iraqi regime had launched (saying that the U.S. intervention was unlawful) which propaganda corresponded with the nature of the propaganda that Saudi Arabia had aired earlier. Moreover due to various reasons many Muslims and especially devoted Muslims did not like the Saudi regime and their behavior. The majority of the critics thought the Saudi authorities were careless, lax, womanizers, bon vivant, debauchees and extravagant money squanderers. Moreover, they regarded them as reactionary and a servant of imperialist powers maintained that the Saudi regime was working for the West and not for the interest of the Islamic Ummah.¹⁴⁷

The fact is that these critics were practically attached to such institutes and organizations which Saudi Arabia had established from 1970 until 1980, both in Muslim countries or non-Muslim countries. Those who lived outside the Muslim world, especially in Europe, were mostly Muslim immigrants who had gone there to work and for different reasons and had political and Islamic inclinations. They were deeply influenced by the regime in Baghdad and supported that regime and opposed Saudi Arabia.

The widespread efforts of Saudi Arabia and their immense investments gave birth to factions and groups the majority of which lined up against Saudi Arabia and sided with Iraq. Such atmosphere prevailed until the end of war which ended with Baghdad's defeat and gradually their hostile attitude towards the Saudi Arabia decreased. Saudi officials too tried to be friendly and moderate with such opposition and the two sides gradually

forgot the past.¹⁴⁸

But this was not the whole scenario. The U.S. intervention in Iraq actually turned into one of the most important turning points in the Sunni ideology. This event nurtured the ideology of subversive activists who revolted against their enemies and even Muslims and laid the foundation of radical organizations such as al-Qaeda and Taliban.¹⁴⁹

This event left its mark in the Saudi community and in the Sheikdoms, to some extent, and converted these countries into the most important bases for radical activities. Above all, a remarkable number of the wealthy Arab citizens became advocates of such thoughts. Although they were not engaged in such radical activities they offered large sums of money to the radical groups and factions.

Probably nothing like the recent event played such an effective role that changed the social, ideological and religious thoughts in Saudi Arabia and in other Sheikdoms, to some extent. In fact the extent of such influence is rooted in the Saudi regime's religious and political propaganda. In the absence of such ideology the impression would not have been so deep and so effective. For example Kuwait was not suffering from such dilemma. Like Saudi Arabia Kuwait did not consider itself to be the guardian of Islamic Ummah and personification of such principles, and could therefore demand foreign countries and the United States and the West to help it without being threatened by any problem.¹⁵⁰

The occupation of Kuwait for few months and the rapid and widespread changes that happened during that critical period and the ensuing war in 1991 happened at a time that all the Sheikdoms, especially Saudi Arabia, had sunk deep in their boundaries. Although Saddam was defeated and Iraq had collapsed none of these countries felt victorious. These countries suffered a sort of shame, defeat and political isolation.

The Arab world was divided. Some Arabic regimes sided with Saddam and some opposed him. The conditions were such that Saddam's opponents were under pressure by their own countrymen and were not willing to openly express their hostility. In the same way those who sided with Saddam were more popular. In between there were regimes that preferred to staying neutral although they could hardly strike such a balance.¹⁵¹

It took a long time until the divided Arab countries solved their dispute and become friendly. Even there was talk of common Arab descent, common Arab destiny and common Arab tradition, but most of the time Kuwait objected with such slogans. Under the circumstances the Sheikdoms were the more confused. Much abuse had been thrown against them during the months that Kuwait was occupied by Iraq by the Iraqi regime and other countries, a great part of which was true, especially about the behavior of the Sheikdoms, and such passive and undecided attitude was alive among the people.¹⁵²

The Saudis, the Kuwaiti citizens and to some extent the other Sheikdoms felt that their help was fattening their enemy instead of courting their friendship. Meanwhile Baghdad's hostile stance had confused the Sheikdoms and had made them reserved.¹⁵³

Aside from the above factors, the eastern bloc had collapsed and a completely new atmosphere was now dominating the world, and it was necessary for the Sheikdoms to adopt policies which adapted to the new realities. But it seemed as if they were not interested in any change. They had lost their previous stream and willingness to take parts in such operations. Previously they had always volunteered to help each other in matters related to Arab dignity.¹⁵⁴

In the course of the new history, the foreign policy of Kuwait was far stronger than other Sheikdoms and more than the other Sheikdoms they welcomed international and regional changes, but in the present dilemma they were unable to decide. The shock they had received from the occupation or as they said the unmanly attitude of former friends who had always received their help still continued.¹⁵⁵

Under such circumstances the Sheikdoms, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, were pushed to solitude and isolation for a while. Among them that which mattered most was the reserved attitude of Saudi Arabia. This reserved policy contributed to their traditional and religious behavior, but not for political or security reasons. The conditions were such that during this juncture we can see religious inclinations and consolidation of Wahhabi institutes and their institution of '*al-amr bil-ma'ruf wal-nahy 'an al-munkar.*' In these circumstances such countries are the least inclined to

reform or to turn to West. It was as if from 1940 until 1945 the country had lost its social and religious stability.¹⁵⁶

Because of the fall of oil prices from the beginning of the 90's and the heavy cost of war and inflammable economy the living condition of the people was not well, and this made the community more reserved, introverted and traditional. Under such circumstances there were those who for the first time in the Saudi history were criticizing the United States and the West. They were mostly religious scholars and followers of Wahhabism. In the forthcoming chapter we will explain the change of Wahhabi ideology in Saudi Arabia that how it conflicted completely with the doctrines of the West and any leftist ideology. The Saudi inhabitants welcomed the United States and the West and they tolerated their presence in the most critical conditions and the Wahhabi clerics never criticized them.¹⁵⁷

Such censure was a turning point in the Saudi history. The criticism continued and gathered force. The developments during the 90's when dealing with Muslims and their fate caused the growth of such aspirations. The hardships the Muslims suffered in Bosnia and their massacre, the war in Chechen and the other calamities which were the continuation of the sufferings of Muslims during the past decades added fuel to the flame.¹⁵⁸

Despite economical hardships the overseas activities of the Wahhabi sect and the Saudi religious policies and doctrines continued as before. There were many reasons for such traditional zeal and propaganda. In the first place new grounds had been found. With the fall of the Eastern Bloc and disintegration of Soviet Union many Muslim countries had been born. Due to the conditions in which they were facing the masses in the newly liberated countries fell in love with Islam and everything related to Islam. Moreover, the Muslims in the former Eastern Bloc who were living in non-Muslim countries including Russia and Muslims in Caucasus, Ukraine and other countries in the former Soviet Union were also burning with the same fire.

Alongside these developments there was Pakistan and Afghanistan whose thirst for fundamental Islam was never quenched. A combination of economical, social, cultural and religious conditions had given birth to

such ardent love for Islam. The fall of the Eastern Bloc and the victory of the mujahids against Najibullah on its turn was adding fire to this flame, and of course similar conditions prevailed more or less in other Muslim-populated regions.

Here contrary to the 80's the Saudi was pushed into the scene and the Saudi's themselves entered these regions and tried to expand their ideology. This helped such propaganda stronger attachment to religion in Saudi Arabia and consolidation of religious and Wahhabi institutions. No doubt the Saudi community in the 90's was far more religious compared to the 80's and 70's. During the 90's a number of wealthy people volunteered to help the Wahhabi organizations and propaganda outside Saudi Arabia.

As mentioned before the shock that the Sheikdoms had suffered during the 1991 war had stagnated and stalled the foreign policy of all the Sheikdoms. The only thing which was active was the religious policy which was not in the hands of the authorities in these countries. The individuals and institutions who were voluntarily engaged in religious propaganda had been controlling a greater part of such activities. Such a scenario was not only true in Saudi Arabia but other Sheikdoms too. This meant that the community was changing and boiling from inside, particularly because their propaganda at that time has become political. Their anti-western ideology was gathering force gradually and was becoming deeper.¹⁵⁹

Such developments continued to such a stage that because of quartering the Americans soldiers in the so-called sacred Arab soil it was facing opposition censure. Before that Saudi Arabia had neither suffered such censure nor such censure had any meaning, and it was because of the changes that happened in the heart of the Saudi population and was notable less ardent in the other Sheikdoms, especially Kuwait.¹⁶⁰

Under such trying circumstances Saudi Arabia and the other Sheikdoms stepped into the twentieth century, or the age of modernization. Aside from the changes which boiled from inside their countries the Sheikdoms were exposed to imported ideas and thoughts. Within the framework of Wahhabi and old tradition it was the first time that such a thing was happening. The birthplace of such ideology was

Saudi Arabia itself, and it was the Saudis who impressed the others. But in those years they had been influenced by the ideas that were expressed outside their borders.¹⁶¹

The most important and inspiring factor were the Taliban and their Arab allies who had been living in Afghanistan since 1980. A combination of a sophisticated mesh of political elements and doctrines with the addition of the experience of the period of their battle with the Red Army and the results of the 1991 war had led them to arrive at new religious/political conclusions which we will speak in detail at a later stage. What mattered was that more than every other country the Saudis themselves were influenced by such results of al-Qaeda ideology. Most probably more than any other ideology such a doctrine had impressed the various classes in Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms to a lesser extent.¹⁶²

This was continuing until the blast of the twin towers in New York on September 11. The quality and magnitude of the catastrophe was such that not only the blow had shocked the United States but the whole world. The main culprit in this suicide operation was al-Qaeda. After that all the Arab leaders and the majority of the Saudi officials were also blamed and of course as an ally of al-Qaeda were also accused as their accomplice.

The other problem was that during those years the neo-conservatives held the power in the White House. They had their own ideology and policy and tried to make the best possible use from this incident to attain their goals. The question was the policy they had adopted completely conflicted with the pride and rich legacy of Arabs and impelled them to react. It was the masses that reacted to such accusation and not the Saudi regime. Such a reaction revolutionized social, religious and political realities of the Arab communities.¹⁶³

In the meantime we must refer to another subject i.e. the developments during the first decade of the present century. The developments in that decade were the reaction of Arabs and Saudi Arabia against the humiliating and insulting manner that the United States had shown against them after the September 11 incident. This reaction reflected its own mental, social and ideology the path of which had been paved as a consequence of developments after the 1991 war.¹⁶⁴

Alongside this actions and reactions which was between the Arabs and Washington's insulted policies that had offended the dignity of Arabs, the Arab masses, the Arab regimes and on top of them Saudi Arabia, Riyadh had fallen into a sort of disillusion and shame. The Saudi regime and its internal, political and educational policies and as a while all the Arab regimes were criticized, or better to say, were attacked by angry Washington. To add salt to the wound some members of the Saudi family had been blamed to have cooperated with al-Qaeda and had been involved in the September 11 incident.¹⁶⁵

Apart from Saudi Arabia Washington criticized the other Sheikdoms too. Since the western analysis attributed the problem to radical extremism and traditional religious, cultural and social tenets which sought to return to the old codes, the edge of the criticism was aimed against such regimes which followed such traditions, among which the Arab Sheikdoms were on the top. According to the western observers these regimes were guiltier because the gulf was deep in their antiquated political and social systems compared to western democracy. For example the quality of the criticism against Tunisia and even Libya and Egypt was far softer than against the traditional regimes in the Sheikdoms and such censure contributed to the reserved and isolated status of Saudi Arabia and the other Sheikdoms.¹⁶⁶

One of the most effective ways to escape such a shame and isolation was to join hands with the faction which under the banner of fighting war and terrorism and exertion towards creation of a great Middle East. These two terms had its own peculiar meanings and at the same time called for a series of action.¹⁶⁷

But such a policy could not be easily enforced. Although the majority of Arab states suffered from a sort of half-modern or traditional dictatorship, but their regimes were not able to take any risk contrary to the wish and inclination of the masses and such an assumption is more appropriate with regard to Saudi Arabia and Sheikdoms. For example the change of religious teaching system in these countries was far more difficult than the countries in North Africa.¹⁶⁸

The insistence of the United States and some European countries for introduction of fundamental changes to prevent from formation and spread

of fanatic and extremist ideology in these countries had the reverse effect. Such a trend influenced both the relation of the people and their governments and the people's opinion about the West. Such sophisticated actions and counteractions which continued until the end of the first decade of the twenty first century benefited religious extremism and al-Qaeda doctrines.

For example conditions were such that few people expressed their joy when the Taliban regime collapsed, although the fall of Taliban meant the destruction of a big network of radical Arabs who had penetrated their respective countries and threatened their governments under different pretexts.

In between we must analyze the second war between the United States and Iraq which led to the fall of the Baath regime in Baghdad. The second war was waged in an atmosphere completely different compared to the first war. During the first war Saddam appeared as a hero fighting against corruption, reactionary regimes, dependence on foreign powers and one who promised a better, far glorious and hopeful future. At least, one can say Arab masses had such an opinion about Saddam Hussein. He was a symbol of Arab heroism against the imperial West.¹⁶⁹

But the case was not so during the second Iraq war. The Arab regimes were more afraid of their citizens than the war itself because they could not anticipate the consequences of the war, but they knew it was dangerous. Saddam had lost his former charm and it was not only because of his different position compared to the first war but because that the various developments as long with the unsuccessful nature of the first war prevented the spark of fire that had kindled the heart of Arabs in the previous war with Iran.

Noteworthy, during the second war the number of factions which protested the war in developed countries were not less than the Arab Muslim masses. It was as if in less than 12 years everything had changed.

Anyhow, the war broke out without any consensus like the first war and without any other country including Arabic states having participated in it, and was ended relatively in a short period by using modern weapons. But the quality of the war and the fact that Iraq was occupied by the United

States and United Kingdom, which had been the propagators of war, paved the way again to the benefit of extremist-subversive groups.¹⁷⁰

In other words, Iraq replaced Afghanistan. Before the fall of Taliban Afghanistan was the hub of such extremist ideas, and Iraq too became like Afghanistan after the fall of Saddam, but here Iraq was a scene of action and a place to stimulate extremist and subversive elements. Aside from that the position of Baghdad versus the Washington was like the position of Kabul against the Russian occupation.

The same group of young Arab students of Al-Utaybi faction which had hurried to Afghanistan to save the country from Soviet occupation hastened to Iraq to save Iraq from Americans. Although the scenario in the two cases was completely different, it looked the same to the eager Arab youth who were imbued deeply with radical Wahhabi inclinations.¹⁷¹

According to these young followers of al-Utaybi school, the United States had replaced the ex-Soviet Union; the replacement had not been done easily. As we said earlier according to the traditional Arab and Wahhabi tradition up to 1990 there was no big difference between the Arabs and the West and the United States. These traditionalists along with the regime in the Saudi Arabia were reserved and sided with the Saudi regime and its allies, whereas the Soviet troops were regarded as manifestation of vice, corruption, irreligion or devils. It was with their belief on Al-Utaybi Islamic principles that the Arab youth (or Afghan-Arab youth) hastened to help the Afghans and fought with the Red Army in 80's.¹⁷²

A change was supposed to happen and the Arab radical youth regarded the Americans in the same way they regarded the Russians. Such developments had happened two decades before the September 11 incident and this incident and the subsequent U.S. foreign policy and propaganda had worsened the hate against the Americans to its highest degree. During the occupation of Iraq by the United States, the Arab radical youth had the same opinion about them as they had entered against the Soviet Union in the 80's and before that.¹⁷³

These things not only influenced the Muslim populated regions but the countries which had given shelter to Muslim immigrants. No doubt where

the problem had to do with the Muslim immigrants it had other reasons and dimensions. Nevertheless it was the first time in the modern history that the Muslim immigrants had been affected with such ideas.¹⁷⁴

The fact is that after the blast of the twin towers in the United States the Arab world and especially the Sheikdoms in the Persian Gulf region and Arabian Peninsula had a very hard time. Political pressure for change and open society was heavy and often unbearable. The general opinion of the non-Muslim world and especially in the West was against the Sheikdoms and they were offended, humiliated, blamed and hurt by different methods.¹⁷⁵

In the first place they pressured Arab regimes to give more political and factional freedom and observe the human rights charter. Countries like Egypt, that had political parties, maintained that such pressure would end up with the domination of Islamic factions and Muslim fundamental and terrorists groups, but the evidences show that the six Sheikdoms kept silent against such rhetoric only because they felt they could not explain their legitimacy which was acceptable to their peculiar system of governance that had emerged on the basis of their clannish and traditional beliefs. In fact, with the exception of Kuwait and Bahrain to some extent they had no political parties or parliaments. Above in the absence of foreign pressure and propaganda all the inhabitants of the Sheikdoms were happy with their regimes.¹⁷⁶

Of course, such foreign pressures led to a series of reforms and changes in these countries and the reforms particularly with regard to the women's rights was remarkable, but as we mentioned earlier, the nature of U.S. pressure was such that provoked the people against their regimes. As a consequence those who took arms against their regimes whether extremist subversive elements or pro-western and freedom seeking parties were nearly isolated.¹⁷⁷

After the second Gulf war wherein huge extremist subversive elements stepped into the field at a large scale we saw terrorist and sabotage attacks in Saudi Arabia and other Sheikdoms except in the UAE. Such subversive operation started simultaneously with other operations in other places such as Indonesia, London and Madrid. Their goal in such subversive tactics

was to prove that they were as dangerous to the other countries as to the Muslim countries, and this was a good tool to lift the blame again the Arabs for secretly supporting the terrorists.¹⁷⁸

In the meantime, they tried to change the mentality of their citizens against the radical groups. For example they tried to change the opinion of clerics and religious institutions which, for various reasons, sided with the radicals, and to do that it was necessary once again to insist upon their traditional approach to religion within their countries, because such an attitude could isolate non-conformists and anti-religious thinkers and incite their citizens to support their governments which were under heavy pressure from the West.¹⁷⁹

Such a trend continued until 2001. The re-election of Bush struck a balance in U.S. foreign policy. Earlier there was serious doubt about the policy that Bush had adopted, and the former fervor for change of everything based on American style that had faltered away. Actually Washington had confronted by a series of limitations which the analysts had explained. But the White House had refused to accept or was unwilling to accept the explanations.¹⁸⁰

Such a revision diffused the pressure on Arabs and the Sheikdoms were relieved. Their political tie with the West improved and, after a long interval of deadlock and impasse they tried to adopt a more active foreign policy. The problem resulting from the occupation of Iraq and the continual loss of American popularity in various countries in the world and the changes in the international arena, paved the way for the Sheikdoms for more active presence in the world. But their main target from entering the international scene was their regional policies. If the Sheikdoms could exercise far successful regional policies in the region particularly in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Afghanistan they would be welcomed by all countries which faced such problems. In the same way their domestic stability to some extent depended on far vigorous policies in these fields.¹⁸¹

Such an attempt was beyond the capacity of the Sheikdoms except Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia possessed the necessary tools and capacity and the others could do so in case they were more united, and this was the

biggest factor which impelled them to move closer to each other and even accepting Saudi leadership after 2005, whereas in earlier years there was a lot of difference and skirmishes between them.

But the question was that Iran was the most influential country in the problems related to the region. After the fall of Saddam and the 33-day war in Lebanon with Israel Tehran's role was the more remarkable. The Arabs could not adopt active regional policies in the region without taking Iran into account.¹⁸²

This was the beginning of severe political and ideological rivalry between the Sheikdoms and Iran. Because of the significance of the subject one must examine the history of the Iranian influence in the region.

The Middle East representing the Islamic world is divided into two big religious faiths, the Shiites and the Sunnis. Although these faiths have many common points from the point of view of principles of belief and practical commandments, they differ in other fields. Meanwhile this difference of opinion covers various historical, social, and psychological philosophies. The fact that the Shiites are the minority and often the very hostile stance of the Sunnis has caused the two faiths to inherit two different historical legacies.¹⁸³

After the Shia faith became the official creed in Iran the attitude of the two faiths versus each other and especially that of Sunnis against the Shiites was deeply influenced by that difference. One important reason for this hostility was that the Iranians and Arabs had many historical recollections about their past, full of positive and negative factors. The most important factor that had given birth to such bitter recollection was the collapse of the Sassanid Empire by the Muslim Arabs, their rough treatment of the Iranians, the consequences of the crash, and Iran's immense contribution to Islamic sciences, art, culture and civilization.¹⁸⁴

These factors including religious and ideological difference along with the unending historical recollections dating back to even pre-Islamic era gave a chance to the Sunni Arabs to sketch different images about Iran and Shia Muslims under the prevailing circumstances by benefiting from the difference of attitudes and creeds.¹⁸⁵

But despite all these differences during the contemporary history of the

region we have seldom seen the Arabs to resort to the levers. The difference between the Shiites and Sunni faith occurs often during religious and rhetorical debates, but seldom enters the social and political scenes, and has no ground to emerge.

The thoughts and political inclinations which prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century was not such to allow a clash between religious sects. Moreover the political and regional rivalry was seldom related to religion.

Arab nationalism, Nasirite ideology, communist and leftist ideas and anti-imperialistic and anti-reactionary inclinations, Islamic factions seeking caliphate for the Islamic world and conformity of religions that was active decades after the World War II, paid less attention to religious and anti-Shia matters, although some of these groups entertained anti-Iranian or anti-Shia opinions.¹⁸⁶

For example, the Arab nationalism at times would become anti-Iranian, especially when they embraced socialistic, leftist or anti-imperialistic tendency. For example, some contemporary Islamic groups seeking to return to the so-called orthodox or established Islamic cannons would sometimes betray anti-Shia sentiments.¹⁸⁷

But such cases were rare and such sentiment was used for political ends. No doubt the question of Shia and Sunni differences was being discussed during this period, but mostly as a domestic subject and not a foreign political issue. For example in countries such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq or Lebanon the clash of Sunni and Shia faiths has always occurred, but as we said earlier the dispute was always treated as a domestic matter and nothing else.

Moreover, one of the goals of religious movements and even political reformists both in the Shia and Sunni camps was to emphasis on Islamic unity avoiding religious differences, conflict and mendacious hostility in political and social scenes.

But things changed after the victory of Islamic revolution in Iran. After the revolution the tribal question became the ruling agenda. Based on the revolution's religious incentives, nature, message and goals naturally the Islamic revolution stood against various regimes in the region. As to the

six Sheikdoms the clash was mostly with Saudi Arabia because of various reasons. Saudi Arabia claimed to be the guardian of Islam. Aside from that it was an ally of the United States and West in the region. Above all and contrary to the other Sheikdoms, Saudi Arabia was severely oppressing and tyrannizing its citizens during these years.¹⁸⁸

We can see the same attitude during the bloom of Nasirite Arab nationalism. The biggest clash in the Middle East was between Nasser and Saudi Arabia. This was not what Nasser wanted but because of the nature of the regime in Saudi Arabia.¹⁸⁹

As mentioned earlier the Islamic revolution brewed problems for Saudi Arabia both on domestic and foreign level. The biggest doubt that the Islamic revolution had cast against Saudi Arabia was that Riyadh which claimed to be guardian of the Muslims was not adhering to Islamic commandments. They were not behaving their citizens justly and were vassals of foreign powers and worked for foreign interests.¹⁹⁰

Surely, the revolt of al-Utaybi and his compatriots at the end of Muharram 1400 A.H. was the result of such thoughts and inclinations. Al-Utaybi was a fanatic traditionalist and Wahhabi. He not only condemned the regime in Saudi Arabia but the prevailing Wahhabi codes. The ideology which had given him such revolutionary thoughts were definitely Wahhabi and traditional doctrine, but one cannot ignore the fact that the excitement caused by the Islamic revolution had provoked him to revolt.¹⁹¹

Where he was talking about regime's lack of commitment to Islamic principles and Wahhabi scholars in their description of true religious codes or speaking about the friendly ties between the Saudi authorities with the infidels and enemies of Islam, such rhetoric indirectly stemmed from Islamic revolution and its slogans.¹⁹²

In order to cope such threat the Saudi officials blamed the Shia nature of Islamic revolution and then they criticized the Shia faith, saying that the Shiites are not Muslims and moved so far in their ire that said that the Shia faith had been invented by Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians and Iranians in general to destroy Islam. After such false allegations they drew a distorted image about the Iranian hostile stance against Arabs and Islam and maintained that Iran was always looking for an opportunity to avenge its

historical defeat from Arabs, because the Muslim Arabs had destroyed their great empire and glory.¹⁹³

Thus, confronting the Shiite sect by different methods entered the Saudi politics both in domestic and external scenes. In the country the object of the regime was to isolate the Shia Muslims and to provoke the people to resist their demonstrations and demands, and blame Sunni individual or Wahhabi group who intended to protest against the government as bad Muslims influenced by the Shia minority. Outside Saudi Arabia too their objective was to neutralize the influence of Islamic revolution insisting that the revolution's creed has deviated from the true Islamic tenets is solely represented by Sunni Muslims, as they assume.

Due to these reasons the Saudi officials were the inventors, propagators, and financers of such policies. Of course, all the regimes who felt threatened by the Iranian Revolution welcomed such innovative stance and helped their propagators. Thus a new strong political factor emerged in the region which practically changed the political blocks and opened a new ground for change in the region under the sphere of the Arab and even the Islamic world.¹⁹⁴

The developments in the past three decades has deeply influenced by such propaganda. Often such a policy was followed far vigorously. For example after the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq and especially after the takeover of Khorramshahr by the Iranian soldiers and Iran's willingness to continue the war, such a policy reached to momentum. After the occupation of Kuwait and the 1991 war this policy petered out, but during the 90's it continued with ebbs and downs and reached momentum after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Of course, now it was not only Saudi Arabia who led the operation. All the countries who thought the influence of Iraq threatened them such as Jordan and Egypt had a role in it, although the role of these countries was political propaganda and not the religious-political.¹⁹⁵

The main reason that intensified or blunted such propaganda was the feeling of fear by Saudi Arabia. Moreover, they considered any increase of Iranian influence in Iraq as a source of threat. Surely general conditions play a big role in the continuation of such negative policy. As a result they

are tried to pave the ground for their propaganda by various methods including satellites which are manned and managed by them.

As we said other regimes too benefited from such negative rhetoric and added fuel to the fire. But aside this there are groups who because of different reasons including religious ends oppose the Shiites and spread of Shiite faith. They take steps that although is dictated by Sunni regimes but actually follows the above-mentioned policy. Surely a regime like Saudi welcomes such measures and helps their propagators, although there are puppet independent groups which have been created and supported by Saudi Arabia to spread the seeds of discord.

One of the most influential groups among them is al-Qaeda in general and the al-Qaeda branch in Iraq, in particular. The method and organization of al-Qaeda after fall of Saddam was to shape the general opinion of the Muslims and Arabs, specially the youth, versus the Shia faith has played an important role. Moreover, one must not forget the significance of this role in the creation of new frontiers and blocs in the region.¹⁹⁶

Anyhow Saudi Arabia announced its new religious policy for Iran after the victory of Islamic revolution and was welcomed by certain regimes such as Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt and Jordan. Along with other factors such an ideology succeeded to mobilize the sentiment of many Arab countries against Iran and in Saddam's favor during the 8-year Iran-Iraq war, but this did not lead to any new sectarian division. After the occupation of Iraq this ideology was completely destroyed and until the fall of Baath regime the same matter continued.

The 2003 War began at a time when all the Arab countries were dissatisfied with the occupation. This dissatisfaction was not because of their support to Saddam. The real reason for their dissatisfaction was the fear about the consequences of occupation which was not quite clear to them. But they felt that the results for these countries and the Arab world would be unpleasant.¹⁹⁷

Such an indecision and anxiety continued until Saddam and his Baath party collapsed. The Shia Muslims held the majority in Iraq and were naturally supposed to play the first role in the country's politics, and this

was not acceptable to Saudi regime because it opened the way for stronger Iranian influence in Iraq and secondly, the Shia Muslims in the region would move closer to each other. There was the danger that under the leadership of Iran the Shia Muslims who had gathered more power could form a giant and formidable bloc.

For this reason and other reasons they tried to oppose the new regime in Iraq and the Arab League practically boycotted Baghdad. Moreover, the Iraqi insurgents and even terrorists that bombed civilian districts on a large scale were supported morally, financially, and militarily under the pretext of fighting the occupation forces, whereas their prime goal was massacre of Shia Muslims on large scale in order to take vengeance for practicing bad faith. Besides they wanted to spread terror and insecurity and instability.¹⁹⁸

The continuation of such policies and deeds paved the way for introduction of clannish traditions, factions and policies. The question in the old times and modern times was not which one was Arab and which country was anti-imperialistic or whether they were progressive and which country was conservative or inclined to the right faction. All these criteria had been obliterated. Who was Shia and who was Sunni was the leading question. The new lineup was created in this manner and the Arabs looked at modern Iraq from that angle.

This faction-building created its own culture. One symbol of this rhetoric was to call the Iraqi Shia Muslims as *ajams* (non-Arab) or Iranians. It was a term which was attributed to the Bahraini and Saudi Shiite citizens during the Arab Spring. Thus the question of faith first of all overshadowed political realities and gave birth to new camps.¹⁹⁹

The active presence of Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms after the September 11 blasts contrary to their past inert and passive attitude happened under such circumstances – circumstances which the Saudis and their Arabs friends had created and had pointed at Iran as the leader of the new Shia camp.

It is another issue whether Iran desired for such a role or not. Iran's wish in this regard was of far less importance than the wish of Arabs to label Tehran with such intentions, it were the Saudi regimes and their

partisans that had given Iran that role and tried to define their relation with Tehran under such false accusations.

Such division to several camps was intensified to the extent that non-Shia Arabs who were politically inclined to Iran were labeled as traitors. According to the Saudi authorities Syria is now within Iran's camp; not merely due to politics but for sectarian reasons.²⁰⁰

With the arrival of the waves of Arab Spring tribal division was intensified. Such grouping and division is such that completely changes and manipulates the demands for freedom, and protests against despotism, corruption and blames the protestors for clannish inclinations, rivalries and hostilities. Surprising enough these false allegations give more strength and courage to the regimes and some opposition groups to stand firmly against their opponents defending their ground and blaming the other party as illegitimate and foreign vassal.

Right now the region is encountered with very sophisticated social developments. Such developments have left its classic background and have gathered new dimensions and features, and their relation with politics has changed. As long as it related to the six Sheikdoms the relationship between social changes and politics firstly depends on the fate of unrest in Bahrain. Although other foreign elements are interfering in this unrest, their influence is proportional to their influence in the relation between dissident Shia citizens in Bahrain with the Sunni regime and how much these two camps are influenced by foreign factors.

4

Transitional Period: Religion and Culture

We have allocated a separate chapter to religion and culture because these two subjects have a decisive role in the calm and almost tension-free transition of the Sheikhdoms into the modern world. Their social and political stability during the period of transition is deeply dependent on their religious beliefs and culture.

As we said in the previous chapters from historical perspective the Sheikhdoms were a formed of series of tribes whose motherland was Saudi Arabia, but due to natural hardships and difficult living conditions during the past two or three decades, they migrated to regions which are now called sheikhdom. Such a verdict is even true about Bahrain and Oman that possess history and civilization. In other words, some tribes or clans came to these two countries and sought shelter during these years. This means that at least, part of the inhabitants of Bahrain and Oman were from amongst the migrant tribes.¹

Under such circumstances naturally the prevailing or better to say the dominating culture was ethnic culture. This culture is still alive in the Sheikhdoms and plays a big role in stabilizing them during the period of transition from ancient times to modern times. In this chapter we aim to examine their religious and cultural role.²

Islam is inseparable from tribal culture, but this Islam is a tribal Islam and conforms to tribal rites. Such Islam is a combination of instructions for prayer and behavior. It is explicit and simple and is free from philosophical, oratorical and jurisprudential complexity – which we see in Iran.³

In the Sheikhdoms, we see Islamic clannish customs and rites but it is difficult to say that these people have followed a true Islamic culture and civilization. A materialistic example of such civilization in the Sheikhdoms either doesn't exist or is very simple and rudimental. One can seldom point to art or architecture in the Sheikhdoms and still the case is same. Despite many changes which contributed to the modernization and wealth of the Sheikhdoms still their religious architecture is not native architecture and are designed and built by foreign nationals. As we said before Oman and Bahrain are exception from that rule compared to other Sheikhdoms. We will examine these countries later on.⁴

The compact environment and lack of ideological and cultural dialogue with others in their culture called for such customs and rites. Moreover, because of the conditions in which the inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms have flourished they had no wish for cultural communication with other communities. According to this secluded people Islam is the only true

religion and their inference from Islam was that it was an absolute truth. Their social and cultural standards, their customs, lifestyle and their beliefs were the best and they all were unanimous in such a belief. Thus there was no place to doubt about their religion or debate or exchange opinions with others. Probably, the only important change which they had seen was the emergence of Wahhabi faith during the time of Bin Abdul Wahhab which directly or indirectly influenced all these regions. Wahhabi faith helped them to become more introvert and reserved because the Wahhabi faith was nothing but fanatic belief on rigid and dry codes which even conflicted with human instincts.⁵

And this was the story of their religion and culture when they face the modern time. Contrary to all Muslim countries who had to suffer many problems to transit from traditional community into modern community the inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms transited to modern times simply or at least with the least inconveniences. Now let's see how they experienced the changes to modern time.⁶

The fact is that the way Saudi Arabia approached the modern world was to some extent differed with the other Sheikhdoms. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the transition process first in Saudi Arabia and then in other Sheikhdoms.

The entry of the new civilization into Saudi Arabia happened at the end of nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. During these years the Saudi Peninsula was being governed by the Ottoman Empire. The most important thing in the desert country was Mecca and Medina, which Sharif Hossein was governing on behalf of the Ottoman sultan.⁷

Personally Sharif Hossein welcomed and loved the new civilization. The same is true with his children too. His ambition to set up an Arabic caliphate in the holy towns was a sort of modernization, but the fact was that first of all his sphere of influence was limited to Mecca and Medina only and to some extent to Jeddah at those times and not to the vast Arabian Peninsula. Secondly, due to their Bedouin and clannish nature the inhabitants of these towns didn't welcome such a change. As a consequence, Sharif Hossein failed to introduce the Arab masses with the modern civilization and the nation continued to live in its traditional

boundary.⁸

Conditions were such until Abd al-Aziz took over the helm and Sharif Hossein and his children left Saudi Arabia. Abd al-Aziz eventually succeeded to make all the Arabian Peninsula obey his command and for the first time he laid out the foundation of a single country known as Saudi Arabia.

The reason for his success during this process was his Wahhabi ideology. His soldiers were the Wahhabi volunteers who under the pretext of spreading their faith and combat with those, who deviated from their tenets or practiced evil codes, forced them to obey them. As long as Abd al-Aziz was fighting with his opponents who, according to his Wahhabi cohorts, were his ideological opponents he faced no problem, but problems surfaced when he united the country and tried to govern it.⁹

Abd al-Aziz had understood that without resorting to modern equipment and methods he could not manage the vast desert country. He therefore, tried to benefit from modern equipment with caution and on a limited scale, but some of his soldiers, who claimed to be true and committed Wahhabi Muslims, could not tolerate his modernization process. According to their opinion about Islamic tenets using modern equipment and methods was unlawful and Abd al-Aziz should not embrace such innovations.¹⁰

He and his supporting clerics tried to convince the opposition to agree with the changes and much debate was held between the king and his supporters and the opposition among whom there were clerics. Some opponents were agreed to Abd al-Aziz's argument and some chose to remain silent, but there was another group that continued to oppose him.¹¹

Abd al-Aziz began to fight them. He killed a number of his opponents and cut the noses and ears of many opponents and managed to curb the riot. The elimination of the enemies was not an important achievement in this struggle. The biggest gain was that the Wahhabi sect accepted that what the king was doing was right and whatever he did was religiously acceptable and no one must oppose him.¹²

Of course, this is part of the scenario. The other problem was the governor himself who always tried to modernize his country and the circle

of clerics in an acceptable framework. Still the same tradition is being observed by the rulers in that country.¹³

This helped the traditional and religious community in Saudi Arabia to stop resisting the innovative acts of the regime for the modernization of the nation from the view of quality and quantity, and this was one of the important factors which stabilized the Saudi community in their confrontation with the modern civilization. But the case was not so in the other Sheikhdoms. They neither had such a strong leader, nor a government-prescribed and dominated ideology and neither such a rare experience. Now let us see how their condition was?

Before entering this topic it is necessary to say that in their first encounter with the modern civilization all the Muslims faced many problems and difficulties. Some of these problems were practical and was related to religion, some were related to belief and rhetoric, while some were personal and some were social problems.¹⁴

The question was that the native and traditional culture emanating from Islam had dominated all Islamic countries until the time they were entering the modern history. They suddenly confronted with a culture which wanted to dominate all their private and public customs starting from individual behavior up to legal and social matters and method of governance of the community as well as their educational, industrial, economical and scientific growth.

Naturally, the Muslims faced with big problems and crises. At this juncture, lack of uniformity in the country was an added bottleneck. In a plural community with different and opposing beliefs and ideas every individual and group had its own interpretation of the modern culture and the way they were supposed to adopt it. Above all the question of accepting or rejecting the new civilization led to domestic rivalry. In other words their position against the modern civilization was dictated by their rivals and opponents. They neither understood it nor accepted nor rejected it deep in their hearts. In other words the modern civilization became an instrument and pretext for domestic maneuvers and rivalry.¹⁵

Due to the above reasons, as well as many others, the majority of the Islamic countries suffered the transition period with much pain and loss,

but this was not the case in the Sheikhdoms. The most important reason was that the societies were homogenous and simple.¹⁶

The inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms understood the new subjects in the same manner. Moreover, they had no sophisticated community having internal struggle and rivalry to allow various factions to benefit from the new circumstances to their benefit and for destruction of their rivals. Above all the Sheikhdoms faced the modern civilization at a time that the other Muslims had already transited that stage and had left behind the dangerous and precarious stage of their clash with the modern civilization at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, the experience of scholars and clerics in other countries for the new civilization greatly helped both the Sheikhdoms and Saudi Arabia. As we shall see after accumulating oil wealth they invited many clerics to manage their religious and educational affairs, and the presence of these clerics during the calm process of transition proved very important and effective.¹⁷

One cannot even briefly describe the various types of difficulties that the Muslim countries suffered during their modernization process. According to some observers the problems were related to Islam itself. They maintained that Islam was the main factor or the main factor that kept Muslims backward. In addition there were those who said that religion was a source for backwardness and tension and it was necessary to fight with it.¹⁸

The other problem was the different interpretations of Islam especially when they wanted to compare it with the modern civilization. The comparison gave birth to more difficult problems. Alongside these topics there was the question of discourse, divine and philosophical subjects in Islam. There were a series of questions. Does God exist? Can Islam prove His existence? How the world, the living creatures and man were created? Many philosophical and scientific theories had penetrated the Islamic countries and were often not well understood by their native propagators. These propagators actually pointed to their deduction of such theories.¹⁹

The other problem was the import of foreign products. What was Islam's commandment about foreign products? Was it permissible to build

new facilities and factories in a Muslim country? What was Quran's verdict about it? For example for a long time there was a debate whether water pipelines were permissible and lawful in Muslim countries. Above everything there was the question of management of the community and legislation. Were parliament and political parties and institutions lawful? Then how the leader of the country must manage things? What sort of administrative system, army, taxation and budget policies were to be used?²⁰

These were some of the problems that all Muslim populated countries had faced at the beginning of their confrontation with the modern civilization. The literature of that period was deeply affected by such matters and a lot of the time and energy of theologians and clerics was spent to respond to doubtful questions or to respond to matters related to jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theological discourse (*Kalam*).²¹

In fact, such matters did not attract the entire attention of religious scholars. The modernization process had entered the Muslim countries especially in big cities and had impressed the youth more than any other class in the community. All educational institutions including universities and even high schools were engaged in such debates and incited various sorts of social and political tensions.²²

Before the arrival of the modern civilization the majority of the Islamic states did not suffer from conflict between old and new generations. They were all living in a common and historical culture and there was no deep cultural difference between generations, but with the beginning of the new era such problems agitated Muslim countries.

The reasons of the conflict between different generations have already been mentioned. It was not social or economical changes that had led to such difference of opinion. The main difference was often about ideological, cultural or religious matters. It took a long time for the community to understand and digest such conflicting subjects and to cope with them. During these years the Muslim writers and clerics and others who had their own views and theories and claimed to be reformers played a big role in such debates.²³

But such problems did not bother the Sheikhdoms at all. They

encountered the modern culture at a time that the culture had ceased to be on the offensive and most of Islamic countries had left behind the primary tensions and disputes about modern civilization. Meanwhile, there were a large number of theologians and Muslim scholars who had conducted extensive studies and had gathered important experience about the modern civilizations and the Sheikdoms could benefit from their knowledge, experience and ingenuity.²⁴

Above all, thanks to their immense wealth they had enough money to hire religious scholars. In addition, many such scholars because of political turmoil in their countries were willing or compelled to leave their countries and the Sheikdoms welcomed them.²⁵

In short from the beginning of the twenty first century the emirs of Bahrain and Kuwait tried to import new educational systems. Naturally the new system they were trying to introduce in their schools was a mixture of traditional and modern teaching methods, but due to the poverty of the masses such a step was not welcomed in the beginning.²⁶

As we explained in the previous chapter that how the authorities in these Sheikdoms tried to hire teachers from other advanced Arab countries. The teachers and professors were hired, but the arrival of the teachers and professors caused many problems. These teachers were influenced by their nationalistic, political and anti-imperialistic environment and transferred the same feelings to the students in the Sheikdoms. Such talks provoked tension and made both the emirs and the British uncomfortable.²⁷

Many steps were taken and extensive studies were conducted to solve this problem often by the British officials, but these schools cannot be regarded as the source of changes in the education system of the Sheikdoms even in Kuwait, because only a limited number of students were being taught and they could not influence the masses. Meanwhile the emir of Kuwait was pessimistic about the schools. The emir has been quoted as saying, "We only need accountants and oil technicians. Therefore the schools must only teach such subjects and not other subjects." The reason for such verdict was that other subjects such as history were troublesome.²⁸

Such developments and debates continued in Kuwait until the beginning of inflow of huge wealth from oil. After that everything was changed. There was a sparsely populated country which lacked necessary substructures and the majority of the inhabitants were illiterate, and it was necessary to build everything as quickly as possible. Luckily there were many people, especially in Arab countries, who were willing to work in Kuwait.²⁹

Taking into account all the domestic and foreign conditions one of the first steps of the authorities in Kuwait was to invite theologians and religious scholars and set up colleges for Islamic sciences. Such a step was natural because all Kuwaiti citizens were Muslims and thanks to their geographical position that they had been in contact with foreign nationals such as Indians, Iranians, British, Europeans and other Arab nationals from the end of nineteenth century. Such communication had offered a sort of awakening about their Islamic heritage. They had understood that they were Muslims. But Islam for a Kuwaiti citizen was his identity and of course Islam adapted to their tribal culture.³⁰

Communication with foreigners had made the Kuwaiti citizens sensitive and proud of their religion. As a consequence, it was natural for them to hire religious teachers first and they try to set up religious institutions and seminaries.³¹

Such measures contributed to their stability far beyond their expectations and helped them to transit to modern civilization. Kuwait quickly opened its doors to the outside world and welcomed every innovative measures that led to modernization, all these things happened without bitter social disputes.

In between other factors that helped the Sheikhdoms in their transition process. The Sheikhdoms opened their doors to the new world at a time that the era of clash of cultures and religions, which had annoyed other Muslim countries at the beginning of the twentieth century, was over. Contrary to many other Muslims one reason for their positive approach to the new civilizations was that they did not suffer the pains that other Muslims had suffered when they had encountered the new civilization.³²

Anyhow it was under such circumstances and within the framework of

their native, ethnic and Islamic culture that the new culture and civilization entered the country. Therefore, no one objected the new culture and the various branches of the society welcomed it. The modern civilization neither met opposition nor led to class difference or social tension in the Sheikhdoms.

The other Sheikhdoms and even Saudi Arabia experienced the same things which Kuwait had experienced. These Sheikhdoms too followed the same path that Kuwait had trodden. Their first steps in that direction was to employ religious scholars and establish religious institutions and centers.³³

The big exception among them was Bahrain and Oman because they had different history, culture and society compared to other Sheikhdoms. Meanwhile, Oman opened its doors to the foreigners later than the other Sheikhdoms.

The majority of the citizens in Bahrain were Shia Muslims, the majority of whom were either farmers or pearl hunters. Besides that due to their Shia faith and historical domination of Iran until the arrival of British colonial adventurers the Bahraini citizens often migrated to Iran or the Iranian people immigrated to Bahrain. Such a close intercourse helped the Bahrain's art, industry, architecture and even customs and folklore to be deeply affected by Iran.³⁴

Moreover, in the past two centuries when the Sunni family immigrated to Bahrain from Saudi Arabia because of poverty and famine the Shia population had always suffered the rule of Sunni minority who governed them by tyranny and discrimination, and such maltreatment had caused their culture and politics to differ with other Sheikhdoms.³⁵

The cultural and religious developments in the Shia populated regions in Bahrain are quite different compared with other Sheikhdoms. These Shia Muslims had inherited a rich culture and many great jurists, lawgivers and clerics had emerged among them. The culture of the Shia population was alive and creative until the contemporary times and was continually in touch with religious seminaries in Iran and Iraq. As a consequence, the Shia majority maintained and preserved its own philosophy and culture and was less affected by the ruling system.³⁶

We have said about Bahrain that its condition was somehow applicable to Oman too. The majority of the people in Oman are of Abadhiyahd sect which is one of the branches of Islam. The Omani inhabitants also enjoy a rich and creative culture which has remained alive until today. Besides that due to various reasons the inhabitants of Oman were introverted and shut to the outside world. Therefore, their religion and culture differs with other Sheikhdoms and they are mostly influenced by their own culture.³⁷

But besides the things mentioned earlier which are mostly related to the religion of the Sheikhdoms there are other things among which the most important one is Arab nationalism that we will examine here.

Arab nationalism was born at the end of the nineteenth century in the Arabic part of the Middle East of the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. Many factors contributed to Arab nationalism, but it was a question of identity. The objective of Arab nationalism was to explain and introduce Arab identity.³⁸

This identity was based on a history and legacy which was deemed to be Arabic, whereas, in fact, it was Islamic legacy that Muslims had inherited, but since their religious and cultural sources were mostly written in Arabic language the culture had become know as Arabic culture.

Here the question is not of its being an Islamic or Arabic identity. Rather, Arabs thought that this culture and religion was Arabic and it was an important legacy and cause of pride for them. For Arabs, who are instinctively sensitive and proud of it was an unexpected blessing that they acquired and were proud of that legacy.³⁹

This greatly helped to this conviction that was studied by the Western and Arab scholars about the Arabs. Their research that had started from the sixteenth century was progressive. The more important studies were conducted during the second part of the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth century they had collected very good information about Islamic history, civilization and sciences. They wrote many books about these subjects and often looked at the history with admiration and applause.⁴⁰

These oriental scholars and researchers of history, philosophy and modern Arabic civilization discovered that they had inherited Islamic sciences and civilization and realized that many Greek philosophical books

were the translation of Arabic works. Above all, almost, all scholars called it Arabic civilization, although some referred it as an Islamic civilization.⁴¹

For those Arabs who acquainted with such research and study at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century such information was welcomed, because at one hand they were being humiliated and insulted for their backwardness and on the other hand, they thought the masters of the new civilization were indebted to their past civilization. They maintained that the ancient Arab civilization was one of the biggest and glorious human civilizations in the world.⁴²

Under these circumstances, it was natural for all the Arab masses, whether Christian or Muslims, religious scholars, irreligious ones or even atheists to quickly absorb such information about their golden past. All those who regarded themselves as Arabs needed such an identity and accepted and subscribed to it with much enthusiasm and wrote books about their golden heritage.⁴³

As mentioned before in those times such information for people who lived in such atmosphere was understandable. The Arabs in other regions were ignorant about their past civilization. They gradually became acquainted with their past, but from the moment they became aware of it they welcomed it with much ardor.⁴⁴

It is because they believed whoever spoke Arabic was an Arab whether at the shores of the Atlantic Ocean or the shores of Red Sea or the Sea of Oman. More than being a tribal or religious heritage Arabic language represented their Arabic identity. Of course, because of political reasons such definition was advertised by those who believed in Arab nationalism and Arab solidarity. They wanted to build an Arab empire and were trying to expand Arab domain as far as possible. That language represented their identity more than anything else and permitted them to expand their domain.⁴⁵

Such definition was practically accepted by the Arabs because it benefited all Arabs. Even those who from historical or cultural viewpoint, were of purer Arab stock welcomed such definition because it gave them weight and dignity. In the same way that definition was welcomed by those who for historical reasons had joined the new Arab camp and were

not Arabs at all.⁴⁶

Anyhow the idea of Arab nation was born and it grew under such atmosphere. The first turning point goes back to years before the start of First World War. United Kingdom which was trying to disintegrate the Ottoman Empire provoked Sharif Hossein, the governor of Mecca and the representative of the Ottoman Empire, to declare himself an independent ruler to separate himself from the Ottoman government and provoke Arabs in Syria to revolt. Instead, they promised Sharif Hossein to help him set up an Arab empire and place him at the head of that empire.⁴⁷

Of course, other Arabs especially Syrians where the Ottoman young Turks had been oppressing them entertained such aspirations, but there is no doubt that the British provocation played a big role in the revolt. After the end of World War I, Sharif Hossein was left alone to fight ambitious Abd al-Aziz and was defeated and expelled to Cypress and the eastern territory of the Ottoman Empire that was divided between the British and French.⁴⁸

Thus, the first Arab nationalistic aspiration was defeated, but they never forget how badly they had been cheated, and this was the beginning of Arab anti-imperialistic aspirations.⁴⁹

The main ground for Arab nationalism at those times was Egypt and Arabic Middle East and the territories which had been captured by the British and the French. Their slogan about their glorious history and heritage made it difficult for them to accept the domination of colonial powers. Thus Arab ethnicity and pride became the most important stimulus for Arabs to resist imperialism.⁵⁰

Alongside such developments caused another incident that strengthened their anti-imperialistic stance and left a long time impression among the Arabs. During the second decade of the twentieth century large number of Jews began immigrating to Palestine. The immigration had begun a long time ago but it suddenly gathered force. After the mass immigration of Jews to Palestine a series of skirmishes happened between the original residents of Palestine and the Jewish immigrants which caught the attention of the Arabs in the region and raised their suspicion.

Such events contributed greatly to the formation of Arab ethnicity and

their anti-imperialistic and anti-colonial feelings to the extent that the idea, even after the independence of these countries, was still boiling in their blood. The teachers who had been invited by Kuwait to teach in Kuwaiti schools before World War II and their presence had led to a series of problems that had been raised with such nationalistic aspirations. The problem began when under the influence of the invited teachers began demonstrating and resorted to anti-imperialistic and anti-British activities.⁵¹

Arab identity and blood continued to boil. The establishment of the state of Israel and the defeat of Arab states from that country in 1948 boiled their blood again until Nasser seized power in Egypt and dedicated himself to the Arab origin and cause. This was a tactic which benefited him and added to his popularity and contributed to the expansion of Arab sphere of influence⁵². During the nationalization of Suez Canal and the side events, Nasser emerged as an Arab hero or legend, and the process contributed to Arab nationalism. After Egypt adopted socialist policies and approached the communist bloc the Arabism was mixed with socialist, progressive and revolutionary aspirations.⁵³

This meant that Arabism was anti-imperialistic, anti-reactionary, revolutionary and leftist and this could prove dangerous to all traditional regimes and rightist regimes and those who were allied to the western imperialistic powers including Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms. It was exactly for this reason that during the peak of attacks by Radio of Cairo, when Nasser was very popular they blamed the Sheikdoms to be traitors to the Arab identity and aspirations.⁵⁴

Taking such points into mind, it must be added that Arabism was regarded as a serious threat against the six Sheikdoms and really threatened them. During the 60's only Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain could be the target of this kind of propaganda. Of course, it was Saudi Arabia that was the main target. The propaganda caused a series of problems for them. The other three Sheikdoms; namely, Qatar, Oman, and the UAE, had not reached such a level that such evil propaganda could leave remarkable impact on their situation.⁵⁵

Among these three countries only Kuwait had the strength to resist the

propaganda. This was because of their bitter experience with the threats and territorial claims of Abdolkarim Qassem. The Iraqi threats reminded Kuwait that they were Kuwaiti citizens and Arab ethnicity could be used as a weapon against them. They learnt to preserve Kuwaiti nationalism beside Arab nationalism and when necessary to give preference to the former. But Saudi Arabia and Bahrain had not such an experience and faced problems which their regimes that they solved by suppressing the people.⁵⁶

The defeat of Egypt in 1967 was in fact the defeat of Nasser's Arab nationalism. Since then, Arab identity (*Al-Qoumia al-Arabia*) was separated from Nasser's progressive, socialistic and revolutionary aspirations and situation was welcomed by the Sheikdoms.⁵⁷

In fact, they needed Arab ethnicity. This ideology gave them identity and history. It offered them pride and glory and converted them into a respectable country. Moreover, it connected them with a vast commonwealth of Arab world which had their weight in international and regional scenes.

Before 1967 neither the Sheikdoms could accept such an ideology nor the ideology was desired to accept them, but after the Arab defeat the problem subsided and the two sides who were willing to have closer ties with each other. The Sheikdoms were quite lucky because the moment they needed such an identity in its broad sense the identity gave up its political aspirations and was under their service. Surely, if the separation from political ambition had happened later they would face many problems.⁵⁸

Since then these two served each other, but of course, it benefited the Sheikdoms most. All the countries which had achieved independence tried to invent a history, a legacy and identify for themselves so that they could offer independent culture to their citizens and meanwhile, convince others that they had history and civilization. This was a necessity which always existed and will exist. As we said Arab nationalism was responding to such need because it relied on Arab/Islamic culture, civilization and history and claimed that these things belonged to all Arabs, whereas, instead of belong to Arabs such a civilization belonged to Islamic nations.

Secondly, all the Arabs had no equal share in the creation and perfection of such civilization. In fact, the inhabitants of the Saudi Peninsula which covered Saudi Arabia and all the Sheikhdoms had very little role in the shaping of such civilization and Islamic civilization is not visible in this region.⁵⁹

Besides, the Arabs in the Sheikhdoms needed such a legacy and accepted it because Arab identity had lost such elements and gave them problems and was unfavorable to them, and all of this happened at a time when they needed to actively step into the new world and the Arab world and international political scene.⁶⁰

It is true that the oil in many Arab countries was discovered earlier than 1967, but with the exception of Kuwait the oil wealth had not helped the other Sheikhdoms. Moreover, massive oil exploitation began in the 60's in these Sheikhdoms. It was during that decade that the wealth accumulated from oil flowed to the people outside the regime authorities and enriched the community.⁶¹

Alongside, these realities due to various reasons was more important that the center of political-gravity of the Arab world was shifted to the Sheikhdoms and the former center of political-gravity of Egypt lost its former glory, and with this new dignity it was necessary for the Sheikhdoms to adopt a far vigorous Arabic and international policy. In its new definition Arab identity was a very important instrument to help them enter the international and regional arena.⁶²

The other side of the story was that the various supporters of that ideology in the vast Arab world, who before 1967, because of the policies of the Sheikhdoms' leaders were dissatisfied and expressed their discontent in various forms, began to feel calm after 1967. They felt that the rulers of the Sheikhdoms, which they had opposed earlier, were in their service now. Besides, such a feeling of fellowship disarmed the opposition factions, which lived in the Sheikhdoms, and which had blamed their governments for having betraying their nation and Arab identity.⁶³

The next point is that such an ideology succeeded to satisfy the feeling for change and idealism of a generation which was being nurtured in an atmosphere of increased wealth and saturated their pride, aspiration for

change and adventurism and prevented them from turning to other doctrines and ideologies which would destabilize their countries.⁶⁴

Thus, the domestic and foreign policies of these countries were under the influence of the new ideology. In some Sheikhdoms, like Kuwait the development was faster and far vigorous while the people were less interested in the religious side of the matter. In a country like Saudi Arabia changing happens slowly and with caution the desire for change was less vigorous. Instead the regime put emphasis on its Wahhabi faith especially in their foreign policies.⁶⁵

Such a trend continued until 1973. UAE too found its independence in 1973. These Sheikhdoms gradually become richer and their people grew more modern. Those who had criticized the Sheikhdoms before 1967 and blamed them to have betrayed the Arab nation and Arab aspirations, now started to praise them and sought their help. Part of the Arab or perhaps all the Arab world was looking at the Sheikhdoms for help.⁶⁶

The inhabitants of the so-called countries including the masses, the intelligentsia, the elite and the regimes, welcomed such a change, and all of this led to their social solidarity and helped the Sheikhdoms to be involved in the developments in the Arab world and the region. Thanks to such a dignity they found universal honor and fame. These changes prepared the Sheikhdoms for a big leap after 1973.⁶⁷

Then the 1973 war happened and the Arab gained half a victory. But such half-hearted victory for those who had been humiliated in the worse manner in 1967 was considered a triumph. This was another indication of uselessness of Arab nationalism which Nasser had preached and which had ended up with the 1967 defeat and the success of an Arab world which favored Islam and Faysal's Saudi Arabia tried to represent it. The result was a stronger wish to shift the center of the Arab world to the Persian Gulf region. The Arab world felt that it needed the help of these countries not only for their wealth but because of their strategic position. Even extremist nationalists and leftists stopped to blame them to be a cause for shame for the Arabs. Instead, they treated them as a part of the dignity and universal credit of Arab world.⁶⁸

These developments have many reasons. The 1973 war led to the

boycott of the West and friends of Israel. The hero of that boycott was Faysal and other Sheikdoms. Although other Arab oil producing countries had joined the boycott since the main producers were among the Sheikdoms they were regarded as the creators and heroes of the boycott by Western observers.⁶⁹

This embargo not only worried governments but also the ordinary people, especially in the West. Although giant oil companies, governments and the media played a big role but without paying attention to that factor the world at large looked at the Arabs and specially to Saudi Arabia and the other Sheikdoms as the propagators of such crisis.⁷⁰

But there was another factor which contributed to this scenario, and that was the new dignity that the Sheikdoms had found. They were thought to be the masters of the new world. The West had to approach them and try to satisfy them in order to secure the smooth flow of oil. It was within that scope that we see a heated competition among industrialist oil-importing countries to move closer to the Sheikdoms and conclude oil contracts with them.⁷¹

Other things also happened alongside these events. Although the Europeans and other industrial countries had a historical picture about Arabs the main elements of such opinion was their new assessments of the Arabs which was shaped in these years i.e. from the moment that the Arabs and their oil was treated as an important element in people's daily life.⁷²

Since such picture was wholly influenced by their estimation of the six Sheikdoms they had the same opinion about all the Arabs. In other words they looked at the Arabs from the scope of their view of the Sheikdoms and this showed the dignity that the Sheikdoms had acquired after the 1973 war. In the first few years after the war such an opinion was expressed mostly by industrialized countries. Later on under the impression of the observers around the world resulting from the propaganda of industrialized states such an opinion and approach become universal.

What makes the Arabs distinct is the picture about the Sheikdoms that represent enormous wealth and spend extravagantly. Barrel, oil dyke,

ankle-long white garment (dishdasha), headdress and cord around headdress, camel, palm tree and desert are symbols of Arab dress. Whether assessed positively or negatively these things represent the significance of the Sheikhdoms in the public opinion and international politics.⁷³

Surely such things change the opinion of the inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms about themselves and the Arabs for them and such opinion about the Sheikhdoms gives them the idea that they represent the Arab world.

That which augmented their chance of being the center of political-gravity of the Arab world that was their generous donations to Islamic/Arabic institutes in the Arab world which is very extensive. These religious institutes have either been set up by the Sheikhdoms or all the budget was paid by the emirs.⁷⁴

To attend to all the subjects that surfaced after the 1973 war calls for further explanation and is beyond the scope of the present chapter. What matters is that religion and culture during the process of transit of these Sheikhdoms to their present social and political status has played an essential role to the extent that one might say that despite their rapid modernization the stability of these Sheikhdoms owes to their religion and culture.⁷⁵

After the 1973 war and the jump of oil prices four times before the war and due to the developments which were mentioned above the Sheikhdoms opened their doors to the outside world including the Arabs. The accumulation of massive wealth, the need to build necessary substructure facilities, the need for rapid urban development and town building, the need to attain a suitable rank in the world and among the Arabs, lack of fear from Arab regimes and Arab progressive and nationalist parties, adopting religious, cultural and Arabic policies commensurate to domestic and foreign conditions, social solidarity and optimism about future and Arab pride and their readiness to struggle for such pride, called for such measures.⁷⁶

In the meantime, the emergence of Arabs with strong religious and nationalistic inclinations was more impressive. Those who had religious inclinations or had been attracted to religious institutes or religious

training institutes were engaged in economic activities. The others who had nationalistic and progressive aspirations became attracted to magazines and newspapers and media, radio and television and publication agencies or universities or schools and cultural centers.⁷⁷

Of course, the case was not so in Saudi Arabia. From the beginning of the 60's, Saudi Arabia decided to set up religious and propaganda bases. At those times, they lacked necessary personnel and were compelled to hire professors and experts from abroad. Moreover, at that time they did not insist on Wahhabi and tradition which they started to emphasize later on. In the beginning they did not insist to promote Wahhabi principles or traditions because they neither needed such propaganda nor those who volunteered to join them accepted such methods.⁷⁸

Simultaneously with such demand and the opening of doors to the world a series of changes happened in some Arab countries which compelled many clerics and religious teachers to migrate or escape from their countries. The Saudi regime welcomed these teachers and scholars who had started to arrive since the 50's. Meanwhile, they had understood that the Indian Subcontinent and particularly Pakistan was an unbounded source of people who were easily satisfied, were fond of religion and were pious. They understood that they could easily hire both clerics and experts in other branches or either ordinary people who could be used for utility services.⁷⁹

Such a process gathered force in the 70's because of various reasons. First of all it was related to all the developments which were mentioned before. This called for the Saudi Arabia to quickly modernize itself and start to deal with the Arab world, Muslims and the world on a larger scale. In this process, the biggest share of contribution flowed to religious and Arabism but within its religious framework.

The ground was paved for such operation. Sacred Mecca and Medina were located in Saudi Arabia and always the number of Hajj pilgrims was on the increase. Due to Nasser's nationalistic policies and poverty of Egypt al-Azhar University, which was once the most important Sunni institution, had weakened. Other Islamic/historical centers such as Fas, Zeituneh, Qeiravan, Qarawiyyin, Timbuktu, Damascus, Baghdad, Aleppo and

Lucknow, Samarkand, Lahore and other religious towns in Africa and far east had lost their funds or under the pressure of the ruling regimes or the new civilization were unable to respond to the need of the Muslims.⁸⁰

Beside that there was no money shortage in the Saudi Arabia and all the needed money was being spent in keeping with the regime's policy both for domestic and outside uses. But contrary to the 50's and 60's the religious policy of the Saudi Arabia was more inclined to Wahhabi faith. Wahhabi faith could serve the regime in its best condition and it was employed so, although other factors were also involved.⁸¹

Anyhow the bliss that Saudi Arabia enjoyed after the 1973 war differed with countries such as Kuwait and other Sheikhdoms. Of course, there were a lot of similarities, but Saudi Arabia and the other Sheikhdoms followed different policies. For example in the Saudi Arabia a large number of Arabs and Muslims who had arrived for religious reasons turned to economic development activities and became rich. Later on, some of these migrants in Saudi Arabia and other Sheikhdoms accumulated enough wealth to feed the religious crusaders and subversive factions and contributed greatly to the spread of Salafi ideology.⁸²

This ample wealth led to important consequences. A country like Kuwait which before World War II was scared of a few imported teachers with Arab nationalistic aspirations, had employed philosophers and defenders of such ideology in its religious institutions and media. In other words the regime had both changed to ethnic Arabic and wanted to propagate such culture among the people.⁸³

Of course, such wealth in all the six Sheikhdoms operated differently. The arrival of new philosophers and thoughts and the mixture of the imported ideology with the beliefs of the local inhabitants and moderately free advertisement of such thoughts had given birth to a modern society whether such ideology was religious, political or nationalistic. Moreover, in many cases, the ideas found a chance to absorb supporters and become firmly established. One good example of such ideological pattern was the strong inclination of the press and part of Kuwaiti intelligentsia to Arabism. Their analyses, definitions and position especially during the 80's were influenced by this ideology. Interesting enough, Kuwait

represented the most extremist Arab nationalism before it was occupied by Iraq.⁸⁴

The significance of the developments in these countries during the 70's was because they had paved the way which shaped the future developments and changes. One can say the period of transit from traditional community to modern community in all these countries nearly ended in the 70's and become a platform for developments and changes in future époques.⁸⁵

The point is that religion and culture succeeded to help these excessively introverted and closed communities to bear calmly these rapid, pressing and fragile changes.

The Islamic revolution happened in Iran during the closing years of 80's. Despite their former anxiety the Sheikhdoms thought the revolution was a domestic matter in Iran and they tried to remain neutral, but due to the nature of the revolution and its reaction to the outside world it was no more possible for the Sheikhdoms to continue their neutral policy.⁸⁶

As we said in the previous chapter Iran's biggest problem was with Saudi Arabia. The revolution embodied a great portion of Arab progressive nationalism and was opposed to monarchy, conservative and rightist regimes. The most important ingredient of the Iranian revolution was its emphasis on an Islam which conflicted with the version of Islam which the Saudi regime was advertising. When the revolution broke out in Iran the Saudi regime was not as secluded and introverted than in the 30's 40's and 50's. It was present in the scene and was playing its role. The Saudi role was because of its religious status and credit and could not remain indifferent to countries which undermined its religious prestige.⁸⁷

Interesting enough, one of the goals of Islamic revolution was propagation of true Islam and combat with metamorphosed Islam used by despotic and reactionary rulers. Therefore, the struggle between Iran and the Saudi regime was natural and the Saudi regime resisted such overtures by Tehran. We have discussed this subject in detail in the previous chapter.

But the case was not so with the other Sheikhdoms. The leading incentive among the Sheikhdoms, especially in Kuwait, was Arab

nationalism. It was exactly for this reason that the extent of their hostility against Islamic revolution was proportional to the extent of commitment to Arab ethnicity. Countries like UAE and Oman understood and assimilated the Islamic revolution far calmly than Kuwait.⁸⁸

With the start of war between Iran and Iraq the position of the Sheikdoms against Iran become more hostile, but what we mentioned about the attitude of the Sheikdoms against Iran is true. The quality of Saudi resistance was often religious and by relying on their Arabic and ethnic identity. The extent of interference of religion and Arabism was proportional to their share of each sheikdom in their foreign policy. The case was quite different with regard to Kuwait. Kuwait was nationalist and lived within the framework of Arab ethnicity although Kuwait's reaction was echoed by their press, cultural institutions or intelligentsia instead of their formal foreign policy. The foreign policy of Bahrain was quite different especially for Iran. The Bahraini citizens were deeply affected by the conflict between the Shia and Sunni communities, although as a member of Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, Bahrain obeyed the general policies of the Sheikdoms.⁸⁹

But UAE, Qatar and Oman had nearly similar stance. This similar position was because they had similar assessment of Arabic identity and the role of such ideology in their countries and their foreign policy, although, due to their very memory of Iran's assistance in Oman, because Iran had helped to quell the Zofar uprising, had convinced their politicians to harbor a far opinion about Tehran.⁹⁰

But this chapter does not intend to analyze the method of reaction of the Sheikdoms for Islamic revolution and war between Iran and Iraq. What we want to prove is that during the 80's these Sheikdoms had discovered their identity with the help of religion and culture and they had a definite interpretation of their community and their interests and how to defend their values.

This means that only religion and culture was not the main factor for their stability during their transition to modern civilization; rather it could help them to manage their affairs after the transition and offer a suitable definition suited to their domestic and foreign policies in the Arab world

and in the international arena and to shape their domestic and foreign policies according to such values.⁹¹

The chaotic periods of the 80's ended in the Sheikhdoms in this manner. Their problem was not merely Iran and the 8-year war. The Persian Gulf was deeply agitated at that time. The big powers were present in the region and were competing with each other. There was the war of oil tankers, extensive presence of foreign warships, the question of formation of raid reactionary troops for occupation of oil wells and keeping the Hormoz Strait open. This was a subject which was being talked at the closing years of 70's. There was also talk about the consequences of occupation of Afghanistan by USSR and the rivalry of the two superpowers in the region, which added fuel to the tension.⁹²

Surely, these Sheikhdoms owed their stability and peace to the explicit field support of the United States and its allies and the indirect support of the Soviet Union. There is no question about that, but this was not a factor that could lead to their consolidation, especially because all these countries lacked the history of an independent state. Surely religion and culture had filled that vacuum and played a leading role in their development process and in shaping their identity and policies.

Kuwait was occupied by Iraq suddenly in the course of few hours in August 1990, and Baghdad threatened Saudi Arabia. This was a big shock. The sudden and unexpected invasion unsettled everything and the world and especially the Arab world and other countries in the region were placed in a very difficult position. The role of religion and culture was more complicated.⁹³

Religion and culture was an antidote for the six Sheikhdoms which could only be used only against a country like Iran which was not Arab, followed Shia faith and had bitter and sweet memories of historical encounters with the Arabs. But this antidote could not be used against a country like Iraq which the sheikhs believed to be the leader and hero that had defended their Arabic and Islamic (Sunni) identity and which had received the biggest aid from the Sheikhdoms. Under the new circumstances the religion/culture antidote changed to position against them because all the propaganda by Baghdad of protecting the Arabs and

Sunni faith and benefited the Saddam's regime.⁹⁴

This was the first difficult experience of the Arab ethnicity which the Sheikhdoms had accepted both from religious and nationalistic standpoints. The experience was so bitter that raised several doubts about the authenticity of their ideology, to the extent that they said what really existed were countries which spoke Arabic and there was no other motive to unite them and define common interests for them. This meant that neither they needed Arab ethnicity nor were committed to that cause.⁹⁵

Such an opinion reached momentum in Kuwait. Interesting enough, more than other Sheikhdoms had always resorted to its Arab ethnicity and had struggled toward that identity. But the Iraqi invasion had cast doubts in the other Sheikhdoms too.⁹⁶

As we said before the modernization of Saudi religion and culture differed with the other Sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf. Religion was given further wait in Saudi Arabia, but in the other Sheikhdoms Arab nationalism mingled with a sort of Gulf or local nationalism prevailed, although both nationalism and religion prevailed in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and religion also prevailed in other Sheikhdoms.

This blow the Sheikhdoms suffered during the occupation of Kuwait was not merely a military threat. The invasion had challenged the Sheikhdoms' identify and defined policies. For example when Iraq attacked Iran it never placed Iran into a similar crisis. In the same way Iran's reaction and liberation of its occupation territories and the presence of Iranian troops in Iraq during the war did not expose Iraq with such crisis. But the Sheikhdoms experienced the identity crisis.⁹⁷

And the crisis was related to Iraq's propaganda and the pretexts they had found to attack Kuwait. Such reasoning in the non-Arab and non-Muslims countries was not comprehensible, but it had many adherents in the Arab world which more than Iraqi citizens were backing Saddam Hussein. This meant that their religious and cultural modernization relating to their identity and foreign policy could not defend their interests at least in the Arab world. Although due to nearly different policies in Saudi Arabia and other Sheikhdoms, these two suffered from two different crises.⁹⁸

The Saudi regime succeeded to solve their problem by stressing on their official Wahhabi faith which had in fact found a nationalistic and Saudi form and served the interests of the Saudi regime. In the next chapters we will explain how the regime in Saudi Arabia created a sort of Saudi nationalism which covered all the Saudi citizens. This nationalism embodied their peculiar culture, pride, feelings and suspicions. These were features that covered even the opponents of the regime.⁹⁹

With the help of this nationalism which comprised of being Saudi citizenship and to be proud of being Saudi national against those who were trying to plunder their wealth or envied them, the Saudis were very suspicious of others. The regime succeeded to preserve its stability. For such people a nationalistic picture of Wahhabi faith was acceptable and satisfactory.

But in the meantime, this incident led to a big revolution in their Salafi and Wahhabi faiths and segregated these too from each other. This meant the birth and perfection of the ideology of anti-traditional and subversive theories which we will explain later on.

During the months that Kuwait was under Iraqi occupation the other Sheikdoms experienced a very difficult time, especially after the Gulf War. Many doubts were raised and some intellectuals and famous politicians commented about them, but practically there was no other policy to replace the former one. They couldn't escape from the fact that they were Arabs. They could look with suspicion to all Arabs and seek their security by seeking friendship with the West and the United States as their true allies. Nevertheless all the Arabs including the West considered them as Arabs.¹⁰¹

In addition, the factor which helped them to be present in the region and the world was their Arabic descent. Even if observers believe that a country like Kuwait is not an Arab state that country cannot adopt an active foreign policy because it lacks the minimum capacity as a sovereign state, but the sheikdom has the chance to better maneuver if it is considered as part of the Arab world.

The only result of the blow was to make the Sheikdoms more realistic and to some extent isolated. It did not make a big change in their model of

cultural modernization where it was related to their policy and identity, and their idea of reconsideration of policies years immediately after occupation gradually petered out. Once again these countries fell into the bosom of the Arab world. Those regimes, parties and individuals which had supported Saddam Hussein during the invasion of Kuwait apologized for Kuwait, and the Sheikdoms followed their former culture and identity— a model which satisfied the citizens and helped them to transit from the 90's with an acceptable level of calmness.

As far as it was related to their social stability a series of skirmishes happened in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The problem in Bahrain was because of the pressure that the Sunni regime was applying to the Shia citizens, and this subject must be examined within the framework of historical protest of the Shia Muslims and the discriminating attitude of the ruling regime, and it has little to do with the subjects we are treading.

But the case was different in Saudi Arabia. We see signs of religious discontent during the 90's in that country. The root of this discontent was in their Wahhabi faith which was the consequences of the 1990 war. The dissidents protested to Saudi authorities for having given quarter to western forces and permitting them to remain in the country after the war ended. Above all their attitude for West and the United States had changed. According to the Saudi version of Wahhabi faith it was unprecedented for the Saudi people to criticize the West and the United States especially because the Institution of *Ifta* in Saudi Arabia and Ibn Baz, its influential head, did not have such opinion. The protest also meant that a gap had occurred in the religious unity of the Saudi citizens which had always prevailed.¹⁰³

Almost, all the protestors were theologians who expressed their opinion in mosques during Friday prayer sermons, and this was unprecedented in the Saudi history. Of course the regime which, at that time, was in weak position at the time overlooked such protests, whereas in the past it reacted to such talk.¹⁰⁴

The 90's ended in this manner in the Sheikdoms. The most restless country during this decade among the Sheikdoms was Saudi Arabia. The Saudi regime tried as they had done during the 80's to send abroad

dissident religious citizens, most of which were young and were fanatic Muslims. In other words the regime didn't prevent them from moving to countries such as Sudan, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Caucasus and Central Asia, and indirectly encouraged the dissidents to leave the country. This exodus contributed greatly to the stability of the country.¹⁰⁵

A similar case happened in some other Sheikhdoms, although in a limited scale. There were volunteers in these Sheikhdoms who like the Saudi youth had gone to the above mentioned countries and some of them had become theoretical and operational leaders, but contrary to Saudi Arabia in the other Sheikhdoms did not indirectly facilitate such exit. Religious zeal and ardor had incited the dissidents and they voluntarily traveled to these countries to fight.¹⁰⁶

There was another point too. Due to internal and external reasons during the 90's the Saudi Arabia was cautious to move close to the West and the United States¹⁰⁷. The presence of foreign troops in the country was creating problems. One reason that impelled the theologians to protest during this period was the presence of foreign troops. Besides the natural dignity and religious credit of that country which housed the holy shrines was in danger among the Muslims, and this made the regime more reserved and isolated. This led to misunderstanding and tension between the United States and Saudi Arabia which compelled the U.S. troops to leave the country in the end.¹⁰⁸

But the other Sheikhdoms were not cautious about this subject. Moreover, they remembered the bitter experience of occupation of Kuwait and there were almost no Arab observer who would censure their close tie with the United States and the West. The inhabitants, the intelligentsia and the leaders of the Sheikhdoms had understood that they needed western support and this impelled them to adopt a more open policy, because the Soviet Union had collapsed and there was no dangerous rivalry between superpowers.¹⁰⁹

Of course, the Sheikhdoms opened their doors in economical and political fronts and they seldom were open in their culture and behavior. The strong ethnic identity along with Arab pride and glory in which Islam was the main ingredient and was a sort of return to Islam and Islamic

identity in the Arab and Islamic world prevented them from opening their culture widely. But they fearlessly resorted to far open policy and far pro-western policies. And they did the same thing with regard to their economy. They decided to try an open economy.¹¹⁰

Qatar and UAE were the two Sheikhdoms that had adopted such policy. After the present leader of Qatar was replaced, Qatar moved out of seclusion and entered the regional and international scenes ardently and boldly and built many institutions and facilities which were necessary to adopt such open policy starting with Aljazeera TV Network to the Qatar Airways. The United Arab Emirates too started to change its policy and converted itself as the most important commercial zone in the region. The conditions in Iran and Iraq and the various sanctions which had been imposed against them, and the endless thirst for Central Asian states and even Russia to buy western and Asian products, paved the way for the rapid growth of UAE. The UAE built necessary facilities to embark upon active trade as a big dealer between producers/exporters and consumers. But in these dealings too they were cautious in exchange of culture and behaved cautiously with the foreigners.¹¹¹

The fact is that this general feature of the Sheikhdoms during the 90's i.e. cautious behavior and ethics played an important role in their social stability. One might say that this is the general feature of the Arab world, but observing ethics in these rich countries, which are undergoing big and rapid changes, was a far important matter.¹¹²

The 90's ended in this manner in the Sheikhdoms until the September 11 incident. This incident surprised the world. Shortly after that the Arab world and specially Saudi Arabia and other Sheikhdoms were put under heaviest pressure. The pressure was increased after the defeat of Taliban and discovery of some secrets about the plans of Al-Qaeda.

According to the Americans and the West, the political, social, cultural, religious and educational systems in these countries were blamed for giving birth to Al-Qaeda and of course they had many reasons to substantiate their argument. As a consequence the pressure for change on the Arab states for which it was increased and it confused the Arab regimes in the Sheikhdoms.¹¹³

During the 90's, the Sheikhdoms had voluntarily turned to West and owed their stability and security to Western support and did all within their power to approach the West, but suddenly they faced with severe and poisonous censure from the West. The bigger problem was that they had no convincing answer to such allegations and this made them weak and defensive.¹¹⁴

Here, we mean the religious and cultural model which the Sheikhdoms had adopted two decades before the end of the twentieth century, and what reaction that model made after September 11 and what they achieved.

In this connection like other critical moments, the Saudi regime quickly resorted to their Wahhabi ideology, but the Wahhabi religious network and Saudi inhabitants reacted so violently that, in many cases, the Saudi regime tried to control or deny such violent reaction.¹¹⁵

Perhaps it was the first time that the reaction of the Saudi inhabitants against foreign criticism and threat was far serious than the regime's reaction. It was because the Saudi citizens believed that not only their regime but themselves, their identity and religion was being insulted, humiliated and blamed. Such public discontent increased the reputation of Ben Laden and Al-Qaeda, and hatred of the United States reached its peak. This reaction was beyond the regime's expectation and the regime was compelled to control it. The religious organizations and figures and even officials in touch with the regime also reacted in the same manner.¹¹⁶

The reason for such severe reaction against the West was not the sharp criticism of the West after September 11 catastrophe. Criticism against the United States and hostility towards West and complaint against the regime's close ties with the United States had begun in 90's. Without such background the reaction of the Saudi inhabitants would have not been so severe and harsh. The reaction to protect their religion and identity and Arabic and national pride consolidated the people and incited the religious institutions to back the regime. Such support strengthened the regime's religious position. Thanks to such strong support the regime succeeded to suppress the subversive figures in the country some of which had bombed several districts in Riyadh. Surely without such strong support the regime would face serious problems.¹¹⁷

Before these blasts Al-Qaeda was very popular and influential among the people and those attached to religious institutions. Even Taliban partisans were popular and influential among the Saudi nationals during the 90's Saudi Arabia was one of the countries that offered monetary assistance because of the nature of their faith and ideology. And the Saudi regime could not resist their influence.¹¹⁸

No doubt, these organizations committed big mistakes by bombing residential quarters and the Saudi regime made maximum benefit from their abortive acts, but aside from this mistake a sort of closeness and harmony started between the Saudi regime, citizens and the religious community, which was the main reason behind the isolation of Al-Qaeda. Thus, the religious policy of the Saudi regime once more rescued them from a dangerous crisis. It also made the Wahhabi sect more stable and balanced and prevented the sect from turning to extremist measures to old tradition.¹¹⁹

Other Sheikhdoms too were facing similar problems. The pressure on them also was unbearable, but they had not the strength and capacity of the Saudi regime to solve their problems. The western pressure actually aimed to topple the regimes in the Sheikhdoms and free the inhabitants from their traditional culture and allow the inhabitants (men and women) to join the global community and adopt western culture, values, and standards.

From that standpoint the pressure was not only against the regimes. The West had no problem with the regimes because it had protected western interests. The problem was that the regimes protected an ancient culture, value and tradition and they thought that they had to change the regimes because the regimes in the Sheikhdoms did not want to respect their culture and values.¹²⁰

The regimes, the intellectuals, the educated class and the masses in the Sheikhdoms had understood this western attitude. Meanwhile the tone used by Washington and the West was so harsh that the inhabitants of the Sheikhdoms felt their identity, religion, tradition, and national and Arab pride was being ridiculed, and they could not suffer such insult.

All these things impelled the Sheikhdoms to react but their reaction was milder as compared to Saudi Arabia because Saudi Arabian citizens were

more proud and sensitive to such criticism. As a result the little Sheikhdoms had to bear the brunt of the attack and for this reason they lessened their support of Al-Qaeda.

Such public reaction against the West contributed to their social solidarity and impelled them to back their regimes. Of course, the regimes tried to make a series of reforms without changing their cultural model and offered more freedom to women, and since the reform adapted to their culture they succeeded in that field. Thus the liberal model succeeded to rescue the Sheikhdoms from a dangerous whirlpool.¹²¹

The next important incident was the second war between the United States and Iraq. This war started under circumstances completely different as compared to the first war. Moreover, the consequences of September 11 blasts had made the six Sheikhdoms so firm that the war did not cause much problem for them.

Interesting enough, for various reasons, protest against the war in industrialized countries was not less vehement than in Arab countries and the six Sheikhdoms. What was important that the war ended in peace and little reaction. That which mattered was the consequences of the war and not the war itself.¹²²

That which provoked Washington to war with Saddam Hussein contrary to widespread opposition in the world was that with the fall of Saddam a new page would turn in the history of the Middle East and after the collapse of the regime they could build a regime in Iraq which would adapt their model and standards. After that the new state would serve a model for the Middle East to become democratic and pro-Western, free from fanatic religious tendencies and fundamentalism and all the factors that had Al-Qaeda's ideology.

The U.S. started the war with this intention and naturally after the victory Washington was trying to enforce its goals. Therefore, they started to pressure the Arab states and the six Sheikhdoms once again for reform. They wanted to rebuild these countries in every field and demanded the regimes to introduce a series of quick reforms according to their recommendations. Naturally the Arab regimes resisted such demands.¹²³

The biggest resistance against the West came from Egypt and Saudi

Arabia. Saudi Arabia was actually resisting on its behalf and on behalf of the other Sheikhdoms. Despite such resistance, the Saudi regime made a series of reforms. Many meetings were held and various groups were invited to these meetings under the instruction of King Abdullah. Many subjects were discussed in these meetings and a series of privileges were granted to Shia and Zeidi minorities.¹²⁴

Such innovative measures were taken in Saudi Arabia and not in other Sheikhdoms because with the exception of Bahrain the others Sheikhdoms did not suffer the problems which the Saudi regime was suffering. Although the government in Bahrain was clannish and traditional, it was acceptable to the citizens and the dissident groups were not as large as in Saudi Arabia.

Of course, conditions were different in Bahrain. The majority of the citizens were Shia Muslims, who, from the very beginning, had been oppressed and discriminated by the Sunni rulers. The regime knew that any freedom allowed to the Shia community would disturb the balance in the country and they would lose their power of controlling the dissidents. They therefore, continued their iron-fist rule and such a treatment of the Shia sect was ignored by the United States perhaps by Saudi pressure.¹²⁵

The fact is that the innovative steps taken by Saudi regime pacified the United States and the West. It gave the Saudi inhabitants more vigor and more hope to dissidents and a series of reforms were made, of course within the framework of people's capacity and proportional to the demands of the dissidents who were living in a framework of traditional and reserved community.¹²⁶

And this is an important point. The demands of dissident groups and individuals both in Saudi Arabia and other Sheikhdoms are deeply influenced by their communities and their native culture. These demands, in its radical form, are completely different compared to the demands of dissidents in other third world countries and even Arab states. These demands are the most important factors for stability of these countries. Therefore the reforms in Saudi Arabia did not disturb their social stability and balance. Even one can say that the reform made King Abdullah more popular and the people thought he was the best man to make the

reforms.¹²⁷

Alongside these actions and reactions other incidents happened which was related to the U.S. war in Iraq. As we said the Sheikdoms had no definite position for the war and even the Arab world had such a neutral position. But after the fall of the Baath regime in Baghdad both the people and government reacted to the change.

According to the Arabs, Iraq had been occupied. The things that the U.S. said confirmed such an image and the hatred of Arabs against U.S. behavior which had started after September 11 spread everywhere. Under such circumstances Al-Qaeda and its ideology was greatly favored, and the atmosphere of ill feeling, after occupation of Afghanistan, by the Soviet Union in the 80's was rekindled with one difference. Now there was an extremist organization like Al-Qaeda which resorted to subversive deeds and tried to return to traditional Islam and the supporters of the organization chanted their slogans in domestic and satellite TV channels or recorded in the Internet.¹²⁸

Iraq was a new scene to combat with those so-called modern crusaders. This feeling was common to the Arabs from Mauritania and Morocco and the shores of Sea of Oman, and many young Arab hotheads hurried to Iraq and participated in different types of destructive and subversive operations. In the beginning they were fighting the U.S. troops and the U.S. allies, but soon the war spread among the civilians and against the Shia. Al-Qaeda's pretext was that the domestic war would lead to insecurity and prevent the Americans to achieve their end.¹²⁹

But this was part of the scenario. Part of the excitement of the war had spread into Iraq, but a great part of the flame had spread into the Arab and Islamic world and even outside the Arab world and had incited them to set up guerrilla organizations. These guerrilla organizations were either Al-Qaeda branches or pursued by al-Qaeda ideology which consisting of bombing or suicide operations. This led to the formation of various camps in the modern world which had a big role in subsequent operations.¹³⁰

Such ideology boiled the blood of volunteers in Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms. Although the Saudi regime and its religious organizations and even official organizations favored the ideology and operation they

did not want them to go so far that would make them fight with the regime itself, because their idea was such that would allow them to reverse their stance and attack the Saudi regime. They therefore, tried to calm the atmosphere and send the extremist partisans to Iraq.¹³¹

In between, there were the rich people and scholars who, fearlessly, helped such extremist organizations and fed the Al-Qaeda operatives and all other subversive partisans in Iraq. There were other clerics who provoked and encouraged the Sunni youth to fight the Shia Muslims and Shia institutions, but the Saudi regime did not react to such operation. Such ideas were sponsored in other Sheikhdoms also but on a lesser scale.¹³²

Such was the general public in the Arab world and among the Sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf region. The Sheikhdoms favored such operation but did not express their joy openly. For various reasons they did not want the U.S. to form a new government in Iraq and did not officially recognize the new regime under the pretext that their citizens and press objected to such system.¹³³

Here, we are talking about the six Sheikhdoms. The Sheikhdoms did not like to see a popular regime and parliament elected by the people in Iraq. It was not because the idea would stretch to the Sheikhdoms. It was because of the Shia Majority in Iraq. They feared that the Shia majority would seize power in Iraq. It was the first time in the history of Iraq that the Shia Muslims were seizing power and such a government would upset the religious/political balance in the region. Moreover, they were afraid that the Shia government in Iraq would embolden Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to rise against their governments.¹³⁴

Another problem was expansion of Iranian influence in Iraq. They thought that once the Shia majority seized power in Iraq it would increase Iran's influence and the consequences would be dangerous. According to the Sheikhdoms, it will remain stable only if there would be a balance of power between Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. And a disturbance that balance would make the region insecure and the unrest would spread to all Sheikhdoms. Moreover, they were afraid that under Iran's leadership the Shia Muslims would wholly change the scales in the region.¹³⁵

Of course, there was a latent reason which neither the Sheikhdoms nor other Arabs would speak about it. Deep in their hearts, the Arabs and even those allied to the United States did not want Washington to achieve victory in Iraq because first of all the defeat would lessen U.S. pressure on Arab regimes for reform and secondly would discourage Washington and the U.S. would loose hope of making changes in the Middle East.¹³⁶

As mentioned before immediately after the victory of Islamic revolution the Saudi regime began criticizing the Shia faith for various reasons. They maintained that the Shia sect was unrelated to Islam and was in fact the enemy of Islam, and they continued such propaganda during the 80's and 90's. They were only launching propaganda against the Shia Muslims and were trying to defame and isolate Iran, and if they censured other Shia Muslims it was because they thought they were affiliated to Iran.¹³⁷

Besides Iran and Saudi Arabia had other rivals some of which were dangerous including Iraq, although it was an Arab country and had a Sunni government during Saddam's time. But in their new ethnic ideology it was their hostile position against the Shia sect that matter - whether they seized power in Iraq or emerged as a big majority, or political parties or figures.¹³⁸

Such a hostile policy against the Shia reflected the social, religious and historical facts in Saudi Arabia. Their policy had not been formed in a vacuum and had its reasons. The political and non-political developments in the recent years especially after the fall of Saddam had made the Saudis more hostile. Of course the Saudi religious branch was more active and the Sunni clerics and religious organizations were adding fire to the flame.¹³⁹

Although the new policy annoyed and further isolated the big Shia minority in Saudi Arabia, it was favored by the people and especially by the orthodox people and such a support contributed to the stability of the regime to the extent that the regime's expression of inclination towards Iran and the Shia Muslims was interpreted by the people and Saudi clerics as a sort of political tactic and that deep in their hearts, the Saudi authorities were hostile against all Shia Muslims and Iran.¹⁴¹

Despite the U.S. pressure on Riyadh to maintain active diplomatic tie with Baghdad as an important neighbor the policy of Saudi Arabia for Iraq

was influenced by its sectarian policy. For a regime like Saudi Arabia which owned its security to the United States after Second World War occupation of Iraq by the U.S. was not a case to worry about. In fact, Saudi Arabia was satisfied with the occupation because Iraq would pose no danger to them.¹⁴¹

Therefore, the reason for reluctance of Riyadh to have formal diplomatic ties with Iraq was not because of the reasons mentioned above, especially after the fall of Saddam when Riyadh had established close ties with Sunni institutes, groups and personalities in Iraq and granted much money to them, although during Saddam's rule and during the first and second war with the U.S. Baghdad had severely criticized the Sunni Iraqis for being traitors to the Islamic and Arab nation.

The real reason for their reluctance was because of their sectarian policies which they had intensified and was the determined factor in their regional policy upon which they had based their policies including taking a position towards Bahrain, towards military intervention therein and their hostile stance against Syria.

Now let's see what was the position of the other Sheikhdoms about the fall of Saddam Hussein? As a whole the Sheikhdoms had not united position for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Kuwait wholeheartedly supported Washington and was ready to offer all sorts of assistance to Washington and its allies. But the other Sheikhdoms were worried about the consequences of the war although when the war started the sheikhs secretly offered military assistance to the U.S. troops.

Contrary to Kuwait neither the people nor the regimes in the other Sheikhdoms welcomed the fall of Saddam Hussein. The influence of Arabism in recent decades and the humiliating method of treatment of Saddam Hussein by Washington and Saddam's supporters had insulted their Arab pride like other Arab states, although they were cautious enough not to betray their ill feeling and criticize Washington.

Kuwait welcomed the new conditions, the constitution and the elections in Iraq, but the other Sheikhdoms looked at such development with suspicion. Even Qatar which had adopted open politics (which pleased Washington) was averse to the changes in Iraq. In fact the reaction of the

Sheikhdoms resembled that of Saudi Arabia. The only difference was that Riyadh was looking at the matter from religious and strategic points of view but the other Sheikhdoms were looking at the matter from sectarian and strategic position.

All the Arab countries like Egypt and Jordan were worried like Saudi Arabia. These countries were all worried from the same reason and since they did not possess Saudi Arabia's wealth they were even more worried. They were afraid that Saudi Arabia or the other Sheikhdoms would not be able to help them and were looking for a solution for their anxiety.

Their biggest headache was Iran and they think that Iran has an expansionist policy. Among them Bahrain was an exception; its policy was affected by social, religious, and historical division. Qatar was trying to improve its ties with Iran despite the fact that Saudi Arabia and other Sheikhdoms did not approve such overtures. Oman had historical and intimate ties with Tehran and had no problem with its Shia minority. The country's small Shia population had always intimate ties with the regime and Oman tried to operate as a medium between Tehran and the six Sheikhdoms. The UAE too was trying to exercise a more practical foreign policy in keeping with modern requirements.

But despite difference of attitude towards Iran, the Sheikhdoms had common points as well. All the Sheikhdoms except Kuwait and to some extent Bahrain like other Arabs hated U.S. occupation of Iraq and looked at Washington as aggressor and believed that the government installed in Baghdad after elections was unlawful and they supported the subversive operation of Al-Qaeda and other subversive organizations in Iraq and even offered financial aid to some of these organizations.

The policy of the Arab governments for the new conditions in Iraq reflected their culture and Arab identity that was hostile.

Such an attitude continued until a series of subversive steps were taken by Al-Qaeda in Qatar and Oman. This was a warning sign for the Sheikhdoms because they were too weak to cope with such threats if it was continued on a larger scale. As a result both the people and the press in the six Sheikhdoms immediately withdrew their support from al-Qaeda, but their anxiety continued as before.

Of course, the consequence of such decision was more perilous in the small Sheikdoms than in Saudi Arabia. There was Shia minority in all these Sheikdoms and there was a Shia majority in Bahrain. Therefore, they could not insist on their sectarian policy because such a policy was likely to destabilize them.

Although such sectarian policy in the Sheikdoms satisfied the Sunni majority and encouraged them to back their regimes, it annoyed the big and small Shia minorities. In fact, the minorities existed and were part of the people in these countries and the Shia Muslims in Bahrain held the majority. Probably, it was the first time that their cultural and Arab sectarian model was undermining their stability and dividing their inhabitants.

The problem of division of faiths exists and has been aggravated during the Arab Spring. The problem is related to their model of government and not to side issues. Each sheikdom is trying to solve the problem one way or other. Probably Kuwait has been the most successful among the Sheikdoms because of its system of government and the fact that Kuwait possesses a big Shia minority. But the final solution for such social division depends on a change in the above mentioned model and the things which will happen during the ongoing Arab Spring.

Besides these problems, other problems were surfacing in the international and regional level which worried the Sheikdoms. The impact of presence of the United States and its allies in Iraq was beyond their expectation and they had understood that they could not change the conditions in Baghdad in keeping with their models and standards.

Although, George Bush was reelected in 2004 he had changed his policy to Iraq and the Arab world. During the contemporary history of the United States President Bush was in unpopular stream and the Arabs treated him as their enemy. Besides domestic and foreign reasons and the change of U.S. policy had other ends in view. Washington had decided to display a positive image of its presence in the region especially to the people in the Middle East.

This called for a milder attitude towards the Arab regimes. Saudi Arabia and the other Sheikdoms were now relieved, but Washington did

not forget its drive for reform. Now they pushed their reform plan in the form of sympathy and moderation and did not apply too much pressure to Arabs to expedite the reforms.

The anxiety of the former years had subsided. On the other hand by resorting to a series of terrorist operations in Europe and Muslim countries Al-Qaeda had lost its former prestige to some extent among the people. The steps taken by Saudi Arabia and its religious propaganda against Al-Qaeda contributed to this lack of support. In different TV programs the Saudi clerics said that the steps taken by Al-Qaeda were against Islamic teachings and Wahhabi principles and their tactics proved very successful.

In between, conditions were ripe for Iran to become more active in the region. Iran had emerged as the most influential country in the region. According to the Arab regimes and the Sheikhdoms Iran was considered as a danger. These things happened during the second part of the first decade of the 21st century. At that time, many Arabs did not consider Iran as a threat but their regimes and the Wahhabi religious organizations and Salafi faith were launching anti-Iranian propaganda.

Meanwhile, during these years the United State, Israel and several European powers were continually threatening Tehran and it was natural for Tehran to react to such threats and adopt a far stronger defense policy. The military buildup in Iran was annoying and frightening the countries in the region, but they were unable to do anything important against Iran. Iran was resisting foreign pressure by all means and nuclear technology was at the top of its programs

The balance of power in the region which had always been fragile was changing. According to the Arabs, Iran was playing the leading role to destabilize the region. But Iran's role was not only political or military. The Arabs felt that Tehran was seeking to expand the Shia faith which could pave the way for political expansion. As a result they gradually began to resist against Iran's expansionist attitude with religious means but often with political ends in mind.

This meant that the question of Shia-Sunni had been changed from religious dispute and had become political dispute and rivalry. It was under such tense atmosphere that Hezbollah began its 33-day war against

Israel. In fact Hezbollah had started the war and such boldness by a militia group surprised and angered many observers.

Saudi Arabia openly and sharply criticized Hezbollah. The Saudi regime believed it was a childish adventure and was frightened of the consequences of the war. Nearly all the other Arab regimes showed a similar reaction although the Sheikdoms showed a far milder stance.

No one believed that Hezbollah could resist Israeli retaliation and emerge victorious, but they emerged victorious. Many TV stations including Aljazeera gave full coverage to the 33-day Hezbollah resistance which had surprised all observers. In all the former encounters between the Arabs and Israel including the four previous wars and side skirmishes it was Tel Aviv that had emerged as absolute winner, but the 33-day war was quite different.

The tough resistance and victory had many religious consequences. The Arab world and specially the Arab youth celebrated the victory and Hezbollah enjoyed its peak of popularity. The Hezbollah was a Shia military organization and was allied to Tehran and had received inspiration from the Islamic Revolution and such a victory was unbearable to Wahhabi and Salafi faiths and the whole Arab regimes. The 33-day war added fuel to the religious and political rivalry between the Sunni and Shia camps and made things more complicated.

As to religious rivalry Saudi authorities were the main players and they had a stronger role in political rivalry. The religious and political rivalry had affected the Arab world and the Persian Gulf littoral states especially their media. The main figures were the religious scholars, students, religious institutions, political elites, and the intelligentsia. Then the rivalry spread to the youth and the masses.

Such an ebb and flow deepened the gap between the rival sectarian camps in the Arab world and especially in the six Sheikdoms – something which had started a long time ago. The tone of the press and media changed according to the conditions of the time. Such a propaganda gradually gathered force until the eruption of the Arab Spring when the crisis in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and even Syria was analyzed within Arab ethnic framework.

The religious and cultural model of Saudi Arabia was capable to stabilize the Sheikhdoms before the eruption of unrest that throughout the Arab world. Of course these two changed drastically, but the attitude remained as it was.

The biggest headache for the Sheikhdoms is that the demand of the Shia population in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain is similar to the demand in other Arab countries. The movement for freedom and justice which has started throughout the Arab world continues in the Sheikhdoms like former years. This is not a case protest. It is a widespread and Arabic protest within the Arab world and the protestors are part of that Arab world. They are protesting with the same ideology and goals and often with the same methods. Therefore, blaming the dissidents like before is neither understandable nor possible, although the regimes are launching such propaganda.

Although after fall of Saddam Hussein and the seizing of power by the Shia majority in Iraq, there were people who used to say that real Muslim were Sunni Arabs and the Shia Arabs are not true Arabs and have Iranian root, such claims conflicted with historical realities. The Shia Arabs in Iraq are the most genuine Arabs who emerged in the heart of Saudi Arabia and migrated to Iraq at the beginning of Islam and during subsequent centuries.

Despite so many supporters of such idea who contributed to the existing Saudi ethnic ideology they have always insisted on their mistaken and invalid views and whenever their Shia populated regions have revolted they have threatened to expel them to Iraq.

As we mentioned before after the Arab spring and unrest in some Shia-populated regions the religious and Arabic ethnic model of the six Sheikhdoms is facing a big challenge. Now, the Sheikhdoms have the wealth, capability and propaganda machine to control the unrest, but it is very unlikely for them to control the situation in the future in the same way that they controlled in the past.

Of course, one cannot ignore the fact that contrary to Tunis, Egypt and Libya the unrest in these Sheikhdoms cannot stretch to other regions. As a result, although, the Shia protest will disrupt the social solidarity in these

countries, it will encourage the Sunni population to give more support to their regimes. Instead, the regimes are trying to offer more privileges to the Shia inhabitants and are shaping their social, economical, military and security policies in a manner that might impel the inhabitants to rely on their Sunni allies.

5

From Conservatism to Extremism: Wahhabism and Saudi Foreign Policy

Many factors contributed to the creation and finalization of different Islamic-revolutionary ideologies. Starting from international and political factors up to social, economical and industrial growth, educational and youth issues, to individual liberties, human dignity, despotism, tyranny and corrupt regimes that were supported by the great powers.¹

These factors as well as matters related to culture, civilization and identity and humiliation and threat of other cultures by foreign intervention, occupation, propaganda of the glory of ancient Arab civilization and the inglorious contemporary history of the Arabs have all contributed to the birth of such ideologies. But we must not forget the influence of religion and religious concept in this regard.²

Subversive and devastating ideology has been born from Salafi and Hanbali faiths which are instinctively very conservative. During the contemporary history the Wahhabi ideology has been the true representative of Salafi and Hanbali doctrines, although in modern times all Salafi and Hanbali followers have not been Wahhabi Muslims. However, as is explained below more than other faiths the Wahhabi faith represents Salafi and Hanbali doctrines.³

In addition, the Wahhabi faith became the ideology of the regime in

Saudi Arabia from the moment it was established. Therefore, one cannot study the developments in that faith without taking into account Saudi domestic and foreign policies. In fact due to this reason and many other reasons we must understand the political developments in Saudi Arabia to better understand why this ideology was born.⁴

Considering the above points perhaps in order to better understand the method of creation and growth of subversive ideology we must examine the subject within the framework of Wahhabi faith and its interaction with the Saudi regime.⁵

Here, we do not want to evaluate the meaning and features of Wahhabi doctrine from a theological point of view. Wahhabi faith is the continuation of a tendency that existed in the history of Islam. The problem with this faith is that its followers have had a hard understanding of Islam and they chose for the literal meanings of the holy texts. In many cases, as the Hanbali Muslims have tried to carefully and completely follow the religious teachings and instructions, it made them acknowledge the religion with caution and hardness. The natural result of these premises was non-provability of the intellect and even suspension of reason. Even when the Qur'an insists on the provability of reason and ask to apply it, the Hanbali scholars misinterpret all these verses to justify their inclination.⁶

Such attitude made the Hanbalis exceedingly cautious in their beliefs and behavior because they were afraid lest they would fail to discharge their religious duties correctly. In fact we can see the same behavior in other religions when we know that jurisprudence has many commandments and there are enough religious books to substantiate them.⁷

Ibn Hanbal who laid the foundation of the Hanbali faith is a strong adherent of Salafi tenets. He was likewise very cautious in the enforcement of religious instructions. He was a God-fearing hermit, cautious and an anchorite. Many Hanbali scholars were like this; they were very cautious and recluse. But there was another fact. Their commitment to religious edicts impelled some of them to react to anything which was thought to be a heresy (*bid'ah*) and contrary to Islamic code (*shari'ah*), and this attitude provoked them to take violent steps and

harshly punish the sinners or nonconformists. Of course in such cases politics was the main mechanism and they served the politicians knowingly and unknowingly.⁸

Another point for consideration is that the energy accumulated from religious zeal made them ready to blindly accept every risk. Practically, they could not distinguish right from wrong and would be easily employed by malicious politicians for evil purposes. When an authority proved them that he was committed to Hanbali and Salafi codes (even on the surface) the people blindly obeyed and served him. This is something which has always happened in the course of history and still continues. The only thing the malicious leader needed was to know how to incite the feeling of religious leaders. After that they blindly obeyed his commands.⁹

The same is true with all Salafi, Hanbali and Wahhabi faiths. In their definition of Islam, reason and logic cannot help them comprehend the religion but is a preventive factor even. In the same way, they give no weight to spirituality and mystic understanding of the religion. According to the Hanbali faith, religion is reduced to a series of rigid and dry codes which one must accept and enforce without consulting reason. Of course, such system of teaching religious codes impairs one's faculty of understanding and changes his mentality, and often the convert becomes fanatic and unbearable, although sometimes the rigid commandments make the believer cautious, ascetic and isolated.¹⁰

As to which of these features is the dominating factor to depend upon social conditions or better to say fear of religious threat. Fanaticism, violence, cautiousness and seclusion occur together. These conditions are imposed from outside and makes the believer to either incline to fanaticism or seclusion.¹¹

For the first time in history, Wahhabism was preached by Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahhab in Najd region. Abdul Wahhab angered the theologians of the region, including his father and brother. These clerics protested to his teachings and wrote articles in this regard. Such reaction continued until Abdul Wahhab met Bin Saud, the emir of Dariya, and invited him to his faith. Bin Saud accepted Abdul Wahhab's teachings and the two concluded an agreement to the effect that the emir should propagate the

Wahhabi faith and Abdul Wahhab should support the emir under all circumstances. In this manner, Wahhabi faith became the official faith of the Bin Saud, the emir of Dariya.¹²

But the question was far important than official acceptance of Wahhabi faith in a small region like Najd. The question was that those who did not follow the new faith and did not believe or act according to Wahhabi teachings were considered infidels; therefore, the Wahhabi converts had to fight with them. The Wahhabis had the right to fight the heathens, kill them, confiscate their property and enslave their women and children. This was the main tool that helped Bin Saud and his new faith to spread.¹³

Najd was an arid waste. The entire Saudi Arabia is arid but Najd has the worst climate and is far dry than Hijaz Province which houses the holy shrines. Moreover, the two holy shrines brought much wealth and blessing to its people. Meanwhile the inhabitants of Hijaz were always in touch with other people in Saudi Peninsula for the sake of Hajj pilgrimage.¹⁴

But Najd was not so prosperous. The people in Najd were hungry, rough, barbarians, and uncivilized. Endless skirmishes between clans in that region had destroyed their security. The inhabitants of Najd were living in unbearable conditions and knew that the people in other regions (especially in Hijaz) were leading a comfortable life. This encouraged them to attack their wealthy neighbors, but their conquest was temporary and brief because they had not enough fighters to control the conquered regions.¹⁵

Wahhabi ideology was introduced under such circumstances. The rigid and dull teachings suited the mentality of rough Bedouin tribesman and served as an ideology to them to strike war with others, even if Muslims. Under the pretext of imposing Wahhabi tenets they plundered the property of their enemies, enslaved their women and children and committed all sorts of atrocities.¹⁶

This was the real reason for the success of the Wahhabi faith in the beginning. The new ideology helped the Najd clans to unite under Bin Saud and the fanatic, cruel and hungry fighters attacked the rich neighboring regions under the pretext that they did not follow the true Islamic canons and were heathens. They said it was their duty to convey

the message of monotheism and to embark upon a ceaseless war against the nonconformists.¹⁷

Such attacks which were carried out in the most violent manner and it enriched the Najd citizens and encouraged them to continue their devastative wars to accumulate wealth they attacked all the neighboring regions and even caravans of Hajj pilgrims. These regions were dominated by the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman Sultan was compelled to interfere when they complained to him¹⁸. He ordered Mohammad Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt, to put an end to the revolt. Mohammad Ali Pasha sent Ismail Pasha, his son, to Arabian Peninsula. The Wahhabi converts were beaten and routed and Bin Saud was arrested, sent to Istanbul and was executed.¹⁹

The Wahhabi revolt was curbed in this manner and the Wahhabi converts remained silent and scattered for a century because they had no incentive (or an efficient leader) to resurrect. The defeat was so severe that for a long time no Wahhabi convert dared to speak about the new faith.²⁰

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Abd al-Aziz, a descendent of Bin Saud clan decided to return to Najd and avenge his father's blood from the neighboring tribes. Bin Saud, who was born in Kuwait, returned to Najd and discovered that the best way to assemble a well organized army was to resurrect the Wahhabi faith. In this way, Abd al-Aziz became an advocate and patron of Wahhabi tenets. He gathered the Wahhabi scholars and built an army.²¹

This time Wahhabi faith had a different mission in mind. Abd al-Aziz's goal was to conquer Najd and no other region. Hijaz was affiliated to the Ottoman Empire and Sharif Hossein was governing that province on behalf of the sultan of the Empire. The wealthy regions around Najd which had been attacked during the first Wahhabi uprising was now under the British influence and London was not indifferent to the developments in the region.²²

Abd al-Aziz who was born in Kuwait was familiar with the British mentality and knew that they would not tolerate his attacks. As a consequence Wahhabi faith remained limited to Najd region, but a series of incidents happened which helped him to make a better maneuver.²³

At the beginning of the First World War the United Kingdom provoked the Arabs in the Ottoman dominions to separate themselves from Ottoman rule, but since the majority of the Arabs in the region were Muslims the provocation did not prove as successful as the regions east of Ottoman Empire. The solution was to provoke them to set up an Arabic empire and the best candidate for that post was Sharif Hossein, the governor of Mecca and Medina. They incited him to separate himself from the Ottoman Empire, declare independence and incite other regions under Ottoman rule to join the Arab empire. Instead they promised to make him the emperor of that empire.²⁴

This policy proved successful and Sharif Hossein incited a big revolt in all these regions. He hoped to set up an Arab empire at the end of the war and help Arabs enjoy their former glory and pride. But at the end of the World War I these dominions were colonized by the British and French imperialists.²⁵

The British and French could not colonize the Arabian Peninsula and the holy shrines which were governed by Sharif Hossein. These were two sacred towns of Islam and the British officials, who knew the region well, did not want to colonize the region or to offer it to the French. They were compelled to eliminate Sharif Hossein who was dreaming about an Arab empire.²⁶

The best way to sack Sharif Hossein was to provoke Abd al-Aziz to attack and conquer Mecca and Medina and they gave him necessary arms. Abd al-Aziz, who always wanted to conquer the holy towns, welcomed the British suggestion. His army and supporters too were eager to capture these towns. The ideal goal was to conquer the two holy towns. By conquering the holy towns they could better propagate their faith and the capture of these towns would give them the highest dignity in the Islamic world.²⁷

After a series of skirmishes and partisan operations the Wahhabi converts conquered Mecca and Medina. Sharif Hossein was compelled to leave the Arabian Peninsula. He was exiled to Cypress and died in that island. Of course the people resisted Abd al-Aziz's advance and attacks and much debate was held between non-Wahhabi clerics and Wahhabi

clerics. The subject of these debates, however, is out of the scope of this treatise.²⁸

After the conquest of the holy towns, Abd al-Aziz stretched the frontiers of Saudi Arabia to the present borders. He did not expand the country farther. He only wanted to govern the newly born country - an arid and barren land with feudal clans which were rivals and enemies. In the meantime the country was housing sacred Mecca and Medina which were respected and loved by all Muslims and every year hundreds of thousands pilgrims flocked to these towns. Abd al-Aziz was supposed to ensure the safety and welfare of these pilgrims who were gradually increasing, and this was beyond the power of the Saudi Arabia at that time.²⁹

Although earlier Abd al-Aziz had battled with many tribes and had slain many influential figures and tribal chiefs he now stopped his incursions and tried to govern the vast, hungry and poor country in an efficient manner. His first step was to declare ceasefire with his neighbors and recognize their independence and their borders. After that he planned to build necessary structures for management of the country.³⁰

In the beginning, he faced with tough resistance. Some of his supporters, who were pure Wahhabi converts, wanted to spread the canons of the original Wahhabi faith, founded by Bin Abdul Wahhab, and they didn't recognize any border. Moreover, they could not tolerate the Shia minority in the new Saudi Arabia. They believed that either the Shia Muslims must convert to Wahhabi faith or be expelled from the country. Moreover, they opposed the modern steps which Abd al-Aziz wanted to take in order to govern the country. They maintained that modern inventions such as telegraph, cars and taxation were unlawful according to Wahhabi codes because such things did not exist during the Prophet's time.³¹

At first, Abd al-Aziz tried to calm them with the help of clerics who sympathized with him. Much debate was held and both sides had their own arguments. The dialogue convinced some fanatic Wahhabi converts and clerics to stop opposing Abd al-Aziz, but deep in their hearts they did not approve such innovations. Another group continued to oppose Abd al-Aziz. At last Abd al-Aziz fought with his opponents. He slew many of

them, cut their noses and ears and suppressed the revolt.³²

What is notable here is the change of Wahhabi attitude. After final victory Abd al-Aziz felt that he could not govern the country on the basis of severe and rigid teachings of Bin Abdul Wahhab and was compelled to soften some of the codes. Although the moderation was very cautious and he took every precaution and thus, this ideology now in use and the pure original Wahhabi teachings differed with each other. He gave the Wahhabi faith the same role which Lenin had played for the Marxists. He was in fact, the Lenin of the Wahhabi sect.³³

After the amendments only Abd al-Aziz's version of Wahhabi faith was exercised in Saudi Arabia and Bin Abdul Wahhab's version was forgotten. Thus, the Wahhabi faith became the official faith of the regime and inhabitants of Saudi Arabia. In other words, the governing faith had understood the need for change and was prepared to moderate itself to serve as a practical ideology for a big country like Saudi Arabia.³⁴

Of course, one must not deny that the Saudi population is inherently introverted reserved. Its regime is also reserved and has limited expectations. The new version of Wahhabism did not make things difficult for the government and the nation; and they lived in harmony and they still do the same thing.³⁵

The original Wahhabism maintained that those outside this faith were enemies and had to be combated, even if they were Muslims. But the new Saudi Wahhabi version tolerated other faiths although believed that some of their codes or rites were non-Islamic. The principle of old Wahhabism was infidelity (*shirk*), but for the new one, it was heresy (*bid'ah*). The old faith maintained that use of new tools and methods in the modern civilization was unlawful, but after some alterations the new ideology tolerated and accepted all of these things with adjustment.³⁶

The formation of Saudi Arabia owes to this new version of Wahhabism. We will explain later how this faith underwent a series of changes to suit the requirements of the age and politics but we must remember that the changes were dictated by Abd al-Aziz.³⁷

Abd al-Aziz who knew his people well and was an intelligent and competent man succeeded to build a safe and tension-free country. In

order to achieve that end he benefited from all the customs and values of tribal life and by marrying with the daughters of chiefs of important Arab clans he formed family connections. Thanks to his innovative measures, lack of ambition and realistic approach to things Saudi Arabia found peace. Of course, severe punishment of opponents and dissidents played a big role in the country's stability. Meanwhile, Islamic instructions were in force and the *al-amr bil-ma'ruf wal-nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding wrong) ensured the sound enforcement of religious codes and good morals in the country.³⁸

Under such circumstances there was no chance for revolt or religious upheaval. Gradually Wahhabism functioned on the basis of Salafi conservative tenets. The real mission of a Saudi Wahhabi Muslim was to cautiously and carefully exercise the religious codes and accept the verdict of the ruler (sultan) and live the way Bin Hanbal had lived and preached. The only thing which angered a Wahhabi Muslim was the unacceptable behavior of Hajj pilgrims who came from other countries. They considered their behavior unlawful, and resisted such unlawful behavior. Enjoining good and forbidding evil to non-Saudi citizens was enough and they were content that they were discharging their religious duties.³⁹

Such behavior pleased the regime. The government wanted to put aside the Wahhabi codes and manage the affairs of the states as it wished without allowing anyone to object them, and they encouraged such docile attitude. The best way to consolidate the new version of Wahhabi faith was to make the surface of things look Islamic in appearance. In fact, the Wahhabi Muslims were happy to exercise the superficial form of Islam and they gradually became more isolated and reserved. Of course, the authorities knew that the religious scholars were angry with the nonconformists and tried not to provoke their wrath.⁴⁰

This was the state of the relationship between Wahhabi faith, Saudi community and the Saudi regime as long as Abd al-Aziz was alive. Although vast oil resources had been discovered and Saudi Arabia had become a most important strategic ally of the United States, the wealth failed to break the tall wall of seclusion that the Wahhabis had built around themselves and they continued to remain secluded and reserved.⁴¹

After Abd al-Aziz Bin Saud's death, his son seized power, but Bin Saud did not have the wisdom, efficiency and skill of his father and behaved like a tribal chieftain. Incidentally such Bedouin behavior pleased the Wahhabis at the time and they loved the *sultan*. During his eleven year rule, the Wahhabi tenets were enforced as before.⁴²

This was happening at a time that thanks to vast oil resources Saudi Arabia was becoming richer and richer and thanks to widespread of modern transportation the number of pilgrims was increasing. The immense wealth changed the attitude of the Saudi emirs and lords because they treated the country's wealth like their private property and spent it extravagantly in a Bedouin manner. But the change of attitude did not change the Wahhabi faith and its relationship with the people.⁴³

Such an attitude continued until Faysal seized power. If we are to consider Abd al-Aziz as the founder of Saudi Arabia, no doubt Faysal was the architect of the modern state. It was Faysal who modernized a backward tribal country which lacked many facilities for the management of such a big country. He reformed the country's treasury and set up ministries and departments and benefited from the oil wealth for the development and reconstruction of the country.⁴⁴

Faysal was clever enough to understand that he should benefit from religion in order to rebuild the country and he welcomed Wahhabi teachings. He resurrected the Wahhabi faith and tried to benefit from the faith for his domestic and foreign ends. Huge oil revenues, the Arabic origin of the inhabitants and Islam helped the *sultan* to achieve his ends.⁴⁵

From the moment Faysal seized power until the 1967 war Arab-Israeli war Saudi Arabia suffered a most difficult period. The Soviet Union and its leftist allies and Nasser and his Arabic nationalism were all very popular. All these camps regarded Saudi Arabia as their enemy and of course, each country assessed Riyadh according to its interest.⁴⁶

Of course, during those years Saudi Arabia suffered very much from class difference. The royal family circle and those affiliated to the court enjoyed legendary wealth and opulence and lived the fabulous life of princes in the One thousand and One Night legend, whereas the masses suffered in absolute poverty and ignorance. It was fear of Saudi brutal

police and security forces that silenced the nation.⁴⁷

Conditions changed after the 1967 war. The great danger from Arab nationalism and socialism had blown over and these radical states were powerless against a wealthy Saudi Arabia. Faysal was aware of all these things and decided to resort to his modified version of Wahhabi faith in order to rebuild the country because it was impossible to modernize a traditional country without a moderate religion.⁴⁸

This was the beginning of renovation of Wahhabi faith by Faysal. Contrary to all other Muslim countries in which religious reform and modernization begins and progresses by religious scholars and institutes, it was the regime in Riyadh which modified and softened the Wahhabi principles.⁴⁹

At first the regime set up new summaries, religious colleges and religious propaganda institutions. The first goal of the regime was to train theologians, orators and imams for the mosques, but because of shortage of scholars in the country they invited theologians and experts from Islamic countries especially from Arab ones. At the beginning the religious institutions did not lay much emphasis on Wahhabi tenets. Neither the government insisted on Wahhabism, nor the latter comprehended the new situation, nor all the teachers were Wahhabists.⁵⁰

But gradually Wahhabism grew stronger. The regime wanted this and also Wahhabism became active. They selected the teachers and the teachers were compelled to lecture according to the Wahhabi tenets in the universities. Such a trend was followed in all religious institutions. It means that Wahhabism becomes more nationalistic and more Saudist.⁵¹

It would be correct to say that during Faysal's reign Saudi Arabia gradually emerged as a unified country. The pride of being a Saudi citizen was intensified because of the events that happened in the region and the world. The war between Arabs and Israel in 1973 left its deepest impact on Saudi politics. It was after this war that the Wahhabi teachings were employed by the regime in their foreign dealings.⁵²

Although from the beginning of the establishment of Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism had served the regime, for the first time Faysal was using it as a tool in his foreign policy in this extension. Before Faysal, the Saudi

regime seldom benefited from Wahhabi ideology in its foreign policy. However, after that time and especially after the defeat of Nasser and Nasirists, using of Wahhabism became institutionalized in foreign relations.⁵³

What helped this policy was the increase of oil wealth. Moreover, religious centers and religious educational and propagandist centers in the Muslim and Arab world were gradually becoming weak. Instead, Saudi Arabia was building and spreading more and more religious institutes. Faysal's policy and the attraction of Islamic professors from different countries refreshed the religious construction. Meanwhile, after the defeat of Arab nationalism, attracting to Islam become more prevalent and more public, and the pressure on religious parties and institutions became gradually less.⁵⁴

In this way, Wahhabism entered to the field of foreign policies, yet in two different forms. The policy of Wahhabism in Islamic countries was different from non-Islamic countries, and especially western ones. At first, the difference was not obvious, but gradually it became more and more conspicuous and concrete.⁵⁵

In Islamic states, especially in poor countries like Pakistan, the object of the Saudi regime was to build mosques and seminaries. These institutions in fact served as platforms for the lecturers to propagate Wahhabism. Of course, it had its evil consequences, because it conflicted with other faiths. The Wahhabi principles conflicted with the general beliefs and rites of all Muslims and the same conflict which had happened in the course of history between the Hanbali sect and followers of religious tradition (*ahl al-hadith*) and others, including the Asha'reh, Mo'tazaleh and other Sunni sects as was well Shia, was repeated again.⁵⁶

This conflict was a warning sign for many Islamic and especially Arab states to resist the Wahhabi propaganda and they hardly permitted the Wahhabi preachers to set up Wahhabi mosques and seminaries in their countries. But in a country like Pakistan which lacked a strong central government to control the religious affairs the Wahhabi teachers could make many Pakistani Muslims convert to their faith. It was these same Wahhabi converts in Pakistan who began their subversive operations later

on.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, there were countries which allowed the Wahhabi organizations and clerics to operate in order to fight with leftist and radical ideas.⁵⁸

The object of the Wahhabi preachers was to advertise Wahhabi faith which naturally boosted the Wahhabi faith in Saudi Arabia and increase the country's prestige and influence. Of course, this was part of their goal. Before taking such steps the Wahhabi preachers had attracted many young volunteers who were willing and ready to accept the faith - whether they graduated from Wahhabi seminaries or were working in Wahhabi religious institutes. All the immigrants who live and work in Mecca and Medina and those who are working in religious institutes and mosques throughout Saudi Arabia are trained in Wahhabi seminaries.⁵⁹

In non-Muslim and Western countries the object of the Wahhabi preachers was to build mosques and Islamic institutes. Such measures gave prestige to Saudi Arabia and helped it to emerge as the center of Muslim and Arab world. Meanwhile, non-Muslim and western countries welcomed such initiatives until the end of 1980's. They thought the building of mosques in their countries represent their democracy and is a symbol of conscious freedom. They were glad that Saudi Arabia was pleased with their tolerance and they needed to satisfy the Saudi authorities for various reasons. Saudi Arabia was the biggest producer and exporter of oil and besides its big market, it needed a big variety of technical and engineering services.⁶⁰

What mattered to Saudi officials was that they had two territories to operate: Islamic lands and non-Islamic ones. They preached two sorts of Wahhabi faith in these two territories and gradually the difference deepened. The first type of Wahhabism, which is to be applied in Islamic lands, was conservative and religiously cautious and strict, which did not exist in Saudi Arabia in that time, because it had been modernized to adapt to the new conditions in Saudi Arabia. But a modern and soft Wahhabi faith had no attraction in a traditional society like Pakistan. Consequently, that very conservative and stern Wahhabism prevailed. By elapse of time, it became even more conservative and closed. This is the Wahhabism that

gave birth to Pakistani's Taliban and the other social-religious groups with the same idea in that region.⁶¹

But in non-Muslim countries the object of Wahhabi preachers was to gain dignity and credit for Saudi Arabia, and the faith had to be introduced in a modern manner. They tried to introduce a modern version of the faith representing a country which wanted to look far more modern than it really was, and even more modernized than the belief of its leaders. The best and most fashionable solution to them was to define Wahhabism as an Islamic Protestant faith designed as a reformist tendency.⁶²

During these years there were many non-Muslims and western citizens who were willing to convert to Islam because of various reasons. Some of them were really interested in Islam and thought that it was an ideal religion, but there were others who were looking for jobs in Saudi Arabia and better living and wanted Saudi authorities to trust them. There was another group who embraced Islam in order to work in the rich Sheikhdoms and marry Muslim girls. The Wahhabi faith was introduced to them with these benefits and some of them were converted to Wahhabi faith after embracing Islam.⁶³

Wahhabi preachers stepped into the seventies with these goals in mind. Another turning point for the faith was the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the political, international and financial consequences of the war which greatly boosted the faith.⁶⁴

After the 1973 War Saudi Arabia changed. Now it was necessary for them to follow a different foreign policy and the Wahhabi faith was one of the most effective machines in the new policy. The Wahhabi teachers intensified their preaching both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. They needed a far more active religion and the condition in the other countries was ripe for more propaganda.⁶⁵

During the interval between 1973 until 1980 Saudi religious institutions were expanded. The Saudi citizens who had graduated from Saudi religious institutions began serving the Wahhabi preachers, but Wahhabi propagandists needed more volunteers. They hired a large number of experts in human and Islamic sciences from Muslim countries and the hired scholars started to serve the Wahhabi institutes.⁶⁶

Both in Islamic and non-Islamic countries the Wahhabi centers added to their activities and built more mosques and educational institutes. Many people in Muslim countries were converted to Wahhabi faith, and often the new converts were more faithful to Wahhabi principles than the Saudi citizens who according to Al-Utaybi had been corrupted by wealth and opulence.⁶⁷

One important reason to resort to severe and extremist Wahhabi codes was Mecca and Medina, the two sacred towns in Saudi Arabia. According to the majority of the Muslims whatever was imported from Saudi Arabia was correct and sacred and they accepted them without question. Such opinion echoed more potently in countries which had poorer Islamic culture and science.⁶⁸

Thanks to such wealth, non-Muslim and western countries regarded Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Islamic world. The Saudi regime was enjoying its peak of prestige and part of that prestige owed to Wahhabi faith and institutes, although the faith was not faithfully followed in Saudi Arabia because the oil wealth was corrupting the inhabitants. And such irreligion was annoying the faithful and fanatic Wahhabis.⁶⁹

The Wahhabis who, because of the acceptable and perhaps ideal Wahhabi principles, had become conservative and reserved after Abd al-Aziz had seized power in the country gradually showed signs of discontent. The faithful Wahhabis could not tolerate the corruption in the community, but their belief was so deep that they accepted the edicts of the sultan and believed that anything done against Abd al-Aziz was unlawful. They thought they were not allowed to openly protest against the government - although a series of protests occurred and some were arrested and jailed.⁷⁰

The Islamic Revolution triumphed under such circumstances and shocked both the Saudi regime and the Wahhabi institution. As we briefly mentioned in previous chapters after some reflection the Saudi regime and Wahhabi followers reacted to the Iranian revolution.⁷¹

The Wahhabi preachers began a widespread anti-Shia and even anti-Iranian propaganda in Muslim countries. Their main argument was that the Shia sect was not a true Islamic sect or was the enemy of Islam. Another

step taken by Wahhabi preachers was to preach a popular Islam, which suited the ordinary and illiterate masses. Their object was to attract more converts and to prove that compared to other Islamic faiths they were more faithful and committed to Islam. This paved the way for further radicalism. The fanatic Wahhabis rejected reason and could not tolerate others. They claimed to be the true and absolute representative of Islam and maintained that all other Islamic sects were infidels. This gradually made them more and more radical and fanatic.⁷²

But things were different in non-Muslim countries. In those years the main accusation against the Iranian Islamic revolution was that it was fundamental, totalitarian and fanatic. The things which Saudi officials were saying in non-Muslim countries against Iran and the Islamic Revolution in Iran were not understood. In these countries the Wahhabi Saudi officials tried to pretend they were moderate, progressive, modern and even rational Muslims. In fact, what Wahhabi propagators preached in non-Muslim countries was contrary to that they preached in Islamic countries.⁷³

This was the object of the Saudi foreign policy and the official Wahhabism. They were trying to preach such a code in the Islamic institutes in non-Muslim countries, but they were faced by restrictions. The most remarkable objection came from the young Muslims, who, for political reasons or for the sake of finding jobs, had immigrated to western countries. These young Muslims had their own opinions and political approaches, especially those who were living in the open society and they were aside from security and traditional restrictions. It was not possible for them to preach as they desired; and the result of their propaganda could not be as it was expected.⁷⁴

The West welcomed the new Wahhabi anti-Iranian propaganda because it weakened the Islamic revolution and reduced its influence. Above all, it had an anti-communist dimension and (as we will explain later) they were very sensitive to the occupation of Afghanistan and supported the anti-resistance fighters in that country.⁷⁵

The Saudi authorities and Wahhabi clerics were the most severe enemy of communists in the Arab world, but in no time in history their hostility

had pleased Washington so much than in the eighties. Reagan's main foreign strategy was to fight the Soviet Union and the Eastern Communist Bloc and naturally more than any other time he welcomed Saudi Arabia's anti-communist approach.⁷⁶

During the eighties many mosques and religious institutions had been built in Europe and the United States – most all of them by Saudis. As we mentioned before such institutes were suitable places for the congregation of migratory young Muslims, especially the Arabs, whose number was gradually increasing. It was easy to move to Europe and the United States at that time and the Muslim youth migrated to these regions for various reasons. Some escaped from their despotic countries and sought political asylum. Conditions in countries which exported their dissent youth were ripe with political or radical activity, but due to sophisticated reasons most of these hostile factions were Islamic groups. The reason that impelled the youth to return to pure Islamic teachings Islamic revolutionary activity was the preaching of the Wahhabi clerics in the mosques and seminaries which Saudi Arabia had built in western countries. As to the migrating youth their religious feelings never agreed with Saudi authorities. We will explain later how such a feeling suddenly showed its true color during the occupation of Kuwait when all these religious institutes became bases for supporters of Saddam Hussein.⁷⁷

Another important thing which happened at that time and greatly affected the Wahhabi faith and the political views of the Sunni sect was the occupation of Afghanistan by former Soviet Union. The communist revolution preached by Abdullah al-Tariqi was limited to Afghanistan only and did not stretch to other Islamic countries in the region. Even before the victory of Islamic revolution the Shah in Iran, who was committed to fight communism, did not react seriously to the advance of communists in Afghanistan because he was facing trouble and unrest in the country.⁷⁸

The problems brewed by the communist regime in a deeply religious and traditional country and the government's impotence to suppress the enemies encouraged the Soviet Union to occupy Afghanistan. The invasion infuriated the United States. Washington said Moscow was trying to reach the warm waters in the Persian Gulf and the United States was

committed to stop the advance of the Red Army. But the Shah had been expelled and the new regime in Iran was deeply anti-American. The geopolitical balance of the region had been disturbed and political order had not yet been established.⁷⁹

The best choice for the U.S. was to incite Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to fight the Soviet Union. Saudi Arabia was willing to interfere because inherently they were anti-communists and their anti-communist hostility contributed to their internal stability and Wahhabi faith. Pakistan also was eager to take anti-communist stance and receive military and non-military assistance from Washington because the U.S. military aid could strengthen it against rival India. Moreover, the presence of Soviet Union, an ally of India in Afghanistan, was unbearable for Pakistan. Islamabad felt insecure and unhappy. All these factors helped them to move closer to Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile thanks to its past activities in Pakistan, building of many mosques and seminaries, Saudi Arabia had gathered many supporters in that country.⁸⁰

Here, our main intention is to examine the effect of the developments in Afghanistan for Wahhabism. Although, the Soviet Union was the first country which had established diplomatic ties with Abd al-Aziz's regime in Saudi Arabia; the Saudi policy mentality completely differed with the communists because the Saudis were hostile against the approach of modern civilization. Moreover, they had bitter experience with the mass of migrants who had escaped to Saudi Arabia from Central Asia after the October Revolution and the leftist propaganda chanted by Moscow. Likewise, they had very bitter experience with Arab leftist activists who were supported by Moscow and had brewed many problems in Saudi Arabia after the Second World War.⁸¹

All these factors had provided a very negative image of Soviet Union to the Saudi regime. According to Saudi authorities, the communists were heathens who had occupied a Muslim country like Afghanistan, and it was their duty to fight the infidels. The Saudi regime believed that it was a real religious war and they mobilized fighters to combat the Red Army.⁸²

The fact is that because of the rise of religious feelings the conditions in the eighties were such that Saudi officials needed a pretext to benefit from

that religious ardor to their advantage. South Yemen, a neighbor of Saudi Arabia, was a communist regime and the Russian agents were present in that country, but Riyadh had tolerated their presence up to then. Meanwhile, when the sultan of Oman had requested Riyadh to suppress the Zofar communist insurgents the Saudi authorities had refused to help him. Now Afghanistan was a good pretext for Riyadh to control and manage the tumultuous religious fervor and of course Wahhabism which was in crisis welcomed such an initiative.⁸³

Thus, Wahhabis were the first volunteers to help Afghanistan and the Saudi regime supported them. Many young men from Saudi Arabia volunteered to fight in Afghanistan. After a while volunteers from other Arab countries such as Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, Yemen and even several Sheikdoms in the Persian Gulf announced their readiness to fight in Afghanistan. These youth were sent to Afghanistan with direct or indirect help from Saudi Arabia. In the meantime the Arab regimes were eager to get rid of them. In other words they expelled their dissident Muslim activists which were a headache for them.⁸⁴

Their first meeting place was Pakistan. Hundred millions of dollars flowed into that poor country⁸⁵. Usama bin Laden, who was supported and trusted by Riyadh, was among those who personally directed military operation. Religious seminaries and schools were quickly built at the border points between Pakistan and Afghanistan and thousands of ardent religious students flocked to these schools. The teachers of these schools were those who during the sixties had been trained in Wahhabi schools in Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's Zia ul-Haq who favored the Salafi faith was backing the Wahhabi activists.⁸⁶

In a short time conditions in Pakistan and especially in its border with Afghanistan changed. Religious zeal was boiling specially among Wahhabis and Salafis. The region looked like Najd Province when Bin Saud and Abd al-Aziz waged his religious wars. The difference was that many devoted volunteers had assembled in Pakistan to help their Afghan brethren to battle aggressive Soviet Union which had occupied Afghanistan.⁸⁷

Gradually, the atmosphere in the region grew more radical. The region

boiled with Salafi Wahhabi fervor. No one from outside or inside Pakistan tried to control such extremist religious passion, especially because Wahhabism has the capacity to become radical.⁸⁸

The problem was that the volunteers who had gathered in Pakistan were not homogenous. There were many Arab youth who had come from different countries and had different educational, ideological and political ends. As is related to our discussion, the question is that they had different political and politico-religious experiences.⁸⁹

Gradually the Saudi youth became interested in the pure Wahhabi teachings of Mohammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab like those who were headed by Juhayman ibn Muhammad Al-Utaybi had occupied the Al-Haram Mosque "Mecca" in November 1979. Inspired by Seyyed Qutb's ideology that divide the world into Islamic and non-Islamic (*jahiliyyah*), the Egyptian and Algerian youth as well as non-Saudi Arabs almost were inclined to the same ideology that the jihadists in Egypt had followed during the 1970's, the most eminent group of them was 'Al-Takfir wa Al-Hijra' (Excommunication and Exodus).⁹⁰

The fact is that the political beliefs of Seyyed Qutb differ with Wahhabi beliefs. They have started from two completely different angles and have reached a conclusion which, to some extent, is similar. Fed up with Muslims who were often neutral and soft against modern civilization and the impotence of officials who tried to moderate and reform Islamic tenets, Qutb thought that the only way to introduce true Islam was to train deeply committed volunteers and to invite people to practice true Islam and purify the community. He said a true Muslim practices and behaves like a pious Muslim, otherwise not only the community will not be Islamic but *jahili*, even if they were Muslims on the surface. He believed that true Muslims must fight such infields and make them pure Muslims.⁹¹

But the Wahhabi faith which was born among desert Bedouin Arabs had a different definition of monotheism and polytheism. They believed that those who didn't believe in monotheism like them and acted otherwise were heathen even if they pretended to be Muslims. They said it was their duty to invite them to their true faith and to kill them if they refused to embrace it. In other words, they maintained that whoever did not follow

their creed was their enemy and they had to fight with them.⁹²

During the turbulent years of the eighties these two ideologies prevailed and were favored by the Arabs who had immigrated to Afghanistan and were later on called “Arab Afghans”. Aside from domestic factors foreign factors also confirmed and encouraged such ideologies. What was important for the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan was to fight the Red Army in Afghanistan by any possible means.⁹³

Naturally these two ideologies affected each other and in the end the combination of these ideologies gave birth to the al-Qaeda ideology, which we will explain later on. What we are concerned with is the reciprocal impact of these two different ideologies against each other.⁹⁴

Wahhabi faith which was not anti-western or anti-American gradually came under the influence of the abovementioned ideologies. Even the original Wahhabi faith was not hostile against non-Muslims. Its mission was to fight those Muslims whom they considered infidels. Many letters had been exchanged between Abd al-Aziz and the British agents in the Persian Gulf in which he had emphasized that the mission of the Wahhabi faith is to fight nonconformist Muslims and not the British officials or non-Muslims. He had even gave back to the British officials the properties which his followers had plundered. Mir-Mohanna, his other ally in the region, also too acted in the same manner.⁹⁵

During its history the Wahhabis had never shown anti-western sentiments. Abd al-Aziz had seized power in Saudi Arabia with the help of British weapons and after that London had always supported him. Such a strong support promoted Abd al-Aziz to become Washington's strategic ally at the end of Second World War. This was not merely a political tactic. Actually the Wahhabi faith did not show signs of anti-western hostility although some conservative Wahhabis did not like the western culture.⁹⁶

The fact it was Qutb's ideas that had provoked anti-western feeling among Arab Afghan Wahhabis. His book entitled, '*Ma'alem fi al-Tariq*', “landmarks of the path”, while describing the principles of an Islam which suited to the illiterate masses expressly criticizes the western and communist cultures, especially those who tried to interpret Islamic canons

through western and communist standards. It is Seyyed Qutb's journey to the United States had a great effect to antagonize him against western culture. In other words, he had formed his hostile ideology when he was in United States. But the founders of Wahhabi faith had no direct contact with the West.⁹⁷

In addition, Qutb believed that the world is divided between the heathens and the true Muslims and that if the Muslims fail to comply with Islamic commandments they must be treated as heathens. The Arab Afghan Wahhabis and their Pakistani and non-Arab sympathizers had embraced such ideology because the theory was more adaptable to realities in Pakistan (and Afghanistan). The Wahhabi theory was a Bedouin and tribal theory and could not be acceptable in other regions.⁹⁸

Meanwhile, Salafi and Wahhabi teachings served as the foundation of their ideology. What they needed was not only a political ideology: they needed a perfect religion. They wished to accept Islam in its entirety – an Islam which could respond to their daily needs, teach them how to fight, propose policies and help them distinguish their friends from their enemies.⁹⁹

In fact, their needs were not just a political and revolutionary ideology, but it was Islamic-politics ideology. The best branch amongst Sunni doctrine were Salafi, Hanbali and Wahhabi faiths. The other branches could not play that role, because of jurisprudential, theological and historical reasons. Of course, one cannot deny the importance of the Saudi-made initiatives in this regard. They had made preliminary arrangements for dispatch of young Arab volunteers to Pakistan and Afghanistan; they had invested billions of dollars and had built hundreds of religious schools in these two countries, and the Saudi clerics were encouraging people and the youth to fight against the communists. All these people were Hanbali and Wahhabi, and it was natural that this branch became the jurisprudential, theological, and moral source for them.¹⁰⁰

Because of these reasons, Qutb's ideology alone could not be helpful, as it could not be helpful for the Egyptian jihadist groups during the 1970's. In Egypt, Qutb had provoked his supporters to launch a limited operation which lacked the energy to continue. Of course, one must not forget the

fact that Qutb's ideology had left a very big impact among the Sunnis although the majority of Sunni and official Wahhabi clerics were against his ideology.¹⁰¹

Thus, the Arab Afghan and their non-Arab sympathizers began to build and develop a new ideology which was unprecedented in the history of Sunni thought and political jurisprudence, which means a revolutionary and extremely subversive ideology. It is surprising this ideology came out from a west-loving and anti-radical Wahhabism of the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁰²

The story continued after the exit of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan. After the exit of the Red Army Afghanistan was governed by Afghan communists who were supported by the Russians, but the mujahids continued to fight the government. Actually the revolutionary youth were in a condition that they needed to fight and enjoyed it. Meanwhile, the new ideology disintegrated the Pakistani and Afghani community from a religious and political aspect. This separation combined the tribal realities in the region and shaped different militant (*mujahid*) groups, which were a big headache for Afghanistan.

The new al-Qaeda ideology quickly spread to chaotic regions in Islamic countries and even to Islamic institutes in the West. As we have mentioned before the religious institutes had been built by Saudi Arabia and they had helped the Wahhabi ideology to spread. In fact, part of the official Wahhabi faith inside and outside Saudi Arabia was under the influence of this new wave. Of course, those days the Saudi regime and the official Wahhabism did not fear any danger from the new ideology.¹⁰³

The decisive blow came with the occupation of Kuwait. What we mean by the blow is the ideological impact and consequences of the occupation of Kuwait on the Arab Afghans and their sympathizers. Although because of their hatred towards the Sheikdoms many of these young partisans were happy with the occupation of Kuwait and this had important consequences. The revolutionary figures were angry because Saudi Arabia had appealed to the United States and Europe for help and had given quarter to their troops in the sacred land – an insult which was not acceptable at all.¹⁰⁴

Such a violent reaction is conceivable because of the boiling religious and revolutionary feelings that had erupted during the eighties. After World War Two the U.S. troops settled in Saudi Arabia and built military bases. At that time, no one in the country had protested to the U.S. presence because there was no such hostile feeling among the people. But things changed from after the nineties. Surprising enough the Saudi regime itself had provoked such sentiments.¹⁰⁵

During these years Saudi was severely criticized. The most important point was that the new Wahhabism was in the final stage of its development and it separated itself from the Saudi regime and even stood against it,¹⁰⁶ from Bin Laden to other people and groups who had fought against the Soviet Union earlier in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁷ But the problem was far graver. Although they believed the basic canons of the Wahhabi faith they distanced themselves from the official Wahhabism in force in Saudi Arabia and accused it of having been serving the Saudi regime. The anti-American and anti-Western feeling of the new ideology which had been latent for years had suddenly erupted and came to the scene.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile, the conditions were ready for the emergence of the new ideology. The Soviet Union had disintegrated, the United States wished to become the only superpower and manage the world, the U.S. attacked and occupied Iraq in a very brutal manner and the tough American sanctions had killed hundred thousands of Iraqi children. These factors gave rise to anti-American feelings and the U.S. was accepted and introduced as an enemy.¹⁰⁹

The nineties began in this manner. The Arab world had lost its solidarity and was in its lowest spirit in the international arena. The regimes which had supported or opposed Saddam Hussein were ashamed and subdued. The Arab states which had been accustomed to close ranks and unite had no means to maneuver. There was no acceptable and compensable ideology. The police pressure in Arab states which had been relaxed to minimum during the American-Iraqi war was again intensified and the Islamist groups who were influenced by the Arab Afghans and their thought were under inspection, pursue and torture. It was for the first time that the Arab Afghans gained security and dangerous concept.¹¹⁰

In the situation, this ideology became more radical and Qutb's thought was accepted more, which means that it should be revolted against any Muslim regime that does not put the Islamic teachings into practice. Excessive police pressure gave birth to radical groups and made them popular and more extremist. Such volatile feeling was more acute in Islamic centers in the West because of their relative freedom compared to those found in Islamic states, but it was found everywhere.¹¹¹

Some religious scholars welcomed the new ideology and supported it. Surprising enough these clerics became more and more popular.¹¹² They maintained that the United States and the West had rivalry and hostility against Islam and Muslims¹¹³ and were trying to avenge the historical wounds they had received from the Arabs in the past. Of course, a series of incidents happened that intensified such ill feelings.

According to radical clerics, the war in the Balkans and the massacre of Muslims in Bosnia and Chechen was a good example. The atmosphere was so hostile against the West that the government appointed clerics in Saudi Arabia who spoke against the U.S. in Friday Prayers which were organized by the government, and the hostile sermons was broadcasted by Saudi radio and TV and satellite channels.¹¹⁴

This is a small example to show that the Muslims had become politically volatile during the nineties. They were angry against foreign powers which had thrown them into disaster. The new Salafism developed and reached perfection under such circumstances. Now conditions were ripe for their operation even in rightist countries like Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms in Persian Gulf.¹¹⁵

Things became difficult for the the Arab Afghans after the Mujahedin in Kabul ousted Najibullah. The Afghans had bitter experience about the Arab Afghans. The Saudi regime had demanded the Afghan jihadist groups to expel them from Afghanistan. Now Saudis became their enemy, and not their supporters.¹¹⁶

The pressure from Mujahedin led to armed conflict with the Arab Afghans and compelled many of them to leave Afghanistan. Some went to other countries and were arrested, but their leaders moved to Sudan where a new Islamic government had been established.¹¹⁷

This new ideology was called al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda had started to mobilize members. They were making plans for the future. They wanted to know where to start and how to attract the youth.¹¹⁸

But al-Qaeda didn't stay long in Sudan, because the country was not suitable for their purpose. It was a vast country with sparse inhabitants who believed in a Sufi sort of Islam. Although in the beginning the authorities in Sudan had welcomed al-Qaeda but the country was not suitable for their operation. In addition, Egypt and some other Arab countries via Egypt were pressuring Sudan to expel them. At last one of their headquarters was bombed by the United States. This compelled the leaders of al-Qaeda to move to Afghanistan and become the guests of Taliban. Although Afghanistan was not an Arab country but the conditions for partisan war for a militia organization like al-Qaeda was far better than Sudan or another country. Wahhabism had penetrated into Afghanistan and Pakistan. They were armed and were good fighters and the different tribes living in perilous mountainous resorts in the two countries made conditions suitable for their operation. The United States could not launch a massive operation against their bases in the mountainous country compared to Sudan which was a flat and desert country.¹¹⁹

The Taliban was composed of the students of Wahhabi schools which the Saudi government or Bin Laden and his colleagues had set up in Pakistan with the help of Saudi Arabia. Most of the conscripts were poor people who had been attracted to these schools during the eighties. Instead of focusing on Islamic jurisprudence the seminaries were teaching the students how to mobilize people and fight the Russian occupiers and their allies. They taught them some general information about Wahhabi faith and offered some military drills. They only taught the easily understood and superficial codes of Islam to them.¹²⁰

As mentioned earlier, these schools had been founded during the sixties at a time that Wahhabi teachers tried to penetrate the Deobandi Sunni seminaries which were old institutes in the Indian Subcontinent and their principles were close to Wahhabi principles with regard to theology. Once Saudi Arabia became rich they had increased their influence in the seminaries and had quickly built many new ones during the seventies,

particularly in Pakistan.¹²¹

The theoretical instructions they received during the eighties were similar to that which they had received a couple of decades ago. The only difference was that the canons were far severe and the severe codes adapted well to their tribal culture. But no military training was offered to the students during the sixties.¹²²

The Taliban militia had emerged from these seminaries, although not all the graduates joined the Taliban ranks. Only those from Pashtoon tribe joined the Taliban camp. Non-Pashtoons either refused to join them or gradually deserted the camp.¹²³

When the al-Qaeda leaders returned to Afghanistan they preferred to fight along with the Taliban and not fighters of other religious sects because al-Qaeda ideology was much closer to the Taliban beliefs. Both al-Qaeda and the Taliban followed Wahhabi and Salafi tenets. They had known each other for years and had cooperated with each other. Meanwhile the Taliban was the biggest jihadist group in Afghanistan.¹²⁴

When Taliban and jihadist groups were fighting against Kabul's government al-Qaeda was fighting along with them and when Taliban seized power in Afghanistan they helped them under every pretext. In fact the capture of Afghanistan by Taliban had gladdened all Wahhabi and Salafi followers in the Islamic and Arab world because Taliban was trying to realize a revolutionary Islam based on the tenets of Hanbali and *ahl al-hadith*.¹²⁵

Here, we must explain the role of the wealthy Wahhabis and Salafis in order to understand how al-Qaeda and Taliban groups were formed.

As we mentioned before the Salafi codes and jurisprudence is as old as the birth of Islam. The Salafi sect has always existed and will exist. Of course, their significance and influence has ebbed and flowed in the course of the history. Here, we are speaking about the Saudi version of Salafi faith modified by the Wahhabi faith and not the teachings of Seyyed Jamaluddin Asadabadi and his student Mohammad Abdoh who emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. The mission of Asadabadi and Abdoh was to fight backwardness, illiteracy and superstition and encourage Muslims to resort to science and reason in

order to resurrect the past glory of Islamic civilization.¹²⁶

The deep religious fervor after the seventies affected not only the youth and academicians but many classes of Muslims. Many of these young academic students grew rich and became prominent figures and remained faithful to their beliefs. From the eighties onward there were large and scattered groups of intellectuals who were wealthy and had high government posts. These wealthy elite helped various Salafi jihadist factions including Taliban and al-Qaeda to fight for their religious ends.¹²⁷

In fact many civilian and military figures in Pakistan's government are Salafi. They support Salafi subversive groups and try to help them by different methods. These Pakistani figures assist the jihadists because they believe their mission like many wealthy people in Saudi Arabia and other Sheikdoms who are still funding Taliban and al-Qaeda.

It is difficult to believe that the presence of Taliban and al-Qaeda side by side led to a sort of ideological interchange. Principally, these two had the same ideology although their goals were different. Al-Qaeda was trying to launch a global war against the West and non-Muslims and was trying to mobilize Muslims for the global war, but Taliban was trying to govern Afghanistan according to the pure Islamic jurisprudence. Taliban was trying to defeat its enemies and help the Pashtoon tribesmen to become masters in Afghanistan.¹²⁸

From that point of view Taliban's ideology resembled that of conservative Wahhabi sect in Saudi Arabia. Both insisted to enforce true Islamic codes. For that reason Taliban was fully supported by Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia and those Salafis in the Islamic world who sided and sympathized with the Wahhabis.¹²⁹

After the 11 September when the U.S. issued an ultimatum to the Taliban to expel al-Qaeda from Afghanistan after a series of consultations Taliban said that Bin Laden and his followers were their guests and they could not expel their guests from the country. This does not mean that they had similar beliefs or ideology for defense. It was quite obvious that the two camps had different goals in mind.¹³⁰

According to the documents discovered after invasion of Afghanistan in keeping with their subversive and revolutionary ideology al-Qaeda had

decided to embark upon a big global war against the United States and its allies. Although they had started their war far earlier their biggest operation was the blast of the twin towers in New York on 11 September.

This subject can be examined from different angles, but the U.S. reaction against the Arabs and Muslims badly annoyed them. The insult was so deep that angered and subdued several rightist Muslim and Arab regimes which were Washington's allies. They were displeased because they were allies of Washington and they tried not to speak about their friendship.¹³¹

The annoyance boosted the reputation of al-Qaeda ideology particularly in the Arab world. Such a reputation encouraged Al-Qaeda to take further subversive steps both in the Islamic and non-Islamic countries. According to their ideology those who were not Muslims were heathens (*jahili*) and al-Qaeda was representing true Islam. Such belief in their integrity was a tool in their hand to destroy those who did not believe like them.¹³²

Of course, it is not still clear if all the subversive operations were handled by al-Qaeda, but al-Qaeda ideology was such that justified such conclusion. But their brutal subversive operations had many evil consequences among which one must refer to the loss of their popularity.¹³³

The most important thing which helped to revive al-Qaeda was the second war between the United States and Iraq. When the war broke out Al-Qaeda leaders tried to show that the presence of the U.S. in Iraq was similar to the ex-Soviet Union in Afghanistan. They claimed that the United States had occupied a Muslim country and on this basis, it was their religious duty to fight against Washington. Such propaganda helped them to mobilize many volunteers and the majority of the suicide operations in Iraq were carried out by these volunteers.¹³⁴

The invasion of Iraq changed the ideology of al-Qaeda. The main source of their ideology was the Salafi-Hanbali-Wahhabi hostile stance against the Shia. Although these three faiths disagreed with other Muslim faiths they were far hostile against the Shia Muslims. But before the second war between the United States and Iraq there was no trace of hostility against the Shia in the al-Qaeda camp, although during their

collaboration with Taliban they had killed some Shia followers because they believed in the Salafi which differed with Shia teachings.¹³⁵

The majority of the population in Iraq was Shia. The Shia Muslims in Iraq were trying to ratify a new constitution, launch a democratic election, form a popular government and expel the U.S. troops from the country. Naturally they wanted the Sunni Muslims and the Kurds to join the new government in Baghdad.

Al-Qaeda tried by all means to throw the country into chaos. Their other object was to fight with the Shia and to kill even their children and women. Meanwhile they wanted to prevent any sort of solidarity and stability in the country and the best method was to provoke sectarian feud and violence.¹³⁶

Thus, the war between al-Qaeda and the United States stretched to children and women and civilians in general. They tried to provoke different sects to fight with each other under various pretexts. After that they provoked hostility against Iran and warned the Iraqis and Arabs that Iran was trying to spread its influence in Iraq and intended to revive its former historical glory. They said that the Shia Muslims in Iraq were the vassals of the Iranian government.¹³⁷

In fact, an ideology like al-Qaeda is resolved to fight those whom it considers to be its enemy and it resorts to every instrument to reach its goal. It does not accept any objection and tries to achieve its end by all means. The reason they succeeded earlier to spread their network was not because they were right in their ideology. It was because they benefited from the boiling anger of the young Arab Muslims to advance their goals and were masters of the field for a while. But it is not an ideology which can continue forever and is doomed to be forgotten sooner or later, although they may launch a series of operations before they die away.¹³⁸

The conditions were such until Arab Spring erupted and gave birth to conditions which conflicted with the strategy and reputation of al-Qaeda. In fact it was the despotic Arab regimes which set up the terrorist organizations. The leaders of these regimes continually warned the world about the danger of al-Qaeda operatives and they fought and suppressed them to justify their claim. But the repression of al-Qaeda had a negative

impact on the masses and the youth and enhanced al-Qaeda's prestige.¹³⁹

Another feature of Arab Spring is its anti-despotic position, quest for dignity and anti-corruption drive. The protesters succeeded to topple several regimes, the revolt continues in several other countries and the rest of the Arab world has remained relatively calm. The most important result of such protests is that the despotic regimes in other countries cannot operate like before. They are compelled to observe human rights and combat corruption.¹⁴⁰

As we said even if the present revolts are suppressed in countries where the opposition has not yet triumphed and the calm in other countries, which are witnessing the revolt, continues, the embattled regimes will be compelled to observe human rights and combat corruption. This means that the conditions and parameters have been changed and there is no chance for despotic subversive organizations like al-Qaeda to survive.

Of course in countries like post-Mubarak Egypt we can see the widespread growth of Salafi forces. Presently they are strongly present in the field and have taken steps which have angered the Islamic groups, parties, and figures. Similar conditions are notable in other Arab states where their regimes have been changed.

In fact presently the Salafism is influenced by foreign politicians. This does not mean that they are vassals and servants of foreign countries. Their leaders are not completely independent and they often follow the instructions of foreign powers. Of course such a trend may change and the influence of foreign countries may decrease or increase. As a whole, radical groups which operate blindly can better serve foreign powers compared to non-radicals.¹⁴¹

Another point is that even though the Salafi faith is close to al-Qaeda ideology they do not operate like al-Qaeda and cannot pretend to be supporters of it. The reputation of al-Qaeda at the beginning of the present century was a private matter. Even at that time no one dared to speak publicly about it.

Another important point is that under the existing circumstances it is logical for al-Qaeda to modify themselves. They cannot change the rules of the games as they wish. A nation which has turned its back against its

despotic rulers will surely oppose the dictatorial manner of group and party.¹⁴²

A good proof of the above assertion is the position of Salafism in Tunis. Before the recent elections in that country the laic groups tried by different means to anger Islamist groups and provoke them to react. One of their tactics was to stage two films which insulted Islam. The *Al-Nazr* Islamic party urged its members and supporters to stay calm. That tactic was understandable, but even the Salafis did not react to the laic provocation. As a consequence the two profane films benefited the Islamic groups and hurt those who had produced them.

That which helped the Salafis was their restraint. In other words they tried to be logic and they moderated their demands and expectations. The same thing will happen in other countries. Of course in a country like Yemen with its tribal system and despotic military regime (which is supported by regimes inside and outside the region) the local Salafis can hardly resort to moderation. At least moderation cannot be expected from them in a short time.

Notwithstanding, the Salafi ideology will continue and remain influential even after the Arab Spring. Of course, they will adapt themselves to new conditions but one can say with assurance that the conditions are not in favor for subversive Salafis activists. Even if they remain active for a while gradually these groups and their extremist ideology will be forgotten.¹⁴³

But such an assertion is not applicable to Taliban. Although they follow the Salafi and Wahhabi faiths, their ideology differs with al-Qaeda. Taliban receives its strength from the Pashtoon culture and society, a big majority in Afghanistan. They are Hanafi Muslims who in recent years have approached the Wahhabi and Salafi doctrine. But in the end, they are Afghans, Pashtoon, and Hanafi. Their goal also differs with subversive Salafi groups although their method of operation has been influenced by al-Qaeda method and their attitude about the application of the Islamic jurisprudence (*taqbiq al-shariah*) is close to Conservative Wahhabis and Salafis in Saudi Arabia. They will remain although in the present situation the probability of modifying their ideology is weak. In addition, their

modification is more cultural than ideological.¹⁴⁴

For example, Taliban is too severe with women. They do not respect their rights and give them little weight, all of which originate from Pashtoon ethnic culture. They must first of all moderate their culture in order to moderate their approach towards women.¹⁴⁵

Unfortunately, sectarian Salafi subversion will continue as before and will not be modified under the existing conditions. As we explained before that first of all, these ideas are deeply rooted in the belief and history of Salafism. Secondly, the difference among the sectarian polarization in the region will help them survive. Thirdly, there are regimes in the region which are investing money to keep such inclinations alive.

From that standpoint their ideology does not originate from social realities. It originates from political conditions of the region.

6

Arab Spring and Socio-Political Stability in “GCC”

It seems as if the completion of this thesis was preordained to coincide with the Arab Spring developments. The Arab world is taken by an ongoing wave of developments and unrests. These developments will probably continue and it is not yet clear how the Arab World would look like after the dust of these events settles, what would be the impacts of these developments on the peripheral spheres and at the same time, how would the peripheral, regional and international realities would influence the current Arab environment.

1- Among the groups of co-cultural countries, i.e. those with common history and heritage, the Arab countries have their own specific commonalities; their mutual interaction is deeper and much more serious.¹

While the Latin American, Black African, Central Asian or Far Eastern nations could also be more or less categorized as co-cultural groups of states, their sense of a common fate, as well as common identity and feelings are much less than what prevails in the Arab World. This is despite the fact that the differences in per capita income and material welfare in this part of the world is much deeper than in any other groups of co-cultural nations. Some Arab states have the highest per capita income in the world, while some are among the poorest countries. However, as mentioned earlier, the people and even the elites and leaders of these countries have the feeling that they belong to a common culture and

identity. They have common self-esteems and even the same problems, and their destiny is closely tied to each other, particularly in the present world.²

This can be confirmed as a fact by anyone who is familiar with the Arab world and the psychology and inner personal structure of the Arabs. At least, they have been so in their contemporary history; now this feeling has become stronger and more common than ever. They have the feeling that the world, especially the Western world, has stood against them and has taken degrading hostile positions. This is an important element in creating a sense of intimacy and common sympathy.³

It is noteworthy that the developments of the last two or three decades, especially the developments of the past decade, has strengthened such feelings, to the extent that those individuals or groups who had different views and interpretations about the relations between Arabs and the West are now more or less isolated and went out of the debates. This has practically been in the interest of those whose views were just mentioned; a view that is currently prevailing in the Arab World.⁴

2- This thesis focuses on "Change and Stability in the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms". However, this will not be separate from the developments of the whole Arab World, and more significantly this group of states has a more determinant role and significance in the policies of the Arab World, due to reasons that will be discussed later on. This is due to the fact that their domestic and foreign policies as well as their social and political stability are deeply inter-connected.⁵

At the beginning of the unrests and after the fall of Bin Ali and Mubarak, tensions also occurred in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain. In Saudi Arabia, the unrests were mainly concentrated in the mostly Shi'ite-residing eastern parts of the country, as well as the more modern and larger cities of Riyadh and Jeddah. At the outset, the Shi'ites demanded the freedom of those who, for years, had been held in detention without trial. Later, they asked for the removal of discriminations against Shi'ites. However, the protests in Riyadh and Jeddah were mainly influenced by the reformist and freedom-seeking movements in Tunisia and Egypt in those days.

In Oman, the protests were primarily focused on unemployment, poverty and difficult labor situation, while in Bahrain the protests were of a different nature which will be discussed later on. Small scale protests were also observed in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates which were soon suppressed through the measures by the governments and the normal life was resumed. In Oman and Saudi Arabia, except in eastern region, the situation calmed down by means of various measures. This meant that the Arab Spring was not able to shake up the pillars of the society, and the social and political stability in those countries, especially in areas where it related to the Sunni majorities.

The main reason for this was- and remains to be- that the ruling regimes in this region, except for Bahrain and eastern parts of Saudi Arabia, enjoy a sufficient level of popularity. Although the political system and the political, cultural and social structures of these countries are traditional in nature and far from being considered as *modern*, these are proportional to their structures, as well as to the social, historical and identity realities; and this is the exact reason for their stability.⁶

The majority of analysts and the Western and American political authorities have criticized these regimes because of their undemocratic nature, which is rather meant to refer to their old-fashioned and traditional political structures. Such criticisms have even amplified after 11 Sept. 2001. However, the Arab Spring clearly showed that the stability of these regimes is mainly due to their popularity. Even in Qatar, where the regime is eager to be considered as modern, open and pioneer system, the political stability is only due to its tribal and traditional structure. These countries are willing to enter into the modern world while keeping, at the same time, their old structures; and this is what the majority of the citizens in those countries want, though each for a different reason. The future of this situation is something that will be discussed later on.⁷

3- Among the six Sheikhdoms, Bahrain is an exception. Apart from its extensive historical, civilization and cultural ties with Iran, the majority of the Bahraini population was and is Shiite. However, the government and all elements of power, including the political structures, the military, the media and to a great extent the economic elements, are in the hands of the

ruling regime; thus leaving the Shiites subject to discrimination.⁸

It would be a long debate to discuss the historical backgrounds of this inequity and its evolution. Important to note is that the social, cultural and then the political structures of this country are deeply influenced by this fact; it has thus shaped up the society on the basis of what the Arabs themselves call it as an sectarian reality, a concept which is different from tribal reality; these concepts have been discussed in the previous chapters.⁹

Here, sectarian distinction means a division based on creed. Creed is meant to refer to various affiliations within a religion and in Islam which distinguishes one group from the other. The criterion is, thus, a judgment based on the affiliation of a person to this or that religious doctrine. Dignity and self-esteem of individuals, as well as their interests, exigencies and rights at the first instance depend on which school of thought they belong. Nevertheless, this is not the end of the story, as in such circumstances, the ruling powers try to accuse the other rival groups of lacking enough patriotic or nationalistic feelings, having links to the foreigners and even of being their mercenaries. This means that an ethnic affiliation, per se, can put a person into the best, or worst, social and political contexts.¹⁰

This is the general concept of sectarianism in the Arab World. No doubt, this concept may change according to the peculiar historical, religious and cultural circumstances. However, this is the whole story concerning the Bahraini, and also Saudi, Shiites.

Another important point is that in practice such thinking forms the political contemplation of the general public. They actually see the other group from a sectarian perspective and similarly assess their actions and activities. Therefore, the Bahraini Shiites belong to the Shiite section of the society even prior to the ruling class in Bahrain. The members of this group are viewed with a negative attitude and considered as the fifth column of the enemies and rivals.¹¹

As far as the Sheikdoms and their stability or unsteadiness is concerned, the question is that such a line of thought is prevailing all across this region, even though at different levels. The majority of articles and analysis written by the authors and analysts of the region after the

unrests in Bahrain, were founded on the same concepts and were thus written within this context.¹²

Moreover, the same applies to ruling regimes across the region. In many instances, as a part of the society influenced by the predominant culture, they think the same; however there are also those who may view and analyze the situation differently due to their familiarity and experiences, although they may act within the framework of sectarian policies, because they find it to be to their benefit. Such an approach is the best way to isolate their rivals and ensure their own immunity. People are keen on this kind of argument and propaganda, are convinced thereby and even believe that they are right.¹³

Moreover, the very basis of their media and advocacy is made and grown upon such culture and criterion. Even their theological advocacy is mixed with such ideas. Although Islam is one of the most lenient religions on racial, tribal, and ethnic issues, the mentality of the religious scholars and preachers in these countries is the same and acts in the same manner, especially when the state-sponsored religious advocacy is concerned.¹⁴

4- The concept and extent of sectarianism in the Sheikdoms cannot be defined and delimited without due consideration to the northern shores of the Persian Gulf. As said before, this concept generally prevails across the Arab World, and particularly in the Middle East. But, ethnicity has its own characteristics in this region, and without it the internal situation cannot be understood.¹⁵

The whole northern coastlines of the Persian Gulf belong to Iran, a big and strong country, as compared to the other countries of the region, that owned even parts of the southern shores before the colonialism era. Iran is neither Arab nor Sunni and is a country with rich social and political transformations.¹⁶

At the time of the British presence in the region, the Arab countries did not fear Iran, especially because Iran itself was in one of the feeble periods of its history. After these countries gained their control over their affairs, Iran became one of their main concerns. The behavioral logic of these countries, both in their domestic and external affairs, could only be interpreted, taking into account this reality which is deeply connected to

their social and political stability.¹⁷

Since the whole question is related to the Shiites, the best they could do was to accuse Shiites of being Iran's agents and mercenaries. This accusation was understandable and defensible both for the citizens of these countries and the people of the GCC's countries that had a deep sense of common destiny. This was also true for the extended Arab World whose morale, advocacy and political support was much needed by the Sheikdoms.¹⁸

As a result, all the negative historical background of the Arab-*Ajam* [non-Arab] as well as the Shiite-Sunni controversies along with fears from Iran and what they call as Iranian expansionist policy, served to increase the sectarian contemplation of the Bahraini, and to some extent Saudi, societies.

Undoubtedly, many people have in recent centuries immigrated from Iran to Bahrain or vice versa; they have been dissolved in the local cultures. Nowadays many people in Iran have 'Bahraini' or 'Bahrani' family names indicating their Bahraini origin, while people of Iranian origin form a major portion of the Bahrain population.¹⁹

The fact is that, the people of Bahraini origin in Iran live along with other Iranians with no sensitivity whatsoever, just as do others have originally come from Iraq, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. However, this is not true on the opposite side. This question is somehow understandable. But various social and political pressures and restrictions imposed on these people are far beyond the acceptable limits.²⁰

In any case, in light of Iran's presence with all its characteristics, the concept of being Shiite, and not followers of Shiism as a religious school of thought, in Bahrain and eastern parts of Saudi Arabia was formed and developed, though with differences. At the moment, this is the prevailing concept which exists as the basis of actions and reactions.²¹

On this basis, the demands of the members of this group of people are viewed as the demands of an ethnic group which is separate from the main part of the society to which they belong. Such an approach, especially in the current situation of the world, leads to further extremist approaches on

the part of the opposition, that in turn not only leads to further disparity between the government and the opposition but also results in deepening of the social gaps. In other words, the Shiites and non-Shiites in the Bahraini society are going apart and this skepticism is also extended to other countries of the region and leads to a kind of polarization of the societies.²²

As a result of the ruling regime's defiance and resort to violence, the opposition in Bahrain, whose demand at the beginning was only limited to the change of the Prime Minister who has been in power for forty years and was believed to be the head of financial and administrative corruption, as well as the mastermind and implementer of the measures which violated the rights of the Shiites, asked for the overthrow of the regime upon the influence of the popular movements in the Arab countries which chanted the same slogan. The fact is that only part of the opposition raised this demand, but the overall public opinion in Bahrain, the region and the Arab world encouraged the other opposition groups to raise the same demand or remain silent vis-à-vis those who demanded so.²³

5- The movement of the Bahraini Shiites also provoked the Shiites in Saudi Arabia. It can be said with confidence that at the beginning the Shiites' protests in the eastern Saudi territory was mainly influenced by the rapid trend of developments in Tunis, and especially in Egypt; thus the demands were limited to specific issues. But, after the rise of the protests in Bahrain and the police violence in Lo'lo' [Pearl] Square, they also rised to support the Bahrainis.

One should also take into account the differences between the situation of Shiites in Saudi Arabia and those in Bahrain. Bahrain is a small country with a Shiite majority, while Saudi Arabia is a big country with enormous resources and a Shiite minority. Moreover, the social, cultural and religious structure in this country is such that the Shiites' protests may not create major domestic problems. In practice, an international denunciation of the maltreatment of the minorities was the most important problem that the Saudis might have faced.

Due to reasons mentioned earlier, the Shiites' protests have even increased domestic solidarity and stability. The prevalence of sectarian

thinking over the minds of the Sunni Saudis and their political and religious system, have caused some kind of skepticism against the Shiites and Iran; thus the Saudis have gained some kind of immunity against the Shiite protests. In some instances, the Saudis even needed these protests.²⁴

After the Saudi military intervention in Bahrain, protests occurred in the form of demonstrations in the eastern parts of Saudi Arabia. But these protests failed to create a crisis in the Saudi government and country. Their problem was how to limit the scope of the protests without killing the demonstrators. As mentioned earlier, the Saudi government's main problem was no more than saving its face abroad, especially in the west, and that it should not be accused of mistreating the minorities. And for different reasons, the Saudis paid much more attention to their external prestige than before.²⁵

Beside these unrests in the eastern parts of the country, unrests also occurred in two major cities of Riyadh and Jeddah influenced by the developments in Tunis and Egypt. The youth were mainly behind these protests as they sought more rights and freedoms and objected to the financial and administrative corruption of the ruling regime and the royal family. This was an alarm for the Saudis.²⁶

We have already discussed in previous chapters that in the autumn of 1979, simultaneous unrests took place in Mecca, as well as in the eastern part of Saudi Arabia²⁷. Extensive demonstrations in this region in early Muharram 1400 Hijri, corresponding to November of 1979, and the Shiites who held mourning ceremonies for Imam Hussain (A.S.) mainly in the form of groups of mourners marching from one place to another, tried to transform these ceremonies into anti-government demonstrations. More or less, they took this model from the demonstrations in Iran which led to the overthrow of the Shah regime in Iran.²⁸

Many people were killed or wounded in the clashes between the security forces and the demonstrators. A larger number of people were arrested. However, these incidents failed to seriously threaten the regime. The regime and its supporters had the main leverages at their hands and due to the sectarian thinking, the general public were pessimistic towards the Shiites and their demands. As a result, such protests had indirectly

strengthened the regime, as they did.²⁹

However, the ideological protests in Mecca which led to the seizure of al-Haram Mosque in November 1979 was rooted in the Wahhabi's idea, which itself is part of the ruling Sunni thought that sought the return to pure Wahhabism³⁰. In their view, the ruling regime has diverted from the pure Wahhabism.³¹

As opposed to Shiite uprising, this movement had the potential to shake the pillars of the regime, as it did. The participants in this movement belonged to the tribes from which the members of the security forces had also come; thus they didn't want to fight against their tribal brothers.³²

The above example is evidence to show that the Sunni protests in Saudi Arabia, unlike the Shiite uprisings, can become a challenge for the ruling regime. As a result, the protests in Jeddah and Riyadh soon became a matter of concern for the regime, although they were smaller in scope as compared to the Shiite demonstrations in the eastern region. If the government hadn't prevented the speeding up of the events, these protests might have expanded and caused deep challenges for the Saudis.³³

Religious and economic leverages were used to counter this movement. During its rule over the country, the Al-Saud family has repeatedly resorted to these two leverages. The Wahhabi religious institution banned, as haraam, any protests and demonstrations, the suppression of which then became a religious duty. At the same time, the King allocated extensive financial resources for the people. It has also been said that the King urged his affiliates to act against financial irregularities, violations of laws and the abuses by the members of the Al-Saud family; and this was meant to be a campaign against corruption.³⁴

Somehow, these two initiatives saved the regime and prevented further expansion of the protests, especially as the Saudi regime is equipped with a kind of 'religious militia', composed of the Wahhabi youth under the command of the *Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahy an al Munkar* Agency, command the good and forbid the evil, affiliated with the Saudi Ministry of Interior.³⁵

The youth members of the militia have a more effective and efficient role than the security forces and serve as the ideological guardian forces of

the regime. In critical situations they take the responsibility to protect the political and religious bases of the regime.³⁶

At the moment, apart from the scarce demands by women to acquire the right for driving, the social situation in Saudi Arabia remains under control and the Arab Spring has not been able to inflict changes in the regime and its policies. This is especially true, as the Americans who are the main critics of the Saudis, are now standing by them.

6- Revitalization of the Saudi Arabia's role in the Arab World is an important issue for the Saudis which is related to the Arab Spring developments. Saudi's presence in the Arab world has always been known to be with an attitude of calmness and conservativeness. This was especially true after the 1991 war.

Although their tough enemy was defeated, this war was a defeat for the Saudis too. Their reputation was severely damaged and they were thus considered as the American mercenaries³⁷. Even their traditional friends among the regimes, political parties, groups and individuals were either separated or pretended not to be Saudi friends as they were afraid of the public opinions. As a result of this war, the Saudis were confronted with numerous domestic problems, because the Muslims and religious scholars who had fundamentalist inclinations accused the Saudi regime of collaboration with the infidels and allowing the infidel soldiers enter the holy land³⁸. This line of thought ultimately ended up in the subversive ideology of Al-Qaeda.³⁹

It took a long time for Saudi Arabia to regain its image. Ever since, they adopted a restraining and inward policy towards the Arab world. This was particularly important as a person like Mubarak was willing and had the capacity to rise and implement the Saudis' wishes. Mubarak was the voice that was heard from the Arab world. The Saudis had reasons to support Mubarak, and he also raised issues that pleased the Saudis.⁴⁰

After 11 September 2001, the Saudi policies became further inward and defensive. Arabs and the Arab world were accused and attacked for those incidents, and the Saudi royal family was criticized the most. Under such circumstances it was quite evident that the Saudis would adopt more restraining policies.⁴¹

It was a little while after the beginning of the Arab Spring, especially after the fall of Mubarak and cessation of protests in Riyadh and Jeddah that the Saudis actively returned to the Arabian scenery. The main reason for this change in attitude was that the Saudis felt that despite what others said, and maybe they themselves believed, they enjoyed a kind of popular acceptability, stability and constancy more than other Arab regimes.⁴²

The criticisms by the Western world of the Saudi regime, especially by the Americans, dated back long time ago. The majority of the authors and analysts who had written about this country have criticized the closed, traditional, non-democratic and violent Saudi system⁴³. Occasionally, even the political authorities have explicitly or implicitly expressed their criticisms. This continued until 11 September 2001. After those incidents when it became known that Saudi citizens had a major role in the 9/11 incidents, both from operational and financial point of view, the Saudis confronted extensive candid and frank criticism. Although other Arab regimes, too, faced some criticisms, the extent and quality of the criticisms against Saudi Arabia was very much different from those of Egypt and Tunis. It seemed as if these countries were more democratic and progressive than the Saudi regime.⁴⁴

The Arab Spring showed to the Saudis and other Sheikhdoms that modernity, and following a progressive and western style democratic system in itself will not guarantee their stability, continuity and popularity. The traditional and tribal political system in these countries was much more popular than the modern political system in the Arab world. This gave the Saudis enormous self-confidence and encouraged them to play a rising role in the developments of the Arab world.⁴⁵

Their military presence in Bahrain is partly due to this same situation. The same logic lies behind their active presence in Yemen, Syria and Egypt and the reactivation of their policies towards Jordan, Morocco and Palestine. Moreover, the Saudis are now controlling the Arab World's mass media empire, including the satellite channels and the press of the Arab world, through which they try to lead and direct the present and future developments.⁴⁶

The Saudis feel that the Arab Spring will not bring about critical

domestic problems. However, these developments may have impacts on their foreign policy. In the mid and short terms, the overall atmosphere of the Arab world may influence the public opinion and increase public demands especially in terms of civil rights.⁴⁷

No matter what their objectives and ideas would be, what will be the final outcome of the developments and whether, at all, they can achieve those objectives, there is no doubt that the Saudis are now active in all areas that they may have an influence. In the past it was not the case and at the moment no other Arab regime is as active as they are. It can even be said that these regimes are now rather inactive than active.

No doubt, one of the main objectives of the Saudis is to cut Iran's leverages in the region. This could not have been done before the Arab Spring as the situation was static and they didn't believe in their capacity. However, they can now do that in view of the changing circumstances and the existing excitements, which are altering everything.

7- Among the six Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were more significantly hit by the Arab Spring. However, the other four countries, too, were directly or indirectly affected by these developments.

First, Oman is the poorest country amongst the GCC states. It is marginalized from the geographical as well as political and cultural points of view; indeed this is what the government itself needed.⁴⁸

Majority of the people follow the Ibadhi faith, a branch of Islam with its own literature and beliefs. In the past, the majority of Sunnis were pessimistic towards this group; nowadays, however, they have milder beliefs. As a result of its geographic situation, religious beliefs and culture, historical background and social structure, Oman does not feel proximity with its neighbors. This could have been the reason why during the crisis in Zofar, Oman asked for Shah's assistance⁴⁹. People in Oman had the feeling that the Arabs, especially the leftist Arab regimes were supporting insurgents in Zofar, while at the same time the rightist regimes were not willing to assist Oman. As a result, they asked for Shah's support. In those days, these events brought up extensive criticisms by the Arabs and the leftist Arab regimes against Oman, and also Iran.⁵⁰

In any event, this decision per se and the lack of cooperation of Arab regimes with Muscat was an indication that this country is not within the scene of Arab developments. The decision helped further distancing of Oman from the Arab world and the other Sheikdoms.⁵¹

This situation was altered in early 1980's which coincided with the Islamic revolution in Iran, beginning of Iraq-Iran war and the establishment of Gulf Cooperation Council. Like Yemen which at that time was divided into Northern and Southern Yemen, Oman too could not have stayed outside the Council. Oman was on the shores of the Oman Sea and controlled the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz, the northern part of which being controlled by Iran.

These realities compelled Oman to enter the Council, and it did. However, Oman always kept its own peculiar policy. This policy can only be understood in light of Oman's balanced policy towards Iran over three decades and its differences with the policies of all, or majority, of the Council members.

In any event, Oman is in such a situation and indeed it is willing to be so. It is a vast and geographically arduous country with scanty oil resources which tries to find its way to development based on its own human resources. As a result the number of proportion of migrant labor force in this country is much less than other countries of the region.⁵²

At the same time, due to expansion of communication systems and mass media, the Omani people are increasingly aware of the economic and livelihood situation in other Persian Gulf countries. Their dissatisfaction is more due to their increased expectations than their poverty.

However, Oman is also suffering from its own specific problems which are different from the problems in other Sunni countries. Until recently, the majority of the people were engaged in agriculture. As mentioned earlier, the vast and mountainous territory, with sufficient water supply and fertile land had historically caused the prevalence of agriculture in this country.⁵³

Other countries of the Council, except Bahrain, suffer from lack of fertile land and fresh water; as a result they had no traditional agriculture activities. In Oman, such was the case and a large portion of people were

involved in agriculture.⁵⁴

The developments of the last three decades weakened the traditional agriculture and the younger generation of farmers preferred to immigrate to urban areas. This added to economic and unemployment problems. They were unskilled and lacked the capacity for their employment in the new industrial and non-industrial sectors of the country. It was quite evident that in such cases foreign labor forces were to be utilized; this led to intensification of unemployment and wage reduction.

As a result of Arab Spring, the unseen problems of the society in these areas were revealed. However, certain protests were directed against financial corruption of a number of state officials, who were immediately replaced. This was a noteworthy move by the government as due to its more or less homogeneous social composition, the regime did not feel that responding to such a demand would be interpreted as a withdrawal against the protestors who might raise the level of their demands after such moves.⁵⁵

In circumstances where the opposition belongs to a specific group who have been oppressed for any reason whatsoever, there is a concern that a response to one demand may lead to other demands. Such a risk is much less probable in a homogeneous and uniform society.

At any event, through replacement of the corrupt officials, the regime managed to prevent expansion and deepening of the people's dissatisfaction and dissent. It was also able to temporarily control and contain poverty and unemployment through financial assistance of the GCC. No doubt, the Sultan's personal characteristics and popular status had a significant role in this context. When talking to the protestors, he used a soft language and sympathetic approach. He didn't threaten or degrade them. All these elements helped the country to pass the sensitive period created by the Arab Spring which could have shaken its security and stability.⁵⁶

8- Kuwait must be viewed separately. Despite significant common features between Kuwait, UAE and Qatar, including their enormous wealth and foreign labor force, Kuwait is in fact different from these two countries and the GCC as a whole. This difference has its main roots in the

historical and social backgrounds.⁵⁷

The history of Kuwait is not older than two centuries⁵⁸; however, from the very beginning, the people in this region were in contact with others, including Arabs of the region, Iranians, Ottomans, Europeans especially the British, Indians and other Asians. This was required by Kuwait's geographical location. As a result, as compared to other countries of the region, Kuwait was born and grown in a rather open environment.⁵⁹

This historical experience had a significant influence on Kuwait's peculiar psychology and the creation of its social, political and intellectual structures. Such psychology and structures survived and are still active despite bitter experiences, numerous threats and even full occupation of the country. These structures are more modern than other countries of the region.⁶⁰

It is exactly for this reason that the reactions of this country to the outside developments are different from its peer countries of the region. The majority of people are Sunni; however there exists a large Shiite minority. A minority within the Sunnis is Salafid with fundamentalist tendencies. The majority of the Salafids do not have deposing tendencies, despite the fact that some the senior members and authorities of Al-Qaeda were- and are- from Kuwait.⁶¹

There is also a minority among Shiites with revolutionary inclinations. But due to prevailing situation in Kuwait, this minority should be seen within the context of non-revolutionary Shiites, while the minority Salafids are viewed in the context of the Sunni majority. This is what is duly noted by the Kuwaiti government and people. The government is in fact utilizing these realities for the sake of its own balance and stability.⁶²

As mentioned earlier, Kuwait is more modern than other members of the Council. One of the manifestations of this modernity is the relative weakness of the tribal and sectarian structures versus the power of the Kuwaiti nationality. As a result, tribal and sectarian realities play a less significant role in that society. It doesn't mean that such realities do not exist at all; but it can be said that they are weaker than what can be observed in other societies. For instance, the problems in Bahrain have created less problems for the Kuwaiti Shiites as compared to Shiites in

other Sheikhdoms. The main reason behind this could be the strength of Kuwaiti nationality and the weakness of the tribal and sectarian structures.⁶³

Apart from all these, Kuwait is a rich country. It is the first country that has found this wealth and it has been distributed to the people. This was unlike what happened in Saudi Arabia which found this wealth immediately after the Second World War. In Saudi Arabia, the wealth was gradually increasing but it was all distributed among members of royal family and their affiliates. Therefore, the ordinary people tasted the oil wealth much later than the Kuwaitis.⁶⁴

It was probably due to the same reason of having extensive and long term contacts with the outside world that the Kuwaiti rulers had also invested their huge national wealth in suitable and prospective centers. They also distributed the wealth among their original Kuwaiti citizens in an appropriate and satisfactory manner. These measures helped stabilize the ruling regime. As a result, the people's demands were not rooted in economic issues, and were mainly focused on social, political and legal requests. This continues to be the case.⁶⁵

Having all these in mind, the Arab Spring did not have significant reflections in Kuwait and it couldn't have that. Of course, as Kuwait and Kuwaitis deeply consider themselves Arabs and dependent on Arab culture, identity and behavior, any development in the Arab world will draw the attention of the ruling elites and the public. But this didn't have domestic implications and didn't lead to protests and demonstrations. It can even be said that the majority of the demands of Kuwaiti people have domestic roots and are less influenced by the outside world.⁶⁶

After the fall of Bin Ali and spread of protests in Egypt leading to the fall of Mubarak, some movements took place in Kuwait which was mostly self-motivated and emotional; these could not be categorized as political, social and economic demands. However, after the expansion of demonstrations in Bahrain and especially after the use of violence, the killing of a number of demonstrators, and intervention of the Saudi forces, the Kuwaiti Shiites reacted in support of the Bahraini demonstrators. In other words, the Arab Spring had its indirect impacts on Kuwait too.⁶⁷

Kuwait showed a conservative reaction to these developments, because it should have kept the domestic balance and in an effort to prevent a collision between Shiites and Sunnis, especially the Salafids who are the main rivals, and at the same time it should avoid tensions in its relations with the GCC, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The government's indulgence and its vast interaction with the influential Shiite figures extensively helped resolve the problem and it is very unlikely that the Arab Spring could effectively create tensions in that country. This is especially true because this country has effectively used, and continues to use, the Salafid leverage to control Shiites and vice versa.⁶⁸

9- Among the Council members, Qatar and the Emirates are the most similar to each other. However, they are following totally different foreign policies; thus they should be studied separately. First we focus on Qatar.

Qatar entered practically the contemporary time and developments of the region upon the coming of the present Emir to power. Although Qatar became independent in 1956 and it started oil exploration in 1960's, it remained one of the most isolated among the Arab countries and even in the region.⁶⁹

The current Emir came to power in 1995 after a nonviolent coup. With the assistance of a number of the elites of the ruling family, he tried to follow an active, open and even adventurist policy. This policy in these days is active both in the context of Arab world and at the international level.⁷⁰

The important thing is that Qatar has tried to create the requirements of such a policy. Establishment of Aljazeera satellite network, and later creation of other networks affiliated to the main Aljazeera entity, an active and high profile airline company, Qatar Airways, hotels, conference halls for international gatherings, increasing presence in sport, culture and youth activities and laying down the necessary infrastructures, efforts to create a Qatari nationalism using all required means, from creation of locations indicating Qatar's history, art and architecture to domestic media propaganda and revision of school books.⁷¹

Their main modality is based on establishing neutral and friendly contacts with all parties of any development and trying to play a mediatory

role. This role has particularly proved more effective and successful in the Arab world. The main reason for this success is the enormous financial resources of Qatar and a vacuum in the leadership in the Arab world, especially after the early 1990's.⁷²

The problem was not with the lack of Arab leadership, per se, but it lies with the isolationism and lack of eagerness of the Arab countries to play a role at regional and international arena. Larger Arab countries that had the power to influence were not willing to do so, each for its own reasons. Thus the ground was paved for a country like Qatar. It was a small country with no historical background. At the same time it is a rich country and although it has no historical, cultural or even political weight, it had at the same time no negative point in its profile, while many potentially influential countries had gloomy profiles.⁷³

Undoubtedly, the Arab world and the outside world needed a country like Qatar with such characteristics and ambitions, especially as it was able to pay the costs of its own measures. Within the Arab world there were countries, like Saudi Arabia, that did not like to compete with the policies of this tiny Sheikdom, but was not in a situation to oppose it. Such dissatisfactions were imperfect enough not to stop Qatar or affect its policies.⁷⁴ Now it should be seen how Qatar dealt with the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring created almost no problem for Qatar. However, Aljazeera which is more or less directly or indirectly influenced by Qatar's foreign policy played a significant role in these developments. Basically after its establishment, this network played a major role in leading and politicizing the public opinion; it still does. Its success was mainly due to its more or less independent, progressive, Arab nationalistic, active and update approach. It can even be said that this network reflects the thoughts and ideals of Arabs, especially the youth, and the political and dynamic forces.⁷⁵

It was probably due to these reasons that relations between Tunis and Aljazeera, and subsequently Qatar itself, were severed, as a result of which the Qatari Ambassador was ultimately summoned from Tunisia. This negative background, in turn, helped more effective reflection of unrests in Tunis. Similarly, the coverage of the unrests in Egypt helped the fall of

Mubarak, although in Egypt's case, the role of Aljazeera was less significant due to the possibility of the live coverage the developments in Egypt by other major western and global networks.⁷⁶

News and analytical coverage by Aljazeera of the unrests in other parts of the Arab world from Libya to Yemen and other countries where demonstrations were held continued with no specific problems. The only problem was in the case of Bahrain. Despite the traditional problems between Qatari and Bahraini regimes, Aljazeera followed a totally different approach towards the developments in Bahrain to the extent that one of its famous and veteran members, Ben Jeddou, resigned. This was not the sole problem. Qatar's policy towards the Bahraini crisis was in line with that of Saudi Arabia and the other GCC states. However, the Saudi and Qatari policies are generally different and even contradictory. Bahrain was one of the rare cases when these two policies went hand in hand.⁷⁷

At the beginning of the unrests in Libya and Benghazi, Qatar stood beside the European governments against Gaddafi and resorted to measures which were later trimmed down. In the case of Yemen, Qatar stayed beside the Council.

In general, Qatar's position on Arab Spring was either based on approval or silence, with Bahrain being the only exception. Although Qatar did not agree to send security forces like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, it approved the Saudi military intervention and thus did not follow a neutral policy.⁷⁸

10- Now, we should study the position of the Emirates towards the Arab Spring.

As concerns the domestic and foreign policies, the UAE is one of the most conservative regimes in this region. Although in general these regimes are conservative, one can say that the UAE stands on top in terms of its conservative policies.⁷⁹

The conservatism is rooted in the fragile structure of this country. The UAE is composed of seven states that in 1971, and at the time of independence, decided to form a unified state.⁸⁰

To maintain and sustain such a group of states in the ever evolving

situation of the region required some kind of conservatism. The first ruler of the Emirates, Sheikh Zayed who was named as the Arab Sage by the Emiratis and the Arabs as a whole, followed such a policy. He was one of the most successful and well-known Arab rulers who indeed enjoyed vast popularity.

This success and popularity was exactly in line with the conservative policy which in turn was rooted in the tribal structures. Patience, tolerance and hesitation along with a pragmatic and unambitious policy and a realistic and even positive approach towards the modernity and modern civilization, were among the main elements of his success. He was practically the founder of the political culture of his country. His approach and modality influenced the Emirati authorities and they always acted, and continue to act, in the same framework. Undoubtedly, this policy was in line with the ethics and spirits of the Emirati people especially some of their rulers, including the former ruler of Dubai and his son, Sheikh Mohammad.⁸¹

Although Arabs are essentially a sensitive and emotional nation, such characteristics are rare in the UAE. They are more seeking a peaceful life with welfare and free from troubles. Their past forty years of experience after their independence shows the same. They have experienced their contemporary history and world through such prerequisites of welfare and well-being.⁸²

In any event, their overall approach towards various developments has been like this. Most of the time, they watch the regional and Arab world developments with suspicion and anxiety, although they generally prefer not to show such anxieties.⁸³

Thus it can be said that the Emirati rulers tackled the Arab Spring in the context of such notional and emotional perspective. Like their other counterparts in the Persian Gulf and even with more emphasis, the UAE rulers welcome stability, in whatever form it might be, than change. They are anxious about political change and it is natural that they will not welcome radical changes.⁸⁴

These developments have not caused any significant changes inside the UAE. But their foreign policy has been under pressure. They didn't expect

the fall of Mubarak and even in the early days, they felt a sense of vacuum and insecurity, because Egypt and its position, apart from whatever it did, was a source of serenity. They feel they need a strong and politically modest Egypt, because such an Egypt will put the Arab World in the path towards their favorite perceptions and ideals.⁸⁵

Tensions in Bahrain made them really concerned. The position of the Shiite minority in UAE is so shaky that it cannot become a source of concern, like in Kuwait. From long time ago, the UAE rulers had also prepared themselves for such shaky situations. Thus the crisis in Bahrain did not create a serious domestic problem. However, the offshoots of the unrests in Bahrain would have definitely made the region unstable and exposed it to political rivalry of the regional and extra-regional powers.⁸⁶

Continuation of unrests in Bahrain and the incapacity of its regime to control the situation prompted the Saudi intervention. The Emiratis accompanied the Saudis against their own wishes and general policies. However, this companionship and partnership was more symbolic. They were not genuinely satisfied with it and perhaps the Saudi pressure was the main cause for their partnership.⁸⁷

11- As stated, the Arab Spring had impacts in the domestic and foreign policies of the six members of GCC in one way or another. Bahrain was the main cornerstone of such impacts. Others were mainly affected as a result of the situation in Bahrain. It should now be seen how they looked at this issue.

The fact is that all of them are aware of the repression and cruelty against Shiites. However, they believe that the main issue is much deeper. They thought that the movement of the Bahraini Shiites will lead to the provocation of their fellow Shiites in other Sheikhdoms and also the whole Arab and Islamic world. It was also noted that the demands of the Bahraini Shiites which at the beginning were only focused on internal reforms, dramatically changed into their request to overthrow the ruling regime. The third point was that the Bahraini protestors were considered as Iran's proxies in Bahrain and the whole region. These three elements prompted these Sheikhdoms to be sensitive towards Bahrain's developments and have practically placed them not beside, but behind the Bahraini regime.

Some had officially and openly expressed their support, while others stated their support through unofficial channels and the governmental and semi-governmental media. In proportion to these fluctuations, the non-Shiite public opinions in these countries as well as their media took a negative, or even very negative, approach. Probably no such negative and hostile attitude towards Arab Spring has ever been seen in other regions.⁸⁸

This clearly indicated the interdependence and domestic and political fragility of these countries. The political structure and modalities on transfer of power and election of the rulers in these countries are basically the same; and this is one of the main reasons for the close relationship between these countries. This proximity is both an element of stability and sustainability, as such a homogeneous structure has caused their common destiny, and a source of instability and fragility, because any changes in this structure will naturally create a challenge for the others as well. If the political system in Bahrain is to fall apart after a popular movement, then a same movement can directly threaten all these six nations.

Although it might be right to say that the ruling regimes in the other five countries enjoy some kind of popular support as a result of which the fall of the regime in Bahrain will not entail a threat in the short term, however a disruption in the balance is a threat, especially as this model could recur in other countries. Such an experience could at least be a tempting one. In the case of Saudi Arabia, this argument is even more accurate.

There is another point relating to the position of the Shiites in these countries. As a religious minority, the Shiites enjoy their best status first in Oman and then in Kuwait. Although the Shiites have a more appropriate situation in these two countries as compared to the other four countries, they are still under suspicion. Such suspicion is not necessarily political in nature and in many instances has social and cultural origins. No doubt, the situation of the Shiites in other countries is more fragile and unsteady, as they are subject to even further suspicion.⁸⁹

This is because these countries in general lack the modern basic requirements of statehood. Tribal and sectarian realities are still strong and the individuals are first viewed as belonging to their tribal and sectarian

affiliations than citizens enjoying equal rights. It is the level of their tribal and sectarian attachment that determines their loyalty to the ruling regime or even to their country. Most important of all, the ruling regime categorizes its citizens according to their tribal and sectarian affiliations.⁹⁰

Undoubtedly, this is one of the most significant vulnerabilities of the Persian Gulf countries. Although the extent of the problem in each of these countries is different, it could be that in normal circumstances this problem may not have a clear manifestation. However, this can be revealed in critical and sensitive periods.⁹¹

No doubt, Iran's presence on the northern shores of the region has further intensified the tribal and sectarian realities of these countries. In general, these countries fear Iran and to a large extent such a feeling seems natural. Iran is a big and ancient country with rich natural, historical and humanitarian backgrounds which in various stages of history had all or certain important parts of the southern shores of the Persian Gulf under its control. Taking into account the position of these countries, such a concern was natural especially after the British forces left the region in early 1970's.⁹²

After the Islamic Revolution, these concerns were intensified, mainly because of the vacuum of power after the fall of Shah and their lack of knowledge over the foreign policy of the new government especially with the certain provocative comments and statements. These concerns were further deepened after the breakout of war between Iran and Iraq, the fall of Khorramshahr and the expansion of battlefields and the subsequent fears and the insecurity in the Persian Gulf. Despite all these, Iran was always viewed as a cornerstone for the stability in these countries. They were confident that in the absence of Iran, their countries would have been swallowed by the Saddam Hossein regime or would have been destabilized by the South Yemen regime or even governments similar to Abdolkarim Qassim or Nasser regimes of late 1950's or early 1960's.⁹³

The approach towards Iran was altered after the end of Iran-Iraq war, and especially after the occupation of Kuwait and the subsequent war which ended this occupation. This became a new element in Iran's foreign policy in 1990's and later until the present time.

Iran was ready to continue its main policies on Palestine, its domestic policies and also the nuclear programme even if it required a confrontation with the US and the West. All these issues were challenges for these countries. The most significant challenge was the possibility of a military conflict which would have definitely affected all southern neighbors of the Persian Gulf.

In these circumstances, the fact that some citizens of these countries, mainly Shiites, were inclined towards Iran and its policies were troublesome and would have caused internal split in the society. As a result, Iran became a question of domestic concern. Moreover, there was a situation whereas the Shiites showed the most inclination towards Iran. The main reasons for such tendency could be found in the expansion and deepening of the revolutionary feelings as well as their unpromising and at least unacceptable situation in addition to the repression they were facing in all aspects of life and their view towards Iran. All these, prompted the Shiites of the region show more inclination towards Iran than any other period in the contemporary history.⁹⁴

In any event, Iran was an important and strong neighbor that followed a policy different from the overall policies of the Sheikdoms and, as such, was inspiring for many citizens of these countries, mainly Shiites. As such, Iran was considered as an element of threat. These two elements along with the first one, that called for the overthrow of the political system were the main determinant factors on the attitude of the Persian Gulf countries towards the uprising in Bahrain.⁹⁵

It might be a separate debate to study the views of the Persian Gulf countries towards Iran, the evolving of these views, their positive and negative elements, their impacts on stability and instability of these countries, etc. These issues have been discussed before; however, one should not forget that the negative manifestation of these relations in critical situations does not entail the factual nature of these relations. Due to their historical memory and their political and geopolitical reckoning, the Persian Gulf nations believe that Iran is an element of balance and stability in the region. For different reasons, such a historical memory is less significant for the new generations; however, the geopolitical

considerations have found more importance than the past.⁹⁶

12- Another consequence of the Arab Spring was further widening of the sectarian differences and disparities. In short, a sect (*ta'ifah*) is a social group with firm beliefs in a specific religion or creed. For instance, the Maronites, the Druze, the Alawis and even the Coptic Christians are considered as *ta'ifah*, while the Berbers who are spread along the north African countries are not *ta'ifah*.

Such a social structure exists in some of those countries, where social-religious groups could be found. But it is even more noteworthy that the majority of Arabs, including those from the Arab Middle East are well familiar with this concept. They view the political issues and developments of the Arab world in this perspective, of course with an overall negative approach.⁹⁷

As mentioned, the sectarian distinctions within certain Arab countries exist as a fact, but their appearance and emergence as well as their influence depends on external circumstances. In general, the Arab Spring provided appropriate circumstances for the emergence of this phenomenon. Having discussed the situation in Bahrain, the impacts of the Arab Spring developments in other Sheikhdoms need to be studied further on.

In this context, the developments in Syria are the most significant incidents to be studied. As concerns the sectarian composition within a country, Syria can be considered the most diverse one in the region. There is a Sunni majority, with the Alawi, Druze and Christian minorities each having its own multiple partitions. As concerns the heritage of eastern Christianity, Syria can be considered the richest and the most ancient country.

Throughout history, the interrelations of these groups have been generally good and free from tensions; however, in certain historical epochs, mainly during the Ottoman Empire, these relations tended to be filled with tension and complexity. Syria, somehow, holds the heritage of this historical background.⁹⁸

At the early years of their control over the Syrian region, the Ottomans followed a tough policy against the Shiites and Alawis who were subject

to attacks and massacres. As a result, they preferred to escape and seek refuge in mountainous areas. In the middle of the Ottoman era, the situation was somehow calm and tolerable; however, the situation in Syria became more difficult at the later periods of the Ottomans and at the time that waves of nationalistic movements expanded across all Ottoman territory, from the European to the Arab parts of the Empire, especially after the rise of Turkish nationalism with its different manifestations and affiliations. The local Turkish rulers were, first of all, tough on the Arabs and the Syrians, and, secondly, adopted diverse policies against different groups and ethnicities.⁹⁹

To justify their policies, these rulers tried to create tension in the relations between the sectarian groups; and this was what happened in practice. Taking into account the historical and religious backgrounds, the major tensions rose between the Alawis and the Sunnis. The same trend also occurred within Turkey itself; however, with the rise of Ataturk, this tension waned and was gradually weakened.

Today's developments in Turkey has prompted some kind of consolidation between these two and the policies of Turkey after Ataturk have encouraged and intensified this policy; a policy that is followed up more seriously by Erdugan's government. However, this development did not take place in Syria. As a result, the Sunni-Alawi conflict has continued as in the past. This was especially due to the fact that the ruling policy during the Baath regime and even before that, was based more on Arab ethnicity and identity than on national unity and Syrian nationality.¹⁰⁰

It is only an emphasis on national unity and common feeling of citizenship that can resolve, or at least inhibit, such problems, as it happened in Turkey. Nevertheless, emphasis on Arab unity and nationalism is not capable to reduce the sectarian disputes. At the same time, as the Arab heritage in contemporary era is mostly considered as a Sunni legacy, any emphasis on that, at least in the long run, would imply the strengthening of the Sunni identity and declining the Alawi identity. This is a phenomenon that has occurred in post-Saddam era in Iraq in the context of the Sunni and Shiite identity.¹⁰¹

As a result, the ethnic problem in Syria survived and was even

intensified. After the coming of Hafiz Assad and the Baath party to power, this phenomenon found a new form and was even institutionalized. Thus the best element to criticize the ruling elite, within or outside the country, was to charge them of being Alawi, and that the Alawis are doing this or that. As a result, the political competition was transformed into a sectarian rivalry.

The heavy shadows of this competition, or hostility, can be observed during the whole period of Hafiz Assad's rule that on certain occasions even resulted in bloody clashes. The main cause of all such clashes was the sectarian conflict and revenge. During Bashar Assad's rule, these conflicts were reduced but with the rise of Arab Spring the conflict heightened again which was also supported by the countries that sought to weaken Syria. Among them, Arab countries stood in the first row. Now we study this issue within the context of the Arab countries, especially as the members of the GCC are concerned.¹⁰²

In the chapter on "Religion and Culture", an argument has been discussed according to which the Salafid thinking and also the Muslim Brotherhood has significant influence in the GCC states. The predominant ideology in Saudi Arabia is Salafid in nature which is promoted by the Wahhabi clerics and structures. The Salafid thought has considerable historical and social influence in other Sheikdoms. Moreover, many Muslim Brotherhood scholars and personalities from different countries, especially from Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Sudan, have immigrated to these countries especially to Saudi Arabia, where they have now gained significant theological, social and economic influence.¹⁰³

In principle, Salafids are in conflict with all non-Salafids. Such a conflict reaches its highest degree when it comes to the Shiites and Alawis. As a result of the 1970's and 1980's incidents in Syria, the Muslim Brothers in general and the Syrian branch of the group follow a flagrant hostility against Alawis and the ruling regime in Syria. These facts have provided the required social and media backgrounds for the current developments.¹⁰⁴

Of course, it should be noted that in many instances the members of Muslim Brotherhood have not immigrated, but have rather escaped. A

large number of the group's members have been under prosecution, persecution and torture in the majority of the Arab countries of the Middle East. This party has been essentially banned in these countries, to the extent that any affiliation to this party was considered as the heaviest political offense.¹⁰⁵

Before the recent developments which resulted in the weakening of the Syrian regime, the members of the Muslim Brotherhood could not openly express views that could be beyond the predefined policies of the society in which they lived. After the recent uprisings, however, they were able to openly express criticisms against the Alawi group; the views that were generally welcomed by the political officials of the host country.¹⁰⁶

As concerns the GCC regimes, these countries had never been sympathetic towards Syria. First of all, in their view, Syria is a leftist regime which is not favorable for these countries. Secondly, Syria is an ally of Iran and Hezbollah. And thirdly, Syria's policy on Israel is totally different from the policies adopted by these Sheikhdoms.

Despite all these, Syria was tolerated and it was felt that at certain points its presence was required and necessary. They were confident that Syria will ultimately move within the path of Arab world's interest and exigencies and its decisions are more logical and reasonable. Its proximity to Iran, though it could be in the interests of Iran and its ally Hezbollah, but it could serve as the most convenient channel of communication with this country, especially at the difficult times of crisis. It could also serve as an element of control. Even more, they also knew that Syria's resistance against Israel is not based on war or adventurism; thus, despite the differences in position and attitudes, Syria's policy could be acceptable to them. What was a matter of concern for the Persian Gulf regimes was a warmonger policy, not the sole policy of resistance.¹⁰⁷

It was due to all these reasons, and even more other reasons, that Syrian regime was considered acceptable, despite the tensions that existed in their relations. For instance, the Saudis were not fond of the Syria's policy in Lebanon and openly criticized that.

This trend continued until the beginning of the unrests in Syria. Salafids of Saudi Arabia and even the clerics associated with the Saudi government

played an important role in provoking Syrians to rise against their regime. They openly announced that the Alawi group is deviant of religion. Assad's family, especially Hafiz Assad, was criticized and the people were called to rise against them. People were provoked to launch uprising against the regime, even if it required that one third of their population lose their lives.¹⁰⁸

Political authorities remained silent against these statements and even resorted to measures which were interpreted as approving the views of these clerics. According to certain reports, they even sent weapons and equipment for the anti-regime militants. These were intended to encourage those who sought to overthrow the government for religious and sectarian incentives and were involved in the assassination of the security, police and military forces. Although Syria was not the scene of a civil war similar to what took place in Libya and Yemen, the protests were not peaceful either, unlike what happened in Tunis, Egypt and Bahrain. A considerable number of government forces were killed. Undoubtedly, as it happened in those three countries, the majority of protestors demanded nonviolent demonstrations, while a smaller group resorted to assassinations and terror.¹⁰⁹

The continuation of the demonstrations resulted in the weakening of the regime and its prestige. It was at this point that the Saudis started their open criticisms. They believed that the fall of Syria would cut Iran's hands in the region and would restrict Hezbollah and reduce the Shiite stress. And they favored all these to happen.

It should be said that the revival of the sectarian hostilities was one of the consequences of the Arab Spring. The members of the GCC, especially the Saudis, have tried to divert the potentials of this movement as a campaign to seek freedom and justice and the fight against corruption into a sectarian clash. This movement will definitely impact the future of Syria and all countries with sectarian structures. It can also influence the future and stability of the Sheikdoms.¹¹⁰

Having said that, if a significant development takes place in Syria to the extent that it results in changes in the Syrian policies on Israel and Palestine, the overall policies of the Arab World will change and the social

and popular pressures resulting from such a development will definitely influence the countries of the Persian Gulf.

The fact is that the question of Israel and Palestine is not solely a political issue for the Arab regimes. They are also involved with the public opinion, especially with regards to those who show higher sensitivity to this issue and are more politically active than other classes of the society. If these regimes bypass certain limits in their approach towards Israel, they will face internal reactions. Most important of all are the reactions by those groups who are political and at the same time seek pretexts to openly express their protests. It happens that these groups are generally young and dissent and their protests can be easily expanded in a way that such protests may not be limited to the policies on Israel.¹¹¹

It is also noteworthy that these young people have, in general, Islamic and puritan inclinations and can be easily attached to radical ideologies like Al-Qaida. Even more significant, is that they can have an impact on the public opinion that is not satisfied with the policies of the Arab regimes over Israel. And this can lead to more general protests.¹¹²

This situation prevails in many GCC states, especially Saudi Arabia. It can be said that the public opinion and the radical youth have remained silent over the policies of their leaders on Israel and Palestine. But this silence is fragile and can be broken at any moment. Even a report by satellite media channels can prompt the silence to be broken.¹¹³

What helped these regimes in their policies versus Palestine was the overall policy of the Arab world. And Syria played the leading role in creating a balance in such a general policy.

Syria has always been the leader of the resistance front and the pioneer element of the Arab policy. Its position had firstly helped the greater popularity of the conservative regimes for the Western countries and allowed them to adopt a more independent policy than what the Westerners and Israelis wanted. Secondly, Syria and its allies were the symbol of commitment, self-esteem and pride of the Arab world. Although the more politically active youth who lived in these conservative countries had objections to the policies of their regimes, but they considered themselves as Arabs and felt that at least a part of the Arab world is

following a revolutionary and pioneer policy against Israel. And this gave them confidence.

Nobody knows in the absence of a regime like Syria to rise and support its revolutionary allies, what would happen to the overall Arab policies against Israel. It is not clear what would be the nature of interaction with Israel, and to what extent the policies of the conservative regimes will be tolerated. Even more important, the reactions of the committed and revolutionary youth and the potential social, political and even cultural and religious are not known. No doubt, all these developments will influence the social and political realities of the Persian Gulf countries, and such impacts will be more significant than any other Arab country.

The anti-Israeli sentiments of the Arabs are rooted in their history, culture, identity and religion. Thus, such sensitivity will not diminish with time and difficulty of the circumstances. The sensitivity will remain and will be intensified for the active youth, whether they have political or theocratic affiliations. Now the question remains to be what would be the approach of the Arab regimes towards these demands? Undoubtedly, any approach would be much easier in the presence than the absence of Syria and its allies.

From this perspective, the question will not be if an unpopular regime will be shaken with the provocation of sectarian controversies, but it would that with such a shake-up the whole general policies of the Arab world and its power to ensure the silence of the public opinion and radical youth would diminish and will bring about a new fragility for Saudi Arabia and its allies.¹¹⁴

NOTES

Preface

1. Concerning Saudi Arabia, Fred Halliday says: "No country in the world, with the possible exception of Tibet, has been the object of such misrepresentation and mystification as Saudi Arabia, a Country of More than 15 Million people, site of a quarter of the world's known oil reserves, and location of the two holiest cities of the Muslim religion, Mecca and Medina. Pascal Me'noret, *The Saudi Enigma*, Page, xi.

This idea can be generalized with respect to other Sheikhdoms. Also see Madawi al- Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 231.

2. One of the famous Ambassadors of Kuwait who is close to the prominent governing figures of his country and other Sheikhdoms told me: The fundamental principle for them is keep quiet and the worst thing for them is to become exposed concerning the problem and difficulties and always recommend each other to remain quite so that the issue should not be exposed.

3. Even the elite class is also like this... See *al-Hujaj al-Qawiyah fi Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, p. 82.

4. The situation of the Sheikhdome should be understood with respect to the Arab world. Usually, the Arabs have no a positive view concerning the sheikhdoms. See *Badawiyun fi Urubba, Slateen al qarn al ishreen, Riyah al Samum*, 105-119.

5. See the research of Yukihiro Takabayashi, *Towards a modern Islamic Kingdom*.

6. Probably, the best method for the understanding of social and cultural peculiarities and mind setup of these people is to talk with the various classes of

the society. The author of *Riyah al Samum* explained the intellectual, social, and political consequences of the Kuwait occupation aftermath. (p. 43-56)

7. See *al Jazriah al arabia fi Qarn al Ishreen*, p. 139-140.

8. "When the regime of Shah of Iran, which had proceeded with nation building in the form of pure westernization excluding traditional powers from the regime, was overthrown by the Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, a number of western scholars began to entertain apprehensions about the future of Saudi Arabia. *Towards a modern Islamic Kingdom*, p.1. Furthermore, the author believes: "there are two crucial keys to solve the theme. One is the prince Faisal succeeded in expanding the rational ruling system of Hijaz to the whole kingdom when he was king. He promoted the political economical modernization of Saudi Arabia, making success its basic."

9. See the interview of Etela'at Newspaper with Mohammad Masjed Jame'e, entitled: Revolution of Tunis, dated in 26/2/2011.

10. However, the writing of the twentieth-century history of Saudi Arabia should explore the internal social dynamics that have shaped the character of this country, political system and adaptation to rapid change. To understand the last 100 years, one needs to engage in an 'unending dialogue between the present and the past.' This dialogue cannot be muted by the obvious material transformation, but should explore its progression, tensions and contradictions. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p.13. This statement could be generalized with respect to other Sheikdoms.

11. *Tahavvul va Sabat dar Khalij e Fars*, p. 305-306.

12. Howsoever, the emphasis on Islam, in the transitional period, to modern society has an important role. "The other is that the Islamic consciousness and ideal of modernization of the New Middle class as a product and promoter of modernization should be analyzed. Is the New Middle class contrary to traditional values? Does the New Middle class regard westernization as the ideal way of modernization by receiving secular education? Is the New class trying to cause a repetition of what happened in Iran?" (Ibid, p.2)

13. Once Bin Laden said, "You will witness the Arabian Peninsula producing several Juhaymans." *Rasael Joheman al Utebi*, p. 7. For various reasons, Arabian Peninsula nourishes Juhayman type people. Furthermore, most of the

Salfids in other sheikhdoms originally belong to Saudi Arabia and specially belong to the Najd tribes. *Arabia Unifies*, p.29.

14. What is perceptible is that the sectarian, tribal and regional tendencies will be strengthened in the Arab world. Especially, because a lot of the regimes believe that strengthening this process will end up in their favor. The GCC members believe likewise albeit not at the same level. See *al Harkat va al Jamat fi sayasiya fi al Bahrain*, p. 131.

15. It is noteworthy that Professor Maurizio Vernassa has approved the general discussed issues. Whatever is in this dissertation that is my views and I bear the sole responsibility of it.

Chapter One

1- Due to considerable significance of the post Islamic era of the Arabian Peninsula in the history of Islamic teachings, numerous books have been written since the early post-Islamic centuries to describe the specifications of this region. A full enumeration of these books is almost impossible here, and there are few parts of the Islamic territories that have been studied and scrutinized so intensively. Such studies cover issues from geographical and natural environment and climate, to the tribes living in these territories and their battles, from water wells and resources to major and even less important roads. One reason for such attempts to better understand this region was the fact that the Hajj pilgrims had to go through this territory to arrive at Mecca and Medina. For instance, see "Sifat Jazirat al-Arab" written in the 3rd and 4th centuries AH [After Hejira]. To review the titles and contents of the most important classical books on this topic, see *Ibid*, p.p. 7-23.

Also, for the section on the Arab geographers and the Arabian Peninsula, see "Mer'at Jazerat al-Arab", p.p. 5-8.

An example of the more recent studies on the Arabian Peninsula can be found at "Darasat fi tarikh al-Jazierat al-Arabia, al-Hadith va-l mo'aser"

2- One of the officers of the Ottoman Naval force who resided in Mecca and Medina for many years wrote about the difficulty of livelihood in the Arabian Peninsula as follows: "No other location on earth can be found where the people are so accustomed to thirst and hunger. Those who can find one meal a day are

lucky and there a numerous people who are forced to suffer hunger and thirst for two or three days. See Sabri Pasha, "Mer'at Jazerat al-Arab", p. 283. This book was published in late 19th Century in Istanbul.

3- Of course, areas with good climate and weather can also be found in the Arabian Peninsula. For instance, see "Al-Bahwa al-Saeeda", a book written by Bertrand Thomas who was in the service of Muscat Government. The book was written by the author during his discovery voyage in the southern parts of the Peninsula from 1927 to 1930. In a more brief account, Ayoob Sabri Pasha reported that: "The weather and natural conditions in Oman is excellent and the capacity for production is higher than other areas. Agricultural products and fruits are cultivated in its cities and villages, and for this reason the residents [in Oman] have a better and milder behavior. ... Apart from agriculture, people are also involved in fishing and they also catch pearl from which they earn good income." Op. cit, p. 235

4- "The tribal structure was like the structure of a larger family, as the tribe itself is composed of a group of families of the same descent." "Darasat fi tarikh al-Jazirat al-Arabia, al-Hadith va-l mo'aser", p. 12

5- Many articles have been written by Arab and western authors on the cultures and value system of the tribal structures in the Arabian Peninsula. For example, see *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 12; Ibn Saud's Warriors of Islam, pp. 8-9.

It is important to note that it is only through a due consideration of these subjects that many of the contemporary issues in the Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms can be understood and analyzed. Hafiz Wahbe, the political advisor of Abdulaziz who later became the Saudi Ambassador in Britain, has commented on the tribal fanaticism as the main element in the tribal culture, as follows: "... it is for these reasons that the tribal fanaticism is so important. It is on this basis that the position of an individual versus his children, and his cousins is strengthened. If this element is not strong enough, it can then be further strengthened through affiliation and bonds with another tribe, as a result of which both sides will become strong enabling them to safeguard themselves against the threats from other stronger tribes."

6- *Al-Mufassal fi Tarikh al-Arab Qabl al-Islam*, vol. 4, pp. 5-127.

7- Ibn Saud's Values of Islam, p. 15; A History of Saudi Arabia, p. 15.

- 8- *Daneshname Jahan Islam* vol. 14, Essay: Hireh.
- 9- *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 108.
- 10- *Al-Mufasssal fi Tarikh al-Arab Qabl al-Islam*, vol. 4, p. 5-127.
- 11- On the changes in the situation in Arabian Peninsula after the relocation of capital to Kufa, see "Darasat fi tarikh al-Jazierat al-Arabia, al-Hadith va-l mo'aser", p. 11. *Studies in Jahiliyyah and Early Islam*, p. 76-77.
- 12- *Tahshil al-Maram fi Akhbar al-Bayt al-Haram*, vol. 2, pp. 558-99.
- 13- For example, see Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, ppl 149.
- 14- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 14. Sultan Salim reinstated the nobles of Mecca in their position. "Mer'at Jazerat al-Arab", p.p. 16-17. Morris, James, "Al-Moluk al-Hashemium", translated by Ahmad Mohammad Khalid, p. 15. "The Ottomans exempted residents of Mecca and Medina from paying taxes and recruiting to military service. They even helped them to be calm. As a result of the far distance between Hijaz and the capital of the Ottoman Empire, this region was not influenced by the European culture and civilization. Thus, the Arabian Peninsula was considered as a surreptitious secret for the outsiders, as the non-Muslims were barred to enter Mecca and Medina."
- 15- On 5 May 1916, the leader of the Arab revolution, Sharif Hossein, declared independence in Mecca. He opened fire from his palace to the Turk's garrison and led the attacks against them. He asked the Turkish ruler to surrender. However the ruler rejected and subsequently the Arabs initiated their attack and occupied the grand bazaar, the Ruler's headquarters, the governmental buildings and the Great Mosque (Masjid al-Haram). Lawrence: *Qissatu Hayatihi wa Haqiqatu Mawqi'ih min al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah*, p. 160
- 16- The Ottomans paid special attention to the normal operation of Hajj caravans and in order to ensure their security and welfare, assistance was provided to the tribes living along the routes of the caravans. see "Mer'at Jazerat al-Arab", p.p. 15-16
- 17- In a meeting with the British representative in the Persian Gulf, the ruler of Kuwait said: "Due to various restrictions, the Sabah clan was forced to migrate from Najd to Kuwait around the year 1710." , "Kuwait: Mazi-ha and Hazero-ha", p. 324
- 18- The Saudi dynasty and the Rulers of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar are

originally from the same tribe, 'Ghanire'. "Arabia Unified", p. 29. As a result of livelihood problems, the Arabs of Ghanire tribe were continuously moving and relocating. Majority of them were residing in the northern parts of Najd. "Mer'at Jazerat al-Arab", p. 249. Al-Shirbassy says: "There is no definite theory about the history of the establishment of Kuwait. In other words, the al-Sabah and al-Khalifa clans had arrived in Kuwait, around the year 1100, probably about the time that Kuwait was established." He then added, "Kuwait was not the main hometown of al-Sabah clan. They had migrated from Najd. They were born there and witnessed clashes between themselves and others." See "Ayyam al-Kuwait", p. 9.

19- The Al-Khalifa family emigrated from Najd to Bahrain in mid 18th century and took the power later on. See *al-Bahrayn Qissat al-Sira' al-Siyasi*, pp. 9-26.

20- About the origins of the Al-Khalifa family, see *al-Jazirah al-Arabiyyah fi al-Qarn al-Ishreen* p.p. 98-100.

21- On the situation of maritime navigation in the Persian Gulf since 16th century, especially after 18th century, see *Duzdan-e Deryai der Khalij-e Fars*.

22- The success of the British forces in their victory over the primitive Bedouin and coastal Arabs was mainly due to their use of the modern weapons which were completely unknown to those Arabs. "The number of the Saudi attackers were about 500. But after one the canons fired, they were frightened and escaped". See "Al-Kuwait va alaqateha al-dowalia khelal al-qarn al-tase'e ashar va avail qarn al-eshrin", p. 42

23- Apart from the modern weaponry, the Arabs of the region were also surprised by the courage, alertness and management of the British. This can be understood from a good number of resources. For instance, see *Jazirat al-Arab fi qarn al-eshrin*, p. 279, where Abdulaziz expresses his surprise and appreciation over the British and the British officers and diplomats in the region. Hafiz Wahbe has repeatedly made reference to this point in his book. There are too many evidences on this issue that cannot be mentioned here.

24- The British and the French went to India through Aleppo and then the Persian Gulf, which was the shortest and most appropriate connecting route to India. "Al-Kuwait va alaqateha al-dowalia khelal al-qarn al-tase'e ashar va avail qarn al-eshrin", p. 40. Also see, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. II, p. 40.

25- In 1838, Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary said that, "our mission in the Persian Gulf is to bring it under our maritime rule away from the influence of any other governments that might stand against our sovereignty, provided that this policy does not cost us too much. "Kuwait: Mazi-ha and Hazero-ha", p 180

26- After the First World War, with the defeat of Germany and internal problems of the Russian Empire, Britain became the only remaining power in the region. Prior to the War, the presence of these powers was increasingly expanding. This trend continued for some time, as stated by the secretary general of the British Foreign Office in 1924: "Now our position in the Persian Gulf is better and more stable than any other time in the past". "Kuwait: Mazi-ha and Hazero-ha", p 196

27- *Jazirat al-Arab fil-Qarn al-Ishreen*, p. 93.

28- After various developments which led to the uprooting of piracy in the Persian Gulf region, the Arab residents of the coastal areas acquired totally different behaviors and morality. For example, at the early 20th century Charles Billgrave wrote the following about the Kuwaitis: "As the courage, skills, cooperation and good behavior is concerned, they are the best residents of the coastal areas." "Kuwait: *Maziha and Hazeroha*", p 181. About the culture of the Emirati authorities, from a negative point of view, see *Ashr Sanawat fi Madharib Aal Nahyan*.

29- At the early years of the 20th Century, an agreement was signed between Kuwait and the British India Shipping Company according to which every week a ship carried cargo and passengers between India and Kuwait. This later expanded to the extent that the Kuwaiti Emir, Sheikh Mubarak, decided to open a representative office in Bombay to assist the Kuwaitis travelling to India. "Kuwait: Mazi-ha and Hazero-ha", p. 42. Hafiz Wahbe who in 1920's paid a visit to Bahrain says that apart from the original residents, a number of people from India and the Eastern Christians as well as a few Europeans live there." *Jazirat al-Arab fi qarn al-eshrin*", p. 93

30- On the education movement in Kuwait, see "Ayyam al-Kuwait", p.p. 83. On the problems arising from the new schools and the invited teachers, see "Tarikh-a Ta'leem fe al-Khalij al-Araby", p.p. 140-148. On the publications imported to Kuwait, see "Ayyam al-Kuwait", p. 336. It is to be noted that this information dates back to 1953 when the book was written.

31- *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwait*, pp. 33.

32- On the impact of the intellectual and social developments and in particular the anti-colonialist developments of the Arab countries of the Middle East in Kuwait, see: "Men hona bed'at al-Kuwait", p.p. 54-59, in which the process of the establishment of the parliament [Majlis] and the opposition thereto which resulted to public demonstrations have been reviewed. On the intellectual developments, for example, see the first magazine entitled *Kazima* published in 1948 which prompted certain reactions, as the government believed that the magazine invited people to communism or other dangerous ideologies. Ibid, p. 64

33- Apart from the political issues and Iran's political influence in Bahrain over the last four centuries and almost until the end of the Second World War, there was a strong social bond between Iran and this territory. The best evidence for this is the great number of families in Iran whose family names are Bahraini, Bahrani, or other names originally taken from the names of the locations or personalities in Bahrain. In Iran many letters similar to this document can be found. This letter was written in mid 18th century by one of the great Bahraini clerics, *Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Mojtahid Bahraini*, addressed to the then Prime Minister of Iran, *Mirza Aqassi*. In the letter, *Sheikh Mohammad* had sought assistance to resist against the invaders: "From long time ago, the land of Bahrain had always been part of the territory of Iran and has been subject to the rule of the [Iranian] government". See "Bahrain va Masa'el Khalij e Fars" [Bahrain and the Question of the Persian Gulf], p. 18

34- *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 93.

35- On the immigration of labor force to Bahrain after the oil discovery, see: "Al-hejra le-therva", p.p. 75-77. The British insisted that the Iranian and Iraqi workers should have been reduced and replaced by Indian workers (p. 83). On the impact of the strikes of the Saudi workers in 1953 on the labor strikes in Bahrain and the report of the British representative on these unrests, see p.p. 106-107.

36- *Al-Bahrayn, Qissat al-Sira' al-Siyasi*, pp. 9-26; 37-44.

37- The Asharqia in Saudi Arabia is a Shiite residing region opposite the coasts of Bahrain. Although after the discovery of oil a number of Sunnis immigrated to this region, these two regions had a constant link and many commonalities. Moreover, people of the both regions speak Arabic and this has

brought them closer together and made their relations invincible. This is while their relations with Iran made their link vulnerable as the latter was not Arab.

From this point of view, Bahrain remains to be an element in the internal stability and security of Saudi Arabia. As a result of small population and territory, and lack of mineral resources as well as other restrictions, the Saudis brought Bahrain under their supervision and almost established a direct protectorate; a situation which is welcomed by the ruling regime.

The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council is in fact a cover-up for the Saudi control over Bahrain. Without such a cover-up, the Saudis were not able to interfere in that country's internal affairs.

38- In principle, Hejaz which was controlled by Sharif Hossein and the Ottomans, had a different nature from Najd and welcomed relations with the outside world." *Lawrence; Qissatu Hayatihi wa Haqiqatu Mawqifihi min al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah; Towards a Modern Islamic Kingdom*, pp. 13-15.

Moreover, after his rule was established, Abdulaziz was forced to remove the previous openness. "The King tried to severely enforce the Wahhabi ideology for two reasons. First to satisfy the demands of the Ikhwan, and second to stabilize his own power and position." See, *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, p. 355.

39- The Akhwan which formed the skeleton of Abdulaziz's military force until the final establishment of his rule, had no inclination towards openness. They considered all manifestations of the modern civilization as signs of heresy and opposed using such manifestations. For instance, they believed that the use of telephone and telegraph and vehicles are *haram* [forbidden]. See *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, p. 352. The details of this incident can be found in *Abdul-Aziz Kama Araftuhu*.

40- For example, reference can be made to "Men hona bed'at al-Kuwait". In the introduction of the book, its Kuwaiti author wrote that he had written the book to prove that his country has not begun with oil and has not been a territory far from civilization. (see p. 5). On the costly welcoming of Earl Curzon at the time that he was India's representative the author says that: "This was intended to show that Kuwait is not a remainder of the dark ages, as was perceived by the public opinion". (p. 40).

Al-Shirbassy, the Egyptian author of the book "Ayyam al-Kuwait", who had

lived and worked there for many years, says: "I love the Kuwaitis because they treat their Arab and Muslim brothers with patience and passion". This book was published in 1953. (P. 384)

41- *Tahawwul va Sabat der Khalij Fars*, pp. 70-72.

42- *Mir'aat Jazirat al-Arab*, pp. 235; *Zofar*, pp. 19-54.

43- *Oman: al-Dimuqratiyyah al-Islamiyyah*.

44- *Safahatun Mishriqatun fi Tarikh Oman*, by Dr. Mustafa al-Najjar.

45- *Zofar*, pp. 11-14.

46- *Tatawwur al-Siyasah al-Amrikiyyah fi Mantiqat al-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 19-20.

47- The entire infrastructure of the Arab lands under the Ottoman Empire was realized by the Germans. See *al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah al-Kubra*, pp. 35-27.

48- At that time, the Saudi Arabia's main source of income rapidly decreased as a result of the war. In 1938, the number of pilgrims was 63,800, while in 1940 it was reduced to 32,100 and in 1941 only 9700 pilgrims visited this place. See, "Tatavvor as-Siasat al-Amrikiyat fi mantaqat al-Khalij al-Arabi 1941-47", p. 77

The economic situation was so difficult that it was proposed that loans should be granted to the Saudis in order to ensure the stability of their regime and also preventing unsteadiness in the Arab World, *Ibid*, p. 78

49- Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the US had found out about the rich oil resources of Saudi Arabia. During the War, it was concerned about the security of the oil rich areas and normal flow of oil to the markets. It had even considered sending forces to these areas. *Ibid*, p. 55.

50- To find out more about the new perspectives at the later years of the Second World War and the years after, see *Ibid*, p. 283

51- As compared to the Arabian territories of the Persian Gulf region, Hejaz was the most volatile area. Such instability was due to the ideas on the establishment of an Arab Caliphate under Sharif Hossein's leadership on which the British played a major role. *Ibid*. p. 283. Refer to *al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah al-Kubra*.

52- *Thawrat al-Arab didd al-Atrak*, pp. 320-326 (Rashid Reza's statement), 342 (The Reply of Sharif Hussein to Reza's statement).

53- *Al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah al-Kubra*, pp. 84-86.

54- Ibid. pp. 17-22.

55- Anti colonialist moves in Iraq as well as certain waves of sentiments were reflected in Palestine, Egypt and Syria and in particular in Kuwait, as a result of which the British as well as the Kuwaiti Emir were concerned. See *Tarikh al-Ta'lim fi al-Khalij al-Arabi*. Such sentiments were also observed in Bahrain.

56- *Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l Bahrayn*, pp. 54-55.

57- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*.

58- The social and political attitudes in the majority of Islamic countries of the Arab Middle East after 1970's was proportionate to the way their traditional societies were opened to the modern civilization. In principle, the traditional societies of these countries were closed but after they contacted the modern civilization they tried to become closer and more protective in order to preserve their original features and to protect their children and younger generations. In the more developed countries of the region- like Iran, Egypt and Syria- the traditional society tore out its surrounding veils and tried to be present in the scenery of the social developments. It was indeed from this point that the tendencies began towards Islam as an ideology and the Islamic movements were initiated. For example, see Masjed-Jame'e, Mohammad, "Ideology and Revolution" [in Persian], p.p. 130-159, which describes how Iran's traditional society was opened. See also Mubarak, Mohammad, "Al-fekr al-Islami al-hadith fi movajehat el-afkar al-qarbi", which reports on the inclinational towards Islam in Syria.

59- On the labor unrests in Saudi Arabia which mainly took place among the workers of the Aramco oil company and was influenced by the labor strikes of the Bahraini and Asian workers in Bahrain, see: "Helm al-thervah lel-hejra", p.p. 106-107. On how this wealth was wasted especially before the rule of King Feisal, see: *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 554-5.

The overthrow of Saud and his replacement with Faisal which was basically made possible with a conspiracy within the Royal family and the religious clerics was due to the same reason, see Ibid. pp. 552-3.

60- *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 33; *The History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 107-8.

61- With the exception of the Royal family and a small group of businessmen

and dealers as well as a group of other people who were close to the Royal family, other people did not enjoy the oil wealth. See *Ibid.* p. 555. This situation continued until mid-1960's.

62- On the Radio Cairo's broadcasts, see S. Shazl, *the Arab Military Option*, p. 98. On the broadcasts of Radio Baghdad which replaced Radio Cairo after the rise of the Ba'athists to power, see *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 131.

63- *The History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 130.

64- For the social and political movements in Bahrain, see *al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*, especially, pp. 7-8.

65- *Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah*, p. 98; *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, p. 373.

66- Bahraini and Arab workers received less wages than the Asian workers, while the latter even received less salaries and privileges than the European personnel. *Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah*, p. 91. After Aramco was established it was increasingly expanded, in the period between 1942 and 1947 to the extent that it became the largest American enterprise outside the US territory. Here, even the European personnel were subject to discrimination. For instance, the Italian ambassador had repeatedly complained to the Saudi authorities about the complaints by the Italian personnel who comprised 6% of the total personnel of the company and were not satisfied with their low salaries and benefits. *Ibid.*, p.p. 103-105

67- On the migration of Iranians to Bahrain to be recruited in the oil industry, see *Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah*, p.p. 75-77

On the impacts of the "Tudeh Party" [People's Party] in Bahrain, see: "Tatavor as-siasat al-amricia fi mantaqe al-Khalij al-Arabi 1941-1947", p. 284.

68- In 1971, Iran recognized the independence of Bahrain. Prior to this date, Bahrain was considered as Iran's thirteenth province and had a representative in the Iranian Parliament. The last Representative from Bahrain was Mr. Abdulrahman Faramarzi, who was the editor-in-chief of Kayhan newspaper which at the time was the most widely published newspaper in Iran.

69- On the salaries of Kuwaiti laborers working in the oil industries of their country and big difference between their salaries with the British and Western workers which resulted in protests and strikes, see: " Helm al-thervah lel-hejra",

p.p. 67-69.

On other unrests and demonstrations, see: *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, p. 84, which describes the student unrests. It was noteworthy that after Abdulkarim Qassim announced the merger of Kuwait to Iraq, the Kuwaiti women launched demonstrations against him. Ibid, p. 88. Taking into account the conservative nature of the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, such demonstrations were considered as unique incidents.

70- Increase in oil exports from Kuwait was due to the nationalization of oil industry in Iran as a result of which Iran's exports were stopped.

71- In that period, the new intellectual layers of society in Kuwait were in favor of the unification with Iraq.

At certain moments, even a decision to change the education system from Iraqi to Egyptian model faced widespread protests. See *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, p. 84.

In the meanwhile, Abdulkarim Qassim's claims was a shock for everybody, from the government to the intellectuals and the general public, and even the women. About the Emir's speech see Ibid. p. 399.

72- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 49-56: Attacking the Kuwaiti psychology from inside, which caused the Kuwaiti personality to be shocked, creating such reactions that resulted in a complete and extreme rejection of whatever is Arab.

73- *Tahavvul wa Sabat*, pp. 84-87.

74- The details of these developments can be further studied in: "Al-fekr al-Eslami al-hadith va sellat be-l-afkar al-Qarbi", and "Al-fekr al-eslami al-hadith fi movajahate al-afkar al-Qarbi". These were the backgrounds which later led to the ideology of *Seyed Qotb* who was the inspiring the Salafid deposing ideologies.

75- For further details, see: "Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars" [Evolution and Stability in the Persian Gulf], p.p. 68-69.

76. *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 182-3.

77- On the stability in Saudi Arabia as the most significant country of this group of states after 1973, see: *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 133.

78- The Return of Ayatollah, pp. 105-112.

79- Ibid. pp. 99-100.

80- "Despite their differences, Shah and Faisal tried to suppress the revolutionary movements in the [Persian] Gulf region. The Saudis wanted to strengthen their relations with Oman which enjoyed a strategic location and at the same time was neighboring Saudi Arabia; however, King Faisal did not respond to Sultan Qabus's request for assistance against the Zofar insurgents. In principle, an open intervention in Oman was not in line with the Faisal's policy. On the other hand, the Saudi opted to close their eyes on Iran's military intervention in April 1973." *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, p. 524.

81- The Sheikdoms were ready to bear the costs of the existing British forces in their region. See, *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi al-Khalij al-Arabi*, p. 129. On the Sheikdoms fears about the Iraqi Ba'athist regime, see *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 120-125.

82- On the mutual relation between the Iranians and the Arabs and the elements influencing such relations, see "Tahavvol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars" [Evolution and Stability in the Persian Gulf], p.p 190-198, and also "Riah as-Samum", p.p. 395-97.

83- *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Saudiyyah*, pp. 524.

84- The Return of Ayatollah, pp. 199-200.

85- I have personally heard from the Arab diplomats about more sympathy of the Gulf people towards the post Revolution Iran. Of course, such conversations took place outside the official diplomatic context. During my mission to the Holy See from 1991 to 1997, I heard the Saudi Ambassador in Italy, Mr. Khalid Al-Zaki, more than once saying that the behavior of the Shah's regime was not understandable for them. According to the Saudi Ambassador, Shah acted like an emperor; however, such a behavior was not seen after the Revolution.

86- On the Saudi's view on the communist regime in Afghanistan and the Soviet intervention, see: *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 115; The Statement of President Jimmy Carter in January, 1980: *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fil-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 47; *Amrika wal-Sa'udiyyah Takamul al-Hadhir Tanafur al-Mustaqbal*, p. 35.

87- In many books and articles written and published on the Iranian Islamic Revolution by the authors from the [Persian] Gulf region, it has been contemplated that this Revolution is inspired by communist ideas, or that it is a

communist conspiracy with an Islamic disguise. For example, see *Ibid.* p. 33.

88- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fil-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 44-5.

89- *Ibid.* 50-56.

90- *Jazirat al-Arab fi'l-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 48: Differences of Handicraft in Najd and the Persian Gulf Coast.

91- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 14.

92- Despite enormous expenditures by these countries during 1970's and 1980's to buy weapons, they failed to take any action during the occupation of Kuwait. It is noteworthy that the amount of these military expenditures ranked second in the world only next to Taiwan.

93- *Riyah al-Samum*, p. 52.

94- *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, p.p. 157-159.

95- For the Attitude of Sheikdoms about Iran, see *Tahavul va Sabat*, pp. 105-119.

96- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 52.

97- *Amrika wa'l-Saudiyyah Takamul al-Hadir Tanafur al-Mustaqbal*, pp. 33.

98- *Tahavul wa Sabat*, pp. 205-253.

99- For example, refer to *Secret of the Kingdom*, pp. 112; *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 58-75; *The History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 163.

100- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 81.

101- *Riyah al-Samum*, p. 50.

102- *Ibid.* p. 59.

103- On the backgrounds of the Iraq-Kuwait frontier disputes, see: "Al-Khalij al-Arabi", p.p. 386-388.

104- *Tahavul va Sabat der Khalij-e Fars*, pp. 12-13.

105- I have repeatedly heard from the Kuwaiti people who escaped to the neighboring countries after the occupation of the country that the Sheikdoms, especially the Emiratis, treated them inappropriately. On the feelings of the Saudi government after the occupation, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 43-52.

106- The reaction of the Arab nations to the Sheikdoms after the occupation of Kuwait was even more hostile than other nations. Many Arab regimes showed

a similar reaction. Many of the Arabs were willing to take revenge over the arrogant behavior of these Sheikhdoms.

107- "Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars" [Evolution and Stability in the Persian Gulf], p. 22

108- After the end of the occupation of Kuwait, many articles were published in the Kuwaiti media in which the Arab nationalism and the activities of the Kuwaiti government in support of this idea were criticized; see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 50-51.

109- During the first half of 1990's, I personally heard repeatedly from the Arab ambassadors in Italy that the Arab world is deeply suffering from disparity to the extent that they can hardly organize joint luncheon or dinner receptions, while in the past they used to get together for monthly meetings.

110- During my mission to Morocco, I repeatedly heard from the Moroccan personalities that although King Hassan stood on the side of the Western forces, he did not express this in his country's internal scene and had asked the mass media not to discuss this issue. It was due to the fact that the public opinion was in favor of Saddam Hussein. These personalities described this attitude as a sign of King Hassan's caution and vigilance.

111- *Hulum al-Hijra lil-Tharwah*, pp. 115.

112- About Sadat's opinion about the Saudi Royal Family and its sympathy to Egypt, see *al-Sira' al-Sa'udi al-Misri Hawla al-Yaman*, pp. 36.

113- On the recognition of Taliban and the assistance provided to this group, see *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, pp. 162-165.

114- The then Saudi Crown Prince, Malik Abdullah, pressured Kuwait to allocate more share for the Jordanian labor force. See: "Helm al-hijra letherva", p. 116

115- On the coup d'etat in Qatar and the subsequent developments, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 297-310.

116- The story of the creation of various protesting Salafi affiliations in Saudi Arabia, which were very soon turned into terrorist and deposing attachments, can be found in many Arab and Western sources. The works of the Saudi anthropologist residing in the UK, Ms. Azawi al-Rashid, are among the most modest sources that have comprehensively studied and analyzed this

phenomenon. See, "Mas'alat dowlat as-Sa'oudia", from the same author, p.p. 43-255

117- About the invitation of USA and the other Western countries and the reactions that it caused in the religious circle and the public opinion Saudi Arabia, see the *The History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 164-171.

118- Ibid. 165-166.

119- *Mas'alah al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 202.

120- In one of my meetings with the Saudi Ambassador, *Mr. Khalid Turki*, in 1994 he strongly criticized the tough behavior of the religious police in that country, meaning the agents of the *Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahy an al Munkar* ["Command the good and forbid the evil"] Agency. A few days prior to our meeting, he, along with his wife, had gone to Mecca where they were treated inappropriately and they were even asked to show documents indicating their marital status. He sadly said "they even asked such documents from an old man like me". On the differences between the evolved and the traditional Wahabisms, see: "Mas'alat dowlat as-Sa'oudia", p.p. 180-188

121- In the articles published by the Bahraini Shiites after the Arab Spring, it was generally mentioned that as a result of the unbalanced social situation and oppressive policies of the ruling regime, every ten years a round of public protests takes place in Bahrain. This is a noteworthy point that has been mentioned in Baysooni's report.

122- *Al-Harakat wa 'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*, pp. 137-142.

123- *Al-Amalah al-Ajnabiyyah fi Aqtar al-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 479; and 53, 124, and 139.

124- The fact is that the majority of the people from [Persian] Gulf region are inclined to trade activities to productive activities. Thus, to be called as "*ibn sane'e*" [son of a producer] is one of the most offensive insults. They loved trade; therefore they paid more attention to trade and accounting when they got in touch with the modern world.

125- For example, visit:

http://realestate.theemiratesnetwork.com/developments/dubai/palm_islands_ar.php.

126- It is generally known that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and

the separation of the new independent republics, a large number of Russian and Ukrainian women travelled to Dubai to make money. Their number in a small region like Dubai was so considerable that their presence was considered as troublesome.

A while later, a number of social and religious personalities of Dubai met with the Ruler, Sheikh Mohammad, and urged him to resolve this problem. In response, he said that this problem can be resolved very quickly but if a decision has been made that Dubai is to be an open society for everybody, then the consequences should also be tolerated. Dubai's economic boom is due to such open policy, thus such consequences should be accepted.

127- An ambassador of one of the Arab governments of the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council, whose name I prefer not to mention here, told me that "the basic principle for our rulers is that the disorders and problems are to be dealt with a policy of denial and covering up." Such a policy currently exists, or better to say prevails, in all these countries.

128- For a perfect example of such an approach, see: Bernard Lewis, "What Went Wrong".

129- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 22-29.

130- After the 9/11 incidents a wave of an anti-Arab pessimistic attitude prevailed in the West. Many articles written by various authors criticized the impolite language of the Westerners. During my mission in Morocco, I repeatedly witnessed the criticisms against the Americans by the Arab diplomats, whose names I prefer not to mention.

The fact is that the Americans' attitude towards the 9/11 incidents caused the negative response from various social layers of the Arab world. According to an opinion poll conducted in 2003, 90% of the Saudi people supported Bin Laden. See *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp.

131- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 135-137.

132- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 75 and 25-28. About women's situation in the Sheikhdoms in the past, see *Safahat min Tarikh al-Kuwayt*, pp. 8.

133- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 140-141.

134- For example, visit:

<http://www.champress.net/index.php?q=ar/Article/view/117087>.

135- Except al-Qaeda, the other Islamic groups along with their variations, and the Liberal groups, for the reason of the humiliating American policies against the Arabs, they resorted to the ruling regimes.

136- See the chapter on "How the Gulf people view Iran" in *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars* [Evolution and Stability in the Persian Gulf], p.p 105-119, in which the historical, cultural, political and religious backgrounds for the views of the people from the Persian Gulf towards Iran has been analyzed.

137- See the interview of Etela'at Newspaper with Mohammad Masjed Jame'e, entitled: Revolution of Tunis, dated in 26/2/2011.

138- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 7-8.

139- The question of Bahrain is currently swayed by this country's membership in the GCC and the Saudi invasion which, in turn, has been carried out on the pretext of the membership in this organization. If this hadn't happened, the extensive popular protests would have resulted in the overthrow of the government or fundamental reforms therein and would have brought the country out of deadlock.

140- Regarding to the sectarian policies of the Bahrain regime, see *al-Jama'at wa'l-Harakat al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*, pp. 112, 131, 139, and 141.

141- *Al-Tanmiyah fi Duwal Majlis al-Ta'awun*.

142- *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-Asr al-Hadith*, p. 1.

143- *Tahavvul wa Sabat*, pp. 305-317.

144- Even in the past, the strong link between the wealth and management in these countries has been a source of concern. On the dissolution of Parliament in Kuwait, see *al-Kuwayt al-Ra'y al-Aakhar*, pp. 13-15.

145- "The Emir is thus the pure mirror through which you can get to know the psychology of the people and whatever is in their minds." *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. Up to now, this definition is still correct in the Sheikhdoms.

146- For instance, see *Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah*, pp. 193-194; *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 73-74. Criticism of Ben Laden to the Saudi government about the Muslim manpower: "While the West manpower enjoys many privileges and rights, the Muslim manpower has no other way than dreaming with such privileges." *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, p. 179.

147- *Beyond All*, pp. 110-16.

Chapter Two

1- Abdulaziz's advisor, Hafiz Wahbe, who was a knowledgeable person, had reported his conversation with one of the people from Najd in 1932. The Najdi man asked him about the government system and the people in power in Europe. Hafiz briefly replied that everything there is controlled by law, and it is the law that sets the limits of the power of the rulers. In response, the Najdi man said that they are not kings. If someone is unable to spend from the treasury at his own discretion, he is not a king. Then Hafiz added that "this is the whole context of their thinking. And it is within this framework that the Arab governments have been formed, except those countries that have been influenced by the Turks. The forms of government in Kuwait, Bahrain, Najd, Qatar and Oman are the same. It is a basic simple method free from complexities of the government in the developed countries. However, the level of justice in these systems depends on the personality of the ruler and his successors and that to what extent they are inclined toward justice and fairness." See *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-qarn al-eshrin*, p.p. 139-140

2- For example, in *Men hona bed'at al-Kuwait*, it has been mentioned that "like other cities and villages, Kuwait was formed when people and small groups got together here. They were forced or voluntarily decided to come to this territory from different parts of the Arabian Peninsula because of the bad situations or other problems they were facing." See: : "Men hona bed'at al-Kuwait", p. 12. Also see, "Kuwait: Mazi-ha and Hazero-ha", p. 324

3- *Tahavvul va Sabat*, pp. 63-65.

4- Ibid.

5- On the Sheikh's leadership and commitment towards his tribe and its members: "The people of Ajman have about 120 local boats with which they travel outside Ajman for fishing or carrying goods. It happens quite often that they spend five months of the year out of their hometown. During their absence, the ruler supervises their families like a father and helps them in case they need anything. In an interview with *Al-Va'deh* Magazine, he said 'the residents here are like my children and I consider myself as their father...' ", see *Khalije fars*,

ashnaee ba emarat aan [in Persian], p. 300

6- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah*, pp. 33.

7- Ibid. pp. 21.

8- *Jazirat al-Arab fi'l-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 139-140.

9- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 3; *Toward a Modern Kingdom*, pp. 101.

10- *Tahavvul va Sabat*, pp. 64-65; *al-Kuwayt al-Ra'y al-Aakhar*, pp. 13-5.

11- For example, Muhammad al-Mubarak, a Syrian religious scholar, explains the painful experience in the transitional period from the end of the Ottoman reign to 1960's, which is a very different experience from the Sheikhdoms. See *al-Fikr al-Islamiy al-Hadith fi Muwajahat al-Afkar al-Gharbiyyah*.

12- *Ideologie va Enghilab*, pp. 150-6.

13- *Beyond All*, pp. 112.

14- *Khalij- Fars: Ashna'ei ba Imarat-e aan*, pp. 200-217 and 300-308.

15- There is no difference in the forms of life of the members of the tribe. Everybody, from the Sheikh and Emir to the ordinary people eat rice, meat, milk and dates. All of them wear *deshdashe* [long cotton dress] over which they put *aba* [sleeveless loose cloak], and wear turbans over their head. They enjoy full freedom. A nomad stands in front of the ruler and defend his rights." See *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-qarn al-eshrin*, p. 12.

16- *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 184; Ms. Bahijeh Behbehani, and essay about the Emir of Kuwait, published in *al-Qabas Newspaper*, dated in 29/8/2011.

17- What was said mostly applies to the four sheikhdoms, except Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. In these Sheikhdoms, the situation has been more or less the same. "Sheikh Saeid ben Maktoom, father of the current Ruler of Dubai- and Grandfather of Sheikh Mohammad- ruled the Sheikhdome for 60 years with gentleness and sympathy. He was a moderate, fair, vigilant and popular figure among his people. In the contacts with him, the author had personally observed these characteristics. In 1958 he withdrew from power in favour of his elder son, Sheikh Rashed bin Saeid Maktoom and passed away about one year later." "Khalije fars, ashnaee ba emarat aan" [Persian Gulf: more to know about its emirates] [in Persian], p. 227. However, their personality and behavior has not always been so humane. For example, see Ibid, p.p. 307-308

18- *Dirasat fi Tarikh al-Jazirah al-Arabiyyah al-Hadith wa'l-Mu'asir*, pp. 13-9.

19- *Tahavvul va Sabat*, pp. 127-131.

20- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah*, pp. 43-52.

21- After the Arab Spring, various articles have been published in the media of Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Oman. In majority of these articles, the authors supported their ruling regimes and used the terms that are more or less similar to those used for their ancestors or chief of tribes.

22- For instance, refer to *al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah ala Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*.

Chapter Three

1- *Tahavvul va Sabat*, pp. 47-53.

2- The relations between England and Kuwait dates back to 1776. The English mailing courier returning to England from India were passing to Aleppo via Kuwait and the East India Company relocated its main office from Basra to Kuwait. "Kuwait: Mazi-ha and Hazero-ha", p. 180

Kuwait was located in the middle of the trade route between Muscat, Bahrain, India, Qatif and the western territories. See *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-qarn al-eshrin*, p. 83. In 1922, about 10000 Kuwaitis were involved in the pearl caching for which they used 800 boats., *ibid.*, p. 52

3- *Al-Kuwayt Madhiha wa-Hadhiruha*, pp. 234-47.

4- About the position of Kuwait and its readiness to join the new world, see *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. 63-84 and 221.

5- On education in Kuwait, see : "Men hona bed'at al-Kuwait", p.p. 83-100. On the invitation of the Palestinian and Syrian teachers in 1936 and the objection of the British representative and his communication with the British representative in Palestine and questioning about these four teachers, see *Tarikh al-Ta'leem fi al-Khalij al-Araby*, p.p. 140-145.

On the objection of the British representative over the sending of the students to Iraq, see *Ibid*, p. 148.

6- On the protests of the school managers and students, see *Min Huna Bada'at*

al-Kuwayt, p. 84.

7- Ibid, p. 149. Since mid 1930's, the Kuwaiti emir had been telling Hafiz Wahba that they are sending their children to study in Beirut and Alexandria.

8- Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt, pp. 84.

9- Ibid.

10- Ibid. pp. 85.

11- After the student unrests in 1940, the Emir of Kuwait said that "we basically need business education and vocational training", *ibid*, p.p. 135-136

It is interesting to note that despite these recommendations, in his response to Adrian Wallance report that requested the history of Kuwait be written by the British in order to prevent the spread of anti-British sentiments, the Kuwaiti Emir stated that "we are part of the Arab nation; a nation that created a civilization over which you established your own civilization. We, ourselves, will teach the Arab history to our children.", *ibid*, p. 158. Further on this report, see: "Jame'e Kuwait", *op cit*, p.p. 150-157

12- Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn, pp. 7-8; Jazirat al-Arab fi'l-Qarn al-Ishreen, pp. 98-100.

13- Da'rat al-Ma'arif Buzurg Islamie, Vol. 11, Article: Bahrain, pp. 399-407.

14- The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century, pp. 244-5; Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah, pp. 75-77.

15- Da'rat al-Ma'arif Buzurg Islamie, Vol. 11, pp. 415-7.

16- Waqi' al-Harakah al-Fikiriyah fi'l-Bahrain, pp. 114.

17- "All of the political movements of Bahrain are of an Arab identity." Refer to al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn.

18- Ibid. p. 87.

19- Ibid. pp. 53-4.

20- Ibid. p. 45.

21- Ibid. pp. 112. About the sectarian policy of the regime in Bahrain from past times, see p. 141.

22- Ibid. pp. 90-1.

23- Dirasatun fi Tarikh al-Jazirah al-Arabiyyah al-Hadith wa'l-Mu'asir, p. 37.

24- A History of Saudi Arabia, p. 14.

25- Ibid. p. 14.

26- Thawrat al-Arab Dhidd al-Atrak, pp. 320-6.

27- The History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 121. Practically, the changes began from the reign of King Faisal.

28- The political and religious systems in Saudi Arabia were so closed and hard that any kind of openness was totally disallowed. For more information, see Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah.

29- The historical events leading to the establishment of the single Saudi Arabia as a state are well described in the "Darasat fi tarikh al-Jazierat al-Arabia ". The author states that: "in 22 September 1932, Abdulaziz merged all parts of this vast territory and established the unified Saudi Arabia, and proclaimed himself as the King of this country.", p. 39. The author then explains how Abdulaziz's title was changed from imam, to Emir, and then to Sheikh and finally to Malek [King], *ibid.*, p. 18

30- On the significance of the Saudi oil for the US and its national security, see a report prepared by the Americans in 1944, in "Tatavor as-siasat al-amrikiya fi mantaghat al-khalij al-arabi", p.p. 117-118. For further information in this regard, see *ibid.*, p.p. 117-194

31- On the changes in the Saudi policies after Faisal which systematically emphasizes on modernization of the country, see

32- Since the time of the Sharifs, there was a group of rich businessmen in Hijaz. Their wealth was mainly derived from the Hajj pilgrimage. After the rise of Abdulaziz to power, this group continued to exist. With the flow of the oil wealth outside of the royal family, they were the first group to enjoy this wealth. See *Toward a Modern Islamic Kingdom*, pp. 12-13.

33- In the year 1346 AH, 14 people who had completed their high school were sent to Egypt. See "Al-entelaq al-ta'limiya fi mamlakat al-arabia as-saudia", p. 253. The second group were sent in 1927, and the author has made reference to the numerous problems that these students had faced. *Ibid.*, p.p. 254-256. On the students sent to the American University in Lebanon and the universities in Cairo and Alexandria as well as the Shariat faculties in Cairo and Alexandria, see *ibid.*, p. 199.

34- Fahd was the first Minister of Education who tried to invite teachers and instructors instead of sending students abroad; *ibid*, p.p. 281-282. In his report to the Cultural Commission of the Arab Union, he said "Each day, I open one school". P. 282.

35- *Al-mamlakat al-Arabia as-saudia kama araftoha*, p. 287.

36- For example, the Aramco workers' strike in 1945, 1946 and 1947 which were aimed at improving the work conditions and salary increases, were ended only because the government threatened them that they might face capital punishment if they didn't end their strike. "Tatavor as-siasat al-amrikiya fi mantaghat al-khalij al-arabi", p. 284

37- *Jazirat al-Arab fi'l-Asr al-Hadith: al-Sa'udiyyah, al-Yaman, Jumhuriyyah al-Yaman al-Sha'biyyah*, pp. 31.

38- The historical and cultural characteristics of the Saudis are deeply influenced by their tribal heritage that have even affected the Saudi opposition. Some of their main features, are reticence, suspicion against others, and inherent conservativeness. These characteristics can be found in all Sheikhdoms. This is one of the features that makes the Saudi opposition different from opposition groups in other parts of the Arab world. Most probably, this is why the extensive and threatening opposition by Al-Qadia in Saudi Arabia has a religious and Islamic nature.

39- For example, the strike in the American oil company in Bahrain was due to the US policy in support of Israel and against Arabs, "Tatavor as-siasat al-amrikiya fi mantaghat al-khalij al-arabi", p. 284.

40- On the Radio Cairo propaganda during Nassir and its impacts, see "The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century", p.p. 199-203. Sa'deddin Shadhli compares Radio Cairo with the military power of Mohamad Ali Pasha; "Exactly one century later, Nasser tried to surprise the Arabs, however in a way different with what Mohamad Ali Pasha utilized. Mohammad Ali created unity through the power of swords. But Nasser used radio, and found a way around the Arab leaders to directly talk to their peoples. He provoked them against the imperialistic powers that had occupied their land, and also against their leaders who were collaborating with those powers, because both played a role in the peoples' sufferings.", S. Shazly, *The Arab Military Option*, p. 98.

- 41- For example, see Salateen al-Qarn al-eshrin, p.p. 6, 9 and 12-15.
- 42- For example, see the Saudi initiatives against communism. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 113.
- 43- On the Radio Cairo propaganda during Nassir and its impacts, see "The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century", p.p. 199-203; al-Kuwayt al-Ra'y al-Aakhar, p. 44.
- 44- As an example of the Saudis' efforts to improve relations with Nasser, see *Al-Ikhwan wa'l-Amrikan*, pp. 12-17.
- 45- *Salateen al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 27 and 149.
- 46- *The History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 106.
- 47- For instance, see the Kuwaiti's expectations from the Arabs against the threats of Abdul-Karim Qasim: *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. 399-404.
- 48- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 115-119.
- 49- During the 1950's and 1960's a large number of Egyptian academia, religious scholars as well as skilled and semi-skilled workers went to the Sheikdoms. Some of them were from official agencies and therefore had no problems with the ruling regimes. For example, see *Ayyam al-Kuwait*, p.p. 101-108. However, some of them were from the political opposition, *Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah*, p. 44. This group had no political activity. At the same time, the first group played a mediating role for the improvement of the bilateral relations.
- 50- *Tahavvul va Sabat*, pp. 257-303.
- 51- *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, p.p. 275-289
- 52- *Ibid*, p.p. 296-302
- 53- *The History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 129-30.
- 54- For example, see "Men hona bed'at al-Kuwait", "The first printing office was established in 1948 [p. 63], and the first newspaper was published in 1954 [p. 65]. Another example was the developments in the Saudi Arabia's education system. "Al-entelaq al-ta'limiya fi mamlakat al-arabia as-saudia", p. 188-262.
- 55- *Al-Kuwait Tarikh wa-Hadharah*, pp. 379.
- 56- For instance, *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. 63-65.
- 57- *The History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 106-114; *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 33.

58- A History of Saudi Arabia, p. 107; Toward a Modern Kingdom, pp. 101.

59- "Their [Persian Gulf governments] ideal was that the Arab nationalism should separate its way from Nasser's ideals. This was achieved with Nasser's defeat. In 1967 war, Nasser was badly defeated. His defeat was also the failure of his ideology. ... His Arab socialism never rose again. As a result, the Arab nationalism suddenly lost its incentives, and progressive and anti colonialist ideals." -"Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars" [Evolution and Stability in the Persian Gulf], p. 82

60- Tahavvol va Sabat, pp. 82-7.

61- Toward a Modern Kingdom, pp. 91; The History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 138.

62- In spite of the fact that in the 1970's, Saudi Arabia was no longer challenged by threats that existed in 1950's and 60's from the Nationalist and Leftist movements, it was engaged with some internal developments, especially inside the religious circles. It attained its climax during the occupation of the Holy Mosque by Juhaiman al-Utaybi in November 1979. Before this incident, there were some protests by the religious motivation, and Juhayman himself was put in prison because of his ideas. Yet, he was released due to the interference of Ben Baz, the Saudi mufti. See Rasa'il Juhayman, pp. and Faith and Power, pp. 82.

63- For an example of what was said by the Arab progressive figures, see: "Salatin al-Qarn al-Eshrin", p.p. 12-15, "The kings are causes of embarrassment of the humanity from the human beings, our embarrassment from the humanity. They are like stains on our reputation, the reputation of the Arab nation.", *ibid*, p. 6. "You the Arab people! Rise and wake up. Our great nation has been divided into weak governments and emirates. Our great and ancient nation, the nation of Ali, Omar and Khalid has been divided into thousands of tribes, and hundreds of religions and ethnicities.", p. 9

64- Tahavvol va Sabat, pp. 82-3.

65- Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn, pp. 88-91; Faysal al-Qatil wa'l-Qateel, pp. 96-7.

66- Al-Ikhwan wa'l-Amrikan, pp. 196. About Oman, see Zofar, especially pp. 121 and 150; A History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 131; Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn, pp. 53-70.

67- *Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*, pp. 141.

68- In this context, the Saudi's were an exception. "They couldn't tolerate a Parliament running in one of the neighboring countries." *Qadaya wa Mawaqif*, p. 125. After the war of 1967, the Saudi's influence in Kuwait was increased. See *Al-Kuwait: al-Ra'y al-akher*, p. 48.

69- On the unrests in Saudi Arabia and the measures that were intended to lead to a coup d'etat, see *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 131.

70- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 182-3; *Tahavvul va Sabat*, pp. 83-87.

71- For example, the Emir of Bahrain said that "We hope that the British do not leave the region before 1971. There are primary defensive considerations for this, especially as Bahrain considers Iran's demands as threats against its security. This could also be true for the other rulers of the [Persian] Gulf], especially those that have border disputes with their neighbors, such as the dispute between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi over the Buraymi region." *Mohazerat*, p. 170.

72- On the relations between Shah and Saudi Arabia, see *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, p. 524.

73- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 129-30.

74- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 132-133.

75- Anti-communist, anti-Soviet and anti-radical policies and sensitivities of Shah can be well understood from his talks with the Emir of Bahrain: "Small countries like you are the weak points of the Persian Gulf. You and the Saudis. You are responsible for the weakness of the region and have disposed it to the threat of communism. I have been told that you are thinking of establishing relationship with the Soviet Union. Why do you want to do that? I don't want to say not to do it. But, if you want to, you should at the same time initiate relations with China. At the same time, not even one minute later. The Chinese are the only people who know what is happening in the Soviet Union. I tell you that communism is spreading all across the Persian Gulf region. Some say that they even don't see any signs of this. But I tell you that whenever you scratch a tree in this region, the red blood of communism will flow from it." Although they didn't like these statements, but they preferred them as they were assuring. M. Heikal, "The return of Ayatollah", p. 194

76- *Ibid*, p. 195

77- Ibid. pp. 99-116; Zofar, pp. 212.

78- It is said that Sheikh Rashed, father of Sheikh Mohammad the current Ruler of Dubai, had advised him that he should not in any circumstances get in troubles with Iran. Sheikh Zayed, the UAE Emir, had also repeatedly said the same thing. In the past, it was always said by the Sheikhdoms that "we are looking forward for charities coming for us from the northern shores."

79- See, "The Return of Ayatollah, p.p. 105-193

80- Ibid. Of course the people of the Persian Gulf no longer think of Iran the same as what they did in the past. For example, see *Khalije Fars: Ashnaee ba emarat-e aan*, [in Persian] [Persian Gulf: To know more about its Emirates], p. 228. The author who has lived in these Sheikhdoms for many years has provided numerous examples for this.

81- *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, p.p. 105-122. For example it has been said in the *Al-eslah* magazine that "through history, the people of the [Persian] Gulf have been facing four main threats, the latest of which being Iran. It further explains that "the Sho'ubi sectarian and religious hatred that have been hidden for centuries since the Sasanids, Khorrasanis and Safavids along with the covetousness of Shah, until the time of those who want to expand their pre-defined evil intentions...", see *Al-eslah*, no. 103, p.p. 14-16.

82- *Return of Ayatollah*, pp. 105-194; *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 114-5.

83- To find an Arab viewpoint, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 409-40.

84- *The Return of Ayatollah*, p. 206.

85- *A History of Saudi Arabia*.

86- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 135-140.

87- Ibid. pp. 136-9.

88- *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 84-85.

89- Ibid. 140-3.

90- *Secrets of the Kingdom*, p. 193.

91- *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, p.p. 78-79.

The following example, entitled as a Letter from Singapore, although was originally intended to criticize the decadence of the people from the Persian Gulf region, but at the same time indicates the perception of the Muslims around the

world on the link between the Arabs, especially those from the Persian Gulf region, and Islam: "In the past we paid respect to the Arabs coming from the Arabian Peninsula and regarded them as the descendants of the Prophet's companions. ... Our fathers kissed the hands of an Arab to seek blessing, because he was considered as a member of the Prophet's family. Today, however, our perception has changed. ... Those who visit our countries in the East Asia are disgraces of the Prophet's cult. They are symbols of wine drinking, yelling, sins and disobedience. They commit any kind of sins..." *Al-Mojtama'a*, No. 741, p. 46. This issue of the magazine was written on 29 Safar 1406 AH, corresponding to 12/11/ 1985, after the sharp increase in the oil prices. On the Westerners' views about Arabs, see: Edward Said, *Covering Islam*, p. 19.

92- *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah*, pp. 14.

93- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 295-6.

94- *Vassilit*, p. 524

95- *Ibid*, p. 525

96- *Ibid*, p. 525

97- *The Return of Ayatollah*, p. 105

98- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 132-3.

99- I have repeatedly heard from the Moroccan officials that King Hassan, despite his own anti-Wahhabi attitudes, had allowed the pro-Saudi Salafids to have their activities in Morocco solely to contain the waves of socialist and communist movements that had blown across the country in 1960's and 1970's.

100- *Al-Ikhwan wa'l-Amrikan*, pp. 98.

101- *Piyambar va-Fir'on*, pp. 63-71.

102- *Zaminehay-e tafakkure siyasie der qalamruye tashayyu' va tasannun*, pp. 163-6.

103- *Piyambar va -Fir'on*, pp. 88-9.

104- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, pp. 204-5.

105- Qotb's ideas were derived from the peculiar political and religious conditions of Egypt in 1950's and 1960's.

106- *Intifadhat al-Mintaqah al-Sharqiyyah*, pp. 66.

107- *Amrika wa'l-Sa'udiyah: Takamul al-Hadhir wa-Tanafur al-Mustaqbal*,

pp. 33. "Sultan ibn Abdul-Aziz, the Saudi defence minister, accused international communism of arousing chaos in Iran."

108- Qadhaya wa-Mawaqif, pp. 136.

109- Amrika wa'l-Sa'udiyyah: Takamul al-Hadhir wa-Tanafur al-Mustaqbal, pp. 33.

110- Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn, pp. 8.

111- Return of Ayatollah, pp. 206.

112- Tahavvol va Sabat, pp. 120-5.

113- Ibid. pp. 120-125

114- For example, see Wa Ja'a al-Majus. The author has utilized all historical, religious, political and cultural elements to indicate that Iran has always been the enemy of Arabs.

115- For example, President Regan promised that he would not allow Saudi Arabia to change to another Iran. He insisted that he would extinguish any Islamic fundamentalist movement. Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah, pp. 49.

116- Ibid.

117- To understand the attitude of the Sheikhdoms, especially the United Arab Emirates, towards Iran, see Khalije Fars: Ashnaei ba Emarate An.

118- The details of this incident can be referred to in Rasa'il Juhayman, especially pp. 17-36.

119- Secret of the Kingdom, pp. 96-7.

120- A History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 156.

121- Ibid. p. 143.

122- However, during Abdulaziz's rule, the Wahhabi Ikhwan had anti-British affiliations and had thus fought him. See what their chief al-Duwaysh told Abdulaziz, in Tarikh-e Al Saud, p.p. 319-20. But the political approach of al-Duwaysh differed from the criticisms of Juyahman al-Utaybi. He wanted the diversion of the modernization policy using a Western and American style.

123- About the attraction between the thoughts of Sayyed Qotb, Muslim Brotherhood, and Wahhabism, see Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 23-7; 121-5; 122.

124- Rasa'il Juhayman, pp. 40-3: Especially when the soldiers asked for a

fatwa from a religious authority. Ibid. pp. 42.

125- There are different views in this regard. According to Juhayman's discussion with Nayif, the Saudi minister of Internal Affairs, non-Muslim forces also participated besides the Muslim. As for *The Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 95, they were Pakistani commandos.

126- *Rasai'l Juhayman*, pp. 44-7.

127- *The Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 96; *Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*.

128- For example see *Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah fi Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*. The basis reason for the support to the Saudi government was that it should be purely and completely an Islamic state. He further went on to the extent that other Islamic groups, whether in the past or present, even the Muslim Brotherhood and the supporters of Seyed Qotb and Hizb a'tahrir, were considered as heretical and unorthodox groups: Ibid, p. 65.

129- *Rasa'l Juhayman*, pp. 47.

130- For example, see Ibid. pp. 48.

131- *Mamlakat al-Fadha'ih*, pp. 333-4.

132- A Saudi senior cleric had said about Abdulaziz that he received a disintegrated and devastated country and turned it into a single and prosperous nation. The people who were starving are now wealthy. He was not only a great leader, but also a blessed personality. *Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah fi Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, p. 81.

133- Wahabian, p.p. 225-27. *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, p. 57; *Toward a Modern Kingdom*, pp. 1-5.

134- Interview with *Etela'at* newspaper, dated 26/12/1389, corresponding to 17/3/2011, entitled: *The Arab Spring: Which Future?*

135- See Fahd's statements on different occasions in *Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah fi Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, p.p. 96-102.

136- About the subsequences of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in Saudi, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 165-70.

137- On the views of the views of the past and present Salafi leaders towards Shi'ism. See *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, p.p. 109-112, in which the trend

in the changes of such attitude has been described.

138- A part of the undertaken measures can be found in *Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah fi Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, p.p. 147-188

139- For example, the author of *al-Kawashif al-Jaliyyah fi Kufr al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, writes in the beginning of his book, "I am an Arab Sunni Muslim, but neither Shç`ah, nor Rafidi, nor Communist." *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*.

140- The Saudi propaganda during the Iran-Iraq war had turned it into a religious war. In his address to the leaders of the Islamic nations, the Saudi Mufti urged them to support Iraq as a religious task. This message was released on the occasion of the fifth summit of Islamic states. *Al-Mojtama Magazine*, Issue no. 802, p.p. 17-19

141- For details of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, refer to *al-Kuwayt Tarikh wa-Hadhara*, pp. 284-97.

142- *Taliban*, p. 133.

143- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 164-6.

144- Even Bin Laden had stated that he and his supporters are ready to fight the occupying forces and force them to withdraw. See *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 131-4.

145- About the fatwa of Ben Baz and the other grand religious figures, see *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, pp. 158.

146- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 166-7; Ben Laden in his interview with Robert Feats has made a reference to these scholars. See *The Saudi Enigma*, pp. 6.

147- *Salateen al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 5-12.

148- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Saudiyyah*, pp. 198.

149- *Salafiyeh Ideologik*, published in *Hamshahri Diplomatique Magazine*, dated in May, 2007; *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, especially pp. 209-19.

150- For example, reference can be made to Abdulaziz's remarks on the efforts for Islamization of the country and his negligence to the views of the people who criticized this policy on the basis of the need to take into account the exigencies of the modern world. See *al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah...*, p.p. 80-81. The

views of one of the most senior Saudi clerics should also be taken into account who had said that "I take God and also you as my witness that I don't know any other country on earth in which the teaching of God's religion have been put in place". Ibid, p. 274. He then strongly criticized those who had since mid 1990's had criticized the government for its alleged deviation from the religion. Ibid, p. 275.

151- Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars, p.p. 22

152- For example, during the occupation of Kuwait many countries and especially the Arab cities which received tourists from the Sheikhdoms, were among the first to oppose them. Of course there have also been other reasons for such opposition. However, it is important to note that such opposition was not solely derived from political or ideological reasons. Majority of the people who had been in touch with them, had a bad, or better to say very bad, memories. For example, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 274-276.

153- Refer to *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 30-64.

154- Kuwait was among the countries that provides voluntary and generous assistance to the poor Arab countries. For example, see Ibid. p. 52.

155. Ibid. p. 51.

156- Ms. Al-Rashid who is from Saudi Arabia, has described these developments in the Chapter two of her book, *Mas'alat al-dowla as-Saudia*, p.p. 95-153.

157- It is noteworthy that al-Duwaysh the leader of Salafi Brotherhood, told Abdulaziz that "... when we asked you to make distance from the British, you said they wanted to become Muslims to assist us in our jihad against the infidels of Hafel, Ahsa'a, Najd, Kuwait and Hijaz". "*Tarikh-e Al Saud*", p.p. 320. This friendship with Britain and ultimately with the West, had become one of the principles of the ruling ideology and official Wahabism.

158- *Hamshahri Diplomatique Magazine*, May, 2007; *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 166-7, 202.

159- About the political stagnation and passive policy of the Sheikhdoms, refer to *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 43-56.

160- Of course, criticisms against the presence of the non-Muslim military forces has a longer historical background. For example, in the later years of the

Second World War, in 1944, Britain was asked to send a military delegation composed of the Sunni Muslims be dispatched to the Arabia, because there had been strong criticisms over the presence of Christian forces in *Tatavor as-siasat al-amrikia fi mantaghat al-khalij al-arabi*, p. 262.

161- Prior to the 1980's, the developments of the religious ideology in the Saudi Arabia were considered as a domestic issue. Even the protests and the uprising in the *Masjid al-Haram* had been more or less rooted in internal matters. However, since 1980's and for the first time the religious ideology had been influenced by novel theological ideas.

162- Taliban, pp. 129-140.

163- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, pp. 146-7.

164- *Ibid.* pp. 95-154.

165- *Ibid.* pp. 25.

166- *Ibid.* pp. 22-3.

167- *Ibid.* pp. 20-21.

168- Also, the opposition groups in Saudi Arabia which had religious and liberal inclinations, decided to stand against the changes in the religious education system as proposed by the Americans. See, *Mas'alat al-dowla as-Saudia*, p. 136.

169- *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, p.p. 11-17

170- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, pp. 75-6.

171- Significant intellectual, religious and political developments had taken place in less than two decades. In 1980's, the youth who had revolutionary and religious inclinations went to Afghanistan as a religious task to fight the communists. They were beside the Americans and were using their assistance. After the fall of Saddam, the same people went to Iraq to fight against their previous allies and supporters. They had religious- but not political- incentives. In fact, their ideological evolution was deep, comprehensive and very predictable.

172- *The Saudi Enigma*, p. 7: Ben Laden says, "The Saudi people have remembered now what the ulema told them and they realize America is the main reason for their problems. The ordinary man knows that his country is the largest oil producer in the world, yet at the same time he is suffering from taxes and bad

services. Now the people understand the speeches of the ulemas in the mosques – that our country has become an American colony. They act decisively with every action to kick the Americans out of Saudi Arabia.”

173- About the presence of America in Iraq, see *Mas’alat al-Dawlah al-Sa’udiyah*, pp. 142.

174- *Al-Irhab fi Jazirat al-Arab*, pp. 25.

175- *Ibid.* pp. 25-6.

176- One of the influential and knowledgeable Kuwaiti Ambassadors said that the parliamentary system has in practice contributed to the social, religious, tribal and family disintegration. See the views and scholarly criticisms of one of the most knowledgeable experts on this issues related to Kuwait and Persian Gulf region, in *Al-Kuwait: al-Ra'y al-akher*, p.p. 13-15

177- The operations of the Islamic Extremists in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman resulted in a decrease in their position. “Al-Hawwali and al-Odeh as well as other sheikhs of the same line have declared a statement denying the attacks and rebuking these extremists, describing them as ignorant and misled youths.” *Mas’alat al-Dawlah al-Sa’udiyah*, pp. 128.

178- On terrorist activities in Saudi Arabia, see *Ibid.* pp. 202-4.

179- The Saudi government and the official Wahhabi establishment undertook extensive religious, propaganda, social and political measures after the bomb explosions, especially in Riyadh. In this way, they managed to sustain their stability. For example, see *al-Hujaj al-Qawiyah*.... The author believes that it is a duty to defend the Saudi state and government and has put forward his justifications.

180- *Al-Irhab fi Jazirat al-Arab*, pp. 33 & 61.

181- For more information about the Saudi foreign and strategic policy, see *Riyah al-Samum*, p. 183.

182- *Chaleshaye Jadid Amniyyati Khalij-e Fars* by Saeed Latifiyan, issued in *Ittila’at Khavar Miyaneh Magazine*, No. 48 and 49.

183- In order to understand the main roots of differences between Shiites and Sunnis through history as well as the contemporary time, see *Bonyad-haye Andishe ye Siasi dar ghalamrove tashayo' va Tasannon*.

184- *Fajr al-Islam*, pp. 227; *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 393-407.

185- Tahavvol va Sabat, pp. 199-201.

186- At the peak of the tensions in the relations between Iran and Egypt during Nasser, the religious elements were never used to launch a religious war. This is also true about the Saudis. As certain points, the relations between Iran and the Saudis became unfriendly. However, religious disputes were seldom raised. The Saudi anti Shiite propaganda were mainly conducted in the context of religious discourse and were hardly used for political purposes.

187- Tahavvol va Sabat, pp. 190-198.

188- Rasa'il Juhayman, pp. 24-5.

189- Ibid. pp. 39; Toward A Modern Kingdom, p. 47.

190- Amrika wal-Sa'udiyyah Takamul al-Hadhir Tanafur al-Mustaqbal, p. 33.

191- Rasa'il Juhayman, p. 37.

192- Ibid.

193- See Tahavvol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars, Chapter: Iran and Arab Nationalism, pp. 190-199.

194- For example, refer to Wa-Ja'a Dawr al-Majus; Tahavvol va sabat, pp. 109-112.

195- This issue has been described by Hosni Mubarak and the king of Jordan as the Shia Crescent.

196- For example, refer to the different messages of al-Zarqawi, in which he condemn and accused the Shia without exception.

197- Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, p. 210.

198- The majority of the explosions that targeted the masses of the people were based on religious fanaticism and had nothing to do with political grounds.

199- It was for the first time at this level the Arab Shia were called as Iranians or ajam. This of course was for humiliating them and trying to prove that they were not Arabs and they were only serving the Iranian interests.

200- For example, see The Arab Uprisings Kindle the Fatwa Market, an article published in al-Quds al-Arabi Newspaper, in 29/6/2011 by Luhaydan, an eminent Saudi clergyman.

Chapter Four

1- Jazirat al-Arab fi'l-Qarn al-Ishreen, pp. 82; Arab Unified, pp.; al-Kuwayt Madhiha wa-Hadhiruha, pp. 324.

2- Beyond All, pp. 12.

3- See Chapter: Islam, Arabism and the Transitional period, and Chapter: Old and Modern Arabism, in Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars, p.p. 65-87 as well as Bolough al-adab fi ma'arafat el-arab, p.p. 5-7, and al-Arabia val-eslam, p. 215.

4- Majlis al-Ta'awun al-Khaliji, pp. 32-68; al-Mujtama' Magazine, pp. 23, No. 74; al-Kuwayt al-Ra'y al-Aakhar, pp. 7-15.

5- See al-Madhahib al-Islamiyyah, a book that reviews the different theological schools in the history of Islam in a comparative manner. About Wahhabism, see pp. 295-340.

6- Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi al-Khalij al-Arabi, pp. 36-8.

7- About the influence of the modern civilization in Hijaz in the Ottoman reign, see Revolt in the Desert, pp. 3.

8- Toward a Modern Kingdom.

9- Ibn Saud's Warriors of Islam, pp. 121-125.

10- Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah ala Wujub al-Difa' an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 80-81.

11- Jazirat al-Arab fi'l-Qarn al-Ishreen, pp. 287.

12- Ibid. pp. 127. "We have written down what we believe and presented it to the imam (Abd al-Aziz). However, we are in no need of dispute, which is not permitted by religion. If the imam accepts our opinion, then Thank God; but if he does not, then it is not the first time that he disagrees with us."

13- Many articles and books have been written on the relations between the Saudi kings and the religious clerics. The following are some the best of such materials: A History of Saudi Arabia, p.p. 124-5.

14- For example, see Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars, p.p. 66-68 and Al-fekr al-Islami al-hadith fi movajehat el-afkar al-qarbi.

15- For example see Al-fekr al-Islami al-hadith fi movajehat el-afkar al-gharbi.

16- Sheikh Mohammad Mubarak, who was originally from Syria and later

went to Saudi Arabia and started teaching, has very well explained this painful experience in his book *Al-fekr al-Islami al-hadith fi movajehat el-afkar al-gharbi*.

17- On the Egyptian clerics who went to Kuwait after the independence of this country, see: Ahmad al-Shirbasy, *Ayyam al-Kuwait*, p. 101. The author was an Egyptian cleric who went to Kuwait and has explained, in detail, about the group that went from Egypt to Kuwait.

18- *Al-fekr al-Islami al-hadith fi movajehat el-afkar al-qarbi*.

19- One of the first reactions can be found in Assadabadi, Seyed Jamaledin, *Radd al-naturieh*.

20- *Toward a Modern Kingdom*, pp. 86; Faysal al-Qatil wa'l-Qateel, pp. 74, 207.

21- *Al-fekr al-Islami al-hadith fi movajehat el-afkar al-qarbi*.

22- *Ibid*.

23- *Ideology va Enghelab*, p.p.184-187.

24- *Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars*, pp. 143-148.

25- About the immigration of religious clerics in 1950's and 1960's when they suffered increasing pressures from the nationalist and leftist governments, see *Ayyam al-Kuwayt*, pp. 327-9.

26- On Bahrain's experience with modern education system, see *Vaghe'e al-haraka al-fekria tel-Bahrain*, p. 114. On Kuwait's experience, see: see "*Tarikh-a Ta'leem fe al-Khalij al-Araby*", p. 130

27- About the difficulties and concerns in Kuwait, see *Tarikh al-Ta'lim fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 140-5.

28- On the detailed story of such problems in Kuwait, see: *Tarikh-a Ta'leem fe al-Khalij al-Araby*, p.p. 140-158.

29- The author of *Ayyam al-Kuwait* who wrote his book in 1953, appreciated the efforts of the Kuwaitis to fight poverty, illiteracy and diseases. (p. 129). He added that education in this country is free and the Government even provides the books and educational items, or in some instances the clothes of the students. (*Ibid*, p. 384)

30- *Tarikh al-Ta'leem fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 130; *Ayyam al-Kuwayt*, pp. 101.

31- *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. 316-7.

32- *Salateen al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 11-2.

33- In 1955, the Saudi government announced that the Saudi students who have been sent abroad must return home, otherwise they might lose their Saudi nationality. *Tarikh al-Ta'lim fi al-Arabia al-Saudia*.

To replace them, the government invited foreign- mainly Arab- teachers and professors. In early 1960's their number totaled 2,000 while in ten years this number increased to 20,000. (Ibid, p. 611)

Most of the religious schools and institutions were also run by migrant Muslim clerics. In 1960, the University of Median was established by a group of Muslim Brotherhood who had been deposed by Nasser. (*Faith and Power*, p. 182)

34- *Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*.

35- *Al-Bahrayn: al-Sira' al-Siyasi*, p. 1.

36- *Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*. Amin al-Rayhani, in the 1920's, writes down about Bahrain, "In Bahrain, I saw a political renaissance that was parallel to that of literature. I also met some people who called for Arab unity." Ibid. pp. 13.

37- *Oman: al-Dimuqratiyyah al-Islamiyyah Taqalid al-Imamah wa'l-Tarikh al-Siyasi al-Hadith*; Zofar, pp. 63.

38- For example, see the views of one of the main founders of the Arab nationalism, Sate' al-Hassri, *Al-Urubatu Awwalan*, p.p. 1-8. On a Christian version, see the views of Amin al-Reihani, in "*Azwa va Araa fi al-qomia val hurria val eshterakia*", vol. 1, p. 17

39- For example, see Kuwaiti Emir's comments in response to Adrian Wallance's report.

40- Reflections of these incidents can be found in Ahmed Amin's writings. See for example Shepherd William: *The Faith of a Modern Muslim Intellectual, The Religious Aspects and Implications of the Writings of Ahmad Amin*.

41- *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 121-7.

42- For example, refer to Amin al-Rayhani's speech in *Aara' fil-Qawmiyyah wal-Hurriyyah wal-Ishtirakiyyah*, vol. 1. p. 17.

43- For example see *Tatawwur al-Fikr al-Qawmi al-Arabi*, especially p.p.

105-139.

44- For example, see the conversation between Abdulaziz and the English general, in *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-qarn al-eshrin*, p. 279.

45- All countries whose residents speak Arabic are considered as Arab countries, *Al-Urubah Awwalan*, p. 2. "Anybody who is from Arab countries and speaks Arabic, is considered as Arab. *Ibid*, p. 4.

46- At the peak of Arab nationalism, there was a situation whereby all Arabs were willing to join it and were proud of their Arab identity. Those who were not willing to join, did not oppose the idea itself, but were suspicious about the expansionist and political objectives sought by the sponsors of this concept.

47- The details of this incident can be found in *al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah al-Kubra*, pp. 135-60.

48- About how Hijaz was attached to Saudi Arabia, see *Arabia Unified*, pp. 63-75; *al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah al-Kubra*, pp. 41-86.

49- *Al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah al-Kubra*.

50- Amin al-Reihani: I am an Arab, from the east and a revolutionary. My soul is from the east and revolution is my main identity. I am revolutionary and support spiritualism. ... I am an Arab and dream of the revival of the Arab dignity of the past. "*Azwa va Araa fi al-qomia val hurria val eshterakia*", vol. 1, p. 17

51- *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, p. 84.

52- The idea of Nasser about the issue of Palestine and Arab nationalism. *Adwa'un wa'Ara'un fi al-Qawmiyyah wa'l-Hurriyyah wal-Ishtirakiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 189.

53- *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 275-88.

54- *Al-Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah fi'l-Islam*, pp. 116; *Mamlakat al-Fadha'ih*, pp. 333-4. About the Saudi's attitude to the Arab nationalism, see *Faysal al-Qatil wa'l-Qateel*, pp. 219-23; *Naqd al-Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah* by Ben Baz.

55- *Al-Sira' al-Sa'udi al-Misri Hawla al-Yaman al-Shimali*, pp. 39 and 31-41.

56- In reaction to Abdulkarim Qassim's claims, the first demonstration of the Kuwaiti women was held against him. *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, p. 88. The reaction of the Kuwaiti Government and the public opinion in this regard

indicated the deepening of Kuwaiti nationalism.

57- Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars, p.p. 81-85. On the threats from Nasser during the peak of his power and also the Kuwaiti Nasserists, see *Al-Kuwait: al-Ra'y al-akher*, p. 44.

58- Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars, p.p. 81-85.

59- For example, the author of the book "Men hona bed'at al-Kuwait", has mentioned in the introduction of his book that: "This book is written in response to a misperception as if Kuwait has been a primitive country far from civilization and has just begun with the exploration of oil. (p. 5). On the costly welcoming of Earl Curzon, he said, "This was intended to prevent wrong perceptions about Kuwait, as if this country is a remainder of dark ages of the past." p. 46.

60- Kuwait is a good example. After independence, this country tried to join the international community as fast as possible and also to adopt an active policy among Arab and Muslim nations. However, this was mainly done with an emphasis on Arabism. More details can be found in *Return of Ayatollah*, pp. 205.

61- Philby who was among the close advisors of Abdulaziz and Saud and had very close knowledge about the Saudi Arabia, said that the enormous wealth was spent only within a small circle of the Royal family and the businessmen related thereto.

62- Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars, p.p. 83-85.

63- For example, see *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 130.

64- For example, see *Riyah al-Samum*.

65- About Kuwait, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 263-4. About Saudi Arabia, see *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 132-3.

66- *Faysal al-Qatil wa'l-Qateel*, pp. 92.

67- For example, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 295.

68- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 139; *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 182-3.

69- *Faysal al-Qatil wa'l-Qateel*, pp. 293-6.

70- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 135-9.

71- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 295.

72- Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars; *al-Kuwayt Madhiha wa-Hadhiruha*, pp. 1.

73- Mamlakat al-Fadha'ih, Chapter Seven. In this chapter, which is the last, the depiction of the Arabs of the Sheikhdoms, whom are well known of their corruption and immortality, has been falsely applied to the Arabs as a whole.

74- Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars p.p. 78-79.

75- See chapters on "Islam, Arabism and the Transitional period" and "Old and Modern Arabism", Ibid., p.p. 65-87

76- For example, see al-Idarah al-Mahalliyyah fi al-Mamlakah al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah.

77- For example, on the immigration of the Egyptian political opposition, especially those who had Islamic affiliations and the consequences of such immigration, see Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah, and also al-Nizam al-Ijtima'i al-Arabi al-Jadid: Dirasat an al-Athar al-Ijtima'i lil-Tharwah al-Niftiyyah.

78- This issue has been discussed in different sources. See for example, Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 23-27.

79- On the invitation of the foreign teachers and ten time increase in their number during 1960's and 1970's, see Tarikh al-arabia as-saudia, p. 611.

80- Ms. Mazavi has well explained Faisal's religious policy. Indeed, he was the founder of the modern Arabia and his predecessors has practically followed the same policy.

81- Wahabization of the education policy in Saudi Arabia since 1970's is an important issue that requires much elaboration. The explanations provided by Ms. Al-Rashid seem not to be sufficient, however are fruitful anyway. The bases of the intellectual evolution after 1990's are ultimately rooted in the religious extremism of this period.

82- Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah, pp. 44.

83- The sectarian attitudes in Kuwait's foreign policy were so strong that in the Khartoum of 1967 held after the defeat of Arabs, Kuwait pledged to contribute 55 million Pounds to the countries in the frontline [of war with Israel]. Saudi Arabia and Libya, too, pledged 50 million and 30 million Pounds respectively. Faisal, al-qatel val qateel, p. 92.

84- Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt, pp. 449; Return of Ayatollah, pp. 205.

85- Al-Mamlakah al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah; Masirat Dawlah wa-Siratu Rijal, pp. 223-57.

86- Return of Ayatollah, pp. 192-207, especially 199-200.

87- A History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 143

88- Tahavol va sobat dar Khalij-e Fars; Return of Ayatollah, pp. 25.

89- Ibid. pp. 143.

90- Zofar, pp. 196-7.

91- Toward a Modern Kingdom, pp. 48.

92- For example, see Kull al-Arab Magazine; Article: Harb al-Khalij, No. 32, 1983.

93- Riyah al-Samum. This book is originally about the intellectual, political, and cultural crises created by the 1990-91 war on the Kuwaiti society, the other GCC governments, and the Arab world in general, especially pages 43-56.

94- For more details about the claims of Abdul Karim Qasim against Kuwait, see Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt, pp. 399. For more details about the Kuwaiti complains after the liberation, see Riyah al-Samum, pp. 53-5.

95- Riah al-Samum, pp. 51-3.

96- About the Kuwait Fund for Arab, and the Kuwaiti assistance to the Arab countries, see al-Kuwayt Tarikh wa-Hadhara, pp. 379.

97- Riyah al-Samum, pp. 53-4.

98- The best evidence on these different reactions was the way the Saudis defended their regime versus the domestic and foreign public opinions. The objective was to defend the religious legitimacy of the regime, and to prove that this government is serving the religious principles and goals. For example, see al-Hujaj al-Qawiyah.... The title of book can be translated as "Solid Justification on the Need and Urgency of Defending the Saudi State, May It be saved by God".

99- For example, Nayef, who currently is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, says that: "The significance of what has been done cannot be understood without comparing the situation of the Arabian Peninsula before and after King Abdulaziz. The tribes and people different parts of the country got together and melted into the nationalism based on Shariah... This continued until the time that security prevailed and drew everybody's attention ..." Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyah..., p.p. 100-101.

Or the great Saudi cleric, Al-Uthaymin, said that in this country we now live in welfare, while we were poor. We live with security, knowledge and dignity, while we used to live in terrifying situation with ignorance and disrespect. We owe all these to our allegiance to religion. And this why others have become jealous and want to destroy us. *Ibid.*, p. 274

100- *Ibid.*, p.p. 315-346

101- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 55-6.

102- Probably, the best example was the mediation by the Saudis that persuaded Kuwait to once again recruit the Jordanian workers who had been expelled from this country because of their support to Saddam Hussein. See *Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah*, p. 116.

103- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 170-187.

104- *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 165-6.

105- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 201.

106- For example, some Kuwaiti people joined al-Qaeda and became amongst its influential personalities.

107- The presence of non-Muslim forces on the Saudi territory has always been a sensitive issue. "We hope that the British government agrees to send Sunni Muslim troops to Saudi Arabia, because there are increasing criticisms about the alleged dependence of Saudi Arabia to Christian forces.", *Tatawwur al-Siyasat al-Amrikiyyah fi Manatiq al-Khalij al-Arabi*, p 262

108- *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 203.

109- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 54, 132-3; *al-Mujtama' Magazine*, No. 25, pp. 74.

110- *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 54; *Harb al-Khalij Wujuhat al-Nazar* by Wajih Abu-Dhikri, published in 'Aalam al-Kitab Magazine, No. 93.

111- This connection was mainly made with the UAE and Kuwait, as they tried to put the whole matter under a cultural moral control.

112- For conserving and hiding the peculiarity of the sheikhdoms, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 416-23.

113- For example, see *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 22-3.

114- *Ibid.* 24-5. The points that were mentioned can be generalized for the other Sheikhdoms.

115- The Saudi regime tried to get help from the official Wahhabism and the Wahhabis welcomed it. For instance, see al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah ala Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 65-274-5.

116- Secrets of the Kingdom, pp. 189-91.

117- Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyyah ala Wujub al-Difa' 'an al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah. It is a sample of the official Wahhabism reaction to the internal and external oppositions.

118- Secrets of Kingdom, pp. 166-7.

119- About the political reformations in Saudi Arabia, see Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 202-4.

120- For example, see Ravand Islahat der Nizame Siyasi Arabistan Sa'udi, by Majid Buzurgmehri, published in Ittila'at Khavar Miyaneh Magazine, No. 44 and 45.

121. Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi, pp. 25.

122- In the post-war years, the majority of newspapers criticized the silence of the sheikhdoms, which continues up to now.

123- For the first time after the 2003 war, the American pressure had a socio-cultural aspect.

124- Concerning the reformists' demands after the 2003 war, see for example al-Irhab fi al-Sa'udiyyah.

125- For instance, see Al-Bahrayn: Qissat al-Sira' al-Siyasi.

126- For example, see Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 262.

127- For instance, see Riyah al-Samum, pp. 197-214; Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 335.

128- Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 201-22.

129- Ibid. pp, 76.

130- About polarization in society after these incidents, see al-Irhab fi Jazirat al-Arab, pp. 25.

131- Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah, pp. 75.

132- Ibid. pp. 72-7.

133- Their main difficulty was that Iraq became a model of democratic

governance in the Arab world.

134- About the Shia in the Persian Gulf, see *The Return of Ayatollah*, pp. 203-5.

135- See *Al-Shiah fi al-Sa'udiyyah*, especially pages 43-54, 431-140.

136- For example, see *Amrika wa'l-Sa'udiyyah Takamul al-Hadhir wa-Tanaful al-Mustaqbal*, pp. 36.

137- *Ibid.*, pp. 50.

138- For example, *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 168.

139- *Amrika wa'l-Sa'udiyyah Takamul al-Hadhir wa-Tanafur al-Mustaqbal*, pp. 32.

140- *Al-Hujaj al-Qawiyah*, pp. 65.

141- *Amrika wa'l-Sa'udiyyah Takamul al-Hadhir wa-Tanafur al-Mustaqbal*, pp. 50.

Chapter Five

1. *The Saudi Enigma*, p. 3.

2. *Tahawul va thebat*, pp. 29-30.

3. *Salafi e ideologic in Hamshahri e Diplomatic (Persian)*, and also *mas'ala al Dowala al saudiya*, p.95.

4. The relationship between Wahabism as the ideology of Saudi Political system and the Saudi Arabia regime was discussed by various analysts from various parts of the world. See: *A History of Saudi Arabia*, chapter 1 and 4; *The Saudi Enigma*, chapter 2; *Sar e tahauli e Wahabiyat*.

5. *Mas'ala al Dowla al Saudiya*, pp. 43-94.

6. To recognize Wahhabi understanding of Islam and it not accepting reason as an authentic source in for the comprehension of the Qur'an. See: *al tauheed va al Shirk*, Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani; *Risalatun fi al-Tahseen wa'l-Taqbeeh al-Aqliyyayn*.

7. See *Bonyad-haye Tafakkure Siyasie*, pp. 78-83; *Arabia Unified*, pp. 82: "Between 1922 and 1924 the famous British historian Arnold Toynbee wrote several articles about the Ikhwan movement. He predicted that if its rapid growth

continued, it would soon encompass the whole peninsula and beyond, and might even repeat the early history of Islam by exploding into the surrounding states of Asia and North Africa.”

8. Concerning the Hanbali conflict with others and even with Asha'era, who had been the close theological schools (see: Farhang 'Aqaed va Mazahib e Islami, Vol.2, Pp. 41-54).

9. Ibid, P.32.

10. The criticism of Sheikh Bashwi, Chancellor al Azhar University, Vol.1, pp. 293 Concerning the fanaticism, arrogance of the Wahabi scholars in Saudi Arabia (see; Muhammad al Ghazali, *al Sunna al Nabawiyah baina ahlalFiqh va ahl al Hadith*) (The author is a prominent Egyptian scholar who taught for many years in Saudi Universities)

11. Salafi e ideologic" in *Hamshahri e Diplomatic* (Persian).

12. Concerning the relationship between Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab and Ibn Saud (See: *unwan al Najd fi Tarikh al Najd*) (This is one of the original resources concerning Wahabism). Concerning the refutation of Wahabism by the father and brother of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (See: *al Mazahib al Islamiya*, pp. 305-310)

13. See Dozdan e Daryae; *The Saudi's Emirs in the first half of 19th century in their correspondence with the British representative in Persian Gulf*, also *Jazira al Arab fi qarn al Ishreen*, pp. 308-315.

14. Concerning the tough living style of Najd, see *Tarikh al arabia al Saudia*, p. 286. The purpose of Wahhabi arrival in Najd was merely based on Materialistic interest and not for the religious purpose. Ibid, 357; *mas'ala al Dowala al saudiya*, p. 312,314.

15. *Tarikh al Arabia al Saudia*, p. 353

16. Dozdan e Daryae, PP. 82-85, 219. For further details see *mas'ala al Dowala al saudiya*, pp. 67-72.

17. Najd itself was not an attractive region as it produced little surplus in dates and livestock. Its own population has always looked towards the coast of Ihsaa and beyond to survive. (*A History of the Saudi Arabia*, p. 15)

18. See *Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd*, pp. 117-8; *al-Madhahib al-Islamiyyah*, p. 298.

19. The Saudi Enigma, p. 222.
20. Ibid.
21. For details, see A History of Saudi Arabia, p. 15-30.
22. Ibid, 30-34.
23. For the development of Najd and Hijaz see; Ibid, p30-71.
24. Lawrence Qissatu Hayatihi wa Haqiqatu Mawqifihi min al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah, p. 160.
25. Al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah al-Kubra.
26. Ibid.
27. A History of Saudi Arabia, pp 44-49
28. For the religious debate between the Hijazis and Najdis scholars See; Jaziratul 'Arab fi qarn al Ishreen, p. 291.
29. Tarikh al 'arabia al saudia, p. 287
- 30 Ibid, P. 357.
31. Jaziratul 'Arab fi Qarn al Ishreen, pp. 143, 282-284.
32. Ibid, p. 289.
33. Tarikh al 'Arabia al Sa'udia, p. 355 and sair e tahwulat e wahabiyat.
34. Tarikh al'Arabia al Sa'udia, p. 395.
35. A History of Saudi Arabia, pp 123-128.
36. Masala al Dawaliah al Sa'udia, p. 128.
37. A History of Saudi Arabia, pp 106-134; sair e tahwulat e sayasi.
38. Tarikh Jazira al 'Arabia fi Qarn al Ishreen; Tarikh al 'arabia al Sa'udia, p. 355.
39. Like Juhayman there were some people who were not satisfied. (see; Rasael Juhayman al 'Utebi, pp. 20-36). Under this he criticizes the Saudi at the time of the occupation of the Masjid al Haram)
40. A History of Saudi Arabia; Masala al Daoala al Sa'udia, p. 53.
41. For example see the steps taken by Saudi Mufti Muhammad bin Ibrahim who was the grand Mufti from 1932 to 1969. Ibid, pp. 55-60.
42. A History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 106-114.

43. In the late 1950's, half of the income of the oil was dedicated to the royal family in Saudi Arabia and the other half to the merchants, employees, and consultants. This means that the share of the royal family was five times as the government's income. *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 554.

44. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 120-128.

45. *Ibid*, pp. 130- 134

46. *Ibid*, 128-130 [Faisal declared in his speech in the parliament of the Indonesia: God considered me able to serve two holy Mosques and therefore, all friends should support us and protect us against annihilators, revolutionaries and marxist. *Tarikh e Aale Sa'ud*, p. 8.

47. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, p. 184

48. *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 82-85; *al Mamlikah al Sa'udia va Zilal al Quds*, p. 77.

49. Concerning Islamic Politics of Faisal, see *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 124-125.

50. *Secrets of the kingdom*, pp 35-37.

51. Al-Mis'ari, one of prominent opposing Saudi Scholars who is self-exiled in London, says: the reformist wahabi movement consequently will become "Dawa Najdiya iqlimiya unsurya" 'Sole Najdi origin movement' (*Masala al dowala al sa'udia*, p. 188)

52. *A History of the Saudi Arabia*, 132-134.

53. *Ibid*, 139-140.

54. *Secrets of the kingdom*, pp. 35-37.

55. *Masala al Doala al Sa'udia*, p. 189: "The official Saudi policy started to move abroad in the 1970's to peaceful positions in Europe, America, Africa, and Asia where mosques, charities, religious seminaries, as well as research centers and foundations of propaganda for Islam were established as a result of the custody of the Saudi regime."

56. From the beginning of the Wahhabi propagation there was a conflict arised every where as wahabism was chosing the traditional and religious regions for their propagation. And whichever regions they used to go they were already having a tradition and culture while wahabism was agaisnt these cultures and

consequently, it was rifting to a conflict. This conflict was there even within Afghan-Arab and Afghan Mujahids. (Ahmad Rashid, Taliban, p. 132)

57. Saudi Enigma, p. 22.

58. We witness such scenario in Morocco. I heard several times from Moroccan scholars that in spite of the enmity of King Hasan concerning Wahabism he permitted them to carry on propagation of Wahabism in the 70s and 80s so that he may control the leftist movement.

59. To nourish and train religious scholars and preachers in 1381 AH Median Islamic University was founded and all of the students had been given stipends.

60. Concerning the establishment of the mosques and Islamic centres in Western and non-Muslim countries. See: A history of Saudi Arabia, p 133; Sir'a al Doa'la va al Qabila fi Khalij al 'Arabia, pp. 13-14.

61. From the end of 1980s official Wahhabi movement adopted a distance with the Wahabism of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This went so far that it did not condemn US war against Taliban. (see: Masala al Doala al Sa'udia, p. 75). The official Wahabism accepts the modern modernization under its control while Taliban rejects it. (Ibid, p.91)

62. The idea has some backgrounds; "Similarly, I believe that the present Arabian puritan movement heralds an epoch of future political greatness based on strong moral and spiritual foundations." Philby of Arabia, pp. 169-170; Arabia Unified, pp. 82 about the idea of Arnold Toynbee. The book towards a modern Islamic kingdom has been written on the same concept.

63. In 1970s and 1980s, some of those people who were working in Saudi Arabia or interested to seek an employment there used to embrace Islam and most of them were Asians and some of them were from Europe and America.

64. For the detail of the story see; A History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 135-162; The Saudi Enigma, pp 133-152.

65. Salafi e ideologic" in Hamshahri e Diplomatic (Persian).

66. A History of Saudi Arabia, pp. 138-139.

67. Rasael Johemian al 'Utebi, p. 7.

68. One of the major reasons of the religious Saudi influence is because of the two holy cities: Mecca and Medina. This got further influenced with the exposition of satellite channels. Some Muslims follow Saudi religious calendar in

observing their religious duties which should be based on the local crescent observation.

69. Aee Rasel al Juhayman al 'Utebi, pp. 37-39. In this he criticizes religious scholars and governance for their westernization.

70. Hafiz Wahbe with his talent explains the problem between Abdul Aziz and Ikhwan in this manner: "Despite his success, Abd al-Aziz could not completely eradicate the roots that were deeply implanted in the personality. Had it not been for that they feared his sway, chaos would have been prevalent in the Arabian Peninsula." *Jazira al- 'Arab fi qarn al Ishreen*, p. 287.

71. *Wa Ja'a Dawr al-Majus*.

72. *Ibid*; see Ihsan Ilahi Zahir's books.

73. *Towards a modern Islamic kingdom*.

74. The Saudi religious policy in 1970s and 1980s was under the influence of King Faisal policy. (*A history of Saudi Arabia*, pp 131-134). This application was not attractive for the youth migrants to the west.

75. *Secrets of the kingdom*, p. 115.

76. "Some prominent Saudi officials, like prince Bandar, as well as his father, Defence minister prince Sultan, saw the Soviet aggression as a chance to form a closer bond with Washington. It was a rare chance, the argue to other Saudi Ministers to replace Israel as America's strategic partner in the middle east. (*Ibid*, 115)

77. *Mas'ala al Dawla al Sa'udia*, p. 198.

78. Concerning the attitude of the Wahabism and the ruling system of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia about the communism (see *al Mamleqa al Sau'dia va zilal al Quds*, pp. 84-86).

79. The policy makers of the Islamic Revolution in Iran from the day first after the triumph of the revolution exhibited their protest against the Communist regime in Afghanistan; and after the Russian invasion it got severe that decreased the bilateral relationship between Iran and Russia. But since Iran had anti-American tendency so America could not consider Iran as an ally against war with Russia in Afghanistan.

80. *The Secrets the kingdom*, p. 97-98.

81. Concerning the Saudi's relationship with USSR, see *Tarikh al 'Arabia al Sau'dia*, p. 458, 459; *Jazairatul 'Arab fi 'Asr al Hadith*, p. 61. "Although Saudi Arabia is politically independent, its people are so under developed that expansion of communism would be very difficult."

82. Bin Bas and Osaimen were two prominent Muftis of Saudi kingdom considered Bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam as real Muslim who were fighting against infidel communist. (*Mas'ala al Do'ala al Sau'dia*, p. 162).

83. Concerning not assisting Oman in the issue of Zoffar region, See: *Tarikha al 'Arabia al Sau'dia*, p. 524.

84. *History of Saudi 'Arabia*, p. 143 "The Iranian Revolution of 1979 influenced internal political developments and inspired Islamic activism in Several 'Arab States, including Saudi 'Arabia"

85. *Mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia*, p.163.

86. *Ibid*, pp. 164-166.

87. *Ibid*, p. 163.

88. *Ibid*, pp. 167-170.

89. *Taliban*, p. 132.

90. The mutual interaction between Islamic Political thought of Egypt in 60s and 70s and the wahabism. See *al mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia*, pp. 95- 179.

91. *Zaminaha tafakur Sayasi dar qalam roe Tashayo va tasanun*, Pp. 161-168; for having a comprehensive understanding the wahabism being extremism and the question that is it from within the school or from external stream of politico-Islamic thought. (see: *mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia*, Pp. 204-205; *al Irhab fi Jaziratul 'Arab va zilal*, p. 25)

92. The conceptualism of the Kufr (infidelity) from wahabi perspective with respect to its social background. (See: *mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia*, pp 65-72; *Jaziratul 'Arab fi qarn al Ishreen*, Pp. 308-315; *al tauheed va al Shirk*, Ayatullah Ja'far Subhhani)

93. *Taliban*, pp. 129-130.

94. *Mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia*, p. 88.

95. However instances were there where Ikhwani Wahabis use to criticise the close relationship between Abdul Aziz and Britain, see; *Sukhanan e al Duwesh*,

Tarikh aale Saud, pp. 319-320.

96. The Conservative section of Wahabism continuously had sensitivity to the influence of the foreign Culture. For Example Bin Bas in 40s criticized the presence of American Engineers in his country. Subsequently, for the same criticism, he had been summoned to the Court of the King and He requested him to not to talk about these issues. (see: mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, p 74)

97. About the consequence of the Sayyed Qutb thought in wahabism and Saudi Society (mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, pp. 109-119).

98. Zaminaha e Tafakkur e Sayasi, p. 161-163.

99. "Don't be deceived by the titles of the [New Islamic] book that indicate how should we invite people to Islam rather it is better to discuss how to live?" (Rasael Juhayman, p. 86; Bin Laden statement concerning the role of the Ulema [Islamic Scholar], mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, p175.)

100. As we mentioned it was the official Wahabism that encouraged youths to go for Jihad to Afghanistan and used to assist them with finance and weapons.

101. Concerning the critique of the Sayed Qutb Ideology, See Dawatan la Quzzat that has been written by al Huzaibi, the leader of Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt in 70s.

102. Mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, p. 104: The editor of al-Salafiyyah Magazine of Saudi Arabia says, "The Liberalists are closer to Islam and Salafism than the followers of Seyyid Qutb and the Revolutionary Wahhabis".

103. Ibid, pp. 161-170

104. A History of Saudi Arabia, Pp. 165-172.

105. Ibid. Pp. 165-166 (See the critique of Safar al Hawali and Salman al Awdah that was popular amongst the youths.)

106. Ibid, Pp. 169-200 (See the Ideological, religious and political changes of that period).

107. See the Interview of Bin Laden by Robert Fisk, The Saudi Enigma, pp. 5-8.

108. Ibid, p.7 "The Saudi People have remembered now what the Ulema told them and they realize America is the main reason for their problems. The ordinary man Knows that his country is the largest Oil producer in the world, yet

at the same time he is suffering from taxes and bad services. Now the People understand the speeches of Ulemas in the Mosques- that our country has become an American colony. They act decisively with every action to kick the Americans out of Saudi Arabia."

109. Riyah al Samuh, P. 52.

110. Ibid, pp. 53-55; al Kawashif al Jali'a, P. 274.

111. Rasael e Juhayman, p. 17. Bin Laden, concerning Arabian Peninsula, Said, "New Juhayman will come out from Arabian Peninsula." (Ibid. p. 7)

112. A history of Saudi Arabia, p. 167; "Criticism of the government in Mosques and University and university lecture halls proceeded hand in hand with increasing vigilance on the part of religious police in an attempt to minimize contact between this force and foreign troops, the government transferred some members of the religious police from the eastern province, where most foreign troops were stationed, to Hijaz and other parts of the country."

113. Ibid, Pp. 167-170.

114. The general Friday sermons in Saudi Arabia including Masjid al Haram and Masjid al Nabi concerning hot Political issues of the Muslims' world like Bosnia, Chechen, Afghanistan, and sometime about Kashmir used to be addressed and this was for the first time.

115. The detail of this incident can be found in mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, pp. 201-255.

116. The relationship between Mujhahedeem and Saudi Government in 1990s became worse. This has been pointed out by Abu Bar'a al Najdi in his book al Kawashif al Jalia fi kufre al do'ala al Sau'dia. See; Mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, pp. 183-185.

117. Ibid, P. 172.

118. After Afghanistan Jihad was transferred to the other regions importantly to Bosnia, Kashmir, Chechen and finally Iraq. Ibid, P. 202.

119. The Saudi Enigma, p. 5-8.

120. Taliban, p. 137-9.

121. Concerning the relationship between Devbandi and their seminaries with relation to Wahabism and Taliban. See Ibid.

122. Ibid.

123. The Saudi Enigma, P. 22 As Benazir Bhutto Said, " The Idea for the Taliban was British, the Management American, the money Saudi and the ground work Pakistan!!!" The Function of fundamentalist discourse, as part and parcel of the ruling power, is to allow that power to say that Violence is exported from the non-Western world to the West, whereas in reality the west is the source of the violence that is turned against it."

124. mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, p. 169

125. Ibid., pp. 140-141

126. Ibid., p. 15; Salafi Ideologic, Hamshahri e Diplomatic

127. Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah, P. 44; Secrets of the kingdom, P 166.

128. To find the difference see the Speech of Bin Laden post 11 September wherein he declares a worldwide war against US and its allies. (mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, p. 173). However, Taliban has no such intentions. (Taliban, Ahmad Rashid)

129. In spite of the silence of the official wahabism concerning US attack on Taliban they were continuously well -wisher of Taliban. (mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, p. 140)

130. Taliban, Ahmed Rashid, p. 140.

131. The criticism of US policy in the Middle East were been found in the front page of Saudi Newspaper. (mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, p. 140)

132. Ibid, P. 88.

133. After the terrorist attacks in Riyadh in 2003-2005, the popularity of al Qaeda severely damaged in such a way that two people from amongst Wahhabi Revolutions Safar al Hawali and Salman al Awdah condemned these attacks and called the al Qaeda terrorist as ignorant and misguided people. (Ibid, P. 128)

134. The revolutionary Wahabism condemned the attack on Iraq severely. Ibid, Pp. 141-145.

135. About religious tolerance among the Afghans; see Taliban, pp. 82-84.

136. For more information, refer to al-Zarqawi's statements.

137. Ibid.

138. For information about the mechanism of development of the political

thought among Muslims, refer to Bonyad-haye Endishe Siyasi.

139. People like Hosni Mubarak in respond to the Western critique used to say that political freedom will pave a way for terrorist organizations and groups to take the power.

140. Interview with Etela'at newspaper, dated 26/12/1389, corresponding to 17/3/2011, entitled: The Arab Spring: Which Future?

141. The present day salafi forces under the influence of scholars like Lohedan who promote uprising against regime like Syria Justified it with the kill even one third population.

142. Concerning the extreme Salafism See; the last chapter of mas'ala al Do'ala al Sa'udia, Pp. 363-373.

143. What could be helpful to provide a source for their sustainability is to divide the society into diversified direction from within. This is possible only through heating the sectarian and tribal issues the same politics that al Qaeda, after the collapse of Saddam Hussain in Iraq, adopted.

144. Peculiarities of Taliban. See Taliban, pp. 17-30.

145. When I was the Ambassador at Vatican, I often heard this from my close friend General Abdul Wali, a cousin and son-in-law of Zahir Shah. He was optimist towards Taliban in the mid of 90s and had contact with them. Also see Taliban, pp. 105-16.

Chapter Six

1. See Sati' al-Hisari, *al-'Urubah Awwalan*, pp. 1: "All those who belong to Arab countries and speak the Arabic are Arabs." "The Arabs are one nation; they are not Iraqis, Morrocans, or Egyptians. They are branches of one nation; that is the Arab Nation." Ibid. pp. 8; *al-Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah wa'l-Islam*, pp. 61-90.

2. About the concept of Arabism amongst the Arabs and its roots, see *tahavvol va sabat dar khalij-e fars*, pp. 195-8.

3. *Tatawwur al-Firk al-Qawmi al-Arabi*, pp. 21. Feelings of humiliation have been an important factor in forming Arabism.

4. About national tendencies against Arab nationalism, see *Islam and Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt*, pp. 89-108.

5. Despite the importance of the GCC for the Arab world and even the contemporary world, this group has the peculiarity of shrinking themselves from the regional and international scene. See *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 77-90.

6. See Chapter: Social Structure and Political Stability in *Tahavvul va Sabat der Khalij-e fars*, pp. 305-17.

7. For example, see Bahijeh Behbehani's article published in al-Qabas Newspaper 29/8/2011, under the title: "As long as the Column (Emir) is fine, we and Kuwait are fine, too."

8. *Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*, pp. 87-8.

9. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 3; *Dirasatun fi Tarikh al-Jazirah al-Arabiyyah al-Hadith wa'l-Mu'asir*, pp. 13-9; *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah*, pp. 13-39, especially 37-9.

10. *Return of Ayatollah*, pp. 199-200.

11. The majority of articles that have been written in the Sheikhdoms in general and in Bahrain in particular in favor of the ruling authorities accused the Shia of being agents of Iran, and none of these articles has ever discussed their social or political demands and rights. About the sectarian policy of the regime, see *al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi al-Bahrayn*, pp. 112-31.

12. *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi al-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 121 where the mass media's roots of sectarian thought are discussed.

13. *Al-Harakat wa'l-Jama'at al-Siyasiyyah fi'l-Bahrayn*, pp. 125. The majority of the political groups demanded: "Applying the principle of equality and justice before the law among all the Bahraini citizens and rejecting any distinction amongst them that may be based on ethnic group, sex, or sectarian affiliation."

14. For example, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qardhawi accused the Bahraini movements of being sectarian movements. Another Sheikh, al-Sudayfi the Saudi clergyman, has recently asked the Saudi Shia citizens of the Eastern Region to immigrate to Iraq.

15. About the concept of sectarianism, see *al-Mughtariboun al-Shiah*, pp. 119-26; *Riyah al-Samum*, 252-3.

16. *The Return of Ayatollah*, pp. ; *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 409-23.

17. *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 396-7.

18. *Al-Mughtariboun al-Shiah*, pp. 123.
19. *tahavvol va sabat*, pp. 150-1; *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 395-97.
20. *Al-Mughtariboun al-Shiah*, pp. 123-5.
21. About the attitude of the Saudis towards the Shia, see *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 138-9. About the historical relations between Iran and Bahrain, see *The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 204-5.
22. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 146-7.
23. About the Arab tendency in Bahrain, see *Waqi al-Harakah al-Fikriyyah fi al-Bahrayn*, pp. 202.
24. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 95-96: "While the international press focused on the uprising of the Grand Mosque, the House of Saud was paying almost as much attention to disturbing events a thousand miles away in Hasa. There, the Shiite of Qatif had taken to the streets by the thousands to mark the holy day commemorating the death of the Prophet's grandson Hussein..."
25. About the Saudi policy of propaganda, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 172-8, especially 175.
26. For more information, visit: abna.ir/data.asp?lang=2&Id=303500.
27. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 147.
28. *Faith and Power*, pp. 180-5; *Rasa'il Juhayman*, pp. 44-47.
29. *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 157-9.
30. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 94-7.
31. About the Saudi mufti Ben Baz, Juhayman al-Utaybi said that this man is corrupted and he is ready to sell his religion with one Rial. See *Faith and Power*, pp. 182.
32. The details can be found in *Rasa'il Juhayman*, pp. 42-4.
33. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 95: "At times, Saudi troops seemed hesitant to fight fellow Wahhabis inside the holy grounds, so prince Nayef arranged for two battalions of Pakistani Muslim commandos, under contract to the Saudi government, to show no mercy to the rebels." *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 172.
34. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 176-8; *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 356.

35. *Al-Mughtariboun al-Shiah*, pp. 130.
36. An article by Rashid al-Madawi in *al-Quds al-Arabi Magazine*.
37. For more details, refer to *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 163-72.
38. *Ibid.* pp. 175-6.
39. More details can be found in *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, especially pp. 43-4.
40. About the relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt after the 1960's, see *al-Mamlakah al-Sa'udiyah wa-Zilal al-Quds*, pp. 177-80.
41. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 188-9.
42. The New Polarization in the Region, an interview published in *Ettela'at Newspaper* in 21/1/2012.
43. *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 305-306.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 305-317.
46. The New Polarization in the Region, an interview published in *Ettela'at Newspaper* in 21/1/2012.
47. After the Arab Spring, some incidents took place in Saudi Arabia and the other GCC member countries that indicated the courage of the people to demand with their citizenship rights.
48. Oman had different foreign policy with the members of the GCC. For instance, Oman did not break relations with Egypt after the travel of Sadat to Israel and it also had close relations with Iran during the Iraq-Iran war.
49. *Zofar*, pp. 189-200; *Tarikh al-Arabiyyah al-Sa'udiyah*, pp. 524.
50. *Zofar*, pp. 201-220.
51. *Ibid.* pp. 105-11. The story of the crisis between Kuwait and Oman.
52. *Mir'aat Jazirat al-Arab*, pp. 235. See *al-Bilad al-Sa'eedah*.
53. *Mir'aat Jazirat al-Arab*, pp. 234-5.
54. See *Al-Bilad al-Saeedah*.
55. Because of the long history and the power of Omani's identity, the tribal and sectarian sensibility is weaker than the other Sheikhdoms. For these reasons, they accepted and digested the changes more smoothly.

56. *Zofar*, pp. 11-4 and 55-67.
57. About the Kuwaiti's understanding about themselves, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 295.
58. *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. 11; *Ayyam al-Kuwayt*, pp. 7.
59. *Jazirat al-Arab fi al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 83. About the difference between the Emir of Kuwait and the emirs of the other Sheikhdoms before the twentieth century, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 263-6.
60. *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. 54-9; *Al-Kuwayt Tarikh wa-Hadhara*, pp. 379.
61. After the uprising of al-Utaybi, some Kuwaitis were amongst his group. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 95.
62. I heard on different occasions from Kuwaiti diplomats that the government, for safeguarding equilibrium in the country, makes use of the two groups; i.e. the Shia and the Salafis.
63. Kuwaiti Nationalists was form and enhanced after the threat of Abd al-Karim Qasim and became stronger after the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The big problem now is the Kuwaitis who got the Kuwaiti identity in the 1970's and 1980's. They came especially from Najd. In the present time, the majority of the Kuwaiti Salafis belong to this group. *Min Huna Bada'at al-Kuwayt*, pp. 399.
64. *Secrets of the Kingdom*, pp. 184.
65. *Al-Kuwayt Madhiha wa-Hadhiruha*, pp. 322-351.
66. See different issues of *al-Mujtama'* Magazine, published in 1980.
67. For more information visit: theworld.tadwinat.com.
68. The main problem of Kuwait in the present time is the vast connection between the Kuwaiti Salafis and the Saudi regime. They are acting as the striking arm of the Saudi regime.
69. *Hulum al-Hijrah lil-Tharwah*, pp. 99.
70. *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 297-311.
71. About the present policy of Qatar, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 297-311.
72. The Arab world has such a scattered human capacity that they can serve any country that has financial potentiality. This can be realized if the policy and management of that country can be put in the framework of the thought and

ideals of this group. Qatar has practically used and made use of this capacity.

73. For different reasons, the sheikhdoms, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have had an ill reputation amongst the intellectual and educated Arabs who detest cooperating with them. Yet, as for Qatar, it was not like this. For instance, see *Dawlat al-Khilafah al-Jadidah*, pp. 5-9 and 47-48; *Salatin al-Qarn al-Ishreen*.

74. About the difference between Qatar and the other GCC members, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 298-9.

75. See *al-I'lam al-Siyasi al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir*.

76. The New Polarization in the Region, an interview published in Ettela'at Newspaper in 21/1/2012.

77. Tunisian-Lebanese journalist Ghassan Ben Jeddou says Al Jazeera satellite TV was an honest and sincere news source, but in recent years it has turned a blind eye to the realities of Arab world, as now it contributes in deceiving people and takes steps in line with the "enemy's stance."

78. The only exception was a report broadcast by al-Jazeera English TV about the Bahraini opposition that resulted in severe criticism of Saudis and Bahrainis.

79. In their anthems, all the Sheikhdoms in the GCC countries sing the safety of their Emir and his key role in saving the country except for the UAE, because this county has practically seven *emirs*; while the *emir* of Abu Dhabi is regarded as their elder brother.

80. *Sira' al-Dawlah wa'l-Qabilah fi'l-Khalij al-Arabi*, pp. 127.

81. *Khalij-e Fars: Ashnaye ba Emarat-haye An*, pp. 227.

82. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 93; *Salateen al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, pp. 11-12.

83. The authorities in the United Arab Emirates, amongst the GCC members, suppressed their feelings about the Arab Spring. They have said nothing, neither in support nor in criticism of these uprisings.

84. For more information about the interview of the chief police of Dubai, visit <http://kharej-alserb.com/archives/10998/>.

85. After the 1967 war, and especially after the coming to power of Sadat and the 1973 war, Egypt has been a source of certainty for the Sheikhdoms. The presence of Egypt was a factor of equilibrium in this region against Iraq, Iran,

and even Saudi Arabia.

86. For example, the national identity cards of some citizens of the UAE were revoked.

87. Unlike the Saudis, the authorities of Emirates did not speak about the Bahrain uprising.

88. For more information about the interview of the chief police of Dubai, visit <http://kharej-alsarb.com/archives/10998/>.

89. See *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 199-201. Even the non-official Wahhabis have had the same idea about Shia. See *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 138-9.

90. *Beyond All*, pp. 112.

91. For instance, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 30-36; *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyyah*, pp. 48.

92. For more information about the Sheikhdome's attitude to Iran, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 409-23.

93. For example, refer to King Faisal's speech in the Indonesian Parliament. *Tarikh Aal Sa'ud*, pp. 8.

94. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 147.

95. The New Polarization in the Region, an interview published in Ettela'at Newspaper in 21/1/2012.

96. *Tahavvol va Sabat*, pp. 105-19.

97. *Al-Mughtariboun al-Shiah*, pp. 259-66.

98. *Thawrat al-Arab Dhidd al-Atrak*, pp. 224.

99. For example, see *al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Shi'i*, pp. 38.

100. Syria, as Nasser had declared it as the heart of the Arabs, was always considered the center of the Arab nationalism. Yet, when the Baathists came to power, they raised the slogan of one Arab nation, without highlighting the Syrian nationalism.

101. For example, refer to al-Zarqawi's letter to Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, the spiritual leader of al-Qaeda; al-Sharq Newspaper, 10/6/1384, pp. 9.

102. Concerning the support of the Saudis to the Islamist oppositionists in Syria in the beginning of the 1980's, see *al-Mamlakah al-Sa'udiyyah wa Zilal al-Quds*, pp. 195.

103. *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*, pp. 25.
104. *Al-Mamlakah al-Sa'udiyah wa Zilal al-Quds*, pp. 195-6; Al-Nadhir Magazine published by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood.
105. Concerning the position of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and their relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, see *al-Ikhwan wa'l-Amrikan*, pp. 16-17.
106. Al-Quds al-Arabi Magazine, an article dated 26/3/2012.
107. *Al-Mamlakah al-Sa'udiyah wa Zilal al-Quds*, pp. 197-201.
108. For example, refer to the fatwa of Salih al-Luhaydan, a member of the Saudi Ifta Committee, published in al-Quds al-Arabi Magazine, dated in 29/6/2011.
109. Under the umbrella of the liberation army of Syria, different groups presented themselves there. The vertebral column of this army is the al-Qaeda and revolutionary Ikhwan forces, who were fighting for sectarian motivations.
110. For more information about the interview of the chief police of Dubai, visit <http://kharej-alserb.com/archives/10998/>.
111. For example, see *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 55.
112. For example, see *Ayman al-Zawahiri Kama Ariftuhu*.
113. *Riyah al-Samum*, pp. 55.
114. To understand the religious, social, and political consequences of the war in Afghanistan, Kuwait occupation, the 11 September incident, the Iraq war in 2003, refer to *Mas'alat al-Dawlah al-Sa'udiyah*. Such crises can be repeated.

Bibliography

The following references include only a portion of the books that have been directly or indirectly used in the drafting of this thesis. Since these sources contribute to a better and more appropriate understanding of the situation of the GCC member states in terms of their social and political stability, those books that are of less significance and are secondary in nature have not been included here in order to avoid a too long-drawn-out list.

Various books and articles, inclusive of those published in the newspapers or journals or those that appeared in the news and analytical websites, have been utilized in the elaboration of the concepts and interpretations that are found in this thesis. The audio-visual media outlets also had a share in this practice. Due to the numerous aspects of the individual and social life in the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf from the historical, cultural, religious and political perspectives, the materials used in the drafting of this book are various and diverse.

Apart from being assorted, the academic validity of these sources is also different. However, it is important to note that less significant sources can also be utilized in a multifaceted social, cultural and political research study in addition to the viable and first hand resources. No doubt, this practice will only be useful if the researcher knows when, how, and to what extent each one of these sources should be used, taking into account the degree of their validity. I hope I had been able to carry out this important task as good and accurate as required.

In any event, every effort has been made to use the first hand sources in Arabic language to the maximum extent possible.

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