

pan-arabischen Kooperation, Ölpreisverfall, wachsende Kluft zwischen armen und reichen Ländern und schlechtes Management des Entwicklungsprozesses durch undemokratische und verschwenderische Regime. Allerdings zeigt Alkazaz auf, daß die Situation keineswegs hoffnungslos ist. Die Region hat eine gute Faktorausstattung und hat in den siebziger Jahren ihre Entwicklungsfähigkeit bewiesen. Aufgezeigt wird auch, wie der Friedensprozeß den Wirkungsraum für Reformen verbreitern kann.

Der Friedensprozeß und seine Auswirkungen, insbesondere auf die Palästinenser und die Wirtschaft des sich abzeichnenden palästinensischen Staates, werden von Margit Scherb auch in Hinblick auf die Erwartungen der Akteure analysiert. Aufbauend auf der Bewertung der Folgen der israelischen Besatzungspolitik auf Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft werden auch die internationalen Entwicklungsstrategien der Weltbank und der westlichen Länder kritisch beleuchtet. Der Beitrag der palästinensischen Selbstverwaltung zu einem erfolgreichen Entwicklungsprozeß wird ebenfalls diskutiert.

Das Thema des islamischen Fundamentalismus dominiert die Sichtweise vieler westlicher Medien und Politiker. Oftmals sind Analysen zu diesem Thema vermengt mit Ideologien, Vorurteilen und der Angst vor einer „grünen Gefahr“, die der überwunden geglaubten „roten Gefahr“ nachfolgt. Mir Ferdowsi unternimmt in seinem Beitrag den Versuch, entlang von drei Thesen die geläufigen Erklärungen zum Aufstieg des Fundamentalismus als „Aufstand gegen die Moderne“ und als „Rückfall in das Mittelalter“ zu problematisieren, da diese eine grobe Vereinfachung darstellen und den Blick auf die differenzierte und komplexe Situation der Arabischen Welt mehr als verstellen.

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Pan-Arab Cooperation After Desert Storm

The 1990 Gulf crisis and the subsequent Operation Desert Storm have highlighted many previously muted or obscure realities such as the nature of inter-Arab relations. For many years, Arab leaders of various ideological persuasions have underscored the importance of pan-Arab solidarity. Some went further to call for a united Arab state extending from the Gulf to the Mediterranean. In practice, however, there was a wide discrepancy in Arab politics between rhetoric and policy well before the onset of the Gulf crisis.

Inter-Arab relations have always been influenced by two forces acting in opposite directions: a centripetal force of solidarity and a centrifugal force of discord and conflict. The pull towards solidarity stems from the commonalities among Arabs: the same language, religion, and culture. Differences that generate disarray and dispute emanate from the diversity of socioeconomic and political features that characterize Arab countries. In population size, the largest Arab country Egypt is twice the next largest country and a hundred times the smallest. Economically, per capita gross domestic products at market exchange rates range from a low value of \$140 for Somalia up to a high \$21,000 for the United Arab Emirates (United Nations 1994). Political systems show great diversity: absolute hereditary monarchies, military oligarchies, one-party systems, and weak democracies (Faour 1993, pp. 33 – 45). Wide disparities are also present in education and status of women.

Supporting the force of disarray is the lack of trust among political leaders. Each leader places utmost trust in his family, tribe, or neighbors. Individuals from outside these primary, parochial groups are not easily trusted. Thus real, sincere cooperation among individuals is largely restricted to members of the same kin or residential group.

This article examines the state of pan-Arab cooperation after Desert Storm. For a better understanding of the current situation, it is important to place the study in its proper historical context by briefly reviewing the modern history of pan-Arab cooperation.

Inter-Arab Relations Before Desert Storm

Arab interstate relations can be traced back to 1945 when seven independent Arab states convened to declare the birth of the Arab League. The League

stood for pan-Arab cooperation and solidarity. During the next two decades, most of the present member states joined in as they gained political independence from the European mandate or colonialism. This period comprised the first phase in the history of pan-Arab cooperation; it was characterized by numerous domestic upheavals, coups d'état, and interstate disputes (see, for example, Ismael and Ismael 1991). The notion of internal sovereignty or the acceptance of the territorial map imposed by Western powers was rejected by large numbers of the Arab public. Instead, the notion of a unified Arab state had a wide popular appeal which justified the intervention of some Arab states in the domestic affairs of others (Kerr 1978). A noted example is the intervention of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in Yemen. The tide of pan-Arabism culminated in the rise to power of pan-Arab regimes in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, and in the union between Egypt and Syria in 1958.

Despite the popular appeal of pan-Arabism, most Arab regimes and leaders had a collective interest in safeguarding their recently established territorial borders. This fact is affirmed in the pact of the Arab League that recognizes the sovereignty of all Arab states while emphasizing the need for pan-Arab solidarity at all levels (Barnett 1991; Taylor 1982). Moreover, the pact allows each member state the freedom to abide by any of the collective decisions the members take, although such decisions are to be unanimous. Still, a member can withdraw, with impunity, any previous commitment it made in a League's meeting (al-Kilani 1995).

Pan-Arabism had a few setbacks notably the failure of the union between Syria and Egypt in 1961. The Arab state systems showed firm resistance to political and economic integration. As a result, the Arab states came to recognize the sovereignty of one another. The stage then was set for a second phase of pan-Arab cooperation that lasted from 1967 to 1975. It began with the defeat of the Arab armies at the hands of the Israeli troops in 1967 and ended with the 1974 and 1975 Arab-Israeli disengagement agreements. During this phase, cooperation prevailed over conflict in interstate relations. Regular meetings of the Arab League were replaced by the more effective summit meetings of heads of state, a practice initiated by the late President Nasser. Pan-Arab cooperation reached its zenith in 1973 when Egypt and Syria launched a joint offensive against Israel followed by a collective Arab measure to stop oil shipments to the West (Sayigh 1991).

From 1975 to 1978, Arab interstate relations passed through a third phase that was marked by tension and disputes. The highest level of discord was reached in 1978 when Egypt signed the Camp David Accords with Israel. Reacting vigorously to Egypt's unilateral decision, the Arab League expelled Egypt. The rift between Egypt and the rest of the Arab world continued well into the 1980s when the Iraqi position in the Iran-Iraq war was weakening. Egypt's support was then sought by Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

The fourth phase of pan-Arab cooperation lasted from 1979 to 1990, ending with the Iraqi troops occupying Kuwait. This phase witnessed further disarray in the Arab regional system. Arab opposition to the 1982 Israeli incursion into Lebanon was alarmingly ineffective. A number of Arab states formed separate blocs, thereby enfeebling the Arab League. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1981 of six Gulf states, with Saudi Arabia playing a dominant role. The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was created in 1989 by Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia. In the same year, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen formed the Arab Cooperation Council.

Inter-Arab Relations Since Desert Storm

One can distinguish at least two phases of Arab interstate relations since the onset of the Gulf crisis in 1990. The first extends from August 1990 until the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement in Washington, D.C. in September 1993, while the second has begun since then. The first phase was characterized by further discord and conflict among Arab states. The discord reached its peak during Operation Desert Storm with the formation of an Arab-Western alliance against Iraq. The Arab side of the coalition included the Gulf states, Egypt and Syria, with a symbolic military support from Morocco and some political support from Tunisia. Jordan, the PLO, Yemen, Sudan, Libya and Algeria opposed the coalition for using force to resolve an inter-Arab conflict.

These changes in political alliances led to the malfunctioning of the Arab League now headed by Egypt, the disintegration of the Arab Cooperation Council, and the marginalization of the AMU. The GCC stayed intact, yet ineffective as it failed to agree on a unified foreign policy and to settle bilateral border disputes among its members.

Well into 1993, wartime positions continued to shape Arab interstate relations. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were determined to punish all states and groups that did not side with them against Iraq, rejecting several reconciliation attempts. Arab politics suffered greater disunity, with each state focusing on its domestic interests. Even the anti-Saddam Arab coalition that signed the Damascus Declaration in 1991 proved to be unstable. The Declaration gave a security role for the poor partners, Egypt and Syria, in return for substantial economic support by the rich GCC partners. Such an arrangement was doomed to fail because of the wide economic, political, and cultural gaps between its non-Gulf signatories, on the one hand, and the GCC states, on the other. The GCC states were wary of the possible security risks if troops from poor, formerly pan-Arab countries were allowed on their soil. Further-

more, they could not afford to bankroll these troops at a time of economic decline. The wealthy Arab states also became convinced that the security of their regimes could only be guaranteed by the United States and its Western allies.

This phase also witnessed the escalation of a number of border disputes notably between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Bahrain and Qatar, while the Kuwait-Iraq conflict remained unresolved. The Saudi-Yemeni dispute refers to the 1934 Taif Treaty. According to this treaty, Yemen agreed to lease three of its provinces to Saudi Arabia in return for the withdrawal of Saudi forces from the Yemeni territory it then occupied. This dispute stayed latent until 1992 when Yemen reactivated it, claiming that the 1934 treaty had expired. Then, the bilateral relations between the two states had soured after the expulsion of some 700,000 Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia during the 1990 – 91 Gulf crisis. Attempts to mediate between the two countries led to several bilateral meetings, but no settlement was reached.

The Bahrain-Qatar dispute is over ownership of some islands and reefs that are presently in Bahraini hands. The GCC, particularly its leading member Saudi Arabia, failed to resolve this dispute. Subsequently, discord within the GCC grew wider. In 1991, Qatar unilaterally took its case to the International Court of Justice, straining its relations with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

The atomization of the Arab regional system was reflected in the absence of a united Arab front during the Arab-Israeli negotiations that started in Madrid in 1991. Coordination among the Arab participants in both the multilateral and the bilateral peace talks was more theatrical than real. The Syrian-led coordination meetings reaffirmed a pledge to work toward a comprehensive settlement with Israel. That pledge, however, did not reflect the real policies of participants. Each of the Arab parties to the peace talks had its interests and agenda which, in many instances, were incompatible. In the bilateral peace talks, each Arab party was wary of a separate deal that could be arranged between Israel and another Arab party, a deal that would weaken its own negotiating power. This fear finally came true when the PLO struck a separate deal with Israel in Oslo in 1993; official signing of the agreement took place later in Washington, D.C.

The Current State of Pan-Arab Cooperation

The peace agreement between Israel and the PLO in 1993 initiated a new phase of interstate relations among Arabs. This phase is marked by rapid shifts of political alignments in response to progress in the peace process, influence of non-Arab regional and international powers, and domestic

changes. However, other major features of pan-Arab cooperation during the preceding phase continue unchanged. These features include atomized Arab politics, periodic rise of interstate disputes, and increased dependence on the West, particularly the United States

Rapid Shifts of Alignments

Arab countries and political groups regularly assess their interests and positions before deciding to maintain or change their alignments. However, the decision to shift alliances may be easier than its translation into reality because that requires the consent of all the parties concerned. The more the involved parties are, the harder the shifting process will be. In the aftermath of the second Gulf war, it was difficult for the Arab parties to move swiftly from their wartime positions of political alignment. Perhaps the PLO was the quickest to seek forgiveness and understanding for its wartime position from several coalition members notably the U.S., Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The Oslo agreement gave it a clear and strong welcome to the ranks of the pro-Western Arab majority. Most offended was Syria, which suspended its short-term détente with the PLO between the Madrid conference in 1991 and the Oslo agreement in 1993.

There are a number of examples of rapid shifts in Arab alignments since then. So far, two cases deserve our attention as evidence: Jordan and Egypt. For Jordan, changing allies included the PLO and its successor the Palestine National Authority (PNA), Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and the GCC states. Shortly after it signed a treaty with Israel, Jordan's relations with the Palestine National Authority (PNA) soured as it desired to play some religious role in Jerusalem, the proclaimed capital of Palestine. The PNA sought support for its position from various Arab states before it came to some agreement over the Jerusalem issue with Jordan. Since then, the relations between the two parties have been marked by caution and distrust. Jordan has always to cater to the feelings and beliefs of its Palestinian citizens who form a majority. The PNA is constantly worried about Israel's reactivating its past proposals regarding the political control of Jordan over the West Bank, which was part of Jordan before 1967. Another change in Jordan's interstate relations was with Syria after the latter rebuked it for its separate deal with Israel in October 1993.

The main transition in Jordan's political alliances was its rapid tilt away from Iraq, first in the direction of Egypt, then Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Jordan is no longer a close, loyal ally of Saddam Hussein. Rather, it may become a staging ground for all kinds of pressures and conspiracies against him by the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Jordan's relations with Egypt may weaken

as the latter is worried about the increasing regional role Jordan may play at Egypt's expense. That could arise if Jordan manages to form a coalition with the U.S., Israel, and the rich Arab states.

Egypt presents another case of rapidly changing alliances. Since Oslo's agreement, Egypt has been nurturing cooperation with states that stood against the Egyptian-led, Arab coalition forces, playing the role of a regional mediator in interstate disputes and a facilitator in the peace process. It has mediated between the PNA and a host of states notably Israel and the U.S., between Jordan and the Gulf states, Jordan and Syria, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and between Libya and the West. It has also been searching for ways to narrow the wide gap between Iraq, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, on the other.

To sustain its leading regional role, Egypt is willing to change its Arab political alliances overnight. A recent example is President Mubarak's discomfort with King Hussein's move in the direction of the U.S. and the Gulf states. Only days before that event, they were meeting to demonstrate their improved relations. Another example is Egypt's recent scaling down of cooperation with Libya under U.S. pressure and promises of more American economic aid. This situation is likely to change if the U.S. reduces its pressure or the promised aid does not arrive.

Atomized Arab Politics

Each Arab state or authority continues to place its survival and interests ahead of regional and subregional interests. As a result, the AMU and the GCC, the subregional organizations that survived Desert Storm, and the regional, Arab League are still plagued by internal disputes and tensions. Bilateral relations between Algeria and Morocco, Tunisia and Morocco, Libya and each of the other AMU members are less cordial than the bilateral relations between each of them and several non-AMU members. Libya, for instance, supports the Islamic regimes of the Sudan and Iran while providing help to Algeria and Egypt in their combat against the militant Islamists. Attempts to harmonize AMU's policies have been rendered futile by the ever-present infighting and tension within its ranks. These attempts included the establishment of a free-trade zone and an investment bank.

Nevertheless, economic and political cooperation within this group is not totally lacking. Rather, their cooperation is largely restricted to security matters. All Maghrebi states agree that the militant Islamists pose a serious threat to their regimes and seem determined to fight and destroy their international network. They have been meeting to discuss and coordinate various tactics and security measures, along with a number of south European countries.

The more coherent GCC remains unable to agree on a unified foreign policy or a subregional security pact or to settle the long-standing, bilateral border disputes. In 1994, Qatar and Kuwait refused to sign the GCC security pact that was proposed by other GCC members. Oman began to engage in economic transactions with Israel without approval of the GCC or the Arab League. Under strong pressure from the GCC, Egypt, and Syria, Oman agreed to freeze some of its normalization measures. Oman accepted the forceful unification of Yemen under President Saleh, rejecting Saudi's assistance to Saleh's opponents during the 1994 civil war in Yemen. It also differed with Saudi Arabia regarding the latter's policy towards Yemen.

To the dismay of other GCC members, both Oman and Qatar maintain cordial relations with Iran and, together with the United Arab Emirates, have been taking steps toward normalizing relations with Iraq. On the other hand, the GCC has begun to act independently and in violation of the decisions of the Arab League, the only pan-Arab regional body. In October 1994, the GCC officially lifted the secondary and tertiary level of the economic boycott of Israel, disregarding protests by several Arab states.

Arab parties that do not belong to any of the subregional organizations also focus on their domestic interests, placing them before pan-Arab concerns. For example, the PLO unilaterally decided to sign a peace accord with Israel, and Jordan followed suit. Most outraged were Syria and Lebanon which, along with Jordan and the PLO, had been meeting to coordinate their positions during the bilateral negotiations with Israel. Apparently, there was some understanding that any Arab party that finds itself ready to sign a peace accord with Israel ought to consult with the other Arab participants. The purpose of consultation was to ensure that any proposed agreement would not weaken the negotiating power of the other Arab parties. Most interested in coordination was Syria that played a leading role. Hence, when the PLO, followed by Jordan, signed separate treaties with Israel, Syria's relations with them deteriorated rapidly. The U.S. applied heavy pressure on Syria to dissuade it from undermining the treaties by encouraging, for example, extreme militant groups to wage terrorist attacks against the PLO and Jordan. Syria promised not to disturb the peace process, but its bilateral relations with both Jordan and the PLO remain strained.

A recent strong indicator of atomized Arab politics is the Jordanian welcome of two high ranking defectors from Iraq, its principal trading partner and longtime friendly neighbor. This step was followed by accepting (perhaps inviting) American military protection against an allegedly likely Iraqi retaliation. Detecting an opportunity to tighten the siege to President Saddam's regime to hasten his departure or fall, the U.S. dispatched to the region a high-gear team with a host of ideas. Apparently, the main American goals were: (a) to stop or at least reduce the flow of goods through the Jordanian-

Iraqi border, the lifeline of Iraq; and (b) to replace the cheap Iraqi oil, Jordan now imports, with Saudi and Kuwaiti oil. King Hussein cannot afford to sever all economic ties with Iraq because of its likely negative repercussions on his regime. However, in his speech to the nation in August 1995, the monarch was pondering the replacement of Iraqi oil. We, he said, are "searching for precautionary alternatives" to Iraqi oil if the flow of this oil stops even "temporarily" (*Annahar*, August 25, 1995, p. 10).

One wonders whether the king, in collaboration with the U.S., Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, is preparing his people for a "short" period of cutoff of Iraqi oil supplies. Such a measure could give a fatal blow to Saddam's regime. The U.S. seems to have succeeded in convincing Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to restore friendly relations with their former ally Jordan, after it has shown sufficient cooperation with the American-Gulf plans. So far, Kuwait has formally agreed to supply Jordan with oil, and Saudi Arabia has given its unofficial consent, according to U.S. administration sources (Watson et al. 1995, p. 10).

King Hussein's clever step aimed to serve Jordanian domestic interests in many ways. First, it gave Jordan a golden opportunity not only to mend fences with the rich Arab states, but also to be rewarded generously at a time of economic decline. To reap all these benefits, the king showed steadfastness in the face of Saddam Hussein, the most hated character in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He revealed Saddam's alleged plans to attack Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, allegations that President Mubarak described as "sheer absurd" (*Annahar*, August 25, 1995, p. 14). More seriously, he publicly gave his blessing to a change in the Iraqi regime, praising the principal defector Hussein Kamel who called for the overthrow of Saddam.

Second, Jordan would further improve its relations with the U.S. This would strengthen Jordan's position vis-à-vis rival Syria, yet invite the envy of Egypt. Despite its recently improved relations with Jordan and the long-standing alliance with the U.S., Egypt may be wary of King Hussein's intentions to weaken its regional leading role. Another concern is for Jordan to take away some of the substantial economic support the U.S. and the GCC have allotted to Egypt. In response to a journalist concerning the king's speech, President Mubarak asked about its "objective," adding that he did not get the real intentions of the king (*Annahar*, August 25, 1995, p. 1). Hours later, Mubarak dispatched his foreign minister to Amman, inquiring about the king's intentions.

Third, Jordan can play a central regional role if it succeeds to replace the current Iraqi regime with a pro-Western one, or to induce the regime to concede to American terms. Jordan hopes to become a regional center for development planning and investment agencies that involve Israel and other non-Arab parties. Jordan has already embarked on this road by offering to

host the second meeting on regional economic cooperation. The first meeting, which was held in Casablanca, Morocco in 1994, failed to achieve some of its major objectives such as the establishment of a GCC-funded regional bank for development.

Another sign of atomized politics is the recent claim by the Palestinian leaders Faysal al-Husseini and Yasser Arafat that part of the Golan Heights is a Palestinian, not Syrian territory. The Syrians did not respond strongly to such a claim at a time when their bilateral negotiations with Israel over the Golan Heights were stumbling. However, the timing of the Palestinian statements, regardless of their accuracy, shows no concern for pan-Arab interests. Sensing a chance to weaken Syria's position, Israel rejected both the Palestinian and the Syrian claims to this piece of land, alleging that it belongs to Israel.

Despite the persistence of atomized politics, few Arab states enjoy a high level of bilateral cooperation. Perhaps Syria and Lebanon offer the best example of two states that are increasingly edging closer. Their level of cooperation has touched so many domains – political, economic, and military, approaching that of integration. Another less striking example is the continuous, political coordination between Egypt and the PNA. In various phases of the peace process since the Madrid conference, Egypt has played the roles of a facilitator and a mediator between the Palestinians and Israel. Yet, it did not shy away from defending Palestinian rights of self-determination. In many ways, Egypt has been acting like a sponsor to the PNA. A third example is the special relation between Egypt and Syria. Egypt's coordination with Syria regarding the peace process and other regional concerns has served pan-Arab interests. Through their joined efforts, Egypt and Syria have managed to freeze the rapid steps taken by some GCC states to normalize relations with Israel, pending real progress in the Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli talks.

Interstate Disputes

Some border disputes that escalated in the wake of Desert Storm are on the right track towards settlement notably the Saudi-Yemeni dispute. The short period of tension between Yemen and Saudi Arabia following President Saleh's consolidation of power over all Yemeni territory ended with an "agenda of understanding" in February 1995. The agenda, an agreement of principles, initiated a series of meetings between officials of the two sides to complete a detailed agreement. The two heads of state formally endorsed the agenda in Riyadh in June 1995.

Other border disputes remain unsettled, and few may escalate into military confrontation namely the Iraq-Kuwait conflict and the Sudan-Egypt

border dispute. Desert Storm did not resolve the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, and the UN resolutions on boundary demarcation may keep the conflict ablaze rather than extinguish it. The imposition of a settlement on a weakened party – Iraq – makes the settlement less durable than a mutually acceptable agreement. However, the formal recognition of the sovereignty of Kuwait by the Iraqi regime paves the way for future reconciliation between the two states, although the new border line is likely to remain disputable.

The lingering dispute between Egypt and Sudan over the Halayeb triangle reflects the level of tension in their bilateral relations. When these relations deteriorate, as when the Sudan was accused of masterminding the assassination attempt at President Mubarak in Ethiopia, their border dispute escalates. Ever since the Islamists came to power in the Sudan, Egypt has felt wary of the consequences of such a rule on its domestic stability. In its fight against Islamic militants, the Egyptian regime is worried about various types of assistance – equipment, information, money – the rebels could obtain from neighboring Sudan. Recently, Egyptian officials are openly accusing Sudan of harboring, training, and exporting terrorists to Arab countries. In his speech to the nation in July 1995, President Mubarak expressed this stance in very strong words:

Egypt will not tolerate, whatever the consequences, to have on its borders a neighbor that ... turned brother Sudan into a nest of conspiracy against Egypt and other Arab countries. (*Annahar*, July 24, 1995, p. 12)

In response to President Mubarak's threats, Sudan widened the scope of the dispute to include issues that are not related to Halayeb or the border line. Sudan has started to raise the issue of the water agreement that was signed between the two countries in 1959. According to this agreement, Egypt was granted the right to use 55.5 billion cubic meters of the Nile water and Sudan 18.5 billions. The Sudan claims that it has not been able to use more than 12.2 billions of its share, while the difference – 6 billion – has been going to Egypt. The Sudanese Minister Ghazi Salaheddin claims that the Sudanese public feels the Nile water agreement is unfair to Sudan and demands the reconsideration of its terms. The minister hints that his government may raise the water issue some time in the future (Sudanese Minister Ghazi Salaheddin, *Annahar*, July 17, 1995, p. 12).

The border dispute between Sudan and Egypt has thus started other, longtime dormant disputes, the most serious of which is the sharing of the Nile waters. The issue of the Nile water touches the lifeline of Egypt, a fact known to both Sudan and Egypt. Therefore, this dispute is unlikely to explode unless Egypt starts to intervene directly and actively to overthrow the Sudanese regime. Only then would the Sudanese regime think of using the water weapon against Egypt. The repercussions then would be disastrous for the entire Arab world because of the heavy weight of Egypt in the region's politics and stability.

Increasing Dependence on the United States

Some 20,000 American ground troops are permanently stationed in the Gulf to thwart any likely assault on its Arab states. More troops and military materiel were brought in, twice so far, to deter a likely Iraqi offensive. Several bilateral security pacts presently link the Gulf states with the U.S. and other Western powers. Moreover, American business companies operating in the GCC and other Arab countries continue to receive more favored treatment than European or Arab business companies.

Summary and Conclusion

Now more than ever, pan-Arab, political cooperation is limited and transient. The only regional organization that represents pan-Arab solidarity and interests, the Arab League, is ineffective and aging. So far, it has failed to reconcile inter-Arab differences since the second Gulf war. Meetings of the League have turned into a show of disunity rather than of solidarity and regional cooperation. The more coherent subregional bodies – the GCC and the AMU – suffer from recurrent infighting that disables them from agreeing on unified policies.

Arab interstate relations are currently marked by rapid shifts in political alignments. Such shifts occur in response to domestic changes, progress in the Middle East peace process or lack thereof, and the influence of powerful non-Arab actors notably the U.S. and Israel. Shifting alignments reflect the continuous atomization of Arab politics. Each state or authority is preoccupied with its own domestic problems, placing them before pan-Arab concerns. There are few cases of impressive, bilateral cooperation, notably between Syria and Lebanon, yet a host of interstate disputes also persists. Some of these disputes are over borders; others are over sharing resources. Most of the disputes are unlikely to escalate soon, but a few are potentially explosive such as the Kuwait-Iraq conflict and the Sudan-Egypt dispute over Halayeb.

As more Arab states sign peace pacts with Israel, the idea of a new regional organization that includes Israel becomes more palatable to the Arabs. This idea may eventually turn into reality as the U.S. and Israel persist to hold multilateral meetings in Arab countries to discuss prospective development plans for the entire Middle East. Guided by the U.S. and influenced by the superior regional actor Israel, the proposed regional organization could prove to be more efficient and effective than the enfeebled Arab League. This organization could supersede the League without necessarily obliterating it. To be sure, the decline in pan-Arab cooperation would then reach its nadir.

Abstracts

Pan-arabische Kooperation ist eingeschränkt und wechselhaft. Die die arabische Solidarität repräsentierende Arabische Liga ist unwirksam. Subregionale Institutionen leiden unter wiederkehrenden Streitigkeiten. Arabische zwischenstaatliche Beziehungen sind durch markante Wechsel politischer Koalitionen geprägt, welche durch inländische Veränderungen, den Friedensprozeß und den Einfluß nicht-arabischer Mächte ausgelöst werden. Diese wechselnden Bündnisse reflektieren die Zersplitterung arabischer Politik. Jedes Land stellt seine eigenen Interessen vor pan-arabische Belange. Inmitten dieser zwischenstaatlichen Konflikte gibt es einige wenige Fälle bilateraler Kooperation. Die wenigsten Konflikte sind explosiv, einige können jedoch zu gewalttätigen Konflikten eskalieren.

Pan-Arab, political cooperation is limited and transient. The Arab League that stands for pan-Arab solidarity is ineffective. Subregional bodies suffer from recurrent infighting. Arab interstate relations are marked by rapid shifts in political alignments that occur in response to domestic changes, progress in the peace process, and influence of non-Arab powers. Shifting alignments reflect the atomization of Arab politics. Each party places its domestic interests before pan-Arab concerns. Amidst the numerous interstate disputes are few cases of close, bilateral cooperation. Most disputes are not explosive, yet few may escalate into violent conflict.

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