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EGYPT, ARAB SOLIDARITY AND ESTABLISHING A COMMON  
FRONT AGAINST ISRAEL 1950-1967

by

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A thesis

Submitted to the institute for Graduate Studies in Social  
Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Political Science

Bogazici University Library



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis advisor, Dr. Mim Kemal Öke for his valuable assistance and guidance.

I wish to thank to  
for their proofreading the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. The Issue of Arab Solidarity

Solidarity in inter-Arab politics has been a long-continuing, emotional as well as intellectual question among the masses of politically conscious Arabs. Indeed, even before the emergence of the movement of neutralism in the world, the Arab states had tried to establish a solidaristic front in the Middle East(1). One of their most prominent attempts toward solidarity occurred in 1945, with the establishment of the Arab League by Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, and then its inclusion of Lebanon in 1953, Sudan in 1956, Tunisia and Morocco in 1958 and Kuwait in 1961. This organization has united the Arab countries in terms of a common "heritage of language, culture, and (to a large extent) religion, a common distrust of outside powers, Western as well as Communist" and especially a common hostility to the state of Israel (2).

Those were the links causative factors of Arab Solidarity but then have not sufficed to eliminate the internal disputes, quarrels, rivalries and conflicts continuously

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(1) Feridun Ergin, Uluslararası Politika Stratejileri (Istanbul, 1980), p. 183.

(2) Karl W. Deutsch, The Analysis of International Relations, Second Edition, (New Jersey, 1978), p. 237.

occurring among the Arab states, nor to prevent -despite the reoccurrence of the summit conferences, Arab military command agreements, the Arab Boycott office- the subsequent military setbacks in 1948, 1956 and 1967. Of course, one of the important factors behind these defeats can be discussed on the military ground that Arab society generally lacked the economic, social, educational and technological basis necessary to mobilize large armies which would curb the expansionist aims of Israeli state in the Middle East. But it can also be argued that the Arab world has been too divided to fill this gap, the intra-Arab conflicts have been continuous and detrimental and that the Arabs weakened their position through losing their energy and time which should have been utilized to strengthen their military potential. In this way, it appears that the former and the latter factors were in a state of interaction; because of their military weakness against Israel the Arab states tend more easily to turn to their intra-quarrels. An all-out war with Israel seems much more difficult due to the fact that intra-conflicts destroy their solidarity.

This study will try to analyze the core reasons of the intra-Arab conflicts destructive of their position in confrontation with Israel. I also find it worthwhile stating that both Nasser, his adherents, his rivals and the Arab masses had seen that the primary weakness of the Arab front against Israel was due much more to their internal divisions and

quarrels than to Israel's military equipment during the period 1950-1967. It is a major question; despite the fact that Nasser and the other Arab leaders believed in that above-mentioned consideration, why were they not able to strengthen Arab solidarity against Israel by eliminating their intra-conflicts?

Any answer to this critical question because the nature and the operation of the intra-Arab conflicts are linked by a number of axes, necessitates a complicated study of the solidarity in the Arab World. However, this kind of study can be considered within two major dimensions. The first one is the persisting trend and the operations of the intra-Arab conflicts -we are also going to analyze their natures- which were very destructive of solidarity against Israel. The second one is the role of Egyptian leadership as a "regional great power" in the Arab World in operations of the intra-conflicts and her efforts to provide Arab unity and regional Arab solidarity against Israel at the same time;

In light of these considerations, after a partial analysis of the issue of solidarity in a regional context as a theoretical framework,

In the first chapter, we are going to show a general panorama of the Arab World during 1950-67 in which Egypt under the charismatic leadership of Nasser, having overwhelming sources; population, culture, geographical



location etc, compared to the other Arab states, appeared as the leader of the Arab front which suffered from the detrimental effects of the intra-conflicts in confrontation with Israel.

The second chapter is devoted to analyzing the efforts of the Egyptian leadership to provide Arab unity under her domination and the impacts of these efforts and of the actions of the Israeli state upon the extent of solidarity in the Arab World.

The third chapter is an effort to present the reasons for the Egyptian Leadership's failure in eliminating the intra-Arab conflicts which, reducing the Arab Front's cohesion and hampering their solidarity, facilitated the Israeli preponderance over the Arab World.

Finally, it is true that the role of the Egyptian leadership had a core importance to the issue of Arab solidarity in confrontation with Israel. However, this study is an attempt to analyze both the role of the Egyptian leadership and the other dynamics behind the issue of the Arab solidarity against Israel during 1950-1967.

## II. An Analysis of Political Solidarity in a Regional Context: Arab Front's Cohesion

The success of the group in its struggle against an enemy, both at the international and at the domestic level is largely related to the degree of its internal cohesion. Because of the historic importance of the alliances and of alliance solidarity which is more or less determinative of the alliance's challenging power against the enemy, a number of theories have been developed in order to explain the dynamics of the alliances' operations. In this context, the issue of solidarity has been analyzed under the category of "alliance cohesion".

With respect to these studies, the two main aspects of "member attitudes" can be considered somewhat as polar, opposite, conceptional points. First, and stronger than the other is the rational, egoistic aspect of the attitudes of the alliance members. It may be an inherent aspect. However, if it becomes overwhelming, it is destructive of the alliance cohesion. Because the decision makers are much more interested in a comparison between the rewards and costs of the actions within the alliance and in the extent of their countries' potential status, security, and stability, than in the psychological aspects of being in coordination with or sharing a community with other members etc. (3). The issue

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(3) George F. Liska, Nations in Alliance: The limits of interdependence, (Baltimore, 1962), p. 12.

of alliance cohesion seems strictly linked to the degree of interest taken by the individual countries. In any case, the joining, pursuing and acting in the alliances, adherence to foreign policy considerations, are affected by the actors' -individual countries- national attributes i.e; nation's amount of resources, its ability to use those resources, predispositions to act. (4).

But, "the amount of resources available to a nation", from the perspective of the war against an enemy, "does not necessarily refer to the strength of its will". Consider the ability of Israel since 1945 to maintain a dominant position in the Middle East against the Arab World (5) which includes more than several intra-quarrelling Arab states with more than a total 60 million population, having enormous oil revenues and mines, arable lands, etc.

Then the question arises, why were the Arab states not able to mobilize their will against their common enemy. First of all, it can be considered that the popular desire for unity which has been the only way to curb Israeli expansionism in the eyes of politically conscious Arabs (6) has not transformed itself into considerably concrete results.

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(4) Maurice A. East, "National Attributes and Foreign Policy" Why the Nations Act, Ed by M.A. East, S. A. Salmore, C.F. Hermann, (London, 1978), p. 133.

(5) Ibid., p. 126.

(6) For example,

According to Sati Al-Husri; "it should not be said that

For example, even the "individual Arab states creating the league, created an association or an alliance not a union"(7). And of course alliances commonly reflect more than single explicit and identical interests between the members and they may include some parallel and divergent ones at the same time.

These are the determinants affecting the characteristics of alliances and the nature of their functions. In any case the patterns of conflicting and converging interests are the factors causative of the degree of alliance cohesion against the enemies. "Even if mutual military needs exist, their creation or maintenance often requires a convergence of interests that goes beyond a common interest in security" (8).

In light of these considerations, it can be argued that, the Arab states, through having different regime attributes, foreign policy restraints, different elite structures and their different interpretations concerning narrow-range; patriotistic vis-a'-vis a wide scope of nationalistic

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the Arabs lost the battle although they were seven states, but rather the Arabs lost the battle of Palestine because they were seven states." Views and Discourses on Arab Nationalism, (Beirut, 1951), p. 3.

(7) Fayez A. Sayegh, Arab Unity: Hope and Fullfilment, (New York, 1958), p. 123.

(8) Robert E. Osgood, "The Nature of Alliances" Politics and the International System, (second edition), ed. by R. L. Phafaltgraff, (New York, 1972), p. 481.

goals (9) have changed the degree of their solidaristic attitudes, from time to time. Despite these realities, since the expansionist goal of the Israeli state became obvious both through her action in the Middle East and even in the speeches of the Israeli leaders (10), the Arab saw that their vital interest was the elimination of Israel.

Here it is worthy to mention the three important psychological factors having potential in the construction of Arab solidarity. These are the "Perception of Threat", the "Perception of Unfriendliness" and the "Expression of Hostility", and there appears to be a positive relationship between their extent and the degree of Alliance

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(9) In this context, Arab ideologies can be distinguished between the one Arab nation; "al - qawmiyya" and many Arab peoples; such as the Egyptian, Iraqis and so on; "al - wataniyya".

William L. Cleveland, The Making of An Arab Nationalist, (New Jersey, 1971), p. 84.

(10) A number of statements exist, illustrative of Israel's ultimate goal; Eretz Israel; for example,

"It lies upon the people's shoulder to prepare for the war, but it lies upon the Israeli army to carry out the fight with the ultimate object of erecting the Israeli Empire", Moshe Dayan, 12 February 1952; "I deeply believe in launching preventive war against Arab states without further hesitation. By doing so, we will achieve two targets; firstly, the annihilation of Arab power; and secondly, the expansion of our territory.", Menachem Beigin, 12 October 1955.

Sami Hadawi, "Israeli Expansionism", Crescent and Star, ed. by Y. Alexander and N.N. Kittrie, (New York, 1973), p. 220.

cohesion (11).

With respect to Arab-Israeli conflict, to put it briefly, the Arabs saw the Israeli state as a tool of "World Zionism" which was in connection with and support by the various forms of neo-colonialism (12), and as an aggressive ideology that resorts to imperialistic, illegitimate, predatory, crude methods such as psychological intimidation and terror, systematic confiscation, brutal persecution, military attacks (13) and disgusting massacres (14). Thus, the Arabs regard Israel as an illegal entity and deeply hate it. As Gamal Nasser had once stated:

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- (11) David C. Schwartz, "Decision Making in Historical and Simulated Crises", International Crises Edited by Charles F. Hermann, (New York, 1972), p. 168.; with respect to the relationships between the "Expression of Hostility" and "Decision-Maker's Behaviors", see especially the work of Dina A. Zinnes, "A Comparison of Hostile Behavior of Decision-Makers in Simulate and Historical Data", World Politics, Vol. XVIII-No:3 (Spring 1966), pp. 474-502.
- (12) Yonah Alexander, The Role of Communication in the Middle East Conflict: Ideological and Religious Aspects (New York, 1973), p. 6.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Arnold Roynbee commented "The evil deeds committed by the Zionist Jews...were comparable to crimes committed against the Jews by the Nazis...The Arab-blood bath at Deir Yasin was on the head of the Irgun; the expulsions after the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 1948, were on the heads of all Israel"
- A Study of History (London: Oxford, 1935-54), 8-p. 290.

"The hatred of the Arabs for the Zionist is very strong and there is no sense in talking about peace with Israel" (15). Here, hatred against Israel should be considered as considerably important factor for Arab solidarity against Israel (16). In accordance with these stimulative factors, Arab states found it necessary to mobilize their will against Israel.

Thus the Arab states, in order to weaken the Israeli position and to curb her expansionism in the Middle East, tried to take some measures. For example, "political warfare to isolate Israel politically, political action within the Arab league, building military strength, military industries" (17), "a propoganda campaign to demoralize it at home and discredit it abroad" (18). They sought to establish some "amalgamated security communities"; the United Arab Military Command, the

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(15) Fayez A. Sayegh, "The Palestinians' Response to Zionism: From Resistance to Liberation", Arab Journal, Vol. III-No:1 (Winter 1965-66), pp. 12-15.

(16) According to Hoffer, the Common hatred integrates even the most contrarious elements; whatever the differences in the opinions of the group of people were, when they feel a common hatred against a focus; a person, a group of people, etc, they delay their internal controversies for the sake of creating a common challenge against it. Eric Hoffer, The True Believers (translated into Turkish by Tur Yayınları under title of "Kestin İnançlılar", (İstanbul, 1980), pp. 114-20.

(17) Yehoshafat Harkabi, Arab Strategies and Israeli's Response (New York, 1977), p. 12.

(18) Yonah, Op.cit, p. 10.

Palestine Liberation Organization, the Arab Boycott Office, the Arab Jordan River Exploration Authority, the Summit Conferences are some striking examples (19).

In order to force their military solidarity to be capable of liberating Palestine, some federations, for example the federation of Egypt, Syria and Iraq in 1963 were established (20). But neither these institutions which were involved in struggle with Israel nor the amalgamation of the military activities of several Arab states were able to create a substantially stronger Arab front (21), because, it seems perhaps they were only the expression of Arab avoidance of the escalation of conflict with Israel. In the alliances, according to David C. Schwartz;

"Nations may tend to perceive crises when cohesion is low but they tend to adopt, recommend escalation of those crises when cohesion seems high... If cohesion continues to appear low, non escalatory behaviours are likely" (22).

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(19) Ibid., p. 11.

(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid.

(22) Schwartz, Op.cit., p. 184.



From this perspective "A cohesive Arab alliance might escalate the conflict with Israel simply because of its capacity to act. By the same token, a disintegrating Arab unity could mean a reduced challenge to Israel" (23).

For the reasons stated above, the Arab position can be labelled as a "no peace-no war" situation with Israel. It appears as turning between "faith in the prospect of realizing the objective; liquidation of Israel on the one hand and skepticism of its feasibility and for lack of a better alternative, acquiescence to the existence of Israel on the other" (24).

Then we have come to a core and complex question that we devoted our study to answer. What are the factors destructive and constructive of the Arab front's cohesion?

One might see that "The differences between Radical and Traditional governments and within most or all Arab regimes; various radical Arab regimes having different interpretations of Arab Socialism and Arab Unity", and "State nationalism vis-a'-vis Pan-Arabism", "Competition for Arab leadership"; "Political Rivalries within the Arab block", "The Immense Economic Differences among the Arab countries" as productive of intra-Arab conflicts. Therefore these may be the destructive factors to the Arab Front's cohesion.

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(23) Paul Y. Hammond, "An Introductory Perspective on the Middle East", Political Dynamics in the Middle East, Ed. by P.Y. Hammond and S.S. Alexander, (New York, 1972), p. 21.

(24) Harkabi, Op.cit., p. 7.

With respect to the constructive ones, besides the Arab's common hatred and their perceptions of Israel as a real threat, we can consider them as the factors which at least reinforce the "sense of community" (25) and/or push it into transformation toward Arab unity in the Middle East. In this respect, the quest for Arab unity and Arab nationalism go hand in hand and are largely the product of the post-World War I period. Thus the elements of unity; a common language, racial origin and religion -which have always been thought to be the main factors in developing national consciousness (26) have largely contributed to the development of pan-Arabist ideology in the Middle East.

In Liska's theory one of the most important factors for alliance cohesion is the development of an "alliance ideology". In fulfilling this function" ideology feeds on selective memory of the past and outlines a program for the future" (27). As far as pan-Arabist ideology is considered, its appeal to the Arabs "lies in the absence of local political or communal tradition binding together the domestic Society of each Arab state" (28). But, as a result of the fact

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(25) "Sense of Community" refers to the non-egoistic aspects of the alliance members' behaviors. According to Liska, it contributes to alliance cohesion, but seldom brings into existence. Liska, Op.cit., pp. 173-75.

As far as the Arab front is concerned the common language, religion, racial origin exert a potential to create the "Sense of Community"

(26) Eliahu Ben-Horin, The Middle East: Crossroads of History (New York, 1943), p. 137.

(27) Liska, Op.cit., p. 61.

that some Arab intellectuals and political leaders, by giving different emphasis on Islamic or Christian ties, by showing their loyalties to the special heritage of their particular region, have contributed to the development of some local and regional doctrines in the Arab World, such as the Pharaohism of Egypt, the Phoenicianism of Lebanon and Syria, and a host of other regional doctrines (29). From this perspective, as a result of "the unresolved tensions between Arab nationalism (al-qawmiyya al-Arabia) and state nationalism (al-watanniya)" (30), and the latter's detrimental effect upon the operation of the whole enterprise -from sense of community to unity-, its joining from time to time with the other destructive factors -political rivalries, competition for Arab leadership, regime differences, Arab nationalism became incapable of the realization of a potent alliance cohesion.

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(28) Malcolm H. Kerr, "Regional Arab Politics and Conflict with Israel" Political Dynamics in the Middle East Ed. by P. Y. Hammond and S. S. Alexander, (New York, 1972), p. 33.

(29) Sati Al-Husri's explanation.  
See in Cleveland, Op.cit., p. 85.

(30) Hisham Sharabi, Arab Intellectuals and West, (Baltimore, 1970), p. 119.

Then, what is a main prerequisite for the Arab front's cohesion? Liska suggests that the cohesiveness of the alliance necessitates the existence of a "core power", and there is a positive relationship between the strength of the core power and the alliance cohesion (31). As far as the Arab front is concerned this last hypothesis appears to have a great explanatory power. Since the "common language, racial origin and religion also were cornerstones, but not sufficient to enforce Arab solidarity and even the main prerequisite to the Pan-Arab movement is the existence of a solid political center (32). Confining the scope of this analysis between 1950s-1967 period, we can argue that the Arab front needed a core power (a political leader) capable of utilizing the various "patterns of influence" (33) in order to

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(31) Liska, Op.cit., 170-180.

(32) Ben-Hourin, Op.cit., p. 140.

(33) As Holsti offered; Relations of concensus, Relations of overt manipulation, Relations of coercion, Relations of force as "Patterns of Influence". As far as regional Arab politics is concerned, Egypt had never got the capability of using coercion and force. Only way to control the Arab World by her was to utilize skillfully Arab nationalism.

K.l. Holsti, International Politics (New Jersey, 1967), pp. 206-8.

provide the cohesion and solidarity. But the country which played the role of Arab political leadership had neither enough coercive power (34), nor was able to utilize Arab nationalism, in order to eliminate the intra-quarrels, rivalries, conflicts in the Arab front.

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(34) Integration of the political community necessitates the existence of a coercive power.

See in Ralf Dahrendorf,

Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Societies

(Stanford, 1959), p. 157.

## CHAPTER I - EGYPT AND THE ARAB WORLD

### I. The Question of Egyptian Leadership

Since world War II, the most emotional issue for the Arabs, has been the realization of Arab solidarity against the state of Israel. Especially after the 1948 war with Israel, the creation of Arab solidarity became a prime necessity in the eyes of the politically conscious Arabs. By mobilizing their collective potentialities, they could prevent the wastage of energy in intra-Arab conflicts and curb, in this way Israeli expansionism. In this context, Arab solidarity and leadership were the connected issues and from the beginning have been centered around Egypt which presented itself as a "regional great power" on the Arab front.

Of course, Egypt's "great power role" in the Arab front compared to the U.S.A's position in NATO, and to the U.S.S.R's position in Warsaw pact, has been considerably moderate, but from the point of the war with Israel, also the important one in providing Arab solidarity and the Arab front's cohesion.

But Egyptian leadership has been much more dependent upon its human sources than upon its military capacity in the Middle East. Compared to the other Arab states, it has an overwhelming lead in human sources (number of bureaucrats, teachers, businessmen, bankers, military officials, engineers, lawyers, doctors, mechanics, journalists and so on), a more developed and fully organized administration, a large number

of universities -Cairo, Ain Shams, Alexandria, Assiut "which give Egypt an enormous edge in cultural resources and attractions over others, and its total population of over 30 million is three times as large as that of each of the next most populous Arab states " (Morocco,Algeria,Sudan) (35).

Of course,these overwhelming human sources, its geographical situation and its culture give it, both materially and psychologically, leadership potential over the other Arab countries.It is interesting that Egypt's historical role from -the time of the Memluks to Muhammed Ali was to dominate rather than to unite the Arabs (36).The emerging of the Jewish state and its expansionism at the expense of the Arab lands has been "a prime stimulative" factor for the entire Arab World toward solidarity and unity, but it has been continuously exposed to the detrimental effects of Egypt's drive for domination.

Besides this, Nasser's charismatic role, from time to time, fed by the emotional attitudes and the deep hatred against Israel, had pushed the Arab front toward "alliance cohesion", but the ideological differences among the Arab regimes were so high, accompanied by competition for Arab leadership, blocked the way to the solidarity and unity of the Arab countries.

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(35) Kerr,Op.cit.,p. 37-38.

(36) Majid Khadduri, Arab Contemporaries: The Role of Personalities in Politics (Baltimore,1973),p. 43.

"For Nasser, any war against Israel should be a final, decisive war and should only be undertaken if Arabs could hope to gain ascendancy over Israel." (37). By the same token, he saw the unity of the Arab states as the most important factor in order to wage any all-out war against Israel. In any case, Nasser, found it impossible to create the unity of the Arab states, without pushing them toward changes in their internal structures. "Arab society would have to be transformed so as to bring about greater social cohesion, because unity necessitates the homogeneity of the regimes;" the unity of the objectives "as Nasser called it" (38). Therefore Nasser saw that the cohesion of the Arab Front was linked with the internal cohesion of the Arab countries, socially, politically and economically. Thus, for Nasser, the modernization and the merger of the Arab countries" were the intermediate targets to attain a position of crushing superiority enabling them to defeat Israel. In short, for Nasser the social and political reforms were very necessary conditions for the Arab world to provide their victory in an eventual war.

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(37) Harkabi, Op.cit., p. 10.

(38) Ibid., p. 11.

Nasser saw unity as the prime necessity to gain ascendancy over Israel. Owing to the fact that he was dubious about Egypt's military capacity and Arab solidarity against Israel, as Harkabi pointed out; Nasser was avoiding an all-out war with Israel.

Ibid., p. 12.



However, the issue of Arab unity was not the sole basis of the Egyptian defense policy against Israel. For instance, the Syrian-Jordanian-Egyptian defense treaty of October 24 1956, the Syrian-Jordanian-Egyptian-Lebanese agreement of January, 1964, and the Egyptian-Jordanian defense treaty of May 30, 1967 were designed mainly for the purpose of increasing military capacity against Israel. They, of course, only to a small extent, served to curb the Israeli's expansionist aims in the Middle East, because the fundamental factor in the weakness of Arab solidarity against the Israeli state was linked with the Egyptian inability to mobilize the entire Arab front which since World War II, has suffered from their "regional intra-conflicts" (39) thus producing wastage of energy which could be used against Zionism. In order to eliminate this dangerous weakness, Egypt, especially during the presence of Gamal'Abd al Nasser, had attempted to utilize Arab nationalism as a fundamental psychological factor in her propoganda.

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(39) This analytical concept is part of the general literature on regional subsystems: Micheal Brecher The New States of Asia (London, 1963) Chapters 3 and 6; Raymond Aron Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations (London, 1966), pp. 389-95; George Modelski 'International Relations and Area Studies' International Relations, London, April 1961.

## II. Intra-Arab Conflicts: The Obstacle to Solidarity

It is worthy to consider in more detail the regional conflicts and competition between various Arab powers; primarily between Egypt on the one hand and different Arab states on the other, because of the fact that the weakness of Arab solidarity against Israel is completely dependent upon Arab intra-conflicts. At different times there have been a number of conflicts among the Arab states; for example, between Egypt and Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and so on. In this context, it is convenient to say that, Egypt, despite the utilization of Arab nationalism during the charismatic presence of Nasser, had not been able to control the Arab world. Its role toward domination and even its leadership was confronted by the resistance of the Arab countries. According to Malcolm H. Kerr,

"Resistance to Egyptian policy has been of two main kinds: first on the part of those who are more or less content with their minor-power status but wish to preserve their autonomy and seek to ward off Egyptian attempts to manage their own affairs; second, on the part of those with leadership ambitions of their own." (40).

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(40). Herr, Op.cit., pp. 36-7.

In any case, Egypt's role toward domination and various Arab state's resistance were one of the prominent aspects of the intra-Arab conflicts. In this respect, from 1945, the Israeli-Arab conflict was only part of the overall picture in the Middle East. "Just as important -perhaps even more so- was the growing tension among the Arab states themselves (41) while it prepared the ground for the reduced challenge against Israel. However, the trend of intra-Arab conflicts has not been linear. For example, even the two years after the dissolution of the Egypt-Syria Union, during 1963, there had been negotiations between Egypt, Syria and Iraq about the prospects of Arab unity. These negotiations captured the imagination of the Arab public as if there were a real tendency toward unity, but the real political relations between the governments were different, complicated, thus only a limited agreement was reached, far away from the real substance of Arab unity (42). It is interesting that, this insubstantial agreement created anxiety in the mind of Israel's chief decision-maker, Ben Gurion, because he feared that "Arab unity under the hegemony of Nasserite Egypt was emerging." (43).

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(41) Yair Evron, The Middle East, (New York, 1973), p. 53.

(42) The Story of intra-Arab relations and negotiations are best accounted for by Malcolm H. Kerr; The Arab-Cold War (Third Edition) (London, 1971).

(43) Evron, Op.cit., p. 53.

"Therefore, he sent urgent messages to the leaders of America, Britain and France demanding guarantees and assurances in face of the assumed emerging Arab Unity" (44). Indeed, Bar-Zohar; his biographers having a close contact with him, suggested that Ben-Gurion had believed in the seriousness of the new Arab threat (45). In short, Arab attempts toward unity, like in the year previous to the Arab league's establishment, had been the immediate concern of the Israeli state but the Arabs were unable even to eliminate their intra-conflicts. Care must be taken that, in the subsequent period; 1964-67, we see an escalation of the intra-Arab conflict. Although during 1964-65 some comparative outer calm was achieved, several conflicts coincided and interacted: the conflict between "Egypt and Syria", and between "Egypt and the other 'radical' or so-called 'progressive' Arab regimes on the one hand and the 'traditional' or conservative regimes on the other" (46). In 1965, intra-Arab politics became the most important issue to the Egyptian propoganda machine (47) and it used rather acrimonious rhetorics, especially against Saudi Arabia and Jordan. During this period there existed some other intra-Arab conflicts; between Syria and Iraq;

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(44) Ibid.

(45) See Bar-Zohar, The Armed Prophet (London, 1967), pp. 292-4.

(46) Evron, Op.cit.

(47) Ibid., p. 57.

between Nasser and Colonel Boumedienne and between the FLN and FLOSY guerrilla organizations in Aden and Southern Yemen (48). The most prominent example of intra-Arab dissarray was the 1965 Casablanca summit conference which was the third summit meeting and the last before the 1967 war. Egypt was on the verge of boycotting it. When the trend approached a dangerous situation prior to 1967, as a result of the rising likelihood of a war with Israel, Arab states tended to moderate their intra-conflicts and showed inclinations toward cooperation. The Jordan-Egyptian defence pact against Israel was established due to the immediate probability of war.

The defeat in the 1967 War brought a turning point in inter-Arab relations. While the problem of Israel before 1967 was a chronic irritant in Arab relations, since 1967, when Israel emerged from her victory in possession of sizeable pieces of Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian territory, the Israel problem has become the all-important factor in the Arab World (49). In any case, despite the galloping of the Israeli threat at their expense, the Arab states, as in previous periods, i.e. during 1967-71, have never been able to eliminate the intra-quarrels. This has caused a strain in the Arab front and created a weak solidarity against Israel.

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(48) Ibid.

(49) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 66.

As K.J. Holsti pointed out;

"Aside from the military coordination and planning, one reason that alliances may fail to deter potential aggressors is because they lack cohesiveness or are riven by internal quarrells and political disagreements " (50).

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(50) K.J. Holsti, Op.cit., p. 116.

CHAPTER II - THE EGYPTIAN EFFORTS FOR ARAB UNITY UNDER HER  
DOMINATION

I? From 1950 to 1958

Until July 1958, Egypt's leading challenger for Arab leadership was the Hashemite monarchy of Iraq. This oligarchy was mainly led by the perennial prime minister Nuri al-Said, and the regent, prince Abdul Ilah. Their policy was based upon the premise of Iraq and leadership of the Fertile Crescent area (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan) and championship of Arab interests in Palestine (51). During that period, both the Hashemite royal House and its partner Britain tried to restrict unity to those Arab countries that they hoped to control. Egypt the largest and the strongest Arab state, would be permanently excluded. But it was not until 1955 that Gamal Abd al-Nasser emerged as a pan-Arab hero and it became difficult for Iraq to reach the Arab leadership (52). By the mid-1950s, when the struggle for Arab hegemony broke wide open between Cairo and Baghdad, Nasser and his followers turned the contest into an ideological affair in order to wield influence over public opinion. It was easy for them to draw public opinion to their side, since the major partner of the Hashemite monarchy was Britain. Of course, the most crucial issue between these two Arab states was in relation to their

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(51) Kerr, "Regional Arab Politics....", p. 43.

(52) Kerr, The Arab Cold War...., p. 3.

strategic considerations in the Middle East. Egyptian success in the Suez Base's evacuation by Britain had presented enormous prestige to Egypt. Then Iraq joined the Baghdad pact which was designed to perpetuate the British strategic presence in the Middle East under a new guise.

"The conception of the Baghdad pact was an arrangement for a general extention and application to Jordan and hopefully also Syria and Lebanon", thus preparing a ground for a new intense Egyptian-Iraqi rivalry for influence in the lesser states; in between: Syria, Lebanon and Jordan (53). Additionally, it was designed to provide a Middle East defence against Communist danger (54). Thus Iraq's steps, as far as the relationship between the Arabs and the Western powers was concerned met with Egypt's strong resistance. In any case, during this period there was an alternative pan-Arab strategy aimed at eliminating the emperialist influences from the Middle East, by realizing Arab Solidarity on the basis of the 1950-Arab League collective security pact (55). It is

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(53) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 44.

(54) Bahdad Korany, Social Change, Charisma and International Behavior, (Leiden, 1976), p. 401.

(55) As Salah Salem expressed it; Arabs should consolidate their military and economic capabilities, coordinate them through efforts and plans, strengthening the "Arab House", no committments should be concluded with foreign states, they should unify their policies to put an end to their 'wasting of energy' through disunity.

Al-Ahram, July 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 1954.



clear that, the Baghdad Pact's controversy was significant, at least in two respects:

- (a) For Nasser, "it was not only talking for Egypt, but also in the name of a unified Arab strategy".
- (b) The controversy between the supporters of pro-Western alignment and those of non-alignment seemed to be similiar to a concept of battle between imperialism, zionism and Arab nationalism and its forces of independence (56).

For example, the Israeli attack of February 28th on the Egyptian-controlled territory of Gaza (killing 38 people and wounding 31) appeared in the eyes of the Arabs that "Egypt was paying the price for its opposition to "imperialist alliances" (57). This confirmed that Nasser, Arab champion was the "target of the Arab's enemies" and this strengthened his position in the Arab World enormously (58). Thus, with respect to the rivalry between Nasser and Hashemite monarchy, it is worthy to say that, there was no chance for the latter to attain Arab leadership by eliminating Nasser's overwhelming psychological appeal to the Arabs.

By the same token, during 1954-55, also Israel became suspicious that Egyptian leadership which seemed capable of bringing about unity in the Arab world that would constitute

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(56) Korany, Op.cit., p. 301.

(57) Ibid.

(58) Ibid.

a grave potential danger to Israel (59). Especially, in February 1958, when the Hashemite monarchy was collapsed altogether with the revolution in Baghdad. At that time, Egyptian expectations toward unity increased. But Qusim acted surprisingly uncooperative with Nasser and sought to undermine his position in Syria, and Saudi Arabia (60).

"To resist attempts at union with Sunni Syria and Egypt, he tried to stimulate Iraqi nationalism" (61). Qusim's challenge was not only related to his failure to join the United Arab Republic but because he relied on local communist support and Soviet backing (62). He suppressed his chief adversaries, the Baathists and pro-Nasser elements. In September 1958, Colonel Aref who publicly advocated an immediate Iraqi-Egyptian union was relieved of his post. In November, he was arrested and condemned to death. On March 8, with UAR backing Abdul Wahab al Shaouaf, Commander of the Fifth Brigade at Mousol, tried an ill-planned revolt. The uprising was crushed with the aid of loyal Army units, Communists and Kurdish tribesmen (63). Qusim, blamed an abortive revolt of pro-Nasser unionist in Mosul in February 1959. At that time Egyptian-Iraqi relations were seriously strained.

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(59) Evron, Op.cit., p. 301.

(60) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 44.

(61) Abid A. Al-Maryati, "Modern Iraq", Middle East Forum Vol. XLIV-No:4, 1968, p. 35.

(62) Kerr, Op.cit., p.44.

(63) Al-Maryati. Op.cit., p. 37.

When Qusim began to adapt a policy of favoring the Iraqi Communists at the expense of Arab nationalists, Nasser saw it as a serious threat to the whole Arab nation. On his visits to Syria he launched a series of bitter attacks and angry criticisms against the Iraqi leader (64). He denounced Abd al-Karim Qusim as a traitor to Arab nationalism and a stooge of international communism (65). However, Qusim managed to survive in power by skillfully paying off the Communists against the Arab nationalists. Nasser deeply distrusted him, and Qusim developed, in return, a violent and jealous hatred (66). Throwing Nasser's suspected admirers in Iraq into jail by the thousands, he made himself an open enemy.

With regard to the Syrian-Egyptian Union, Qusim's policy posed a threat to their integrity. Syria had joined the Egyptians partly to protect themselves against Baghdad and by stimulating the overthrow of conservative regimes, they had desired to bring such countries like Iraq into the Arab union (67). From this point of view, Qusim's policy -refusal to join the union- disappointed the Syrians, gave rise to their skepticism about the feasibility of the U.A.R., and the absence of Iraq as a third partner paved the way for a future

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(64) Peter Mansfield, The Arabs (London, 1976), p. 317.

(65) Kerr, The Arab Cold...

(66) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 317.

(67) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 18.

strain in the Union, since it had prepared a ground for Egyptian domination.

The U.A.R.-Iraqi conflict has dominated the inter Arab scene since early 1959. The campaign of hatred has been maintained through mutually critical radio and press propoganda (68). At the end of the year, 1959, Qusim announced that because of geographical nearness and cultural resemblance, a union between Syria and Iraq would be more natural than the Syrian-Egyptian union. This new approach was interpreted as a deliberate taunt to Nasser, and as an attack on the regime's political structure (69).

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(68) Iraqi propoganda rose to its highest anti-Nasser pitch after a coup d'état attempt led by col. Abdel Wahhab Shawwaf was bloodily suppressed and U.A.R. diplomats were expelled from Baghdad. After an unsuccessful assassination attempted on Qusim in October, Iraqi spokeman charged that U.A.R. troops were concentrated upon Iraqi-Syria border.

See J.S. Raleigh, "A Political Survey" Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol XI-No: 1 (Winter, 1960), p. 10.

(69) Ibid.

## II. The Union with Syria

Despite Nasser's deliberate and protracted efforts to mend the Arab fences, the revolutionary Arab camp was split. In any case, Iraq, in the 1960s, declined from the status of major rival to Egypt. During this period, Syria underwent an opposite evolution, especially after the Ba'athist seizure of power in 1963. In 1958 the Syrians had great political enthusiasm for Arab unity, thus, the psychological effects of Nasser's pan-Arab propaganda had an enormous appeal to them for a Syrian-Egyptian union (70). But in time, under this union, the governing of Syria by Egyptian rulers gave rise to strong Syrian grievances against Egyptian domination.

Nasser's problems, during this union were very difficult. Like other dependent allies such as Yemen under Sallal or Iraq under Aref, no one in Syria possessed enough moral authority or cohesive military force to control the country on his own. In all of these countries the rival factions were in continuous competition with each other and on that ground Egyptian favour was a commodity for them that they

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(70) It is worthy to show here that in 1958, the number of revolutionary Arab organizations had increased their support for Nasserism. One of the most prominent ones was ANM led by George Habash; towards the end of 1958 this movement saw the UAR as the vanguard for future Arab unity.

See, walid W. Kazziha, Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World (London, 1975), p. 57.

sought to use to strengthen their own positions. The Egyptians were coming in with blueprints, military staff officers and administrative cadres, but this also caused mistrust and set jealous local factions against each other (71). In any case, Egyptians in Syria, discovered that they were foreigners bereft of economic resources with which to give the Syrians a real boost, and their military presence was less than overwhelming (72). That implied, that any probable attempt toward dissolution of the Syrian part of the U.A.R. could never be suppressed by Egyptian power.

From the beginning, some countries had not accepted even the political and ideological leadership of Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia had broken off formal diplomatic relations with the U.A.R. in 1958. Lebanon had accused the U.A.R. of interfering in her internal affairs. Although a conciliatory formula had been founded and accepted at the United Nations and the civil war had ended, large sections of Lebanon's public remained suspicious of President Nasser. Additionally, the U.A.R.'s relations with the Sudan remained strained due to the border problems on the Nile (73).

In addition to the general Syrian displeasure with their being governed by Egyptians in their country, the practical and emotional difficulties were immense and Nasser's magic

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(71) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 46.

(72) Ibid.

(73) Raleigh, Op.cit., p. 9.

charisma was not enough (74). Nasser, from the beginning was dubious and hesitant to allow the Syrian Ba'athists to control their own country. When Syria insisted on immediate merger with Egypt, Nasser accepted on condition that he should have absolute rule in both regions of the United Republic. The Syrian Ba'athists, believing that Nasser would have to rule Syria through them, accepted Nasser's condition. Nasser had no intention of doing this and without their cooperation (75), with little regard to the differences in her social and economic structure, applied his policies to Syria. The result was that the government of the U.A.R. became increasingly centralized in Cairo (76). "The Syrians, who regarded themselves as the forerunners of Arab nationalism, felt they were relegated to a subordinate position" (77). For the distribution of the ranks there was no equal treatment, and some prominent Syrian elite, especially Bitar and Aflaq had already approached Nasser, complaining that Syrian were not receiving equal treatment (78).

These Syrian leaders had, from the very beginning been in favour of the Egypt-Syria union. For example, Michel Aflaq,

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(74) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 318.

(75) Ibid., p. 317.

(76) Ibid., pp. 318-9.

(77) According to Mansfield, there is a Syrian belief in the superiority of their Arabism over the other Arabs. He utilized a Turkish journalist's cynical description of the U.A.R.; "A first case in history of a black nation colonizing a white nation." Ibid., p. 320.

(78) Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, United Arab Republic,

the founder of the Syrian Baath philosophy, having a mixture of romanticism and idealism in his national, socialist pan-Arab ideology, had developed a great deal of enthusiasm for the Arab National unity (79). He was popular among the young men in Syria, especially who considered Arab weakness toward Israel as a direct result of rivalry and division among Arab leaders seeking power.

These leaders like the other Syrian elite raised strong arguments against the Egyptian drive to grasp Syrian administrative ranks and Egyptian policies applied to their country. Egyptian officers, in return, only tried to justify their policies on the basis of need and to show the Syrian

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Mahidir falsāt Mubahathāt Al-Wahda  
(minutes of the Unity Discussions) (Cairo: National  
Publishing House, 1963), pp. 90-91.

(...) Thirty-three of the top 400 positions in Syria were known to have been filled by Egyptians, but the actual number was believed to have been higher. In the Syrian Ministry of Industry, seven of the top 13 officials were Egyptians.

Haykal, ibid.

(79) Aflaq said that "The Arabs should regard themselves as in a state of continuous war in order to achieve national goals"

Michel 'Aflaq, Niqat al-Bidaya:

Ahadith Ba'd al-Khamis Min Huzayran

[The Beginning Point: talks (on the period) after the Fifth of June] (Beyrut, 1971), p. 60.



desires as selfish and opportunistic (80). The controversies between Egypt and Syria increased, in time, and on 28 September, disaffected elements in Syria struck (81). Nasser, at first, thought to intervene to suppress the revolt led by the army officers. But, then, he realized that an intervention was unnecessary because it would be hopeless and Egyptian coercive power was not enough (82).

With respect to the U.A.R. experience in the Arab World, two important points should also be considered. The first is that the U.A.R.'s failure revealed the intellectual mistake made by the early proponents of Arab nationalism (83).

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(80) Monte Palmer, "The United Arab Republic" : Middle East Journal, Vol. XX No:1 (Winter, 1966), p. 68.

(81) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 320.

(82) As mentioned earlier, as Dahrendorf has argued; for integration of a political community, a primary prerequisite is the existence of a coercive power. Dahrendorf, Op.cit., p. 157.

As far as Egypt's position in U.A.R. is concerned, it was, for example, not like the U.S.S.R. in the Warsaw Pact, which suppressed easily the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian revolts.

(83) As Fayez A. Sayegh pointed out "Attributing Arab disunity solely to foreign influences, ..., the architects of the Arab nationalist ideology underestimated the disruptive political forces latent within Arab society itself, and the built-in factors of diversity coexisting with the factors of community in the Arab World."

Sayegh, Arab Unity..., p. 82.

Second, and most important is that its failure showed to the Israelis that the realization of Arab unity in the future -the most troublesome spectre for them- through the destructive nature of the intra-Arab rivalries, exerted a weak possibility. Much more than other Middle Eastern issues, the problem of Israel had aroused an immediate concern in the U.A.R. Since Egypt adopted the leadership in the Arab World, the initiative concerning this problem, from the Egyptian angle, should not have been left to fall into the hands of other Arab states. Until 1967, despite the failure of the U.A.R. experience, Egypt had somewhat been able to maintain its general prestige by emphasizing her indispensability to the Arabs collectively for their security. In any case, the dissolution of the U.A.R. in 1961 created a situation in which the Egyptian leadership had become somewhat disenchanted with the ideas of Arab unity. The gap between declared Arab policy and the reality of intra-Arab politics based upon the competition for leadership and power, showed that a violent conflict with Israel was less of a possibility.

However, Israel from the beginning of 1960, developed a strategy based on the assumption that Arab unity would probably not be realized. The best way to ensure this was to prevent the inclusion of Jordan in any Arab union which would wage war with Israel. "Arab states could not count on Egypt to help them militarily in the event of violent clashes with Israel" (84). Thus, the Israeli strategy was based on

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(84) Evron, Op. cit., p. 51.

a design to make it clear to Egypt, and to show a strong deterring posture manifested at times in retaliatory attacks especially against Syria to block infiltration (85), and its military superiority to prove the Arab's "inability to solve the Palestian problem by force of arms", but in doing this to avoid having the Arab's come too humiliated (86). Because the humiliation of the Arab front would incite their solidarity against Israel. From this perspective, of course, a weak Arab solidarity would enhance Israel's advantage of being surrounded by divided, intra-quarrelling Arab states.

### III. The Emergence of Saudi Arabia as an Alternative Leader

The conflict between the Egyptian and Syrian administrative strata which prepared the ground for the dissolution in 1961 had never eradicated the powerful influence of Nasserism in Syria and in the rest of the Arab World. But from about 1962 onwards, a new intra-Arab conflict was seen; Saudi Arabia emerged as Egypt's main leading rival in the Arab world.

Saudi Arabia, in the early 1940s, had been involved in the Middle East intra-Arab conflicts on Egypt's side and supported it in her conflict with Iraq and with Trans-Jordan, concerning Syrian future (87).

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(85) Ibid., pp. 51-52.

(86) Ibid., p. 51.

(87) Ibid., p. 196.

In doing so, even Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia had threatened to invade Transjordan. After 1945, Saudi Arabia and Egypt had shared the members of an alternative block against that of the Hashemite (88). Egypt and Saudi Arabia remained in cooperation up to early 1958s, but then due to Egypt's increasing ambition toward the Arab hegemony, the seeds of the rivalry were created and then in 1962, grew into a conflict when Egypt became involved in the Yemen civil war. Egyptian ambitions of pursuing Arab leadership in hand, the growing strength of Saudi Arabia as a result of oil revenues and the weakening of Iraq and Syria due to their domestic instability and the Egypt's perplexed position because of the Union's dissolution, made Saudi Arabia obvious leading rival to Egypt. Saudi Arabian countervailing role against Egypt on the inter-Arab scene, since 1957, changing into an open rivalry with the Yemen war, had continued throughout the 1965-1966 period of the Saudi's promoting of the Islamic pact as a challenge against Egyptian leadership in the Arab World.

In the year 1963 King Faisal appeared as the champion of Islamic solidarity, calling the Islamic as well as Arab countries to cooperate. His Islamic policy aimed to align Muslim nations against foreign aggression (89), and Israeli

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(88) Bary Rubin, The Arab States and Palestine Conflict  
(Sracuse, 1981), p. 60.

(89) Khadduri, Op.cit., p. 101.

expansionism in the Middle East. He was also denounced as being a reactionary by most of the revolutionary leaders because of his opposition to the communist activities. Indeed he was opposed to any form of foreign intervention in Islamic lands (90).

Accordingly, one of the prominent discontentments of Saudi Arabia concerning Egyptian policy was linked to Egypt -U.S.S.R relations during Nasser's presence. It disliked Egypt -like any other Arab state- being in a close relationship with the U.S.S.R (91). At the same time Egypt stood in continuing need of Saudi Arabian financial aid, particularly with the procurement of arms for use against Israel. While that was a case, Nasser's ideology which put forward that the unity of the Arab states, as the primary prerequisite for eliminating the Israeli imperialism from the lands could be realized through the "homogeneity of the Arab regimes" was bearing obnoxious elements for the destiny of both Saudi Arabia and other traditional regimes. It should be argued, then, that this idea, feeding an internal strain between the radical, so-called revolutionary regimes; such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, etc. on the one hand and the traditional regimes; such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait on the other created a detrimental effect on the Arab front's cohesion.

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(90) Ibid.

(91) King Faisal strictly repudiated any relation with the Communist World; as he stated "Our country is an Islamic

#### IV. Unity of Purpose versus Unity of Ranks

In 1962 Nasser's position in the Arab World was demonstrated by the fact that the governments of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, and Syria were all attacking her from their various standpoints. The Saudi's and Yemeni's "attack point" was on Egyptian socialism which they said was alien and atheistic (92). Whereas Syria after the secession, "concentrated on accusing Nasser and Egypt of criminally tyrannical behavior during the union" (93). At a meeting of the Arab league in August, Syria raised a complaint against Egypt in rather violent terms. Nasser, withdrawing his delegates from the meeting, replied to these attacks -he was destroying Arab solidarity- that he was mainly interested in unity of purpose (wahdat al haadaf), not in unity of ranks (wahdat al-saff).

He accused that the kind of unity proposed by the Jordanians, Syrians, and Saudis served only the interest of Imperialism.

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country. Our people live and die according to their traditional beliefs. We have no contact with the communist world diplomatic or otherwise"

Mohammed Heikal, The Road To Ramadan (London, 1975), p. 78.

(92) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 323.

(93) Ibid.

He suggested that;

"We call for unity of purpose, but we look with suspicion on slogans calling for unity of ranks. Unity of ranks based on different purposes would drive the entire Arab nation into danger...

All the Arab peoples have one and the same goal, but certain rulers are working toward different goals" (94).

This argument had a powerful appeal upon the masses but implied that only the Egyptian were really sincere in their nationalism, exerting such clear implication (95) also had a destructive effect on Arab solidarity.

The opponents of this idea maintained that the very slogan, "Unity of purpose before the unity of ranks" was nothing but a cover-up for Egypt's ambition to gain control over all of Arabia. It was interpreted as Egypt's having a hidden desire, though it was a country with poor national resources, limited in cultivable land and heavily overpopulated, to dominate and control countries rich in land and with abundant natural resources in the Arab World(96).

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(94) Speech of 22 Feb. 1962 (President Gamal Abdel-Nasser's Speeches and Press-interviews, 1962, pp. 29-30; trans. slightly adopted).

(95) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 324.

(96) M. Capil, "Political Survey: 1962 Arab Middle East" Middle Eastern Affairs Vol. XIV-No:1 (Winter, 1963), pp. 41-42.

## V. Violent Propoganda Campaigns

According to Nasser, the countries to be united, must be founded on Arab nationalism whose pillar was the nationalization of wealth, making the state its absolute owner. While some of the political leaders and intellectuals in the Arab countries maintained an attitude of doubt and suspicion toward Arab socialism and, bringing forth arguments from the moral teachings of the Quran and other oral traditions, quoting ancient and modern commentaries, strictly opposed it. The Egyptian propoganda machine rejected these arguments and raised some violent attacks on the Arab rulers who opposed Nasser and his ideas, describing them as "traitors to the Arab national cause" (97).

Saudi Arabia and Jordan (and until September, Yemen) were the special targets of these attacks. Iraq and the Persian Gulf principalities as well as some North African countries were also attacked by propoganda. But Iraq, was seemingly not too disturbed by these attempts because the dissolving of the Syrian-Egyptian union helped her greatly. For her, the prospect of closer relations with Syria "if not actual union", looked promising in the future. Syria herself, with the bitter lesson of union with Egypt still very fresh in her memory, was in a position to hurl back

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(97) Ibid., pp. 41-43.



all the violent attack made by the Egyptian propoganda machine, since she was after the dissolution, the very symbol of Nasser's failure (98).

In any case, during this period, the ideological campaign also helped keep the Syrian secessionist authorities in a state of defensiveness and confusion. They tried to prove their virtue, in terms of Arabism and socialism, in the face of Cairo's attacks. The most interesting aspect of the Cairo propoganda attacks was their accusing Syria of being secessionist (infisali) which referred to a treasonous connotation, like that of the word shu'ubi (defamatory of Arab virtues and pan-Arab solidarity) applied to Qusim and the Iraqi communists (99). The Syrians, in return, insisted that the Egyptians had shown themselves the enemies of unity by their domineering attitude in the Arab world (100).

On occasion Egyptian propoganda appeared in Saudi Arabia. When its government rejected the Egyptian pattern of Arab unity, the Egyptian broadcast which had already portrayed King Saud as "a great lion of the desert" and "a brother of President Nasser, continued to label him and his successors as "corrupt rulers, feudalists, friends of American oil imperialist, weak and degenerate" (101).

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(98) Ibid., p. 44.

(99) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 33.

(100) Ibid., p. 112.

(101) Holsti, Op.cit., p. 273.

With all of these, it is obvious that the strategy of Egyptian propoganda was primarily designed to divide the societies of Arab states which had not favoured the ideas of Arab unity in the Egyptian sense and had not devoted themselves to the full extent, to build up the support for President Nasser and his Pan-Arab ideals (102). In doing so, Egypt almost used the principle of psychological warfare to affect the mind and emotions of other Arab countries.

Egyptian propoganda in the first place aimed to rise the pride and vanity of the Arabs by reminding them of their glorious past. "All that glory had been achieved, it was carefully explained, because they had been united." That was the time they should unite again under Nasser's great leadership to re-create their glories of the past, "in one nation united and indivisible, with one leader great and invincible, and with one core and one heart - Cairo." (103).

There existed another theme which was hate. It was used, in general, against those who opposed Nasser's schemes: "the imperialist and the lackeys of imperialism" (a very skillfull formula which was used against all sort of political opponents), hate of foreigners, hate of the Jews, hate of rival Arab leaders (104). Especially, the Egyptian radio

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(102) Ibid., p. 272.

(103) A. Loya, "Radio Propoganda of the United Arab Republic: "An Analysis" Middle Eastern Affairs Vol.XIII-No:4, (Spring,1962), p. 104.

(104) Ibid., p. 105.

propoganda tried to arouse hate against established governments not sympathetic with Egypt's objectives, uncovering scandalous information about rulers, particularly by identifying them in rather derogatory images as agents of Israel (105).

Although, after the dissolution of the U.A.R, as a result of the necessity to build the idea of Arab unity on a more solid basis, there appeared a relative shift from a strategy creating hatred, to the more intellectual aspects of unity; Arab socialism, the Egyptian propoganda machine continued to play a role as a disunifying factor in Arab solidarity through its drastic rhetoric.

In any case, the main reason for this shift of emphasis was linked to Nasser's try to prevent the erosion of his charisma. This process had began with Syria's secession from the U.A.R. But the slogan of Arab socialism encompassed a clear implication that "the core stimulator" for the Arab unity; the idea of solidarity against Israel was weakened, through the idea of Arab socialism which drove the attentions and the debates to the social structures of the different Arab regimes. Nasser, however was not able to curb the erosion of his charisma in this way. Nasser's charisma, beginning with the stalemate in the Yemeni civil war -despite substantial Egyptian support- continued to erose and

particularly with the stunning defeat in the six day war in 1967 reached its nadir (106).

In September 1962, Egypt's position in the Arab world was almost complete political isolation. This weakness was attributed by the Egyptian leadership to the secessionist policy of Syria which had caused the dissolution a year earlier and had been a humiliating blow to Nasser's prestige and Egypt's pivotal position in the Arab World. Besides this, it had strengthened the conservative forces of the Arab World. Thus Nasser put forward that 'reactionism', 'imperialism' and its agents had joined forces and succeeded in separating Syria from Egypt (107). A more insistent argument was that this separatist movement had been the hallmark of the hostile, imperialist ideologies aimed to liquidate Egypt's Arab revolution (108). It is true that some of the intellectuals in Egypt were well aware of the controversies between the Arab revolution and Arab solidarity (109). Despite this, the Egyptian response turned out to be one of obstinate ideological entrenchment which allowed no compromise with her opponents and increasing dominative drive in the sphere of inter-Arab politics.

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(106) Shawky Saad Zeidan, The Emergence of Charisma: (London, 1976), p. 12.

(107) President Gamal Abdel Nasser's Speeches and Press-Interviews, Cairo Information Department, 1961, p. 351.

(108) Ibid.

(109) For example, In December 1961, Muhammed Haykal, the famous influential editor of the authoritative and semi-official newspaper al-Ahram alleged that "the primacy of Egypt's revolutionary objectives in the Arab World operates at the expense of Arab solidarity which at that stage only meant the cessation of Arab revolution and an acceptance of bargains that hinder major changes in Arab society".

A.F. Dawisha, "Intervention in Yemen: An Analysis of Egyptian Perceptions and Policies" Middle East Journal Vol. XXIX-No: 1 (Winter, 1975), p. 47-48.

## VI. The Yemeni Conflict

The year 1962 can also be characterized as an environment of rigid political polarization between Egypt and the conservative camp led by Saudi Arabia, which was perceived by the Egyptian leadership as the bastion of reaction and the major agent of Imperialist ambitions, conspiracies in the Arab World (110).

In September, the disarray and divisions in Arabia sharpened since Yemen had fallen as a pawn of conflict between Egyptian leftist and rightist Saudi Arabia for influence in the Red Sea area (111).

At the beginning of the conflict Nasser believed he had grasped the opportunity to take an initiative in Yemen where the ruthless, reactionary Imam Ahmed who was attracting British federation plans (112) had died and a revolt, and in turn, a declaration of a republic by the group of arm officers had taken place (113). Nasser sent an expeditionary force to

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(110) Ibid., p. 48.

(111) The Middle East: U.S. Policy, Israel, Oil and the Arabs, Third Edition, Congressional Quarterly, September 1977, p. 148.

(112) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 50.

See for a more detailed discussion in George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, Third Edition, (New York, 1962), pp. 582-87.

(113) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 324.

defend the Yemeni Republic whereas Saudi Arabia rallied her support for successor Imam al-Badr.

That was the time when Egypt was involved in a continuous and bloody war in Yemen, which produced a major rift with Saudi Arabia. Nasser's objectives in this war were presumably to provide an option for intervention in Aden and South Arabia, giving an assurance to a friendly regime (the Republican one), and eventually to have access to the large oil-rich areas both there and in the Persian Gulf (114). If this was to be realized Egypt would have great sources of oil at her disposal for the first time and could strengthen her financial position. Thus, according to Loya this intervention was based on "purely imperialistic motives and that can be deduced from Nasser's motives during this period up to the 1967 war " (115). The revolt in Yemen, -which was also a war against the medieval regime of neighbouring Saudi Arabia who was anxious for obvious reasons to keep the status-quo in that area, did not only hasten the signing of the Jordan-Saudi military

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(114) Evron, Op.cit., p. 55.

(115) According to some writers; the Egyptian drive for domination aims primarily to create an Arabic Empire under her command.

"Egypt's strategic and avowed purpose was to create an Empire extending from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean."

An interesting speech of Nasser stated that,

agreement, but caused also its extension in a number of areas. It is interesting that Egypt, appearing as their common enemy -bearing a new dangerous weapon (namely Arab Socialism)- gave rise to the development of closer relations between Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Thus firstly King Saud and King Hussain met in Taif and established a friendship agreement of wide scope. Then in October, Jordanian and Saudi delegations composed of high-ranking ministers and members of the chief staff came together to reach a draft agreement concerning political, economic, and military issues. Saudi Arabia gave up her long-standing claims to territory in the Aqaba region (116).

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"We, the Egyptian people realize that we form an organic part of a greater Arab entity and are aware of our responsibilities and obligations toward a common Arab struggle for the glory and honour of the Arab nation", that was declared in the Egyptian Constitution by Nasser in 1954. "This gave a legal status to Egyptian leadership".

Loya, Op.cit., p. 104.

See a similiar argument in Holsti, Op.cit., p. 273.

(116) This territory had already belonged to the Hejaz (After a war thirty years ago between King Ibr Saud and King Hussain, which resulted in the defeat of Jordan, Britain intervned and annexed it to Trans-Jordan, then it became Saudi Arabian constantly claimed territory.)

Now King Saud, for the sake of strengthening his position -to establish a counter alliance against Egypt- gave up this long-standing claim.

Capil, Op.cit., p. 44.



Additionally an unified command force was to be established (117).

While this was happening the Egyptians continued to assist republican Yemenis. Villages and towns were bombed, tribal centers loyal to the monarchy were faced with the crude commitments of Egypt soldiers. As a result of this, it is highly interesting that the protectorate regime became more and more hated. Yemenis who were in the ranks of the republicians joined the Imam's forces and it would also seem that many Egyptian became dubious about Cairo's adventure (118).

Egypt's involvement in Yemen was to prove costly and difficult. Thousands of parachute troops, commando units, planes, tanks, ships etc., costing more than \$ 1.000.0 a day impoverished Egypt (119). Of course, during Nasser's presence, the Yemen War, exhibited one of the most dramatic example of Arab wastage of energy through intra-conflicts. Egypt would utilize the above-mentioned military sources against Israel in 1963 when the Jordan river dilemma emerged and the Arab states reached the verge of triggering a war with Israel.

Another aspect of the Yemen civil war, of course, that Egyptians, like Syrian had already, discovered that common language and culture was not enough to ensure cooperation and

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(117) Ibid.

(118) Ibid., p. 45.

(119) Ibid.

unity with another people (120). Egyptians became increasingly involved in the administration of the politically fragile republic, of course, not only for the necessities of the war against the royal dynasty but also for their long-standing drive toward hegemony in that area. But the result was that her rivals raised the cry of Egyptian imperialism and more easily weakened Egypt's prestige in the Arab World. In addition to this, Egyptian leaders soon realized that the Yemeni civil war was not popular even among their own people since the Egyptians were shedding their blood in an internal struggle instead of in a war with Israel.

The major factor in Egypt's intervention in Yemen was of course, Cairo's desire to gain and dominate a Lebensraum that would encompass all the Arab countries but especially those which had vast oil resources (121). It should also be considered that the unequal distribution of the natural resources in that area had originally been the stimulator of the intra-Arab conflicts (122). Since Egypt had no oil resources at her disposal and had no intention of leaving

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(120) For example, it was argued that "the Arabs have deceived themselves exaggerating the roles of their common language, and common racial origin in realization of Arab unity. "Unity, like its environment of nationalism, is partially product of frustration fed by resentment toward the colonial powers and especially toward Israel."

J.A. Bill and C. Leiden The Middle East: Politics and Power, (Boston, 1974), p. 256.

Arab leadership to Saudi Arabia she found herself in an inevitable drive to acquire this area.

It is interesting that Arabs were not able to eliminate their intra-quarrels and to provide a solution to the Yemeni Conflict. In the third week of November, a peace formula, purely for tactical reasons, was offered by U.S. President John F. Kennedy. It entailed the withdrawal of Egyptian troops to be simultaneously accompanied by Saudi Arabian severance of aid to Yemeni Royalists. Then Egyptian leadership struck a conciliatory note declaring that intervention was merely reaction to Saudi and Jordanian aggression. They had never been responsible for war in Yemen, but it was a Saudi Arabian-Jordanian common responsibility (123).

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(121) Capil, Op.cit., p. 45.

(122) According to Professor P.J. Vatikiotis;

"Because of economic differences political conflict in the Arab Middle East so far has been between states. This is largely due to the fact that some of them are immensely rich oil-producing countries, others are not; some endowed with adequate resources in proportion to their populations, others are hopelessly overpopulated" Conflict in the Middle East, (London, 1971), p. 27.

(123) Dawisha, Op.cit., p. 51.

What is of greater significance, here, is that the Yemeni conflict deepened the disarray and division in the Arab World. Not only did the monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Jordan oppose the Egyptian intervention in Yemen but Syria, Lebanon, and the Sudan never approved as well. It is also interesting that Syria which had already recognized the republican Yemeni regime violently attacked Cairo's action. Then struggle in Yemen was the background for the most demagogic propoganda war between Jordan and Egypt. Over Amman Radio Egypt was accused of shedding Arab blood; "Why was she sending men and material to fight for Yemen instead of sending them to Palestin?" (124). In reply to this question, Hasanayn Haykal, editor of al-Ahram suggested that Egypt went to Yemen not to fight but to prevent war. It is the duty of all to support the national revival in Yemen, but also the victory of revolution in Yemen which would give rise to revolution in Saudi Arabia, in Jordan, and in other Arab countries where reaction dominates. Then it would open the road to victory in Palestine (125).

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(124) Capil, Op.cit., p. 46.

(125) Ibid.

Haykal appears to be justifying Egypt's intervention in Yemen also on a completely different ground; to open the road to Palestinian liberation. It should be noted that, in most of the radical Arab countries, there exist an inclination to confuse the issue of war against

## VII. The Arab League's Impotence

It became obvious that the Arab League was impotent when it came to playing any useful role in the Yemeni civil war into which Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan were soon drawn (126). The course of action followed by the League merely aimed at meeting the requirements of the Yemeni situation. This organization, based upon the principles of non-intervention, did not make any contribution to the elimination of civil strife. Even, since its fact-finding mission delegates were from the members of the secretariat staff and also from Egypt, during its visit to Yemen, the league only met the representatives of one faction ;the republicans but refused to meet the other faction; the royalists because they were labelled as "rebels" (127).

The Arab League was for a long time regarded as the expression of Arab unity (128), although some countries,

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Israel and the necessity of the revolution in traditional Arab countries. Since this idea is never acceptable by the leaders, the elite of the traditional regimes, have prepared a conflict on the Arab Front.

(126) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 39.

(127) Hussein A. Hassouna

The League of Arab States and Regional Disputes:

A study of Middle East Conflicts (New York, 1975), pp. 28-9.

(128) T.R. Little The Arab League: A Reassessment, Middle East Journal, Vol. X-No: 2, (Spring, 1956), p. 138.

in the course of time, had accused it of aiming to serve mainly Egyptian interest in the Arab World. For example, Tunisia joined the Arab League in 1958 but immediately withdrew, bitterly accusing this organization of being entirely dominated by Egypt (129). Then the Yemeni case seemed, in Arab eyes, to confirm this long-standing accusation about the league's position and functions in the Arab World.

By the end of 1963, the impotence of the Arab League was exposed when its members fell into a long and complex pattern of quarrels that the league was unable to prevent. Iraq, refusing to recognize Kuwait (130), had recalled her ambassadors from all other league members. Egypt had broken her diplomatic relations with Jordan and had not recognized the Syrian regime. The diplomatic relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia had been broken off as well after the Yemeni republican revolution. Still, Saudi Arabia and Jordan recognized the Yemeni royalist but Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon recognized the Yemeni republicans. As a by-product of the Syrian-Egyptian confrontation, Syrian-Lebanese relations had also been spoiled and their frontier was closed (131).

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(129) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 329

(130) Abdel Karim Qusim, after Kuwait became fully independent as the result of the abolishment of 1899 Anglo-Kuwaite treaty, promptly insisted on a claim that Kuwait was par of Iraq  
Ibid., p. 325.

(131) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 40.

A Lebanese Journalist once remarked that "Israel enjoyed with the moral satisfaction of no longer being the country placed under the ban of the organization formed by her neighbours, but simply one of the countries of this region that boycott each other" (132).

From a Westerner's point of view, it is an indisputable fact that during most of its history the Arab League has obsessively believed that the only real threat to peace in the Arab region comes from Israel or Israel's supporters outside the Arab region. According to this view, in actuality the Arab area had been rocked by disputes, unrelated either to Israel or to "western intervention", that the Arab League had been unable to solve during the period of 1950-1966. Since 1958, these disputes have become increasingly violent and since 1962, the peace of the Arab region has been shattered by bloody wrangling in Yemen into which Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the UAR have fallen and border disputes between Syria and Lebanon and a major border incident between Algeria and Morocco (133). Those were the clues exposing the impotence of the Arab League to eliminate -at least to curb- the intra-Arab conflicts.

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(132) Renz 'Aggiouri in L'Orient (Beirut), 25 January 1963;  
See also in Kerr, ibid.

(133) Robert W. Macdonald, The League of Arab States: A Study in the Dynamics of Regional Organization (New Jersey, 1965), p. 239.

### VIII. The 1963 Unity Talks and Their Failure

In 1963 events in the Arab World seemed to be the beginning of movement toward a great triumph for Nasser. In February Abdul Karim Qusim was overthrown, shot in a coup by the Ba'athist, and Nasser's friend and ally Abdul Salam Aref came to the power in Iraq. The new tide soon overwhelmed the weak Syrian regime and it collapsed under the pressure commonly exerted by Baghdad and Cairo (134). The Syrian "Revolutionary Council settled on a mild-mannered and relatively inexperienced young man, Colonel Luay al-Atasi" (135) who already showed great enthusiasm for the Egypt-Syria union. Here also the Ba'athists established an alliance with Nasserists and other Arab unionist groups. Both the new Iraqi and Syrian ministers arrived amid scenes of greater popular enthusiasm than before, for reconciliation meetings with Nasser were to start immediately to work toward negotiation for the establishment of a federal union. Yemen, which was in close alliance with Egypt, and Algeria led by Nasser's friend Ben Bella, shared similar aims and ideals and were favoured to be in cooperation with Nasser (136).

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(134) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 327.

(135) Kerr, The Arab Cold, p. 45.

(136) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 327.



Then, it became very interesting that Israel interpreted these developments toward Arab federation as a threat to the balance of power in the Middle East. Israel and her friend; the U.S.A. saw in Arab unity the loss of being surrounded by disunited, divided, intra-quarrelling Arab states rather than a strong federated Arab country (137). Zionists called for Kennedy - Khrushchew talks to discuss the steps and measures to guarantee the security of Israel and to give them assurance in the face of the increasing Arab threat against Israel (138). Ben-Gurion, the Israeli's chief decision maker, having an alarmist character, fearing that Arab unity under the hegemony of Nasserite Egypt was coming into existence, raised his cry insisting on the necessity of assurances and guarantees from the U.S.A., Britain and France. Although his messages were turned down politely (139), in the U.S.A., twelve senators assailed the continuation of economic aid to Nasser. Senator Humphrey and his adherents accused the Soviet Union of "pouring, guns, tanks, ships and planes into Egypt to re-equip Nasser's armies and stir up the Arabs, since the Israel's commitment to the West" (140).

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(137) Alfred M. Liliental, The Other Side of the Coin, (New York, 1965), p. 259.

(138) Ibid.

(139) Evron, Op.cit., p. 53-4

(140) Liliental, Op.cit., p. 259.

Additionally, Senate Republican leader Evertt M. Dirksen raised a thundering cry as an expression of fear of possible Arab aggression against Israel (141). Public opinion in the U.S.A., in reference to this new emerging Arab movement, mounted and the press portrayed Arab efforts as a step toward a new frontal attack on Israel.

In any case, in reality, there was little chance for the realization of the Arab federation since the previous union with Syria had just been momentarily forgotten. The mutual mistrust between Nasser and the Baathists came to the surface and hampered the Arab expectations for federation. Above all, in devising the formula for a federation, a familiar problem - Egypt's drive to realize its predominance - presented itself as destructive of unionist expectations. Any constitution based on the mentality of Egyptian predominance, which would guarantee Egyptian hegemony in the union would be unacceptable to Egypt's Baathist partners (142).

The old-line civilian Ba'athists, such as the founders of the party, Micheal Aflaq and Salah al-Din Bitar discovered that the notion of unity, during the Syria-Egypt Union had become a game which developed at their expense. That Egypt, with her traditionally influential role and Nasser's

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(141) Evron, Op.cit., p. 54.

(142) Kerr, "Regional Arab...p. 47.

charismatic presence behind her, increasingly dominated.

The Israeli's fear of an Arab federation turned out to be premature. The April Cairo talks for unity proved that the obstacles; 'centrifugal forces' (143) and the basic ideological differences which underlie the break-down of the 1958 Egyptian-Syrian Union (144) were so strong that the realization of the Arab federation was a very small possibility. While Salah Bitar and Micheal Aflaq of Syria and Ali Saleh al-Saadi of Iraq; the Ba'athist leaders had constantly demanded collective leadership and a multiparty "democratic system", Nasser strictly insisted on his demand for the existence of only a single nationalist front; each country representing all views as a prerequisite for unity. This idea was not acceptable to the Ba'athists since it would both prepare a ground for Egyptian domination and relegate them to a subordinate position.

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(143) Some of the concepts concerning intra-Arab quarrels drawn from Sayegh's study seem to have explanatory powers about the operation of inter Arab politics; they are "The rivalries among the Arab rulers", "The discordant streaks in the Arab political canvas," "The ingrained Individualism" and "Parochialism."

Op.cit., p. 83.

(144) According to Prof. P.J. Vatikiotis, despite proclamations about "masses" and "popular" forces, in terms of domestic politics, Syrian short-lived regimes could

As a result of a ruthless suppression of an attempted pro-Nasser uprising by the Baathist in Syria, Nasser openly and harshly attacked the Baath and accused both Syria and Iraq of organizing a conspiracy against him and announced that Egypt was not prepared to enter into a union with the 'fascist' regime in Syria. Then, the Baathist insisted on eliminating the last vestige of Nasserists in their ranks (145).

Egypt's relation with Iraq and Syria rapidly worsened during 1963. Thus the Arab World was much more divided than ever before. Since the bitter recriminations between the radical and conservative camps had already sharpened the disarray in the Arab world, the picture at the end of 1963

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be referred as "pseudo-left".

P.J. Vatikiotis "The Politics of the Fertile Crescent" Political Dynamics in the Middle East, Ed. by P.Y. Hammond and S.S. Alexander (New York, 1972), p. 237.

It comes to me that the frequency of the regime turnovers in Syria giving rise to some controversial elements in Ba'athist ideology made Nasser difficult to reach agreement with the Syrian delegate. As Malcolm H. Kerr pointed out "The Difficulty was that the Syrian regime with which Egypt had united a variety of conflicting revolutionary and reactionary groups between whom it was impolitic to try to draw indivious distinction" Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 59.

(145) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 326.

was of a panorama in which almost all of the Arab states were at each other's throats. The majority of the quarrels, whatever their specific origins centered around the revolutionary versus the conservative or moderate regimes. Once again the intensity of these quarrels also showed that the Arab league, except for its contribution to Arab cooperation in cultural, economic and technological fields; other than in the political sphere, never did create a solid ground on which the idea of Arab unity could be built. Most of the radical pan-Arabists had never seen it as an organization built on the idea of Arab unity. It was even considered an obstacle to Arab unity rather than an aid to it. Since it was an organization, sanctifying the separate sovereignties of its members, prohibiting them to interfere in each other's internal affairs, it hampered the contagion of the revolution in Arab Society (146). As is known, the charter of the Arab league presents its purpose not as the achievement of a political union but it is confined to a narrow area; a coordinating role (147). Indeed, "it is in the direction of coordination and cooperation that the Arab world needs to channel its energies rather than in the chimera of political unity" (148). Thus, the issue of

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(146) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 97.

(147) See, J. Bill and C. Leiden, Op.cit., p. 262.

(148) Ibid.

cooperation between the Arab governments continued to exist largely on the non-controversial, non-political planes of Arab life (149). Besides its organizational deficiencies in stimulating the Arab regional integration (150), its foremost failures, of course, were in the political sphere. It was neither able to prevent the continuous Jewish migration to Palestine, nor able to strengthen Arab solidarity against Israel through eliminating intra-Arab conflicts. When the Egyptian-Syria-Iraqi struggle of 1963 rose, the hatred of rival revolutionary Arab movements sharpened the existent divisions and quarrels among the revolutionary, conservative and moderate regimes, the league of Arab states appeared as having almost no power to curb these inter struggles.

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(149) Sayeigh, Op, cit., p. 143.

(150) It was argued that the Arab League is not just a political organization. It functions as an umbrella organization, comprising many different specialised agencies, just like the United Nations. The existence of these different agencies; Political, Economic, Cultural, Social Affairs, Palestine, Information Departments is not enough to justify the Arab League's existence. "These agencies could just as well function independently and probably a lot better."

Al-Zahaf Al-Akhdar English Ed. vol. III/37, Dec. 24-1982, p. 7.

IX. The Jordan River Tension

At the end of 1963 a sudden shift toward cohesion in the Arab front emerged as a result of the confrontation with Israel who was attempting to complete her project diverting the head-waters of the Jordan river from its natural base, and was beginning to pump water to the Negev.

It was the "date which marks the beginning of the escalation of the conflict with Israel which was to erupt in June, 1967" (151) and also of the moderation of the intra-Arab quarrels for several years (152). Because of the immense symbolic importance of the Jordan river in the eyes of the Arab masses who expected their governments to act against Israel, the Arab leaders' positions were generally difficult (153) since none of the Arab states were ready to make war with Israel. Although they believed that a war of any Arab country with Israel would probably turn into a general war of the Arab front, it would be very dangerous since they were still never able to eliminate their divided condition which would prevent any effective action. While Egypt and Jordan were

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(151) Odd Bull, War and Peace in the Middle East, (London, 1976), p. 72.

(152) As Robert C. Bone argued "The Greater the need for a threatening outside enemy who equally menaces all elements of "our" group and therefore makes it necessary to submerge internal differences for common survival." Action and Organization, (New York, 1971), p. 267.

(153) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 331.

avoiding involvement in a war with Israel, Nasser and King Hussein saw that Syria in which the successive insecure regimes had fed continuously the fervour of anti-Zionism as their propoganda appeal -as a result of her galloping hatred against Israel- would act on her own. Since they would never be able to restrain her (154), they, too, would fall into a war for which they were not prepared (155). Although Israeli leaders realized that there were serious differences between the members of the Arab front, they favoured an assumption that the confrontation with Israel was to be the foremost issue for all of the Arab states. This idea seemed to hold true since, at that time, Syria began diverting the Jordan river and the arm race quickened on the Arab front.

In any case, Egypt and Jordan could never afford a war with Israel. King Hussein would probably lose his territory west of the Jordan and his throne at the same time. Nasser was also in no position to support a war with Israel, with half of his army stationed in Yemen (156). It should be noted

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(154) As Osgood stated; "Alliances, although ostensibly and actually directed against an external threat, may additionally or even primarily be intended to restrain a member, limit its option, support its government, or control its foreign policy in some fashion", Op.cit., p. 482.

It is clear that "the alliance cohesion" largely necessitates the alliance's capability of restraining and controlling its members especially in emergency situations.



that Nasser's dilemma was double faced; as the charismatic leader and the pan-Arab hero, the Arab masses would expect him to fight against Israel. Egyptian avoidance of a war would either give additional encouragement to Israel for attempting new faci accomplis in the future and would also accelerate the erosion of Egyptian prestige and his charisma in the Arab World. But, to engage in a war, most importantly, would cause an Arab defeat by Israel, and secondly, destroy the Egyptian appeal for Arab nationalism and his charisma in the Arab world . This was Nasser's nightmare and in mid-December he invited all the Arab monarchs and presidents to discuss how to meet the situation. It was an opportunity for Nasser to repair the fences of the Arab states. However, it was also the time when the Arab Solidarity was exposed to the constructive effect of the Israeli threat (157). The kings and

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(155) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 391.

(156) Kerr, The Arab Cold...; p. 98.

(.) As far as Nasser's position is concerned, I think Harkabi's statement would best fit; "Nasser's position was thus a blend of the extremism in the notion of all-out war and a self-restraint in postponing it." Harkabi, Op.cit., p.12.

(157) As we mentioned earlier the common perception of threat by the Arabs concerning Israel is one of the constructive factors for Arab solidarity. with respect to the "Jordan River" dilemma in 1963, considering the Arab

presidents of the Arab League had gathered in Cairo for a summit meeting of the Arab league. A general cordiality and mutual tolerance returned and they began to discuss necessary measures against Israel. Although the conference had primarily aimed to consider Joint Arab action against Israel, the Yemen crises was also discussed among the other problems. During the conference, the Presidents of Algeria and Iraq, playing the role of mediators between the parties concerned, tried to restore relations between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic. One of the useful impacts of the Arab Summit Meeting -which was convened as a result of Israeli's attempt to divert the Jordan- was on the establishment of a former agreement which would facilitate the withdrawal of Egypt's army and the stopping of Saudi assistance to royalists in Yemen.

The heads of state agreed to set up a unified Arab military command under Egyptian General 'Ali'Ali Amer, an annual defense budget of about \$ 42 million -aimed basicly to strengthen the armed forces of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan and a permanent unified planning staff including approximately one hundred military experts under the general

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front as a kind of a defensive alliance it can be argued that "If all partners of a defensive military coalition perceive a common enemy or threat, the alliance is likely to withstand strains caused by ideological incompatibilities or distrust arising from personality differences between political leaders!"  
Holsti,Op.cit., p. 116.

supervision of General Imam, chairman of the Permanent Military Commission (158). Besides this, the heads of states approved establishing a Palestine Liberation Organization, with its own army. It is worthy to note here, that the major effort in the Arab League in creating this organization and recognizing it as the official representative of the Palestinian people had been exerted by Egypt (159).

"Nasser aspired at the Cairo Summit to establish an Arab consensus for his position and, in so doing to isolate the Syrians" (160). He easily achieved both aims. Since Egypt was unready for war, Nasser found it necessary to make other Arab governments publicly share moral responsibility for a decision not to fight, and to join them in pressuring the Syrians to hold their fire (161). This was very much important in order to keep Egyptian prestige. Then the heads of the member states adopted a compromise formula that war with Israel was inevitable, but not now (162). They all agreed that the Arab states, coordinating their military programs, and

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(158) Macdonald, Op.cit., p. 238.

(159) William B. Quandt, "Political and Military Dimensions of Contemporary Palestinian Nationalism", The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism, Ed. by w.B. Quandt, F. Jabber, A.M. Lesch, (Santa Monica, 1972), p. 50.

(160) Winston Burdett, Encounter with the Middle East, (London, 1969), p. 114.

(161) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 98.

(162) Burdett, Op.cit., p. 144.

strengthening their armies, should prepare for a war, but in the meantime should refrain from doing anything that might provoke it prematurely (163). Thus, the Arab states, considering that the inevitable war was still several years away, accepted that period as an option to attain a credible offensive power against Israel. Nasser, in order to restrain Syria, offered a plan of depriving Israel through producing a system of counter-canals and pipes on Arab territory.

Syrians were mainly dissatisfied with this measure and went home rebuffed and resentful. Syria and Lebanon were reluctant to carry out the diversion measures on the Jordan tributaries in their territories without being under more adequate Arab protection. They felt the need for a powerful and effective united military command which was lacking (164). Thus, both Nasser, and King Hussein were preoccupied with the problem of how to satisfy Syrian discontent and also Arab aspirations for the liberation of Palestine without provoking prematurely a disastrous war with Israel. It was very clear that the Cairo summit on the one hand, facilitated to a partial extent the re-establishment of the friendships and reconciliation; especially between Egypt and Saudi Arabia in

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(163) Burdett, Op.cit., p. 144.

(164) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 331.

reference to the Yemeni War. On the other hand, since these reconciliations fell short of settling all differences, they gave the Arab masses a false sense that some positive and united action had been undertaken and that Arab Solidarity had begun to expand its power against Israel. It was true that the psychological factors in the confrontation with Israel concerning the Jordan river issue stimulated Arab Solidarity and pointed to the need for their concerted action. But in time these factors pushed them into a consideration which assumed that the unified Arab struggle would overcome the military power of Israel. This contributed largely to the defeat in June, 1967.

X. The Alexandria Summit

The era of reconciliation which began at the Cairo Summit lasted until 1966. Especially in the year 1965, the differences between the radical and conservative camps began deepening. However a considerable calm was to be achieved only as a result of the increasing of tension with Israel in the spring of 1967.

In September, 1964, the second Conference of Heads of Arab States was held in Alexandria. The negative spirit (which remained between Egypt and Syria) originating from the Syrian secession from the U.A.R showed a mild improvement at the Alexandria Summit Meeting. Although the Syrian President, General Hafiz Amim, expressing Syrian discontent about Arab pacifism against Israel, raised the cry of immediate war, he was not able to get support from the heads of the member states. Nasser formally accepted the Syrian war doctrine that Palestine could be liberated by arms and not at the conference table (165). He was not vehemently shouting for a war with Israel. He accepted this idea temperately, but pushed the clock forward, and except for Syria, the other members of the Arab League were completely supportive of Nasser's attitude.

It stands to reason that the greatest problem for the Arabs; the expediencies of an inevitable war with Israel.

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(165) Burdett, Op.cit., p. 146.

had facilitated the reconciliation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia upon the Yemeni Conflict. As a matter of fact, Egypt from the outset of the conference was looking for a chance to solve the Egyptian difficulties by finding an adequate ground for reconciliation with Saudi Arabia. Egypt's war in Yemen was endless, unwinnable, costly and a number of the groups of Yemeni Republicans, day by day, became vehemently resentful of Egyptian domination of their affairs. During the period of increasing tension with Israel, it seemed necessary for Nasser to reach an agreement with King Faisal. When some Republican leaders began to negotiate separately with the Saudis and Royalists this desire became much more obvious.

Upon the termination of the Conference on September 11, Prince Faisal remained in Egypt and held talks with President Nasser on the Yemen issue. At the conclusion of their meetings, they agreed to co-operate and to increase their efforts in mediation with the conflicting parties in order to settle all of the problems and the war in Yemen (166). In the first place, this agreement seemed promising since it forced a cease-fire. Then, the renewal of armed hostilities showed that the differences between the two factions and their supporters were rather strong and "the problem was further

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(166) Manfred W. Wenner, Modern Yemen, 1918-1966, (Baltimore, 1967), p. 214.

complicated by both religious and political factors in Yemen itself" (167).

#### XI. The Islamic Front

The Yemeni civil war not only drained Egypt's foreign exchange and tied down most of its best troops, but also shook her prestige in the Arab World. Nasser's scheme of "Jordan river counterdiversion" was never successfully put into effect and was even abandoned altogether by the Arab countries. In the midst of these developments (May, 1965) Nasser told a congress of Palestinians in Cairo that a war with Israel for the liberation of Palestine was impossible as long as the Arab states were divided. Cairo's status as the major capital in the Arab world and Nasser's function as the symbol of pan-Arab heroism could neither help to unite the Arab states, nor to solve his galloping domestic problems (Rapid and somewhat ill-planned policies of industrialization and reduction in the western aid, Egyptian increasing debt etc.).

Faced with a number of external and domestic problems, Nasser made a visit to Jedda in Saudi Arabia to reach an agreement with King Faisal on the Yemeni Conflict. Although a comprehensive agreement was settled and designed to effect an immediate cease-fire by ending of Saudi-Arabian military aid

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(167) Hassouna, Op.cit., p. 188.



to the royalist and the withdrawal of all soldiers of the United Arab Republic from Yemen (168), it did not go into effect since neither side trusted the other to be wholly sincere (169).

In late 1965, King Faisal began to make diplomatic visits and held consultations aiming toward the establishment of what became known as the Islamic Pact. Faisal referred to the idea of an Islamic conference of heads of Muslim states, regardless of their internal political systems, to meet in Mecca. He began by visiting the Shah of Iran. In December they joined in calling for an Islamic unity against the subversive influence from outside, proposed that Saudi Arabia and Iran should unite in fighting the elements and ideas which are alien to Islam (170). Although he was deliberately unspecific, it was easily understood that he was referring to Nasser's Arab socialism (171). By the same token, at the end of January, he went to Amman as King Hussein's guest, later he visited Turkey, Sudan, Pakistan, Morocco, Tunisia, Guinea and Mali.

Nasser, from the beginning had not approved of mixing religion and politics. As he commented;

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(168) Ibid., p. 189.

(169) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 332

(170) Robert Stephens, Nasser: A Political Bibliography  
(London, 1971), p. 399.

(171) Ibid.

"What would the world be like if we had an Islamic Pact, a Jewish Pact, a Budhist Pact? I do not think that such pacts would make the world wonderful. Peoples of different creeds would not thereby be able to live together" (172).

Nasser was aware of the fact that the main motive behind the Islamic pact attempt was to curb the extension of his Arab socialism in the Middle East. Secondly, as a pan-Arab nationalist, he saw that such a drive toward pan-Islamism would strengthen the 'lesser asabiyyas' (173) in the Arab World.

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(172) P.J Vatikiotis "Islam and the Foreign Policy of Egypt" Islam and International Relations Edited by. J. Harris Proctor (New York, 1965), p. 95.

(173) Ibn Khald'un refers to the tie of 'asabiyya' as an essential factor to the growth of a viable political community. On the village or local level, it strictly resembles what we call nationalism in a state. To the modern Arabs, 'asabiyya generally means solidarity, perhaps on the religious level, and often on the regional, communal and indeed on the village or tribal level. Many dedicated modern Arab nationalists may argue that 'qawmiyya' can be achieved only with the deterioration of 'lesser asabiyyas'.

See an interesting argument in The Middle East: Politics and Power, J.H. Bill and C. Leiden (Boston, 1974) p. 35; For a general discussion of it, see Sylvia G. Haim (ed.), Arab Nationalism (Berkeley, 1962).

(.) It seems clear that Nasser was aware of the strength of the local political and tribal traditions in the Arab World and also the strength of 'al-wataniyya' ideologies. The Islamic Pact which would include

Then Nasser never did approve of the strengthening of Faisal's attempt in the Middle East. By the same token, he had already avoided giving emphasis upon 'Jihad' against Israel. The concept of all-out war as well as the 'whole politicidal nexus'; 'goal of destruction of Israel', could be connected to the idea of 'Jihad' (174). "Nasser may have clung the idea of all-out war for psychological reasons beside the intellectual one" (175). He supported the Pan-Arabist kind of all-out war rather than a Pan-Islamist one, through the

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non-Arab elements, weakening the appeal of pan-Arabism which aimed to eliminate these lesser assabiyas, drawing the Arab-masses attention toward a new focus; Islamic instead of Arab solidarity, would make his action for Arab unity difficult in the future.

(174) Harkabi, Op.cit., p. 3.

(.) According to Islamic theory, the world is divided into two camps "House of Islam" and "House of War"; the Non-Muslim World which were to be conquered for Islam by Jihad; by force of arms. Establishment of the state of Israel represented a twofold provocation. It deprived Arabs of a land that had been theirs for many generations, and it converted the part of the "House of Islam" into "House of War".

Ilse Lincherstadter, Islam and the Modern Age (New York, 1958), p. 94.

(175) Harkabi, Op.cit., p. 3.

latter would offer a larger communal action outside the Arab World and draw the Arab loyalties toward a larger community than his idea of Arab unity. Despite the fact that Faisal's aim was mainly restricted to curbing the extension of left-oriented ideologies in the Middle East, it seemed to Nasser also to be a threat to the appeal of pan-Arabism. Faisal's conference never took place. In November, Nasser appeared in a search for local alliance as in 1955-1958. On paper it would be a defense alliance against Israel; in political reality, "it was also a defense alliance against Saudi Arabia and her supposedly American Supported challenge to Egyptian leadership"(176) .

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(176) Islamic Pact seemed in the eyes of the radical regimes, as a new guise of the Eisenhower Doctrine.

Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 52.

(.) The Eisenhower Doctrine had provided a basis for active American intervention, and also aimed to prevent communist expansion in the Middle East.

See an excellent interpretation in Tarun C. Bose, The Superpowers and the Middle East, (New York, 1972), pp. 46-48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55.

XI. From 1966 to the June War

The year 1966 appeared as the beginning of a rapid drive towards a new Arab-Israeli War which Nasser had wanted to avoid. In February 1966 the Syrian regime was overthrown by a radical wing of the Baath party. Hafiz, Bitar, Umran, Razzaz and a number of the moderate leaders were arrested. "The new leaders said little of Arab unity and much of revolution" (177). The new rulers of Syria had no love for Nasser, but were more hostile towards the Arab Kings (178) and were much more ardent than the previous rulers about intensifying the border tension with Israel. al-Fatah, a new Palestinian guerrilla organization, had begun sabotage operations against Israel in 1965. The organization received increasing encouragement and help from Syria which trained its men and furnished arms and equipment. Till July 1966, Israel carried out retaliatory raids against Jordan and Lebanon who were held responsible for al-Fatah activities (179).

In July 1966, the Israeli airforce bombed across the Syrian border and on 15 August, 1966, both sides fell into a major battle with planes, artillery and patrol boats. In November, as a result of the increasingly deteriorating

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(177) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 48.

(178) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 323.

(179) Bose, Op.cit., p. 89.

situation in the Middle East Nasser agreed to conclude a new and highly comprehensive defense agreement with Syria which stated that if one of the parties became the victim of aggression, the other would immediately resort to all means at disposal and use arm forces resolutely against the aggressor. Egypt and Syria were already united in a united Arab Command. Thus Egypt was bound to go to the aid of Syria against Israeli attack. As a military agreement, in practice, it seemed to add no contribution to the previous situation since the Syrians were still deeply suspicious of Egypt and refused to permit the stationing of Egyptian troops and air force units on their territory. Although both sides agreed they would not go to the war without consulting the other it was only the approval of their reciprocal mistrust.

It would have little relevance under the circumstances (180). For these reasons, the defense pact's contribution to the parties concerned was silence.

In mid-March 1967 when the tension rose to new heights, many members of the Arab League including Libya, Sudan, Lebanon, Kuwait and -to an extent- Iraq, leveled thundering critics against the sharp ideological cleavage between the Cairo-Damascus-San'a and Amman-Riyadh alliances, expressing that the cleavage could only devastate the Arab position against Israel (181). Despite this, even early in May, 1967,

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(180) Burdett, Op.cit., p. 170.

(181) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 126.

the Intra-Arab conflicts; especially between Arab revolutionaries and conservatives could not entirely be eliminated (182). The Arabs were preoccupied not only with Israel but also with one another.

From the beginning despite the persistent nature of the intra-Arab conflicts, Nasser seemed to be pursuing his hope for Arab unity. He said a hundred times that the liberation of Palestine must wait for the unification of the Arab states and for the victory of the socialist revolution in the Arab lands, for the preparation of the Arab armies (183). In short, Nasser saw the Arab victory over Israel as linked with the victory of the socialist revolution in the Arab World. Of course, this idea had largely contributed to the conflict between the radical and conservative Arab regimes. Despite this, not only Jordan but Egypt and Syria also were given material and the political assistance by Faisal who was moved by the spirit of "Islamic solidarity" when Israeli attacked these countries (184).

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(181) Kerr, The Arab Cold..., p. 126.

(182) Ibid.

(183) Ibid.

(184) Khadduri, Op.cit., p. 101.

(.) When we investigated the historical trends of Arab nationalism we saw that the movements of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism had much in common. See a detailed discussion in Habib I. Katibah, The New Spirit in Arab Lands, (New York, 1973), p. 50.

As far as Jordan is concerned, a month earlier, her Prime Minister in a press conference had charged the U.A.R and Syria which had been denouncing King Hussein's government, with failing to bear their share of the problem with Israel and accused Egypt of shedding Arab blood instead of transferring her troops from Yemen to Sinai (185). Then, on 30 May, King Hussein, realizing that war was now inevitable and it would be impossible for Jordan to stand aside, dramatically flew to Cairo to sign a U.A.R -Jordanian Defence Pact (186). It was established and included a provision placing Hussein's

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(.) It is true that Arab nationalism and Islamic loyalty nourish each other ideologically. Even a famous Iraqi Moslem intellectual, al-Bazzaz propelled that Islam does not conflict with Arab nationalism and the political goals of the movement nourish each other. Quoted from Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today (New York, 1964), p. 321

(.) This consideration seems true when we look at Faisal's attempt. Coupled with a sense of responsibility to his race, his deep loyalty to Islam made him increase assistance for his rivals against Israel.

(185) Charles W. Yost "The Arab-Israeli War: How it Began"  
The Arab-Israeli Conflict : Readings and Documents;  
Edited by J. N. Moore, (New Jersey, 1977), p. 294-95.

(186) Edgar O'Ballance, The Third Arab-Israeli War (London, 1972)  
p. 33.



armed forces under the command of an Egyptian general, Major General Abdul Munim Riad (187).

In the days previous to the June War, the Arab states, in spite of their dangerous disunity, enjoying an emotional self-intoxication, raised the cry for a second round with Israel. The final victory over Israel seemed imminent in their eyes. For that time, even Nasser seemed to have abandoned his earlier doubts about Arab military capabilities against Israel (188). But the result was rather dramatic, the Six-Day War of June, 1967, which erupted after months of tension, bringing a smashing victory to Israel, not only stunned the Arabs, but left Israel in a position of strength. In contrast to 1956, when Israeli forces accepted to withdraw as a result of strong Washington-Moscow pressure, Tel Aviv at once announced that Israel would remain in the occupied territories (189).

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(187) Ibid.

(188) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 335.

(189) Congressional Quarterly, The Middle East..., p. 76.

## XII. The Impacts of the 1967 War on Inter-Arab Relations

The 1967 war was an immeasurably greater defeat for the Arabs than the 1956 war had been. It was only when the guns fell silent that Israel saw the magnitude of her victory. She had faced three Arab armies instead of one, militarily outnumbered by a wide margin, and a greater Arab determination to throw the 'Jewish intruders' into the sea (190).

It was clear that the Arab states had received a great shock as a result of the "June War". Only a few days earlier they were certain that they would meet in Tel Aviv and had been discussing which Arab army would arrive there first (191). In the face of this dramatic defeat of the Arab states, the concept of destroying Israel by conventional warfare lost credibility (192).

As Harkabi pointed out;

"The Arab Military defeat was too overwhelming to sustain the hope that Israel could be overcome on the battlefield in a clash between regular armies. Thus it gave a temporary boost to the fedayeen, and their organization... ..as the only active element which kept the banner of the anti-Israel struggle flying" (193).

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(190) Walter Laquer, Confrontation : The Middle East War and World Politics (London, 1974), p. 1.

(191) Ibid.

(192) Harkabi, Op.cit., p. 15.

(193) Ibid.

Indeed, the Palestinian resistance movement after the June war, declaring its insistence and determination on keeping the struggle with Israel open, tried to feed the fervour of the conflict, and even to escalate it (194).

Fatah, as the largest of the Palestinian organizations, had been particularly vulnerable to the charge of defending above all Palestinian interests rather than those of the Arab nations at large. "To defend itself from this accusation, Fatah has adopted a position midway between regionalism and Arab nationalism" (195). Additionally, as a response, it had leveled some counter accusations against the Arab states that "during their custodianship over the Palestinian problem, they proved their clumsiness in dealing with Israel. And in the words of a Fatah representative;

"Arab countries have their specific problems of their own interests which condition their thinking and determine their action in Palestine cause." (196)

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(194) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 64.

(195) An interesting point, which was also open to discussion was put forward by Quandt that the Palestinians after 1967 war showed inclination toward placing own interests above Arab nationalist interests. According to him, this was showed up by the conscious change in terminology chosen by the Palestinian National Congress from 1964 to 1968 to express the world 'national'. In 1964, the word used was qawmi (nationalism in a broad sense); In 1968, the word watani (state nationalism) was used. Quandt, Op.cit., p. 96.

(196) Ibid.

As Kerr pointed out;

"The June war widened and dramatized the gulf between the interests of the Arab states and those of the Palestinians" (197).

Coupled with the shock of discovering the extent of their impotence (198); "that renewal of full-scale war was impossible because Israel retained overwhelming military superiority even if the Arabs were united; which they were not" (199), and of their loss in the June war (200), to secure Israel withdrawal from their territories, they began to offer "concessions and guarantees to Israel that would have been unthinkable at any previous time since 1949" (201). It seemed that the cry for Arab nationalism had lost its élan.

In this respect, one of the definite consequences of the June War of 1967 was the almost disappearance of any references to 'al-gawmiyya', 'al-arabiya' by the Arab states which had been most directly involved in the conflict with Israel (202).

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(197) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 63.

(198) Ibid.

(199) Mansfield, Op.cit., p. 348.

(200) That 11,500 Egyptian, 6,094 Jordanian soldiers were killed, Syrian did not publish exact figures; however, their total number, comparing to 679 Israeli soldiers were overwhelming. Egypt had lost approximately 80 per cent of her war material.

Laquer, Op.cit., p.1.

(201) Kerr, "Regional Arab...", p. 63.

(202) Vatikiotis, "The Politics of the Fertile...", p.25.

Of course, this is largely due to the problem of protecting the respective territories of existing Arab states, but also in connection with the rise of the Palestine Liberation Movement whose loyalty was attached much more to their homeland territories than to the large scope of Arab nationalism (203). For the same reasons, the years 1968 and 1969 showed a low point in pan-Arab activities. There appeared a relative rise in the strength of wataniyya as opposed to qawmiyya (204). Considering that the al-qawmiya ideology is one of the "constructive factors" in Arab solidarity, its weakening, during these years, can be referred to the decline of solidarity in the Arab World.

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(203) Ibid.

(.) Within the alliance system, one of the major reasons for the internal strains is, of course related to the changes in the elite interpretation of interest. See for a detailed discussion; E.B. Haas and A.S. Whiting,

Dynamics of International Relations (New York, Toronto, London, 1956), pp. 174-76.

This approach well fit the period early after 1967 in which mutual accusations were exchanged between the Palestinian liberation organizations and the other Arab states, as a result of the widening gap between their interests.

(204) Yair Evron, "Two Periods in the Arab-Israeli Strategic Relations 1957-1967; 1967-73" From June to October: The Middle East Between 1967 and 1973 Edited by I. Rabinovich and Haim Shaked (New Jersey, 1978), p. 109.

The credibility of Egypt and of "her adherent school of thought" (205) declined in the eyes of the Arabs, and her ability to exercise Arab leadership diminished, and the Arab World became an area in which a group of states was lacking leadership, orientation and a common objective (206).

The Rabat Summit Conference in 1969 can especially be considered as a strict example of the Arabs' perplexing situation against Israel. As Nasser explicitly acknowledged that the outcome of this conference was a total failure since all of the participating states were reluctant to commit themselves to any concrete plan for future concerted Arab

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(205) As Harkabi pointed out; According to the "Continuous Strife School" which was led by Egypt until the 1973 war with Israel the struggle against Israel should continue uninterrupted, a truce and pause, any respite or settlement, even if transient was very dangerous and intolerable. The revolution (Arab Socialism) and the struggle against Israel should go on irrespective of obstacles. With the 1967 Arab defeat, this school largely lost its credibility. While there appeared a relative strength in the credibility of the "Erosion and Withering Away School" led by Habib Bourguiba, Egypt with the 1973 defeat, completely left the "Continuous Strife School" and adopted a new one so-called "The Reducing Israel to its Natural Dimensions School" which rejects all-out war as did the Bourguiba's school.

Harkabi, Op.cit., pp. 40-68.

(206) Daniel Dishon, "Inter-Arab Relations" From June to October: The Middle East between 1967 and 1973, Ed. by I.Rabinovich and H.Shaked (New Jersey, 1978), p. 161.

action against Israel (207). The scepticism against Israel had increased in the Arab World. Iraq and Syria, boycotting the conference, claimed that none of the anti-Israel resolutions were sufficiently radical and warlike (208).

Competition in the Arab World for positions of hegemony had not ceased up to 1973 (209) When a new strike with Israel was to strengthen Arab solidarity. All the Arabs including also the Egyptians became increasingly reluctant to embrace pan-Arabism enthusiastically after the 1967 war (210). As Dekmejian proposed that pan-Arabism as a part of the psychic make-up of every Arab (211). But actually neither pan-Arabism, nor the other constructive factors (as we counted earlier) of the Arab front's cohesion were capable of eliminating the persisting intra-quarrels, conflicts and the competition for leadership in the Arab World.

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(207) Ibid.

(208) Ibid.

(209) Evron, "Two Periods . . . , p. 108.

(210) Leland Bowie, "Charisma, Weber and Nasir".  
The Middle East Journal, Vol. XXX-No: 2 (Spring, 1976),  
p. 153.

(211) See in general R. Hrair Dekmejian,  
"Marx, Weber and the Egyptian Revolution"  
The Middle East Journal , Vol. XXX-No: 2, (Spring, 1976),  
pp. 157-72.

CHAPTER III. THE FAILURE OF EGYPT TO ELIMINATE THE INTRA-ARAB  
CONFLICTS

We can describe the position of Egypt in the Arab World during the period from 1950-1967, as neither a hegemony nor an approved leadership. "It had neither the strength nor the means to force on the Arab governments a line popular with them" (212). Egypt was not able to realize her double-faced objective; "The Arab Unity under her domination" since;

First of all, there existed a persisting trend of Intra-Arab conflicts -as we marked them earlier; The obstacle to Solidarity- originating from the "heterogeneity" (213) of the Arab Regimes possessed of leaders striving for the Arab leadership and from the strength of al-watanniya- oriented ideologies. In such a situation, Abd al-Nasser, during his charismatic presence, as the leader of the "core Arab power" and the champion of "pan-Arab heroism" tried to utilize Arab nationalism in order to unify the Arab states under Egyptian leadership. As far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned, it is clear that Nasser was not able to play skillfully the role of a "war lord" (214) in transforming the sense of

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(212) Dishon, "Inter-Arab...",p. 167.

(213) The Arab World contains strong elements of heterogeneity; traditional, radical, moderate regimes of those which organized according to different principles, different ideologies and appeal to different contradictory values. Evron, Middle East...,p. 203; he utilized the concept of



community -which, however, did not exist to a great extent in the Arab World- into a "War community" (215). He did himself, as did the other Arab leaders try to avoid a war with Israel. Then the June 1967 War which resulted in the stunning defeat of Egypt and the other Arab states reduced Nasser's charisma -which had already been shaken by the

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"heterogeneity" from Aron's work, Op.cit., pp. 99-104, 147-9, 371-403.

(214) I utilized this concept from the work of Weber. As he expressed;

"The charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by providing his strength in life. If he wants to be a 'prophet'. He must perform miracles; if he wants to be a 'war lord', he must perform heroic deeds. Above all, however, his divine mission must 'prove' itself in that those who faithfully surrender to him must fare well"

In H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, trans. and eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York, 1946), p. 249. Nasser's charismatic appeal in trying to provide unity against Israel seems somewhat in Weber's category of "war lord", but was not enough to provide solidarity.

(215) In Osgood's article, the concept of "war community" refers to an alliance enjoying extensive cohesiveness, having members in general co-operation, and in mutual confidence with each other.

Osgood, Op.cit., p. 483.

war in Yemen- to its nadir(216), and also the appeal of pan-Arabism in the Middle East. The result was clear that Egypt became much more incapable of taking the lead in inter-Arab affairs and of curbing the intra-Arab conflicts.

The second and less complicated aspect of the Egyptian failure, seems linked with her long-standing drive toward domination in the Arab World, which contributed to the acceleration of the intra-conflicts rather than to solidarity.

It was true that, from the beginning, Nasser, believing in the fact that Arab unity and Arab victory over Israel could be realized through modernization, the series of reforms and the spread of Arab Socialism in the Arab World, tried to change the internal structures of the Arab regimes through his nationalist - socialist ideology. In doing so, he also tried to establish a revolutionary predominant coalition in the Arab World, under his control -the clear example was the union with Syria- which, encompassing all the Arab states in time, would have transformed his pan-Arabic end into reality. As a result of this strategy, firstly, the split between the revolutionary and conservative camp deepened in time. Secondly, the Egyptian drive to control the internal affairs of the revolutionary Arab countries, preparing a ground for

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(216) Zeiden, Op.cit.,p. 12.

the internal tension and strong dissents, contributed especially to the Egyptian confrontation with Syria and Iraq (217).

However, all the Arab states had at one time or another, found themselves resisting Egyptian dominative drive over them: King Hussein in Jordan, Habib Bourguiba in Tunus, numerous leftist and rightist regimes in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, Sudan and so on. Their resistance did not only adhere to their discontent at being in a minor-power status vis-á-vis Egypt and their alternative ambitions for Arab leadership but also to their suspicions about the Egyptian policies which at one time to another, were interpreted by them as "the

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(217) It seems Kaplan's argument somewhat fit the intra-Arab quarrels. As he pointed out;

"A predominant coalition...would constitute the interests of those who do not belong to the coalition.. the dominant member(s) of the coalition would then also dominate the lesser members of the coalitions. Coalitions therefore tend to be counterbalanced by opposing coalitions when they become threatening to non-members and to became fragile when they threaten the interests of some of their own members. In the last instance, threatened members find it advantageous either to withdraw into neutrality or to join the opposed coalition".

Morton Kaplan, System and Process in International Politics, (New York, 1957), p. 23.

Egyptian efforts to realize her own nationalist aspirations under the guise of pan-Arabism" (218).

It was true that none of the Egyptian leaders before Nasser had identified Egypt with Arab nationalism or sought to inspire confidence, dignity, and self-assurance among the Arabs as a whole(219). Indeed, the Egyptian historical role in the Arab World from the time of Memluk had aimed to dominate rather than to unite. Most of the Arab leaders were very aware of this fact. In any union, through their belief in cultural superiority over the other Arabs, "the Egyptian people were not to be satisfied with an equal partnership with other Arab countries" (220).

Finally, the Arabs for their part had refused to be dominated. Nor was Egypt in a position to tolerate Arab unity -especially among the countries of the Fertile Crescent, because such a combination of states might weaken Egypt's preponderate position in the Arab World- without her participation (221).

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(.) See a similiar argument in William H.Riker, The Theory of Political Coalitions,(New Haven,1962),p. 161-63.

(218) İlhan Arsel, Arab Milliyetçiliği ve Türkler, (İstanbul,1977),p. 451-53.

(219) Khadduri, Op.cit., p. 47.

(220) Ibid.,p. 49.

(221) Majid Khadduri, Political Trends in the Arab World, (Baltimore,1970), pp. 262-65..

## CONCLUSION

The central effort in our study was to reveal the core dynamics behind the weakness of Arab solidarity in the Middle East which mainly facilitated the Israeli preponderance over the Arab World. It was a clear and accepted point even by a number of politically conscious Arabs that the issue of solidarity presents one of the most complicated as well as dramatic aspect of Arab politics in the Middle East. In our study, without distorting these complicated aspects of the issue of Arab Solidarity, we sought to station them on an explanatory model.

A salient characteristic of the period on which we made our analysis was the existence of the persisting trend of intra-Arab conflicts as a clue to the weakness of Arab solidarity in the Middle East. However, the intra-Arab conflicts can be considered as adhering to the five essential axes;

1. The Conflict due to "Heterogeneity"; refers to the conflict between the "radical" and the "conservative" Arab regimes and also one among the radical Arab regimes, having different ideological interpretations of socialism and unity in the Arab World; such as between Nasserite Egypt and Baathist Syria and or between Syria and Iraq (222).

2. The Conflict due to 'The Controversy between the notion of Pan-Arabism and a Narrow-Range Nationalism and/or State Nationalism'; refers to the unresolved tension between the al-quawmiyya and al-watanniya ideologies.

3. The Conflict due to "The Competition for Arab Leadership"; of course the disagreements and quarrels between Nasser, and various Ba'athist leaders of Syria, and of Iraq, King Hussein and so on were not only related to the different regime attributes of their countries, or oscillating considerations between pan-Arabism and their state nationalisms, but also their inevitable drives toward Arab leadership and their attempts to avoid being in secondary or subordinate positions in any cooperation in the "Arab World in which the political systems have certainly assigned a strong role to personal leadership, historically and culturally" (223).

4. The Conflict due to the "Immense Economic Differences"; refers-As Prof. Vatikiotis already suggested- to controversies between the countries having rich-oil sources,

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(222) See a similiar argument in Evron's study, The Middle East..... 198.

(223) See in Michael C.Hudson, Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy, (New Haven and London, 1977),p. 19.

countries adequate in proportion to their populations and the countries which did not have these attributes.

5. The Conflict due to the "Drive toward Domination versus Resistance"; this refers to the impacts of the 'Egyptian drive toward domination and the various Arab states' resistance to it' upon the operation of inter-Arab relationships, which contributed to the acceleration of the intra-Arab conflicts rather than to Arab Solidarity. For instance, one should also remember the contribution of this factor to the dissolution of the Egyptian-Syrian union and to the deepening of the gap between Egypt and the conservative camp as a result of the Yemeni Conflict.

As far as the Egyptian role of leadership in the Arab World is concerned, being way from the position of the U.S.A in NATO and of the U.S.S.R in the Warsaw Pact, having no coercive power at her disposal and/or not being capable of using force to control the Arab Front -for example, one should at once remember that Nasser's inability to intervene in the revolt resulted in the dissolution of the Egypt-Syria Union- while seeking to realize Arab unity and solidarity against Israel at the same time, possessed only two main weapons at her disposal.

The first one was that pan-Arabism which was fed by the elements of common language, religion, racial origin, historical background of struggle against the colonial powers

Sense of Community

Unity

Constructive Factors

Destructive Factors

Common Language

Racial Origin

Religion

Historical Background

Existence and the Actions of Israel

Perception of Threat  
By the Arabs

Arab's Deep Hatred  
against Israel

Core Power's (Egyptian  
Leadership)

Role I

al-Qawmiyya

INTRA-ARAB

CONFLICTS

Heterogeneity

al-wataniyya  
and local political  
traditions

competition for  
Arab leadership

immense economic  
differences

Egyptian Drive  
Toward Domination  
versus Resistance

Core Power's  
Role II  
(Conflict-Accelerating)  
Factor



and also against Zionism in the Middle East. One should consider that in one respect, although the Arab front, possessing the states having these common attributes has got an advantage compared to some other alliances, exerts a weak "alliance cohesion". It is true that the Warsaw Pact which encompasses countries having different languages, different racial origins and different historical backgrounds, having "homogenous regimes" and a strong political leader (U.S.S.R) exerts a much more potent "alliance cohesion". In any case, one can consider that these elements, despite the fact that they had given rise to the Arab nationalism -as we have shown in figure I, being under the detrimental effects of the persisting intra-Arab conflicts were not able to reinforce the sense of community (224). Despite the existence of a number of "destructive factors" to Arab solidarity -as we have shown in figure II- Egypt in the position of a Regional great power role (Core Power) and the Arab leadership exerted an effort to provide Arab unity under her domination. Her efforts had a two-faced effect upon Arab solidarity. Her role toward solidarity (Role I) was overwhelmed by the destructive effect of her role toward domination (Role II). Pan-Arabism in the hands of Egyptian leadership, despite its theme designed to

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(224) One should consider Hadley Cantril's psycho-political research, "transactional psychology" which emphasizes that people do not react directly in a simple mechanistic

incite pride and dignity among the Arabs was not able to unify them.

Secondly, the existence of a deeply hated enemy and its perception by the Arab states as a threat to their survival was the constructive factor in Arab solidarity and I tried to prove it by using various 'alliance theories'. As we mentioned earlier, Israel while adapting various deterrence measures against the Arab states, tried to avoid making the Arabs too humiliated, because this could incite Arab solidarity in the Middle East. Nasser, during his charismatic presence, utilizing Arab nationalism, and trying to prove that the Israeli state could be overcome only by unification of the Arab states, sought to transform the sense of

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way to a situation but rather that their reaction is grounded upon assumptions formed by past experiences." Hadley Cantril, The Human Dimension: Experiences in Policy Research (New Brunswick, 1967), p. 16.

(.) Cantril's theory seems to have explanatory power about intra-Arab conflicts and the behaviors of the Arab leaders concerning Arab unity. Any conflict, drawing a footprint in the mind of the leader, affects his subsequent actions. Given the fact that the failure of the Egypt-Syria union and during it the Egyptian drive toward domination was very fresh in the mind of Micheal Aflaq, Salah Bitar and the other Arab leaders which also made it difficult to establish a new union in 1963. It can be thought that the intra-Arab conflicts has a self-propelling dimension.

community -which was not very strong in the Arab World- into the Arab unity in the Middle East. Despite the fact that this exerted a weak possibility in the eyes of the Israelis, Nasser's efforts appeared very obnoxious to them since he, by strengthening Arab solidarity in the Middle East, could create a "war community" against Israel.

In light of these considerations, our study, referring to the overwhelming strength of the destructive factors for Arab solidarity over the constructive ones reaches a conclusion that the weakness of Arab solidarity against Israel during the period between 1950-67 was shown by the persisting trend of intra-Arab conflicts which had originated from the heterogeneity of the Arab regimes, the existence and the strength of the al-Watanniya oriented ideologies and, of the local political traditions, the competition for Arab leadership, and the immense economic differences among the Arab states. Those were so strong that neither the existence of Arab nationalism and its utilization by the Egyptian leadership in the hands of Nasser, nor the Arab common hatred and their perceptions of Israel as a real threat, were capable of creating Arab solidarity in the Middle East.

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