The Future of Regional Security in the Middle East:
Expert Perspectives on Coming Developments

Edited by Erika Holmquist and John Rydqvist

FOI

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Sammanfattning

Denna rapport innehåller texter på flera olika teman med stor betydelse för säkerhetsutvecklingen i Mellanöstern och Nordafrika. Analysen fokuserar på den regionala analysnivån. Texterna är skrivna av ett antal välrenommerade forskare från olika discipliner. Skribenterna ombads att förhålla sig till framtiden och hur den fråga de skriver om kan komma att påverka säkerheten i regionen. Rapporten diskuterar energi och säkerhet, geografi, naturresurser och klimat, politiska motsättningar i spåren av den arabiska våren, det militära verktyget, våldsamma icke-statliga grupper, USA:s Mellanösternpolitik, regional säkerhetsarkitektur och den historiska roll som skapandet av moderna arméer har haft för statsbyggnadsprojekten i regionen.

Summary

This report contains a collection of papers on topics with relevance for security in the Middle East. The analysis is focused on the regional level. The paper are written by renowned scholars from various academic disciplines who were specifically tasked with addressing future perspectives on regional security. The topics covered in this report are: energy and security; challenges of natural geography; political contestation following the Arab Spring and state responses; the military tool; armed non-state actors; US Middle East policy; regional security architecture; and the historical role of the army in Middle East state-building.

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Dr. Paul Sullivan has been a professor of economics at the National Defense University (NDU) since July 1999. Dr. Sullivan is an Adjunct Professor of Security Studies at Georgetown University, where he has been teaching classes on global energy and security (which include analyses of energy issues for the EU, Russia, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, Japan, the U.S., Canada, and the Arctic) for over 11 years. He is a Senior International Fellow at the National Council of US-Arab Relations, an Adjunct Senior Fellow for Future Global Resource Threats at the Federation of American Scientists, and Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the American Institute of Contemporary German Studies. For six years before his time at NDU, Dr. Sullivan was at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, where he taught classes and did research on the economics, economic history, and political economy of the Middle East. He has advised senior US officials and others on many issues related to energy, water, food, economics, politics and military security regarding the Middle East, North Africa, and East Asia, at a very high level. He obtained his PhD from Yale University, with *highest honors* (1986), and graduated *summa cum laude* from Brandeis University (1979).

Preface

This anthology is the result of a collaborative effort and the editors would like to thank the experts and officials from Sweden who contributed to a preliminary workshop on regional security in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), held in February 2015. We are also grateful to those colleagues who helped with the arrangements and administration of the international conference that was subsequently held in June 2015 and generously financed by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. A special thanks goes to Mikael Eriksson, Samuel Bergenwall, Adriana Lins de Albuquerque, and Kaan Korkmaz for their help with editing early versions of individual chapters in this anthology. Last, but not least, we would like to thank the writers, moderators, and discussants for their contributions to what, in our view, became a most enlightening conference. We hope that readers of this book will find that it provides equally thought-provoking perspectives on regional security in MENA.

John Rydqvist and Erika Holmquist, Stockholm, April 2016

Introduction

This book comes at a crucial time for the Middle East. Uncertainties about the trajectories and future dynamics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) continue to keep the region in the political spotlight. After more than ten years of contention and conflict over Iran's nuclear programme a negotiated settlement has been reached which, if implemented faithfully, will hinder Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. In return UN-mandated international sanctions are being relaxed and as a result Iran's relations with many countries will normalize. The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is however likely to continue to shape and determine the regional security architecture. Considering that several ongoing wars and conflicts, most notably in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, have become closely intertwined with and fuel the Saudi-Iran power struggle, regional tensions risk further escalation. Meanwhile, peace in Syria seems far off, the struggle against ISIS[1] is only progressing slowly and there is little sign that Iraq, under the weight of ISIS occupation, can start to address root causes of the country's internal tension. Meanwhile oil-dependent rentier economies are scrambling to understand consequences of and adapt to a situation where oil prices may remain suppressed for years.

At the same time, there is a general consensus that emerging developments in the region need to be considered from a more long-term perspective. While key players, fundamental balances of power, and structural factors remain, a new Middle East is nevertheless emerging. What will such a future hold? How do we address this issue from a scholarly perspective and in a way that can feed into and inform current policy-making? This anthology addresses those questions.

This book is the result of a two-year project. First, the study's coordinators identified a set of important topics and issues that were believed likely to influence security developments in the region in a ten-year perspective. This was done through a process of in-house deliberation, with additional input from a cross-disciplinary seminar that included experts and officials from the Swedish government, several of its agencies, and universities. The topics or themes are: energy and security; challenges of natural geography; political contestation following the Arab Spring and state responses; the military tool; armed non-state actors; US Middle East policy; regional security architecture; and the historical role of the army in Middle East state-building.

Second, a group of renowned Middle East scholars were invited to write papers on these topics, and specifically tasked to incorporate future perspectives on regional security. Authors were given the freedom to organize their papers as they

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[1] For the purposes of this anthology, the group is referred to as the Islamic state (IS), ISIS or Daesh interchangeably by the authors.

themselves saw fit, a format meant to provide maximum space for creative thinking. Therefore the chapters are quite different in character and scope.

The resulting papers were presented at a two-day conference, held in Stockholm, on 5-6 June 2015. The end result is this book of ten papers that illuminate a range of different medium-term aspects of security in the Middle East and North Africa. The papers are organized in three parts, summarized below.

Part One: Contention, Security and International Relations

Adriana Lins de Albuquerque sets the stage for the anthology by providing a short theoretical overview of the pros and cons of analyzing the Middle East from a regional perspective.

Anoushiravan Ehteshami looks at drivers of insecurity in the Middle East and explains why the region lacks a functioning regional security architecture.

Jessica Ashooh outlines what US foreign policy vis-a-vis the Middle East could look like in the future years, and what the potential effects on Middle East security would be.

Hassan Barari asks what political contestation will look like following the Arab Spring, and what will determine the interaction between state and society.

Part Two: Climate Change, Resources and Economy

Scott Greenwood explores the implications that climate change, growing freshwater scarcity, and declining food production hold for the domestic and external security of Middle Eastern and North African states.

Paul Sullivan discusses potential future challenges to energy security in the region.

Part Three: State, Army and Violence

Adham Saouli outlines the causes and effects of the emergence of armed political movements in the Middle East, and what the consequences could be for regional security.

Houchang Hassan-Yari describes the warfighting capabilities of four regional powers; Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Iran and how these will affect the future.

Stephanie Cronin takes a historic perspective in considering the role armies have played in state-building, and asks if the army and state-building project will remain important in face of the disintegrating regional order.

Part One: Contention, Security and International Relations

Analysing Security in the Middle East from a Regional Perspective

Adriana Lins de Albuquerque, PhD

Introduction

The subsequent essays in this book seek to discuss the future development of regional security in the Middle East from a regional perspective and with a 10-year purview. But in order to do so we first have to understand not only what is meant by taking a regional perspective, but also what we mean by *region.* Hence, the following text seeks to set the stage for the larger discussion of what factors are likely to influence security developments in the Middle East in the future by assessing the extent to which political science theory that focuses on the regional level of analysis allows us to better understand political developments in this sphere. It does so by analysing the following questions:

1) What is a region and how do regions matter in international politics? 2) Is the Middle East a region and what can regional theories tell us about the Middle East?

What is a Region and How Do Regions Matter in International Politics?

In order to be able to discuss the benefits of analysing the Middle East from a regional perspective, one first has to define what one means by region and whether it is appropriate to speak of the Middle East as being one. Unfortunately, there is no consensus among scholars of international relations (IR) on what constitutes a region.[2] As suggested by Hettne, a minimalist definition of a region would refer to it as "a limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and a degree of mutual interdependence."[3] Some scholars argue that one should think of regions primarily as administrative units, which can be either functional, such as labour markets, or as geographical divisions that "distinguish homogenous, cohesive units based on the features of nature and culture."[4]

Lately, a scholarly consensus has nevertheless emerged that, rather than being pre-existing static entities, regions are socially constructed. (Hettne 2005)[5]. There are two approaches to this constructivist reading of what allows for the creation of

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[2] Hettne, "Beyond the 'new' regionalism," 544; Hameiri, "Theorising regions through changes in statehood," 313; Fawn, "'Regions' and their study," 12.

[3] Hettne, 544.

[4] Paasi, "The resurgence of the 'region' and 'regional identity,'" 131.

[5] Hettne.

regions; the first focuses on *regionalism/regionalisation,* whereas the second emphasises *regionness.*

The *regionalism/regionalisation* approach focuses on the extent to which states share a common political and/or economic project. Whereas regionalism focuses on "formal, state-led projects of region-making that often involve a certain degree of institutionalisation," or other forms of regional cooperation and coordination,[6] regionalisation emphasizes "the growth of societal integration within a region and the often undirected processes of social and economic interaction." In contrast to *regionalism*, where states are the main actors pushing for more or less institutionalisation, non-state actors are often important agents for change when it comes to *regionalisation*.[7]

Security regionalism is the consequence of states within the same *regional security complex* cooperating on security in ways that makes their interactions more like the Deutschian notion of a *security community*. According to Buzan, a *regional security complex* is "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national security cannot realistically be considered apart from another".[8] Members of a regional security community are integrated to such an extent that there is a "real assurance that the members of the community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way" (Deutsch et al. quoted in Adler and Barnett 1998, 6).[9]

Security communities can be either amalgamated or pluralistic. Whereas amalgamated security communities are a "formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government after amalgamation," a pluralistic security community "retains the legal independence of separate governments" (Deutsch et al. quoted in Adler and Barnett 1998, 6).[10] In a pluralistic security community, members "possess a compatibility of core values derived from common institutions, and mutual responsiveness—a matter of mutual identity and loyalty, a sense of "we-ness," and are integrated to the point that they entertain "dependable expectations of peaceful change" (Deutsch et al. quoted in Adler and Barnett 1998, 7).[11]

According to Lake, "regions are often described as pluralistic security communities in which cooperation is understood to have emerged spontaneously from anarchy and are better described, at least in their early stages if not beyond, as regional hierarchies in which peace and conflict regulation are the products of the authority of a dominant state."[12] Mearsheimer and Katzenstein second the

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[6] Fawn, 13.
[7] Hameiri, 318.
[8] Hettne, 553.
[9] Deutsch, et al., *Political Community,* quoted in Adler & Barnett, *Security Communities,* 6.
[10] Deutsch, et al., quoted in Adler & Barnett, 6.
[11] Deutsch, et al., quoted in Adler & Barnett, 7.
[12] Lake, "Regional hierarchy," 37.

notion that hegemons matter to the development of regions.[13] Katzenstein, however, argues that the United States in particular is central to the creation of regions, and that regions should be conceptualized as "distinctively institutionalized but 'porous' spaces hierarchically linked with the core states under an overarching US imperium."[14] In Katzenstein's view, regions are made porous by globalization and internationalization[15] and the US works to control the region through a "supporter state."[16]

The *regionness* approach emphasizes the importance of states' sharing "common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social and historical bonds."[17] The greater the regional cohesion and the sense of a mutual regional transnational identity, the greater the level of *regionness*.[18]

Why should one care about what constitutes a region, a regional security complex/community, or the level of regionness and regionalisation? A more or less explicit assumption common to this literature is that greater regional cooperation is likely to result in more peaceful relations between states. As such, whether states (and the people in them) identify themselves as part of a region, or are members of regional organisations, is directly linked to issues of regional security.

Many scholars who advocate the importance of the regional level of analysis argue that it is distinct and that theories devoted to explaining regional relations explain inter-state relations in ways that theories of international relations cannot. Yet, the core tenets of the majority of these region-focused theories closely resemble those of Liberalism, Constructivism and Neorealism. For example, like the regionalism/regionalisation approach, Liberalism believes that increased economic and political cooperation and membership in regional organisations promote peaceful cooperation. Similarly, scholars who emphasize the importance of regional identities, and the fact that these are socially constructed, clearly draw their inspiration from Constructivism. Finally, regional theories that suggest that anarchy, hegemons (regional and off-shore) and balance of power are the key drivers of regional politics are obviously intellectually indebted to Neorealism. Indeed, Buzan and Weaver even suggest that their regional security complex theory should be considered the "fourth tier of neorealism."[19]

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[13] Mearsheimer, "The tragedy of great power politics," 2001; Katzenstein, *A World of Regions,* 2005.
[14] Acharya, "The emerging regional architecture of world politics," 632.
[15] Acharya, 632.
[16] Katzenstein, 240.
[17] Hettne.
[18] Hameiri; Fawn; Hettne.
[19] Buzan & Weaver, *Regions and Powers,* 481-82.

Is the Middle East a Region? What Can Regional Theories Tell Us About the Middle East?

"Wahda (unity) in the traditional sense may be a chimera, but *takamal* (integration), *tansiq* (coordination), and *ta'awun* (cooperation) are not as scarce as the daily newspaper headlines might lead one to expect."[20]

Based on the above discussion of defining a region, to what extent does the Middle East qualify as such? As if the vagueness of the term region doesn't make answering this question hard enough, there is also the additional challenge of agreeing on what constitutes the Middle East. Despite the opposite claims of some scholars,[21] there is in fact very little consensus about which countries (Turkey?) or sub-regions (North Africa?) constitute the geographical area referred to as the Middle East. [22] Ignoring this issue for now, it may nevertheless be possible to discuss the extent to which the Middle East constitutes a region by focusing on the different factors emphasized above, such as shared culture, common security threats, economic and political integration, and institutionalization.

Economic Integration

With regard to the perspective of economic integration, the Middle East is one of the least integrated areas in the world.[23] The reason is largely that, until not so very long ago, economies tended to be state-driven and, in the Arab (nationalist) socialist regimes, were also characterised by central planning, domestically, and focused on the need to be self-sufficient, given the anarchic nature of international politics.[24] From the perspective of economic integration, then, it would be hard to argue that the Middle East is a region. Having said that, there nevertheless exists a regional institution devoted to economic integration, namely, the Council of Arab Economic Unity. This organisation is mainly responsible for the establishment of the "Greater Arab Free Trade Area" (GAFTA), which was founded in 1997. There are also substantial labour flows between states in the area. Other factors contributing to whether it can be considered a region may also need to be assessed, if a definitive answer is to be arrived at.

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[20] Hudson, *Middle East Dilemma,* 7.

[21] Maoz claims that "the Middle East includes all the northern African states bordering the Mediterranean, as well as Sudan. The Asian Middle East includes all the states bordering the Mediterranean (excluding Cyprus but including Turkey), Jordan, Yemen and the states bordering the Persian Gulf" (1995, 8).

[22] For a discussion of the different interpretations of what constitutes the Middle East, see Holmén, 1994.

[23] Rouis & Tabor, *Regional Economic Integration.*

[24] Hudson, 16.

Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism

Despite the fact that the low level of economic integration suggests that the Middle East may not be a region, it is possible to argue, in contrast, that the majority of states within it (however defined) share certain cultural similarities. Arab ethnicity and religious affiliation to Islam[25] are predominant traits among the populations of most states in the area, with Israel being the obvious outlier in both regards. Iran's being non-Arab, and Shia, also creates less of a cultural tie with the rest of the states in the region.

Since independence, Arab national identity has been a salient unifying factor in the region. With regard to institutionalisation, this is most clearly exemplified by the Arab League, which was founded by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia in 1945, and currently has 16 member states from the region.[26] In addition to being a forum for regulating political, economic, and cultural cooperation, the Arab League also seeks to formalize security collaboration among its member states. Yet, although the Arab League has contributed to "functional integration" among its members, the organisation is generally believed to have failed, with regard to furthering both political and economic integration.[27]

Despite the increased pre-eminence pan-Arabism took under Nasser, projects seeking to unify Arab states, such as the Federation of Arab Republics (Egypt, Syria, and Libya, 1971-1973), and the Arab Cooperation Council (Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and North Yemen, 1989-90), have all failed.[28] As argued by Barnett, although Arab states after independence realized that they had various shared interests, they were also apprehensive about embracing pan-Arabism, fearing it was a "Trojan horse for [other] Arab leaders" to intervene in their domestic affairs.[29] Although Arab leaders had used pan-Arab rhetoric to build domestic support, the instrumental value of invoking Arab nationalism became moot upon Israel's victory in the 6-Day War, in June 1967. Since the war had been invoked on the basis of Arab nationalism, the military defeat also resulted in the death of pan-Arabism. Consequently, Nasser was persuaded to abandon the greater

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[25]Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Algeria, and Morocco are predominantly Sunni, whereas the majority of the populace in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain are Shia. Oman is Ibadi, the smallest of the Islamic sects, and closely linked to Sunni Islam. Although being predominantly Sunni, the Alawite, a Shia sect, are in power in Syria. Likewise, although the majority of Iraqis are Shia, the country was for a long time ruled by the Sunni dictator, Saddam Hussein (http://www.cfr.org/peace-conflict-and-human-rights/sunni-shia-divide/p33176#!/). Having said that, the Middle East is obviously far from a culturally homogenous region, with a plethora of ethnic groups and religious sects within it.
[26] Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Besides these Middle Eastern member states, Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, and Sudan are also members (http://www.arableagueonline.org/hello-world/#more-1).
[27] Hudson, 11.
[28] Hudson, 21.
[29] Barnett, "Sovereignty, nationalism, and regional order," 500.

political project, and encouraged to focus instead on Israel, something that was financially supported by the Saudis.[30]

Although Arab states largely abandoned the greater pan-Arab project following 1967, this did not mean that they abandoned Arab nationalism per se. Rather, as argued by Barnett, the meaning of Arab nationalism eventually changed to be in accordance with state sovereignty. By enabling "stable expectations and shared norms that are associated with sovereignty" among states in the region, the emergence of this "centrist" version of Arab nationalism was actually what allowed for the emergence of regional order in the Arab world, according to Barnett.[31] In his view, the failure of Pan-Arabism means that "while there is little support for unification, the continued existence of an Arab identity that serves as a bridge between Arab states, and the awareness by Arab states of the permeability of borders to cultural and economic forces, preserves an interest in close relations."[32]

Security Collaboration and Threat Perception

In addition to the cultural importance of Arabism and Islam to *"regionness,"* another factor unifying the majority of states in the region is the conflict with Israel. According to Buzan and Weaver, the trifecta of Arabism, Islam, and anti-Israeli (as well as anti-US) sentiment has been crucial to the development of a Middle Eastern regional security complex. But, they also emphasize the importance of the Palestine-Israeli conflict, describing it as "a domestic conflict that in some ways is the key to the whole Middle East [regional security complex]."[33]

Katzenstein, on the other hand, would argue that the reason why regionalisation in the Middle East has not evolved further is because the US has failed to identify a suitable candidate for the role of "regional supporter," meaning a state that could further help the US implement its "imperium" in the region.[34] Neither of the two possible candidates, Israeli and Saudi Arabia, can take on this role; Israel, being the "target of a region-wide coalition," cannot rally the support of the other states in the region[35] and, despite its being the second-closest US ally, Saudi Arabia is ideologically "antithetical to American values."[36]

With regard to regional collaboration in the security sphere, the Arab League is unique, both with regard to the extent of its membership and its mandate. The AL was founded partly for the purposes of managing and resolving conflict between

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[30] Barnett, 501.
[31] Barnett, 481-83.
[32] Barnett, 503.
[33] Buzan & Weaver, 191, 195.
[34] Katzenstein, 241.
[35] Katzenstein, 242.
[36] Katzenstein, 239.

Arab states, and partly to coordinate military responses against common threats such as Israel.[37] Central to the Arab League charter are its collective self-defence articles. These prohibit member-states from using force as a means of resolving disputes amongst themselves, and also give them the right to defend against aggression, provided the League Council agrees to this by a unanimous vote.[38] Despite the suggestion in these Arab League articles of a Middle Eastern *pluralistic security community* in which the Arab League plays an important conflict management role, scholars nevertheless suggest the organisation has been largely unsuccessful in resolving inter-Arab political disputes or responding to security threats in the region.[39]

According to Hudson, during Nasser's time member-states "saw the [Arab League] as an instrument of Egyptian expansionism rather than as a neutral and even-handed instrument for inter-Arab conflict resolution.[40] Later, the Arab League failed to uphold a common Arab stand in the Camp David negotiations in 1978, which resulted in Egypt's defection and the subsequent Egypt-Israeli peace-treaty of 1979. Mediation efforts in the Lebanese civil wars of 1958 and 1975-1989, the 1970 Jordan-Palestine crisis, and the conflict between North and South Yemen failed to have a significant impact on conflict resolution.[41] Crucially, the Arab League was unable to effectively handle the Iraqi invasion (which Hussein claimed was part of an all-Arab struggle) of Kuwait in 1990, with member-states failing to reach a unified stance on the issue; twelve of fifteen member-states voted to condemn Iraq and contribute troops to the international coalition organised by the United States to liberate Kuwait.[42] Consequently, the second Gulf War has been seen by many as the death knell of Arabism and the beginning of a significant escalation of American military involvement in the region.[43]

Apart from the Arab League, the periodic summit meeting of the Arab heads of state is, arguably, the only other institution devoted to Arab integration. Yet, the same obstacles to Arab cooperation that hinder the effectiveness of the Arab League also prevail here, namely, balance of power, ideological differences and personal rivalries.[44] According to Hudson, this means that "although there may be a sense of community, it is not buttressed by sufficiently strong institutions or practices (on either the domestic or regional levels) to assure over the long haul, dependable expectations of peaceful change" characteristic of a pluralistic security

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[37] Maoz, "Regional security in the Middle East," 19. The Arab League is currently also a member of the American led anti-ISIS coalition (http://www.state.gov/s/seci/index.htm).
[38] Hudson, 11.
[39] Maoz, 19; Hudson, 11.
[40] Hudson, 12.
[41] Hudson, 11.
[42] Hudson, 13.
[43] Hudson, 14.
[44] Hudson, 12.

community.[45] Barnett adds to this notion, arguing that "[t]he Iraqi invasion of Kuwait ushered in a new era in inter-Arab relations, as Arab leaders became less apologetic about defending their policies of furthering the state's – as opposed to the Arab nation's – interest."[46] This is evident from the fact that security collaboration in the post-1990 period has been characterized by being bilateral, sub-regional, or involving non-Middle Eastern security arrangements, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab Mahgrib Union, the African Union, or, in the case of Turkey, NATO.[47] More recently, a number of states in the region have become parties to the international US-initiated anti-ISIS coalition.

Of the institutions mentioned above, the GCC is of particular interest. Created in 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council includes Oman, Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia among its members and has the stated purpose of furthering economic and cultural cooperation in the Gulf.[48] The wish to promote economic cooperation may seem perplexing, given that the Gulf states are all oil exporters and have comparable industrial profiles and therefore lack complementarity.[49]

Indeed, despite the emphasis on economic and cultural cooperation, the actual impetus for the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council was security concerns. More specifically, the Gulf Cooperation Council was founded in response to fears that the Iranian revolution would have internal security repercussions within the Gulf states.[50] Being monarchies with substantial Shiite minorities (or, in the case of Bahrain, a majority), the Gulf states were very worried that the Iranian revolution (which had special appeal to Shias) and Ayatollah Khomeini's open call for the downfall of Muslim royal regimes would result in domestic security challengers' seeking to bring about regime change. As such, "one purpose of the Gulf Cooperation Council was to provide Gulf citizens with a rhetorical and institutional alternative identity that would compete with Iran's Islamic revolutionary and Iraq's secular Arab nationalist platform."[51]

Hence, the security purpose of the institution was primarily directed towards internal, rather than external, security threats.[52] Having said that, the Gulf states were nevertheless worried that the true purpose behind the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council would alarm Iran, Iraq and other Arab states, something that explains why the members publicly emphasized that the Gulf Cooperation Council

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[45] Hudson, 7.
[46] Barnett, 501-2.
[47] Hudson, 19; Maoz, 19.
[48] Barnett & Gause, "Caravans in the opposite direction," 169.
[49] Barnett & Gause, 176-77.
[50] Barnett & Gause, 161.
[51] Barnett & Gause, 170.
[52] Barnett & Gause, 172.

was not a security organisation.[53] Despite their common Arab ethnicity and membership in the AL, GCC member states saw the rest of the Arab states in the region as somewhat of a threat, and were vehemently against unification.[54]

Yet, despite their shared cultural (religious, ethnic, and tribal) similarities and common threat perception, the Gulf states and the Gulf Cooperation Council do not constitute a pluralistic security community.[55] This is the case even though the GCC, in contrast to the AL, stood united behind Kuwait and were willing to employ force to ensure its liberation during the Iraqi invasion in 1990.[56] The reason for this is that Gulf Cooperation Council states, due to the history of dynastic conflict in the Arab Peninsula, also tend to view each other with suspicion. This became even more evident in the aftermath of the Gulf War, when the external and internal security threat represented by Iran and Iraq decreased.[57] Gulf states are generally worried about other Gulf Cooperation Council states seeking to destabilize them domestically, and especially concerned about the potential hegemonic ambitions of Saudi Arabia.[58] The fact that the Gulf Cooperation Council states can envision themselves using force against each other means that the chances that the Gulf develops into a pluralistic security community in the future are low.[59] As noted by Barnett and Gause, "only when leaders are confident that interstate cooperation will not lead to a challenge to their own domestic position can integration move forward."[60]

The Gulf Cooperation Council points to a crucial complexity inherent in seeking to understand Middle Eastern political developments in the security sphere, namely the close relationship and interplay between internal and external security.[61] As eloquently expressed by Barnett and Gause, "in a region where internal security threats pose as serious a challenge to regime stability as do external threats, cooperation and agreement (or lack thereof) on issues regarding domestic politics are as important as cooperation on interstate issues."[62]

Conclusion

Although there is a substantial political science literature focusing on the regional level, applying this theoretical lens towards understanding security developments in the Middle East is far from straightforward. With regards to whether we should

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[53] Barnett & Gause, 169.
[54] Barnett & Gause, 168.
[55] Barnett & Gause, 161.
[56] Barnett & Gause, 180.
[57] Barnett & Gause, 185.
[58] Barnett & Gause, 190.
[59] Barnett & Gause, 189.
[60] Barnett & Gause, 191.
[61] Buzan & Weaver, 218.
[62] Barnett & Gause, 162.

consider the Middle East a region, several potentially important factors that allegedly contribute to making a collection of states into a region were taken into consideration. With regards to the level of economic integration the Middle East clearly does not qualify as a region, given the limited level of trade between countries. In contrast, many countries in the Middle East share considerable commonalities when it comes to religion (the majority being Sunni Muslim) and language (Arabic), suggesting it may in fact be a region based on these commonalities.

Having said that, pan-Arabism appears to have been insufficient in promoting a broader sense of regional identity, suggesting that the extent of cultural regionness may actually be less than it appears merely by reference to language and religion. One of the reasons why pan-Arabism failed in the long haul to provide a uniting identity for a broad group of countries in the region is closely related threat perception: Political leaders worried that pan-Arabism would become an instrument that other leaders in the region could take advantage in order to intervene in national affairs and hence by extension saw it as a threat to internal security.

The same suspicions about the true intentions of its neighbours – including those with similar cultural attributes – that doomed pan-Arabism is also the reason why there historically has been little meaningful security collaboration between states in the Middle East. Hence, despite the majority of Middle Eastern countries having identified a common enemy in the state of Israel, this has not been enough for them to fully trust each other enough to develop into something similar to a security community, something scholars believe would be necessary for this conflict-ridden region to become more peaceful.

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The MENA Regional Security Architecture

Anoushiravan Ehteshami, PhD

Introduction

The MENA region, which took shape in the aftermath of the First World War and the emergence of a number of new territorial states in the area, has suffered from acute instability from its inception. War, for example, paved the way for the region's only Jewish state, and thus was born the seemingly intractable Arab-Israeli conflict, which ensured the isolation of Israel from its neighbours for the best part of a generation. Elsewhere, deep ideological rivalries between nationalist (led by Egypt) and conservative (led by Saudi Arabia) forces, caused by the rise of Nasserism in the Arab region, created division in this community of states and peoples, thereby preventing this largest group of states from creating region-wide approaches to security. Rivalry underpinned their relations with each other until the death of Nasser, in 1971. However, the reduction in inter-Arab rivalries following the 1973 war was short lived, as Egypt's new pro-Western president, Anwar al-Sadat, chose to strike a unilateral peace with Israel and thus leave the Arab order in total disarray. Elsewhere, revolution in Iran, in 1979, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, in the same year, brought new security challenges – the challenge of revolutionary Islam, on the one hand, and the threat of Jihadism, on the other. These, arguably, have continued to influence the security dynamics of the MENA region, on top of which we now also have to contend with the problems caused by the rise of fragile (Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen) and weak states (Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia) in geopolitically sensitive parts of the region, such as the Arabian Peninsula, northern Levant and coastal North Africa.

This paper aims to discuss the causes and drivers of insecurity in the MENA region, and to account for these dangers through a detailed discussion of a number of "cataclysmic events," which, combined, have made the establishment of a region-wide security framework a practical impossibility. It further highlights the complexities arising from the process of systemic shift, in which the region's economic relations are going through a transition, from West to East, and explores what impact this systemic shift might have on the security architecture of MENA.

Geopolitical Change in the Middle East

The Middle East is a competitive and fragmented regional system. The region lacks a security architecture and is unique for the absence of any collective security

arrangements, or of a forum for region-wide dialogue.[63] Notwithstanding that, the Arab League (encompassing 22 states and some 370 million people, the region's largest intergovernmental organization) has been mobilized in the cause of peace and security on numerous occasions, with regard to Palestine and Arab-Israeli conflict; Yemen (in the 1960s, over unification in 1990, and since 2011); Western Sahara; the three islands dispute between Iran and the UAE; dealing with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait; and in recent times, Libya and Syria. But due to systemic pressures, as discussed below, these efforts have failed to bear fruit.[64]

The region is dominated by authoritarian regime types, and yet is bereft of a hegemonic power able to impose its own will on other states; none of the main regional powers have managed to create an absolute coalition to outwit or outmanoeuvre rivals, and in each instance they have reinforced regional rivalries.[65] As a consequence, MENA is, characterized by inter-state rivalries, and has increasingly become exposed to identity politics, which is manifesting itself in inter-religious/confessional (Muslim-non-Muslim, Sunni-Shia) and inter-communal conflicts (such as those in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen). As a result, the region exhibits signs of deep social trauma and crisis of identity at both state and society levels, in that a national narrative of statehood and national identity is no longer sufficient to keep communities together in a wider territorial state. As is shown below, sub-communalization is taking root across the region, thus gradually eroding the hard-won century-old national societies that independent states forcefully, but carefully, put together. The region's "contested" states seem to be unravelling into smaller communities of sects, religious affiliations, tribal groups and ethnicities, as is the case in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The MENA region is suffering from an imbalance in the forces pushing for change: the peaceful mass mobilizations and the violent nihilistic ones. In my opinion, this is a region which is at once both *post-modern* and *pre-modern*. Both post- and pre-modern forces compete for power. Modernity, as the norm for much of the twentieth century – in terms of rationality as a driver of decisions, transparent institutions of governance, rule of law, reliable public services (education, health, etc.), accountable public servants, functioning state institutions, and enhancement of opportunity – has been taking a back seat in driving change in the region.

As we have seen in several countries – Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, to name but four – the regional system is vulnerable to the behaviour of sub-state and non-state actors (such as the KDP and KUP, Hezbollah, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, ISIL, Ansar al-Sharia, al-Nusra Front, the Houthis), and many of its states are suffering at the hands of violent jihadi groups who have stepped into the vacuum created by the weakening of the iron grip of central government in several Arab countries. Power is fluid, unevenly distributed, and does not necessarily

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[63] Noble, "From Arab System to Middle East System?" 67-165.
[64] Sussman, "After Middle East uprisings" 16 March 2011.
[65] Rubin, *The Tragedy of the Middle East*.

manifest itself in terms of such traditional indicators as the size of population, territory, economy (GNP), or geography; nor do size of military budgets, of the armed forces, or military hardware, provide sufficient indicators of power and influence. Indeed, in the twenty-first century, it seems to be a case of the smaller Arab states outperforming their larger counterparts, most notably from the ranks of the GCC states: Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.[66]

The region's strategic landscape has been in flux for more than four decades. The main causes of this unsettled strategic landscape are: Revolution (1979), uprisings and protests (1982, 1990s [Algeria] 2005, 2009, 2010-present), peace treaties (1979, 1993 and 1994), war (Persian Gulf: 1980-88, 1990-91, 2003-09; Levant: 1982-84, 2006, 2009, 2014), and external intervention. These events and developments, to varying degree, have had a dramatic impact on the regional system: destroying partnerships, creating new alliances, disrupting the normal flow of inter-state and people-to-people relations, undoing regimes and ruling parties and, every time, imposing a heavy cost (in terms of treasure, lives, heritage, and opportunities lost) on societies and ruling regimes. My argument is that the region has not had a moment's peace since the second half of the 1960s.

The Arab Order

To make matters worse, due to external intervention and the power of such intra-regional forces as pan-Arabism, the region is also rather dysfunctional; it does not hang together as a region *for* itself. The Arab order, at heart, is also a deeply polarized one. The Arab order's polarization has encouraged its fragmentation, arguably loosening the already fraying pan-Arab ties running across territories.[67] This process has enabled the large and small Arab states to pursue their own "national" interests with less fear of retribution from the more dominant Arab states. Thus, by way of example, in the two decades following the end of the Cold War, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority negotiated their own bilateral deals with Israel (in 1994 and 1993, respectively); Saudi Arabia championed the land-for-peace Arab Peace Plan (early 2000s); the Maghreb states forged closer commercial links with the expanding European Union (from the 1990s onwards and in the context of the "Barcelona Process," in particular); Syria drew closer to the moderate Arab camp and Turkey (in the 2000s); and Qaddafi's Libya came in from the cold and rebuilt ties with the United States and the European Union (mid-2000s). These developments have loosened the regional order and encouraged its multi-polarity. However, the region's instabilities have also exposed its many actors to severe shocks.

Secondly, the pace of change and the depth of trauma have been so intense that it has become almost impossible for the local parties to create collective approaches to the issue of (local, national and communal) security in the region. Regional

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[66] Ehteshami, *Dynamics of Change in the Persian Gulf.*
[67] Ehteshami & Hinnebusch, "Foreign policymaking in the Middle East," 225-244.

institutions, due to regional rivalries and absence of capacity-building at the pan-regional level, are not effective in defining and then creating collective approaches to security. The dominant regional actors, in effect, compete, instead of cooperate, for a safer and more stable region. Thirdly, the pace of change has accelerated, partly as a result of globalization (faster and more intensive flow of information, assets and resources) and partly in response to the region's increasingly networked societies and the emergence of communalism as a form of sub-national organization (and resistance).

Since the end of the twentieth century, the region's security dynamics have worsened even more dramatically. These can be captured and explained in terms of key cataclysmic events that have come to shape the MENA region.

Shattering Events

In this regard, three key developments will be focused on to illustrate not just the depth, but also the magnitude, of the region-wide security crisis now facing the area and also the dynamic interdependence of shattering events that act as a cascade of insecurity.[68] The three cataclysmic events chosen for further analysis have their roots in the region itself, but in each instance the internal-external relationship seems to have contributed to the security tensions, rather than helping to ameliorate them. Regional and external powers are arguably in it together, but as they have continued to pursue often competing, if not contradictory, agendas, these relationships have only intensified regional rivalries.

First Cataclysmic Event: 9/11

9/11 proved to be the first cataclysmic event following the ten years of relative calm in the aftermath of the end of global bipolarity, and the international war to liberate Kuwait from Iraq, in 1991. The September 2001 attacks in the US had both direct and indirect consequences for the MENA subsystem. They led to direct US-led intervention in the region, leading to two protracted conflicts (Afghanistan and Iraq) and the further destabilization of an already disrupted order. In this dynamic situation, it was also the targets of US intervention that proved geopolitically decisive. US intervention dramatically altered the regional balance of power in West Asia. In Afghanistan, US action helped disperse al-Qaeda and the Taliban. And in Iraq, American action to remove the Ba'ath regime decidedly reordered the regional balance of power, strengthening Iran, on the one hand, and further weakening the Arab core, on the other. The overriding message from a closer examination of the region is how much the regional balance of power and, also, the dynamics of the region, have been shaped by outside shocks following 9/11 and the Bush administration's "pre-emptive self-defence" and "preventive war" strategies. In the past, outside powers did play a decisive role in shaping the very

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[68] For further discussion see Hinnebusch & Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*.

geography of this region, defining the territorial boundaries of many of the states in question today. In more recent times, however, as we saw after 9/11, in pursuit of their security and political interests, external powers have tended to intervene directly in efforts to shape and control the subsystem. In so doing, the conduct of great powers has not only challenged the local elites' efforts to build legitimacy (state identity) at home, but also fed to saturation their pervasive sense of insecurity.

Second Cataclysmic Event: American invasion of Iraq 2003

The dramatic political and security changes following the fall of Baghdad to US troops in March 2003 marked the beginning of a whole new political phase in the continuum of change in the MENA subsystem. The manner of its execution, and the messy outcome of the war, have left a long shadow over the region, dramatically altering regional relations and also weakening Iraq as one of the region's most important geopolitical actors. Apart from the war causing utter devastation of what remained of Iraq as a viable nation-state, the point must be made that the destruction of the Ba'ath state in Iraq irrevocably changed the regional balance of power, and changed it in neighbouring Iran's favour, for it ended the relative balance that had existed in the Persian Gulf sub-region since the 1960s. And the rise of a pro-Iran Shia regime in Iraq also encouraged, in the moderate Sunni-majority countries, the fear of a growing Shia influence; the fear of an emerging, overarching "Shia crescent," in the words of King Abdullah of Jordan. The fall of the Ba'ath regime led to the "Arabization" of the Shia issue.

The moderate Arab states' concern that US action in Iraq was damaging their national security put pressure on the US' alliance network in the Arab world, but the manner of its departure from Iraq– in terms of not maintaining a security presence there, or ensuring that robust state institutions in Iraq could provide for the country's stability – left the neighbouring Arab states concerned and exposed to the insecurity that was being exported from Iraqi territory. These fears also forced Saudi Arabia out of its shell and made a more proactive Arab actor of the Kingdom, ready to confront Iran in the Arab region, while taking steps to lead a coalition of Arab states against jihadists.

The Arab states, thus, have been trying since then to manage the spill-over effects of the Iraq war and adjust to the changing regional balance of power. It is overly problematic that the regional tensions following the Iraq war have now become woven into the wider turmoil in the Arab region, the turmoil arising from mass uprisings in several Arab states. This is the third catalysmic event that deserves closer scrutiny.

Third Cataclysmic Event: The Arab Uprisings of 2011

The chaos and upheaval that have culminated in a series of revolts and uprisings since 2009 have become the region's new norm in the 2010s. The first of a number of mass protests was in Iran, in 2009, which itself followed, arguably, Lebanon's

2005 street protests. Mass protests by Iranians against the re-election of the incumbent president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, were a landmark in the history of the Islamic republic and had two direct effects on the country. Firstly, it suffered from the same crisis of legitimacy that it had accused the Arab states in the region of; and secondly, it was vulnerable to protest and would have to strengthen and broaden its security systems. The fact that Tehran saw domestic protests in terms of outside efforts to destabilize the regime – "velvet revolutions" – led to a hardening of its foreign and domestic policies.[69] Thus, the second term of Ahmadinejad's presidency was defined by tensions in Iran's regional relations, which were made worse from late 2010, with the tumultuous Arab uprisings that were sweeping across the region. The green revolt in Iran and the regime's violent and uncompromising response weakened Tehran's claims of being a regional model of revolutionary Islam and also went some way to sullying its image, amongst Arab activists, as a beacon of popular legitimacy. But the green movement also demonstrated the power of peaceful popular protest and the virtues of cyber mobilization in response to regime attack.

The Arab uprisings themselves have come to define the unpredictable nature of Middle East politics and MENA's inter-state regional relations: the new normal of the region. Successive regime collapse in several Arab countries between 2010 and 2013 unhinged several regional partnerships (for example, between Syria and Saudi Arabia; between Egypt and the GCC as a bloc, until the return of the military to power; and the Arab Maghreb Union), and while strengthening some others (Iran and Syria, Iran and Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and UAE), it has tested the limits of the ability of external powers to shape outcomes and minimize the fall-out from the turmoil. By any measure, the Arab uprisings have proved to be the most important force reshaping the region in the post-Cold War period. Established patterns of behaviour from the Cold War and the post-9/11 periods have been disrupted, and no single or group of countries, from within or outside the region, has successfully managed to shape the transition. The prolongation of the region-wide crisis has dramatically increased the sense of insecurity within states, further strengthening the grip of internal security institutions. As a consequence of the region's unpredictable security dynamics, the regional states' behaviour, in terms of defining orientation (towards neighbours and great powers) and the subsystem as a whole, has become harder to anticipate. In addition, the circulation of elites, coupled with the growing role of "citizen power," has not only in the transition countries, in particular, but also in other countries, challenged the supposition that actions are always taken at the clique level in the MENA subsystem. The uprisings have also posed serious challenges to wider interested parties, while countries such as Israel, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar have all had to adjust their foreign policies, be more proactive, and respond to the

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[69] Yaphe, *Nuclear Politics in Iran*.

rapidly changing regional landscape, although with little or no guarantees of success.

Thus, in sum, the messy process of transition has had a direct and dramatic impact on the regional balance of power and has brought regional powers in direct competition with each other: Iran and Turkey compete in Iraq, Syria and Central Asia; Iran and Saudi Arabia compete in the Persian Gulf, the Levant and, as flag bearers of Islam, in other parts of the Muslim world, too; Iran and Israel project power into their respective hinterlands and compete at the strategic level, as well (in missile defence and nuclear politics); Turkey and Saudi Arabia cooperate in Syria, but compete in Egypt and elsewhere in the Maghreb; and the smaller Gulf Arab states try to pursue an independent foreign policy, but, with the exception of Qatar, do not stray too far from Saudi Arabia. Policy in the transition countries, moreover – in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen – has been hostage to the given balance of post-authoritarian political forces and the uncertainty that has accompanied the drawing up of the new states' priorities, and of course to the legitimizing principles that drive its "new" policies.

Moreover, the collapse of the region's dominant "security regimes" (Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen) has also shuffled the pack in such a way as to enable smaller states – the smaller GCC countries, in particular, and Jordan – to play a substantially bigger role in the region. At the same time, regime collapse and inter-state chaos have created the permissive conditions that allow a range of non-state actors to operate in, and also across, different countries more freely and directly.

Of the "transition" countries, Syria's condition continues to be an exceptional case. This is not only because its revolution has metamorphosed into a ruinous civil war, but also that this country has, since the 1950s, played a historically significant ideological and geopolitical role in the region. The two constant sources of tension in the country – identity and geopolitics – are the tools being used by (state and non-state) rival forces to bite away at the fabric of the state. Syria has been reduced from the most formidable regional power to a battleground of fighting groups and rival states. In Egypt, too, we have been witness to the impact that the seesaw of power has had on that country's regional relationships, in which the UAE is one day a hostile country (under Morsi), but a close ally the next (under the post-Morsi military-backed government); Qatar was transformed from a desired ally into an unwelcome Arab partner. In Libya, tribal, ethnic, Islamist, and radical jihadi forces pull in different, often competing, directions, to the detriment of central authority, and thus leave the territory of this vast country open to outside pressures. Interestingly, it is only in Tunisia, where the whole process of change started, that we see a relatively peaceful and orderly transfer of power to more representative national political forces, in which a democratic process has been augmented by the discourse of inclusivity and civil society engagement.

Systemic Shift and its Implications

MENA regional stability is a key concern not only for the West, but also for East Asia, and the potential for a security breakdown in one or the other to spill over is of concern to all the actors. In this regard, what we have been witnessing this century, through a shifting of global economic power eastwards, is arguably a return to a neo-Sinocentric system that is itself balanced by the forces of a polycentric world and global institutions still dominated by the uroatlantic alliance. The Middle East's oil states, having served the energy needs of the dominant West for a hundred years, beginning in the early twentieth century, are in the twenty-first increasingly serving the other side. But their institutional relationships have not caught up with these new realities, and thus, arguably, leaving the oil states as prisoners of both. The dynamics that "Asianization" has produced are now, as a result, being tested in the differences between policy in the West and China (and Russia, as well) over the conditions of insecurity in the Middle East and the methods through which to address these security shortcomings. Yet, despite the twenty-first century's being regarded as the Asian century, it is the United States that is the greatest MENA and East Asian power, in terms of its military presence, alliance structures, and economic power. So, the shift in the balance of economic power, alongside a structural shift in the global energy markets, will certainly augment the deepening of pan-Asian relations.[70] But, the United States' "pivot" towards East Asia is contingent on a successful effort to stabilize the Middle East, which ironically can only happen with the United States' active engagement. America's allies – in Europe and in the Middle East – will therefore not accept a unilateral American disengagement, and will do what they can to keep the Western bloc's presence (which also includes Turkey) strong, in what is essentially the European Union's backyard. Continuing crises in the Middle East not only indefinitely delay the United States' Asian pivot, but also satisfies at least China, which not only sees the US as being just outside its own backyard, but also can count on the US to exercise its power and influence in the Middle East, in order to contain the spread of instability arising from the Arab uprisings and the erosion of central authority in such oil rich countries as Iraq and Libya, and in such other important countries as Syria, Egypt, and Yemen. A greater American security presence in the Middle East is likely to continue and, ironically, despite retrenchment and a period of relative inaction (2011-13), it is increasingly compelled to reengage more fully with the region; intervene militarily (in Iraq, Syria, Yemen); commit more military assets; take remedial action to try to rejuvenate its regional alliance structure; and reduce tensions with its greatest regional adversary (Iran), in order to stabilize regional inter-state relations and to focus on the threat of the Islamic State and the jihadi threat more broadly. As long as the politics of force continues to dominate the MENA region, neither can the US leave it, nor can regional states coalesce around existing or new multilateral

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[70] See Ehteshami & Miyagi, *The Emerging Middle East-East Asia Nexus.*

institutions, in order to carve a new vision of coexistence and shared prosperity. It is this reality that ultimately explains the importance and relevance of such sub-regional organizations as the GCC as anchors of stability and vehicles for security.[71] This particular organization is well-endowed, networked, globalized, mobilized and in possession of the most advanced military hardware and could, if pressed, mobilize regional forces (and bodies such as the Arab League) to confront the threats facing it. But the GCC can only do so with a clear mission and in partnership with the key regional and external partners.

In Sum

Currently, the MENA region is in freefall, as far as security is concerned. Regional disorder and chaos, compounded by power vacuums at the heart of the region, have encouraged the competition between the remaining strong states and have also emboldened them to intervene, unilaterally, or as part of makeshift coalitions. Saudi-led interventions in Yemen, and Iran's role in buttressing the Assad regime in Syria, are symptomatic of the new strategic realities in the MENA region. In the absence of other strong (or interventionist) states, Iran and Saudi Arabia, as a consequence, have become both more visible and more active.

Furthermore, state structures in the Middle East are too weak and vulnerable to provide a robust defence against the challenges facing it. Thus, states increasingly appear fierce, brittle, or hyper-authoritarian. At the same time, MENA states are bending under the weight of widening social disparities, debilitating poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, an energized and empowered youth, inefficient and unproductive economies, and excessive reliance on mono-commodity exports, namely hydrocarbons. There are very few breaks in the clouds now covering the region, and it is unlikely that order can be returned to the region in the period to 2020. The sub-state (jihadi groups and other Islamist ones) and proto-state (Islamic State) forces unleashed will continue to dispel energy and light new fires across, and beyond, the region. While evidence of a fightback by several regional states is emerging, Arab efforts, for example, to put together a robust anti-terror coalition, competing approaches to the region's security problems – such as those between Iran and Saudi Arabia in dealing with Syria, Iraq, and Yemen – tend to hamper pan-regional approaches to security. Indeed, as the interests of the remaining "strong" regional states diverge, room for compromise and dialogue has shrunk, commensurate with the depth of the security crisis that is encompassing the region. Systemic shift does not help matters, as the regional powers have grown less certain of US commitment, and remain unsure of Asian powers' security commitments to the Middle East.

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[71] See Ehteshami, *The Union Moment for the GCC*.

Beyond 2020, however, we could look forward to the beginnings of renewal, based on the assumption that the current state structures stay intact. Although state survival, in at least four MENA states (Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen), is a big assumption to make, one can nevertheless expect international and regional partnerships to bring pressure to bear on the myriad of jihadi forces to, first, dissipate their power and influence and, second, create the political space for coalition-building among local forces. If and when Iraqi and Syrian states begin to restore order, then the (regional and international) military, political and economic pressures on IS and its affiliates will rise exponentially, thus forcing the underlying contradictions of the jihadi caliphate to the surface. As Libya and Yemen will remain ungovernable territories for some time to come, different approaches are needed for containing their respective crises, a situation that is rooted in a combination of state failure and communalization. In both cases, however, there is much that the West and the neighbouring states can do, in terms of economic assistance, and logistical, intelligence, training and stabilization support.

National stability, if restored, can provide the positive catalyst for regional cooperation. But for regional cooperation to work, Arab and non-Arab states will have to compromise and agree to work together. Of particular importance in this regard is the Arab-Iran-Turkey triangle: Not only do Iran and Turkey have to work together over Iraq and Syria, but both will also have to cooperate with the Arab states (Egypt, Saudi Arabia and others) in the broader interest of the region. It is unlikely that such a "triangle of stability" can emerge before 2020. So, while a security umbrella may not form before 2025, if the regional powers work cooperatively and, better still, collectively, then the MENA region will for the first time be able to contemplate the virtues of subsystem-wide security structures. The place of the other major regional power, Israel, remains unclear and much of its relationship with the Arab world will be dependent on Tel Aviv's meeting the demands of the international community for the implementation of the two-state solution. This outcome is unlikely.

Ultimately, a stable region will invite broader engagement and, despite the "pivot" and America's growing energy self-sufficiency, Washington and its European allies will continue, arguably, to have a role in supporting their regional allies, reaching accommodation with Tehran, and in contributing to building security. But, evidence suggests that regional vulnerabilities will prohibit collective action and thus limit the utility of Western intervention in the future

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The Goldilocks Decade? US Foreign Policy in the Middle East toward the 2020s

Jessica Ashooh, PhD

Opposing Doctrines, Equally Rooted in History

The early years of the twenty-first century have been fraught with challenges for the United States in the Middle East, as the post-Cold War triumphalism of Desert Storm, Madrid, and Oslo gave way to the horrors of 9/11, the war in Iraq, and the violent collapse in the regional state system brought on by the Arab uprisings of 2011. Through Presidents Bush and Obama, the United States has sought to meet these challenges with two fiercely polar policies: the Bush Doctrine and the Obama Doctrine.

The Bush Doctrine, developed in reaction to 9/11, emphasised the need for robust American engagement in the Middle East—militarily, if necessary. "The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands," said Bush in his second inaugural address.[72] Although not the first elucidation of the Bush Doctrine, the 2005 speech is in many ways the clearest articulation of the main points of the policy, which can be distilled into four key elements:

1. A strong belief in the importance of a state's domestic regime in determining its foreign policy;

2. The perception of great threats that can be defeated only by new and vigorous policies, most notably preventive war;

3. A willingness to act unilaterally when necessary;

4. An overriding sense that peace and stability require the United States to assert its primacy in world politics.[73]

In contrast, the Obama Doctrine is not four principles but four words: "Don't do stupid sh-t," as he reportedly drilled into a plane full of reporters in 2014.[74] While the doctrine was sanitized and refined for an April 2015 interview with Thomas Friedman, emphasising "engagement," and a willingness to test and readjust decades-old policy assumptions, the subtext is clear: the US should avoid any

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[72] Bush, *Second Inaugural Address.*
[73] Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," 365.
[74] Rothkopf, "Obama's Don't Do Stupid Shit Foreign Policy."

military engagement abroad, because it is expensive and contributes to American insecurity rather than reducing it.[75]

Indeed, whereas the Bush Doctrine was far too willing to resort to the use of military force, that use of force was in service of an organising principle predicated on the belief that the spread of democracy makes the United States safer, and that democracy can be seeded by removing dictators. And while that premise is now understood to be deeply flawed, the Obama doctrine also fails in that it entirely lacks an organising principle. The President's preoccupation with not using military force has created a negative policy that is predicated solely upon the avoidance of a tactic, rather than a positive policy based on a strategic vision.

Though the Bush and Obama Doctrines might seem isolated in their historic moments—one in response to a violent tragedy and the other a self-conscious corrective action to that response—they are in fact both equally strongly rooted in the American political tradition and represent a classic tension between impulses toward isolationism on the one hand and notions of American exceptionalism and moral duty on the other. While George Washington may have been making an early case for isolationism when he admonished his successors not to "entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition," it is important to point out that it was essential for him to do so, to dampen the ideological overexpansion that often besets post-revolutionary societies.[76]

Indeed, in many ways, Washington's address should not be seen as a cornerstone in the foundation of US foreign policy, but rather as a plank in a barricade to contain its moralist tide. John Quincy Adams was reacting to the same pressures as Washington when he insisted that America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy," in his July 4th speech on foreign policy, in 1821, which was not so much a statement as it was a plea against those agitating for American intervention in the Latin American wars for independence.[77] DeTocqueville, writing in 1833, also noted this ideological impulse in the American public, and called "the tendency of a democracy to obey its feelings rather than its calculations" one of its "natural defects" as a form of government.[78] More than one hundred years later, George Kennan concurred, and put a name on Americans' ideological foreign policy tendencies: "legalism-moralism."[79]

Interestingly, however, lest one might think that the moral impulse in American foreign policy is purely interventionist, Kennan on the contrary lamented it for keeping the US out of conflicts in the interwar years, in favour of a naïve, moral pursuit of peace at all costs, enshrined most absurdly in the 1928 Kellogg-Briand

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[75] Friedman, "Iran and the Obama Doctrine."
[76] Washington, *Farewell Address*.
[77] Adams, *Speech.*
[78] de Tocqueville, "How American democracy conducts the external affairs of the state," 226-30.
[79] Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, 95.

Pact outlawing war. In Kennan's view, this overreliance on ideological principles prevented the United States and others from intervening to stop fascism at an early, manageable point. As Kennan wrote, "The evil of these utopian enthusiasms was not only, or even primarily, the wasted time, the misplaced emphasis, the encouragement of false hopes. The evil lay primarily in the fact that these enthusiasms distracted our gaze from the real things that were happening."[80]

One might draw a parallel between the interwar experience of which Kennan writes and the current state of affairs in US foreign policy, with a nationally traumatic episode of conflict leaving Americans and their leadership reluctant to reengage, while problems abroad grow ever more protracted. Indeed, the fable of Goldilocks and the Three Bears comes to mind in pursuit of a right-sized US foreign policy. Thus, if Bush's vision was too big, and Obama's too small, what does a "just right" foreign policy look like for the United States in the Middle East? This is largely the question with which the next American president will be grappling, and it will be a defining policy challenge through the 2020s.

Assumptions about Priorities

Before one can begin to approach this question, however, it is essential to take stock of assumptions. Firstly, let us assume that the interests of the United States in the Middle East will be underpinned by four essential priorities:

1. Mitigating the terrorism threat emanating from the region;

2. Managing the continued aftershocks of the "Arab Spring" and the state failure problem;

3. Containing Iranian regional ambitions;

4. Restoring standing and credibility with allies, especially Israel.

These assumed policy priorities—as well as those that don't make the list—say a great deal about how one might expect the region to look in the next decade. Violent radical groups will still have sufficient capacity to threaten the United States and its allies. The countries hit hardest by the revolutions of 2011 will still be struggling to stand up and will continue to present an enormous financial and security burden on the region. In the best case scenario, fragile national unity peace plans will be forged in places like Syria, Libya, and Yemen, reducing violence and tamping down refugee flows, though not entirely. At worst, these countries will remain in open warfare, and will perhaps have dragged one or two other vulnerable states down with them. They will continue to destabilise their neighbours, foment human misery, and draw in foreign fighters. Iran will continue to take advantage of this instability in Arab politics to undermine situations it sees as threatening,

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[80] Kennan, 21-22.

such as the re-emergence of a strong and sovereign Iraq. And a trust deficit will remain between the United States and its closest partners in the region: Israel, the Gulf states, and Turkey. In short, even under the best-case scenario, regional dynamics will remain dangerously unstable.

Notably absent from the list of American policy priorities in this assumed future, however, is an emphasis on oil. While, to be sure, the supply of energy will remain a solid American interest, it will become less of a priority in terms of the Middle East specifically. The stunning development of North American oil resources has created more flexibility in global supply. The United States, which now produces more oil than it imports,[81] has since 2012 become the top oil and gas producer in the world, effectively displacing Saudi Arabia as the global swing producer.[82] This status as top producer is projected to last until around 2030, meaning that Middle East energy supplies will be a much less significant driver of American policy in the region for the medium term.[83]

Nevertheless, despite this good news in energy markets, the United States will still face significant constraints on its foreign policy. However, these constraints will not be external; the U.S. will remain the dominant military power in the region and the world well into the 2020s and beyond. Rather, the factors that impose limits on America's ability to implement this power in the Middle East will be almost entirely domestic in nature.

Firstly, the continued hangover from the global financial crisis of the late 2000s will still be felt via cautiousness about budgets and government spending, even if the United States remains in consistent economic growth. While the Tea Party will remain a fringe movement, the peculiarities of the American legislative system create an environment where even small players can drive a major party's agenda, as demonstrated by the fight over the debt limit and the separate but concurrent government shutdown of 2013. While military spending used to be somewhat immune from these types of policy battles, the budget sequester of 2013 represents a sea change, wherein defence budgets are no longer guaranteed.

This tightening of the purse strings is also linked to increasing Congressional activism in matters of foreign policy. As James Lindsay notes, "the pendulum of power on foreign policy has swung back and forth many times over the course of American history," between Congress and the White House.[84] At the present moment, it seems that the pendulum is swinging back toward Capitol Hill, as lawmakers grow impatient with the increasing use of Executive Orders and Presidential Directives, in what they see as an effort by the White House to sidestep Congress's Constitutional authority to declare war and ratify treaties. As a result,

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[81] US Department of Energy, "US oil production and imports."
[82] US Energy Information Administration, "Today in energy."
[83] Smith, "US seen as biggest oil producer."
[84] Lindsay, "The shifting pendulum of power," 224.

Congress has steadily shown more willingness to try to claw back some of its influence in this regard. While the results have often been ham-handed, as with Senator Tom Cotton's March 2015 letter to Iran, there is no reason to believe that this trend will stop; though it may periodically lighten in situations where there is more public and Congressional confidence in the President.[85]

All of this will be girded by a public that remains ambivalent toward international engagement, and will still be impacted by a lukewarm global economy and the experience of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2013, 52% of Americans polled believed that the United States "should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along as best they can on their own."[86] This represented the highest percentage since the question was first tracked, in 1964 (when only 20% of respondents agreed with that proposition), and was the first time that a majority was recorded as favouring disengagement. The numbers represent a trend, and voters can therefore be expected to continue to pressure elected representatives to prioritise domestic issues and pull back from international matters that are perceived as not being America's own.

These combined issues will contribute to a climate where the US will still be a leader in the Middle East, but will have to more earnestly pursue partners for implementation. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as functional partnerships have the potential to mitigate both of the worst tendencies of the two US foreign policy poles of isolationism and legalism-moralism. Well-placed, trusted partner countries can help draw the United States into action when needed, and they can also help moderate it in times of overreach. Yet, while Europe has always traditionally been America's chief partner in the world and in the region, can we expect it to continue to play this role going forward?

The Shape of Other Global Players

In order to answer this, it is necessary to examine assumptions of how Europe will look during the coming decade. Given the ongoing financial issues in the Eurozone, continued elevated levels of unemployment, and resurgent security concerns on its eastern front, Europe is likely to be in an inward-looking mood for the foreseeable future, relying on international institutions to shoulder the international policy burden, rather than on the activism of individual states. This is not to say that key European countries will never be able to be drawn into partnership with the United States on issues that are considered a high priority. For all the beating that the Special Relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom took over Iraq, the US and UK—along with Europe more

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[85] Cotton, et al., "Open letter to the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran."
[86] Kohut, "Americans: disengaged, feeling less respected."

broadly—still share a set of ideals that hold more in common than not, even if their politics differ. Considerable repair must still be done, to be sure. Engaging in serious partnerships may be just the way to accomplish that, particularly after an American leadership change in 2016 presents a blank slate for moving forward.

It is also important in this regard to take into account Russia and China, and what role they might play in the region. Handling these two powers is in many ways the most critical test of American geopolitical strategy in the coming decade. As Henry Kissinger has emphasised, the American relationship with China is one of the most critical issues to get right, and the relationship need not be necessarily adversarial.[87] Indeed, there are striking overlaps and complementarities of interests between the United States and China in the Middle East. China, as the top consumer of Middle Eastern oil, benefits from a stable and secure region that is open to world trade. On the contrary, Russia, with an economy heavily based on hydrocarbon commodities, is set up to be a natural rival to states in the Middle East. It benefits when the countries in the region do poorly, and oil prices rise. Furthermore, Russia will always feel more threatened than China by the scale of US military dominance in the Middle East as a region, simply due to geography. This geopolitical reality—in addition to very real fears about extremism and the Caucasus—is likely a factor in recent Russian military escalations in Syria, as Moscow is eager to preserve its only real foothold in the region.

The Chinese, on the other hand, do not see the Middle East as within their natural sphere of influence, and—quite wisely—have little interest in the expense and risk of assuming the traditionally American role of security guarantor there. They have no desire in directly challenging the US on these matters; on the contrary, they have historically benefitted from the American efforts to ensure the continued stable flow of energy supplies. Nevertheless, China will continue to grow its military capabilities, and this could present an opportunity for the United States to draw the Chinese into low-risk, trust-building partnerships in the Gulf, similar to the cooperation in recent years on counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.[88]

Finally, and most importantly, while the United States in the 2020s will play a more expanded security role in the Middle East than it has under Obama, it will still look increasingly to countries of the region to help shoulder more of their own security burdens, due to the domestic trends and constraints in both the US and Europe noted previously. In many ways, this is one of the most exciting prospects of the next decade, as many Arab countries become more capable and confident as actors in their own neighbourhoods. Current regional participation in the counter-ISIL coalition is instructive in this regard. Arab countries participating in the mission are fully and capably contributing, flying challenging sorties and demonstrating expertise with their advanced Western hardware—the United Arab

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[87] Kissinger, "The chance for a New World Order."
[88] Wang, "China expert."

Emirates' performance in the fight against ISIL in Syria is an encouraging example.[89] Likewise, recent actions in Yemen, while imperfectly executed, at the very least demonstrate regional players' new commitments to being active agents in matters of their own regional security. Though approaches will surely have to be refined to guard against the kinds of atrocious—and ultimately mission-counterproductive—civilian casualties seen in the Saudi strike operations in Yemen, these improvements will come as countries become more experienced in combat, and continue to benefit from capacity-building cooperation with the United States.

A "Just Right" Policy

Having assessed assumptions about what the United States, the region, and other key global players will look like in the next decade, what does it mean for the shape of US policy to come? In many ways, given the current geopolitical and domestic pressures that the US faces, the most expected outcome will be a return to the norm of US policy in the region, the traditional median between the excesses of George W. Bush and the regressive tendencies of Obama. On the whole, this looks like a United States that openly declares the Middle East as a priority, and is much more consistently engaged, both diplomatically and, when necessary, militarily. However, while still willing to act without a UN imprimatur when necessary, it will seek partners to help create legitimacy and relieve pressure on its own resources. To support the strength and readiness of these partnerships, continuing emphasis will be placed on military-to-military cooperation, helping to build confidence between countries that, despite convergent interests, remain culturally very different. This type of US-led but strongly alliance-based regional security architecture in many ways represents the right-sized Middle East policy that the United States seeks.

While the scenario of a United States refocused on Middle East security seems to be most likely in the event of the election of an establishment candidate, what of the alternatives? Given the fact that broad American approaches to foreign policy are typically the prerogative of the President—despite the fact that Congress increasingly seeks to have a say—much rides on the character of the individual who prevails in 2016. The candidate field displays a wide range of foreign policy views when it comes to the Middle East. However, the mainstream candidates of both parties hew to the norm of an active (but not overbearing) US foreign policy in the Middle East. Although none supports George W. Bush-scale interventionism in the region, a number of candidates believe that the US should take a more active policy in Syria, something Clinton advocated for, at odds with President Obama, during her tenure as his Secretary of State. A number of candidates also support

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[89] Chandrasekaran, "In the UAE."

more American effort in containing Iranian activity in the Arab world in the aftermath of the nuclear deal.

Thus, while it is possible (though very unlikely) that a fringe isolationist like Sanders could become President, the odds are against it. Nevertheless, in this unlikely scenario, the problems of the region would likely continue on their downward, violent trajectory. The vacuum would be bloodily fought over for some time, either between regional players who don't have the military acumen to bring a swift conclusion to the test of force, or with interspersed intervention from adventurous outside powers like the Russians. Indeed, extended American neglect of the region through the 2020s would likely create a situation either so dangerous from a security standpoint, or hellish from a humanitarian one, that it would eventually prompt American action no matter what. And that action, when it did come, would follow the same ally-seeking model in reaction to the faults of the Bush Doctrine.

Nevertheless, while it is a simple matter to talk about judicious, coalition-based foreign policy in times when the broad international parameters are known, how might we account for the black swan events, such as the Arab Spring, that are both infrequent yet inevitable? The fall of the clerical regime in Iran, a massive terrorist attack on American soil, a third intifada in Palestine—all of these events would draw a significant American response. Even a committed isolationist would be hard pressed not to respond militarily to another 9/11-style attack on US soil, and the American public would almost certainly demand such a response. In times of crisis, domestic constraints lift, tolerance for sacrifice increases, and US policy tends to revert to its most instinctive historic norms, a policy morally driven and based on a notion of American duty and exceptionalism. And while recent experiences in Iraq might make such a policy response seem like a frightening and undesirable outcome, if channelled appropriately by allies, American military might can be a transformative element.

Thus, even if a game changing event is to occur in the 2020s, there is still a strong case to be made that the United States, through learning from the worst tendencies in its national foreign policy character, will be better positioned to take advantage—with its partners—of its best elements: a regional policy that is neither too big, nor too small, but just right for the times and the challenges of the twenty-first century Middle East.

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Clash of Interests: Political Contestation and State Reponses after the Arab Spring

Hassan Barari, PhD

Introduction

On the whole, the Arab region has been trapped in a cycle of authoritarianism, since the inception of the Arab state system that emerged in the wake of the First World War. Indeed, "Arab antipathy to the third wave of democratization—a wave that swept much of Europe and other parts of the world during the latter quarter of the last century—is striking."[90]

In December 2010, the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi—a Tunisian vegetable vendor—triggered the Arab Spring. Within weeks, a wave of protests spilled over into some of the Arab region. If anything, the outbreak of the Arab Spring shattered the "president for life" model of governance in the MENA area.[91] Of course, the reactions of Arab regimes to this unprecedented phenomenon have ranged from calculated political or economic concessions to repression. Unlike republican regimes, the repertoires of monarchic regimes included various strategies for containing the spill-over effect of the Arab Spring, which enabled them to survive. And yet, the jockeying for sway between regimes and opposition movements is far from over.

This paper addresses the following questions. First, what strategies will organizations that engage in political contestation in autocratic states employ over the next decade? Second, what strategies will autocratic regimes adopt in their bid to counter these internal challenges? In particular, within the framework of the previous two questions, this paper addresses further questions such as: What factors will determine which of these approaches they will choose? What are the lessons learned from the Arab Spring, with regard to strategies, and how these strategies will inform future state-society interaction in years to come? At this point, it is worth mentioning that the paper does not refer to groups – such as al-Qaeda, ISIS, and like-minded groups – that embrace transnational objectives.

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[90] Barari, "The persistence of autocracy," .99.
[91] For more details see Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life.*

Regime Strategies during the Next Decade

The survival strategies employed by regimes in many of the MENA countries during the post-Arab Spring will vary according to regime type. Monarchies (the GCC countries, Morocco, and Jordan) are less threatened by internal challenges.[92] Hence, barring regional turmoil, the relative monarchical stability is most likely to continue for a decade to come.

Four conditions will allow the various Arab monarchies to avoid repercussions from the Arab Spring uprisings during the next decade. First, rent made available by oil revenues will allow GCC countries to adopt political strategies to forestall mass opposition. Second, none of the internal opposition in any monarchies – with the exception of Bahrain – will enjoy the backing of any significant and influential external players. Third, Arab monarchies have cultivated alliances with the West, which in turn helps them to suppress internal opposition. Fourth, internal opposition movements in each of the monarchies are most likely to demand political reform as opposed to the ouster of their rulers. Therefore, the ability of monarchies to escape the impact of the Arab Spring and maintain power without giving into the demands for genuine reform is a function of the interplay of the above factors. As long as these four factors, or some of them, hold, radical changes are hardly possible and, hence, the monarchical structure will prevail for years to come.

In monarchies such as Jordan and Morocco (lacking rent generated by oil resources), they will have to introduce managed reform from above. They did that during the Arab Spring, so that they could "stand above the political fray," and "co-opt various elements into the political system."[93] Indeed, in both Jordan and Morocco, the Islamist parties never sought to bring down the regime, as was the case in Egypt. In Morocco, relations between the regime and Islamists are cooperative, while in Jordan they range from cooperative to combative, in some cases. King Abdullah II refused to cave in to the Saudi and Egyptian pressure to declare the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. I argue that in the ten years to come, the Islamists in both Jordan and Morocco will have continued the same pattern of working from within, and in a gradual manner. In Jordan, the regime is most likely to resort to dividing the Islamist movement and will de-Islamize the public space.[94]

The monarchic regimes will also continue the strategy of maintaining neo-patrimonial structures of political organization. Hence, the link between the ruling elite and its narrow trusted circle in key constituencies (tribes, for instance) will

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[92] See Gause, *Kings for All Seasons*.
[93] Andrew Barwig, "The 'New Palace Guards'," 439.
[94] In the last few months, the regime has helped to divide the Muslim Brotherhood institutionally in Jordan, a measure that will most likely emasculate the movement altogether.

take the shape of clientelism. While this system provides the autocratic regime with loyalty in a certain part of the society, as a method of political rule to check the population, it is inherently unstable. The unequal access to government resources will only expand the constituency of the disgruntled and resentful. This will only provide the Islamic parties the political opportunity to thrive. Besides, it is not yet clear whether the regime will have enough financial revenue to continue with this client-patron relationship with certain constituencies.

Countries that have to adopt an economic liberal approach, whereby the public sector will no longer be able to absorb the generations of educated youth, will face a real challenge. The inability of regimes to meet the needs of new generations and the difficulties they will face in trying to uphold their current life style, let alone improving living standards, will undoubtedly raise questions about the legitimacy of these regimes in years to come. Unlike the case in the GCC countries, the dynamics of instability in both Morocco and Jordan will be mainly informed by the worsening economic conditions. Chances are that both countries will fare badly in the economic field. Under these circumstances, more powerful protest movements will come to the fore, a development that may push the two regimes to opt for a combination of co-optation and repression.

The typology that is based on regime type is warranted for three reasons. First, monarchic regimes are more legitimate than their republican counterparts. Second, the opposition movements do not seek to bring down regimes. Third, and more important, is the fact that the above-mentioned four factors are available in monarchies, but not necessarily in republican regimes. I argue that, seen in this way, non-democratic republican regimes employ repression as a key strategy to attain both stability and survival. During the last few years, various forms of repression have been implemented. Egypt and Syria are a case in point. In other words, it seems that autocratic regimes will always resort to violence and repression in order to place a huge price tag on protest movements and parties. Tunisia is the exception to the rule. And yet, even in Tunisia, the financial resources needed to keep initial democratization afloat are lacking.

Much to the surprise of pundits and observers, Saudi Arabia led a counter-revolution in 2013 to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from consolidating its power base in Egypt. But regional politics do, nevertheless, matter for all. Anti-Muslim Brotherhood regimes began to identify Iran as posing a threat to their interests. Ever since King Salman ascended to the Saudi throne in February 2015, he began to reset Saudi foreign policy. It seems that Riyadh is opting for making peace with political Islam. After Houthis took control of Sana'a, it also seems that Saudi Arabia is pushing for a united Sunni front against Iran and its regional proxies. As long as Iran poses a perceived threat to the Sunni world, key Arab countries may put the competition with Islamists on the back burner.

Although various Arab countries follow a different political strategy in dealing with the Islamist threat, the majority of them will continue using the Islamists as a

"bogeyman" to scare the West and force it to prop up the current autocratic status quo. An interview of King Abdullah II, by Jeffery Goldberg, reveals how these regimes use the Islamist as a bogeyman to send the West a message – either us or the Islamist.[95] I argue in this paper that they will continue to use this bogeyman as a key strategy for two reasons: first, Islamists are the only organized and formidable political forces that can be a viable alternative; and, second, they seek to demonize them so that they cannot find an ally in the West.

Regimes that feel threatened by the lack of reform will opt for the introduction of controlled political contestation. This strategy may be adopted in monarchies (except the GCC countries) and to some extent in Egypt. Various regimes can resort to some political opening, such as elections. However, it is hardly possible to see open and free political contestation and rotation of power. Elections will continue to be rigged and electoral law will most likely be based on gerrymandering so as to forestall the emergence of checks and balances.

Opposition Strategies

In the beginning of this paper, I argued that the GCC countries – except for Bahrain – may not experience any kind of formidable opposition that can put pressure on regimes to reform. But the same cannot be said about other monarchies, such as Jordan and Morocco, where the teetering economy may create a rather different dynamic and different calculations for all players involved in politics. Since opposition movements in both Morocco and Jordan do not call for a regime change, they will most likely work from within to affect the desired outcome. And yet, the expected lack of economic development, coupled with the disillusion with the lack of genuine political reform, will surely set in motion new peaceful protests. But still, the opposition movements in both Jordan and Morocco will be difficult to sell in the West, thus providing the regime with the privilege of introducing limited reform, to withdraw the rug from underneath the opposition.

Save for Tunisia, opposition in other republican countries, particularly in Egypt, will resort to a measured degree of activism, in the form of demonstrations, sit-ins and, in some cases, violence. In republican countries, opposition movements may have no control over their followers and thus a degree of violence may be witnessed. It is not yet clear whether the explosions that hit Egypt recently are linked to the opposition.

The opposition movements in both monarchies and republican countries will resort to political participation as long as it is seen as an effective way to produce political change. The chance to gain power through political participation can create the incentive for participation. Yet, the appeal of peaceful tactics can easily be undermined in the event that the autocratic regimes crack down on non-violent

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[95] See Goldberg, "The modern king in the Arab Spring."

protesters. That said, one should take into account that violence is less appealing to the public in general.

For the opposition movements to be effective, they may opt for building internal alliances as an effective strategy. To be sure, the Egyptian opposition was much more effective when it worked coherently. In Jordan, for instance, the opposition failed to form an effective alliance and was later fraught by divisions over their position with regard to the Syrian revolution. Some scholars rule out the possibility of forming alliances among the opposition groups in the MENA. Francesco Cavatorta argues that "in the MENA, contrary to some claims, effective unity of the opposition does not occur and it postulates that there is much more competition than cooperation among opposition groups."[96] This paper takes issue with this argument for two reasons: first, the main Islamic forces in Jordan were members of the Committee for the Coordination of National Opposition Parties. Most striking is the fact that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had a history of forging electoral alliances with secular parties, particularly the *Wafd* Party.[97] Second, opposition parties are rational actors. They will opt for anything that makes them stronger.

However, one should make a distinction about the ultimate objective of the various opposition movements. In Egypt, for instance, there have been many differences about the nature of the state: religious vs. civic state. It is hard to say that the current political crisis in Egypt is over democracy. Indeed, it is all about a struggle for power between the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist parties and secular opposition parties, on the one hand, and the military, on the other. According to Marina Ottaway, the strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was that they would use "the electoral arena, not necessarily because they are more democratic but because they can win elections."[98]

Another strategy that may be used by the opposition is deemed "wait and see." This means that, rather than confronting the autocratic regime head on and risking elimination, opposition forces could take advantage of the regime's failure to deliver. The most potent factor that could provide the opposition with the much-needed ammunition is the socio-economic one. Unlike the oil-rich countries, other countries will suffer from the lack of economic development and the challenge of unemployment and poverty. For this reason, the next outbreak of protest movements will be in those countries that maintain a firm grip on power, but without succeeding economically. In these countries no degree of "upgraded autocracy", to use the term of Steven Heydemann, are likely to convince the

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[96] Cavatorta, "Divided they stand, divided they fail," 3
[97] Pripstein-Pousney, "Multi-party elections in the Arab world," 50.
[98] Marina Ottaway, interview by Bernard Gwertzman, "Egypt's struggle for power," *Council on Foreign Relations,* December 5, 2012, accessed February 11, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/egypt/egypts-struggle-power/p29599.

masses not again to take to the streets with the objective of bringing down the regime.

It is not as if the opposition movement is monolithic. Indeed, even within the Muslim Brotherhood, there is a plethora of ideas and policy preferences. If the regimes fail to adopt an inclusive approach, the traditional leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood may well find it difficult to control its members. Some – the youth in particular – may be tempted to join a radical *takfiri* group, thus creating a different dynamic and paving the way for more violence. I argue that, seen in this way, the combination of the rise of youth unemployment and poverty, with the continuation of their disempowerment, is the recipe for opposition movements to move from non-violent to violent activism.

Considering the oppositions' preferences and choices from a different analytical angle, some would argue that the national context does matter. In countries where public participation is being allowed, the national economy is doing fairly well, the opposition is not seeking to replace the regime, and the regime enjoys some historical legitimacy, it is hard to think of a shakeup. The only viable and realistic choice for the opposition is to adopt peaceful tactics. However, in some republican countries, the interaction between the opposition and the regime is a zero-sum. If the opposition feels that political participation is both possible and can serve as a vehicle for assuming power, it will act in a rational and calculated way. If they feel that that is not possible, I argue that some circle within the opposition may think of going underground, a move that would change the dynamics of the relations, and make a resort to violence a viable option.

Conclusion

This paper examines the various strategies for avoiding a genuine democratic transformation that are likely to be used by non-democratic regimes in the MENA. In a similar vein, the paper examines the possible strategies that opposition parties can use to effect the desired change. It is worth noting that the masses in this part of the world came to the difficult conclusion that a failure in the democratic transition may either bring back the old regime, or pave the way for violence. Hence, opposition groups will either resort to violence, engage politically to bring about a degree of gradual change, or, in the case of some, will go underground.

To date, we have not seen genuine and sustained alliance-building among the opposition forces. On the contrary, there is more competition than cooperation among these political forces. If the state fails to deliver in the decade to come, opposition forces will have no choice but to engage in a kind of broad alliance-building in order to make a difference. However, some opposition groups will also adopt a "wait-and-see" approach. They hope that the autocratic regimes will fail and that people will be looking for an alternative. It remains to be seen whether the opposition groups will soon realize that it may not be a good strategy to only

take advantage of people's resentment and frustration, without coming up with an alternative platform.

Regimes will miscalculate if they do not understand that, short of creating the conditions for economic development and creating jobs, they will run the risk of facing a more determined and fierce youth. While some Arab regimes can rely on the West to at least not support the opposition movement, this cannot last for good. Legitimacy is to be bought internally, if stability is to be maintained in the years to come. And this entails that these countries meet the economic demands of the masses, or concede politically, in the shape of a more transparent political process.

That being said, one should take into account the wider regional strategic scene and the clashing interests of those who support the Arab uprisings (Qatar and Turkey, in particular) and those who support the status quo. An agreement or understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran will mitigate much of the conflict in the region and will affect the strategies chosen by regimes and oppositions. Perhaps, if there is a lesson to be learned from the Arab Spring, it is the need to think of the day after toppling a regime. In Libya and Yemen, for instance, the transition phase failed, thus creating the environment for civil wars. What aggravates the situation in both countries is the external interference.

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Part Two: Climate Change, Resources and Economy

MENA to 2025—Climate Change, Food, and Water Scarcity: Future Challenges

Scott Greenwood, PhD

Introduction

This chapter explores the implications that climate change, growing freshwater scarcity, and declining food production hold for the domestic and external security of Middle Eastern and North African states. Using a case study of Syria, the chapter illustrates how the failure of the Syrian government to assist communities and individuals whose livelihoods had been destroyed by the extreme drought was a key factor in motivating many of these individuals to join and support the popular resistance movement against the Bashar al-Assad regime in 2011. The region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is the most arid in the world ,with only three of the region's nineteen countries (Iraq, Iran, and Turkey) enjoying total renewable water sources above 1000 cubic meters per capita. Of the remaining sixteen countries, only four (Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria) possess renewable water resources in excess of 500 cubic meters per capita, while the rest all fall below this threshold.[1] Consequently, it is not surprising that the availability of water plays a critical role in the region's economic and political future. In addition, the MENA region is the greatest importer of food in the world, especially of cereals. The countries of the Arabian Peninsula are particularly food insecure, with several (Qatar, UAE, and Yemen) importing upwards of 90% of their food needs.

Climate change is an important driver of both water scarcity and food insecurity, but it is only one of several important drivers, including population growth, urbanization, changing consumption habits, economic growth, and changes in land use. Consequently, any analysis of the potential contributions that water scarcity and food insecurity can make to civil unrest or civil conflict must take into account these other important variables. MENA countries are already experiencing the effects of climate change and the impacts of these changes in regional weather patterns will become more significant over time. At the same time, many MENA countries are experiencing high levels of population growth and rapid urbanization, increasing demand for both water and food, especially in cities. While agriculture continues to be the region's largest user of water (on average almost 90% of the region's freshwater is used for agriculture), the processes of urbanization and economic growth are leading to greater demand for water from residential and industrial users, putting even greater pressure on already stressed

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[1] UNESCO, *Water for A Sustainable World*, 12.

surface and groundwater resources. These processes, in combination with observed and predicted climate changes, pose stark and robust challenges for MENA governments in both the near- and long-term future.

Observed Climatic Trends in the Middle East and North Africa

Observed climatic trends in the Middle East and North Africa over the past several decades indicate increasing near surface temperatures and lower levels of precipitation, especially during winter. According to Barkhordian, mean annual and seasonal near surface temperatures in North Africa increased at a statistically significant rate between 1980 and 2009.[2] Significant increases in annual minimum and maximum temperature were also observed during the same time period.[3] These increases in temperatures were accompanied by lower levels of winter precipitation most notably north of the Atlas Mountains and along the Algerian and Tunisian coasts. Furthermore, a trend towards slightly wetter late summer and fall conditions in northern Morocco and Algeria was also discovered.[4]

The general observed temperature and precipitation trends in North Africa match those for the rest of the Mediterranean basin. A 2011 NOAA study of the Mediterranean basin as a whole, during the period from 1902 to 2010, indicated a clear trend towards a drier climate emerging in the 1970s, with the greatest observed drying occurring in the countries of the Levant (Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon).[5] A significant trend towards warmer and drier conditions was confirmed by a more recent study using daily observational weather station data from across the Arab region as a whole.[6] In the Arabian Peninsula, an observed downward trend in precipitation from 1980-2008 is not considered statistically significant, but observations of increased temperatures during the same period were found to be significant. The most robust findings were increases in annual minimum temperature trends. Sixteen of twenty-one observation stations in the Arabian Peninsula showed statistically significant warming trends with the highest annual increases observed in the United Emirates, northwest Oman, and Qatar.[7] Overall the Middle East and North Africa are likely to experience a continuing trend in the next ten years towards longer summers and shorter winters, with a general tendency towards fewer winter precipitation events. At the same time, there are likely to be continued instances of extreme weather, such as the 2006-10 Syrian drought and the February 2015 winter storm that saw record snowfall from

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[2] Barkhordarian, et al., "Consistency of observed near surface temperature trends,"

[3] Vizy & Cook, "Mid-twenty-first century changes in extreme events."

[4] Barkhordarian, et al., "The expectation of future precipitation change."

[5] Hoerling, et al., "On the increased frequency of Mediterranean drought."

[6] Donat, et al., "changes in extreme temperature and precipitation."

[7] Al Sarmi & Washington, "Recent observed climate change over the Arabian Peninsula."

Lebanon to northern Saudi Arabia.[8] These near-term climatic and meteorological trends will mean increased water stress in Middle Eastern and North African countries, as well as lower levels of soil moisture, with accompanying negative consequences for agricultural productivity, particularly on non-irrigated land.

Water Scarcity and the Security of Middle Eastern and North African States

For those interested in whether increasing water stress and observed climate changes have implications for domestic and external security dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa, the case of Syria offers useful lessons and insight.[9] First, as a country that relies heavily on both surface water and groundwater sources, Syria is an ideal case for making generalizations to MENA countries that rely on both types of water sources (Morocco, Algeria,[10] Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon) as well as MENA countries that rely primarily on groundwater (Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, Palestine, and Yemen). Another grouping is the Persian Gulf oil-exporting countries that can rely heavily on desalinized seawater to supplement their usage of groundwater. These countries will be discussed in a separate section, as they are the exception, rather than the rule, regarding regional water availability trends. Second, Syria is expected to experience many of the same effects from climate change as the rest of the Middle East and North Africa, namely: higher surface temperatures, lower levels of precipitation, and more volatile precipitation events. Third, Syria experienced widespread civil unrest in 2011, following a crippling four-year drought (2006-2010), which displaced over a million people and devastated entire communities in the country's east and northeast. Although the initial protests in Syria were peaceful in nature, the Bashar al-Assad regime's violent responses to the protests led to the rise of armed resistance to the regime and eventually to the ongoing civil war in that country. Consequently, Syria is an ideal case for investigating the potential links between water scarcity and civil unrest/conflict in the Middle East and North Africa.

In 2012, several publications, alleging a direct link between the drought and popular unrest in Syria during 2011, appeared.[11] However, none of these

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[8] Burton, "Rare desert snow in Saudi Arabia."

[9] For the purposes of this chapter, "domestic security" is defined as the degree to which a political regime or government is free from internal threats such as sustained anti-regime demonstrations, armed rebellion, and military coups. "External security" is defined as the degree to which a government or state is safe from actions by other states, or non-state actors, such as militias or transnational terrorist groups, which threaten the former's sovereignty over its territory and/or population.

[10] Algeria also relies on desalinized seawater, but to a much lesser extent than the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf.

[11] Friedman, "The other Arab Spring"; Femia & Werrell. *Syria*; and Mohtadi, "Climate change and the Syrian uprising."

publications specified the exact ways in which the effects of drought contributed to the rise of civil unrest. Other research has illustrated that the connection between drought and civil unrest in Syria in 2011 was indirect, rather than direct, and that popular frustration with government policy was the key variable behind protests in Dar'a and other cities where the civil unrest initially began.[12] Instead of directly causing thousands of disgruntled rural migrants to rise up in protest, the drought's effects and the government's negligible response to the drought primarily exacerbated rural residents' existing dissatisfaction with the policies and poor governing practices of President Bashar al-Assad and his inner circle pursued during the 2000s.

Specific areas of concern were the impacts of economic liberalization on small farmers, rising rural poverty, and the failure of the Bashar al-Assad government to take measures to mitigate the drought's effects on agricultural communities. In expanding economic liberalization to include agriculture, the Bashar al-Assad regime pursued a series of policies that led to a (re)concentration of Syria's best arable land and water resources into the hands of wealthy farmers and regime cronies.[13] Another effect of liberalizing the agricultural sector was increased rural poverty, particularly in the regions that would be most negatively affected by the drought: the north and east.[14] Thus, when severe drought conditions began in 2006, many rural communities were already suffering from very poor economic conditions. Popular frustration with these conditions was soon exacerbated by once reliable water sources running dry and the government's failure to implement its recently approved drought response plan. Adding insult to injury were security forces' efforts to prevent those most negatively affected by the drought from leaving their communities.[15] Finally, frustration among small farmers affected by the drought reached its peak in 2008, when the government eliminated long-standing subsidies for fertilizer and diesel fuel, nearly quadrupling the price of each. In response, thousands of small farmers abandoned their fields and migrated to Syria's major urban centres with their families, where they lived in tent cities with no basic services.[16]

The combination of economic liberalization policies that favoured the few at the expense of the many, the government's unwillingness to assist communities most negatively affected by the drought, and the government's refusal to help rural

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[12] De Châtel, "The role of drought and climate change"; and Greenwood, "Drought, governance, and civil unrest."

[13] During the 1950s and 1960s, the Ba'th party implemented land reform policies that led to more equitable patterns of land ownership. However, economic liberalization policies during the 2000s radically reversed this trend. Please see Ababsa, "Agrarian counter-reform in Syria (2000-2010)"; and Haddad. *Business Networks in Syria.*

[14] El Laithy & Abu-Ismail, *Poverty in Syria: 1996-2004.*

[15] International Crisis Group, "Popular protest in North Africa and the Middle East (VI)," 23.

[16] De Châtel, 6-7; and International Crisis Group, "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East," 16.

migrants living in tent cities gain access to adequate housing and basic services, led to high levels of discontent among these migrants and among those who remained in rural towns and villages devastated by the drought. Thus, when popular demonstrations broke out in the southern city of Dar'a and other Syrian cities in the spring of 2011, many rural migrants who were displaced to these cities by the drought and the government's elimination of key agricultural subsidies joined these demonstrations. In addition, many residents of small rural towns and villages staged smaller-scale protests in solidarity with those taking place in the major cities.[17] Whereas long-time urban residents took to the streets to express anger over the common grievances of long-term unemployment, rising poverty, and frustration with corruption, rural migrants to urban areas were also motivated by a desire to express their frustration with the government's blatant unwillingness to assist individuals and communities whose livelihoods were shattered by the drought.

Although the effects of the 2006-2010 drought were not a direct cause of the 2011 civil unrest and subsequent civil war in Syria, the combination of drought and the government's feeble efforts to mitigate the drought's effects did lead to a collapse of support for the Ba'th regime among the rural poor, particularly in those areas (the north and east) that would eventually be taken over by armed rebel groups. The loss of this constituency's support was a key factor in making the Bashar al-Assad regime more vulnerable to both non-violent and violent opposition than it would have been otherwise. Had the Bashar al-Assad regime pursued economic policies, especially agricultural policies, that created more equitable increases in rural incomes and less inequality in land ownership during the 2000s, the regime most likely would have enjoyed more political support from the rural poor prior to the destabilizing impacts of political transitions in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of regime cronies such as businessman Rami Makhlouf becoming fabulously wealthy from privatization and other economic liberalization policies, at the same time that the government was cutting agricultural subsidies vital for the economic survival of small farmers, undermined support for Bashar al-Assad's regime among the rural poor even further.

Although severe drought caused neither the popular uprising nor the civil war in Syria, the drought did create physical and economic circumstances that made the Bashar al-Assad regime more vulnerable to popular resistance. Ultimately, it was the government's failure to take action to mitigate these circumstances that proved to be the most significant factor leading to anti-regime mobilization in rural areas and the breakdown of domestic security in the country's north and east. Moreover, as armed rebel movements took advantage of the Assad regime's inability to exert control over these areas, the Islamic State, Jabha al-Nusra, and other groups were able to threaten the domestic and external security of Syria and its neighbours,

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[17] Leenders, "Collective action and mobilization in Dar'a," 420-422.

leading to a situation, in 2015, where nearly half of Syrian and Iraqi territories were outside the control of their central governments.

Climate Change and Food Security in the Middle East and North Africa

A 2011 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) report illustrates the disruptive impacts that drier and warmer climatic conditions may have on agricultural production and the livelihoods of farmers and urban residents in Middle Eastern and North African countries. According to that report, climate change's principal global economic impact will be higher world food prices, while its local effects will be decreases in agricultural yields and greater climate variability. The authors of the report estimate that, between 2000 and 2050, the world prices of rice, maize, soybeans, and wheat will rise by 62%, 63%, 72%, and 39%, respectively, due to rising global incomes and population growth. However, climate change is projected to cause additional world market price increases of "32 to 37 percent for rice, 52 to 55 percent for maize, 94 to 111 percent for wheat, and 11 to 14 percent for soybeans." Thus, by 2050, the combined effects of demographic changes, global economic growth, and climate change could lead to a total increase in the world price for rice of 94 to 99 percent, 105 to 108 percent for maize, 83 to 86 percent for soybeans, and 133 to 150% for wheat.[18]

According to the same IFPRI report, the principal impact of climate change within the Middle East and North Africa will be lower agricultural yields. The report's authors conclude that "a combination of lower rainfall and higher temperatures, in addition to changes in solar radiation, the physical and chemical characteristics of the soil, and levels of fertilizer applications" will cause lower agricultural production.[19] Looking at the case of Syria, specifically, the local effects of climate change are projected to lower the growth rates in the agricultural sector by 0.6% *annually,* from what could be achieved without the effects of climate change. Furthermore, climate change is expected to accelerate the agricultural sector's diminishing role in Middle Eastern and North African economies. "The model results show that [in Syria] the share of agricultural GDP out of total GDP declines from about 17% in 2007, to just less than 11% in 2030, to finally reach 7% by the end of the simulation period in 2050."[20] The authors calculate that the poorest 20 per cent of rural non-farm households will suffer the most from the global and local impacts of climate change, due to the "joint effect of being net food buyers

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[18] Breisinger, et al., *Global and Local Economic Impacts of Climate Change in Syria,* 13. Please also see Lagi, Betrand & Ban-Yam, "The food crises and political instability," for a thorough examination of how high global food prices can contribute to social and political instability in the Arab world.

[19] Breisinger, et al., 16.

[20] Breisinger, et al., 17.

who spend a high share of their income on food and of earning incomes from factors of production most affected by climate change, namely, land and unskilled labour." Estimates from the economic model suggest that this group could see its income decrease up to 2.8% *annually* from 2000 to 2050.[21] As a final point, the IFPRI report demonstrates the vulnerability of Bedouin to the effects of climate change. Interviews with residents in Syria's desert regions indicated that many sheepherders with 200 sheep or less were forced to give up animal herding and migrate to urban areas in search of work during the 2006-10 drought. Overall, 70-80 per cent of households in some Bedouin communities abandoned animal herding as their primary livelihood, due to the drought.[22]

Consequently, the global and local effects of climate change will have clear negative effects on the fiscal and macroeconomic health of governments in the Middle East and North Africa. Lower agricultural yields will mean greater food imports and higher import bills, especially if climate change, global economic growth, and demographic trends do indeed lead to dramatically higher prices for MENA staples such as wheat and rice. Lower agricultural yields also mean fewer agricultural exports and less foreign exchange from agro-exports. Overall, the IFPRI report illustrates very clearly how Middle Eastern and North African countries can experience significant negative economic effects from climate change, primarily in the form of higher food prices, and these effects can have grave implications for the macroeconomic and political stability of the region.[23]

The Persian Gulf States: Water and Food Security Achieved?

Compared to the rest of the Middle East and North Africa, the Persian Gulf states that can afford to desalinate seawater on a large scale and that can use earnings from oil exports to import food and heavily subsidize its price, would seem to be in a much less vulnerable position with regard to food and water security. However, the absence of significant sources of surface water, the unsustainable extraction of groundwater, and disincentives to conserve desalinated water mean that these countries are not as secure as one might think. For example, the practice of providing freshwater for domestic consumption at no cost, or at rates of 1-2% of the cost of production, provides little incentive for individual consumers to save water. In addition, unstable world oil prices threaten the ability of some Persian Gulf states to afford the expensive consumer subsidies (including those for water,

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[21] Breisinger, et al., 22.
[22] Breisinger, et al., 30.
[23] For a discussion of how global weather events may have contributed to the outbreak of the Arab Spring, please see Werrell & Femia, *The Arab Spring and Climate Change*.

food, and energy) that these countries' leaders rely on for maintaining the political support of their citizenry.

In the Arabian Peninsula renewable freshwater sources are very meagre, as indicated below:

Country	**Renewable Freshwater Availability in Cubic Meters per capita**
Bahrain	3
Kuwait	0
Oman	385
Qatar	26
Saudi Arabia	83
United Arab Emirates	16

In the absence of significant sources of surface water, groundwater is the principal source for meeting the water needs of agriculture, and agriculture is the largest freshwater user, ranging from a low of 45% of all freshwater withdrawals in Bahrain, to a high of 88% in Saudi Arabia.[24] However, agriculture only makes up a very tiny percentage of the value added to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in these countries:

Country	**Contribution of Agriculture to GDP (% of Value Added)**
Bahrain	Data Not Available
Kuwait	0.4
Oman	1.3
Qatar	0.1
Saudi Arabia	1.8
United Arab Emirates	0.7

Consequently, a great deal of water is being used for a very small sector of the economy that generates very few jobs (relative to the service and manufacturing sectors). The figures above are also helpful indicators of the tension in the Persian Gulf states between water and food security. Within MENA, the countries of the Arabian Peninsula are particularly dependent on food imports to feed their

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[24] World Bank Development Indicators <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.H2O.FWTL.ZS>. The percentage of freshwater used for agriculture in Yemen is actually the highest in the Arabian Peninsula, at 91%.

populations and are making efforts to boost domestic food production in order to be more self-reliant. However, increasing food production and expanding the use of arable land raises demand for freshwater, especially if inefficient irrigation methods continue to be used (for example, in Qatar, 70% of the farmers who grow fodder for livestock rely on flood irrigation).[25] One possible solution to this dilemma is investment in overseas farmland and foreign food-processing companies. By investing in countries with productive farmland and ample sources of water, wealthy Persian Gulf states can increase their food security without intensifying their current overexploitation of groundwater, or being forced to use very expensive desalinated water for domestic agriculture. However, overseas investments are not without significant risks, including retaliation and sabotage by small farmers forcibly relocated from lands bought by Gulf investors; the unwitting participation of investors in national and regional political disputes; poor transportation and export facilities in host countries; and the failure of host governments to protect the interests of investors when the latter are reluctant to pay bribes demanded by corrupt host government officials.[26]

Conclusion

Looking towards 2025, Middle Eastern and North African states are very vulnerable to the effects of climate change and spikes in global food prices caused by world population growth, speculation in global commodity markets, and extreme weather events that disrupt regional and world agricultural production. Longer summers and shorter and drier winters, in combination with rapid population growth (due to both natural growth and the migration of refugees from conflicts in Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen), will increase pressure on already over-stressed surface and groundwater supplies across the region. In addition, lower agricultural yields associated with climate change and rising world food prices will mean growing food import bills for MENA governments, with particularly negative consequences for oil-poor countries. MENA governments, in concert with the international community, should take decisive measures to encourage greater water conservation in urban and rural areas, particularly with irrigated agriculture. The current regional emphasis on "supply-side" measures that extract greater and greater amounts of water from surface and groundwater resources is unsustainable. This is particularly true for groundwater, as the extraction of this resource at rates that greatly exceed the rate of natural renewal will continue to exhaust and pollute wells in agricultural areas.[27] Without adequate water supplies, local economies and ecosystems will be devastated, forcing rural residents to migrate to cities, where unemployment, underemployment, and poverty levels are

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[25] Francis, "Qatar food security strategy," 41.
[26] Tetreault, Wheeler & Shepherd, "Win-win versus lose-lose."
[27] Voss, et al., "Groundwater depletion in the Middle East"; and Greenwood, "Water insecurity, climate change and governance in the Arab World," 146-147.

already high. In sum, without bold and decisive action to manage scarce water supplies more effectively and sustainably, water and food insecurity will pose significant threats to the domestic and external security of many MENA states, especially Yemen, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Israel.[28]

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[28] In Israel, the principal threat comes from the extreme maldistribution of water resources between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. Although Israel is growing its capacity to desalinate seawater for domestic use, this new source of supply is limited almost exclusively to Israeli Jews. At the same time, Palestinian Arab farmers' access to water in the West Bank is becoming increasingly tenuous as more and more water is diverted from their use to Israeli settlements (for both agricultural and domestic use).

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Energy, Politics, and Security in the Middle East and North Africa

Paul Sullivan, PhD[29]

Introduction

How are energy related issues likely to influence security in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in the future?

Military, political, economic, financial, demographic, climate, and other non-technical issues will likely dominate energy security calculations in the region for the next ten years. The region is in turmoil. There are violence and instability in many areas. How the violence and instability will be handled may determine the energy security situations of the region in many ways and on many levels. Politics within and across countries will be vital for the next ten years. Financing of new energy systems, greater energy supply, either from oil and gas or renewables and nuclear, will also determine where energy security within and across countries will go. Many of the poorer countries will need assistance from the richer ones in the region. If that financial assistance is not forthcoming, then some of the political tensions and instabilities in the region could worsen.

Demography and economic development are the main drivers for energy demand. There are ways to reduce the direct connections between energy needs and demographic and economic growth, but that would involve much better demand management and the reduction of subsidies for not only energy, but also for water and food, and other products and processes that require energy, in the region.

Weather change could have a potentially significant impact on energy security across the board in the region in the next ten years.[30] If temperatures increase on average there will be increasing demands on energy for cooling. There could be significant increases in demand for water for electrical generation. If the rains are less than expected, many of the countries in the region will have to move to greater desalination faster than expected, and this will put increasing stress on energy systems and energy investments. The poorer countries that do not have the financial freedom and ability to invest in climate change mitigation options could

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[29] All opinions are Dr. Sullivan's alone and do not represent those of the U.S. Government, The National Defense University, or any other entity he may be a part of.

[30] DNI, "Global trends 2025," "Global trends 2030," "Global water security," "Natural resources in 2020, 2030, and 2040"; World Bank, "Climate change and migration," "Turn down the Heat," "Turn down the heat: climate extremes"; Thomson Reuters, "The World in 2025"; United Nations, "CO2 emissions per capita."

be the hardest hit. Climate-induced instability is and will be real. This region may be one of the most vulnerable.

The Energy-Water-Food Nexus

The energy-water-food nexus could be of increasing concern, and could affect overall energy, water, and food security for the region.[31] An example of this can be found in Saudi Arabia, which used about 1.5 million barrels of oil a day to desalinate water in recent times. If its trend of using oil for desalinating water continues, according to the World Bank, Saudi Arabia could be using as much as 8 million barrels of oil a day to produce fresh water.[32] This would lead to a great decline in the ability of Saudi Arabia to export oil. Saudi Arabia needs to find alternatives to oil for desalination and quickly. Many MENA countries, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE and Oman, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Algeria, Djibouti, and Tunisia are hugely dependent on desalinated water, either from oil-fired or natural gas-fired desalination plants. These countries will need to find alternatives to oil and gas for desalination.[33] There will be considerable unmet water demand gaps in almost all MENA countries in the coming decade.[34] These water demand gaps will have to be filled, or trouble will happen.[35]

If energy, water and food subsidies in the region are cut or phased out in the next ten years, which is unlikely given the heady and volatile political environment of so many of these countries, then the energy, water, and food security situations of the countries could become much better.[36] However, the major unanswered

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[31] Fath, "Present and future trends"; FAO, AQUASTAT, "Bahrain", "Egypt", "Iraq" "Jordan", "Kuwait", "Lebanon", "Libya", "Oman", "Qatar", "Saudi Arabia", "Sudan", "Syria", "UAE", "Yemen"; FAO, "Coping with water scarcity," "Energy-smart food for people and climate," "Food losses and waste," "Food security and nutrition in the Near East and North Africa," "Food security and nutrition in the Southern and Eastern Rim," "Food wastage footprints," "Food waste footprints: full cost accounting," "Food waste footprints: impacts on natural resources," "Impacts of bioenergy on food security," "Global food losses and food waste," "Livestock's long shadow," "Proceedings expert consultation meeting," "Reducing food loss and waste," "Report of the expert consultation," "State of food and agriculture," "Statistical yearbook, 2014," "The energy-water-food nexus," "The state of food and agriculture, 2014," "The state of the world's land and water resources," "Walking the nexus talk."
[32] World Bank, "Renewable energy desalination."
[33] World Bank, "Renewable energy desalination"; Al-Heshami, "A review of desalination trends in the GCC."
[34] World Bank, "Renewable energy desalination."
[35] Axworthy, et al., "Global agenda 2013"; DNI, "Global trends 2025," "Global trends 2030," "Global water security"; Bailey, et al., "Edible oil."
[36] World Bank, "Corrosive subsidies"; Al-Zubari, "Water-energy-food nexus in the Arab region"; IEA, "IEA analysis of fossil fuel subsidies"; "Water for energy"; IMF, "Energy subsides in the Middle East and North Africa," "Subsidy reform in the Middle East and North Africa"; Laamrani, "Nexus water energy food security in Arab countries"; Lubega, et al., "Opportunities for integrated energy and water management in the GCC"; Naja, "Towards a food secure Arab world"; Rickli, "The nexus between energy, water and food"; Rodriguez, et al., "Thirsty energy"; Shell,

question is how such subsidy cuts could generate political and other instabilities in the region. There is a deep-seated "Catch-22" situation in the energy, water, and food situations of the region. How this nexus is handled could greatly determine the future of the region. Resources are tied to revolutions.[37]

As food is wasted, water is wasted. As water is wasted, energy is wasted. As energy is over-consumed, water is wasted, because water goes to making electricity, especially for cooling towers, and a significant amount of water goes toward making refined oil products and petrochemicals from natural gas.[38] There is a circular, triple resource threat caused by subsidies and waste in the region. These resource threats cause resource, social, political, and economic stresses that can lead to greater instability, revolutions, and insurgencies.[39]

Renewable energy

Renewables could be a more important source of energy in the region by 2025.[40] It is hard to predict what percentage of the energy systems of the MENA countries will be renewable at the end of our time period, but clearly it will be more than now. Some countries are moving faster than others. Morocco is one of the fastest movers. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE are pouring investments in renewable technology developments and uses. Egypt knows it will need more renewables. Israel, even with its new and large gas finds, still has a focus on renewables.

One of the main drivers of renewables will be desalination. Another will be internal subsidies and renewable standards and laws, tax breaks, and the like. Another driver will be the need for some MENA countries to keep their oil and gas revenues up.

"Understanding the stress nexus"; Waterfootprint.org, "Product water footprints: energy"; Sullivan, "A mutually dependent relationship"; IEA, "Water for energy"; Rodriguez, et al., "Thirsty energy."

[37] Sullivan, "The energy-insurgency revolution nexus," "The water-energy-food-conflict nexus in MENA," "Water, food, energy, qat and conflict: Yemen."

[38] Sullivan, "A mutually dependent relationship"; IEA, "Water for energy"; Rodriguez, et al., "Thirsty energy."

[39] Sullivan, "The energy-insurgency revolution nexus," "The water-energy-food-conflict nexus in MENA," "Water, food, energy, qat and conflict."

[40] Bridle, et al., "Fossil-fuel subsidies"; Clean Energy Business Council, "Water and energy in MENA"; Meltzer, "Low carbon energy transitions"; MESIA, "Mena solar outlook 2015"; Mohtar, "The MENA nexus initiative"; Montgomery, "North Africa"; Naja, "Towards a food secure Arab world"; Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, "Prospects for renewable energy in GCC states"; PwC, "Developing renewable energy projects"; World Bank, "Renewable energy desalination"; United Nations, "The renewable energy sector in North Africa," "CO2 emissions per capita"; University of Cambridge & PwC, "Financing the future of energy."

If the science and business of advanced batteries move significantly forward in the next ten years, then renewables could spread much faster than expected in MENA and in the world.[41]

Petrochemicals and Other Energy-Intensive Industries

The drive to "diversify" the economies by developing petrochemicals industries and other energy-intensive industries in the oil- and gas-exporting countries in the region could change energy markets in the region and globally. As these diversifying industries develop, these countries will use more and more of their potentially exportable oil and gas for internal use. If these countries subsidize energy in order to diversify their economies, they could make the resource waste and stress situations even worse.

The Iran Deal, Iraq, Syria, the Sunni-Shia and the Arab-Kurdish Divides

The Iran deal could be a huge game changer. Iran has massive natural gas reserves, but due to sanctions and mismanagement has not developed its LNG export capacity. Sanctions also restricted its oil investments, production, and exports. The Iran Deal of July 2015 could change all of this. Iran could be a significant player in world natural gas markets, and has the potential to be a far greater oil producer and exporter during the coming ten years. Its market is limited to just six countries under sanctions, with China being the largest market.[42] That will likely change.[43]

Iraq has the potential of being a far greater oil exporter, and also has a chance of being a significant natural gas exporter as more gas fields are found and developed.[44] Iraq has some significant instability issues to contend with. It is also, in many ways, a split state. For energy, the most important split is between the south, where the largest fields are found, and the north, where significant fields are found, yet these northern fields are mainly controlled by the increasingly autonomous Kurdish government. Parts of Iraq are also controlled by the so-called "Islamic State" and other extremist groups. It is hard to predict where these splits and insurgencies will be in ten years.

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[41] IRENA, "Battery storage for renewables: market status and outlook."
[42] EIA, "Iran."
[43] Cordesman, "The Iran deal and Iranian energy exports"; Samore, "The Iran Deal"; Washington Post, "The full text of the Iran Deal."
[44] EIA, "Iraq."

Syria is presently a shattered country.[45] The so-called "Islamic State" has developed a large smuggling network for oil and refined products from Syria to Turkey. They control some modest oil fields and refineries in Syria and want to control some of the largest refineries in Iraq, such as the Baiji refinery. If the Islamic State moves into more important oil and gas areas in Iraq and Syria, this could be a game changer for stability in the region.

The Sunni-Shia divide could widen and become far more volatile. The effects of this could include considerable increased instability in the region, but more particularly in the Gulf area and the Eastern Mediterranean. All could lose from a vastly increased set of tensions between the Sunni and the Shia. The largest oil fields in the world can be found in areas where these tensions are strong today, and could be more inflamed in the future, such as in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and Southern Iraq. If the tensions boil over, all bets are off on where the region is going and what may happen to global and regional oil and gas markets. Al Qaeada, The Islamic State, and other extremist groups could become more important players in energy security, as they play in-between the spaces of the Sunni-Shia divide.

Prices, Price Volatility, and Potential Supply Shocks

If, for the next ten years, oil prices are continuously volatile, but at low levels relative to the budgetary needs of the oil exporting countries, then there may be some considerable changes in the social contracts in these countries. Many countries in the region have fallen into the red on their budgets that were based on the prices of oil being well over $100 per barrel.[46] It is vital for the budgets of the oil and gas exporters that prices remain high, but not so high as to provide much larger incentives for new and increased oil and gas exports to enter and disturb the markets, such as happened after the oil shocks in the 1970s.

Regional oil and gas importers can benefit from low oil and gas prices. To add a bit more complexity, higher oil and gas prices in the MENA region mean more employment for remittance workers from the poorer states in the region. Remittance income is vital for some of these poorer countries. Many of the poorer, energy-importing countries also receive aid from the richer, energy exporters of the region.

As the shale gas revolution spreads into places like Argentina, Algeria, Canada, Mexico, and Australia, and especially China, which has the largest shale gas reserves in the world estimated so far, gas prices may also drop globally and

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[45] EIA, "Iraq."
[46] Faucon, "Oil price slump"; Arezki & Blanchard, "Seven questions"; Talley, "Oil price winners and losers."

behave in a volatile manner.[47] This could have significant impacts on energy exploration, development, production and exports from the region.

When LNG exports from the US, Canada, Australia, and other places start to flood the markets, LNG prices may drop and become volatile. These two series of events could have a significant impact on MENA countries that are LNG exporters, such as Qatar, as well as pipeline gas exporters, such as Algeria. Expect volatility, and even increased volatility, as the shale oil and shale gas revolutions spread, as new finds are developed inside and outside the region, and as LNG markets become further developed.

If Japan restarts more of its nuclear plants, given that Japan is the world's largest LNG importer, further softness could come to LNG prices.[48] If Ras Laffan in Qatar, given that Qatar is likely to remain one of the largest LNG exporters, is attacked and significantly damaged sometime in the next ten years, then LNG prices and piped natural gas prices could go through the roof.[49] If the large natural gas finds in East Africa are developed faster than expected and begin to export large amounts of LNG, then gas prices could be softened.[50] If Venezuela goes into political turmoil, oil prices could go up considerably.[51] If India finally gets its act together and grows at the 7-10 percent that it may be capable of over a good part of the next ten years, then oil and gas prices could have upward momentum.

If global transportation technologies begin their inevitable change in the direction of using more natural gas, biofuels, electricity, or unconventional fuels, then oil markets, which rely a lot on transportation demand—given that 96 percent of all transport is based on oil—could be softening further as these new transport energy options diffuse into the global marketplace.[52] The imposition of tighter miles per gallon standards in major transportation energy countries could also have a great effect on oil demand, as would the development of more efficient and longer-lasting batteries for transport.

The Interests of the "Major Powers"

The US will remain the main protector of free flow of trade in the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz for the time period. China and any other potential competitor for that position will likely not be up to the task of replacing the US within the ten

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[47] EIA, "Technically available shale oil"; Sullivan, "US shale and some grand strategic issues," 6-9; EIA, "OPEC revenues Fact Sheet"; Blanchard, "Seven questions."
[48] Russell, "Japan's nuclear plan"; Sullivan, "Walking the Wall", BBC, "Japan restarts first nuclear plant."
[49] Sullivan, "Blowback to Qatar."
[50] EIA, "Emerging East Africa energy."
[51] EIA, "Venezuela."
[52] EIA, "International energy outlook, 2014"; OPEC, "World oil outlook, 2014"; ORNL, "Transportation energy data book, 2014."

year period. The UK and France are getting more involved in the region, but hardly near to the level of the US. The US may be importing less energy from the Gulf region in the time period, but it also understands that the oil and gas coming out of the region are vital for world trade and the world economy.

Many of its major trading partners, such as China, Japan, South Korea, and many European states rely on the oil and gas coming out of the Gulf.[53] The Sea Lanes of Communication need to remain open and in business. The US will also likely continue to have non-energy interests in the region. It will also likely, and unfortunately, be still involved in Iraq, Syria, and other places in the region, which will require access to and use of the Gulf waters and some of the land mass of the GCC area.

Within the time period, the increasing stress on the U.S. federal budget due to entitlements, such as Medicare and Social Security, will begin to further cut into discretionary budgetary items, such as the defence budget.[54] However, U.S. leadership will likely continue to realize the importance of a large presence in the MENA region.

The spread of Chinese interests and leverage in the region could be another game changer.[55] The continuing spread of Russian influence in the region will likely be destabilizing, especially in Syria.[56] It is unclear at the moment whether the spread of Chinese influence and leverage in the region will be destabilizing or not.

Cyber Issues

Cyber issues could become of increasing importance. Past cyber-attacks on nuclear facilities in Iran and on Saudi Aramco are a few examples of what may be coming in the next ten years. Cyber-attacks on energy facilities are more common than most think, or even as reported to authorities and the press. Cyber issues could become one of the main threats to the SCADA systems that are vital to the supply chains for electricity, oil, gas, water, and more. Cyber issues in the region could cut across the energy-water-food nexus. Cyber-attacks in the region may prove to be more effective than physical attacks at times in the coming ten years. Shutting down large refineries, export facilities, production facilities, electricity systems, and more, with cyber-attacks is not impossible.

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[53] EIA, "China," "India," "Japan," "South Korea," "Turkey"; European Commission, "In-depth study of European energy security."
[54] Austin, "The Budget Control Act"; Heritage Foundation, "The budget book"; US Congress, "The threat to national security."
[55] Sullivan, "Does China enhance stability in the Middle East?"
[56] Chulov, "Russian moves in Syria."

The Heterogeneity of Energy in the Region

Energy security in the Middle East is quite heterogeneous.[57] There are some countries with little oil and natural gas that is economically, geologically, or technically, extracted or extractable, such as Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, and Bahrain. There are others with dwindling supplies of oil and gas, or mismanaged supplies of oil and gas, such as Syria and Yemen. There are the recently lucky ones, such as Egypt, with its recent massive gas finds off its north coast. There are the giants of oil, such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, and Algeria. Iraq and Saudi Arabia are not natural gas exporters, even though they both have significant natural gas reserves. Kuwait is a net importer of natural gas, mostly from Qatar, and has been since 2008. The UAE has been a net importer of natural gas from Qatar since 2008, but it is also an exporter of natural gas. It was the first Gulf country to export LNG in 1977. Given the heterogeneous nature of the energy resources of the countries of MENA, the future of energy in MENA is also expected to be similarly heterogeneous.

Policy Options

Given this analysis, what recommendations can one give policymakers wishing to enhance regional security? A number of policy options are worth considering:

1. Given the heterogeneity of energy and other systems in the region, one-size-fits-all policies should not be considered.

2. Energy, water, and food subsidies need to be phased out in the region.

3. Demand management policies need to be properly developed for energy, water, and food in the region.

4. Energy and water efficiency need to be significantly improved in the region.

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[57] Alexander & Krause-Jackson, "Syrians turn to backyard refining"; Booz & Co, "Natural gas shortage in the GCC"; British Business Group, "The Middle East Energy outlook"; EIA, "Algeria," "Annual Projections to 2040," "Bahrain," "Caspian Sea region," "Crude oil production," "Eastern Mediterranean "Egypt," "Emerging East Africa energy," "Global natural gas markets overview," "International data and analyses" "International energy outlook, 2014," "International exports data, Natural Gas," "International imports data, natural gas," "International exports data, petroleum," "International imports data, petroleum," "Iran," "Iraq," "Israel," "Jordan," "Kuwait," "Lebanon," "Libya," "Morocco," "Oman," "OPEC revenues Fact Sheet," "Petroleum and Other Liquids," "Qatar," "Saudi Arabia," "Sudan and South Sudan," "Syria," "Technically available shale oil and shale gas resources" "Tunisia," "United Arab Emirates"; Enerdata, "Country energy report: Jordan," "Morocco Energy Report," "Saudi Arabia energy report," "Tunisia energy report"; Economist Intelligence Unit, "Industry report, energy, Algeria," "Industry report, energy, Egypt," "Industry report, energy, Libya," "Industry report, energy, Qatar."

5. Renewable energy systems need to diffuse more quickly in many countries in the region, especially for desalination purposes.

6. More effort and creative thought needs to be expended to help resolve many of the economic, political, social, ethnic, and sectarian issues that could seriously harm energy security in the region and globally.

7. There needs to be greater efforts in cooperation between the EU and the US on energy and security issues in the MENA region. Other powers also need to be brought in to these efforts when appropriate and productive.

8. Policies need to consider more fully the impact of global and other non-MENA events on MENA; and of MENA events on global and other non-MENA areas.

9. Policies need to consider the importance of systems within systems, and the linkages across energy, security, economic, political, military, diplomatic, and other systems. Without this systems-within-systems approach, some incongruous results may occur.

10. There are many problems in the region that are not solvable or even managed better from the outside. The countries and people of the region need to be the biggest contributors to the solutions to the problems within their own cultural, political, and other environments.

11. More effort needs to be put towards developing expertise in energy, nexus systems, and dealing with great uncertainty and volatility, not only in the MENA, but globally.

12. Scenario and "war-gaming" of potential causes and effects of energy and other resource stresses needs to pick up pace. There will be shocks and volatility in the region, and it is doubtful the EU, the US, MENA, and others are fully prepared to mitigate the costs of many events and processes that may occur.

13. Alternative energy sources and technologies need to be invented and diffused more quickly from the non-MENA world to help mitigate the potential costs of future shocks coming out of the region.

14. Long-term, strategic thinking is required at all levels in the governments that are involved with the consideration of energy and security issues that may arise in MENA during the next 10 years.

15. Greater global cooperation in the cyber realm is needed. MENA could be a place where a cyber-attack on major energy systems could disrupt not only the flow of oil, gas or electricity, but the world economy.

16. Sea Lanes of Communication and energy chokepoints in the region need to be studied more carefully to see what the possible threat and response

scenarios might be in the coming decade regarding energy security. This is not just for maritime transport, port management, SCADA systems, and so forth, but also for the connections amongst those systems and across those systems.

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Part Three: State, Army and Violence

Armed Political Movements in the Middle East

Adham Saouli, PhD

Introduction

In an ideal world, the German sociologist Max Weber opined, the state would be an organisation "that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory." When legitimate, states deliver stability and order; they also facilitate human and social development. The absence of states, on the other hand, leads to political chaos, or "anarchy," as Weber observed,[1] a situation that resembles the current political turmoil in the Middle East.

The Arab uprisings of 2011 questioned the legitimacy of many Arab regimes (such as Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen). By 2013, these regimes had lost their ability to monopolise physical force; among other things, this gave rise to many armed political movements (APM). By 2014, APMs challenged the political boundaries of the region when some, such as Hizbullah, crossed borders to fight in other states, whilst others, such as the Islamic State (IS), occupied territories and announced a new state straddling regions in Iraq and Syria. Political orders collapsed and violence, with grave consequence for innocent lives, increased.

This short chapter addresses one aspect of the current political chaos in the region: the causes and effects of the emergence and expansion of APMs in the Middle East. I first define what APMs are, then explain the causes of their rise; finally, I examine some of the consequences of the growth of APMs on Middle East security.

Understanding Armed Political Movements

The emergence and diffusion of APMs is directly related to regime weakness and erosion. Regimes erode when their legitimacy diminishes in the eyes of their populations. This loss of legitimacy can be caused by several factors: inability of a regime to deliver socio-economic services; failure to preserve state sovereignty, as in the defeat in war; failure to provide political opportunities and freedoms to its citizens; or when a regime governs in the name of one group or ideology (ethnic,

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[1] Weber, "Politics as a vocation."

religious, national, linguistic) at the expense of other groups or ideologies in a given territory.[2]

APMs emerge as a challenge to existing regimes and/or to fill political and social vacuums resulting from regime collapse. The first characteristic of APMs is that they are political actors; they carry political visions and platforms, which aim to preserve or alter political regimes. The second characteristic of APMs is that they belong to broader social movements. These movements can be representatives of a socio-economic group (labour unions), or a religious group (Christian, Sunni, Shi'a). Social movements generate several political organisations that express, in varying forms and through different strategies, the broader goals of a social movement.[3] For example, the Islamist movement in the Muslim world produced several forms of political organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in several Arab countries, *al-Dawa* in Iraq and Lebanon, and al-Qaida.

To achieve their political goals, APMs mobilise populations for their cause; they emphasise the socio-political grievances of the group, and offer alternative political visions and ideologies. Such campaigns challenge regime monopoly over ideology; they also threaten the legitimacy of ruling authoritarian regimes and, hence, reinforce their weakness. For example, in the latest Arab uprisings, activists called for freedom, dignity, and democracy, political demands that authoritarian regimes had failed to guarantee. These slogans contributed to the mobilisation of the public and to the toppling of leaders in Egypt and Tunisia.[4]

However, as opposed to political parties that resort to peaceful forms of political contestation, APMs also employ violence. APMs emerge in the context of civil wars, when for example different social groups (ethnic, sectarian) resort to violence to protect themselves in the absence of a central authority. APMs also emerge under authoritarian systems where opportunities for political contestation are absent. By employing violence, APMs present a second major threat to regimes: they challenge a regime's monopoly on physical force.[5] When several APMs emerge in a territory (think of Syria since 2012), Weber's monopoly on physical force *diffuses* and a situation of war emerges.

Hence, in carrying an alternative ideology, a political platform, and weapons, APMs are in essence *alternative* regimes. If an APM succeeds in toppling a regime, it may then replace it in power; think, for example, of the National Liberation Front that came to replace the colonial regime in Algeria. However, where an APM fails to overthrow a regime it could still occupy certain territories

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[2] For a discussion see Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States*.
[3] A social movement involves "sustained challenges to power-holders in the name of one or more populations living under the jurisdiction of those power-holders by means public displays dramatizing those populations' worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment"; for a detailed discussion see Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires,* 179-208.
[4] Saouli, "Performing the Egyptian revolution."
[5] For a discussion of these processes, see Saouli, "Back to the future."

and apply its own political vision by establishing state-like institutions (monopoly over coercion, courts, schools, etc.); one example is IS, which now applies its own extreme ideologies in some Iraqi and Syrian cities.[6]

State-building and Armed Political Movements in the Middle East

Since the emergence of the state system (1920) in the Middle East, the region has generated at least three types of APMs. The nature of the APMs and their rise and fall are directly linked to state-building attempts in the region. The colonial division of the region into different states left many groups (Arab Nationalists, Islamists, Palestinians, Kurds, etc.) frustrated. The states the colonial powers installed were not consolidated states, but rather they were *states-in-the-making*. As a modern institution, the state took many centuries to crystallise in Europe (from at least the 16th century). This involved a long and bloody process before physical force was monopolised in the state (the first of Weber's conditions) and before the state became legitimate, meaning democratic (the second element in Weber's definition). In the Arab world, however, the state had to cope with two simultaneous pressures: consolidation and legitimation. Whilst many Arab regimes succeeded, temporarily, in consolidating their rule by monopolising ideology and coercion, they have failed to sustain their legitimacy over time. This created a *weak* state that is *vulnerable* to revision, both from domestic and external rivals.[7]

APMs have been crucial players in state-building processes in the Arab world. They can be divided into three types. First, the national liberation movements are APMs that have struggled to liberate their countries from colonial regimes or occupying forces. In the Arab-Israeli conflict, APMs, such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Hamas, and Hizbullah, began to resort to guerrilla warfare when Arab regimes failed to achieve their political goal, namely the liberation of Palestine. What contributed to the rise of these actors was their presence in divided states, such as Lebanon (the PLO, until 1982, and Hizbullah, later on) and Israel/Palestine (Hamas).[8]

Weak states provided both opportunities and limitations for this type of APM. The absence of strong central authorities has enabled APMs to establish armed divisions. Hizbullah, for example, managed to maintain its armed division after the end of the Lebanon war whilst also integrating with the political system. Integration required various forms of political adaptation.[9] After the Oslo

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[6] For an analysis of the rise of IS, see Cockburn, *The Rise of Islamic State.*
[7] For an analysis of the emergence and survival of the Arab state, see Saouli, *The Arab State.*
[8] Saouli, "Hizbullah, Hamas, and the Arab uprisings."
[9] Saouli, "Hizbullah in the civilising process."

Agreement (1993), the PLO transformed into the Palestinian Authority, establishing the basis for state-like authority. Hamas won the 2009 elections and formed a government, whilst also maintaining its armed resistance against Israel.[10] As such, these organisations had to cope with and balance between their armed political status and their presence in a state and state system.

The second form of APMs emerged in authoritarian systems and during civil wars.[11] The rise of Arab nationalist regimes (such as Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, and Yemen) in the post-colonial period (1950s-1960s), led, among other things, to the monopolisation of coercion and ideology. One-party rule left little room for political contestation, and led many groups to resort to violence to topple regimes. In 1978-1982, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood entered into a bloody war with the Baathist regime.[12] In Egypt, extreme Islamists violently targeted state officials and tourists in the 1980s and 1990s.[13] In Algeria, capitalising on a brief political opening by the regime, the Islamists won the first round of the parliamentary elections, in 1992; however, threatened by a possible loss of power, the regime cancelled the elections, which then triggered a bloody civil war between the army and the Islamists that lasted until 1999.[14]

Civil wars have also given rise to APMs. In such situations, APMs have emerged to protect certain groups, usually with the aim of either preserving or revising existing political structures. The Lebanese civil war provides a clear example. In that war, the Muslim/Leftist coalition aimed to revise the existing political system to gain a fairer representation in the state. However, fearing a loss of power and influence, several Christian political parties became armed organizations and fought to preserve the system. By 1976, Lebanon was divided into two parts (Muslim and Christian), with the diffusion of APMs on both sides of the conflict. APMs in this case came to fill the political and security void left by the weak state.[15]

Another example is post-2003 Iraq. The collapse of the Iraqi regime in the face of the US-led invasion gave rise to many APMs in Kurdish, Shi'a, and Sunni areas of Iraq. The civil war centred over the varying political visions each group carried regarding the future of Iraq. The diffusion of coercion in Iraq, especially after the withdrawal of the US forces in 2011, led to total state collapse and to the rise and

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[10] Milton-Edwards, & Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement.*
[11] For an analysis of authoritarianism in the Arab world, see Brynen, Moore, Salloukh, & Zahar, eds., *Beyond the Arab Spring.*
[12] Patrick *Asad of Syria.*
[13] Naguib, "Islamism(s) old and new," 103-9.
[14] Mortimer, "Islamists, soldiers, and democrats."
[15] Saouli, "Stability.".

expansion of IS. But this, as I elaborate below, was also due to regional rivalries (particularly among the two main camps led by Saudi Arabia and Iran).[16]

The third type of APM is trans-state (or globalist) Islamists. These groups are part of the broader Islamist movement. Unlike other Islamists who, out of conviction or political tactics, accept the modern state, the main unit of social and political organisation of trans-state Islamists (such as al-Qaida and its different branches, and IS) is the "community of Muslim believers," or the *umma*. After having failed to topple authoritarian regimes in the Arab and Muslim worlds, these groups have resorted to fighting the "far enemy,"[17] the Western states that support authoritarian regimes in the Arab world.

Recently, these groups have capitalised on emerging opportunities in the Middle East to fight against both their "far enemy" and domestic regimes. In Afghanistan, Iraq and, lately, several other Arab countries, this APM type capitalised on existing political polarisation, illegitimate regimes, and foreign occupation to establish influence and control for itself. In Iraq, for example, al-Qaida-related groups exploited Sunni frustration to mobilise the community against the Shi'a-Kurdish coalition and US occupation.[18] In so doing, they established a social base in Iraq, initially as the Iraqi branch of al-Qaida, before becoming IS, when the group expanded to Syria.

The Syrian uprising of 2011, which came after many years of Baathist authoritarian rule, and which had turned violent by 2012, provided further opportunities for Islamists (such as *Jabha al-Nusra* (al-Qaida's branch in Syria, and IS) to emerge and expand their control in Syria. These groups capitalised on both domestic divisions and regional rivalries to expand their control. Domestically, through a combination of sectarian, religious and political mobilisation, they drew support from Assad's rivals, particularly within the Sunni community in Syria. The failure of the mainstream opposition to gain ground gave rise to many Islamist groups, not least IS. Regionally, by opening their border to the flow of jihadists (especially Turkey) and through financial support (Qatar and Saudi Arabia), Assad's regional rivals contributed to the weakening of his regime and to the rise of APMs in Syria. These states aimed to topple Assad, but also to contain and isolate Iran and its Lebanese ally, Hizbullah.[19]

As such, the rise and expansion of IS, which occupies territories in both Iraq and Syria, can be explained by understanding the failed state-building process in Iraq and Syria, sectarian mobilisation against ruling regimes, and regional and international rivalries. In these two cases, the rise of APMs is both a result of and contributor to regime weakness and collapse. The expansion of IS and its

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[16] Saouli, "Back to the future," 324-6.
[17] Gerges, *The Far Enemy*.
[18] Toby Dodge, *Iraq*.
[19] Adham Saouli, 'Syria's predicament."

declaration of its so-called "Caliphate" was possible due to state collapse in two *adjacent* countries, making it possible for an APM to connect territories in two collapsed states and, thus, announce its own state. IS and al-Qaida-related branches in other Arab states (such as Libya, Egypt, and Yemen) continue to fight against their rivals, but have so far failed to gain ground.

Armed Political Movements and Middle East Security: A Conclusion

To summarise, it is important to reiterate that there have been three major types of APMs: national liberation movements, oppositional movements against authoritarian regimes, and trans-state movements that have become particularly salient since 2012. These APMs share many characteristics: they are political actors that hold varying political visions and strategies; they emerge from and are a political manifestation of social movements; and, last but not least, they are armed groups.

Given these characteristics, APMs have challenged the power (both coercive and ideological) of incumbent regimes, and have formed alternative political organisations and vehicles for political change in the region. As such, it is not surprising that APMs are the main protagonists in the on-going civil wars in the region. Civil wars are a result of both failed state-building processes and the new attempt to *reconstruct* regimes by insurgent APMs.[20]

What implications does this analysis carry regarding the future security of the Middle East region? First, what the Middle East is now witnessing is an attempt to *reform* existing states. In all cases (Syria, Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and Bahrain), the civil wars involve different groups fighting to re-establish political order according to their visions and interests. APMs are not only the consequence of the failure of state-building, but potentially also are the cause of and key to state-rebuilding in the region. As social movements, APMs represent certain social groups. As political actors, they hold political goals. And as armed factions they can facilitate or hinder political transition. I do make an exception when it comes to IS. As an extremist group that does not accept political pluralism, IS, unless it changes radically, would act more as a constraint to political transition than as an enabler of such a possibility.

Second, these on-going civil wars are also taking place amidst regional and international rivalry over and in the region—especially in Syria, Iraq, and, lately, Yemen. Regionally, Saudi-Iranian rivalry has aggravated sectarian, especially Sunni-Shi'a, divisions. These divisions are now manifested in the civil wars and conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. Within the Sunni world, competition

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[20] Saouli, "Back to the future."

between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, on the one hand, and Qatar and Turkey (who have supported the Muslim Brotherhood), on the other, is adding further complexity to regional security, and is aggravating the civil wars in Libya and Syria. Internationally, Russian-US rivalry is also contributing to the aggravation of civil wars in several countries. Russia has been a major supporter of Assad's regime in Syria. It fears that his fall would weaken its hold in the region, as this could isolate Iran, its other main ally there. The US, on the other hand, wanted to see Assad toppled, to weaken Iran and Hizbullah. Syria, and by extension Iraq and Lebanon, is key in the war over the Middle East for both regional and international great powers.

Given the domestic-regional-international nexus, the on-going civil wars will only come to an end if and when regional and international actors reach a political agreement that would then be translated into a political solution within various Arab countries. This would involve regional and international actors exerting pressure on their clients to reach political solutions. In many of these conflicts, APMs are precisely these clients. Hence, if APMs are to play an important role in political transition in the region, external forces will have to exercise pressure on these APMs. Again, there is the exception of IS, which, although regional political rivalries and domestic divides have made its rise possible, may be more resistant to external pressure.

Thirdly, whilst regional and international pressure are crucial for ending the current bloodshed and political turmoil in the region, the ultimate solution will remain domestic. Most of the conflicts are taking place in divided societies (Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, and Bahrain). For a political solution to be reached, these societies will have to reform their states, which means their political institutions. This will involve attempts in the state to reintegrate various groups, of which APMs are crucial components, through fair representation. This would be followed by attempts to centralise coercion by integrating APMs in national armies and security forces. What could potentially emerge are consociational democracies: political systems that incorporate different groups through power-sharing arrangements. Lebanon's experience with such a system has not been entirely successful, but its use contributed to ending its long war, whilst also maintaining a level of freedom for its various sectarian communities, and order. The Lebanon war teaches that the APMs who made war also formed the vehicles for ending it, acknowledging that the solution was generated externally.

Finally, the biggest challenges facing the Arab world in the coming five years would be to re-establish political *order*, which requires a monopolisation of coercion in the state, and the maintaining of the *freedom* of various social groups and movements, which would require the emergence of legitimate and representative institutions. APMs arose due to a legitimacy crisis in several Arab countries; their fall might come as a result of the emergence of legitimate states

that resemble Weber's ideal. At the moment, I fear, this remains a remote possibility.

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Middle East Warfighting Capabilities in 2025

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Introduction

This chapter focuses on Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, the four most important countries in the Middle East in terms of military capacity. It does so by discussing the different roles they want to play in the region, and internationally, by 2025.

The four countries modernize their weaponry according to their financial or military resources and while considering their policy options. The question is whether they can obtain the expected result in the area of defence and security with the amount of effort and money that they put into their armed forces. How would this military capability result in warfighting capacity, against rival states and proto-state actors, in 2025? The evidence shows that more sophisticated weapons do not mean greater security.

Warfighting: the State of Capability

The following sections chart the concept of warfare; then compare the current war capacity of the four major countries in our study, and finally evaluate their advantages and disadvantages in producing and supplying their national security. The analysis is concluded by a discussion of the future outcomes of the respective countries war fighting capability in 2025.

To study the case of the warfighting capability of the four countries in 2025, a conceptual definition is needed. In its 1989 *Manual 1* publication, and in the context of a bipolar international system, the United States Marine Corps defined warfare as "a violent clash of interests between or among organized groups characterized by the use of military force. These groups have traditionally been established nation-states, but they may also include any non-state group—such as an international coalition or a faction within or outside of an existing state—with its own political interests and the ability to generate organized violence on a scale sufficient to have significant political consequences."[21] In an updated version of its doctrine, published in 1997, the Marine Corps adopted the 1989 *Manual 1* definition and remained vague in identifying the non-state groups. This

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[21] Department of the Navy, *Warfighting.*

continuation means that the nature of war persists, even if its character has changed.

In my view, the predominant definition of war in the Western military and strategic literature is based on Clausewitz's conceptualisation, which has inspired American warfighting doctrines. This meaning of war pays little attention to whether war is legal or ethical. Opposite the Clausewitzian concept is a definition that is of Roman inspiration, which approaches war as a legal condition, thus acknowledging legality and ethics as essential components of the strategy and conduct of war. In other words, there are limits to what belligerent forces are allowed to do. Their organized violence is constrained by rules and regulated through norms.[22]

As for warfighting capability, the concept is larger than the pure use of arms. It is a complex and multifaceted activity derived from a combination of intangible and tangible elements, such as strategic vision and tactical capacity in implementing it through technical means, education, operational concepts, leadership, and organization.

The Middle East and Challenges in Regulating Warfare

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are not only Muslim countries, but also serious adepts of Clausewitz's when it comes to the conduct of war. As such, they do not follow their own religious teachings. Islam established a set of moral ethics that combatants should observe before, during, and after the cessation of war. Those permit defensive fighting against active combatants, while forbidding harm to anyone or anything else—human, animal, or property.[23]

Egypt

In terms of financial resources available for purchasing arms, training and educating soldiers, and establishing military doctrines, Egypt is the poorest of the four countries. Cairo has a weak, archaic, economy that is not generating new wealth, based in part on three areas: income from tourism and from the Suez Canal,

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[22] Metz & Cuccia, *Defining War for the 21st Century.*
[23] Rashid, "Prophet Muhammad's rules of war"; Ali-Gomaa, "War in Islam: ethics & rules."

and foreign aid.[24] The structural weakness of the Egyptian economy makes it incapable of supporting a growing population.[25]

The sum of these factors would force Egypt to maintain the peace, even a negative cold peace, with Israel. In the absence of conflict with foreign countries, any credible threat to state security will come from the armed groups in Sinai and internal political and economically-driven protest movements. The Egyptian regular armed forces and security agencies should be capable of controlling them. The cost of any military action outside national borders and in support of regional allies will be assumed by oil rich states that sponsor such intervention.

The Egyptian armed forces are a very old and powerful institution. A beneficiary first, of Soviet Union, and then United States aid, Egypt, since it signed the Camp David peace accord with Israel in 1979, receives an annual $1.3 billion in military assistance from the U.S. Egypt's military budget is relatively small ($4.4 billion) considering the size of the country. Despite its wars with Israel (1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973), its "military's operational abilities are highly suspect, and it has had trouble fighting terrorists and insurgents in the Sinai."[26]

Egypt has accumulated defeat after defeat in all of the wars against Israel, and even Yemen, in which it has participated The Egyptian-Yemen war, which lasted five years (1962-67),[27] has exposed all the structural, logistical, and strategic

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[24] A recent World Bank overview, *Egypt Overview,* looks favourably on the economic reforms introduced by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, and states, "Economic growth in Fiscal Year (FY) 14 of 2.2% is projected to almost double to 4% in FY15. The budget deficit is expected to decline to 11.3% of GDP in FY15, compared to 12.8% in FY14, and 14% in FY13. This will bring down government debt to GDP ratio to 94% by end FY15, from 95.5% in end-FY14. Egypt has been benefiting from large-scale exceptional financing from the Gulf. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait have committed around US$20 billion to Egypt through a mix of central bank deposits, cash and in-kind grants, and project aid. On March 13-15, 2015, during the Egypt Economic Development Conference (EEDC), the Government highlighted its economic reform program designed to restore fiscal stability and drive growth, and attract domestic and international investors across key sectors. The World Bank Group (WBG) will engage with Egypt on the reform agenda"; *The Economist* has published a report, "Thinking big: another Egyptian leader falls for the false promise of grand projects,", recalling the historical background of Egypt's megalomaniac leaders, "building grand new cities as monuments to their egos," but failing in "restructuring a sluggish economy and hidebound bureaucracy," and leaving on the side-lines most small- and medium-sized enterprises that "employ the biggest share of Egyptian workers," while "lack[ing] access to capital and receive[ing] little support from the government."

[25] A few figures published by the World Bank (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW): the population of Egypt was 83.39 million in 2014. Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population): 25.2% in 2011; growth national income (GNI) per capita: $3,280 in 2014; population growth rate (annual %): 1.6 in 2013. Egypt Population Forecast for 2025 is close to 97 million (http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/egypt-population/).

[26] Rosen, Bender & Macias, in "The most powerful militaries in the Middle East," ranked Egypt as the 6th most powerful military in the Middle East.

[27] "Egyptian military historians refer to their war in Yemen as their Vietnam," according to Lt. Cdr. Youssef Aboul-Enein, in "The Egyptian-Yemen War (1962-67): Egyptian Perspectives on Guerrilla Warfare."

weaknesses of "the country of the Pharaohs," and these weaknesses that have not been overcome since 1967. In general, its warfighting capability is derived from a combination of technical assets, operational concepts, organizational clarity, conscientious bravery, and, more importantly, educated soldiers.

Israel

This country is a model of what a warfighting-capable state represents. From its outset, Israel has developed a modern military, and thus it became the most powerful military of the four countries and is backed by the United States. Israel is also the only nuclear power in the Middle East. [28] Its $15 billion defence budget ensures a force of 176,500 active frontline personnel, 3,870 tanks, and 680 aircraft.[29] Israel's domestic defence industry gives the country a qualitative edge over the entire region's other armed forces.[30]

Israel is not facing any major or uncontainable security challenges from within its undefined borders. It has clear control over its Arab Palestinian minority,[31] the Falasha (Ethiopian Jews), and different groups of protesters challenging inequalities in socio-economic areas.

Neutralisation of Egypt and Jordan through the signing of separate peace agreements and the gradual implosion of the Assad regime in Syria have removed the imminent threats from the traditional enemies that, historically, Israel has been

[28] The existence of an Israeli nuclear arsenal is well known, despite Tel Aviv's official policy of "nuclear opacity that, while acknowledging that Israel maintains the option of building nuclear weapons, leaves it factually uncertain as to whether Israel actually possesses nuclear weapons and if so at what operational status." The syntactic ambiguity was deliberately entertained by all Israeli Prime Ministers, including Benjamin Netanyahu who reiterated, in 2011: "We won't be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East." Like his predecessors and successors, Rabin was a master of ambiguity. "During a meeting at the Pentagon in November 1968, Israel's ambassador to the United States, Yitzhak Rabin, said that 'he would not consider a weapon that had not been tested to be a weapon.' Rabin noted that this was his personal understanding as a former military leader. Moreover, he said, 'There must be a public acknowledgement. The fact that you have got it must be known,'" (Kristensen & Norris, "Israeli nuclear weapons, 2014.) An article published in *Jane's Intelligence Review* in 1997 estimated the Israeli arsenal as being as many as 400 nuclear weapons. Israel's stand is challenged by numerous sources, including the Federation of American Scientists, "Status of world nuclear forces." According to the Federation, "Although Israel has produced enough plutonium for 100-200 warheads, the number of delivery platforms and estimates made by the U.S. intelligence community suggest that the stockpile might include approximately 80 warheads."
[29] *SIPRI Yearbook 2013,* p. 322, states, "The Israeli military operates 205 F-16 and F-15 aircraft. Some are believed to be certified to deliver nuclear payloads."
[30] In addition to its conventional weapons and nuclear warheads, Israel may have stockpiles of weaponized nerve gas and some biological weapons offensive capabilities as well as a range of delivery systems (ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, submarines and strategic bombers). With its massive conventional and unconventional arsenal, Israel is the dominant military force in the Middle East.
[31] "Palestinian citizens of the state comprise 20% of the total population, numbering almost 1.2 million people," Adalah, "The Inequality Report."

accustomed to. The only remaining major threat for Israel is Iran. Tehran does not recognise Israel. The former is ready to assist anyone who is ready to fight Israel. Resolutely determined to eliminate Israel—the "usurper"—Iran and its allies, namely, Assad, Hezbollah, and Hamas, constitute what Tehran calls the "Resistance Front." The only credible, but not existential, foreign threat to Israel will come from this bloc.

Although several challenges to Israel's security will continue to exist, they will remain limited and cannot significantly alter its security. Israel is in a much better position, militarily, than its enemies in the region. Its nuclear capacity is an additional insurance policy that this country enjoys.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

Ranked third, by the *Business Insider,* on its list of "The Most Powerful Militaries in the Middle East," Saudi Arabia's defence expenditure grew "300% in a decade." The *IHS Jane's Annual Defence Budgets Review* confirms that Saudi Arabia's defence budget has tripled in 10 years. On *Jane's* list of the top twenty countries, "Defence Budget Ranking 2013," Saudi Arabia is 9th (USD 42.8 billion per year), way ahead of Israel, which is ranked 19th, with approximately USD 13 billion.[32] It was "up by about 19 percent in 2013" from the previous year, "the largest rise in spending since 2007".[33]

Riyadh's internal conflicts cannot pose a serious threat to the kingdom. Its internal security is entrusted to the National Guard, which "is one of the most capable security forces in the entire region."[34] The country has enough financial resources to distribute resources and ward of financial discontent and thus appease its population, as it did in the context of the Arab Spring. The serious challenges to Saudi Arabia's security are mainly external. They are generated by ideological groups as well as several states the Kingdom has contentious relations with.

The Islamic State and Al-Qaeda on the Arabic Peninsula AP is a source of concern for the House of Saud, but at this juncture neither of them have the needed capability to dislodge the latter from power. The Houthis of Yemen are unlikely to be able to sustain an open war against the Kingdom. Neither does Iraq, despite current tensions, pose a credible threat to Saudi security during the next decade.

The historic rivalry between a *Persian* Iran and a Saudi *Arabia* will continue. This rivalry, which has taken a clear ideological-religious turn, will prevent any sustainable normalization of Iranian-Saudi relations. However, the contention will not escalate into direct war between the two countries. Iran has neither the ideological appetite, nor the military means to initiate a war against the holy land of Islam. A realist Tehran does not want to alienate all Arab countries, in addition

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[32] IHS, "Global defence budgets."
[33] IHS, "Global defence budgets."
[34] *Business Insider, op.cit.*

to the United States and Europe. The conduct of the Yemen war that Riyadh started in March 2015 reveals the limits of Saudi warfighting capabilities, despite possession of the most advanced arms in the Persian Gulf area. Waging a classic war solely with the use of airpower, against an enemy whose tolerance for casualties is high, does not bring quick and decisive victory. That said, the two regimes will continue to use their proxies to check one another. In sum, despite its vulnerabilities, limited defensive capability, and enemies, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will not have to defend itself against large-scale aggression by a state in the next decade.

Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)

Iran is ranked 5th on the *Business Insider* list.[35] Like the other three countries, the Iranian regime has to deal with internal and external threats. Iranian society is deeply polarized. A non-elected conservative minority holds most of the power and limits the access that the majority has to the decision-making process. The extended popular uprising that followed the 2009 presidential elections was the bursting of this polarization.

The internal threat to the survival of the Islamic regime becomes greater if political protest takes an ethnical colour. The economic crisis and the high cost of living can only exacerbate the political climate. The repression of any of society's demands for political change have so far been successful, though there are limits to what the exercise of police repression can produce in terms of regime security. The threat of a repetition of the events of 2009 is real.

Iran is the only country in the region that is threatened with war by the USA. There are also threats from countries within the region. The most credible threat is from Israel, in the context of the Iranian nuclear programme. If a war breaks out between Israel and Iran, the Americans will support Israel, with serious consequences for Iran. For this and other reasons, Iran prefers to confront Israel through its proxies.

Iranian forces have not been tested since the war with Iraq in the 1980s. The participation of the Revolutionary Guards in small wars in Iraq and Syria has given them some experience in asymmetrical warfare. As Iran cannot match the warfighting capabilities of the United States and Israel, it counts on its asymmetrical war experience and missile capability in the event of a conflict with those countries. Iran can also compensate for its lack of modern weapons by arousing the religious fervor of its combatants. However, there are limits to what religious enthusiasm can accomplish on the battlefield. Iran will be the big loser in both conventional and unconventional war with the U.S. and Israel. If it's not forced to, Tehran prefers to avoid such a conflict, despite its leadership's declared hostility to Washington and Tel Aviv.

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[35] http://www.businessinsider.com/most-powerful-militaries-in-the-middle-east-2014-8?op=1#ixzz3HRCZ31TY

Conclusion

Everything suggests that our four countries will face a series of internal and external challenges that affect them differently. Since security units intervene in internal issues, mainly in Egypt and Iran, they are distracted from their primary mission of defending the country against foreign aggression.

The purchase of weapons will continue, although most of these weapons will be used in low-intensity conflicts. The overall balance of forces in the Middle East will continue to be determined by foreign powers, especially the U.S.

Warfighting capability is not distributed equally among the four countries. Israel is the only country that has successfully implemented all the attributes of warfighting capabilities in its military doctrines.

With the flare-up of violence and proxy wars in the Middle East, an arms race among many belligerent states, will remain a serious source of tension in 2025.

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State and Army in the Middle East and North Africa: Reflections on the Past and Future

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This chapter asks what lessons may be may be learned from an examination of the historical experience of armies and their role in state-building in the Middle East and North Africa; and to what extent such lessons may offer a guide to understanding the future role of armies in countries from Morocco to Iran; and the likely shape of the emerging security architecture across the region. It places this historical experience in a pan-regional perspective, seeking to define broad similarities in approaches and consequences, but argues that, within this comparative paradigm, each country's narrative is also nonetheless determined by specific national historical, cultural, political, and economic contexts.

Firstly, the magnitude of the transformation currently underway across much of the Middle East and North Africa must be emphasized. The present crisis may indeed be understood as an historical reversal of a state-building project that is at least two centuries old. The Middle East entered the twenty-first century with authoritarian states supported by large, expensive armies, all, with the exception of the somewhat peculiar Arab Gulf states and perhaps also Libya, manned by conscript troops, their officers often strategically located within the commanding heights of politics and economy. This may be seen as the culmination of a long process that had begun in earnest in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when a range of Arab, Ottoman, and Iranian polities began what was to be a protracted experiment with army reform.[36] Nonetheless, despite the longevity and apparent success of this process, in 2015 the state-system across the region and the armies that underpinned it appear to have entered a prolonged and perhaps terminal period of crisis and collapse.

It should further be pointed out that, although the invasion of Iraq in 2003 prompted much speculation about the supposedly fragile nature of the Middle Eastern state system, the arbitrary nature of state borders, and the frailty and illegitimacy of national institutions, during the twentieth century this state system in fact achieved a considerable degree of success and legitimacy and proved surprisingly resilient. Even in the nineteenth century, Ottoman sovereignty over the Arab territories, for example, was barely contested from within. Ottoman control was substantially weakened and removed only by European imperial action, for example by the British in Egypt in 1882, the Italians in Libya in 1911-

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[36] Cronin, *Armies and State-Building.*

12, and the French in North Africa. The relative stability of the Ottoman system continued during and until after the end of the First World War, the British-sponsored Arab revolt in the Hijaz notwithstanding. The post-War state system that emerged was largely the creation, it is true, of Britain and France, but it consolidated itself and became entrenched as an arena for national political activity. It survived intact all the many vicissitudes of twentieth century Middle Eastern politics. The strength of this system may be seen in light of the total failure of the one significant change, the creation of Israel in 1948, to achieve any regional legitimacy. It was a traumatic blow from outside, the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, which was to cause this regional system to begin to unravel, leading to the current crisis.

In broad historical terms, then, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa possess a common history of state-building. In the two centuries between 1800 and 2000, states, rulers and elites across the Middle East and North Africa shared a broad agenda of defensive military modernization, a project supported by a nationalist ideology that showcased the army as the national institution *par excellence*. Yet the events of the so-called Arab Spring of 2011 also demonstrated the significance of the specific local context in determining the very different reactions of individual national armies to moments of intense political crisis. In Egypt and Tunisia, the military high commands were able to muster considerable political cohesion and decisiveness and moved to eliminate unpopular figureheads of both army and state, Presidents Mubarak in Egypt and Ben Ali in Tunisia.[37] In Libya, on the contrary, a weak and disorganized military almost immediately split into two, an eastern faction based on Benghazi, supporting the opposition, and a western army based on Tripoli, and remaining loyal to Ghadafi.[38] In Syria, after some early defections and despite almost universal Western predictions that the army would disintegrate, enough of the army continued to back the Assad regime to enable it to survive. In Bahrain, the army, its rank and file largely composed not of Bahrayni citizens but of Sunni Pakistanis, quickly abandoned any pretence that it could meet the challenge from the streets and surrendered its role to the Saudi National Guard invited in by a panicking al-Khalifa ruling family.

It was the late eighteenth century, when the Middle East and North Africa first began to attract the sustained attention of modern European imperialism and colonialism, which first saw the birth of systematic local efforts to import European methods of military organization and techniques of warfare. Everywhere, in Morocco, Tunis, Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran, Europeanized regiments sprang up, unleashing a process of military-led

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[37] For the Egyptian army, see Azzam, *Egypt's Military Council;* Hashim, *The Egyptian Military, Part One;* Gotowicki, "The role of the Egyptian military in domestic society"; for an account of the military in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, see Willis, *Politics and Power in the Maghreb.*
[38] For the Libyan army, see Cordesman, *A Tragedy of Arms,* 216-20; Pollack, *Arabs at War,* 358-446.

modernization that was to characterize state-building projects throughout the region until well into the twentieth century. The length, duration and near universality of the defensive modernization project so inaugurated has already been noted, as is the recent sudden and unexpected stalling or reversal of this project, leading to the proliferation of failed states, a novel development in the region. Equally noteworthy is the extent to which twentieth century armies were marked by the circumstances of their birth and infancy.

Three features of this new experiment in military modernization were to be of great significance for the future: purpose, cost and leadership.

The first concerned the purpose of the new armies. Certainly, ruling dynasties in the nineteenth century Middle East and North Africa embarked on army reform because they wished to strengthen their defensive capacity and resist growing European hegemony. But such rulers also had another purpose: to strengthen their personal position inside their patrimonies, buttressing their own power as expressed in the form of a modern autocratic state. These origins indelibly stamped Middle Eastern armies as instruments primarily for the enforcement of domestic political power. Throughout much of the twentieth century and until the present, with a small number of exceptions, Middle Eastern armies have remained important mainly for their role in guaranteeing regimes rather than conventional inter-state warfare.

The second issue to come to the fore concerned the financing of military reform. During the nineteenth century, ruling dynasties across the Middle East learned a harsh lesson about the cost of modern armies. Standing armies were inherently massively more costly than older types of military forces. Based on conscription, they required bureaucratic and administrative expansion and rationalization, the payment of salaries, provision of barracks and headquarters, and so on. The inevitable result, in the absence of economic development, an industrial revolution, or any other means of raising revenues, was a turn to borrowing from those very European countries against which the modern army was supposedly a defence. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, army reform more often led, through the ruinous debts incurred, to an actual and complete loss of sovereignty and direct European control. By 1869, 1875 and 1876, respectively, Tunisia, Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire had each been bankrupted by the crippling expense of their modernization programmes, at the heart of which was the army. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries were to produce no easy solution to the problem of paying for modern armies.

In addition to the requirements mentioned above, standing armies, unlike their predecessors, had a very specific further requirement, an officer corps trained in modern military methods, or organization, and warfare. In building modern armies, all the rulers of the Middle East faced the same difficulties in accumulating the cadre for a professional officer corps. The region possessed no modern educational institutions, let alone military colleges, nor had local elites yet made

any significant efforts to acquire training abroad. All therefore adopted the same solution, turning directly to European officers. This was quickly recognized as an enterprise fraught with danger, the requests for official missions only producing the creation of new mechanisms for the assertion of European political influence. Experience with Western military advice provided another harsh lesson for both existing authorities and rising nationalist opinion.[39]

Thus the nineteenth century saw the military modernization project, intended to protect sovereignty and enhance centralized domestic political power, leading to exactly the opposite results. Nonetheless, the state-building project produced complex and contradictory effects. Often leading to political authoritarianism, financial bankruptcy, and loss of sovereignty, the attempt to create modern armies also wrought profound changes of long-term significance on a number of levels, administrative, social, political, and intellectual. In the Ottoman Empire, for example, the new army became a route for the social advancement of officers from modest provincial backgrounds. In the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, it also provided the mechanism for the articulation of a new national consciousness, such developments imparting a revolutionary dimension to the modern army's burgeoning sense of its own national mission. The ability of the state, embodied in the military, to extend its reach, and therefore its sovereignty, across the entire national territory and over the lives of the national population increased exponentially.

From the beginning of their existence, armies across the region were deeply implicated in politics, sometimes in defence of the established political order, more often as agents of its overthrow. Defeat in war was an especially important catalyst for change. The capacity of the modern armies constructed by Middle Eastern rulers to resist European power was almost non-existent. But military defeats were at least as significant as success, and perhaps more so, to Middle Eastern political development. The Young Turk officers of the Ottoman army were galvanized into political action in 1908, seizing control of the Ottoman government and deposing the sultan, partly by successive defeats and loss of territories in the Balkans and Tripolitania. Egypt in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries illustrates perfectly the linkage between military defeat and the emergence from within the officer corps of a radical political challenge. The multiple failures of the Egyptian army during Khedive Ismail's empire-building in Abyssinia discredited the old Turkish-speaking command, paving the way for the Egyptian nationalist revolt led by Colonel Urabi. The linkage continued in the twentieth century. Defeat in Palestine in 1948 galvanized the Free Officers and led directly to the 1952 coup. Indeed, military defeat and failure in Palestine was to lead to revolutionary transformation across the Arab world. It is interesting that, by the latter part of the

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[39] The number of European and American military missions that were active in various countries of the Middle East in the nineteenth century is extraordinary. For a bibliography see Cronin, *Armies and State-Building,* footnote 23, p. 258.

twentieth century, this long-standing and almost universal connection between military defeat and political change seems to have been sundered, perhaps signifying the ossification of politics and the total immersion of the officer corps, especially at the coup-making levels of colonel and above, into existing political elites. Defeat, or at least lack of success, in the war with Iran, 1980-88, and after the occupation of Kuwait, for example, did not produce a successful challenge to Saddam Husayn's control of Iraq.

The problems evident from the very beginning of the defensive modernization project, of financing, of foreign tutelage, and of political disaffection, continued to plague Middle Eastern armies throughout the twentieth century. They were, furthermore, intertwined. The tendency of these problems to reinforce each other, the danger they represented, and the inability of different regimes to address them successfully, can be clearly illustrated in the cases of Pahlavi Iran and Saudi Arabia.[40] From the 1950s, both countries rapidly abandoned any attempt to finance the army out of domestic taxation, relying on oil revenues. Both failed to produce sufficient pools of trained manpower for the oil-funded advanced military technology acquired from the West, leading to a dependence on foreign personnel. Both also failed to address the consequent generation of intense political alienation and dissent within the ranks of the army itself, and in wider civil society, leading to the overthrow of one monarchy, the Iranian, and the near destruction of the other, the Saudi.

In the second half of the twentieth century, both Iran and Saudi Arabia avoided the bankruptcies experienced by the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Tunisia by relying on oil revenues to fund military expansion. In both cases, this reliance freed the governments from normal domestic constraints, exercised elsewhere through taxation and democratic politics, but embroiled the countries in political and economic relationships that damaged not only the political credibility of the regimes, but even the military competence of the armies.

It may be argued, for example, that the oil price rise of 1973, which enabled the shah of Iran to embark on a military spending spree of epic proportions, was one of the key factors that finally doomed the monarchy.[41] The sudden availability of seemingly unlimited quantities of cash resulted in a military spending spree of irrational scope and dimensions, leading to the swelling of numbers of American advisers, both the spending and the advisers directly targeted by the various strands of the opposition, both secular and religious. The oil price rise facilitated the shah's grandiose plans for regional hegemony under US auspices, further provoking the domestic opposition, and created a lucrative Iranian arms market, encouraging the

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[40] For the Iranian army, see Ward, *Immortal: A Military History of Iran";* for the Saudi military, see Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century";* see al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia.*
[41] For Iran's military expenditure, see Chegnizadeh, *Iranian Military Modernization, 1921-1979.*

US in the direction of an increasingly uncritical pro-shah orientation.[42] At the same time, within the Iranian army, dissent was silenced by a deluge of material privileges. When the revolution came, the army was ill-prepared to meet civil disturbance. The sophisticated high-tech weaponry so beloved by the shah was of little use against unarmed demonstrators in urban centres, the army very much a blunt instrument whose deployment on the streets invariably aggravated discontent.

In Saudi Arabia, the use of oil revenues to boost military spending led to similar distortions in priorities. Despite the multiple political problems and military weaknesses in evidence during the 1991 Gulf War crisis, the massive expenditure on defence continued unabated. As in 1970s Iran, its military utility was revealed as marginal, and it operated mainly as a mechanism for recycling petrodollars to the advantage of the Saudi elite and the Western arms industry, and for cementing Saudi political and diplomatic relationships with the West, especially with the United States.

In Iran, the human resources on which the Iranian army could draw in the 1970s, for both its officer corps and its rank and file, were inadequate, unprepared to cope with the volume and sophistication of the new equipment. The lack of skilled manpower led to the arrival in Iran of vast numbers of American advisors to assist in the operation and maintenance of the imported weapons, a solution which contributed significantly to the unpopularity of the regime. All US military personnel were given legal immunity while in Iran and were consequently a particular object of revolutionary propaganda, denounced by Khomeini as symbols of Iran's subservience to the US, and becoming a target for the guerrilla campaign of the 1970s.

Similarly, the arrival of very large numbers of foreign military personnel in Saudi Arabia created intense political problems for the al-Saud. It contributed specifically to a crisis of legitimacy and the rise of Islamist opposition, in general, and of al-Qa'ida, in particular. In Saudi Arabia, technically competent and politically reliable recruits had been, as in Iran, in short supply. The numbers of foreigners employed in the kingdom on defence contracts accordingly grew to fantastic proportions. Yet, in 1991, with Saddam Husayn's occupation of Kuwait, the Saudis were forced to face the fact that their massive military expenditure, about $3 billion over the previous twenty years, had left the country practically defenceless. The Saudis were obliged to appeal to the US for direct protection and King Fahd's invitation to US troops to defend Saudi soil inaugurated a prolonged political crisis in the kingdom.

In both Pahlavi Iran and Saudi Arabia, the character of military development produced deep fissures within the military, and pervasive criticism of the military

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[42] Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development.*

from civil society. The 1950s was a decade of nationalist, sometimes left-leaning, coups in the Arab world. In Iran, however, the army had suffered enormous damage to its prestige by its recent role in the Western-led overthrow of a nationalist figure, Muhammad Musadiq, whose stature was growing with the passage of time. Despite the consolidation of the control of the post-coup regime over the army, subterranean discontent continued to exist for professional as well as political reasons, many officers disliking the necessity of court patronage for advancement and the royal dictatorship itself. As far as the wider society was concerned, in the years after the coup the army was profoundly unpopular. When faced with the revolutionary movement in 1977-78, the army was unprepared and unwilling to act. The high command, even when encouraged by the US through the Huyser mission, could find neither the esprit de corps nor the political and military confidence to act decisively to defend the monarchy or to project its own power through a military coup. Middle ranking officers had already largely retired, resigned, or defected, to the opposition; this was even true of those at the traditionally coup-making rank of colonel, while the conscript units were rapidly disintegrating.[43]

In common with other Arab armies, in the 1950s the fledgling Saudi officer experienced the appeal of pan-Arabism and Nasserism, and even leftism.[44] As in Iran, officers were discontented both with what they saw as the backwardness and corruption of their own societies, and specifically with the brake this put on the modernization of their forces and the specific obstacle placed in the way of their own professional advancement by the system of patrimonial rule and the entitlement of members of the royal family—by the 1990s numbering as many as 20,000 people—all three services and the defence ministry finding their entire upper echelons increasingly dominated by an ever-growing pool of officers of royal birth. As the growing oil wealth increasingly enabled the regime to buy off opposition among the better-educated, including among army and air force officers, so a social and ideological trauma resulting from that same oil wealth led to the emergence, among the poorer tribal groups heavily represented in the National Guard, of a different kind of dissent, now with a strong religious revivalist character. In 1979, the same year as the Iranian revolution, current and former members of the National Guard were central participants and even leaders of the radical Islamist attack on the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

The Saudi monarchy survived the crisis of 1979; the Iranian monarchy did not. These two countries, in the three decades of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, shared a common project of military-led modernization and shared also the concomitant problems, but the contrasting outcomes also illustrate crucially the importance of

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[43] For a vivid description of the disintegration of the army, see Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution.*

[44] Safran, *Saudi Arabia,"* 81; Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia,* 339-340; Cronin, *Armies and State-Building,* 225-227.

the specific political and historical context. Traditions of political dissent in Saudi Arabia were weaker than in Iran and compromised by the persistence and strength of tribal ties. In contrast to Iran, the varying strands of opposition to the al-Saud failed to find common cause, the religious radicals isolated from the urban intelligentsia and the Shi'a dissidents. In neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia, however, although for different reasons, was the army able to take control of security or politics in the fateful year of 1979.

Finally, to what extent is the military-led state-building project that exercised such hegemony across the Middle East and North Africa between 1800 and 2000 finally exhausted? Certainly much of the military conflict across the region now has the character of urban guerrilla warfare, and armies have either been forced to adapt, as in the Syrian case, or to rely heavily on militias, as in Iraq. Yet the project itself, on the ideological level at least, remains intact, armies still presenting themselves, sometimes successfully, as the pre-eminent national institution. However, the ability of countries across the region to emerge from the current collapse is at present unclear. As of the summer of 2015, indeed, the disintegration appears to be accelerating, with unprecedented levels of population flight. As outlined above, the state-building project in the Middle East and North Africa has been, as it was in Europe, protracted and difficult, involving domestic, regional and international contest and conflict. Comforting easy proposals, such as the provision of military assistance to entrenched local elites, is, on the basis of past experience, unlikely to lead to lasting solutions. Whether the region is still capable of generating the strength necessary to rebuild its state institutions, and provide the minimum of security necessary for everyday life, let alone political progress, remains to be seen.

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This volume collects a number of papers discussing various aspects of Middle East security. The papers are written by scholars from different academic disciplines who were asked to address questions of importance today and in the future.

The book contains chapters on the security implications of energy; natural geography; political contestation following the Arab Spring and state responses; evolution of armed forces in the region; armed non-state actors; US Middle East policy; the overall regional security architecture; and the historical role of the armies in Middle East state-building