ARAB UNITY AND DISUNITY

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ABBREVIATIONS

E.E.C.	European Economic Community
O.A.S.	Organisation of American States
O.P.E.C.	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
P.L.O.	Palestine Liberation Organisation
R.C.C.	Revolutionary Command Council
U.A.R.	United Arab Republic
U.N.E.F.	United Nations Emergency Forces
U.S.A.	United States of America
U.S.S.R.	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This dissertation examines the factors of unity and disunity in the politics of Pan-Arabism during the period from 1942 to 1973. Particular attention is paid to the nature of Arab aspirations to unity, to the obstacles to unity created by the divisions between Arab states and political movements, to the impact of external forces on Arab politics, and to the fact that no single Arab state has been able to establish a position of effective leadership in the Arab world

In Chapters I and II I deal with Arabism in history. There are three schools of thought which attribute the genesis of Arabism to, respectively, the pre-Islamic period, the early Islamic period, and the period after Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt. Most writers consider that just as the Islamic conquests had been the major force in the spread of Arabism in the Fertile Crescent and North Africa, so Arabism became an ingredient in the concept of Ummah (the all-embracing society of Muslims). The rise of Pan-Turanism brought the Ummah to an end as an Islamic political community and led to the emergence of Arab nationalism of the several "shuoub" (peoples) of the Arab "qawm" (nation).

Different views of the origin of Arabism led to political as well as intellectual differences in approaches to Arab unity. Traditionalists, whether they were writers, leaders of political parties, or heads of states, saw the Arabs as a favoured people in Islam and advocated the attainment of Arab unity by reviving

commitment to the faith of Islam and conserving the traditional Islamic institutions as the sole binding force of Arab unity. Reformists advocated the achievement of Arab unity through the free exercise of the common will of the masses; their first step would be to awaken the consciousness of the Arab masses and their feeling of belonging to one nation. Competition between these two approaches has been a recurring feature of Arab politics which has contributed to the division of the Arab world into conservative and progressive factions.

In Chapter III I deal with the first movement for Arab unity, which was recognised politically by Britain in 1938 and 1941. The Hashemite Houses of Iraq and Transjordan became the main advocates of Arab unity, in the sense of annexing one state to another under their leadership. Nahas Pasha of Egypt then took over the leadership when he convened the Alexandria and Cairo conferences in 1944 and 1945. But the rivalries between the Arab states, and the tendency to local nationalism in Lebanon, defeated the early aspirations of unity; and the League of Arab States, although it expressed the Arab identity of its members, was mainly important because it recognised their independence of each other and provided a framework of inter-Arab relations which would sustain the division of the Arab world into separate states. Various suggestions have been made within the League for promoting it into a more "advanced" body which could be the instrument of Arab unity, but none has been able to overcome the dissensions provoked by factional conflict.

Chapter IV examines first the intellectual bases of

socialist revolutionary movements which aspire to end
the status quo. The variety of these movements has
stimulated inter-revolutionary conflicts and this has
inspired proposals on how they might be combined into
one movement. Baathism and Nasserism are analysed in
detail as the most prominent revolutionary movements at
work in the Arab world. Baathism is the ideology of a
political party looking for power at any cost, even at
the expense of Arab unity. Its stated objectives are
unity, socialism and freedom, and it sees itself as the
party of revolution of the Arab masses. The main centri-
fugal effect of the Baath in the Arab world derives from
its combination of doctrines of socialism and unity which
provokes opposition from oil-rich Arab states. The
Baath has succeeded in controlling political power in
Iraq as well as Syria but has failed in unifying even
these two regimes into one. Nasserism, on the other hand,
was a military power based in Egypt looking for an ideol-
ogy. It developed pragmatically from the Six Principles
of Revolution through various Egyptian constitutions and
the National Charter. Proclaiming freedom, socialism
and unity, Nasserism had a share in bringing about the
independence of other Arab states and succeeded in trans-
forming Egyptian society into a socialist one, with a
single party system. The Nasserist strategy for Arab
unity developed opportunistically from a programme of
inter-Arab co-operation through the constitutional unity
of the United Arab Republic, a scheme for partial unity,
and finally back to "unified Arab action" i.e., a pro-
gramme of inter-Arab co-operation. Nasserism carried in

itself the seeds of its failure; the transformation to socialism and the policy of challenge, of attempting to unite the Arab world by propaganda, confrontation or even military intervention, naturally resulted in the Arab cold war. It was then Nasser himself who had to look for reconciliation with other Arab leaders through summit conferences, and eventually the cold war was brought to an end by the Six Day War of June 1967. It is a paradox that the main centres of Nasserism are now in Libya and Lebanon. The chapter ends with a comparison of the two movements.

In Chapter V I look at the politics of Arab unity as a shifting pattern of three types of relationship: brotherhood, cousinhood and enmity. This pattern became more recognisable after 1952 because of the emergence of Nasserism, socialism, revolutionary Republics and military coups, and the frequent switches of alignment made a major contribution to perpetuating the status quo. Egyptian-Saudi relations are treated as an important example of the continuously changing pattern of inter-Arab groupings, moving from brotherhood, to cousinhood, to enmity and vice-versa. External factors and unstable international politics had both cohesive and divisive effects on Arab unity and the Palestinians pose particularly acute problems.

Chapter VI sets out my conclusions, summarising the main arguments and examining the failure of Egypt to lead the other Arab states to unity.

CHAPTER I

Arabism in History

Arabism is a complex subject.   The word "Arab" itself
has had different meanings at different stages of Arab
history.

During the pre-Islamic period, an Arab was an
inhabitant of Arabia or someone whose ancestors had once
been nomads in Arabia.(1)   In the remote Arab history of
the pre-Islamic period in the first Millennium B.C.(2)
the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula spread out into
neighbouring regions in search of water and pasture and
to escape from internal conflicts.   The first Arab
Semitic race was originally located in two areas: the
south-west part of the Peninsula (the Yemen) and an arid
area with oases in the northern half of the Peninsula,
Najd, Hijaz, Arud and Yamama.(3)   From there the first
advance was made into the Fertile Crescent, where the
Jewish Arabs lived in a more civilized region.(4)

The early Arabs entertained vague notions about a
common stock and descent.   This feeling of common origin
underlay the distinctions drawn between Beduin Arabs
(the inhabitants of the northern half of the Peninsula),

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(1) W.M. Watt, Islamic Political Thought: the Basic
                Concepts, Edinburgh, 1968, p.117
(2) P.M. Holt, The Cambridge History of Islam,
                Cambridge, 1970, Vol.1, p.6
(3) Darwish al-Jundi, al Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah pil-Adab
                al-Hadith, (Arab Nationalism in
                Modern Arab Literature), Cairo, 1962,
                pp.36-43
(4) P.M. Holt, op.cit., p.5

Genuine Arabs (the inhabitants of Yemen), and Naturalized

Arabs (immigrants or members of tribes regarded for

historical reasons as immigrant).(5)   During the first

Millennium B.C. there was a feeling of common conscious-

ness and self-awareness, that lacked, however, organiz-

ation and guidance.   This common consciousness was

identified with certain characteristics of the early Beduin

way of life and culture(6) and was most strongly man-

ifested when challenged by two powers: the Sassanians in

the east and Byzantium in the west.   The Battle of Dhu

Qar is an example of the emerging Arab ability to come

together to face a common enemy.(7)   Assyrian records

relate that in 854 B.C. Guidibu the Arab, with one

thousand camel troops from Arabia, joined Ber-idri of

Damascus against Shal Manassar III in the Battle of

Qarqar(8) (or Dhu Qar as it is known in Arabic language:

it is in what is now Iraq).   Despite the small number of

troops involved, the decisive victory of the Arabs is seen

as the beginning of a new era, since it gave the Arab

tribes a new confidence and enthusiasm.

The second period of Arab history is the emergence

of Islam, when the word "Arab" signified those groups

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(5) Abdul Aziz al-Duri, al Juzur al-Tarikhiyyah lil-
         Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah (The Historical
         Roots of Arab Nationalism), Beirut,
         1960, pp.10-14
(6) Ibrahim Jumah, Ideologiyyah al Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah
         Imbithaquha min al-Dzamir al-Arabi,
         (The Ideology of Arab Nationalism in
         Emergence from the Consciousness of
         Arabs) Cairo, 1960, pp.92-97
(7) Abdul Aziz al-Duri, op.cit., p.41
(8) Raphael Patai, The Arab Mind,
         New York, 1973, p.12

which carried out the great conquests in the first century
of Islam and then settled outside the Arabian Peninsula
as an elite of warriors and rulers in the midst of a much
more numerous subject population.(9)   The first gener-
ation of Arab rulers were united politically and theolog-
ically for only a short period.   Their political diversity
began after the death of Umar the second Caliph.(10)
Theological division began in the time of Ali, the fourth
Caliph.   Henceforth the work of Islamization was carried
out by both the Arabs and non-Arab Muslims.   The criterion
of Arabization was the acceptance of the Arab language by
the inhabitants of conquered territories where both Arabs
and non-Arab muslims lived together, sharing an ideal of
a unified "Ummah", an idea which conveys a sense of
political community.   The binding force of this community
was the belief in the message of Muhammad and the "Shahadah"
(the declaration that there is no god but Allah and that
Muhammad is His apostle);   faith was the pact which bound
muslims together in the Ummah.(11)   The idea of ummah was
accepted by both Arab and non-Arab and in time it super-
ceded the concept of Arabism.   The concept of ummah thus
permitted non-Arab muslims to play a leading role in Arab
political life for a thousand years, until the downfall of
Ottoman Empire in 1918.

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(9) P.M. Holt, The Study of Modern Arab History (Lecture
              delivered on 2 January 1965) SOAS, London,
              1965, p.6
(10) M.A. Shaban, Islamic History A.D. 660-750 (A.H.132)
              A New Interpretation
              Cambridge, 1971, pp.60-79
(11) Elie Salem, "Nationalism and Islam"
              The Muslim World, Michigin, Vol.52, No.4,
              1962, p.278

. The third period, that of the Arab revival, is identified with the transformation of the ideal of Ummah into the concept of "qawm" in which the binding forces are those of kinship and language.(12)   This process began when the Arabs attempted to have an independent Arab caliphate in Hijaz and an independent united Arab state in the Fertile Crescent.(13)   The territorial scope of the concept was limited.   Thus when at the turn of the 20th century the Sharif of Mecca was claiming to act as a spokesman for the whole Arab nation, he was content to name the Red Sea as the western border of Arab territories. This implied that Egyptians, though speaking Arabic, were not Arabs (and indeed few of them claimed Arab descent).(14)

In reaction to the idea of an Arab caliphate, the religious ideal of ummah was revived by the Sultan Abdul Hamid and propagated as a new political ideology for the Ottoman Empire.   It was aimed on the one hand at containing the idea of an Arab caliphate and on the other hand, at strengthening the Empire's stand against the West.(15) This controversy about the caliphate raised the political consciousness of both Arabs and Turks and contributed to political decisions within and between both peoples. Abdul Hamid was deposed by the Young Turks who introduced the secular doctrine of pan-Turanism.   The Arabs developed

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(12) Charles Issawi, "The Bases of Arab Unity", International Affairs, January 1955, p.36
(13) Mahmud Samra, "Islam and Arab Nationalism, Complementary or Competitive", Middle East Forum, Vol.XLII, No.2, p.12
(14) W.M. Watt, op.cit., p.117
(15) Mahmud Samra, op.cit., p.14

a political response, in the concept of al-Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah (Arab Nationalism) which signified that an Arab was "anyone whose historical tradition attached him to the civilization which grew up around Arab Islam in the Middle Ages".(16)   Thus, as Professor Holt argues, the sharing of language and a common history came to be stronger defining characteristics of Arabism than descent. These factors generated the feeling of belonging to one nation.

Today membership of the Arab League is sufficient to identify a state as "Arab" even when, as in the case of Mauretiania and Somalia, historic links with Arab culture are tenuous.   The formation of the League signifies the latest development of the concept of "qawm", which is in turn divided into several "shaab" (people).   We can consider the League as representative of "al-Qawm" (the nation) and each member-state as representative of a "shaab" (a people).

Arab writers about Arab unity can be divided into two schools.   For both schools, Arab unity requires the establishment of an Arab nation and Arab nationalism is the force for achieving such unity.   For traditionalists, the roots of Arab nationalism are found in Islam.   Arab reformists, however, who began to be important in the 19th century and were much affected by what they knew of Europe, believed that the Arab nation would be realised

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(16) P.M. Holt, op.cit., pp.6-7

through a more general feeling of common nationhood.(17)

Traditionalists attribute the oneness of the Arab nation to the faith which united the Arabs from the days of their first acceptance of Islam. One finds the traditional view being expressed even by Arab Muslims with modernising ideas. Dr Taha Hussein, who was driven out of al-Azhar University because of his liberal thinking about Islam, wrote in 1959: "if we really want to know when Arab nationalism emerges, in a proper sense of the word, we have to attribute it to the emergence of Islam. The actual founder of Arab unity in its various aspects (political, economic, social and linguistic) was the Prophet Muhammad. The first Arab unity was attained in Medina, from where it grew gradually, sometimes by persuasion and sometimes by force".(18)

Those who attribute Arab nationalism to the Islamic faith believe that Islam invariably encompasses all aspects of life (culture, language and politics). Arab common culture is generated from Islamic teaching, with the Quran as "a mirror reflecting certain images of the life of the Arabs".(19) The Quran is seen as the pinnacle of achievement in Arab literature: the language, its beauty and

(17) For further information about traditionalists and reformists, see Dr Said Nofal, "al-wahdah al-Arabiyyah pi majal al-fikr wal-thaqaafah" (Arab Unity in sphere of Outlook and Culture) al-Hilal (Arabic periodical) Cairo, January 1972, pp.5-15

(18) Taha Husein, "Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah fil-midzi wal-hadzir wal-mustaqbal" (Arab Nationalism in the Past Present and Future) al-Hilal, Cairo, January 1959. Vol.67, p.32

(19) Ali Husni al-Kharbutli, Muhammad wal-Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah (Muhammad and Arab Nationalism), Cairo, 1959, pp. 67-75

style an object of admiration and wonder to all Arabs.
Nevertheless, the traditionalists appreciate also the
political significance of a common language, which at
least gives the Arabs the possibility of communicating and
acting as one nation.

Reformists when expounding or explaining Arab
nationalism emphasise "a comprehensive feeling of the Arab
nation of belonging to one nation, supplemented by a
combination of various factors of language, historical
memories, and national interest".(20)   Writers such as
al-Razzaz, a Baathist, attach much more importance to the
element of feeling than to religion, culture and language,
and tend to take a Western secular view of religion as a
belief system apart from everyday political and economic
life.   They accordingly view religion alone as an
insufficient factor of nationalism: many Western nations
believe in a common religion and yet live with separate
nationalisms while India encompasses a variety of religions
without this variety prevening her from being one new
nation.   Equally language and historical memories, taken
alone, are not enough to form a nation.   The English
language is a national language for both the United Kingdom
and Ireland, but they are separate nations; and the Arabs
and Turks, in spite of their long shared historical
memories for more than five centuries, did not merge into
one nation.   Neither religion, nor history, nor language

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(20) Munif al-Razzaz, al-Maalim al-jadidah lil-Hayah al-
Arabiyyah (New Features of the Arab
Life), Beirut, 1960, pp.270-80.
For this book al-Razzaz was awarded
the first prize in the League of the
Arab states' publishing competition
in 1955.

is alone sufficient to generate a single nation. For the reformists the Arab nation is fundamentally defined by the "feeling of a group of people that they are 'sons' of one nation. They could be linked by all these factors (religion, language, history), or by some, or by none of them".(21) Shared interests come second to shared feelings in this theory of nationalism.

Sati' al-Husri, the most influential contemporary writer on Arab nationalism, also stressed the importance of feeling as a main factor of nationalism.(22) He expressed it in terms of the "spiritual" relationship that the Arabs have and feel toward their ancestors. It is a relationship that is born of various social bonds, especially a common language and history. Husri attached an important priority to the Arabic language as a main element of Arab nationalism. He said "when we find a man who disowns and takes no pride in the fact that he is an Arab, even though he is Arabic-speaking and belongs to an Arab nation ... we regard him as an Arab whether he likes it or not, whether he accepts it or not"...(23)

The reformists' readiness to think in terms of a number of factors going to make up the feeling of Arab nationalism differentiates them from the traditionalists, with their exclusive concentration on religion, and also

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(21) ibid., p.176
(22) Sati' al-Husri, Hawla al-Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah, (Concerning Arab Nationalism) Beirut, 1961, pp.65-66
See also L.M. Kenny, "Sati' al-Husri's Views on Arab Nationalism", The Middle East Journal, Vol.17, No.2, 1963, pp.231-256
(23) ibid., p.66

links them with the Western style of political science.
Thus Halpern writes: "they are Arabs by culture and
language and Muslims by religion";(24) and Issawi treats
the Arabs as any other national group: "inhabiting a
definite stretch of territory, bound by ties of kinship,
speaking a common language, sharing common historical
memories and practising a common way of life".(25) These
factors together generate a feeling of belonging to one
nation.

Another difference between the reformists and the
traditionalists relates to the divergence between their
perceptions of the origins of Arab nationalism. The
traditionalists were interested in the historic origins
of the idea of Arab nationalism, searching for the moment
when its existence was first embodied in organized society;
the reformists, however, were looking for something that
could serve as an overall Arab ideology during their
struggle for independence.

The traditionalists assert that when the first Islamic
state was founded, and during the period of the Arab
caliphates, the idea of Arab nationalism was implicit in,
and an ingredient of, the idea of ummah (a unified
Islamic Society).(26) There was an interaction between
Arab nationalism and Islam. Islam bound the Arab tribes
together into one people, taught them a feeling of kinship

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(24) Manfred Halpern, The Politics of Social Change in
the Middle East and North Africa,
Princeton, 1963, pp.197-98
(25) Charles Issawi, op.cit., p.36
(26) Elie Salem, "Nationalism and Islam", The Muslim
World, Vol.52, 1962, p.278

which transcended mere ties of blood and engendered a feeling of brotherhood. The feeling and language of Arabism in turn contributed cohesion to the ummah during the period of the Arab caliphates. After a century of Arab caliphates non-Arab peoples became more important elements in the Islamic community. When the policy of reformation, to give equal political rights to Arab and non-Arab Muslims, was undertaken by the caliphate (under Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz), the Arab element no longer had the upper hand; and finally non-Arabs took over the ruling position in the community, with the downfall of the last Abbasid caliph.(27) During the long centuries till the turn of the 19th century, the Arabs were but one of the peoples of the ummah in which the faith of Islam played the unifying role.

The reformists see explicit emergence of Arab nationalism as an ideological movement which began in 1798 when Bonaparte landed in Egypt;(28) an event which was followed by successive Western European military, economic, cultural and political influences on the Arab world. The Arab consciousness was intensified in 1908 when Sultan Abdul Hamid was deposed and the policy of Turkification and Pan-Turanism was introduced to the Arab world.(29) The Arab response to Pan-Turanism was to revolt against the idea

(27) K.H. Karpat, Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East Praeger, London, 1968, p.258.

(28) John Marlow, Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism The Cresset Press, London, 1961, pp.7-9

(29) Peter Mansfield, The Ottoman Empire and its Successors Macmillan, London, 1973, pp.27-28

and propagate the alternative idea of Arab independence and unity. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 was followed by the introduction of the multiple mandates system, fragmenting the Arab world into a variety of spheres of influence.(30)   It was from this fragmentation and from the struggle for independence that the call for Arab unity finally emerged.

The reformists see several strands in the Arab revival. First there were national liberation movements in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent and attempts to co-ordinate the efforts of these independence movements.   The second strand was a cultural revival which had been gaining momentum and which now contributed to the sharpening of the Arab national consciousness.   Third, the idea of political nationalism, which had found its way into the Arab world from Europe in the past century, came to exert its appeal on a wider mass basis after the First World War, reinforced by the Allies' proclamation of the principle of national self-determination.   Finally the advent of modern means of communication enhanced contact among the populations of the various Arab lands.(31)

During the 1920's and 1930's the Arab revolt against the multiple mandates system resulted in the achievement of at least formal independence in Egypt (1922), Transjordan

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(30) Tareq Y, Ismael, Governments and Politics of the
                     Contemporary Middle East,
                     The Dorsey Press, Ontario, 1970,
                     pp.33-35
(31) Fayez A. Sayegh, Arab Unity; Hope and Fulfilment,
                     New York, 1958, p.49

(1923) and Iraq (1930).(32)   While they struggled for
independence the idea of pan-Arabism and the call for unity
had a certain value;   but after the states gained their
independence, its appeal faded.   Furthermore, indepen-
dence was achieved by a territorial settlement for each
separate state so that in 1945 there were seven indepen-
dent Arab states with carefully guarded frontiers.   Between
1941-1945 attempts to revive the idea of Arab unity
generated only a league of independent Arab states which
maintained their sovereign status;(33)   and this develop-
ment was balanced by the emergence of further independent
Arab states, so that membership of the League has now
increased to twenty.

In the next two chapters, there is a closer examin-
ation of the reformist and traditionalist ideas about
Arab nationalism which shows how the political forces at
work within the Arab world were balanced in such a way as
to ensure (a) that some sort of league was likely to be
established but (b) that it was unlikely to be a step
towards the attainment of Arab unity.

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(32) Peter Mansfield, op.cit., pp.195-6
(33) ibid., pp.175-180 (Chronological Table)

CHAPTER II

Traditional and Reformist Theories of Arab Unity

Arabs can take the problem of unity or disunity at
two levels.   They can regard themselves as a nation (qawm)
in which a majority believe in one religion, speak a common
language, share common historical memories, inhabit a
definite stretch of territory and practise a common
culture.   These shared attributes are regarded by the
traditionalists as in themselves the fundamental elements
of the Arab nation, but by reformists as factors which
generate the feelings of belonging to one nation;   but
both schools see the division of the Arabs into separate
states as being in the nature of a schism.   Alternatively,
Arabs can take as the point of departure the existence
of separate Arab peoples (shuoub), organised in some
twenty firmly established states which might in the future
be joined together in one political "qawm".   The first
view suggests that attempts to realise unity should be made
from below either by peaceful means or by revolutionary
movements.   The second view points to unification from
above by means of the union of governments.   Whatever
view is taken has strong implications when we attempt to
answer the questions, "who is to achieve unity?" and "how
is it to be brought about?".

Traditional Views of Islam and Arab Unity

The unity of the Arabs, like that of other national
groups, is a matter of a people inhabiting a definite stretch
of territory, bound by ties of kinship, speaking a common

language, sharing common historical memories, and practising a common way of life which is expressed through religion and culture.(1)   But in the case of the Arabs, religion is of particular importance.   Though the Arabic word, "din", may be translated as "religion", its connotations are quite different from those of the English word, since "din" covers nearly the whole conduct of life.(2)   Islam accordingly played a vital role in unifying the Arabs.   From the emergence of Islam until the end of the Arab Caliphate the Arab world was absorbed in the Islamic world as an integral part of the ummah. Indeed Islam was the first unifying factor to emerge from within the Arab community, encompassing various aspects of Arab life.

The people of the unified ummah lived under the moral imperative of Islam which, as a religion, contains precepts of direct relevance to political and social life. Thus the Friday congregation encourages communal solidarity and the pilgrimage facilitates friendly contact between Muslims from different lands.   From an early period, the ummah included every Muslim, irrespective of his race, colour or status.   The member of the ummah lived by the precepts of Islam and submitted to the Shariah.   Islam percolated into the darkest corners of their lives and gave them light, meaning and hope.   Belief in the message of Muhammad is the unifying factor of the ummah, and the Shahadah (the declaration that there is no god

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(1) Charles Issawi, op.cit., p.36
(2) W. Watt, op.cit., p.29

but Allah and Muhammad is His apostle) is the pact which brings the individual Muslim to the ummah, subject to the law, and bound by its moral principles. In Islam, the ummah, as the community of all Muslims, is comprehensive in a social as well as in a religious sense. Islam holds out a hope of personal salvation and calls upon the Muslim to live in the community as well as to abide by Shariah. His life within the community of Muslims constitutes his best guarantee for an orderly life in the world, and his role as a member of the community is as important as his personal conduct.(3) Thus the individual becomes through religion an integral part of his community. Without it, according to the Prophet Muhammad, he has no meaning: the Muslim who dissociates himself from the ummah will die, not as a Muslim, but as a pagan. The Prophet is reported to have asked for the death of him who seeks to create discord in the affairs of the ummah. The members of the ummah were called upon to be like the stones of a wall, the one supporting the other, and they are exhorted to love and support each other: "No one is a true believer unless he wishes for his brother (Muslim) what he wishes for himself".(4) The Islamic community constitutes one unit, one realm, one world: "this is your ummah, one ummah".(5)

In the early day of Islam the ummah had constituted a political unity, established by the Prophet Muhammad in three stages of struggle (preaching to the inhabitants of

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(3) Elie Salem, op.cit., pp.278-279
(4) Sahih al-Muslim, Cairo, 1929-30, Vol.12, p.16
(5) Quran, Surah al-Ambia', 21/92

Mecca, forming his followers into one opposition group, and
finally establishing a unified ummah in Medina).(6)   But
the political conflicts and contradictions which soon
broke the formal structure of Islam had a minimum effect
on the Islamic community itself.   Although the social,
moral and legal affairs of the ummah began to diversify,
the presence of political frontiers was not a great
obstacle to Muslims.   Frontiers marked the limits of the
rule of this or that dynasty or prince, but they did not
separate peoples, as the frontiers of the modern nation-
states do.   Home was where Islam prevailed.   Undoubtedly
an Egyptian felt more at home in Egypt than in Morocco
but, when necessary, he could settle anywhere in the land
of Islam without feeling a serious cultural strain.   When
Mustafa Kamal abolished the Caliphate in 1924, he sought
to put an end to Islam as the "symbol" of unity, but this
did not destroy the unity of spirit and sentiment that
still moulds the Muslims in the ummah.(7)

Though an Islamic community could not have been founded
without the spiritual ideal, it has since its founding
developed strong social and cultural bonds.   These bonds
have survived even when the spiritual element has been
weakened.   In the Islamic community the spiritual factor
is central, but it is not everything.   It is even possible
for a Muslim who is not spiritually inclined and does not
regularly perform his religious duties, to remain a strong
adherent of the ummah and a staunch defender of Islam,

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(6) M.F. Othman, Dawlatul Fikrah (the State of Ideology)
                    Dar al-Kuwitiyyah, Kuwait, 1968, pp.33-50
(7) Elie Salem, op.cit., p.280

especially when it is endangered by outsiders.

Arab Position in the Ummah

As Islam spread far beyond the Arab world, non-Arabs were put on an equal footing with Arabs in accordance with the Quran;(8) but Arab nationalism was nevertheless recognisable. The Arabs thought of Muhammad as an Arab hero, not only as the Prophet of Islam. To them Islam was an eruption which expressed the truth and the ideal of the Arab nation. They were proud of it as a religion, a culture and a law. Hasan al-Banna, who was more interested in the ummah than in the Arab nation, reiterated the unique place of the Arab in Islam: "the Arabs are the first nation of Islam and Islam's preferred people".(9)

"Nationalism and Islam", said Abdul Rahman al-Bazzaz "are in complete agreement; the life of nationalism is the Arabic language which is also the language of Islam".(10) The preservation of this language is not only a national but also a religious duty. The greatest annals of Islamic history are the annals of Arab Islamic history. Arab literature is essentially Arab-Islamic literature. Literary Arabic, a binding force among all the

(8) The Quran, Verse No.13 Surah 49. "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily, the most honoured of you in the Sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you..."

(9) Hasan al-Banna, Ma'a al-Qawmiyyah al-Arabiyyah, (With Arab Nationalism), Cairo, 1957, p.115. The author was the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Party.

(10) A.R. al-Bazzaz, Fi-Ruh al-Islam, (In the Spirit of Islam) Baghdad, 1959, pp.180-181

educated Arab classes, owes its continued existence largely
to Islam and particularly to the Quran.   If Islam weakens,
literary Arabic may decline and drag with it into oblivion
the very idea of Arab nationalism.   According to the
Prophet, "Arabism consists of language and religion";   when
these two universals are discredited, each desert grouping
(and the Arab world is a series of groupings in small areas
of the wide desert) will fold into itself and wither into
an isolated and ineffective community lacking in power,
culture and ideology.

In modern times Arabs, whether they are Muslims or
non-Muslims, believe that Islam was entrusted to them, and
that they were the leaders of Islamic community till the
downfall of Abbaside caliphate.   The Quran, says Hassan
al-Baquri, "refers to the Arab as the best community that
has been raised up for mankind as long as they enjoin right
conduct and forbid indecency".(11)   This is, he says,
"the truth witnessed by God;   and all the Arabs have to do
is to work under the impulse of this testimony until they
become in the eyes of all people the best nation in existence".
(12)   "We Arab nationalists" writes al Shibani, "believe
that the Muslim world is the natural lung of Arab national-
ism, and we believe that Arab nationalism cannot be dis-
associated from Islam as a religion and as an order.   Arab
nationalism gives the Arab a country while Islam gives him

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(11) the Quran, Verse No.110, Surah 3
(12) A.H. al-Baquri, Aurouba wal Din, (Arabism and Religion)
                        Cairo, 1959, p.63

a complete world".(13)   The association between Islam and Arabism is also made through the person of Muhammad who is depicted as the founder of Arab unity and as the fountain-head of Arab nationalism; "our Arab master (Sauuiduna) Muhammad, is the spirit of the Arab world, its foundation and its symbol of glory; without him, the Arab world would be a body without a soul".(14)

Baath doctrine linked the Arab nation with Islam, but it put the argument the other way round.   Arabism is regarded as the creative force, finding expression in the life of an Arab, Muhammad, and in the Arabic language, with Islam as its end-product.   The Baath doctrine stated that "the Arab nation is considered, philosophically speaking, not as a social and economic historic formation, but as a transcendent fact inspiring different forms, one of its highest contributions taking the form of Islam.   It was not Islam that modelled the people of Arabia, the Fertile Crescent and North Africa, equipping them with Islamic values, especially the Arabic language and Arabic culture, but the Arab nation that created Islam."(15)   This ideological view is parallel with that of some modern political interpretations of Islam.   Thus M.A. Shaaban writes that "Muhammad did not establish a state nor did he unite the Arabs.   He took over an existing established

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(13) Elie Salem, op.cit., p.284
(14) ibid., p.284
(15) Tabitha Petran, Syria,
                    Earnest Benn Ltd., London, 1972, p.90

regime and modified it, introducing as few changes as possible".(16)

Both the traditionalists and modernists agree that Arab and Islam are intermingled: the former give Islam the creative role in building the Islamic community (ummah) where the Arab nation occupied a central position; the latter give prominence to the Arab nation which enables Islam to spread and prevail under the name of ummah. The modernist Arabs, Muslim and non-Muslim, saw Islam as a "revolution that can only be understood by revolutionaries", (17) meaning that Islam should not be understood as a traditional force. Aflaq said that "those who are closest to Islam in sentiment and spirit are the revolutionary generation who are presently rebelling against the old and the corrupt ... and those who seem to be the staunchest defenders of Islam are themselves the most unrevolutionary elements".(18) But even some traditionalists see that "the Arabs must purify their beliefs and practices and must enter the political struggle and seize control ... The realisable approach to this end is first of all to modernise oneself". Thus Hasan al-Banna did not hesitate to approve borrowing from the West. Indeed modernisation to him meant "borrowing all technical and scientific aspects of Western civilization that were useful to the revival of Islam ... the two sources of the Quran and the

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(16) M.A. Shaaban, op.cit., p.15
(17) Michel Aflaq, "The Socialist Ideology of Baath" in ed K.H. Karpat, op.cit., pp.193-195
(18) ibid., p.193

Sunnah of Muhammad contained all that was needed to build the just and prosperous society. In the final analysis every innovation and borrowed idea was good or bad according to whether it conformed with the word of God and the teaching of His Apostle".(19)

Both traditionalists and modernists can see how an Islamic revival in the Arab world might aid the cause of Arab unity. If a feeling of community exists among Muslims, it should exist to a greater extent among Arabs since they share, in addition, a common language and habits and other particularities of the Arab people. Thus, Arab nationalism can emerge within the concept of ummah for all its universal connotations. Indeed, the main obstacle facing the movement of Arab unity was, and is, that of Arab factionalism and regionalism; and those divisive forces might be outweighed by the concept of ummah, if only the Arabs would commit themselves fully to it.

Many Arabs see themselves as members of a tribe. Tribal allegiance antedates Islam; indeed, the concept of solidarity in the Islamic community is largely modelled on the spirit of solidarity that characterised the Arab tribes. Although Arabs think of themselves as citizens of a regional political entity (such as Iraq, Syria, Egypt or Jordan) it can be argued that the concept of a national state in the fullest sense of the term, apart of Arabism and Islam, has not yet made a significant

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(19) Hisham Sharabi, "Transformation of Ideology in the
Middle East", The Middle East Journal,
Washington, D.C. Vol.19, No.4,
1965, pp. 481-482

impression on them.   Muslim Arabs conceive of themselves primarily as Muslims, as members of the ummah in which they find their social and spiritual security.   The Islamic conception occupies a prominent position in their political perspective and Islam is accordingly cosidered by the Arab nationalists as a fitting and healthy milieu for growth.   They can hope that Arab national unity might be attained peacefully through the attainment of Islamic unity, through the implementation of the spirit of Islam.   In working for this goal, Arab nationalism had to make a close alliance with Islam, in the hope of winning and mobilising the support of the Arab Muslim masses.

In recent history, attempts at reviving the vigour of Islam have occurred in the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and the Sudan, and more recently in Libya.   In the Arabian Peninsula, the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia adopted the doctrine of Wahabism (puritanism) as his political philosophy.   Ibn Saud, ruler of the central Najd region, started his conquests of the eastern and western regions of the Peninsula not only to liberate them from Turkish control, but also to purify the faith of the inhabitants from various alien innovations and additions (by the time he completed his campaign he was fighting against the Hashemite whom he regarded as being no better than the Turk in matters of the faith).   He enforced the teaching of Wahabism on his people through education and law.   His most effective successor, King Faisal, kept to this mingling of political and religious objectives: "We, as responsible officials and governments,

must prepare our people for unity, raise their morale and make unity acceptable to them."(20)   Arab unity was to . start from within every unit of the Islamic community, and it was the responsibility of individual Arab states to guide their people to such an objective.   "Islam", said King Faisal, "is the best ideological content for our desired unity.   In the past many nations fought under Arab leadership because of Islam, and won great victories ... Islamic unity is the best kind of unity, it would not be too much if we shed our blood and gave up our lives for that unity".(21)

In 1965, Saudi Arabia initiated the idea of the Islamic Summit Conference and then the establishment of an Islamic Secretariat, with the objective of reviving the idea of Pan-Islamism whichhad been propagated by Jamaluddin al-Afghani, and Muhammad Abduh in the 19th century.   The idea politically was, perhaps, aimed at polarising Arab and Muslim states into the Saudi Arabian orbit against secular pan-Arabism and communism.   The Islamic Secretariat parallels the Arab League and its role is meant to be competitive with, rather than complementary to, the League, appealing to faith and loyalty rather than race alone.

Egypt and the Sudan had witnessed the movement of Islamic revivalism in the form of political parties. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and al-Mahdiyyah in

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(20) Walid Khalidi, Arab Political Documents, Slim
                          Press, Beirut, 1965, p.320
(21) ibid., p.320

Sudan, both tried to reestablish the power of Islamic traditionalists in their respective countries, though without a strong practical commitment to the unity of the Arab nation as a whole.   Both were swept away by rival revolutionary movements, the Brotherhood being supressed by Nasser and the government of al-Mahdiyyah being overthrown by Numeiri's coup.

The Libyan Revolution of September 1969, has attempted to follow an Islamic approach to Arab unity, known as Qaddafyism after the Chairman of the Libyan Revolutionary Council.   Qaddafi probably sees his policy as an attempt to reconcile the pan-Islamic idea of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia with the pan-Arabism of President Nasser, to whom Qaddafi owes a lot of his political orientation.

The Arab world is fronted by a great variety of (mainly indigenous) ideologies ranging from Wahabism (puritanism) to Arabism, Islamic Socialism and Communism. Attempts to unite the Arab world under any one of these ideologies causes only disunity and endless dispute, and even the idea of unity becomes a paralysing myth in several Arab states.(22)   To circumvent these ideological conflicts, some Arab writers have turned their attention to the kind of political and social processes that would be needed to bring about the peaceful unification of the Arab people.

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(22) See "Ideological Problems", in Political Dynamic in the Middle East, ed. by P.Y. Hammond, New York, 1972, pp.31-36.

Reformist Approaches to Arab Unity

Saadoun Hamadi (the present Foreign Minister of Iraq) suggested in 1968 that in order to achieve Arab unity there first had to be a free common will of the Arab people. The realization of such a common will required the prior establishment of a democratic system, so that the people could have the freedom of choice and self-expression to vote for unification from below.(23)

"Democratic System" has a special connotation in the Arab world and is used by Arab socialist writers to mean "a popular democratic system". "Popular" also has a special connotation: it means that the system should be based on the decision of the majority of "allied masses" working through a single party within the framework of Arab socialism. In Razzaz's theory, which is typical of Arab socialist thought, the "allied masses" are the five groups which make up society: peasants, workers, intelligentsia, armed forces and "national capitalists"(24) The suggestion is that this political framework would give public opinion a decisive role in the political decision, so that the use of force and negotiation from positions of strength could be avoided.

In considering whether the popular decision on unity should be unanimous or by majority, Hamadi argued that the decision should not be taken through public opinion as it was before the process of political education had been

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(23) Saadoun Hamadi, "Nadwah; Hawla al-Wahdah Wannaksah" (Seminar; Concerning Unity and Defeat) Dirasat Arabiyyah, Vol.9, No.7, 1968, p.76

(24) Munif al-Razzaz, op.cit., p.174

soundly implemented. At the present time, the decision for unity would not, for a variety of reasons, necessarily be a genuine people's decision. Arab governments, with little educated public opinion to guide them, had to approach questions regarding unity partly in the light of doctrines of historical legitimacy, but mainly with regard to prevailing international conditions which, it was thought , made regional blocs an attractive solution to a number of problems even though they tended to get in the way of pan-Arab unification.(25) But elites had become accustomed to thinking of unity as a fundamental political value, of which the validity was not affected by any wavering of public opinion. In the eyes of Arab socialist proponents of unity, public opinion would be neither educated nor free until it was in favour of Arab unity. When it came down to the practical question, who was actually to decide on unity or disunity, Arab socialist theories gave various answers, but they all came to the same thing: "the leaders have to decide on behalf of their people with understanding of their real will and interests".(26) To talk about public opinion in the Arab world thus means in reality to talk about the opinions of elites, of the few thousand who are capable of express-ing themselves and able to exert their influence on others.

This point gives a new dimension to the meaning of the "democratic system" desired by Arab writers. They want a popular guided democracy of the one party type,

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(25) Saadoun Hamadi, op.cit., p.68
(26) ibid., p.82

akin to Totalitarianism.(27)   They think of raw public
opinion as being liable to be swayed by loyalty to exist-
ing states, by separate Arab nationalisms, and so as
capable of strengthening the tendency to Arab disunity
which is rooted in the desire for diversity.   Hamadi
described public opinion "as a raw material which could
be affected by different cultural bodies, political
tendencies and mass media";(28)   and which accordingly is
liable to move against the true interests of the people.

A number of writers have considered how public
opinion might be moulded into the correct shape, how it
might be guided to be a centrifugal force to intensify
its creative features.   Abdullah al-Rimawi (the former
Jordanian foreign minister of Nabulsi's Cabinet of 1957
and also a leading Baath member in Jordan) suggested that,
"the first step toward unity is to start with the
consciousness of the Arab people.   What is necessary at
the present time is to raise rapidly and with considerable
force the consciousness of the Arab public and their feel-
ing of belonging to one nation".(29)   Mass media have a
vital role to play in this process of eruption.   The
consciousness of the people at large is both a focal
point and the solid ground to start from.   By

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(27) Blondel (ed), Comparative Government, "General
              Characteristics of Totalitarian
              Dictatorship", Macmillan, 1969, p.168
(28) Saadoun Hamadi, "al-Wahdah wal-Thawrah wal-Awamil al-
              Zatiyyah" (Unity, Revolution and
              Egoism) Dirasat Arabiyyah, Beirut,
              Vol.4, February, 1968, p.70
(29) Abduallah al-Rimawi, al-Harakah al-Arabiyyah al-
              Wahidah (One Arab Movement)
              Beirut, 1964, p.256

"consciousness" is meant, "awareness of the objective and internal situations, which should be stimulated in the process of maturation and the achievement of unity".(30) It is necessary also to create a mutual compatibility between the main values relevant to political behaviour and political will, and to identify these with a distinctive way of life, such as the Islamic way which by the doctrine of "Ummah" unified Arab and non-Arab under the banner of Islam irrespective of race, status and differences of language and culture. It is relevant to mention that more importance is attached to the value of justice as propagated in Islam than to the value of freedom as propagated in Western democratic systems.

Arab nationalist writers also attach great importance to the value of sincerity. "It is lack of sincerity which has kept them (the Arabs) from extending their political loyalty to their nation (qaum); reasons of personal interest and lack of sincerity on the part of their leaders has stagnated the cause of unity".(31) Arabs can take the European Community as an example of sincerity to a cause; despite their ambivalence about unification and their dissimilarity in many respects, the members of the EEC are able to gear their efforts towards the satisfaction

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(30) Nadim al-Bitar, "al-Tariq ila Tariq al-Wahdah al-Arabiyyah" (The Means to the Approach of Arab Unity), Dirasat Arabiyyah, Beirut, Vol.9 No.9, July 1955, p.12

(31) Jamil Abdul Ghafar, "al-Wahdah al-Arabiyyah Wattammazoq al-Qua al-Taqaddomiyyah" (Arab Unity and the Divided Progressive Forces) Dirasat Arabiyyah, Beirut, Vol.6, No.II, November 1969, pp.9-10

of shared interests within the framework of the community.
Sincerity does not emerge out of the blue, especially in
the economic field.   With respect to the unification
of states, it requires understanding of the mutual
interests of the participants together with an "expectation
of stronger and rewarding economic ties or joint reward as
an essential background condition of unity".(32)   In the
case of the Arab world, sincerity for the cause of unity
has to be reconciled with the differing economic interests
of the Arab states, or at least of their ruling classes.
The first steps would be to propagate the spirit of unity
throughout the Arab world, so that individuals could be
capable of recognising any divergence from the cause.
It was important "to hold public discussion through media
of mass communication to clarify the nation's objective
and adopt a workable framework for the purpose".(33)
Thus clarity, mutual understanding and shared interests
were necessarily important elements of unity.

Given sincerity to the cause of Arab unity, the
possibility of its success was thought to be assured.
Unity required primarily the extension of loyalty to the
proposed new governmental entity, which would represent
the interests of the masses at large.   Equally important,
successful unification would require agreement regarding

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(32) Michael Hodges, European Integration, Penguin Books,
     Harmondsworth, 1972, p.112
(33) Saadoun Hamadi, "Nadwah hawla al-Wahdah Wannaksah"
     (seminar; Concerning Unity and
     Defeat), Dirasat Arabiyyah,
     Vol.9, No.9, 1968, p.66

organizational structure.(34)

Arab writers have seen Arab unity in the broad sense
as a unity of people who have a common political will,
produced by mutual insight and culture.   This shared
political will must play a vital role in the process of
unification.   With the existence of political will, the
people will be able in a democratic system to determine
the steps necessary for the fulfilment of unity.   This
political will can be partially or wholly achieved only
by those members of the state who can determine for
themselves, from one case to the next, what is to be done
and what is to be left undone, so that the purpose of
unity will be fulfilled.   "These groups of people might
look for unity or unite their forces for the establish-
ment of a unified state for all the Arab citizens, to
assure their individual and collective interest, and to
protect their security and prosperity".(35)

One may ask whether people who have free will are
willing by themselves to determine their interest;   in
other words, whether they are willing to use their free
will politically in determining their desired end.   The
conclusion is that not very many people with a free will

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(34) c.f. Deutsch's three criteria for a successful
  - "amalgamated security community"
     in M. Hodges op.cit., p.113
     1. Accept and support common governmental institutions
     2. Extend generalised political loyalty to them and to
        the preservation of amalgamated community
     3. Operate these common institutions with adequate
        mutual attention and responsiveness to the messages
        and needs of all participating.
(35) Dr Said Nofal, "Al-Wahdah al-Arabiyyah fil-Majal
                      al-Fikr wal-Thaqafah" (Arab Unity in
                      the sphere of Outlook and Culture)
                      al-Hilal, Cairo, February 1972,
                      pp. 5-15

have a political will to achieve unity, but that such a
desire can be developed, especially in a people who want
to share and participate in their homeland, language,
political institutions, or whatever else unites them.
But political will is not necessarily achieved only
through shared culture and outlook, or the voluntary
response of the masses to the call of their leaders.
It can be imposed upon them through persuasion, deception,
law, naked force, economic pressure or police action,
especially under what is called "a guided democratic
regime".

Thus we come to the conclusion that "common will" is
not necessarily the result of free political interaction.
This brings us back to the question of who is to make the
choice of unity or disunity. Is it the choice of the
people or the leaders? Is it the choice of the ideol-
ogical organizations who succeed in convincing, persuad-
ing or forcing the people to accept unity or disunity?
What happens when there are two or more competing wills
for unity? The answers to these questions depend on the
role in policy-making of the common will of the masses and
on how far they are to participate in policy-making. This
leads us to look at the kinds of regime under which the
people live, whether it is parliamentary democracy or
guided democracy. When there are two or more competing
political organizations and ideologies aiming at unity there
is - in the case of the Arab world - definitely disunity.(36)

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(36) K.W. Deutsch, Nation-Building, Atherton Press,
     New York, 1966, pp.44-45

Competition between "conservatives" and "progressives"
for the leading role in the Arab nation has been a
recurring feature of Arab political life.   Both movements
have strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of
Arab nationalists.   The conservatives attempt to preserve
a national spiritual and cultural structure, ideals, values
and sense of nationhood which is deeply rooted in the
feeling of the people.   The weakness of the conservative
movement is that it could lead to cultural and ideological
stagnation, unable to cope with demands for economic
progress.   The progressive movement is characterised by
earnest desire for change, for betterment and improvement.
There is, however, a danger inherent in it, in that, when
it emerges suddenly and forcefully it can be a destructive
force which hinders the process of unification, instead
of enhancing it.(37)   What is needed is to get both
movements working in parallel so as to meet the necessity
for change without losing the original identity of the
nation.   Islam is an important source of Arab national
culture which can be a basis for such a combination of
conservatism and economic progressivism - but it is not
strong enough today to compete with the modern ideologies.

The formation of the Arab League provided an example
of an attempt to promote political unity through cultural
alignment.   The League treaty represented the most that
could be got out of the four schemes for unity submitted
to the 1942 Alexandria Conference which preceded the 1945
Cairo Conference.   The degree of unity at the Conferences

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(37) Dr Said Nofal, op.cit., pp.5-15

was slight because the common will was weakened by the
strength of the conflict between the centrifugal forces
(conservative) and centripital forces (progressive) of
the seven independent Arab states.   The absence of an
organized political party in some Arab states and the
weakness of such political parties as existed in the others,
were the features of Arab political life which were most
relevant to the weak political will of the Arabs for unity.
The outcome was a weak organization for co-operation
between governments.   To overcome these weaknesses within
the framework of the League, the Arab states agreed to
form a "Permanent Cultural Committee" (the first committee
set up by the League) in 1945.   Its function was to
produce uniform guidelines for a common culture, to promote
Arab self-awareness, to bring together Arab outlooks and
ideas and thus to raise up in the long run the Arabs'
feeling of belonging to one nation.

This attempt at cultural unification by way of
cultural uniformity was unable to meet the needs of the
period.   The policy failed, first because it had been laid
down by what was essentially a powerless body, secondly
because the implementation of the policy was left to the
member states, and thirdly because there was no link between
the League and the Arab people at large.   It represented
the Arab elites rather than the Arab people.   The failure
of the policy may be seen in its repeated subsequent
promulgation.   In 1957, after seventeen years of the League,
a partial agreement was concluded between three members
(Syria, Egypt and Jordan) aimed at "educating Arab citizens
to work for the sake of one Arab nation and to respect

their responsibility and obligation toward a combined Arab struggle".(38)   The Arab states returned again to the matter of cultural unity after the defeat of 1967 when the Arab Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization was founded.   The Charter of the Organization claimed that "the Organization is founded in response to the feeling of natural unity between the people of the Arab nation, and to the belief that unity of outlook and culture are the first foundation of Arab unity".(39)   But these later mechanisms also failed, not least because of the resistance exerted by conservative regimes to moves for cultural unity which could be (and were) used by certain Arab states, mainly Egypt, as a platform for the trans-mission and infiltration of revolutionary ideas.

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(38) ibid., p. 15
(39) ibid., p.15

CHAPTER III

The League of Arab States

The politics of Arab unity involved an interaction between various elements: competing groups with aspirations to bring about the total or partial unity of the Arab nation; rival Arab governments; and Great Powers who both influenced Arab aspirations and used them in the course of their own international struggle. Each participant had its own motives and intentions; one concrete result of their interaction was the formation of the League of Arab States.

The Arab nationalists aspired to form some kind of union, and believed they were entitled to do so, being bound by common language and a community of interests which arose from geography, history and culture. The movement towards that ideal came to be known as Pan-Arabism. This movement came first as a rejection of the policy of Turkification imposed on the Ottoman Empire by the Young Turks. To this was added Great Britain's promise, made to promote her influence in the Arab world, of Arab independence and unity, as had been demanded by Sherif Husein of Mecca. This pledge was violated by the Sykes-Picot agreement of 16 May 1916, which partitioned the Arab world into zones of British and French influence, leaving only the Arabian Peninsula fully independent.(1)

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(1) Majid Khadduri, "The Arab League", The American
        Journal of International Law,
            Vol.40, October 1946, pp.756-757

These contradictory promises contributed to division
in the Arab nationalists' attitudes, especially during
the Second World War.   The extreme nationalists were
opposed to supporting Britain and France, the two Super
Powers in the Arab world, since they were disillusioned by
the way these powers had implemented their promises.
Impresses by the successes of the Axis Powers, and counting
on their ultimate victory, they thought the salvation of
the Arabs lay in taking sides with Germany.   This
attitude was clearly demonstrated by Rashid Ali Gylani's
revolt in Iraq in 1941.   The moderate nationalists were
opposed to Axis ideology and foresaw grave dangers to
the Arabs from Axis penetration in the Middle East.
Their attitude was to side with the Allies against Axis
power and they were seemingly confident of British and
French sympathy towards their aspirations.

An explicit acknowledgement of Arab aspirations came
on 9 November 1938, when Britain invited the independent
Arab states to participate in the projected London Confer-
ence on Palestine, thereby recognising de facto their
interest in a matter of concern to all Arab peoples.   Two
of the British objectives in the wider context of the
European crisis and the need to find some solution to the
Palestine problem, were to cool the rivalry between the
Hashemite and Saudi Houses and to draw them into a more
stable political relationship with Britain.   On 29 May 1941,
Britain renewed her conditional recognition of the Arabs'
aspirations towards unity, when the Foreign Secretary,
Anthony Eden, said at the Mansion House that "His Majesty's
Government for their part will give full support to any

(Arab unity) scheme that commands general approval ...
such a scheme would not come into conflict with Great
Britain's main interests in the Near East".(2)   Because
of this recognition, some Arabs attributed the idea of
an Arab League to Britain and consequently considered
it a British creation.(3)   The recognition had, however,
been qualified by the phrase "general approval" (which
implied a degree of unanimity which was unlikely to be
attained);   and by the stipulation, expressed as a predic-
tion, that the scheme should not come into conflict with
Great Britain's main interests in the Arab world.   This
implied that there would have to be a strengthening of
pro-Western Arab leaders and the exclusion, at least in
part, of the aspirations of the extremist Arab nationalists
who supported Axis power, and particularly of such el-
ements as those led by Gylani who were in revolt against
the British in Iraq.   (By coincidence Gylani's revolt
was finally suppressed on the same day as Eden spoke.)

The Hashemite leaders took the statement to mean
that henceforth the British would drop their policy of
"divide and rule" and that it would be safe for them to
suggest ways of uniting the Arabs.(4)

Both Hashemite Kingdoms were in favour of the limited
degree of Arab unity represented by the Fertile Crescent.

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(2) M. Khadduri, "The Scheme of Fertile Crescent Unity: a
          study in inter-Arad relations" in The
          Near East and Great Britain, ed. by R.N.
          Frye, New York, 1951, pp.137-77
(3) E. Atiyyah, "The Arab League", World Affairs, Vol.1,
          January 1947, pp.34-47
(4) S.N. Fisher, "The Arab League", in the Middle East,
          Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, pp.571-72

In 1942 Nuri al-Said, the Prime Minister of Iraq who had
been restored to power after the suppression of Gylani's
revolt, circulated his "Blue Book" which suggested the
"reuniting" of "Greater Syria". He sent a note on
"Arab Independence and Unity" to Mr R.G. Casey, Great
Britain's Minister of State in Cairo, in which he
recommended the unification of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine
and Jordan in a "Greater Syria" which in a subsequent
union with Iraq would form a single Arab state in the
"Fertile Crescent" as a first step in the formation of an
Arab League.(5)

We can see from this scheme, first, that Nuri al-Said
saw Arab unity as a gradual and slow development in three
stages: (a) to unify a Greater Syria; (b) to unify the
Fertile Crescent; (c) to form the League of Independent
Arab States. Secondly, he wished to leave the degree of
change within the units participating in the scheme for
decision by the popular will. This decision would deter-
mine whether a federal or unitary constitution should be
adopted, and whether a republican or monarchical structure
should be established. He insisted in his explanatory
note that the union of various parts of historic Syria
should come first and suggested that in this instance the
degree of unity should be on the level of federation.(6)
The degree of unity of the proposed League of Independent
Arab States should, however, be on the level of
"confederation". He put forward a number of possible

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(5) M. Khadduri, "The Arab League", Loc.cit., p.762,note 1
(6) Nuri al-Said, Arab Independence and Unity, Baghdad,
    1943, pp.11-12
    See also J.C. Herewitz, "General Nuri al-Said Fertile
    Crescent Scheme December 1942" in Diplomacy in the Near
    and Middle East, London, 1956, pp.236-237

forms of unification in order to demonstrate Iraq's
willingness to be flexible, in the hope that this would
enable other Arab states to adhere to his proposal.   In
the same spirit it was proposed that the federation of
Greater Syria should have a permanent council nominated
by the member states and presided over by one of the
rulers of the states who would be chosen in a manner
acceptable to the states concerned.(7)

What is evident here is that General Nuri al-Said
was aiming at forming a bloc in the Fertile Crescent, under
the name of "federal government",(8) which would strengthen
the position of the Hashemite Kingdoms in the Arab world.
His suggestion of a League of Arab States as a looser
structure was, perhaps, a tactical offer to both Saudi
Arabia and Egypt, intended to dampen their opposition to
the scheme.   Furthermore, for reasons of delicacy, he
suggested that the choice of governmental system,
monarchical or republican, should be left to the popular
will to decide.   General Nuri applied the formula "let's
do nothing about this" hoping that the Syrians might come
to unite under a monarchical system as was promised in
1920.

Nuri's scheme nevertheless antagonised the Saudis,
the traditional Hashemite foe in the Arabian Peninsula.
Hashemite ambitions in the Fertile Crescent also ran counter
to Syrian aspirations, since Free France had promised in
1941 to grant independence both to Syria and Lebanon.

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(7) Ibid.
(8) R.L. Watts, New Federations: Experiments in the
           Commonwealth, Oxford, Claredon Press,
           1960, pp.9-14

The scheme was, however, consistent with British imperial
interests in the area.   To put Syria under the influence
of her Hashemite ally would do no harm to British interests
there, although consideration had to be given to Jewish
aspirations of a National Home in Palestine, which might
be hindered by a scheme of Arab unity.(9)

Success or failure of the scheme was mainly dependent
on the attitudes of Britain, France, Egypt and Saudi
Arabia.   Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia feared the creation
of Greater Syria under the Hashemite auspices.   Britain
and France viewed Nuri's plan as a wartime means of
mobilising the moderate Arab nationalists against both
Arab extremists and the Axis Powers.   Nuri played on
such hopes when he suggested that "if it is possible in
the manner suggested above to create a confederation of Arab
states ... then a great many of the "difficulties"(10)
which have faced Great Britain and France in the Middle
East during the past decades will disappear".(11)   He
probably aimed at combining Arab aspirations with those
of the Great Powers.   In January 1943, Iraq declared war
against the Axis because Nuri, as Mr Khadduri said,
"firmly believed that Arab nationalism was in need of

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(9) Peter Mansfield, The Ottoman Empire and Its Successors,
                     Macmillan, London 1973, pp.92-95
(10) He probably meant by this, the conflict between the
     two aspirations of Arab nationalism and Zionism on
     one side and between them on one side and British
     presence in the Middle East on the other.
(11) A. Tarabein, Arab Unity in the History of the
                  Contemporary Arab East, 1800-1950,
                  Beirut, 1958, p.427

British sympathy and support",(12) which the British

indeed had readily given since World War I.   But the

Allies' victory changed the international situation;

Britain and France were no longer in need of the strength

of Arab unity.

Nuri's first scheme was almost bound to fail; in

addition to international circumstances there was internal

factionalism in the Arab world.   The success of the

scheme was neither in the interests of Saudi Arabia,

because of the traditional enmity, nor in the interests

of Egypt, because of her rivalry with Iraq.(13)   Whatever

its defects as a plan for unity, the main point in putting

forward the scheme was, in fact, the advancement of

Hashemite ambitions in Syria, and it was a worthwhile

attempt within this context.

The role of external elites as a unifying factor in

inter-Arab relations seemed to have come to an end; "the

initiative for an Arab League" said Mr Eden on 24 February

1943, "would have to come from the Arabs themselves".(14)

On March 2 and 17, 1943, Amir Abdullah declared that the

Arabs should immediately seize the opportunity and call for

a general Arab conference to decide upon the ways and

means of carrying out the scheme of Arab unity.   On

30 May 1943, Nahas Pasha, Prime Minister of Egypt, declared

in a statement to the Egyptian Senate, that the Egyptian

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(12) M. Khadduri, "General Nuri's Flirtration with the Axis
             Powers", The Middle East Journal,
             Vol.16, No.3, 1962, p.328
(13) B.Y. Boutros Ghali, "The Arab League. Ten Years of
             Struggle", International
             Conciliation, Vol.504-505,
             No.498, 1955-56, pp.253-268
(14) S.P. Fisher, op.cit., p.571

Government had decided to explore the opinions of the various Arab Governments independently and then would invite them to a conference to be held in Egypt in order to reach an agreement on the form of the proposed Arab Union.

General Nuri went to Egypt and conferred with Nahas Pasha from July 31 to August 5, 1943; the full conference of Arab states met in Alexandria in September 1944, their efforts resulted in a kind of Arab co-operation which fell short of what the Pan-Arabists aspired to.

Egypt's entrance into the arena of Arab politics was stimulated by several factors one of which was "the growth of Egyptian mass communications which gradually led to a cultural and political awakening, in which Egypt found herself playing a leading role".(15) During the forties, the idea of Pan-Arabism including all the Arabic-speaking people was propagated in Egypt. Fuad Abazah, a prominent Egyptian, organised "The Arab Union" (al-Ittihad al-Arabi) on 25 May 1942.(16) Sati' al-Husri claimed that Arab intellectuals considered Egypt to be "the heart of the Arab countries" occupying a position in the Arab world comparable to that of Cairo in Egypt itself. He also took the view that "Egypt is bound to the Arab nation by language, history, geography, common interests and aspirations which are living and all tangible and transcend the Pharaonic ideas which belong

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(15) Anwar G. Chejne, "Egyptian Attitudes Toward Pan-Arabism", The Middle East Journal, Vol.11, No.3, 1957, pp.253-68

(16) ibid., p.256

to the dead past".(17)   At a more moderate political level, the acute rivalry between Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdoms made each House prefer Egyptian leadership to advancing the ambitions of the other. Thus Egypt was able to play a balancing role, standing half way between Pan-Arabism and regional factionalism (shaabism).

During the conference on Arab unity, General Nuri al-Said once again seized the opportunity to advance his ambitions, and proposed two possible forms of co-operation between the Arab states in the fields of political, economic and social affairs.   From the beginning, he ruled out the possibility of unifying the Arabs under a unitary central government, being aware, perhaps, that Britain and France were not in favour of Arab unity in its literal sense and also of the internal situation in each Arab state.   Each faced its own particular problems and had its own variations in economic and political structure, so that together they provided improbable material for so ambitious a project.(18)

Nuri put forward alternative schemes for the consideration of the conference.   One was that the Arab states should form a union equipped with "an executive authority" whose decisions would be binding on every member-state. The union would have a "general assembly" in which each state would be represented on the basis of its size of population and GNP.   The union would be chaired by a

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(17) ibid., p.257, al-Husri is a leading figure in modern
              Arab historical studies.
(18) A. Tabarein, op.cit., p.428

Secretary General nominated or appointed in accordance
with its constitutional law. The alternative scheme was
to form a union without a numerically representative
assembly. Its decisions would be obligatory only for
those who chose to accept them, and each member-state would
have an equal number of representatives.

The second proposal is noteable for its omission of
the "general assembly of popular representatives" based
on the population size and GNP of each state. Each
state would be given an equal number of representatives,
irrespective of population and GNP. The amendment was,
perhaps, meant to facilitate the affiliation of the
smaller Arab states, especially Lebanon and Transjordan,
to the suggested union on an equal footing. Furthermore,
population size was an inapplicable criterion in some
Arab states, notably Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The popular
assembly, suggested in the first scheme, was probably
intended to represent the common will of the Arab masses.
It might be seen as a legitimising authority for the
League's decisions, after the fashion of popular democracy.
In this respect, however, it was alien to all Arab political
systems of that time, and was therefore unacceptable.

It may be supposed that Nuri himself had seen the
danger of proportional representation of the Arab states
in a general assembly, since this would have given his
rival, Egypt, an upperhand in the assembly (the Egyptian
population was the largest among the independent Arab
states). Furthermore, such a scheme would have alienated
Lebanon, a country which considered her Arab neighbours
as foreign states, and so would have discouraged her from

joining the union.   Indeed, it seems likely that Nuri's first scheme was put forward so that he himself should not be outflanked by a more "advanced" scheme, in the confident hope that it would be rejected by other Arab governments.

It was clear that the realisation of full union, with a central executive authority, was impossible at this stage of development of Arab nationalism.   Some of the Arab states asserted their internal independence, while others were not prepared to renounce their sovereignty in favour of full union.   Only Syria stood for full-fledged Arab unity, and was quite prepared to renounce her sovereignty in favour of a central executive authority of the Arab union;   but this was a tactic intended to block schemes for partial unity with either of the Hashemite Kingdoms.(19)

Transjordan was represented by Mr Tawfiq Abul-Huda, then her Prime Minister, who agreed with the second of Nuri's proposals.   His objective was to unite Syria with Transjordan in the first place, stating that the question of union between Syria and Transjordan was not a difficult one because the difference between the political systems of each country were insufficient to hinder the union.   This conclusion was apparently based on no more than an assurance given in 1920 by Mr Faris al-Khuri, a notable Syrian nationalist, in a letter to Amir Abdullah of Transjordan in which he had said that "his Syrian friends were already in favour of the monarchical form of government, and that the republican system was adopted

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(19) Majid Khadduri, "The Arab League", Loc.cit., pp.763-64

only at the time when Syria was still under French mandate".(20)   Abdul-Huda suggested that when the union between Syria and Transjordan was established in the form of "Minor Syria", the next stage would be to unite Lebanon, Palestine and Minor Syria in a "tripartite union".   This suggestion showed again that Syria was the focal point of the scheme of Arab unity, as far as Transjordan was concerned.   Thus the scheme of Arab unity was meant to aggrandise the Hashemite Kingdom in the Fertile Crescent. Syria's attitude towards a monarchical system had, however, changed in twenty four years with the personnel who represented her.   When Abul-Huda suggested that "both Syria and Transjordan should be given the opportunity to conduct separate negotiations for laying down a plan of unity before they would join the Arab League"(21), Jamal Mardam, the Syrian representative, while he declared his approval in principle for the scheme of the Minor Syria union, showed dissatisfaction with Transjordan's approach to the problem.   In answering a question by Sheik Yusof Yasin of Saudi Arabia concerning the future form of government, should Minor Syria come into being, he said, "Syria was always in favour of a republican system".(22)   Mardam added, "Minor Syria could be achieved by annexation of Transjordan to Syria as it had been the southern province under the Arab regime of Faisal".   Furthermore, Syria desired "to keep

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(20) Majid Khadduri, "The Scheme of the Fertile Crescent",
                                 Loc.cit., p.144
(21) ibid., p.147
(22) ibid., p.147

Damascus as the capital of the proposed union and a
republican form of government".(23)   On the level of
degree of unity, Syria was "strongly in favour of central
government, despite all obstacles.   When this degree
of unity was unachievable, the alternative was any degree
of union or covenant".(24)

The main points of conflict may be described thus.
First, each state (in this case Syria and Transjordan) saw
the scheme of unity as a means of extending its own
territorial boundaries, by annexing one to another
(either Syria to Transjordan or Transjordan to Syria).
Second, each state wished to keep its own institutions
intact and consequently rejected any degree of change in
its internal system.   This did not leave much room for
compromise.   Third, Syria wished to start the scheme of
unity with a higher degree of unity and wider territorial
scope, while Transjordan was prepared to accept a lower
territorial scope.   Neither Syria nor Transjordan was
ready to compromise so that the result was the preservation
of the independence of each.

Saudi Arabia's attitude was clear from the beginning:
she was not optimistic about reaching any agreement for
unity.   Ibn Saud sent his representative to the conference
at Alexandria to put forward seven conditions for his
country's membership of an Arab League.   These conditions
were generally aimed at maintaining the status quo in the
Arab world.(25)   His first point was that the degree of

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(23) A. Tarabein, op.cit., p.442
(24) ibid., p.442
(25) ibid., p.486

unity of the Arab states should be confined within the limits of inter-governmental co-operation for individual and collective peace of the member-states. The fifth required recognition of the independence of both Syria and Lebanon as separate Arab republics. This condition was aimed directly at preventing the realisation of Hashemite ambitions for the union of the Fertile Crescent. The sixth condition stated the Saudis' opposition to the idea of cultural and legal unification between the Arab states. This was because in Ibn Saud's view the presence within his territories of the Holy Places (Mecca and Medina) necessitated the practice of the Islamic system of education and jurisprudence according to the strict tenets of Wahabism which was strongly opposed to any modernisation of the legal and educational system. The last condition called upon the Arab states to co-operate in the field of trade and strengthen their economy as one nation (ummah) bound by common interests.(26)

Finally, Lebanon's attitude towards unity was hostile. On 16 September 1944, the Maronite Patriach Antun Aridha made a declaration to the effect that "Lebanon would not submit to any scheme of union or unity"(27) and demanded that a guarantee for her independence be given by France, Great Britain, the USA and the USSR. His ultimate desire was to establish "friendly relations with foreign countries, especially the neighbouring Arab countries". Riyad al-Solh, then

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(26) ibid, p.487
(27) Majid Khadduri, "The Arab League", Loc.cit., p.147

the Prime Minister of Lebanon, declared, stressing his country's independence, that "friendly co-operation between Christians and Muslims in Syria and Lebanon was more valuable to him than building an empire".(28)

It is obvious from the discussion above that the political will for unity among the Arab states varied considerably from one to another, and that there was a conspicuous absence of any strong link between them. Under the title of "Arab unity" each participant at the conference sought an opportunity to attain his own particular ends. Nuri al-Said of Iraq aimed at annexation of Syria to Iraq by propagating the scheme of the unity of "the Fertile Crescent". Amir Abdullah of Transjordan aimed to extend his kingdom to Syria under the name of "Minor Syria". Meanwhile Syrian representatives capitalised on the different political systems of Syria and Transjordan to pre-empt the Hashemite scheme. Lebanon leaders, Christian and Muslim, were promoting the idea of "friendly relations" between co-religionists in preference to the scheme of Arab unity, and seeking an international guarantee of her independence. Saudi Arabia was unwilling to support any scheme, favouring the independence of individual states and she supported the idea of an independent Syria and Lebanon in order to frustrate the Hashemites.

Egypt's role at the conference was to produce a compromise which could be accepted, however reluctantly, by all seven participants. In this task, Nahas Pasha was

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(28) ibid., p.147

assisted by the fact that all the delegations had felt
obliged to give some sort of endorsement to the idea of
Pan-Arabism.   The role of mediation fell naturally to
Egypt as the host government and also as a disinterested
party in Hashemite-Syrian-Saudi rivalries.   There was
also an immediate Egyptian interest.   A leading position
in an Arab League would bolster her status vis-a-vis Iraq
and, more importantly, strengthen her hand in negotiations
with the British.   This was of special significance,
since Nahas had already made up his mind to attempt to
secure the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt.

On 25 September 1944, delegates of seven nations met
in Alexandria and signed the Protocol of Alexandria which
laid the basis of the Charter of the Arab League and which
was signed six months later on 22 March 1945.

The formation of the League symbolised the victory
of local nationalism over Pan-Arabism, as can be seen in
the way in which it has been both described by scholars
and identified internationally.   S.S. Goodspeed saw it
as a "loose knit organization of sovereign states, with
the emphasis placed on voluntary co-operation" which had
fallen "short of its expectations and had not greatly
increased the unity of the Arab world".(29)   F.S. Northedge
entitled it "a loose confederation" which represented the
weakest degree of unity among those suggested in various

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(29) Stephen S. Goodspeed, The Nature and Function of
                           International Organization,
                           Oxford University Press, New York,
                           1959, pp.563 & 565

schemes.(30)   P.E. Jacob identified it as a "simple
alliance of expedience"(31) which could indeed have been
formed between any set of countries, even without the
social and cultural ties that linked the Arabs.   The
League is characterised internationally, with regard to
its supposed function and objective of securing regional
peace, as a "regional organisation or agency".(32)

The foundation of the Arab League can be seen also
as an elitist attempt to dispose of the problem of Arab
unity.   It had given the Arabs a kind of regional organ-
isation and so could be viewed as an initial step towards
total Arab unity.   On the other hand, little had been
done to resolve Arab rivalries, and the League Charter's
guarantee of the independence (of each other) of the
existing Arab states itself constituted a centrifugal
force, that is, a force to keep Arab states apart.
Furthermore, two years of hard negotiation had resulted
in meagre achievement and this lack of success led to an
immediate decline in sentiment in favour of Arab unity,
so that the League looked like being the final, rather than
the initial, step on the road to unity.   The League's
performance soon showed its inability to secure stable
inter-Arab relations and proved it to be ineffective
in achieving its limited commitment to produce co-operation
between the member states, in co-ordinating Arab policy

(30) F.S. Northedge & M.D. Donelon, International Disputes,
                    Europa Publications, London, 1971,
                    p.243
(31) P.E. Jacob et al, The Dynamic of International Organ-
                    isation, The Dorsey Press, Homewood,
                    Illinois, 1972, p.131
(32) The United Nations Charter, Article No.52

towards the Palestinian problem, and in upholding the security of small states (such as Lebanon, Jordan, the Yemen).

The first task of the League was to bring about closer relations between its member-states and to encourage any initiatives taken by members in this direction. But inter-Arab disputes increased in number, partly because the number of Arab states increased from seven to twenty,(33) but mainly because of an increase in the number of republics and a decrease in the number of monarchies, with the socialist republics tending to align themselves against the conservative monarchies. This tendency was compounded by the fact that five of the monarchies are rich in oil and low in population, and so appear ripe and attractive for domination by their large republican neighbours.

The vastness of the Arab world poses the problem that different countries have different security problems and are likely to favour different solutions. Thus Iraq, when Nuri al-Said perceived a Soviet threat, had a choice between a pact with the Soviet Union or a defence treaty with the West. The latter turned out to be fatal for the Hashemite regime; but the point is that no Iraqi government has ever perceived the Arab League as guaranteeing its safety vis-a-vis Russia or

(33) The twenty Arab states are now divided into twelve
 - republics (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Yemen Arab
   Republic, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen,
   Egypt, the Sudan, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania
   and Somalia) and eight monarchies (Jordan, Oman,
   Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates,
   Saudi Arabia and Morocco.)

Iran. Similarly, at the other end of the Arab world,
the Maghreb states have to solve their own security
problems independently of the League.

With respect to inter-Arab co-operation, Egypt and
Iraq, the main advocates of Pan-Arabism, have pursued
the path of Arab unity by totally different means.
Egypt has exercised her influence to control the League
as an instrument of her foreign policy (with the tacit
approval of some other Arab states) while Iraq allied
herself with the Western powers up till 1958, and then
with the Eastern powers since 1968. In Iraq the idea
of Arab unity has become no more than a slogan, and the
League is regarded as an arena for inter-Arab disputes.

Some Arab leaders have attempted to overcome the
League's defects as an instrument of Arab unity by ad-
vocating the constitutional development of the Charter.
In 1950, the member-states had concluded the Treaty of
Joint Defence and Economic Co-operation which became an
integral part of the Charter. At the same time the
Prime Minister of Syria, Nazim al-Qudsi, had put forward
another scheme of Arab unity by promoting the League
into a more effective inter-Arab organisation.(34)
It was understood that his suggestion was aimed at
two objectives: to secure the support of the Syrian
people to his government; and to save his country from
the ravages of sectional conflicts which might come
upon it through a succession of military coups by pro-

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(34) Nazim al-Qudsi, "The Plan for Arab Unity",
                    Middle East Affairs, Vol.2, No.3,
                    1951, pp.100-104

Egyptian and pro-Iraqi factions.

In making his proposal al-Qudsi brought in an external catalyst to evoke the Arabist sentiment. He said that in the circumstances of Cold War the Arabs were weak internationally and not of great importance in the international balance, irrespective of whether the Cold War went on or the storm broke. He said that "sound military considerations show that at present, most of the Arab states are separately unable to confront the Zionist menace, whose major concern has been, and is, how to split the Arab states, to confront them one by one"(35); and of the League, that in its present form it had failed Arab hopes, for although it was lavish in words and demonstrations, it was barren of results.(36) al-Qudsi suggested that all independent Arab states should unify their foreign policies, national defence, economic force and main resources as an intermediary step to unitary or federal or confederal government. This unification would be implemented in three stages: military unification would come first, followed by the gradual change and adjustment of every state system until they reached the third stage of harmony in which the separate states would eventually come to merge into a common national union.(37) The responsibility for taking the first step would fall mainly to governments. al-Qudsi wanted his plan to be endorsed by the League

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(35) ibid., p.103
(36) ibid., the 12th item of the plan
(37) ibid., the 25th item of the plan

which should then set up a "steering committee"(38) to submit the proposal to all the Arab capitals. In order to mobilise political support at the popular level, he urged the Arab leaders to mobilise the "common will" of the people who, he said, already followed their leaders with confidence.(39) He also made his own direct appeal to public opinion to support the scheme.

The plan received wide acclaim in the Syrian, Iraqi and Jordanian press. Egypt's reaction was cool and some Egyptian newspapers labeled the Plan a "utopia in Arab politics". Mustafa Amin, editor of the daily Akhbar al-Yawm, contemptuously stated that the plan was very attractive and aimed at "converting the desert into gardens".(40) The League itself took no action and without the support the Arab governments, popular enthusiasm, such as it was, had no practical result. This episode demonstrated that in the matter of Arab unity, the power of initiative belongs exclusively to governments. Qudsi found as Nasser was to discover later, that appeals to the people over the heads of governments were not effective.

What appeared to be another attempt at transforming the League by means of the constitutional development of its Charter, was made in 1957, when A.M. Mustafa, the Deputy Secretary-General, suggested that the status of the League should be developed into what he termed "supranational government". He too envisaged the process

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(38) ibid., the first item of the plan
(39) ibid., the 20th item of the plan
(40) Anwar G. Chejne, op.cit., pp.261-262

being accomplished in three stages.   First, there would

be a modification of the procedure of decision-making of

the League to make majority decisions binding on all

member-states.   Then the member-states would bestow an

autonomous power on the League in order to enable it to

exercise an independent authority.   Finally, when the

League had won acceptance for its new functions through-

out the Arab world, to the extent that its member-states

were ready to surrender their sovereignty to it, then a

unified government would be set up, as a federal, confederal

or unitary state called "the United Arab States".(41)

The implementation would have required the Arab

states to adapt and harmonise their political systems as

well as their political ideologies.   This could not be

done by amending the League's constitution;   and it was

not a political possibility given the fact that, with the

meteoric rise of Nasser to prominence in the aftermath of

Suez, most of the Arab states were involved in one way

or another in political struggles with each other, either

for the leadership of the Arab people or merely to ensure

their own survival.   Indeed, the mere fact that this

proposal came from the Egyptian dominated League Secretar-

iat makes it look as though the proposal itself was but a

tactic in Nasser's Pan-Arab strategy, intended to polarise

Arab opinion rather than to lay a basis for unification.

In 1974 M.A. Mahgoub, the former Prime Minister of

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(41) Abdul-Muneim Mustafa, "Jamiah al-Arabiyyah Satusbeh
                              Ghaira zat-Almawdo'" (The
                              League of Arab States will be
                              Unnecessary), Al-Hilal, Cairo,
                              Vol.67, 1957, pp.39-40

the Sudan, suggested an alternative approach to Arab
unity.   His suggestion was based on the revival of Arab
cultural unity.   If this could become in reality a
common culture with meaning for the Arab masses rather
than an image on a pedestal or an ancient culture to be
remembered, it could serve as a basis for Arab political
unity.   In economic and technical fields he suggested
that gradual economic and technical unification should
precede political unity.   He said "I believe that once
these steps are gradually implemented, a successful
federation of all Arab states might be achieved".(42)
But the problem of Arab unity was not so much that of the
lack of a scheme or programme for unity, it was rather
the lack of the political will of the Arab leaders to
implement these or any other suggested schemes.

It is not only Arab writers who have looked for a
clever way round the central obstacle of the lack of will
of Arab governments.   In the West, S.P. Huntington has
produced a scheme for the reconciliation of socialist
and conservative factions.   He suggested that "rep-
resentatives" should be chosen on the basis of "intra-
elites, factions and cliques"(43) to respresent the
traditional elements in the Arab world, while the rep-
resentatives of the socialist bloc would be chosen on
the basis of social classes such as workers, intelligentsia,
peasants, soldiers and small business holders.   In other

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(42) M.A. Mahgoub, Democracy on Trial, Andre Deutsch,
                  London, 1974, p.77
(43) S.P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing
                  Society, Yale University Press,
                  1958, p.406

words, as the Arab world was divided between two political

forces, the socialist or so called "progressive" and the

"conservative", any project of unity should take account

of the fact and be devised in such a way as to accommodate

it.   But this was to state the essence of the problem

rather than to solve it.   A similar approach was ad-

vanced by Karl Kaiser, who wrote of promoting direct

horizontal transactions between social sectors of differ-

ent societies, transactions which would bypass the in-

stitutions of government but which would greatly affect

their margin for manoevre.   This would allow various

forms of mutual penetration of formally separate states

and speed up the growth of linking activities in a number

of non-state sectors.(44)   But again, it was not realistic

to expect Arab governments to tolerate such processes

while they were locked in struggle with each other.

In contrast to those who sought the development

of the League, there were others hostile to the whole

idea of unity, for reasons of ideology (socialism,

communism), religion (Islam, Christianity), or local

nationalism.   Factional opposition to unity in the

Arab world was especially strong in Lebanon, Syria and

Egypt.   In Lebanon it was expressed by almost every

faction.   Charles H. Malik, a liberal with a generally

pro-Western attitude, expressed the Christian elite's

rejection of Arabism when he said, "our ideal is to

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(44) Karl Kaiser, "Transactional Politics: toward a
                   Theory of Multinational Politics",
                   International Organisation, Vol.25,
                   No.4, 1971, p.790

enter seriously into the positive Western heritage of
thought, in this heritage we find the complete truth".(45)
The same rejection was made by the Phalangist leaders,
led by Pierre Gemayel, who believes that Lebanon is
"a soul, a spiritual principle ... it would be materially
possible to absorb it into Syria or an Arab Empire
temporarily; it is spiritually impossible to unite it
to a world which does not share its state of soul, its
spiritual principles".(46)   The focal point of the
Phalangists' position is less exalted, being a traditional
and practical distrust of the Islamic form of government.
The Phalangist account of Lebanon's history is that "the
Muslim Caliphs imposed on their lands a theocratic regime
involving a state of discrimination against non-Muslim
religious minorities.   The Christians, called Zimmis or
protected, were not equal to the Muslims in regard to
rights".(47)   The Phalangists naturally fear any revival
of such discrimination.   When each faction maintains
its identity as Christian and Muslim their Arabism is
forgotten.   Within Lebanon, factional commitment super-
sedes the ideal of Arab nationalism although both Christ-
ian and Muslim are Arabs.   During the struggle for
independence, Lebanese politicians, Muslim and Christian,
reached an agreement among themselves known as the
National Convention.   In accordance with it, the President

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(45) A. al-Hadi al-Fikayki, "The Shu'ubujya and Arab
                           Nationalism", in Political
                           and Social Thought in the
                           Contemporary Middle East, ed. K.H.KARPAT
                           Praeger, London, 1968, p.86
(46) P. Gemayel, "Lebanese Nationalism and its Foundations:
                 the Phalangist Viewpoint", ed. K.H. Karpat,
                 ibid., p.108
(47) ibid., p.108

was always to be a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni
Muslim, the Speaker a Shi' Muslim, and the Deputy
Speaker a Greek Orthodox, while the Greek Catholics and
other sizeable sects were to be represented in the
Cabinet.   The convention was based on a general under-
standing that the Christians would not imperil the in-
dependence of Lebanon by looking for protective agree-
ments with European countries, while the Muslims would
respect the religious and cultural links of the Christ-
ians with the West and would not seek to merge the
country with her Arab neighbours who were identified as
"Muslims" rather than "Arabs".   An attempt to amend
the proportional distribution of representatives in the
Chamber, according to the new balance of population
which makes the Muslims a majority in the country,
helped to spark the civil war of 1975-76.

In Syria, Antun Saadah founded in 1936 the "Syrian
National Party".   Among its aims was that to unite
Lebanon with Syria under the name of "Syria".   Saadah
rejected the idea of religio-political factional labels
of Christian and Muslim which prevailed in Lebanon.
He also denied the Arab characteristics of Syria and
rejected the essential features of Arab nationalism.
He based his party's policy on "Syria for the Syrians"
and asserted that Syria should preserve her own identity
and characteristics by extending religious toleration
to all, and by making religion a personal rather than
a social and political matter.   This differed from the
system in Lebanon where religious factionalism is, and
was, vigorously practised and protected as the basis of

political and social life.   In 1961, members of the
Syrian National Party attempted an unsuccessful coup
in Lebanon.   Their aim was still to merge it with
Syria to form a non-religious state, on the basis that
"he who believes in Islam is a heretic;   he who believes
in Christianity is even more heretical;   he who believes
in Lebanon is not of our members".(48)   But this was no
longer a plausible policy, given the Pan-Arabist turn
that Syrian politics had taken since the 1950s.

There also appeared a new anti-Arabism in Egypt
prior to the Revolution.   This movement was represented
by the Pharaonic movement which denied Egypt's Arab
character and argued that Egypt had no business with
the struggle for Arab nationalism.   The movement was
led by Salama Musa (1887-1959) a Christian Copt, by
Abdul Aziz Jawish, who made a distinction between the
Arabs and the Egyptian "nation", and Muhammad Magdi,
who regarded the Egyptian "nation" as comprising Egypt's
Pharaonic population only.(49)   During the 1920s, the
Egyptian leader Saad Zaghlul dismissed the idea of Arab
unity as useless: the Arab states, in his mind, were as
nothing, and as he put it, "if you add one zero to another
zero, and then you add another zero, what will be the
sum?"   He gave priority to the development and progress
of each individual state and rejected the idea of unified
Arab action which was proposed to him during the struggle

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(48) Antun Saadah, "The Teaching Book of the Syrian
                        Socialist Party"in ed. K.H. Karpat,
                        op.cit., pp.95-98
(49) A. al-Hadi al-Fikayki, op.cit., pp.82-83

for independence, sending away Arab delegates from the
Fertile Crescent with the reply that "our problem is an
Egyptian problem and not an Arab problem".(50)

The tendency to give preference to local national-
isms over Arab nationalism was prevalent even among
those who pioneered the movement of Arab unity.   Abdul
Rahman Azzam, the first (Egyptian) Secretary General of
the Arab League said, after he left the Secretariat,
that "we are Egyptian first, Arab second and Muslim
third".(51)   This may have reflected an original attitude
about Arab unity which has survived his own involvement
in the creation of the League, or a view formed in the
light of experience of the politics of Arab nationalism;
in either case, it bears witness to the negative effect
which the League had on some of those closest to it.

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(50) Anwar G. Chejne, op.cit., p.253
(51) ibid., p.260

CHAPTER IV

Baathism and Nasserism: the Pan-Arabist
Revolutionary Movements

Baathism and Nasserism have been the most prominent
revolutionary movements in the world's view of Arab
politics. In the case of Nasserism, this has been
largely due to the impact of the personality of Nasser
(and to the way in which, from Suez onwards, his import-
ance was inflated by his enemies) and the central
position of Egypt in Middle Eastern affairs; but these
factors have in turn owed something to the pursuit of
Pan-Arabism by both movements. This dedication to Pan-
Arabism distinguishes Baathism and Nasserism from most
other revolutionary movements in the Arab world which,
like the Algerian revolutionary independence movement,
attach a far higher importance to Algerian nationalism
and which show interest in Pan-Arabism only in so far
as it serves their particular national cause. But
although Baathism and Nasserism lead the Pan-Arabist
struggle, the ways in which they have worked to achieve
their goal, and the bitter rivalries between them, have
in fact contributed much to the failure of the struggle
for Arab unity.

Before considering and comparing the two movements
in detail, it is necessary to examine the terminology
employed in Arab revolutionary politics. It is imposs-
ible to fix a single objective meaning to the Arab word
for revolution because in the Arab world, as elsewhere,
"revolution" has been adopted as the slogan of a variety
of political movements. According to Bernard Lewis,

"in current Arabic usage the noun "thawra" (revolution)
and the adjective "thawri" (revolutionary) are the
terms accepted by the revolutionary socialist regimes
in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere to describe their
own actions, intentions and ideologies".(1)   Thus
"revolution" is the cry of the socialist regimes against
their conservative or liberal rivals (the antithesis of
"revolution" is "reaction") and also marks the rejection
both of the status quo in the Arab world and of the
Arab League's approach to Arab unity.   Revolution is
presented as the necessary means to overcome the profound
disparity between the Arab peoples' aspirations to unity
and the reality of the complete disunity of their
national life;   and struggles against elements of weak-
ness in existing socialist regimes as well as against
reactionary regimes earn the title "revolutionary".
Any discussion of the politics of Arab unity must accord-
ingly pay some heed to the "revolutionaries".

     Two writers, a Syrian and an Egyptian, may serve
to introduce the uses of revolutionary language in debates
on Arab unity.   Achievement of the unity of the whole
Arab world (in the sense of a melting of Arab societies
into one and not that of a mere "artificial composition
and combination") requires, according to the Syrian
Haidar, a revolutionary movement which confronts and
destroys the separate state interests and the privileged

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(1) Bernard Lewis, "Islamic Concepts of Revolution", in
     Revolution in the Middle East and
     Other Case Studies, ed. by
     P.J. Vatikiotis, Allen & Uniwin,
     London, 1972, pp.30-40

classes which stand against unity. Haidar includes

amongst the main targets of such a revolutionary move-

ment: local communists who, in accordance with Stalinist

policy in the Middle East, wage war against Arab national

unity; reactionaries who played the imperialists' role

in the Arab world after independence; the national

bourgeoisies who develop the internal contradictions of

the Arab people into disputes between Arab countries

and so create obstacles on the path of unity; and

feudalists who share the interests of reactionary

regimes and imperialists in exploiting the peasants and

working class.(2)   Thus revolution means the total

destruction of political leaderships and social struc-

tures in order to achieve the creation of the new nation;

and revolution and the struggle for national unity become

one and the same movement.   Revolutionary writers see

the struggle for national unity having multiple political

implications.   It would mean the destruction of all

rightist political parties, traditional regimes and non-

nationalist elements.   The acute conflict between the

revolutionaries and the beneficiaries of the existing

system would result in the former being gathered into one

socialist party and the struggle would then become a

struggle of political parties for political power.   Once

the revolutionary (the socialist) party attained political

power in one country, the strife would be raised to the

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(2) H. Haidar, "al-Thawrah wal wahdah Fil-Harb al-
          Thawriyyah al-musallahah", (Revolution
          and Unity of an Armed Revolutionary War),
          Dirasat Arabiyyah, Beirut, 1967,
          Vol.4, No.1, pp.38-39

inter-state level and become a confrontation between the revolutionary and conservative blocs. This must sometimes break out into inter-Arab conflicts as in Yemen, 1962-1967, the "cold war" between Nasser and his rivals of 1958-1967, and communal fighting such as that in Iraq in 1959-1975, Lebanon in 1958 and again in 1975 to the present day, and between the Palestinians and the King of Jordan in 1970. The Egyptian Hamdan accordingly suggests that because the destruction of all non-revolutionary regimes is a prerequisite of the creation of strong national unity, war between Arab states must be regarded as a necessary means to the ultimate aim of unity and that on the way to Tel Aviv, the fiercest battles must be fought in Arab capitals.(3)

Baathists tend to emphasise that, in order to ensure revolutionary victory in Arab capitals, the revolutionary process must start with the revolutionary education of the masses: not until they have been liberated from their historic and personal contradictions and induced to develop a new political consciousness, will the ground be prepared for revolutionary struggle throughout the Arab world. Such an argument is advanced by N. Hatum who suggested that the entire Arab revolutionary vanguard should be organised under one leadership with the task of abolishing the contradictions between the peoples of the various Arab states and of unifying them into one nation. This vanguard should have branches in every Arab state while

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(3) Jamal Hamdan, "Palastin wal Wahdah", (Palestine and Unity), Al-Hilal, Cairo, December, 1964, Vol.7-12, pp.64-73

its central command should co-ordinate their policies
and design the overall strategy of the Arab revolutionary
struggle for unity and also for the defeat of rival pan-
Arabist policies and parties.(4)

A more elaborate version of this suggestion had
already been advanced in 1964 by Abdullah al-Remawi, a
former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Jordan in the
Nabulsi government of 1957 and the enfant terrible of the
Baath Party who was secretary general of its branch in
Jordan. After he was expelled from the main Baath in
1959 he established his own Baath party in Jordan, and
then became a supporter of President Nasser.(5) He
proposed that for Arab policies to be effective, they
should be placed under the supervision of "al-harakah al-
qawmiyyah al-wahidah" (One Arab Movement). This act of
unity would signify the vertical integration of Arab
ideology, masses and leaderships. It would require the
self-destruction of all political parties and movements
in the Arab world rather than their mere combination.
The practical implementation of unity of theory and
thought, together with the emphasis which Remawi put on
"popular political organisation" would represent a new
version of popular democracy. The organisation would
draw the entire Arab masses in their various "fiaat"

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(4) Nur al-Din Hatum, Muhadarat 'an al-Marahil al-
        Tarikhiyyah Lil-Qawmiyyah al-
        Arabiyyah (The Historical Phases
        of Arab Nationalism), Maahad al-
        Dirasat al-Arabiyyah, Cairo, 1963,
        p.69

(5) K.K. Karpat, op.cit., p.147, See also K.S.A. Jaber,
        The Arab Baath Socialist Party, Syracus,
        U.P., New York, 1966, pp.50, 54

(groups) into playing their role in building a democratic socialist society. Thus there would be a revolutionary resolution of the old ambivalence in Arab political life between loyalty to the ideal of an Arab nation and allegiance to particular states. The revolution would be achieved in two stages: a political revolution involving a transfer of political power; and an economic and social transformation which would bring with it the qualitative transformation of individual mentality, psychology, and morality as well as equality and redistribution of wealth in a more quantitative sense.(6) But Remawi stressed the necessity of there being one comprehensive revolution of the Arab people undertaken by a single popular political organisation.

A popular and socialist revolution of the sort prescribed by Remawi has not yet happened in the Arab world; the great variety of Arab revolutionary movements is part of the reason given by Remawi for this. These movements may be roughly categorised as follows:

1. Non-nationalist revolutionary groups such as communists who believe in the revolution of the proletariat, reject the cause of Arab unity, and support a variety of revolutionary groups as a tactic to weaken the nationalist movement.

2. National revolutionary groups which believe in a variety of Arab nations rather than

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(6) Abdullah al-Remawi, "al-Harakah al-Arabiyyah al-Wahidah" (One Arab Movement), Dar al-nashr lil-lamieyeen, Beirut, January 1964, pp.25,31,38,53,61, 73,134,280,340

Pan-Arabism, e.g. Syrian National Party

which advocates "Syria for the Syrians".

3. Groups who profess belief in the oneness

of the Arab cause and appear to strive

for it, but are called by Remawi "false

revolutionaries" because they work in

fact for their own ends in an opportunist

manner; their claims to the monopoly of

truth are a prime cause of disunity.

4. The Baathists in Syria and Iraq whom

Remawi called "tactical revolutionaries"

because, despite their belief in Arab

unity, socialism and democracy, they

conducted themselves in a way which

worked against the oneness of the Arab

revolution by failing to unite their

two countries.

5. The Baathists and Nasserites who believe

in the oneness of Arab nation, Pan-Arabism

and the revolutionary solution, but whom

Remawi called "factual national revolution-

aries" because he said their actions were

guided by an understanding of the actual

facts of the Arab world which they thought

required a variety of revolutionary strat-

egies to meet the variety of Arab conditions.

Remawi could only express the pious hope that the true

revolution might be attainable by unifying these rival rev-

olutions into one movement in the sense of "unification on

an equal footing" such as Nasserites and Baathists have

suggested after 1962.(7) One way he thought this might be

done. was by combining the three main Arab revolutionary

charters - the Egyptian charter, the Tripoli charter of

the Algerian revolution, and the Baath constitution - in

a single document.   He realised that certain passages in

each would have to be rewritten to provide the Arab

revolution with a basis of theoretical unity, with

nationalism as its distinctive ideology.   For example,

chapter nine of the Egyptian charter would need amendment,

since at present it described the partial unity of certain

Arab states as a means to the eventual attainment of the

complete unity of the Arab world.(8)   He also proposed

another five unities of what he termed "objectives":

force, will, instrument, action and priority.   Through

these unities he envisaged the possibility of achieving

the unification of Arab revolutionaries in one compre-

hensive pan-Arab revolution.(9)

Saadoon Hamadi, the Iraqi Baathist, was an advocate

of horizontal unification who rejected the idea of a

single party system on the ground that it had failed in

the past and caused rivalry between the revolutionary Move-

ments which placed stumbling blocks in the path of unity.(10)

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(7) Abdullah al-Remawi, "al-Thawra al-Arabiyyah" (Arab
                         Revolution) Dar-maktabat al-fikr,
                         Tripoli, Libya, 1974, pp.71-73
(8) Abdullah al-Remawi, "al Harakah al-Arabiyyah al-
                         Wahidah" (One Arab Movement),
                         Loc.cit., p.382, 387-390
(9) Abdullah al-Remawi, "al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah" (Arab
                         Revolution), Loc.cit., p.233
(10) S. Hamadi, "al-Wahdah wal Masoliyyah al-Tarikhiyyah",
                (Unity and Historical Responsibility),
                Dirasat Arabiyyah, Beirut, Vol.8, No.7,
                May, 1972, pp.13-14

Hamadi preferred the formation of a National Front which would be a coalition of existing parties, rather than a new party to replace them all. He thought such a front could lead to the attainment of unity for several reasons. The failure of the UAR experiment had shown that unity under the aegis of a single revolutionary movement such as the Arab National Union of 1958-1961 could work only in exactly the right circumstances and that it could not succeed when the right conditions did not exist. If the attempt to achieve organic unity were made in the wrong conditions, the forces of unity would soon split among themselves and bring the downfall of the union. Furthermore the UAR experience had shown that an artificial entity could not produce the positive effect of persuading other Arab states, who regarded themselves as beneficiaries of the status quo, to join the union, but rather had the effect of inducing them, and giving them opportunities, to attack the union through its internal weakness.(11) Formal unity of state and party under-mined by ideological discordance could only lead to disintegration and disunity. A link that was looser and accepted as weaker, together with a clear understanding of ideological differences, might have proved more durable especially if genuine power-sharing had ensured that no party to the arrangement felt resentment of another.(12)

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(11) David Hirst, Oil and Public Opinion in the Middle East, Faber & Faber, London 1966, pp.26-32

(12) ibid., p.16

We will now look in more detail at the two major socialist revolutionary movements in the Arab world in the 1950's and 1960's: the Baath, with its main strength in Syria and Iraq, and the Nasserite movement, based in Egypt but with enthusiastic adherents throughout the Arab world.

BAATHISM

The Baath Party was organised by Michel Aflaq, Salah al-Bitar and Said Jalal in Syria in 1940.   It moved into the open when Syria gained formal independence in 1943, began publishing the journal, al-Baath, in 1946, and held its first congress in 1947.(13)

The Baath Party started its activities from a position of opposition, and so could not be identified immediately with the ambition of any one established government.   Beginning as an ideology in search of power, the Baath believed that its Arab nationalism would create conditions in which the Arabs could establish both socialism and unity.   These two were seen as inextricably linked: "there is no socialism without unity and no unity without socialism".(14)   The two went together because, as Aflaq thought, only in this way could the Arab workers be brought to accept unity and nationalism as meaningful and desirable.

In accordance with its ideology, which held Arab states to be "regions" (aggtar) of a single nation, the

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(13) K.H. Karpat, op.cit., p.185
(14) S. Hamadi, "al-Wahdah wal-Masoliyyah al-Tarikhiyyah" (Unity and Historical Responsibility), Loc.cit., p.13

party set out to organise branches throughout the Arab
world which it regarded in its entirety as the arena
where it had to struggle for power.   To date, however,
the limit to its success has been to gain power in Syria
and Iraq and to establish branches in Lebanon and Jordan:
in the latter, Baathists have also succeeded in playing
a role in the government of King Husein.

Aflaq built the ideological framework of the Baath
party on three principles.   The first was that a true
nationalist movement should spring from the "masses".
These are defined in the Baath constitution as "the
inhabitants of the entire area between the Taurus and the
Sahara and the Atlantic and the Persian Gulf".(15)   The
Baath added a class dimension by further defining the
masses as the workers and peasants.   The Baath has had
some success in recruitment;   indeed, there is testimony
to their effectiveness in the fact that the party is
banned in most Arab countries, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia,
Morocco and others.   But to say that the revolution
should "spring from the masses" is to raise questions
about the role of the masses.   Nasser questioned Aflaq
about this in 1963 and told him that he was mistaken if
he thought that government by the people was merely having
elections and then having a few people sitting in a room
and deciding affairs, for, despite the elections, the
Party would have isolated itself from the whole people

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(15) K.S.A. Jaber, "Constitution of The Arab Baath
            Socialist Party", Article No.7,
            op.cit., p.169

and would rule as a tiny minority.(16)   The same criticism,
of course, would have applied just as much to Nasser's
regime.)   The Baath strategy for popular revolution has
in fact been the usual one of a revolutionary elite, that
is, setting out to infiltrate the masses and arouse them,
not to seize power for themselves, but to support the
Baath leadership in an attempt to seize power which it
promises to use, when gained, on behalf of the masses.

The second of the Baath principles is that the Arab
nationalism of the inhabitants of the entire Arab world
is one and indivisible.   In developing this principle,
the Baath could start with the feeling of cultural unity
which is known as Arabism and proceed from it to an
assumption about the possibility of the emergence of a
sense of political unity - Arab nationalism.(17)   To
make this assumption, however, was to stretch the argument
a long way.   At one end, Aflaq was on firm ground since
there was ample evidence in history and culture for the
existence of Arabism;   but at the other end, he came up
against the realities of the political diversities of
the Arab world and so had to resort to the pretence that
the existing Arab states, despite their manifest emerging
consciousness of themselves as, say, Egyptian or Tunisian,
were somehow "artificial".   This was not a satisfactory

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(16) K.H. Karpat, "Ideological Problems in the Arab World
as Seen by its Leaders", op cit., p.278
See also a complete text in Walid Khalidi
& Yusuf Ibsh (eds), Arab Political
Documents, 1963, Slim Press, Beirut, 1964,
pp.120-146.
(17) Jaan Pennar, The USSR and the Arabs: the Ideological
Dimension, C. Hurst & Co., London, 1973,
p.102.

position, as is shown by Aflaq's assertions about the inevitability of popular revolution as the only means of achieving socialism and unity. On the one hand, the Baath proclaimed the fragility of existing frontiers, that "the Arab world seems divided because every 'region' attempts to solve its regional problems independently"(18); while at the same time they were forced to recognise that these divisions were not so artificial that it would not take twenty separate revolutions to overcome them, since they were far too deep to be resolved by compromise.

The third principle concerned the inevitability of popular revolution and is important to all of the three Baathist objectives: unity, socialism and freedom. As an objective, unity means the political oneness of the Arab people irrespective of their differences in citizenship; the objective would be achieved when there was a situation in which the loyalty of every Arab people to the Arab nation would supersede allegiance to individual Arab states, so that the Arabs would live virtually in one state.

The meaning of the second objective, socialism, is as problematic as that of "masses". At a general national level it calls for the establishment of "the ideal social order which will allow the Arab people to realise its possibilities and to enable its genius to flourish which will ensure for the nation constant progress in its material and moral output, it makes possible a trustful

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(18) K.S.A. Jaber, op.cit., p.168

brotherhood among its members".(19)   This definition
raises questions about economic, moral and political
aspects of the Baathist programme.

One interpretation of the Baath economic programme
is that it aims at "the dictatorship of the lower middle
class and the levelling down of all those who stand
above them in the social and economic scale".(20)
Given Syria's limited economic resources, one might say
perhaps that this amounts to seeking equality of poverty.
Provided that it was not possible for individuals to
escape the common predicament, leaving their fellows
behind, equality of poverty might be regarded as an
effective instrument to secure maximum productivity,
since each individual would know that his own betterment
could be achieved only as part of general economic
growth.   This policy would not, however, get far unless
there were adequate economic resources, although the
Baathists can argue that a positive moral effect of this
kind of socialism is that it leads to the disappearance
of class hatred among its members and creates trustful
brotherhood, because the system "unites and produces
co-operation in all fields of life".(21)

The Baathist objective of "creating a fair economic
system in the Arab world"(22) has national and inter-
national (in the Western sense of these words) implications.

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(19) K.S.A. Jaber, ibid., p.169, quoting Article 4 of the
            Baath Constitution as translated by
            Sylvia Haim
(20) L. Binder, Ideological Revolution in the Middle East,
            London & New York, 1964, p.184
(21) ibid., p.184
(22) K.H. Karpat, op.cit., p.192

Within individual states, Baathist socialist doctrine demands the end of the capitalist system and the establishment of a socialist one, with public ownership of natural resources, big companies and foreign concessions, and workers' participation in the management of their factories with fixed wages and a fixed rate of profit guaranteed by the state.(23)   The vast majority of the Arab people was in a state of poverty with a handful of rich landowners and sheikhs standing out conspituously. The party hoped to win the impoverished masses' support in its national struggle by means of its socialist programme.   But the masses were not merely impoverished; they were also armed with faith and a belief in destiny which made them unconcerned with their economic situation. To be satisfied with one's lot was accounted the mark of a virtuous man.   So Aflaq saw that the socialist revolution would have to be preceded by a revolutionary awakening of consciousness by which the masses would become aware of their true situation.

In the Arab world as a whole a fair economic system requires the redistribution of the wealth of the fatherland between Arab states.   This idea of course arouses fierce opposition from the richer of them, leading to inter-Arab conflicts which demonstrate the reality, rather than the artificiality, of the disunity of the Arab world. The conservatives' understanding of the real meaning to them of socialism as an essential ingredient of Arab nationalism, brings multiple problems to the politics of

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(23)   K.S.A. Jaber, Articles No.29, 30 and 31, op.cit., p.171

Arab unity and serves to identify the limits of the
Baathist fatherland.   To say that the unity of the
Arab world requires the redistribution of wealth between
twenty states is to say virtually that there can be no
unity between the conservative and socialist states,
since the implementation of the doctrine leads to the
elimination of those states whose strength consists of
natural resources rather than people, i.e. Saudi Arabia
and the Emirates of the Gulf, the "gross national products
without nations".   This explains why the conservatives
oppose socialism itself as well as the governments of the
socialist regimes;   one, indeed, Saudi Arabia, counter-
attacks socialism at the ideological level by placing it
in opposition to Islam.   Although Baathist doctrine
maintains that there is no unity without socialism and no
socialism without unity, the establishment of this
organic link would be at the expense of the rich oil
states and the eager pursuit of it is accordingly an
obstacle to Arab unity.   In practice the Baath Party
has to content itself with implementing its socialist
programme on the "regional" level in Syria and Iraq -
and these two states are governed by the Baath as separate
entities which are often embroiled in bitter quarrels
with each other.   A further point about Baathist social-
ism is that it arouses strong feelings of rivalry in
other socialist regimes and movements such as Nasserism
and Islamic socialism in Algeria and Libya.

The third objective of the Baath is "freedom" which
is vital to the advance of the party.   When the Party
was founded, it had to join in the struggle for freedom

from French rule in Syria and Lebanon.   It also had a
direct interest in freedom from internal feudalism(24) and
in securing the right to freedom of speech and assembly
in every Arab state, for without this it would be unable
to engage in the open struggle for power which it saw
as its mission.   But though the Baath sought freedom
as a condition for winning power, they were more cautious
when it came to their own government.   The Baath con-
stitution provides that freedom must be kept "within the
limits of the higher Arab national interests"(25) and
in Syria and Iraq freedom is restricted to that of a
guided democracy, with the Baath repressing rival revol-
utionaries as firmly as they themselves are repressed
elsewhere.   This mutual intolerance of competing soc-
ialist movements is as much a factor of disunity in the
Arab world as is the hostility between socialists and
conservatives.

The Baath aimed at awakening the Arab masses from
their lack of concern with their economic condition by
means of what Aflaq termed "inqilab".   In Baathist
terminology "inqilab" means primarily a process of
struggle in which moral and spiritual qualities, such
as courage and enthusiasm, are very important.   The
Baath activists were to win over the masses to acceptance
of the need for a certain amount of reform in the trad-
itional Islamic way of living, so as to enable a new
spirit to emerge and thereby a new nation.   Aflaq,

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(24) L. Binder, op.cit., p.189
(25) A.B. Jaber, op.cit., p.168

although a Christian, argued that "the Prophet and his associates were the embodiment of the true and noble Arab spirit".(26)   He called for a resurrection (baath) of this spirit and, furthermore, for recognition of the truth that Islam was a "revolution that can only be understood by revolutionaries".(27)   The revolutionary consciousness of the Arab people was not to be created by the Baath; it was to be revived, so that the traditional social and political virtues of Islam could be reborn through the Baath.

The Baath was thus to be an instrument of moral and spiritual enlightenment; and setting it up as an effective political organisation was thought of as a precondition of Arab progress towards unity in a reborn Arab nation.   The first step in the Baath struggle was for the believers in Baathism to organise themselves on a pan-Arab nationalist basis to refute the division of the Arab homeland.(28)   To do this they were to form branches of the Party in every Arab state where this was possible.   Each branch would be built up by recruiting followers through a cell system.   The cell would be the smallest unit of the Baath structure, with cells composing companies and divisions.   Branches would be grouped in regions, corresponding to the existing Arab states and a national command would direct activities throughout the

(26) L. Binder, op.cit., p.129
(27) Michel Aflaq, "The Socialist Ideology of the Baath",
     in K.H. Karpat, Loc.cit., p.193
(28) Michel Aflaq, Fi Sabil al Baath" (On the Road to
     Baath), Dar al-Taliah li al-Tibaah
     wal-Nashr, Beirut, 1959, pp.126-129

Arab world. By the cell system, the Baath was able to infiltrate the masses and found a grass-roots organisation in each state. It has experienced most success in controlling political power in Iraq and Syria where the majority of its active members are army officers rather than workers and peasants.

The second step was to be for the Baath - who claimed the title of the party of inqilab - to launch and lead the popular struggle (al-inqilab al-shaabi) to raise the people's consciousness to a revolutionary level. The objective in this struggle was not to be as much the overthrow of the ruling class by a coup, as the transformation of the masses themselves. There is in the term "inqilab" a certain ambiguity. In the Quran it means simply "turning around" and thus may be used, as by al-Kindi, to signify a cyclical turn of power - "inqilab al-dawla".(29) In the Baath constitution itself there is a certain recognition that the Party's aims require the overthrow of the present faulty structure in all its manifestations, political, economic, social and intellectual.(30) It so happened that it was possible for the Baath to achieve this objective, at least in Syria and Iraq, without waiting for the transformation of the people. The overthrowing side of the Party's character thus received emphasis from the way in which at an early stage Aflaq and his colleagues sought and gained an orthodox political role through a series of coups d'etat.

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(29) Bernard Lewis, op.cit., p.39
(30) Article No.6 of the Baath Constitution

Outside the Baathist movement, the word inqilab is indeed
most commonly understood to signify a simple coup (which
gives a quite different connotation to the Baathist claim
to be the party of inqilab) while the wider meaning of
revolution is reserved to "thawra".

The Baathist leaders have shown themselves to attach
more importance to winning and holding onto immediate
political power than to bringing about the structural
change of society which their doctrine propounds; and
this has undermined the theoretical basis of the movement
and driven it to adopt opportunist policies.   In Syria
for example, the Baath Party collaborated with the
Communists to gain power.   The Communists then under-
mined the Baath's position in Syria and so, unable to
manage on their own, the Baathists turned to Nasser and
agreed to the formation of the UAR.   Nasser suppressed
the Communists, but also seemed likely to eclipse the
Baath itself - and so the Party gave its support to an
army coup to break up the UAR.

The Baath's commitment to Pan-Arabism is qualified
to the extent that when the Party leaders have had to
choose between supporting a policy which would promote
Arab unity at the expense of their own power, and a policy
which would preserve their power at the expense of Arab
unity, they have always chosen the latter.   The Party has
attempted to reconcile its two objectives, power for
itself and unity in the Arab world, by advocating a new
policy called "al-qiyyadah al-jamaiyyah" (a collective
leadership).   During the unity talks held in Cairo in
March 1963, between Egypt, Syria and Iraq, the two Baath

delegations advanced this idea of collective leadership
and it was agreed upon by the participants and incorpor-
ated into the Tripartite Agreement which was supposed to
make a certain degree of reconciliation between Baathism
and Nasserism.   But due to his previous experience with
the Baathists, and because of personal egotism, President
Nasser was reluctant to implement this agreement and
delayed the formation of the federal union.   Eventually
he accused the Syrian Baath of breaking the agreement
when the Nasserite elements in Syria, whom the Baath
suspected of preparing a coup against them, were
suppressed.   The Baath was no more able to establish a
"collective leadership" for Syria and Iraq, although in
these countries they claimed to be two branches of the
same party.   Many rapprochements were made for military
and economic unity in preparation for complete unity.
The Baath National Command (al-qiyadah al-qawmiyyah)
agreed in October 1963 that President A. Salam Aref of
Iraq was to be the first President of the union and
Mr Salah al-Bitar its first Prime Minister, and yet the
limited collective leadership of the Baathist group
failed in bringing about the proposed union.(31)

NASSERISM

The doctrine of Arab socialism known as Nasserism -
a label which Nasser himself always tried to reject - was
created by Nasser after the 1952 revolution.   At the time

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(31) Majid Khadduri, Republican Iraq, Oxford University
                Press, London, 1969, pp.204-207

of Farouk's overthrow, although a few of the Free Officers
leaned towards Marxism or the Islamic reformism of the
Muslim Brotherhood, the majority, like Nasser himself,
had no coherent political ideology beyond "reform".(32)
This can be seen in the Free Officers' manifesto, the
Six Principles of the Revolution, from which Nasser
eventually developed his own political ideas and practices:

1. the elimination of imperialism and its
   traitorous Egyptian agents;

2. the eradication of feudalism;

3. the destruction of monopoly and of the
   domination of capital over the govern-
   ment;

4. the establishment of social justice;

5. the establishment of a strong national
   Army; and

6. the establishment of a sound democracy.(33)

Within two years Nasser had placed his personal stamp
on this body of doctrine in his book, The Philosophy of
Revolution, which he put forward as not merely a policy
or set of policies, but as a pragmatic theory, developed
during the national struggle.   The two other principal
documents of Nasserism are the Egyptian constitution of
1956, which gave particular emphasis to the socialist
features of the Six Principles, and the National Charter
of 1962.

Nasserism operates on two levels, the Egyptian and the

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(32) P. Mansfield, op.cit., p.114
(33) G.A. Nasser, "The Principles that Guide Egypt's
            Political Life", in K.H. Karpat,
            op.cit., pp.200-204

Pan-Arab.   Nasser's first attempt at constructing a
political philosophy was not much more than a rational-
isation of his policy for Egypt.   During the period 1952
to 195¼, Nasser concentrated within Egypt on bringing the
people to an acceptance of socialism, which he called "the
stage of conversion", while externally he restricted his
Pan-Arabist activities to agitation and propaganda, which
he called "the stage of upsurge".   His internal strategy
was to convert Egyptian society from within by implement-
ing the Six Principles of the Egyptian Revolution as far
as he could.   The elimination of imperialism was achieved
by the negotiated evacuation of the 80,000 British troops
from the banks of the Suez Canal.   The eradication of
feudalism, the abolition of monopoly and of the domin-
ation of capital over the government, were pursued by
means of a whole range of socialist laws, including
agrarian reform, the redistribution of the fertile land
to the farmers, the extension of the public sector to
take in banks and insurance companies, and government
supervision over foreign trade.   (As part of this modern-
isation programme, Nasser revived the long-standing
project of an Aswan High Dam).   Nasser described the
aims of his Arab socialism as a "society of sufficiency
and justice".   His policy was both to increase production
and to bring about a redistribution of wealth, believing
that increased production without justice in redistrib-
ution would mean a further monopolisation of wealth, and
that redistribution of wealth without increasing national
income would end only in the redistribution of poverty and

misery.(34)

Nasser's internal political strategy was to bring
what he called the five groups of the working classes –
workers, peasants, intelligentsia, armed forces and
"national capitalists" (mainly small business owners) –
together in a single political organisation. This has
had various names at various times: the National Liber-
ation Rally (1953-56), the National Union (1956-1962),
and (from 1962) the Arab Socialist Union. This polit-
ical organisation has been the only "political party"
permitted in Egypt. Nasser described it as the ex-
pression of the political will of the active popular
forces, allied within the framework of a political
organisation which was different from a political party
in the Western sense of the term.

Nasser established these successive political organ-
isations as a framework for his national activities and
as a means of providing popular backing for his policies
whether in Egypt or in inter-Arab politics. His idea
was that this framework would permit political partic-
ipation by those he supposed to be naturally sympathetic
to socialism, while excluding other groups. Socialism
was initially defined in terms of the Six Principles but
the socialist programme had later to be revised in the
light of experience. During the first period when the
tasks of the Liberation Rally were to implement the Six
Principles, Nasser did not engage in the politics of

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(34) G.A. Nasser, "The Principles That Guide Egypt's
      Political Life", Loc.cit.,
      pp.200-204

Pan-Arabism very actively. For example, on returning
from the Bandong Conference, Nasser told the Egyptian
people: "I declared in the name of the Egyptian people...
that your internal policy was to establish social justice
and get rid of feudalism and imperialism and its supporters,
and that your foreign policy was a fully independent /i.e.
Egyptian/ policy.(35)

It was events, in Egypt and elsewhere, rather than a
grand plan conceived in advance, which intensified
Nasser's involvement in the politics of Pan-Arabism as
well as his endeavours to bring in socialism. The
Czech arms deal and the failure of negotiations with the
West on the Aswan High Dam seems to have made Nasser more
enthusiastic about socialism. On 1 June 1956, just
before the final departure of the British troops from
the Canal Zone, Nasser promised the Egyptian people to
end the military rule of the Revolutionary Command Council
in Egypt and to turn the country into a "co-operative
society". He announced that the RCC would be disolved
on 23 June when Egypt's new constitution was voted on.
The new constitution was to mark three developments.
First, the Six Principles were reaffirmed in its preamble.
Second, the socialist features of the regime were
emphasised by the manner in which the Liberation Rally
was developed into the National Union (al-ittihad al-
qawmi). The last of the 192 articles of the Constitution
provided that the people of Egypt should form a National

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(35) See "Chronology", The Middle East Journal,
Washington D.C., Vol.6,
June-July, 1955, p.221

Union.   This body would provide a comprehensive frame-
work for all the political aspects of the transition to
socialism, including debate on how this should be brought
about.   As part of its function, it was to make socialist
nominations for membership of the National Assembly.
(To underline his commitment to socialism, Nasser and three
of his ministers accepted 1,318 of the National Union's
nominations and rejected 1,210 as "politically undesir-
able".)   The third development was that the idea of
Pan-Arabism became one of the formal objectives of
Nasserism.   Paragraph 6 of the Constitution preamble
begins as follows: "We, the Egyptian people, realising
that we form an organic part of the greater Arab entity,
and aware of our responsibilities and obligations toward
the common Arab struggle for the glory and honour of the
Arab nation ...".(36)   This affirmation came just in
time for the Suez Canal Crisis, which broke on 26 July,
1956, in which Nasser's call for Arab unity became much
more vigorous, as part of his struggle for survival.

Thus two parallel struggles were institutionalised:
socialism and Pan-Arabism.   Nasser intended that the two
should reinforce each other in the second stage of his
Revolution: but in fact they were to be stumbling blocks
to each other.

The National Union lasted through the experiment of
union with Syria.   After the downfall of the UAR in 1961,

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(36) Curtist F. Jones, "The New Egyptian Constitution",
                     The Middle East Journal,
                     Washington D.C., Vol.10, No.5,
                     1956, pp.300, 304

Nasser decided to give a new precise form to socialism
through a National Charter.   This document set out three
objectives and one may notice that the importance of Pan-
Arabism had been reduced.   The three objectives were
freedom, socialism and unity.   Freedom meant both
independence for the country and freedom for the citizen
in the sense of being able to participate in, or be rep-
resented by, the only political organisation of the
country, the Arab Socialist Union.   Socialism meant the
just redistribution of wealth to every citizen.   Unity,
as an objective, was not elaborated upon in the National
Charter beyond stating that unity was the natural order
of a nation: the whole context of the Charter, which
was concerned exclusively with Egyptian affairs, makes
it evident that this referred to the unity of the Egyptian
people.   As far as Pan-Arab unity was concerned, the
Charter, to salvage what it could from the wreck of
the UAR, included a recognition that partial unity of
any two or more Arab states could, perhaps, lead to
total unity as long as these partial unities were com-
plementary to one another (rather than contradictory as
had been the case in 1958 when the UAR confronted the
Hashemite Federation of Iraq and Jordan).

In its first two years, the Egyptian Revolution had
been preoccupied with the problems of the Nile Valley and
had not greatly concerned itself with wider Arab affairs.
Nasser's early ideas about Egypt's role in the world, which
he saw in terms of Arab, African and Islamic circles, were
set out in The Philosophy of Revolution which was later
described by Professor Walid Khalidi as "vague and dreamy

reminiscences rather than a statement of political philosophy".(37)   The generality of Nasser's idea of inter-Arab co-operation is suggested by his statement in January, 1955 that "our comprehension of unity is that if anything happens in Damascus there is an echo in Cairo".(38)   He was so far from being a fully-fledged Nasserist that he was prepared to assert the primacy of that very conservative body, the Arab League, in Arab affairs (although it was in fact other Arab states which had to take the initiative in diplomatic co-operation with Egypt through League channels).   He wrote in 1955:   "the League can be made the instrument through which a greater unity can be achieved among the Arab nations in every field of activity".(39)

Even though Nasser was slow to become a Nasserist, the roots of Nasserist Pan-Arabism are to be found in the Six Principles, despite the fact that they contain no direct reference to the cause of Arab unity.   It was, however, implicit in the first of them, that pledging the leaders of the Revolution to fight against imperialism. This linked Egypt to the wider Arab cause of independence, since a large part of the Arab world was still under colonial rule, and the Egyptian struggle in the Canal Zone was both an encouragement to other Arab countries to strive for their independence and, at the same time, a part of

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(37) Walid Khalidi, "Nasserism and the Arab*World",
            Middle East Forum, Beirut, 1959,
            Vol.XXIV, No.4, pp.30-37
(38) Al-Ahram, September, 1973, p.5 (Obituary)
(39) Nasser, Gamal Abdul, "The Egyptian Revolution",
            Foreign Affairs, XXXIII, January 1955,
            p.210

their struggle.

Thus the implicit connotation of the first of the Six
Principles of Revolution was the initial take-off point
of Nasser's Pan-Arab policy, but it was followed by
vigorous attempts to exercise as much leadership as
possible, starting with the Canal Zone and the Algerian
revolt in November, 1954. The vigorousness of Nasser's
involvement was stimulated by successive events in the
Middle East, starting with the signing of the Baghad Pact
in February, 1955 and the open conflict with Israel which
started again in the same month with the Gaza raid, and
by the Bandong Conference in April, 1955 where Nasser for
the first time met the Third World leaders and got an
opportunity, with the help of China, to initiate an
arms deal with Russia. This arms deal was followed by
the withdrawal of American economic aid for the Aswan
High Dam and so led to the Suez Crisis in 1956.(40)
When Nasser brought the idea of the Arabism of Egypt
into the 1956 constitution, his cry for Arab nationalism
became louder. He said when announcing the nationalis-
ation of the Suez Company that "the people will stand
united as one man to resist the imperialists' act of
treachery. We shall do whatever we like ... we have
taken this decision to restore part of the glories of
the past and safeguard our national dignity and pride".(41)

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(40) P.J. Vatikiotis, "Egypt and the Arab World", in
        Foreign Policy in World Politics,
        ed. by Roy C. Macridis, Prantice-Hall
        International, Englewood Cliffs,
        1962, p.342
(41) G.E.K. "Arab Nationalism and Nasserism", The World
        Today, Vol.14, No.12, December 1958, p.540

The response of the Arab masses to Nasser's call
for Arab nationalism was immediate and enthusiastic and
showed the measure of success that had been achieved in
his "stage of upsurge".   His own explanation of the
nationalisation of the Canal, only twelve years before
the concession was due to expire anyway, was that he
and Egypt had been "slapped in the face" by the Americans
and that he had needed some dramatic way to electrify the
Arab masses into protest.   The immediate nationalisation
of the Canal was the means he chose and its major objec-
tive was to "arouse Arab nationalism".(42)   He explained
his strategy thus: "a people cannot be inspired to
mobilise their strength and to be made aware of their
strength just by shouting.   They must be aroused by
dramatic action, by deeds, by action that proves one's
strength, and by deeds carried out with all the effective
means at one's command".(43)   Each success would give
the Arab spirit a new horizon which might eventually raise
the self-confidence of the people and banish the sense of
inferiority that had so long affected them.

After the crisis, Nasser made more and more play of
the idea of Arab unity because he wished to exploit the
new-found popular support which had proved itself to be
so vital to his survival as a leader.   The transition
to the next phase of his Pan-Arab policy, to what he called
"the stage of constitutional unity" again came about
opportunistically.   When conflict in Syria-led the Baath

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(42) Willard Range, "An Interpretation of Nasserism",
              West.Political Quarterly, Utah, Vol.12,
              No.4, 1959, p.1011
(43) ibid., 1011

Party to appeal for help against the Communists by offer-
ing Nasser a union between the two countries, Nasser
seized with delight this opportunity to extend his in-
fluence.   His rationalisation of his response, which had
not been foreshadowed in earlier theoretical statements,
was that to gain the strength needed to acquire self-
respect and the respect of others, the Arab people must
unite constitutionally in a single state.

Nasser now used the king of language which suggested
that the UAR was part of a grand Nasserite design (rather
than the outcome of a Baathist tactical move to keep power
in Syria) and held that a United Arabia was the only kind
of political arrangement for the Arab world that could
produce political stability among Arabs, prevent ex-
ploitation by foreign "devils"(44) and give the Arab
people a sense of self-reliance.   All parts of the Arab
world were inter-dependent;   no part could be defended
without defence of the whole and a single defensive
system was as necessary for the Arab region as for the
Pan-American region.(45)   The reference to the OAS seemed
to cast Egypt in the same relation to the Arab world as
the US occupied in the Americas, and served to bolster the
identification of Nasserism with Arab nationalism.

Although Nasserism had had a profound effect on the
Arab world, it did not have universal appeal.   Its
importance was recognised by such external commentators
as Richard H. Nolte and William R. Polk, who argued that

(44) ibid., p.1011
(45) ibid., p.1013

Arab nationalism was a considerable force, and that "if
the United States is to pursue its objectives successfully
in the Middle East it must understand that the decisive
social and political force at work is Arab nationalism,
and must come to terms with it ...".(46)   To Nasser's
supporters, Nasserism meant the way to comprehensive Arab
unity including all the lands where the Arabic language
and culture were predominant; but his rivals saw it as
a force which could undermine their interests or even
bring their very existence to an end.   To most Egyptians
Nasserism had come to mean the extension of Egypt's dom-
ination over the Arab world, a bid for leadership in Black
Africa and victory for the Arab cause;(47) but even within
Egypt Nasserism was a devisive force.   It had brought to
the Muslim Brotherhood (al-ikhwan al-Muslimin), on the
extreme right, the destruction of their party and the
death of their leaders and this in turn brought some
discredit on Nasser in the wider Arab world where the
hanging of the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders was seen as
an attack on Islam.   On the left, Nasserism meant to the
Communist Party in Syria a suppressive force which denied
its right to exist in its homeland.   These rivals on
right and left accordingly worked to slow down the
Nasserite drive to unity.

All other governments in the Middle East were in
varying degree suspicious of Nasser.   To Nuri al-Said of
Iraq, Nasserism was the force which had isolated Iraq and

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(46) The World Today, "Arab Nationalism and Nasserism",
                           Vol.14, No.12, December 1958, p.532
(47) P.J. Vatikiotis, op.cit., p.335

taken control over the Arab League (not least because
Egypt in the early years of the League paid 42% of the
League Budget; this proportion declined as other Arab
states took a fairer share, and since 1973 has stood at
14%, the same as that paid by Kuwait). Eventually
Nasserism, after the formation of the UAR, was the force
which brought Nuri's regime to an end.(48)   To Lebanon,
Nasserism was the force behind her civil war of 1958.
To Israel, Nasserism was a dangerous force (49), (and to
the Soviet Union, by the same token, a useful ally in the
Middle East).   Thus, because of the hostility as well
as the adulation which Nasser inspired, Nasserism was a
centrifugal rather than a centripetal force and as such
contributed to what was called "the Arab Cold War".(50)

Eventually, Nasserism encountered a great deal of
opposition from within and without the UAR.   The most
fatal centrifugal force was the "constitutional unity"
itself, which the Syrians regarded as no more than
Nasserite domination in Syria.   Whereas the Baath Party
rejected the idea that the UAR meant that the character-
istics of Egyptianism and Syrianism should cease to
exist, the Egyptians worked to proceed at once to complete
unification with a common citizenship.

From 1962 there were signs of change in Nasser's
approach to unity.   He produced the National Charter for

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(48) P.J. Vatikiotis, op.cit., p.343
(49) Uri Avenry, Israel Without Zionists, A Plea for Peace
          in the Middle East, Macmillan, London,
          1968, p.102, 103
(50) M. Kerr, The Arab Cold War, Oxford University Press,
          London, 1971

the Egyptian people in which he accepted the idea of peaceful _partial_ unification. On the need for peaceful methods, the Charter stated that "unity cannot be, nor should be, imposed. The national objectives should be equally honourable in their means as in their ends, therefore coercion of any kind is detrimental to unity".(51) With respect to partial unification, Nasser accepted the possibility of forming two or more unities on the path to total unity when he said "any political unification within the Arab world by two or more of the Arab states is a step forward and draws nearer the day of total unity".(52)

At the same time, however, as Nasser's ideological principles were taking a new shape he was, in practice, living amid the storm of the inter-Arab Cold War. His disputes with Saudi Arabia, which had started before the formation of the UAR with a Saudi conspiracy to have Nasser assassinated,(53) were brought to a new level of intensity by the Yemeni coup in September, 1962 and the start of the republican-royalist civil war. Furthermore, Nasser's socialist transition as formulated in the Charter exacerbated his relations not only with the states of the conservative bloc but also with other feudalist elements in the Arab world. Finally, Nasser's conflicts with Qasim of Iraq and the secessionist regime of Syria were continuous until the former was overthrown by a Baathist-led

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(51) Abdul Moghni Said, "The National Charter", in Arab
                Socialism, Blandford Press,
                London, 1972, p.129
(52) ibid., p.129 See also Al-Ahram, Cairo, September,
                1973, p.5 (Obituary)
(53) David Hirst, op.cit., pp.26,27

coalition in February, 1963 and the Baathists returned
to power in Syria in March.

While the Yemeni coup (led by the Iraqi trained
officer Colonel Abdullah al-Sallal) and the subsequent
civil war, on the one hand, perpetuated the Egyptian-
Saudi war of propaganda and, on the other, brought Saudi-
Jordanian relations closer, the coming of the new Baathist
regimes in Iraq and Syria brought the three socialist
regimes of Egypt, Iraq and Syria into a new era of under-
standing. Amid these developments Nasser's policy of
Pan-Arabism manifested a new approach: unity of "goal,
thought, outlook and unity of political action" of the
socialist states. The policy came to public notice when
the Baathist regimes of Iraq and Syria proposed new
unity talks with Egypt which were held in Cairo in
April, 1963. One may notice that the reconvening of
the unity talks at that particular time was initiated
by the Baathist regimes; this had at least three im-
plications. The first was that the Baathists were
trying to make amends for their own contribution to the
downfall of the UAR. The second was that they were
attempting to strengthen their positions in both countries
and to gain popular support by offering to their own
people the ultimate goal of Arab unity. The third was
that if there was to be any unity with Egypt it should not
be on the old Nasserite terms. The three governments
agreed on two things. The first was the idea of
"collective leadership". Nasser at first accepted this
as a policy of gradual approach to unity. He thus in-
directly recognised the Baathists' demand for power-sharing

and a limit to Egyptian domination of the proposed union.
The second was that to implement their agreement, the
three governments agreed on what they called a "Charter
for National Action".(54)   This had been suggested by
Abdullah Remawi, as an instrument which would define the
principles, aims and social philosophy of the progressive
forces which it was supposed to bring together, and which
would become the basis of their interaction.   One of its
principles was to be freedom to form popular organisations;
the Arab Socialist Union would be free to operate in
Syria and Iraq and the Baath would be permitted in Egypt.
The idea was to enable the "free popular will to find an
organised means of self-expression and the united political
leadership to guarantee the co-ordination of all popular
organisations on the road of unification".(55)

Behind the agreement, however, each party had hidden
objectives.   Nasser's was to enable the Nasserite elements
in Syria and Iraq to grow rapidly and seize control of
power there.   The Baathists, in accordance with their
strategy of favouring the multi-party system in other
countries, had it in mind to suppress the Nasserite
elements at home while starting a grassroots Baathist
movement in Egypt.   It was not surprising that when the
ruling Baath party in Syria took the first step down this
road and suppressed the Nasserites in Syria, the agree-
ment fell apart.   Nasser's reaction to yet another failure

(54) For further details see M. Kerr, "The Cairo
Negotiations, March-April 1963", op.cit., p.44-73
(55) Walid Khalidi, "Minutes of the Tripartite Talks" in
Arab Political Documents, Slim Press,
Beirut, 1963, pp.75-217

was to abandon ideas of collective leadership and to
seek a general co-ordination of policy with Arab govern-
ments, without looking for any special relationship with
the Baath.

The negotiations on setting up a second UAR had not
interrupted the continuous stream of Nasserist propaganda
from Cairo directed at the Arab masses, urging them by
radio to defeat capitalism and imperialism and to demolish
exploitation.   This Cold War continued, with Egypt
facing Saudi Arabia in the Yemen civil war, attacking
the South Arabian Federation which had been set up in
January 1964, as well as, at the other political extreme,
the ruling Baath party in Iraq.   Nasserite propaganda,
perhaps, had some share in the ousting of the Baathists
from the Iraq government in November 1963 and contributed
much to the eventual downfall of the South Arabian
Federation in November 1967 (when the Peoples Republic
of South Yemen was declared).   But the Yemen civil war
was so difficult and costly and such a drain on the
Egyptian economy, that Nasser attempted to bring it to
an end through a series of agreements within the general
context of his new strategy of co-ordination of policy.

An opportunity arose in 1964 with respect to the
proposed scheme for the diversion of the River Jordan.
Nasser suggested that this should be the subject of an
Arab Summit Conference which might serve to evoke Arab
enthusiasm for unified Arab action.   If the conference
were attended by Saudi Arabia, Nasser could make it an
occasion for reconciliation with Faisal and ending
the war in the Yemen.   This would have the advantage of

easing the severe strain of the war on the Egyptian
economy and Egypt's internal stability.   Nasser could be
confident that the conference would be well-attended,
because he had chosen a subject that bore directly on
the Arabs' fight against Israel.   This made it much
more difficult for any Arab state to stay away than if
he had chosen the subject of Arab co-operation in some
field where he could not point directly to an external
enemy.   But although Faisal came to both sessions of
the Summit (January and September 1964) and acted as its
Chairman, Nasser failed to get a Yemen settlement, for
to Faisal the solution of the Yemen civil war was not a
matter for a mere political agreement;   he would not be
satisfied with anything less than the total withdrawal
of the Egyptian army from his neighbour.   It was not
until after the Six Day War that Nasser agreed to do this
and the conflict was eventually solved in May 1970 by
compromise.

Despite his failure to attain his direct aim through
the Summit Conference, Nasser succeeded in perpetuating
the idea of the Summit itself as a new approach to Pan-
Arab co-operation.   Five Summit Conferences were held
during the period of 1964-1970 (Nasser died immediately
after attending the fifth Conference held in Cairo to
discuss the Jordanian civil war against the Palestinians)
and the continuing practice of calling such Summits may
be regarded as Nasser's legacy to the cause of Pan-
Arabism.   The value of the Summit mechanism raises
questions beyond the scope of this review of revolutionary
movements and is discussed in the next chapter.

Although his schemes of formal unity collapsed,
Nasserism did not entirely fail as a Pan-Arab movement.
It succeeded in the outward struggle against imperialism
more than in the inward transition to socialism. But
the increasing number of independent Arab states freed
from their imperial masters had not brought the aspiration
of Arab unity any nearer to realisation. Their achieve-
ment of independence had in fact institutionalised a
proliferation of Arab states each of which valued its
sovereignty and for itself if not for others, the tol-
eration of a variety of political forms in the Arab
world.

The "third circle" of Nasser's Philosophy of Revol-
ution, the Islamic world, also took institutional shape
when the first Islamic Conference was held in 1968 in
Morocco and the Islamic Secretariat was founded in Jeddah,
but the idea was under the leadership of his rival, King
Faisal, who in theory differed from Nasser by putting
the idea of Pan-Islamism before Pan-Arabism. (One could,
however, argue that Saudi practice places a higher value
on Saudi Arabianism than on either Pan-Arabism or Pan-
Islamism. Saudi immigration policy, for example, treats
Arabs and non-Arab Muslims on an equal footing with non-
Muslims).

One may attribute some achievements, as well as
failures, to Nasser's strategy of mass conversion by
propaganda or subversion. On the one hand, Nasserism
succeeded in recruiting followers in some Arab countries.
The Young Officers who led the military coup in Libya in
September 1969 represented an extension of Nasserism in

a new form, as a combination of Pan-Arabism and Islamism
worked out into what is known as Qaddafiyism.   The
Libyian revolutionaries actually tried, with some
encouragement from Nasser, to go back to the Nasserite
policy of unity through "constitutional unity" with the
abortive scheme for a union of Egypt, Libya and the
Sudan.   But when that failed, the Libyans engaged in a
campaign of propaganda and various alleged subversions
which gave rise to a minor cold war with President Sadat
of Egypt and President Numeri of Sudan.

One may conclude that Nasserism had grown by oppor-
tunism and developed its operational approaches by
reaction rather than design.   The most blatant manifes-
tation of this was that Nasser's propaganda was origin-
ally a response to various radio stations which operated
against Egypt;(56)   Nasser ordered his aides to stop the
operation of subversion after the disaster of the Six
Day War(57) which provides a fair example of his "trial
and error" policy in Pan-Arab affairs.

BAATHISM AND NASSERISM: A COMPARISON

Baathism and Nasserism were markedly different in
origin.   Baathism was the ideology of a political party
which had been founded by civilians (who had received a
Western education in France) as an opposition party to
compete with other political parties for power in Syria.

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(56) For further details see M. Abdul-Kader Hatem,
    "Beginnings of an Information Response", in
    Information and The Arab Cause, Longman Group Ltd,
    London, 1974, pp.143-165
(57) Heikal, op.cit., pp.124-30

Its founders, Michel Aflaq, Salah al-Bitar and Jalal Said,
were of different religions, Christian and Islam. It
was established with a complete party structure and
constitution which had been worked out in advance by a
group of the intelligentsia who wanted to take an active
part in politics. Nasserism was the rationalisation and
adaptation to circumstances of the rather vague ideas
about the modernisation of Egypt held by the group of
Free Officers who overthrew King Farouq in 1952. Its
early motivation was resentment against the Palace, the
political parties and the British presence in Egypt and
it was an ideology developed opportunistically from the
Six Principles of Revolution. Far from having a party
structure worked out in advance, it had to improvise
three "political organisations" in eight years (1954-1962).

The difference in origin of the two movements led to
differences in their approaches to Pan-Arabism. The
Baathist approach was theoretically divided into two
stages. In the first, the Baath aimed at the conversion
of the Arab masses into a nation of revolution. In the
second, the Baath was to lead the core of the Baath
followers (i.e. those who accepted Baathism as a mission)
into a revolution aiming at political power. Nasser
also envisaged two stages of "political" and "social"
revolution; but as Nasserism started with political
power, it had no need of a revolution to gain it. So
for Nasser, the beginning of the two revolutions were
various changes in the political system introduced after
the coup d'etat to transform the regime from a monarch-
ical system to a republican one, and from a multi-party

system to a system based on a type of political organis-
ation which, under various names, was supposed to rep-
resent a framework for Nasser's political democracy.
The social revolution consisted essentially of an economic
revolution which was to take the form of a socialist
transformation of Egyptian society.   In other words,
while the Baath had to seek radical change from below
(by "inqilab" of the masses) as a preparation for polit-
ical revolution, Nasser, having already seized political
power, had to advocate change from above and impose it
by decrees and constitutions as well as by means of his
"guided democracy".   A consequence of this difference
was that the Baath had to work for political power within
the limit of the capacity of a political party, resorting
to the establishment of branches in various parts of the
Arab world on the "cell system" and recruiting new
party members by persuasion and a political education
which aimed at "the creation of a new Arab generation
which believes in the unity of the Arab nation and in
the eternity of its mission".   Nasser, on the other hand,
could utilise the whole power of the Egyptian state to
educate and mobilise the Egyptian people and the Arab
masses to accept his political and social revolutions
(he did not in any case believe in multi-party systems).
In the Arab world at large he accordingly made particular
use of radio broadcasts, rather than a party cell organ-
isation, while within Egypt he introduced in schools and
universities what was called "al-maddah al-qawmiyyah"
(the National subject), i.e., indoctrination in the
principles of the Egyptian Revolution, of Arab Socialism

and military training.

At the same time, however, as the Baath was trying to establish its branches in Arab countries, looking for political power through election, it was also recruiting military officers who soon became the most active members of the Party, with the result that in those countries where the Baath achieved power, they did so by means of military coups, and not by elections at all. This can be seen as a compromise of Baathist principles which brought the Baath close to Nasserist practice. Nasserism in Egypt went through something like the reverse of this process. Nasser did not believe in the multi-party system or free competition for power; but having seized power he had to resort to bringing about a compromise between the various groups of Egyptian society within the framework of his political organisation where each group elected its representatives to Parliament. The competition and debates between the various groups, (workers, peasants, intelligentsia, small business men and armed forces) within this political organisation helped the transition to socialism to take place with considerable internal stability.

In Pan-Arab politics, Nasser exerted his influence to persuade other Arab socialist regimes to follow his pattern of political organisation. He succeeded in convincing President Abdul Salam Aref of Iraq, President Numeiri of the Sudan and Colonel Qaddafi of Libya, to form organisations in their own countries similar to the Arab Socialist Union. Nasser, perhaps, believed that assimilation in political organisation might ease the way to

unity, although in practice it had no such effect. To
the Baath, assimilation in this respect was also desirable
for the same purpose of unity, but in their case the
stumbling block arose from the military element in the
Party. Baathist military involvement in political
struggle was not always favourable to the Baath Party.
Military officers could also be recruited as committed
members of other political parties, so that a Baath coup
could be overturned by a Nasserite or some other Arab
nationalist coup, a process which inevitably led to a
great deal of political instability in the countries
concerned, Syria and Iraq.

Nasserism had an advantage over Baathism with regard
to propaganda. Through mass persuasion Nasser had
succeeded in spreading his influence in the Arab world
and recruiting what may be called "hidden subordinates".
Organising political opposition in their own countries or
leading military coups in the name of Nasserism, they
considered themselves part of the Nasserite movement
although they often acted without the foreknowledge of
Nasser himself. Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Sudan and
Libya all provide examples of these hidden subordinates.
Not only were some of them well-hidden but they also
tended, in his later years, to be more Nasserist than
Nasser himself. In the Libyan case, for example, Nasser
sought to discover the orientation of the coup, whether or
not it was Baathist, only to be informed by its leaders
that they were Nasserists who wanted to place Libya at

his disposal.(58)   Qaddafi even claimed that this had
been his main motive in organising the Libyan coup, saying,
"tell President Nasser that we do not want to rule Libya.
All we have done is our duty as Arab nationalists.   Now
it is for President Nasser to take over himself and guide
Libya from the reactionary camp, where it has been, to
the progressive camp, where it would be".(59)

In their propaganda directed at the Arab masses, both
Baathism and Nasserism sought to strengthen their appeal by
presenting their doctrines as being at least consistent
with the teaching of Islam (although the Iraqi Baathists
have, since their coalition with the Communists in 1972,
adopted an aggressively atheist line).(60)   Aflaq viewed
Islam as a religion which in its spirit and doctrine as
well as in its lack of formal structure, was capable of
being turned to revolutionary purpose.   He saw it as a
vital movement which provided the internal strength of
the Arab nation and contributed to the revival of Arab-
ism.   This religion, he said, had provided the basis for
Arab evolution to unity, strength and progress.(61)   Nasser
made a similar claim, that his Arab nationalism derived
generally from Islamic teaching and, unlike the Baath,
he acknowledged no debt to Marxism.   His main use of
Islam, however, was in inter-Arab affairs.   His early
view that the Islamic world offered a third circle for

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(58) M. Heikal, op.cit., p.68
(59) ibid., p.184
(60) M. Aflaq, Fi Sabil al-Baath (On the Road to Baath),
         Loc.cit., p.130
(61) "Chronology" in The Middle East Journal, Vol.24,
         1972, p.297

Egyptian foreign policy, and he also tried to make it a
basis for keeping his relations with the conservative
regime of Saudi Arabia as close as possible.   He co-
operated with King Saud to form, in 1954, the Islamic
Congress (al Mu'utamar al-Islami)(62) with Annwar Sadat
as its first Secretary-General.   When the Arab cold war
started with Saudi Arabia, the Congress was brought to
an end, but Nasser formed in 1962 another semi-government
organisation in Cairo, known as the Highest Council of
Islamic Affairs (al Majlis al-Aala Lil Shuoun al-Islamiyyah)
which Saudi Arabia countered with another, formed in
Mecca, known as The Islamic World League (Rabitah al-
'Alam al-Islami) in the same year.

The faith of Islam was institutionalised in the
National Charter of Egypt which proclaimed "unshakable
faith in God, the Prophet and the sacred messages which
He passed on to humanity in all places and at all times,
as a guide to justice and righteousness".   In practice,
however, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic political
party which had branches all over the Islamic world as
well as in Egypt, had been banned in 1954 and was not
accepted as a component of his new political organisation,
the Arab Socialist Union.   The abolition of the multi-
party system in Egypt accordingly led to severe disputes
with the Brotherhood which, although it had been formally
banned, was as active as before through its "usrah" (cell)

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(62) Ahmad Zaki, "Al-Jamiah al-Arabiyyah wal-Islamiyyah,
             hal Tataaradzan?" (the Arab and Islamic
             Leagues, Are they Competitive?) Al-Hilal,
             Vol.62, No.11, 1954, pp.13-16

system against Nasser.(63)   The hanging of their leaders
in 1954 and 1966 aroused widespread opposition to Nasser's
regime which was cast in the role of a foe of Islam.
Furthermore, Nasser's political organisation had made
other socialist regimes unwilling to join the Nasserite
path to unity.   Thus Nasser's political organisation
constituted a centrifugal force both within and outside
Egypt.

The Baathist and Nasserite movements proclaimed the
same objectives, but with their order reversed.   While
the Baath fought for unity, socialism and freedom,
Nasserists struggled for freedom, socialism and unity.
(Thus the first inkling that Nasser had that Qaddafi was
one of his followers came from the order in which the
three objectives of the Libyan Revolution were pro-
claimed).(64)   Both aimed at the Arab masses.   A
notable difference between the two was that the Baathists
saw an organic relation between socialism and unity,
whereas Nasser saw freedom (i.e. national independence)
and socialism as the essential elements of his revolution.
When the two movements came together in 1958, they formed
the first experiment of Arab union which revealed the
centrifugal and centripetal forces at work in the Arab
world.

Arab writers have criticised the Baathist-Nasserist
union for several reasons.   One argument has been that

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(63) Peter Mansfield, op.cit., p.116
(64) Heikal, op.cit., p.68   See also Document "The
          Libyan Revolution in the Words of its
          Leaders", The Middle East Journal, Vol.24
          1971, p.215

the failure under Nasser's leadership of this experiment
in Arab unity did great damage to the notion of Arab
unity itself.   This view was expressed in the unific-
ation talks held in Cairo in 1963, where the Baath set
up "collective leadership" as an alternative to Nasserism,
as well as in the later policy of the new Baathist regime
in Iraq under President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr.(65)

Jamil A. Ghafar, a Syrian critical of both Baathist
and Nasserist conduct in the UAR, attributed the failure
of the experiment to the immediate adoption of "constit-
utional unity" as a means by which both movements hoped
to retain power.   In his view this should not come at
the end of a process which should have begun with a
steady programme of functional unification, so that
"constitutional unity" would have been the eventual
expression of an organic relationship between twin
struggles for national and socialist objectives.   This
organic bringing together of nationalist and socialist
movements would have intensified the centrapetal forces
of unity in the feelings of the Arab masses, and those
feelings of Arab unity would in turn have become the
basis of Arab daily life.(66)   Ghafar suggested further
that progress towards Arab nationalism had to be based
on a predesigned programme for socialism.   In other
words, he criticised the way in which the UAR had been
founded as a merely improvised policy related only to the
power struggle between the Baath Party and the Communists

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(65) M. Kadduri, Republican Iraq, Loc.cit., p.284
(66) Jamil A. Ghafar, op.cit., p.7,8

in Syria, and had therefore lacked the necessary bases for lasting Arab unity.   The nature of Nasserite improvisation had inevitably led only to a temporary co-existence between two incompatible doctrines about the organisation of political activity, despite the amalgamation of the Baath into the National Union.   Thus the failure of the UAR was related by Ghafar mainly to the lack of an ideological commitment in social, political and economic affairs which expressed adequately the interests of the Arab masses. One may add that this lack of ideological commitment was more than a mistake which Nasser might in time have learnt to rectify; it was an inescapable feature of the opportunist approach to Arab unity which was Nasserism.

At another level of argument, Ghafar accused Nasser of being too soft in his dealings with private sectors of the economy and ideologically uncommitted members of the National Union, and too lenient with petty bourgeois elements who had penetrated the Nasserite movement.   Nasser had practised a policy of accommodation with these elements in Egypt, and after 1958 he extended it to the whole UAR.   He thereby granted his unwitting protection to those who in 1960 would act against the socialist transformation of Syria and favour its secession from the UAR.(67)

O. Farsakh also attributed the failure of the UAR to the pragmatic nature of Nasserism which was looking for an ideology rather than implementing a well defined one.   The softness of Nasserism was due to Nasser's

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(67) ibid., p.8

rejection of the notion of class struggle; but such a struggle was required in Syria to implement the socialist transformation there. Nasser believed in peaceful conversion of the Arab masses, but this belief enabled the reactionary elements and the petty bourgeoisie to defeat Nasser's programme from within. (68)

Farsakh argued that Nasserism ceased to be a revolutionary movement after the formation of the UAR because, although the realisation of "constitutional unity" was a revolution in itself (here he differed from Ghafar), it was not followed by unification of the governmental features of a united state, i.e., political organisation, armed forces, currency, administration, laws and political ideology. The absence of determination to achieve these unities had created the impression that Nasser lacked revolutionary enthusiasm. This led at first to the emergence of internal opposition among the revolutionaries themselves, and then generated bitter conflicts which led finally to the secession of Syria. (69)

Regarding the Baathist contribution to the rise and fall of the UAR, Ghafar saw the formation of the United Arab Republic as no more than a tactical move against local Communists. The Baath itself encompassed rightist elements who had been able to reach top positions in the Party; from there they could spread doubt about the correctness of its socialist programme, thereby inclining the Party to adopt an opportunistic reformist policy. (70)

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(68) For further details see O.Farsakh, "Wahdah Sanah 1958" (Unity of 1958), Dirasat Arabiyyah, Beirut, Vol.9, No.4, 1973, pp.31-35

(69) ibid., p.35

(70) J.A. Ghafar, op.cit., pp.13-14

Furthermore, the Party was divided into two incompatible wings in Damascus and Baghdad. This illustrates the most significant of the centrifugal forces exerted in the Arab world and the UAR by both Baathism and Nasserism. Each practised a kind of ideological fanaticism, not only with regard to the other, but also among themselves. This brought internal rivalries, which cancelled out one another's achievements and finally degraded the notion of unity itself. Ghafar attributed the conflicts between the Baathist regimes in Iraq and Syria to the spirit of "ideological regimentation" which not only had perpetuated the conflicts between them but had also exacerbated them to the extent that it was difficult to reach mutual understanding even at times when they both faced a grievous challenge.(71) On the same point, Hamadi attributed these conflicts to a "psychological separatism" which demonstrated itself in power disputes between the two regional Commands of the Party. He meant by "psychological separatism", the tendency of the leader in each capital to see himself as sole rightful leader of the Party as a whole, a tendency which nec- essarily exerted a negative effect on the Party objective of Arab unity as well as on the unity of the Party itself.

With regard to their relations with other states, both movements did great damage. Although Baathist socialist doctrine was the more divisive as an ideological factor in inter-Arab relations, the combination of Nasserism with the political, economic and cultural standing of Egypt was

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(71) ibid., p.18

a cause of deeper division in the Arab world than the Baath. Nasserist Egypt was at the centre of the Arab cold war, facing opposition from many quarters, including the Baath Party itself. Despite the divisive effects in the Arab world of its socialist character, the Baath Party rarely involved itself in disputes with conservative regimes. Thus Nasserism was more divisive in the diplomatic realm of inter-Arab relations than Baathism, it was also a divisive factor in its dealing with other socialist regimes because of Nasser's monopolistic manner of political struggle for power. The socialist aspect of both Baathism and Nasserism undermined any basis there might otherwise have been in Arabism or Islam for drawing the conservative Arab oil states into a process of peaceful unification, for these two states rejected the path of Arab economic unity for fear of a nationalisation policy which would deprive them of the special advantages which, as independent states, they drew from their oil. The oil rich countries were also reluctant to invest their capital in Egypt, Iraq and Syria, whose socialist policies aroused a feeling of resentment in the majority of conservative Muslims in Arab and non-Arab countries.

Comparing the durability of the programmes, the Baath's has proved more successful because the Party has an ideology and structure which enables its members to work to implement its programme to a certain extent independently of the formal leadership. In other words, the Baathist programme was a programme of ideas, whereas the Nasserite one was an improvised policy linked very closely with the changing will of the leader.

The force of Nasser's propaganda in the Arab world
had something of the effect of the Baath cell system.
It found supporters in the Sudan and Libya and in some
factions in Lebanon.   In these places it developed into
a new version, eventually identified with new person-
alities, such as Qaddafi, who became affiliated to
Nasserism.   But whereas support for Baathism grew
steadily in the Arab masses of Syria and Iraq, with
increasing popular commitment to its ideology and its
struggle for political power, Nasserism grew rapidly in
the entire Arab world as it searched for a Pan-Arab
ideology - and then withered with the death of the
leader.   Today it is Baathism which is the most power-
ful of the Pan-Arab movements dedicated to socialism and
Arab unity, and the most threatening force to the con-
servative regimes in the Arab world.

The two revolutionary movements have caused direct
damage to the effectiveness of the Arab League as a
formal framework of inter-Arab relations.   In the first
place, at the same time as they aspired to unite the
Arab world, they were fundamentally against the status
quo represented by the League.   Secondly, as Pan-Arabist
movements they caused inter-Arab conflicts which imposed
on the League a heavy burden which in many cases it
seemed unable to bear.   In some cases, they showed it
to be ineffective in carrying out tasks of reconciliation
and maintaining the status quo;   in others, they compelled
the League to appear as if it favoured some Arab policies
against others.   This last factor was exacerbated by
Egypt's ability, because of her position at the centre of

Arab politics, to employ the League as an instrument of her inter-Arab policy. The location of the League's offices in Cairo, where its bureaucracy was staffed mainly by Egyptians, and the high contribution which for so long Egypt made to the League Budget, made it often appear an annex of the Egyptian Foreign Office. All these factors had enabled Egypt to increase her influence in the League and reserve the post of Secretary General for her own nationals: Abdul Rahman Azzam; Abdul Khaleq Hassuna and, most recently, Mahmoud Riyad.

Although the Syrian and Iraqi governments could not turn their backs entirely on the League, the Baath Party has attacked its very existence. Aflaq considered it "an admission and legalisation of the present disunity in the Arab world .... It is not only a short step toward unity but also the wrong step".(72)   This attitude was shared by other Arab revolutionary writers. The Arab leaders who compromised on Arab unity and founded the League were branded by Fayez Sayegh, a Palestinian, as a "bunch of selfish politicians bent upon the assumption of power at any cost. They were a group of opportunists and compromisers interested in trivialities rather than in the general good and the national cause".(73) Munif Razzaz, one of the Baath leaders, went further by stating that "the coming together of corrupt Arab governments only resulted in the accumulation of corruption".(74)

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(72) K.S.A. Jaber, op.cit., p.25
(73) Walid Khazziha, Revolutionary Transformation in the
                      Arab World, Charles Knight & Co.,
                      London, 1975, p.7
(74) ibid., p.10

The League was an accumulated corruption because "it favoured the perpetuation of regionalism as opposed to Pan-Arabism, and it was entirely controlled by an old generation of Arab politicians".(75)

There is in fact some basis for the revolutionaries' reproaches. The League's Charter did indeed permit schemes of union between Arab states and Article 9 could be said even to encourage the aspiration of closer relations between two or more Arab states. It provided that "The states of the Arab League that are desirous of establishing among themselves closer collaboration and stronger bonds than those provided for in the present Pact, may conclude among themselves whatever agreements they wish for this purpose". The older generation of Arab politicians such as Abdul Hamid Badawi Pasha (later a Judge of the International Court of Justice) who died on 5 August 1965, could thus claim that closer ties between two or more member states should by no means be considered contrary to the charter; and Abdul Rahman Azzam, the first Secretary General of the League, said "I do not consider this article to be framed in a negative sense. I believe it was put in in order to emphasise the rights of member states to conclude whatever agreements they like that are broader in scope than this Charter".(76) But the positive initiative for unity or closer co-operation had to come from the member states themselves, not from the League. It was the fact that

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(75) ibid., p.10
(76) K.H. Karpat, op.cit., p.249

initiative for unity was left to sovereign states which led critics of the League to say that it would not serve as an instrument of Arab unity. M.A. Mahgoub, the former Prime Minister of the Sudan, said, "the terminology of the Charter makes this unity impossible, from the very origin of the League. As its membership has grown, disputes between the member states inside and outside the conference room have served to keep the Arab states apart rather than unite them".(77) But it was not just that the League was a forum for disputes, and frequently a scapegoat, rather than an instrument for unity; the League also legitimised the right of Arab states to stand apart from schemes of unity. The conservative regimes would not have joined it on any other basis. Article 8, in particular, states that "every member state of the League shall respect the form of government obtaining in the other states of the League, and shall recognise the form of government obtaining as one of the rights of those states, and shall pledge itself not to take any action tending to change that form".

Comparing Article 8 and 9, one may conclude that the League is an instrument of the status quo rather than the promoter of the policies of Arab unity. N.A. Faris suggested to the League two alternatives: revolutionary violence or voluntary federation.(78) Any Arab country might be able to play a role similar to the one played by Prussia in forging German unity, if international

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(77) M.A. Mahgoub, op.cit., p.294
(78) N.A. Faris, "A View of Arab Unity", in K.H. Karpat, op.cit., pp.259-261

circumstances were favourable. Why no Arab country has yet been able to play the role of Prussia is one of the questions examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

Brothers, Cousins and Enemies

For most of the period since 1945, and particularly
in the years prior to the Six Days' War, Arab states have
appeared to be divided into two groups generally antagon-
istic to each other.   One was republican and socialist,
led by Egypt;   the other was monarchist and conservative,
led by Saudi Arabia;   but both were essentially author-
itarian and centralist.   On the surface it seemed that
the struggle between the two was acute, with each trying
to dominate the other in direct confrontation (as in the
Yemen);   but the underlying reality of inter-Arab
relations was not a simple bipolarity along lines deter-
mined by the political characteristics of each group.
The relations between Arab states seem to depend as much
upon the external threat which they face as upon their
own policy preferences, and as these external threats
have changed rapidly over the last thirty years so have
the patterns of conflict and co-operation in the Arab
world.   This view of inter-Arab relations was encapsul-
ated by King Faisal when he was asked in June 1967 how
he would behave towards Egypt, his opponent in the Yemen,
now that she had been attacked by Israel.   He replied
with an Arab proverb: I stand with my brother against my
cousin and with my cousin against my enemy".(1)   The
wider significance of this remark for the understanding
of Arab politics can be shown with respect to the notion

(1) Keesing Contemporary Archive, June 3-10, 1967, Vol.16,
1966-1967, p.22066

of "circles" which is found in Nasser's writings and else-
where.

Nasser used the idea of "circles" in his <u>Philosophy</u>
<u>of Revolution</u> to paint a static picture of international
politics with Egypt at the centre surrounded by the three
circles of the Arab world, the African world and Islam.
There are three difficulties about this view as an approach
to inter-Arab politics. One is that it involves an
arbitrary assertion about Egypt's position at the centre
of Arab affairs. The second is that it does not say
anything about relations within the Arab world itself, and
the third is that it does not take sufficient account of
the continually changing nature of Arab politics. The
circles in Arab politics do not centre on Egypt alone
but rather on each of the Arab states and they vary in
extent as the feelings of Arab states towards each other
change. If we are to use broad categories to describe
the relationships between Arab states it may be more
useful to borrow the terms employed by King Faisal rather
than Nasser's "circles", and to analyse inter-Arab
relations in terms of "brotherhood", "cousinhood" and
"enmity".

The first circle or category of inter-Arab relations
may be regarded as the relation of brotherhood. This
may imply an actual relation of kinship as in the case of
brothers or cousins ruling in neighbouring states (e.g.
the Hashemites in Iraq and Transjordan); and by extension,
the term may also apply between leaders with similar
political systems in their own countries. In other words,

those who rule through monarchical systems may regard each
other as brothers, and so may republicans.   On another
dimension, those with similar ideologies may recognise a
degree of political brotherhood between each other;
traditionalists and conservatives are brothers in their
own group and socialists are brothers in their own cluster.
The second category is that of "cousinhood".   This term
refers to the relationship between Arab groups with
differing political systems and ideologies.   Relations
between Arab royalists and republicans are of this kind
of cousinhood, as are relations between Arab socialists
and conservatives.

Brotherhood and cousinhood are both based first of
all on the political sentiment of Arabism, that is, the
feeling of belonging to one nation (qawm) bound by a
common religion, language, historical memories and common
culture.   This feeling transcends the division of the
Arab world into many different states(shuoub).   Despite
this division, the Arab masses may be regarded as brothers
with respect to their Arabness;   and by the same token,
the Arab states may be regarded as being in a relation of
kinship to each other, of either brotherhood or cousin-
hood.   When the relation of Arabness is reinforced by
a marked similarity of political system or ideology, the
feeling of kinship between two states may be close enough
to merit the term "brotherhood";   but when the Arab bonds
between two states are cut across and weakened by
differences of political systems and ideologies this
more distant relationship may be called "cousinhood".

One may accordingly define political brotherhood as

the relationship of two states who are bound together by
Arabism and shared political and ideological attitudes,
and who feel a strong obligation to help one another when
threatened by an outsider. Cousinhood is a looser
relationship based on Arabism, but weakened by differing
political and ideological attitudes. Cousins, however,
are prepared to help one another at a time of crisis with
outsiders, though at other times they may oppose each
other in support of brother states.

The level of relationship between states who might
be expected to regard each other as brothers (e.g. because
both are monarchies) may be retarded at, or degraded to,
that of cousinhood either because of recent historical
enmity or because of political or doctrinal conflicts.
Such have been the relations between the House of
Ibn Saud and the Hashemites whom he drove out of the
Arabian Peninsular, and, on the republican side, the
rivalries between Nasser and Qasim, and Nasser and
Bourquaba. The relations of ideological brotherhood
also degrade into cousinhood when members of an ideol-
ogical cluster come into direct or indirect confrontation
with one another in the struggle for political power, as
was the case with Nasser's relations with the Baathist
regimes in Syria and Iraq. A rather similar case of
deterioration in a relationship for doctrinal reasons can
be seen in the quarrel between Saudi Arabia and the former
Kingdom of Yemen over matters of Islamic doctrine.

Relations of brotherhood tend to hold firm when
challenged by cousins, and relations of cousinhood tend
to upgrade to brotherhood when cousin states are faced by

common enemies. The former proposition can be seen in
Jordanian-Iraqi relations during the first half of 1958,
and the latter is demonstrated by the Syrio-Egyptian
relations prior to the Six Day War.

The relations of enmity which most concern us here
are also to be understood in the context of Arabism.
When relations between Arab states deteriorate to the level
of enmity it is because the actions of one of them are
perceived as threats to the fundamental values of Arabism
as encapsulated in the compromise which permitted the
formation of the Arab League. These values are: first,
resistance to interference by non-Arabs in Arab affairs;
second, respect for the independence of each Arab state;
and third, a rather vague obligation to co-operate with
other Arab states, an obligation to be strictly adhered
to whenever Arab states are threatened by outsiders.
These values may be regarded as the framework of inter-
Arab relations and actions intended to change this frame-
work are likely to be considered as an act of antagonism
which degrades the actor's relations with other member-
states of the League into the third circle of "enmity".

Hostile acts may take many forms but in any part-
icular case as essential ingredient will be a threat to
one or more of the values mentioned above. In some
cases, the hostile acts have been of such a nature as would
disrupt friendly relations in any group of nations, for
example, the employment of military means to annex the
territory of another Arab state or to consolidate polit-
ical power over another Arab country obtained by a coup.
Where such actions have been taken, by Qasim of Iraq against

Kuwait, or by Egypt in Yemen, or in the Algerian-Moroccan
border disputes, the result has always been, not surpris-
ingly, a sharp decline from relations of cousinhood to
outright enmity.   But in the particular circumstances of
Arab politics, we also find very sharp reactions to
policies which have a particular significance in relation
to Arabism.   Thus Arab Nationalists, particularly
Baathists and Nasserists, tend to treat as an act of
enmity any infringment of the basic tenets of Arabism.
Offence has been given by Arab states welcoming foreign
military bases or allying with foreign countries in
defensive treaties, e.g. King Idris of Libya and Nuri al-
Said of Iraq, even though the British and American bases
in Libya and the Baghdad Pact were not directed against
Arab interests.   Arab nationalists have similarly treated
as hostile any moves by Arab states to co-operate with
communist elements against their own brand of Pan-Arabism,
e.g. Iraq under the Qasim regime, or to propagate peaceful
coexistence with those whom the nationalists regard as
enemies, e.g. Bourquaba who proposed, in 1963, peaceful
coexistence with Israel.   Arab traditionalists on the
other hand, react with hostility to a different set of
stimuli, which reflects their own interpretation of
Arabism.   They treat as enemies Arab states who help and
encourage change in the political system or ideology of
other Arab states, whether by military intervention or by
propaganda, such as Egypt during the period of Arab cold
war until 1967 and during her intervention in Yemen.   The
primacy for all Arab states of the values of respect for
the sovereignty of individual Arab states is shown by the

fact that attempts to achieve territorial unification by force have always provoked dissension in the Arab world and constituted notable set backs to the Arab cause. This has occurred regardless of whether the "offender" has been progressive (e.g. Iraq's campaign against Kuwait) or conservative (e.g. Morocco's campaign for Mauritania and Spanish Sahara).

The shifts in inter-Arab relations between brotherhood and enmity are also very much affected by the actions of outside powers. Attempts by outsiders to form close relationships with particular Arab states, whether or not the outsider intended to influence its Arab partner's relations with other Arab states, have frequently resulted in tensions within the Arab world. This can be seen in the case of the relations of the United Kingdom with Iraq and Jordan, similarly those of the United States with Saudi Arabia, and again the Soviet Union with Egypt. The close relations between the British and the Hashemites contributed much to the downfall of the Iraqi monarchy, by spotlighting it as a target for Arab nationalists. In the other three cases, the Arab state in question has been pushed from time to time to quarrel with its non-Arab friends in order to repair its standing with other Arab states. Thus, King Husein has, from time to time, turned against Britain and America in order to improve his relations with Egypt and Syria, Saudi Arabia has moved away from the US to emphasise her role as a leading contender for Arab leadership, and Egypt has reduced her dependence on the Soviet Union, partly to win the favour of the United States, but also to reassert her leadership

of the Arab world (as in 1972-73). Conversely, when an Arab state is compelled to have recourse to foreign assistance it knows that one inevitable result will be accusations of betrayal voiced by its Arab neighbours, as experienced by the Lebanon and Jordan in 1958.

Direct attacks on Arab states by outsiders always have an immediate unifying effect on the Arab world, of a kind described in the remark by King Faisal quoted earlier. Arab enemies rediscover their sense of cousin-hood and cousins become brothers. The most regular sponser of Arab unity is accordingly Israel. The problem of Israel touches all three of the fundamental values of Arabism. It is considered to be a foreign intrusion in the Arab world, a foreign intervention in a particular Arab country (Palestine) and an enemy to Arab Co-operation. But although Israel acts as a catalyst of Arab unity, it also provides occasions for Arab discord. The urge to resolve the problem of Israel is a standing temptation to Arab states and movements to interfere in each other's affairs in order to bring about the desired coalition of forces against Israel.

One way in which inter-Arab enmity can be suspended and perhaps eventually brought to an end is where there is any direct external threat against the Arab world. This transition from enmity to cousinhood or brotherhood can be attributed to the feeling of Arabism which makes all the member-states of the Arab League feel obliged to help one another as required by the League's Charter. The degree of reconciliation is affected by the acuteness of hostil-ity between cousins and enemies, as well as by factors of

time and space.

As a broad generalisation, it can be argued that the strength or weakness of inter-Arab relations depends largely on one internal and one external factor. The internal factor is that the more Arab states observe their commitment to the League Charter to uphold the status quo, i.e., to respect each other's independence, the more harmonious will be their relations. This is why the Pan-Arabist movement tends in the long run to be a disruptive force in the Arab world. Any attempt, on the part of one nation, to move more quickly towards the formation of a single Arab state is bound to create considerable enmity within the Arab world. Indeed, such action is such a direct attack on a fundamental principle of Arabism, as expressed in the League, that it may even lead cousins to ally with external powers for their own security and to defend the Arab League status quo. The external factor is that, subject to the above qualification, the stronger the enmity directed externally against the Arab world, the closer the relations of brotherhood and cousinhood will be. But while political support to brothers or cousins is usually given at once where military help is concerned, the co-operation among brothers and counsins in time of crisis depends on factors of time and space. The location of the fighting, the cost of helping, the likelihood of immediate or delayed reward or retribution, and the degree of immediate peril faced by those engaged in the actual fighting, all influence the extend and intensity of Arab collaboration. One may notice that space, in particular, has different effects on military and political support:

the nearer the states are to the enemy the more military support is given; the further they are away, the more they are inclined to give their support politically. By the same token, the nearer the states are to the scene of possible fighting, the more they are prepared to support a political solution; the further they are away, the more they cry for military action.

We must now examine in more detail some of the key elements in the general interpretation of inter-Arab politics set out at the beginning of this chapter. The first step is to look at the "bloc model" of Arab politics to see how it has been imposed on Arab politics and why it is less able than the "brotherhood/cousinhood model" to explain the shifting pattern of relations between Arab states.

The emergence of revolutionary Pan-Arabist movements in the Arab world suggested the possibility of dividing Arab states into blocs of "progressive socialists" and "conservatives". It was tempting to identify the disputing groups in the Arab world as blocs corresponding to the rigid Eastern and Western groupings in the Cold War, especially when it looked as though one group was headed by socialist, "progressive", Pan-Arabist Egypt while the other group appeared to follow the lead of traditionalist, Islamic and conservative Saudi Arabia. Such an interpretation was attractive to the Cold Warriors in East and West, since it might serve to bind to each camp at least some of the Arab states, by deepening inter-Arab rivalries and intensifying their tensions to a state of conflict in which each Arab bloc would be

dependent on a Super Power. The Soviet Union in part-
icular adopted a policy of supporting the unity of social-
ist "progressive" Arab states. In this policy, a major
Soviet objective has been to oppose the very idea of
"Arabism"(2) and to prevent its achievement by either
group, by supporting one Arab group against the other.
The divisive character of Soviet backing for progressive
movements in the Arab world was shown by a statement in
Pravda (April 3, 1963): "it all depends who carries the
banner of unity and on what basis it will be realised:
anti-imperialist, democratic, popular, or pro-imperialist
and anti-democratic".(3) This showed how progressive
slogans could be used to turn Arab states against each
other, by labelling conservative Arab states as lackeys
of imperialism. The clear Soviet international objec-
tive in the context of the Cold War was to polarise
friendly Arab states against the Soviet Union's rivals in
the West as well as against Western supporters in the
Arab world. When Soviet spokesmen announced that "the
Soviet people enthusiastically welcomed the strengthening
of the unity of the Arab peoples on the basis of the
struggle against Colonialism"(4) it meant that the Soviet
Union welcomed the strengthening of some Arab peoples'
struggle against Colonialism at the expense of Arab unity.

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(2) Aryed Yodfat, Arab Politics in the Soviet Mirror,
Israel University Press, Jerusalem,
1973, p.203
(3) ibid., p.230
(4) ibid., p.202 See also John R. Swanson "The Soviet
Union and the Arab World: Revolutionary
Progress Through Dependence on Local
Elites, The Western Political Quarterly"
University of Utah, Vol.27, No.4, 1974
pp.637-656

The Soviet model of bloc politics could not survive
for long the frequent shifts in relations between Arab
states. This was because too many factors were at work
in Arab politics building bridges across the socialist/
conservative divide, and because the two supposed groups
had too many attitudes in common. Both groups based
themselves fundamentally on the idea of Arabism. Certainly
it was true that the revolutionary socialist group emerged
in Arab politics with the objective of promoting the idea
of Arabism as it applied to individual citizens and
individual states, into a political ideology for the
entire Arab people and all Arab states; but individual
Arab states had accepted in the institutional framework
of inter-Arab relations expressed by the Charter of the
League, a framework which permitted the promotion of the
Pan-Arabist ideology so long as it was confined within
the bounds set by the values of that Charter. Conse-
quently when the member-states of the League were divided
over political systems and ideologies they could, never-
theless, react to one another at least within a relation-
ship of cousinhood. Furthermore, when enmity arose
because an Arab state had transgressed a fundamental
principle of the League Charter, such as respect for the
autonomy of individual states, it could repair the injury
by reaffirming its support for the principles of the
Charter, though it might be required further to give proof
of its sincerity, and could then be taken back into the
fold of cousinhood. One other factor working against the
cohesion of "blocs" of Arab states has been the practical
difficulties encountered by any state which has contemplated

such a policy.   On one hand the principles of the Arab
League stand in the way of overt interference in the
affairs of Arab states, such as is necessary from time to
time to ensure bloc conformity;   on the other, no Arab
state has the power to compel compliance.   A shifting
pattern of relationships is almost inevitable in a system
in which power is widely diffused.

The bloc model of inter-Arab relations does not
survive an examination of the relationships involving the
two supposed leaders of the blocs, Egypt and Saudi Arabia;
such an examination rather shows how relationships move in
and out of the categories of brotherhood, cousinhood and
enmity during the course of the twenty one years between
1952 and 1973.

After the Egyptian Revolution of July 1952, Saudi-
Egyptian relations were generally in the nature of cousin-
hood.   Although Saudi relations with Farouk had not been
particularly close and Prince Faisal, Saudi Prime Minister
until he deposed his brother King Saud in 1964,(5) voiced
no objections to the new Republic, the two countries
remained distant from each other in consequence of their
differences in political system and the gradual transition
of Egypt to socialism.   Relations between the two countries
were at their most harmonious when both were facing poten-
tial enemies.   Saudi Arabia had Egypt's sympathy in her
bitter disputes with Britain over the Buraimi Oasis,(6)

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(5) In March 1958, King Saud relinquished powers to
    Prince Faisal and in 1964 Saud was deposed.
(6) G.E. Kirk, Contemporary Arab Politics: a Concise
                History, Methuen, London, 1961, p.34

while Egypt could rely on Saudi hostility to the Hash-
emites in the conflicts with Iraq concerning the latter's
membership of the Baghdad Pact (which Nasser considered
to be in complete contradiction to the objective of Arab
nationalism).   The Pact was particularly offensive to
Nasser because it appeared to offer Britain some compen-
sation for what she was being given up through the
negotiated withdrawal of her troops from the Canal Zone.
Saudi-Egyptian relations were brought closer when Britain
attempted to induce Jordan to join the Baghdad Pact, a
development which would have made it even more offensive
to Saudi sentiment.   Saudi Arabia threatened Jordan with
military action, and on 8 February 1955, Prince Faisal
stated that his government was in complete agreement with
the Egyptian government on all matters of Arab and foreign
policy.(7)   At the same time, Jordanian Arab national-
ists were receiving constant Nasserist support for their
campaign of opposition to Jordan's joining the Pact.

Thus in 1955 and 1956, the most conservative Arab
monarchy and the most progressive Arab republic joined
forces against the Hashemite monarchies, partly in pursuit
of private quarrels and partly to resist an imperialist
intrusion in the Arab world.   At the same time all Arab
states, monarchies and republics alike, supported the
liberation movements in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco in
their struggle against France.   This was very far from
the politics of two opposing blocs.

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(7) "Chronology", The Middle East Journal, Washington D.C.,
Vol.9, No.2, 1955, p.166

In February 1956, Husein's nerve broke and he dis-
missed Glubb Pahsa.(8)   This success for Nasserism further
inflamed nationalist sentiment within Jordan and increased
the internal threat to the monarchy, but the break with
Britain had positive effects on Jordanian relations with
other Arab countries.   Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia
together were prepared to replace British assistance to
Jordan of £E 20 million, and a tripartite military Command
of Egypt, Jordan and Syria was established on 25 October
1956.(9)   The whole process of reconciliation of the
Arab world was of course immeasurably assisted by the
Suez War which had, in turn, to some extent been caused
by the disruptions and anxieties provoked by the Arab
quarrel over the Baghdad Pact.

The growth of Nasserism after the Suez Crisis marked
a turning point in Arab politics.   There began a series of
rapid changes in the inter-Arab relations of brotherhood
and cousinhood, especially with regard to relations between
Egypt and the monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Jordan.   Egypt
accelerated her transformation to socialism which now found
expression in the new constitution.   Nasser was thus
giving added impetus to his move to the left which had
started with the Czech arms deal and the nationalisation
of the Suez Canal.   This leftwards drift resulted in his
estrangement from the conservative regimes and the contin-
uation of his fierce attack on the Muslim Brotherhood added

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(8) Anthony Nutting, No End of a Lesson: the Story of Suez,
                     Constable, London, pp.28-29
(9) Peter Mansfield, The Middle East: a Political and
                     Economic Survey, 4th Edition, Oxford
                     University Press, 1973, p.143

to their anxieties about the direction of his policies.
The hanging of the Muslim Brotherhood leaders in 1954 had
been accepted as a matter of internal affairs, but the
continuing repression of any moves by the Muslim Brother-
hood to take a part in Egyptian political life had worry-
ing implications for the traditional Islamic rulers in the
Arab world. At the same time a new external factor, which
was bound to have divisive effects on inter-Arab politics,
emerged in the form of the Eisenhower Doctrine.(10) This
was presented as a means of containing subversion by
foreign communist influences in the Arab world, but was
in fact aimed at containing Nasserism and the communist
movement in Syria as well as at perpetuating the status
quo and protecting America's friends in the Middle East.
The United States State Department seems also to have
considered the possibility of buttressing Saud as a rival
to Nasser's leadership of the Arabs.(11) While Egypt and
Syria opposed the new threat of American interference in
Arab affairs, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon were happy to accept
the Doctrine, both being as opposed to Nasserism as they
were to Communism, although King Saud and his advisers
still tried to avoid an open clash with Nasser. Jordan,

(10) President Eisenhower's message to the Congress on
5 January 1957, that the United States would use force
to secure and protect a nation requesting such aid
against overt aggression from any nation controlled
by international Communism.
See John Marlowe, Arab Nationalism and British
Imperialism, A Study in Power Politics, The Cresset
Press, London, 1961, pp.146-147
(11) Anthony Nutting, I Saw for Myself,
Constable, London, 1958, p.61

however, because of Nasserist ideological influence, main-
tained close relations with Nasser, and her nationalist
government went as far as opening diplomatic relations
with the Soviet Union.   Thus Jordan proceeded to
strengthen her alignment with Egypt.   The nationalist
government denounced the Eisenhower Doctrine (and thereby
forfeited an American loan) and successfully insisted on
the withdrawal of the Hashemite Iraqi troops who had
entered Jordan at the time of Suez.(12)   These were
replaced by Syrian and Saudi troops in accordance with the
Joint Military Command Agreement of October 1956, but the
Saudi troops were soon withdrawn, leaving only the Syrians.

It looked as though the emerging pattern of Arab
politics would place Jordan in alignment with Egypt and
Syria against Saudi Arabia, with Iraq isolated.   Then
the Jordanian nationalists overreached themselves;   an
attempt at a Nasserist coup against King Husein by the
army failed (its leader Ali Abu Nawar fled to Syria),
Saudi troops returned to Jordan to strengthen Husein's
position, and the Jordanian-Egyptian brotherhood was
disrupted.

We have already examined in Chapter IV the particular
factors in the Baathist and Nasserist movements which con-
tributed to the formation of the UAR.   This event also, of
course, had major significance for inter-Arab relations of
brotherhood, cousinhood and enmity.   The establishment of
the UAR was in part the result of the interaction of ex-
ternal and internal forces in the Arab world, and it

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(12) Anthony Nutting, No End of a Lesson, Loc.cit., pp.90-99

produced an important, albeit temporary, realignment of
Arab relationships.   The growth of Nasserism threatened
Western, particularly British, interests in the Arab world
and opened the way to Soviet influence in the Middle East.
At the same time as Nasser was turning in the direction
of the Soviet Union, and relying more on Soviet assistance,
the Syrian Communist Party was also growing and becoming
involved in political struggle with the Baath party in
Syria.   It was in response to these developments that
the Eisenhower Doctrine was propounded, with the objective
of containing both Nasserism and Communism in the Arab
world and supporting the conservative Arab states. The
struggle between the Baath and the Communists culminated
in a crisis in Syria which involved Turkey, the Lebanon
and the United States.(13)   The crisis brought Syrio-
Egyptian relations closer and Egypt felt obliged to send
her troops to Syria in accordance with the Mutual Defence
Agreement between the two countries.   The international
response to the crisis intensified the power struggle
between the Baath party and the Communist in Syria.
Finally, when the Baath found itself unable to suppress the
Communists and feared that they would take power, the Baath
offered President Nasser union with Egypt.(14)

The conservative regimes had played little, if any,
part in the struggle between the progressive factions in

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(13) W.Z. Laqueur, The Soviet Union and the Middle East,
                    F.A. Praeger, New York, 1959, pp.247-61
(14) Monte Palmer, "The United Arab Republic: An Assess-
                    ment of Its Failure", The Middle East
                    Journal, Washington D.C., Vol.20,
                    No.1, 1966, pp.52-53

Syria. They certainly had not combined their strength to oppose the communists and had left that task to their main nationalist rival. But when the United Arab Republic was an accomplished fact, the monarchies reacted against it. Nasser claimed in February 1958 that the Saudi reactionaries were trying to have him assassinated on the eve of the formation of the UAR. The two Hashemite kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq hastily formed the short-lived Arab Federation.(15) Thus Syrio-Egyptian relations were transformed by the formation of the UAR, while relations between the two traditional rivals of the Saudi and Hashemite Houses were shifted into the brotherhood of the monarchical system. When the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in a coup instigated by Nasser it caused a new shifting of inter-Arab relations. The Jordanian reaction was to turn to Britain rather than to Saudi Arabia (at the same time the Lebanon called on the United States to help). This train of events suggests that the conservatives did not attach much practical importance to the conservative bloc (the Arab Federation was primarily Hashemite rather than monarchist) and turned individually to the West when their survival was threatened. Similarly, the progressive movements were guided by individual considerations rather than group objectives: when the Baath's ambitions were hampered by Nasser, they broke up the UAR; and when Qasim reached out for Kuwait, he met opposition not only from Britain and Saudi Arabia but also from Egypt.

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(15) Reeva S. Simon, "The Hashemite Conspiracy; Hashemite Unity Attempt", International Journal, the Middle East Study, Great Britain, Vol.5, 1974, p.321

The early 1960's provided many examples of the rapidly shifting pattern of Arab objectives and relations. Regarding the power struggle between the Baath and Nasser; the ideological brothers in the days of the UAR's decline, the Baath party found itself threatened by Nasser and this caused a new shifting in inter-Arab grouping with the Baath working together with Jordanian and Saudi Arabian interests to bring down the Nasserist regime in Syria. The Baath was able to regard the conservatives as at least cousins once Western intervention had been withdrawn from both Lebanon and Jordan. The conservative rulers, although they opposed Communism and radical nationalism, were quite happy to work with one radical nationalist force, the Syrian Baath, against another, Nasser, who had suppressed the Syrian Communists and was becoming suspicious of Soviet influence throughout the Middle East. Furthermore, Nasser, the enemy of Western influence in the Arab world, set himself the task of indirectly implementing the spirit of the Eisenhower Doctrine. The new Baathist, Jordanian, Saudi Arabian grouping was able to bring off a military coup in Syria which brought Nasser's UAR to an end.

The break up of the UAR was followed by successive crises between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and Egypt and Syria. The deterioration of relations between Egypt and Syria culminated on 28 August when the Egyptian delegation walked out of an Arab League meeting in Lebanon that had been called to discuss the Syrian complaints of Egyptian intervention in her affairs. A few days earlier, Egypt's relations with Saudi Arabia had taken a turn for the worse

when Nasser had offered hospitality to a renegade brother

of King Saud.   On 19 August 1962, Prince Talal Ibn Abdul

Aziz had fled to Cairo and publicly denounced his brother's

regime;   on 21 August he was granted a meeting with

President Nasser in Alexandria which increased Saud's

suspicion of their being engaged in some sort of con-

spiracy.   The crisis between the two countries culmin-

ated when the Imam of Yemen was overthrown on 27 September

1962, and Egypt and the USSR recognised the new regime

two days later.   The granting of political asylum to the

crew of a Saudi Air Force aeroplane that had been sent to

Yemen with arms for the royalists, but had turned up in

Egypt, gave Cairo an opportunity to flaunt the new enmity

between the two countries.   Egypt was involved in the

actual fighting side by side with the republicans, while

the Saudis backed the royalist forces with financial

support and arms.   Egyptian involvement in Yemen gathered

the remaining monarchies into one circle of brotherhood

composed of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco.(16)   Faisal

did not, however, justify his Yemeni policy as a defence

of monarchy, but as resistance to the breaking of a

treaty by a fellow Arab state: "Saudi Arabia was bound

by a tripartite defence pact between her, Yemen and Egypt.

When this unfortunate aggression was launched by a party to

this pact, the Saudi Government felt itself obliged to

defend a country to which it had bound itself".(17)   He

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(16) H. Kerr, "Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen" in
          The Arab Cold War, Oxford University Press,
          1971, pp.107-114
(17) Walid Khalidi, Arab Political Documents, Loc.cit.,
          pp.372-373

also pointed to the right of any Arab state to defend
its sovereignty; he fought, he said, "to defend ourselves
and our very sovereignty. The leaders of Egypt declared
that they had moved to the Yemen and were fighting there
to destroy this country as well. We were forced, there-
fore, to protect ourselves, and self-defence is the right
of every state and nation".(18)

The Arab "Cold War" of 1962-1967 is the best, if
not the only example of bloc politics in the Arab world.
It is, indeed, hard to see how the term can be justified.
The period of acute hostility did not last long and it was
Nasser who took the initiative in trying to bring the
Egyptian-Saudi Arabian confronation to an end. Nasser
attempted to reconcile himself with Saudi Arabia by
bilateral approaches as well as by means of a Summit
Conference within the framework of the Arab League.(19)
Nasser succeeded in attaining Saudi de facto recognition
of the Republic of Yemen when Abdullah al-Sallal and
King Faisal sat together in the second Arab Summit
Conference in September 1964. The Conference was
followed by a reduction in tension in Egypt's relations
with Saudi Arabia and also with Jordan and Syria, and
Faisal made a conciliatory gesture when he pardoned his
brother, Prince Talal. Further progress was recorded
in the Joint Communique of 3 March 1964, at the end of
his visit to Cairo, when Saudi Arabia and Egypt declared
that they had no ambitions in Yemen, and gave their

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(18) ibid., pp.373-375
(19) Walid Khalidi, Arab Political Documents, Slim Press,
          Beirut, 1964, p.69

unqualified support to its independence.(20)   This marked

the return of Saudi Arabia to cousinhood with Egypt which

Faisal explained by saying that "we did not begin a new

era with our friends in the UAR (Egypt), we merely

restored relations that were always there and always

strong".   It was then Husein's turn to pardon a Nasserist

as a gesture of reconciliation with Egypt and he allowed

Ali Abu Nawar to return home.   The lack of cordiality,

however, in the restored relations of cousinhood between

Riyyad and Cairo was shown by the continuing anxiety of

Saudi Arabia about the security of her borders with Yemen.

Throughout the Yemen War, Nasser had continued to

have difficulty in his relations with his "progressive"

brothers;   indeed the relationship was akin to cousin-

hood.   Egypt's quarrels with Syria and Iraq were resolved

by the overthrow of the regimes in these two countries.

Qasim was overthrown on 8 February 1963 by Abdul Salam

Aref, his collaborator in the Revolution, mainly because

Qasim's violence had become a personal threat to his

colleagues.   In March 1963 the tension between Syria

and Nasser was brought to an end by a bloodless coup in

Damascus which had the effect of purging the non-Baathist

elements in the coalition government.   The new regime in

Iraq and Syria were both of generally Baathist character

and they joined forces in demanding a new Arab union with

Egypt.   Three sets of talks were held in Cairo between

14 March and 14 April 1963 which resulted in the proclamation

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(20) ibid., pp.397-398

of a new Federation of Arab Republics.(21)   The declar-
ation never came into force, however, for reasons discussed
in chapter IV, it is necessary here only to recall that
declared ideological solidarity could not overcome differ-
ences of policy and the desire of each regime to maintain
its independence unimpaired.   The relations of ideological
brotherhood improved between Syria, Iraq and Egypt after
a new Baath government took power in Syria.   In February
1966, agreement was reached on the basis of full
sovereignty and equality for all parties, and, in November
1966, a comprehensive defence agreement was signed for
a unified military command between Egypt and Syria.
This train of events shows the extent to which the mood
of inter-Arab relations depends on the most variable
ideological mood of individual regimes.

While Saudi-Egyptian relations remained in an
uncertain condition, Saudi Arabia initiated a wider policy
of co-operation among the forty states of the Islamic
world (of which the members of the Arab League accounted
for only half).   The Saudi initiative was aimed at
seeking an alternative, wider framework for their inter-
national policy where Saudi Arabia could use her position
in the Islamic world to play a leading role in competition
with Egypt, the leader of the Arab League.   It was also
a part of the Saudi counter-attack on the socialist
transformation in Egypt which had been given fresh impetus
by the Egyptian National Charter.   The first step in the

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(21) W. Khalidi, Arab Political Document, Loc.cit.,
1963, pp.175-213

new policy was taken in partnership with the Shah of
Iran.   A joint Saudi-Iranian communique, published on
13 December 1965, stated that "the two sovereigns agreed
to support the call for an Islamic Conference to provide
the opportunity for discussion of matters of importance
to the Islamic states, and to be a starting point towards
Islamic unity and the protection of Islamic interests".(22)
Faisal chose to act in conjunction with the Shah in the
hope that this would help the two countries to reach agree-
ment on the future of the Gulf, since he had little confid-
ence in the capacity of the Arab Joint Defence Agreement
to contain Iranian ambitions.   It was not, however, a
partnership that was at all welcome to Nasser and the
newly restored relationship of cousinhood deteriorated
to the extent that President Nasser postponed the Summit
Conference planned for the Summer of 1966 on the ground
that Arab reactionaries were exploiting it for their own
ends.   Eventually the Unified Arab Military Command
ceased to exist.(23)

It is hard to see this pattern of relationships
moving to any logical conclusion and impossible to view
it as any sort of progression towards Arab unity.   The
internal logic was one of continually shifting relation-
ships, moving according to changing interests and ideol-
ogical moods.   This internal logic was, however, to be

(22) W. Khalidi, Arab Political Document, 1965, Loc.cit.,
          p.449.   See also T. Bulloch "Revolution in
          the Gulf", in The Making of a War, The
          Middle East 1967 to 1973, W & J Mackay,
          Chatham, 1974, p.449
(23) P.Y. Hammond, "Inter-Arab Division", op.cit., pp.60-63

disrupted by the Six Day War, when a sharp external threat

drove the Arabs into co-operation with each other.   To

some extent the war can be seen as in part the product

of inter-Arab relations.   The establishment of harmonious

relationships among the socialist regimes had been followed

by an intensification of their sponsorship of Palestinian

guerilla activities against Israel.   Israel responded

with military reprisals and threats of heavier action

which were, however, "no more than routine warnings of

reprisals in what had become a standardised pattern".(24)

But when the Russians warned the Egyptians that there was

an Israeli plan for an imminent major attack against

Syria,(25) Nasser found himself under intense pressure

to respond to this warning.   Although the United States

and the Soviet Union appealed to Nasser to show self-

restraint,(26) he was bound to accept the "projected"

challenge and comply with the Egyptian-Syrian Military

Agreement.   He was also under "Psychological" pressure,(27)

not only because his friends looked to him for leadership,

but also because his rivals, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, would

take advantage of any failure to act and were loudly taunt-

ing him with accusations of cowardice.   So he expelled

UNEF, engaged in a military demonstration in Sinai, and

closed the Gulf of Aqaba to shipping bound for Eilat (he

had never in fact told the Egyptian people of his tacit

acceptance of the Israeli right of passage).   To the

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(24) W.Z. Laqueur, The Israel-Arab Reader. A Documentary
                    History of the Middle East Conflict,
                    Loc.cit., p.544

(25) ibid., p.189
(26) ibid., p.190
(27) ibid., p.180

Israelis, the blockade of the Gulf was "an act of war".(28)

The Kings were now caught in the crisis which their rivalry

with Nasser had helped to provoke. Three days before the

war broke out King Husein of Jordan flew to Cairo to effect

a reconciliation with the PLO as well as to conclude a

military co-operation agreement with Egypt. His reward

for adjusting his policy and closing ranks with his Arab

cousins was the loss of half of his kingdom. Faisal had

to make the same adjustment as soon as the war broke out,

explaining his move with the proverb quoted at the begin-

ning of this chapter.

Throughout the period from 1956 to 1967, Arab politics

had been marked by sharp distinctions between relations

of brotherhood, cousinhood and enmity. These years had

been characterised by the vehemence of inter-Arab prop-

aganda and by frequent trials of strength and nerve

between the Arab states. In all this, Nasser had been

in the forefront, as the most vigorous exponent, followed

by the Baathists, of the cause of Arab unity. In the

aftermath of the defeat of June 1967, the humiliated Arab

leaders were inclined to see Nasser as the symbol of their

failure. Some Arab writers even attributed the defeat

to the Nasserist propaganda and its misconceptions.

A. Hatem said, "Arab counter-propaganda seemed to be in

complete disarray, not only did it give way to wild

emotional threat, but it contradicted itself, it even lost

sight of the basic truth of 5 June 1967..."(29) The Arab

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(28) ibid., p.219
(29) M.A. Hatem, op.cit., p.230

states were now looking for a more sober and rational
basis for their relationships than Pan-Arabist propaganda.

Nasser himself, perhaps, realised that although the
propaganda approach of the Pan-Arab movements had had some
positive results, in instigating Arab revolts for indepen-
dence and in overthrowing some monarchies, it had finally
damaged the Arab struggle against Israel. In any case,
after 9 June 1967 the intensity of Nasserist propaganda
was lessened and Egypt joined in the work of promoting
reconciliation between brothers and cousins. Hatem
reflects the Arab expectation that a new start would be
possible after the Six Day War, in his optimistic inter-
pretation of the Khartoum Summit Conference which was
the first step towards recovery. "The Arab Governments
had demonstrated to their own people and to the world
that they too had the will to preserve their unity and
their sense of shared destiny in spite of all that the
Zionists could do".(30) But although their "crushing
defeat" in the war awakened the Arabs to manifest their
will and demonstrate their feelings of brotherhood and
cousinhood, the goal they sought in the Conference was
unified Arab action in pursuit of shared objectives, not
pan-Arabist unity, or even the partial unity of the early
1960's. Three of the Arab monarchies, Saudi Arabia,
Kuwait and Libya, accepted their Arab responsibilities in
a practical manner by offering subsidies to Egypt and
Jordan,(31) and republics such as Algeria and the Sudan

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(30) M.A. Hatem, ibid., p.234
(31) The Syrian Government did not attend the Conference.

sent their troops to help Egypt after the war, (but the
Algerians were soon withdrawn from the Canal Zone).
Practical co-operation of this type implied respect for
each others' sovereignty and an acceptance that there
could be no forced unification.

After 1967 there have been some old-fashion calls for
unification but they have come from new regimes without
direct experience of the old traumas.   In 1969 there were
military coups in the Sudan led by Colonel J. Numeiri, and
in Libya led by Colonel M. Qaddafi.   Both considered them-
selves as Nasserist and the Libyan demanded Pan-Arab unity
of the kind that Nasser had achieved in 1958-61.   Before
Nasser's death, and on Qaddafi's initiative, constitut-
ional unity - the Federation of Arab Republics - was
declared in 1971 between Libya, Egypt and Syria;(32)   and
in 1972 a plan was actually agreed for the merger of Libya
and Egypt in the context of the new Federation, again on
Qaddafi's initiative.   The ideological gulf between
Qaddafi and Sadat, the new Egyptian President, was, however,
so great that nothing practical was achieved, and the
struggle for leadership between the two men was more
apparent than any moves to implement the achievement of
unification.   President Sadat was mainly interested in
bringing about closer relations with Saudi Arabia, which
had far more political weight and influence in the Arab

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(32) Tabitha Petran, "Federation of Arab Republics",
                     op.cit., pp.254-257. The third member
                     was to have been the Sudan; but she
                     withdrew because of difficulties
                     connected with the South Sudan problem
                     and was replaced by Syria.

and Islamic worlds than the young and untested Libyan
leader and was more powerful economically.   The immediate
and urgent requirement of Egypt was to rebuild the
Egyptian economy, strengthen her armed forces and undo
the damage that Egypt had suffered under Nasser.   To go
along with Qaddafi's projected unification meant an
additional drain on the wearied Egyptian economy and a
possible renewal of the unrewarding inter-Arab cold war.
Sadat accordingly confined the existence of the Federation
to Libyan territory.

The ideal of Arab unity was treated after Nasser's
death in the same remote and formal way as it had been
before the Egyptian Revolution of 1952.   Nothing immed-
iate was to be done, though there could be a minimal,
notional, constitutional foundation for the future develop-
ment of Pan-Arabism.   Thus Article 9 of the Federation
Constitution characterised its member-states as "Arab
republics that believe in Arab unity, work for the
realising of a unified socialist Arab society".(33)   But
this commitment to socialist Pan-Arabism, however formal,
carries some risk of reviving and perpetuating the division
of the Arab world into two circles, progressive and
reactionary.   A return to the struggle for socialist
transformation would probably lead back to the Nasserist
path of inter-Arab struggle.

President Sadat faced considerable difficulties in

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(33) See Document;   "The Constitution of the Federation of
Arab Republics", The Middle East Journal,
Washington D.C., Vol.25, No.4, 1971,
pp.523-529

establishing his grip on Egyptian political power.   He

was "riding the storm"(34) internally, surrounded by

Nasser's men who were still inclined towards the Soviet

Union, and had given a pledge to the Egyptian people that

the year 1971 was to be a decisive year with Israel,

although at the same time he was at odds with the Soviet

Union over the supply of weapons and the Soviet loan for

the Aswan High Dam.   In this awkward situation, at odds

with the Power on which he relied for supplies of weapons,

closer relations with Saudi Arabia and Syria were highly

desirable.   The former had the oil which could be used

if necessary as a political weapon.   King Faisal had

emerged as a major leader of the Arabs after the death

of Nasser and had a long-standing relationship of mutual

respect with Sadat.   Faisal also looked to Syria for the

future security of his oil pipelines (Tapline) across

Syria from Saudi Arabia to Sidon.   Faisal's most immediate

objective in 1971 was to get fifty per cent participation

in the oil companies by 1980 and preference for Arab oil

entering the United States.   A limited war with Israel

might be utilised as a pretext for using oil as a polit-

ical weapon in case the American authorities continued

to reject this programme.

The dramatic success of OPEC's oil diplomacy is not

really relevant to an account of Arab unity, for what was

involved was Arab co-operation, not unification.   The

same may be said of the Arab moves leading up to the attack

on Israel in October 1973.   The three leading Arab states

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(34) M. Heikal, op.cit., p.263

were able to collaborate effectively because their interests
coincided and none perceived a threat to its independence
emanating from the others.   Pan-Arabist propaganda
directed by one against another would have been the death
of either enterprise.   This tripartite collaboration, on
a basis which excluded Pan-Arabist politics, meant that
for the first time the Arabs were able to conclude a pre-
designed unified Arab action involving military and
economic might.

It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter that
one of the fundamental values of Arabism is rejection of
outside interference in Arab affairs.   This can be seen,
throughout the period since 1945, in the acute disturb-
ances which have inevitably followed such attempts at
intervention.   Let us now look at the cohesive and
divisive effects of external interventions in Arab affairs
on relations between Arab states.   These can take the
form of threats to individual Arab states or to the Arab
world as a whole;   or they can take the form of attempts
to build special relationships with particular Arab
states.   In either case, intervention has marked effects
on the pattern of relationships in the Arab world.

The cohesive effects of external intervention are
seen most clearly in the Arab response to Israel and the
Suez invasion.   Israel is seen as an intrusion as well
as an enemy and this added to the agony of the victory of
Israel in the 1948 war.   It motivated the Arabs to promote
and improve military and economic co-operation within the
framework of the Arab League and by bilateral and tri-
lateral agreements.   Some Arab leaders even suggested a

radical change in the constitutional status of the League
itself as a means of bringing about Arab unity; in 1950,
member-states of the League agreed on the Treaty of
Military and Economic Co-operation which became an
integral part of the League Charter, and in the same year
Nazim al-Qudsi proposed a scheme of Arab unity through
developing the League into a "supranation government".
A.M. Mustafa made a similar suggestion in 1957 in the
aftermath of Suez.(35)   Outside the League, successive
bilateral and trilateral military agreements were con-
cluded mainly by Israel's Arab neighbour states, which
indicates the extent to which Israel acted as a cohesive
factor in inter-Arab relations.   This proposition is
emphasised further when we look at the various attempts
at unification in the Arab Middle East, e.g. Egyptian-
Syrian, Syrian-Iraqi, Jordanian-Iraqi and finally
Egyptian-Libyan, and note the absence of similar schemes
in North Africa.   If they were merely a matter of unif-
ication between two or more Arab states, the unification
of Egypt and the Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait,and
Algeria and Tunisia would have been more rational and
acceptable.   The frequency of these attempts at unif-
ication signifies the nature of an integrated Arab
response to the threats which had also motivated some Arab
leaders to call openly for Arab unity, believing that in
unity alone is strength which may undo the effects of these
threats.

One may ask why, up till now, no Arab unity has been

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(35) See Chapter III pp.55-57

attainable, and why such as there has been, has not
endured.   To some extent at least the answer is that the
threat itself is not overwhelming enough to affect the
whole Arab world as a single target.   This flows partly
from deliberate Israeli policy which recognises the fact
that the wider the threatened area is, the less security
the Israelis can maintain, and reciprocally, that the
further Arab states are away from the Israeli threat, the
less they feel its cohesive effects.   But it also has to
be recognised that the shifting nature of inter-Arab
groupings, which is related to the politics of brotherhood
and cousinhood, and the rivalries between brothers and
cousins for political power, has minimised or even
cancelled the cohesive effects of the threats themselves.

The desire for unified Arab action in one way
emphasises the feeling of a shared responsibility among
the Arabs, but its effectiveness is less than might be
expected because it gives rise only to a policy of reaction
to threat, rather than to a predesigned and thoroughly
considered policy to prevent any foreseeable threat.   One
might suggest that the greater the frequency of threat,
the more its cohesive effects would be experienced and
manifested in improved inter-Arab relations.   But con-
sidering the actual nature of inter-Arab relations, this
proposition would only be tenable if it could be shown that
the main Arab states would always see their ultimate
interests lying in united Arab action.   This can be seen
in Saudi-Egyptian-Syrian collaboration prior to the
October War 1973, but it has not always been the case.
The Suez Crisis rallied the Arab world and gave extra drive

to the rise of Nasserism in the Arab world, a movement which
among other things rejected military alliance with an out-
sider.   Although most of the Arab world could unite on
this issue, it intensified the struggle between Nasser and
Nuri al-Said concerning the Baghdad Pact.   The Suez Crisis
also had a share in bringing about the formation of the
UAR, but this too turned out to be a divisive factor in
Arab politics.

    We now turn to the effects on Arab unity and disunity
of "special relationships" between Arab states and out-
siders.   There are many examples: Britain and Iraq
until 1958, Britain and Jordan; the United States and
Saudi Arabia; the United States and Lebanon; perhaps
none had created so many problems for the Arab world as
the special relationship of the Soviet Union with Egypt.

    Despite the close alliance between the Soviet Union
and President Nasser, Nasserism posed serious problems
for Soviet ideology.   From the point of view of world
politics, fervent Pan-Arabism was unwelcome to the Soviet
Union for three reasons.   First, Nasserism contradicts
the communist doctrine of the unity of the working class
of the world; secondly, nationalism raises potentially
embarrassing questions about the nature of Soviet influ-
ence in Eastern Europe; thirdly, the achievement of Pan-
Arabist objectives, however unlikely this may be, would
pose at least a potential threat to Russia from the South-
west, particularly if it led to a revival of the ideal of
an Ummah which would embrace some forty million Soviet
citizens.   Such considerations, combined with more immed-
iate Soviet state interests, have led the Soviet Union

into being highly selective in her support for Pan-Arabism.

In general, the Soviet Union inclined to support pro-socialist forces and to oppose reaction. But in the Middle East the Soviet Union has aspired to control the Arab world through Arab communist parties, whose main local rivals are local socialist nationalists. The Soviet Union has accordingly, from time to time, been driven to support democratic institutions to enable the communist parties to survive and flourish in competition with nationalists. The purpose of the Soviet-proposed democracy is limited to permitting communist participation in policy-making and political power in the country concerned. This can be seen in the cases of Syria and Iraq;(36) the continuous supply of arms and economic aid to Syria and the close relations with the Baathist regime in Iraq were directed to these ends. But the nature of Soviet objectives in the Arab world, and of the complexities to which they have given rise, can be seen best in the case of Egypt.

During the time of Nasser, the close Soviet-Egyptian friendship had a divisive effect on inter-Arab relations. It started with Egypt's need for arms supplies, economic aid to build the Aswan High Dam, and Eastern European markets in which to sell Egyptian cotton. Soviet-Egyptian relations alarmed conservative Arab states and the divisive effects of what was to Egypt an essential

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(36) See Chapter IV and also Harry N. Howard "The Soviet Union in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan", in The Soviet Union in the Middle East, edited by J. Lederer Hoover Institution Press, California, 1974, pp.134-157

relationship were intensified by Egypt's transition to a socialism which was in the sight of the conservative regimes akin to communism. King Husein's reaction to his own nationalist government's proposal to set up diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union was an example of this alarm. Husein's distrust of the Soviet Union in turn affected Nasser's Pan-Arab movement. Soviet-Egyptian friendship was thus a factor in the severing of the Egyptian-Jordanian relationship of cousinhood.

The Soviet objectives in Egypt were similar to those in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. Nasser differentiated between the Soviet Union as a state, and Communism; his dealings with the former did not entail acceptance of the latter.(37) The Soviet friendship with Egypt had the support of home-bred communists but Nasser's policy towards them was to exclude them from any share in political power. Bearing in mind the effects of massive Soviet aid to Egypt, he refrained from hanging them, the fate he had inflicted on the Muslim Brotherhood leaders. Other Arabs were suspicious of Soviet motives in her relationship with Egypt. They saw the Soviet Union as hostile to Pan-Arabism with an interest in weakening Nasser, the leader of the movement. With the communists inside Egypt rendered ineffective politically by Nasser, Soviet

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(37) Paradoxically, the main route for the infiltration of Communism into the Arab world was through the Western educational institutes in Beirut and Cairo. As King Faisal said, the American University of Beirut was a principal breeding place of Arab communists in the Middle East; its most celebrated student was George Habash, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. See M. Helkal, op.cit. p.76, and W. Kazziha, op.cit., pp.17-30

aid to Egypt could be seen as a manoeuvre to gain influence
and control the country by alternative means.   After 1967
it looked like being a most successful strategy, as Egypt's
situation obliged her to accept a bigger and bigger Soviet
military presence;   but this presence had the same sort
of divisive effect in the Arab world as had the Western
special relationships which had aroused Nasser's anger
and in the end Sadat had to expel his Soviet advisers.
Soviet-Egyptian friendship can thus be compared with the
efforts of the West to win particular friendships in the
Middle East.   Originally seen as a lifeline by the Arab
state, it was ultimately recognised as a very mixed
blessing.   The Soviet-Egyptian alliance divided the
Arab world in the same way as the Baghdad Pact had done,
having been considered by Nasser as interference in Arab
affairs and contradictory to the Arab League Charter.
Similarly, the Eisenhower Doctrine was seen as an offer
of friendly relations made to some Arab states as a
protection against the growth of Nasserism and Communism
in Egypt and Syria respectively.   When President Chamoun
of Lebanon anticipated that the growth of Nasserism would
lead to a threat to Lebanon's independence, he accepted
the offer of American help which eventually sparked the
Lebanese civil war in 1958 and led to the landing of
American troops to save and perpetuate the Lebanese con-
ventional system.   Thus external interventions, whether
in the form of threat or friendship, had some cohesive
and some divisive effects in inter-Arab relations, bring-
ing to bear on the movement of Arab unity the pressures
exerted by the ambitions of world communism and the struggle

between East and West in the context of the Cold War. The external threats were not enough to bring about Arab unity; while the special relationships of friendship acted both to divide the Arab world and to maintain the status quo of disunity.

We have already mentioned the impact of Israel on inter-Arab politics and must now look at the role of the Palestinian movement. The internal politics of the Palestinians are the most volatile of Arab politics and the relations of the Palestinians with the Arab states fluctuate continuously between brotherhood, cousinhood and enmity. It is accordingly not surprising that the Palestinians have constituted a divisive force in inter-Arab politics, although occasionally they have been the focus of cohesion.

The formal policy of the majority of Arab states is that the Palestinians should preserve their Palestin-ianness as a separate identity in the family of the Arab nation, with the same status as the Jordanians, Egyptians, etc. According to this view none of the Arab states is entitled individually to take action aimed at solving the problem without the consent of the Palestinians them-selves as well as that of the member-states of the Arab League. In fact, however, the seriousness of the Palestinian problem varies for each Arab state according to its geographical location, and the front-line states are frequently compelled to act alone. This contradic-tion between the formal doctrine and the realities of the situation is a fertile source of inter-Arab quarrels.

Jordan's policy of using the Palestinian issue to

extend and strengthen Hashemite dominions was clear from
the beginning.   Under the slogan of Arab unity Amir
Abdullah (the grandfather of King Husein) attempted in
1948 to absorb the Palestinians into his Kingdom of
Transjordan by annexing the Jordan West Bank and calling
his country the Kingdom of Jordan.   He and his successor
failed, however, to Jordanise the Palestinians for various
reasons.   The most fundamental was that the successive
hostilities on the Jordanian-Israeli borders strengthened
the inhabitants' feeling of Palestinian nationalism rather
than of Jordanian citizenship.   Palestinian indifference
or lack of loyalty to the Hashemite dynasty was exploited
by Nasser, who set out to frustrate Husein's objective of
totally Jordanising the West Bank.   For this purpose
Nasser attempted to form the Palestinian organisations
into one supposedly representative body, the Palestinian
Liberation Organisation.   He succeeded, during the
second Summit Conference held on 5 September 1964, in
gaining the conference's approval for the formation of
the PLO.

The implication of this policy was first of all to
deny Husein's claim of sovereignty on the West Bank, for
now the PLO was considered the representative of the
Palestinians in this area and in the Gaza Strip.   Secondly,
Nasser himself had to refute the accusation of wishing to
annex the Strip to Egyptian territory.   He was willing
to do this because by recognising the identity of the
Palestinian as different from that of the Egyptians he
could secure agreement that the Palestinian problem should
be solved by the Palestinians themselves, dealing directly

with Israel: in this way the responsibility of the
guerillas' activities would fall on the PLO and not on
Egypt as a state. The price Nasser had to pay was to
submit to accusations that his main purpose was to get
rid of his responsibility for sponsoring the Palestinians'
cause by shifting the entire burden to the Palestinian
people.

The formation of the PLO brought a new problem to
the small Arab states neighbouring Israel. It constit-
uted a set-back to Hashemite ambitions of territorial
agrandisement which had been partially realised in the
1948 war and also brought about a direct confrontation
between Jordan and Israel. Now that the West Bank was
in the eyes of the Palestinians recognised as part of
their homeland, they thought they had a right to use it
as a base from which to launch activities against Israel.
As far as King Husein was concerned, however, the PLO
still had to comply with the rules laid down by Jordanian
sovereignty and he thus actively rejected the notion of
the dual identity of his Kingdom. This was the crucial
problem between the PLO and King Husein, which became
particularly acute after the Arab defeat in 1967. Israeli
policy was to fix responsibility for guerilla attacks on
the state from whose territory they had been launched.
This put Jordan in a quandary. Husein could either go
along with the Palestinians, which might lead to Israeli
reprisals which could cost him the remaining half of his
Kingdom; or he could contain the guerillas' activities
with his own security forces at the risk of civil war.
His adoption of the second policy resulted in his driving

the PLO out of his territory in the Jordanian civil war
in 1970 and so to very damaging rifts in the system of
Arab co-operation which had been established at Khartoum.

Looking at the attitudes of other Arab states towards
the Palestinian problem one may see the following categ-
ories. Egypt, Syria and Iraq had sponsored the formation
of the PLO, but limited its activities because Syria and
Egypt attached the main priority to recovering the
territory they had lost in the Six Day War. The oil
rich conservative Arab states provided financial support
and arms supplies to the PLO, without taking much account
of the security problems which this posed for the small
Arab states, particularly Lebanon; the main motive of
the oil shiekhs was to appease their Palestinian residents.
All Arab leaders, especially those who had newly seized
power by coups, claimed themselves to be devoted to the
Palestinian cause, as a means of identifying themselves
as revolutionary nationalists, so as to consolidate their
own grasp on political power in their own countries. No
Arab state wanted to absorb large numbers of Palestinians,
but neither was any Arab state genuinely devoted to the
Palestinians' struggle for their own state in their own
homeland.

The Palestinian problem has become an ingredient of
inter-Arab relations and of the inter-Arab political game.
The call for Arab unity for the sake of the Palestinians
has been a mere slogan; in fact the Palestinian problem
has exacerbated inter-Arab divisions. The exacerbation
became acute when the PLO itself was incapable of control-
ling its extremist members who were trying to establish a

new Hanoi in the Middle East, seeking an Arab capital
that could accommodate their activities on a full scale.
None of the Arab states was willing to provide such
accommodation because of their fear of Israeli vengeance
falling on any Arab Hanoi.   It was accordingly not
surprising that Lebanon, the country that had least power
to drive out the PLO or to contain its movements, should
become the site of the Arab Hanoi and the latest victim
of this problem, violently demonstrated in the civil war
of 1975-76.   As matters stand at the end of 1976, the
most recent lesson of the Palestinian problem for the
Arabs has been the demonstration of how much can be
achieved by the ruthless co-operation of the three major
Arab states.   Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, acting under
the banner of the Arab League, but making sure its
machinery serves their purposes.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

In this thesis we have examined the fundamental obstacles that have defeated the cause of Pan-Arabism, leaving the Arab states to work for a less elevated goal, that of co-operation. It remains to consider why no single Arab state has been able to find a way round these obstacles and lead the Arab peoples towards union, i.e., to play the role of Prussia in the creation of Germany.

The roots of the struggle between the centrifugal and centripetal forces in Arab politics lie in the different interpretations of the origin of Arab nationalism. Some Arab writers placed it in remote pre-Islamic history and others preferred to find the origin in the emergence of Islam itself. Some Arab writers saw Islam as the product of Arabism, while others preferred to say that Arab nationalism could not have existed without Islam. The writers who have been markedly influenced by western culture have attributed the emergence of Arab nationalism to the forces introduced into the Arab world when Bonaparte landed in Egypt in 1798. Whatever the historical origins of Arab nationalism all have agreed that in the modern era, nationalism is a matter of feeling of belonging to one nation, with the Arabic language, historical memories, a common culture and way of life as the main ingredients of this feeling. Despite this agreement, different interpretations of nationalism have resulted in different preferences, either to Pan-Arabism or Pan-Islamism. This diversity of doctrines and interpretations is the first

centrifugal force in Arab politics.

A further manifestation of this force is the variety of proposals that have been put forward by Arab writers for the bringing about of Arab unity by peaceful means. These proposals may be gathered in two main groups. The first was the Islamic revivalism expressed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Mahdi movement in the Sudan. The second group was more variegated. It included suggestions for Arab, rather than Islamic, cultural revivalism which might intensify the self-awareness of the Arab nation, and also suggestions on how Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism might be reconciled in a democratic system characterised by variety and tolerance. But unity of culture, language and common historical memories cannot by themselves bring about Arab unity; what is required to translate all these unities into a political unity is the political will of the Arab leaders. This in turn raises the question of how the unifying political power is to be achieved, whether by force, as Saudi Arabia might desire, or by free competition, as advocated by the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic political parties. The former can intensify cultural, linguistic and even ideological unity by the exercise of political power, while the latter approach sees political power as the result of cultural unity. Bearing in mind this tension between Islamic revivalism and Pan-Arabism, the political will of Arabs as a whole must be seen as the subject of struggle between mainly traditionalist conservatives and the progressives. Lack of compatibility between the two is another centrifugal

force of Arab unity.

This incompatibility gives rise to a variety of
ideologies, which means in the Arab context a matter of
serious dispute. Not only are these disputes between
conservatives and progressives: the conservatives and
traditionalists are rivals among themselves, with the
Hashemites against Saudi Arabia and the latter against
the Hamiduddin House. These quarrels have overshadowed
all talk of Arab unity and eventually reduced the aspir-
ations of Pan-Arabism to mere co-operation among states,
as in the Arab League.

The democratic solution which might have reconciled
Arab rivalries and created the conditions of co-existence
has failed to rally the Arab leaders. The solution
itself had different connotations for different political
systems. An economic democracy which would favour the
working classes was unacceptable to the oil-rich Arab
countries because it would work at the expense of the rich
states. The propagation of this solution by the Baath
and Nasser, as a socialist path for Arab national move-
ments, had the immediate result of deepening disputes
among the Arabs themselves. Thus unified political will
was not attainable by means of economic democracy.
Furthermore, those who believed in a similar socialist
path could not themselves unify their movements into one
organised party to cover the whole Arab world. They are
divided between Baathism, Nasserism, Algerian socialism,
Yemeni socialism, and Libyan socialism. Proposals have
been put forward to unify them into one movement but the
socialists themselves have failed to unify their political

will to come together. These movements are rivals to one another; none of them is allowed to survive in the region of others, especially as each state believes in a single political party and denies the principle of free competition between various political parties. As far as the conservative regimes are concerned, the idea of political party does not exist at all. Thus the possibility of achieving political will of the Arab masses through political organisation has no place in Arab politics.

The different times and circumstances in which the various Arab states have achieved their independence have also had divisive effects. Arab nationalism has found expression in the various stages of pre-independence, independence and post-independence. In all three stages, the Arabs have failed to unify their movements so as to further the cause of Pan-Arab unity. The cases of Lebanon and Syria in 1942-46 offer an example of the limits of the capacities of Arab nationalism in the pre-independence period. As we have discussed in Chapter III, inter-Arab rivalries were a centrifugal force working against the unification of either the Fertile Crescent or Greater Syria, or even Minor Syria, not to mention the hindrances which they created for Arab co-operative efforts to help those countries to attain their independence. In the end it was British troops which forced French colonial power to recognise Syrian independence. As another example we can see how, after the formation of the Arab League, Arab states showed little enthusiasm for participation in actual fighting side by side with, say, the

Algerian rebels.   Their participation was expressed in

the form of diplomatic efforts in the United Nations and

moves to win over world wide public opinion, in arms

supplies and financial backing; the burden of fighting

was shouldered by the Algerians themselves.   Lack of

actual military involvement must be attributed mainly

to the weakness of Arab states vis-a-vis French military

and economic strength, but the geographical factor - the

remoteness of Algeria from the Arab Middle East - was

also a factor.   Arab unity against the colonialists was

also undermined by the fact that Egypt, the strongest of

the Arab states, was distracted by bitter quarrels with

other Arab states and successive conflicts with Britain

and her allies in the Arab world.   It was not surprising

that the Algerians considered themselves as Algerians

first, Muslims second and Arabs third.

If actual involvement in brothers' armed struggles

for their independence was impossible, forced integration

by military intervention in other Arab states also ended

in failure, e.g., the Egyptian intervention in Yemen.

The withdrawal of the Egyptian troops was a precondition

of her peaceful relations with Saudi Arabia, and the with-

drawal signified at least that the Egyptians were not strong

enough to play the role of Prussia in the creation of Arab

unity.   Inter-Arab regrouping had a share in weakening

the Egyptian efforts in this respect, and the Egyptian

withdrawal from Yemen also signified that the value which

the Arab League Charter had placed on the sovereign

independence of all existing Arab states had at last

prevailed in inter-Arab relations.

The second stage of Arab nationalism is as an ex-
pression of independence. The Arabs had not collectively
launched their struggle for independence to cover the
whole area whose people had a feeling of belonging to
one nation, because they came under different colonial
powers at different times. The achievement of indepen-
dence by separate states gave these states a feeling of
local nationalism, e.g., Egyptianism was different from
Tunisian political sentiment in 1954 when Tunisia was
still under French rule. After independence it was easy
for pre-independence enthusiasm for Arab unity to wither
and eventually become formalised in the already instit-
utionalised form provided by the Arab League, which the
newly independent states could now join.

In the third stage, when all the Arabs were ruled
by separate sovereign states, the task of unification
became even more difficult. The rich oil countries were
conservative traditionalist, and had rarely joined in
even the calls for Pan-Arabism, preferring in the case of
Saudi Arabia, the doctrine of Pan-Islamism. The poor
Arab states called for Pan-Arabism and adopted socialism
as the means of solving their economic problems. These
contradictions could result only in negative inter-Arab
relations. Furthermore, different political ideologies
led to different political, economic and security prefer-
ences, leading to divisive friendships with the Western
and Eastern worlds. Stable inter-Arab relations might
have been helped by stable international relations in the
world as a whole, but as things happened Arab ideological
differences were exacerbated by the East-West Cold War.

Leaving aside the external factors, the nature of inter-
Arab groupings and regroupings with all their volatility
had had corrosive effects on Arab alignments and had made
them too unstable to sustain long term unification.

A. Faris, a political scientist, had looked for a
single Arab state which could play the role of Prussia
in forging Arab unity.(1) This state would have to be
capable of tipping the balance in the struggle between
the centrifugal and centripetal forces of Arab unity
which had resulted in the perpetuation of the status quo.
He did not explain why he saw a "Prussian role" waiting
to be filled, but there is an obvious parallel between
Germany before 1870 and the existence of numerous Arab
states which had been fragmented during the course of
centuries into separate dynastic and regional states and
were striving for unity following their achievement of
independence - especially as their struggle had resulted
so far only in the formation of the Arab League which
reinforced their separateness. The role of Prussia may
be desirable as an alternative means to the end of Pan-
Arabism, if only because collective efforts, compromises
and collective bargaining among different Arab political
systems and ideologies had failed to attain this objec-
tive. But even the strongest member-states of the Arab
League lack the strength to bring about this unity in the
way the Prussians had created German unity. Only Egypt
has anything approaching the necessary capabilities and
her power has never been equal to the task.

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(1) N.A. Faris, op.cit., p.261. See also p.118

Egypt's national power is to some extent an attribute of her geographical location. Nasser had acknowledged his awareness of the importance of this element in his book, The Philosophy of Revolution, where he described Egypt as occupying the central position in three circles, those of the Arab, African and Islamic worlds, as well as being a meeting place, crossroads and military corridor of world importance. The second geographical factor of some importance is the Nile River, which provides Egypt with permanent irrigation and relatively favourable conditions for the agricultural production of export commodities (e.g. cotton) and wheat, rice and sugar for local consumption. The building of the Aswan High Dam has enabled Egypt to increase the area of arable land and her capacity for hydroelectric power, as well as creating a fishing industry on the artificial Lake of Nasser.

The Egyptian industry is considerably more advanced than that of other Arab states, both in traditional manufactures (cotton spinning and weaving, sugar and cement) and the new industries (fertilizers, rubber tyres, pulp and paper, iron and steel, and automobiles).(2) In addition, although Egypt has a tiny amount of oil compared with Saudi Arabia, it is enough to meet the demands of local consumption.

The Egyptian population is the largest among the Arab peoples, and concentrated within the Nile Valley. It is

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(2) Bent Hansen, Foreign Trade Regimes and Economic
Development: Egypt. Colombia University
Press, New York, London, 1975,
pp.137-139, 203-298

big enough to give the Egyptian government man-power to
be recruited into the military services, and cheap labour
to work in industries. Qualitatively, the Egyptians are
simple in their way of life, emotional and forgiving at
the same time (except in blood feuds) liberal, if compared
with Saudi Arabians, not sufficiently educated in religious
affairs but more advanced in mundane subjects and so able
to provide teachers, doctors and engineers to many Arab
countries as well as a civil service which is capable of
taking control of the Arab League. The Egyptian morale
is highly integrated and strongly supports government
programmes as well as strengthening the administrative
machinery. This has been tested three times, in the
defeats of 1956 and 1967 and after the death of Nasser in
1970, when the Egyptian people have shown a steady deter-
mination to support their government's inter-Arab policies.

Egyptian military might is the strongest among the
Arab armed forces in terms of the number of men, quantity
of weapons, training, leadership and morale. Egypt had
been tested militarily several times both by Israel and
in the conflict in Yemen: admittedly she has usually lost,
but never so badly that she did not retain her military
leadership. Perhaps Egypt's strongest asset has been her
ability to produce national leaders not only for the
Egyptian people but also for the Arab world. President
Nasser was one of the outstanding leaders in recent history
but it is probably unfair to attribute Egypt's national
power to merely one national leader in isolation from other
elements. One may ask, in order to illustrate the effects
of these elements, what could Nasser have done if he had

been born in Yemen?   The natural elements of national
power which are permanent, have more weight than any single
person.   Egypt had played the role of Arab leader before
Nasser, when Nahas Pasha took over the initiative of the
movement of Arab unity in 1943.(3)   Any new regime would
probably have been welcomed as an improvement on Farouk's
and Nasserism, as a creed, was rather shallow;   neverthe-
less, the secret of Nasser's charisma was probably that he
was able to express the aspirations of the Egyptian people
and was capable of making them enthusiastic about his
programme of Pan-Arab unity.

With these advantages, what had Egypt to fear from
other Arab countries, particularly Iraq and Saudi Arabia?
As we have seen in Chapter III, the first advocate of the
movement of Arab unity was Nuri al-Said of Iraq in the
early 1940's;   but his proposal came to a standstill and
was taken over by Nahas Pasha who succeeded in achieving
the formation of the Arab League.   This implies that
Iraq was not in a position to claim Arab leadership because
of her location at the far end of the Arab world, her
limited economic resources, her national morale as well
as her internal instability (the Iraqi population is
divided between Sunni and Shi'i doctrines and between Arab,
Turkoman and Kurdish peoples).   The same is true with
regard to Saudi Arabia.   Although she possesses the largest
resources of oil (which Nasser described as a nerve of
civilisation) oil was and is her only commodity and prob-
ably the only nerve on which her national power depends.

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(3) See Chapter III, pp.41-42

Further indication of Saudi Arabia's lack of the quality
of leadership is that although she was among the biggest
oil producers, the initiative was taken by the Iraqi
Government to establish OPEC, and the first unilateral
decision to increase oil prices was taken by Libya. The
recent use of oil as a political weapon was made possible
by collective efforts. These two countries, Iraq and
Saudi Arabia, are not capable of replacing Egypt's Lead-
ership of the Arab world; but they can stop Egypt from
exercising it effectively and this vulnerability to
blocking tactics is what has kept Egypt from playing
the role of Prussia.

Egypt's geographical location has brought disad-
vantages as well as advantages for Egyptian national
power, especially during the Cold War. Both the Eastern
and Western blocs were trying to exert their influence
on this corridor to Africa and Asia; if they could do
this in cooperation with Egypt, so much the better, if
not, they would make the attempt regardless. The
example of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal illus-
trated each bloc's attitude towards Egypt. The Eastern
bloc seized on Egypt's disputes with the West to demonstrate
its friendly intentions with arms supplies and later with
a military presence. This friendship was coupled with
qualified declarations of support for Nasser's Pan-Arab
movement. Western treatment of Egypt has been much
more forceful at times. These external actions have
focused attention on Egypt's position of leadership, but
they have weakened her to some extent and helped force
her into an unwanted degree of dependence on the Soviet

Union.

Many of Egypt's failures and misfortunes can be explained as mistakes. Looking at Nasser's policy of Pan-Arab unity, it was often provocative to the West, especially to the US with its acceptance of Eastern arms and the Soviet loan for the Aswan High Dam, to the British Government, with the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, and to France, with Nasser's help to the Algerian guerillas, as well as being provocative to Israel in the form of fedaiyeen raids. Not all these actions were strictly necessary. In inter-Arab relations, Nasser allowed himself to be provoked by the Baghdad Pact into an Egyptian-Iraqi war of propaganda which was the starting point of the Arab cold war. In other words, from 1954 to 1958, Nasser antagonised four strong states and one of his own cousin states, and caused three of them to join forces in an attempt to bring him down. This hardly compared with Bismarck's policy.(4) Later, in inter-Arab relations, Nasser at the peak of his power in 1958-1961, involved himself in bitter disputes with almost all the Arab states in the Middle East, in the Lebanese civil war, the attempted coup in Jordan, with Saudi Arabia and Iraq (both with Nuri al-Said and Qasim) with the Sudan and also with the Soviet Union concerning the Iraqi Communists. Again, only a supremely powerful state could have afforded to take this dangerous road to unity.

The quality of Nasser's diplomacy was low because of

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(4) Helmut Bohme, The Foundation of the German Empire,
Select Documents, translated by G. Ramm,
Oxford U.P., New York, London, 1971,
p.138

his excessive use of propaganda rather than alliance with his fellow Arab leaders. His approach to Arab unity was to antagonise in order to polarise, instead of consolidating his brotherly relations with Arab states to achieve the eventual objective of Arab unity. As a matter of fact, Nasser followed two parallel lines in his international and inter-Arab relations. In the former his diplomacy was to challenge the external powers in order to attain the independence of various parts of the Arab world and indeed he succeeded in this respect. In the latter, as the policy of challenge to expel the external powers succeeded, it began to have effects in inter-Arab relations, the very reverse of what Nasser intended. Nasser eventually realised that for Egypt, Pan-Arab unity was unrewarding and costly, and he started to return to his original policy of "Egypt for the Egyptians", keeping his inter-Arab relations within the formal framework of the Arab League's charter. This policy has been continued and strengthened by President Sadat. Thus Egypt's national power was unable to overcome the contradictions between the centrifugal and centripetal forces in Arab politics; it rather intensified the acuteness of the struggle, deepened inter-Arab rivalries and speeded up and destabilised the shifting nature of Arab relations of brotherhood, cousinhood and enmity.

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