The Foreign Policies
of Middle East States

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Introduction:
The Analytical Framework

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This book takes a modified form of realist theory as a working hypothesis.* It assumes that in the Middle East the state is the main actor in foreign policy and that state elites have an interest in maximizing the autonomy and security of the state. It accepts the realist claim that a built-in feature of a state system, anarchy, has generated profound insecurity and a pervasive struggle for power. Indeed, the Middle East is one of the regional subsystems where this anarchy appears most in evidence: it holds two of the world's most durable and intense conflict centers, the Arab-Israeli and the Gulf arenas; its states are still contesting borders and rank among themselves; and there is not a single one that does not feel threatened by one or more of its neighbors. Finally, the book accepts that states seek to counter these threats through "reason of state," notably power accumulation and balancing, and that the latter is a key to regional order.

Yet realism has several important liabilities in understanding the Middle East. First, neorealism holds that systemic insecurity induces uniform patterns of behavior, notably balancing against threats, but this is merely typical to the extent that a state system of relatively sovereign unified states is consolidated. In the Middle East, however, the state system is still in the *process* of consolidation, hence the dynamics of the "system level," per se, has less effect on state behavior than realism expects, while other levels, addressed by rival theories, have more.

Marxist-inspired "structuralists" argue that the world capitalist system is decisive, that it is a hierarchy, not realism's simple anarchy, and

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*See the glossary on p. 351 for explanations of international relations terms.

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that, in this hierarchy, the economic dependency of late-developing states sharply constrains their sovereignty. Constructivists insist that interstate relations are contingent on the way *identity* is constructed; in the Middle East, sub- and suprastate identities compete with state identity, inspire transstate movements, and constrain purely state-centric behavior. For pluralists, Middle East states are not unitary and impermeable, as realism assumes, but fragmented and penetrated and hence less capable of pursuing realist "reason of state."

As such, it is useful to assume that the foreign policies of Middle East states are shaped by the way their leaders negotiate the often conflicting pressures emanating from three conceptually distinct environments: (1) the domestic level; (2) the regional systemic level; and (3) the global (or international) level. Arguably, however, to the extent state formation advances, state decisionmakers acquire greater autonomy of both global and domestic constraints while each state also comes to potentially constitute a greater threat to the other. To the extent this happens, foreign policymaking can increasingly approximate the reason of state whereby rational actors seek regime survival in a dangerous regional environment. Each state actor examined in the book has negotiated a somewhat different course within its three environments.

This chapter looks, first, at the contrary pressures on policymakers emanating from the global capitalist "core" and from conflicting domestic identities, and also examines to what extent state building enables them to master these pressures. Second, it examines the foreign policymaking process; and third, it looks at how the incremental consolidation of the state system increasingly shapes the behavior of its parts along the lines of realist reason of state.

Foreign Policy Determinants

The Global Level: Core-Periphery Relations

The Middle East, once an independent civilization, has been turned into a periphery of the Western-dominated world system. According to L. Carl Brown, the Middle East is a *penetrated system,* one subject to an exceptional level of external intervention and control yet, by virtue of its cultural distinctiveness, stubbornly resistant to subordination.[1] Western penetration has endured in the postcolonial era, motivated by contiguous location and the exceptional concentration of great power interests—oil, transit routes, Israel. To many Arabs and Muslims, imperialism, far from

dead, persists in new forms. As Buzan points out, the Islamic world is the only classical civilization that has not managed to reestablish itself as a significant world actor since the retreat of Western empires.[2] This defines the parameters within which Middle East states must operate and is a major issue in the politics of the region.

Structuralism, the international-relations theory most concerned with explaining global core-periphery relations, has been widely used by scholars of the Middle East to understand this reality.[3] According to Galtung's influential "Structural Theory of Imperialism," periphery states, including those of the Middle East, are subordinated within a global hierarchy, dependent on and tied to the core powers while being only very weakly related to each other.[4] Indeed, many scholars argue that the transformation of the Middle East under imperialism produced an outcome that resembles Galtung's model.

First, where once there was a universal trading empire, imperialism fragmented the region into a multitude of relatively weak and, to an extent, artificial states. As Brown shows, these states, at odds with each other and insecure, sought external patrons and resources for the regional power struggle set in motion by this fragmentation. Especially where the new states emerged as Western protectorates against indigenous opposition, they have remained dependent for their security on the Western global powers long after formal independence. Unlike India and China, the postcolonial state system nullifies rather than restores the precolonial universal state.

Second, the parallel incorporation of the regional economy into the world capitalist system shattered regional economic interdependence and restructured the region into a classic dependent economy marked by the production and export of primary products (e.g., cotton and oil) and dependence on imports of manufactures and technology. Oil may be thought to be fundamentally different from other primary products, given the high level of revenues it generates and the dependence of core economies on it, but in fact the recycling of petrodollars has perpetuated overall regional dependency on the import of capital (foreign aid, loans, and investment), and hence high levels of debt, in a way not significantly different from the export of other primary products.[5]

Economic dependency means a major function of foreign policy must be to secure and maximize resource flows from external sources. Because states' revenue bases are exceptionally dependent on external resources—whether foreign aid, taxes on foreign trade, or oil revenues—and not on domestically raised taxes, they may be more responsive to the demands of global powers than to domestic opinion in designing

their policies.[6] Indeed, some Middle Eastern states explicitly design their foreign policies to serve economic ends, from trading policies favorable to great power patrons in return for aid to merely subordinating nationalism in policymaking to ensuring a favorable investment climate.

Third, according to Galtung, the "bridgehead" that the "core" establishes in "the centre of the periphery nation for the joint benefit of both" is equally important to sustaining the region's subordination to the "core."[7] Specifically, imperialism, in implanting "client elites" and fostering "compradors"—traders and exporters—has created shared economic interests between the core and dominant local classes while retarding national bourgeoisies with an interest in autonomous national and regional development. Arguably, the current dominant form of this relation is manifested in the way the overwhelming investment of surplus petrodollars by Arab oil monarchies in the West gives their ruling families a much greater stake in the core economies than in that of the region. According to Bruce Moon, such relations tend to generate a "constrained consensus" that results in significant congruence between the foreign policies of regional states and those of the core. This is a function of the overlap of local elites' economic interests, world views (through Western education), and threat perceptions (fear of radical movements) with those of core elites.[8]

Fourth, while such manipulation of interests is far more important than crude power in sustaining regional subordination, where there is insufficient overlap of interests, the core powers use economic punishments—withdrawal of aid, economic sanctions, and the like—against economically vulnerable regional states (e.g., U.S. attempts to isolate Iran).[9] As a last resort, military force is periodically used by Western powers to prevent, in Brown's words, any regional power trying to "organize the system" against them—as Saddam Hussein found out. Such intervention by the hegemonic powers is consistent with Wallerstein's argument that the maintenance and expansion of the world capitalist system depends on a *hegemon,* a dominant state that defends the system, breaks down barriers to core-periphery economic links (e.g., promoting economic liberalization), and assures reliable access to raw materials, especially the cheap energy concentrated in the Middle East.[10] The core-periphery struggle over oil has been a dominant theme in the region's politics from the overthrow of Iran's Mossadeq to the formation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to the second Gulf war.

The structuralist view of world capitalist dominance over the region is contested by more realist-centered views and, even in the structuralist view, core-periphery relations are not static. Global penetration does

not mean the region lacks all autonomy in the conduct of foreign policy. First, as Oran Young argues, there is always a certain discontinuity between the possession of global power and its exercise in regional arenas: to the extent great powers are unable or uninterested in fully controlling a regional subsystem, the potential for regional autonomy increases.[11]

This has been facilitated when, as during the Cold War, global bipolarity "split the core," so to speak. The superpower rivalry that made local clients valuable actually gave regional states leverage over their patrons, even allowing the "tail to wag the dog" over regional issues where the client's vital interests were more at stake than those of the global patron. It also allowed them to extract enhanced military capabilities that would, ironically, make external intervention more costly. Bipolarity arguably gave local states a crucial three-decade window of opportunity to consolidate their autonomy.[12]

Additionally, as Thompson has observed, the lack of horizontal ties among periphery states in Galtung's model applies in the Middle East chiefly at the economic level and has not prevented the survival in the region of dense transstate cultural and political ties; these provide potential vehicles for the mobilization of region-wide anti-imperialism by nationalist regimes seeking a collective challenge to the dependency system.[13] Thus, in the 1950s superpower competition, in limiting the ability of the Western great powers to use military force in the region, cleared space for Nasser's attempt to use Pan-Arab ideology to organize the Arab states, albeit briefly, against Western intrusion.

Also, at the economic level, local states made efforts to reduce the asymmetry of their relation to the core. For radical states, a statist industrialization strategy, made possible by alternative Soviet markets and technology, aimed to sufficiently dilute or diversify dependency and enhance power capabilities to support nationalist foreign policies challenging Western penetration. Where oil resources, harnessed to such strategies, provided a relatively secure economic base, some regimes—such as Libya, Iraq, and Iran—were better positioned to absorb the economic costs of challenging external power. The limits of such strategies were, however, underlined by the fate of poorer states such as Egypt, where statist failure ended in a post-Nasser dependency on donors who expected and got an end to Egypt's radical nationalism.

Other states, such as the oil monarchies, were less interested in challenging the system than enhancing their autonomy within it. OPEC, in which oil producers banded together "horizontally," altered the "feudal" structure of relations and arguably allowed Saudi Arabia, with its pivotal role in stabilizing oil prices, to transform dependency into asymmetrical

interdependence. Even states that began as overt client regimes have sought to defend their autonomy. If dependency holds anywhere, it should do in such extreme cases as Jordan, literally dependent on its annual budget subsidy to sustain the state; but even Jordan briefly defied its patrons in the Gulf war.[14] Israel, with its unique capacity to penetrate the policy process of the U.S. world hegemon, is little constrained by its high dependence on Washington.

However, the post–Cold War transformation in the world system, specifically Soviet collapse and unchecked U.S. hegemony, has once again narrowed the autonomy of many regional states. How far the United States is able to impose its will is debatable, but it is able, as never before, to directly intervene against challenges to its interests, as the ongoing post–Gulf war campaign against Iraq shows. The Libyan case indicates how international sanctions have tempered the radicalism of states that once challenged Western hegemony.[15] In addition, the globalization of capitalism is drawing regional states into ever denser webs of economic dependency—or interdependency. While globalization continues to meet more resistance in the Middle East than elsewhere, notably in the region's evasion of full economic liberalization, increasing numbers of states, such as Tunisia and Egypt, see it as an opportunity for increased investment and markets. They have seemingly made the decision to be players rather than victims, even if this means the sacrifice of some autonomy. But to the extent external penetration of the region tends to generate popular local resistance—recently in the form of political Islam—elites may have to temper such ambitions.[16]

In summation, the impact of the region's position in the world system on the foreign policies of local states is by no means straightforward. (1) Where the interests of local regimes overlap with those of core patrons, reason of state and alliance with a great power coincide and states tend to "bandwagon" with their global patron to contain local threats. (2) On the other hand, penetration generates resistance and where nationalist movements come to power, nationalist regimes have sought to organize a regional coalition to balance against external powers. (3) However, this is only possible under favorable conditions: when the great powers are divided (as in the Cold War)—and hegemonic intervention is thus deterred—and when the region is relatively united (the Nasserite 1950s and 1960s) against the outside, the conditions for regional autonomy may be better than in the reverse case (before 1945; since 1990). Chapters 3 and 4 explore these issues in greater depth.

Between Identity and Sovereignty

The unique features of the Middle East state system, specifically the uneasy relation of identity and state sovereignty, immensely complicate foreign policymaking in the Middle East. The realist model, in which elites represent loyal populations insulated from external influence in the conduct of foreign policy, must be substantially modified in analysis of the region. Many Middle Eastern states lack the full features—impermeability, secure national identity—that realism assumes. The Arab world, in particular, is less well represented by realism's impenetrable "billiard balls" than (in Paul Noble's words) a set of interconnected organisms separated only by porous membranes.[17]

Indeed, the consolidation of a system of nation-states in the region is obstructed by the profound flaws originating in its largely external imposition: the resulting often arbitrary borders and ill fit between states and national identities mean that loyalty to the individual states is contested by substate and suprastate identities. The resultant embedding of the state system in a matrix of fluid multiple identities means that the "national interest" that realism assumes underlies foreign policy is problematic and contested.

Irredentism. One major manifestation of the poor fit of state and nation is the rampant, built-in irredentism—dissatisfaction with the incongruity between territorial borders and "imagined communities." Irredentism is rooted in the way substate (ethnic or religious) communities, in frequently spilling across state borders (becoming transstate), stimulate territorial conflicts. In consequence, states contest each other's borders or "interfere" in each other's "domestic" affairs by supporting dissident transstate communities, a practice that can escalate into actual military confrontation between states.[18] Thus, the Kurdish protonation spreads across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, making these states vulnerable to succession movements but also allowing them to manipulate Kurdish dissidents against each other. This transstate conflict was an element in the ongoing Iran-Iraq conflict and the 1998 Turkish-Syrian confrontation. Somewhat similarly, the displacement of the Palestinians by the creation of Israel, and Israel's dissatisfaction with its initial (pre-1967) borders, transmuted a communal struggle over Palestine into an Arab-Israeli interstate conflict. Shi'a Iran's effort to export Islamic revolution found a particular response in Shi'a communities throughout the region and helped touch off the Iran-Iraq war, the world's longest-lasting twentieth-century war. In Lebanon, the

power of substate (sectarian) identities and the ties of rival sects with kindred communities in other states produced civil war and state collapse that allowed rival states to make Lebanon a battlefield and unleashed one major war (1982) between Syria and Israel and chronic conflict on Lebanon's southern border with Israel.

Suprastate identity. While irredentism is a feature of much of the Third World, what makes the Middle East region, or more specifically its Arab core, unique is its history of exceptional suprastate identities. Because the state system was imposed on a preexisting cultural and linguistic unity that more or less persists, the mass loyalty to the state typical where it corresponds to a definite nation is, in the Arab world, diluted and limited by strong popular identifications with larger communities— the Arab nation, the Islamic *umma*.[19] The result, according to Kienle, is a system of territorial states, not—so far at least—nation-states.[20] This is most striking in the most artificial states (Syria, Jordan), but even in those such as Egypt, which have their own viable separate identities, suprastate identities sufficiently persist to prevent the consolidation of distinct nation-states. Such variations in identity are examined in greater depth in Chapter 2.

The result, according to Bahgat Korany, is a *duality* where ruling elites are caught between *raison de la nation* (Pan-Arabism) and *raison d'etat* (sovereignty) in foreign policymaking. On the one hand, as Kienle observed, state elites have treated the Arab world as a single arena of political competition and mass publics have believed that shared Arab interests—the Palestine cause, autonomy from the West— should limit the sovereign right to put particular state interests first; on the other hand, leaders have tenaciously defended state sovereignty against suprastate constraints.[21] However, as Michael Barnett's constructivist study argues, identity is "constructed," not given or constant, and the interaction of Arab leaders has determined the evolution of identity over time between Korany's Pan-Arab and sovereignty poles.[22]

Arab leaders' behavior helped to establish Pan-Arabism. They sought all-Arab leadership by competing to win over public opinion through the "outbidding" of rivals in promotion of Arab causes. The conduct of the game involved "symbolic politics," not military force, that is, pressuring or threatening rival state elites by making Pan-Arab ideological appeals to their populations. This would, in a consolidated nation-state system, have been seen as interference in domestic affairs and have had little chance of success; it was natural and successful in the Arab world precisely because of the power of suprastate identity.

Even if states, like Nasser's Egypt, tried to manipulate Pan-Arabism to serve state interests, Pan-Arab movements, autonomous, multiple, and crossing state boundaries, were no mere instruments of regimes; indeed, such movements used Nasser to bolster their local standing as much as he used them and they constantly pressured him into increasing Egypt's commitment to the cause against his own better judgment. The "outbidding" of rival leaders established Pan-Arab norms of behavior: states sought Pan-Arab leadership by raising the standards, states seeking to maintain such leadership had to be seen to live up to Pan-Arabism and states perceived to violate its norms became more vulnerable to subversion. Even Nasser felt constrained to satisfy the expectations of his Pan-Arab constituency, which "entrapped" him and his rivals in a dynamic of nationalist outbidding against Israel and led to the 1967 war, at great cost to state interests.

The interactions of leaders also "deconstructed" Pan-Arabism, so to speak: interstate disagreements over its meaning and the failures of Arab unity projects and of Arab collective institutions disillusioned and demobilized Arab publics, reducing Pan-Arab constraints on state leaders. Ironically, the use of Arabism by ambitious leaders to subvert rivals only heightened the sense of threat from kindred Arab states, reinforced the differentiation between the individual states, and led state elites to promote distinctive state identities and the norm of state sovereignty to legitimize their self-defense. The outcome was, according to Barnett, "normative fragmentation." Identities remain contested, but have become too complex and multiple to sharply or uniformly constrain state elites in their conduct of foreign policy.[23]

This account of the decline of Pan-Arabism must be qualified in two respects. First, constructivism's neglect of power leads it to ignore the extent to which the decline of Pan-Arabism was ultimately rooted in the power struggles unleashed by three major wars—the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the two Gulf wars. In these wars, it was military power (not public opinion) that counted while the intensified threat to regimes' survival led them to put realist self-help over identity. Anwar Sadat's separate peace with Israel, the classic case where Arab collective interests were sacrificed to reason of state, was legitimized by appeal to the doctrine of sovereignty and precipitated a similar recourse to self-help by the other Arab states that it left more vulnerable to Israeli power.

Second, however, Pan-Arabism continues to have a residual affect on foreign policymaking. Because state identities are still no good substitute for Arab identity in most, if not all, the Arab states, the legitimacy of regimes continues to be contingent on being seen to act for Arab or

Islamic interests, and political Islam, in some respects, has become a surrogate for Pan-Arabism. Foreign policymakers must therefore still disguise, justify, or even modify the pure pursuit of reason of state. As Sela showed, moreover, "dualism" also led to the emergence of the Arab summit system, which institutionalized a version of Arab solidarity more compatible with state sovereignty.[24]

In summary, the Arab world retains some features of an "international society," a community bound by rules and norms; but it is sliding toward merger with the wider Middle East, a mere "system of states" mostly linked by power and interest.[25]

State Formation and Foreign Policymaking

The capacity of Middle Eastern states to cope with the pressures from their multilevel environment depends on a degree of internal cohesion. This is a function of their level of state formation. If they are to conduct foreign policies that rationally cope with external exigencies, state elites must command the legitimacy and institutions to establish a certain autonomy of domestic demands while sustaining some minimum level of public support. While realism tends to take such capacity for granted, in the Middle East state formation remains problematic and a matter of considerable controversy.

According to advocates of what might be called the "domestic vulnerability model" of foreign policymaking, the main threat to unstable Third World regimes is *domestic,* and foreign policy is a key instrument of survival at home, whether used to build domestic legitimacy through nationalism or to secure external support against domestic opposition.[26] This model is relevant insofar as Middle Eastern states, lacking secure national identity and democratic accountability, suffer legitimacy deficits; but it ignores the crucial importance of external threats in foreign policymaking.

The most popular alternative, what might be called the "leadership-dominant model," assumes that leaders, facing few institutional constraints at home, are able to translate their idiosyncratic personal values, styles—and pathologies—into foreign policy.[27] However, this imagines a domestic vacuum that is questionable even in authoritarian regimes, where leaders may face informal domestic constraints, such as the need to protect regime legitimacy. Legitimacy in states where imperialism remains a perceived threat and where little welfare and few political rights are typically delivered tends to be exceptionally dependent on foreign-policy performance.

In the first model, leaders are "too weak," in the second "too strong," but both assume an absence of the institutions (enabling leaders to mediate between domestic demands and external constraints) that are arguably needed for the effective conduct of foreign policy. This, can, however, be misleading if taken too far. As compared to the decade after independence, there is evidence of an increasing durability and stability of Middle Eastern states.[28] Several decades of state formation in the region have arguably resulted in sufficient institution building that foreign policies are less directly shaped by the unconstrained biases of the top leader and less buffeted by internal vulnerabilities than heretofore and are, therefore, more a response to the external challenges assumed by realist thinking.

How far this is so is an empirical question and, in reality, levels of Middle East state formation are very uneven. As such, the domestic politics and leadership-dominant models can be retained as ideal types reflective of more under- and "overdeveloped" regime types at opposite ends of a continuum; while states with more balanced institutional profiles can be located on either side of its midpoint. Individual states are, moreover, likely to *move over time* through several different phases in state formation that are arguably associated with differences in foreign policy. The broad lines of these phases (most relevant for the Arab world) are suggested below.

1. The postindependence period (roughly 1945–1960) in the Arab core and Iran was an era of weak states governed by externally imposed or narrowly based elites chiefly driven by fear of domestic instability from publics inflamed by nationalism. In foreign policy, they opted either to rely on external protection against such threats—embedding themselves deeper into the dependency web—or sought legitimacy by anti-imperialist/anti-Zionist rhetoric. Each strategy had costs: the first risked domestic subversion, the second, foreign defeat or economic loss, in either case resulting in more unstable and vulnerable regimes. By contrast, in Turkey and Israel, where states were more consolidated and institutionalization combined with democratization gave leaders substantial legitimacy and hence autonomy in foreign policymaking, classic reason of state prevailed.

2. By the 1960s (after 1956 in Egypt), state building was under way in the Arab world and Iran, a function of the need to master domestic instability and transstate penetration and/or to dilute international dependency. The different origins and initial social bases of regimes, however, dictated quite different state-building strategies that biased foreign policy in conflicting radical and conservative directions.[29]

In the Arab oil monarchies, state formation took place under West-
ern patronage in small, geopolitically weak and nationally unmobilized
societies, although the small middle class was vulnerable to transstate
Arab nationalist appeals. Domestic vulnerability was contained by tra-
ditional (patriarchal and Islamic) legitimacy and the growing distribu-
tion of oil-financed benefits to co-opt the middle class and keep the
masses demobilized. Protection from regional threats was provided by
the Western great powers. In Iran's larger more mobilized society, the
shah had to construct a more elaborate technology of control.

In the opposite strategy, that of the authoritarian-nationalist re-
publics, regimes originating in middle-class overthrow of Western client
elites sought to consolidate their power through the mobilization of
countervailing popular support and dilution of dependency on the West.
Wealth redistribution (e.g., land reform, nationalizations) and public-
sector-led development bolstered autonomy of the dominant classes and
enabled regimes to access aid, markets, and protection from the East-
ern bloc. While these regimes attempted to incorporate the middle and
lower classes through party building, because the military remained a
vehicle of factional politics and because they lacked a secure social
base in a dominant class, they remained unstable. Hence, legitimacy
was sought through radical nationalist foreign policies.

3. A third stage was apparent by the mid-1970s, namely the in-
creased consolidation of both kinds of states.[30] The main incentive was
now the high threat of war while booming oil revenues and continued
superpower patronage provided the means. Successful state building
shared certain commonalties across the region.

State bureaucratic structures, modern means of coercion and com-
munications, and the use of political technologies—such as party build-
ing or corporatist associations—dramatically expanded and increasingly
penetrated society. States tried to indigenize these imported structures
by grafting elements of the multiple levels of local identity to them. On
the one hand, substate sectarian, tribal, and family *assabiya* (solidarity)
was used to construct webs of trusted followers at the state center, com-
manding the instruments of power, a process of patrimonialization that
blurred the distinction between monarchies and republics. On the other
hand, political elites tried to legitimize their states in terms of suprastate
Arabism and Islam—which, ironically, actually strengthened the capac-
ity of individual states to pursue reason of state: thus, Saudi Islam as
well as Syrian and Iraqi Arab nationalism legitimized contrary and often
conflicting foreign policies largely expressive of state interests.

More questionable is how far such efforts actually substituted for classic nation-statehood in the Arab world. Political identity is, of course, constructed and need not necessarily be rooted in Arab ethnonationalism. In the Arab world the *territorial* state, based on habitation of a common territory—especially where boundaries correspond to some historical memory—and equal citizenship rights under a common government could become an alternative basis of identity. To a considerable extent this has happened; but loyalties to individual states will only be consolidated when democratization gives citizens the rights they need to feel the state is "theirs." It is instructive that in Turkey and Israel, the initial much greater coincidence of boundaries and a distinct national identity, plus more substantial democratization, allowed an earlier and smoother consolidation of the state.

Attachment to the state of strategic class interests needed to anchor it against the winds of transstate popular sentiment may substitute for popular identifications. Such classes include bureaucratic strata (whose share in state patronage give them an interest in reason of state) and commercial bourgeoisies (who profit as middlemen between the state and the global economy). Both monarchies and republics gave birth to new state-dependent bourgeoisies, closely linked to officialdom, that had a stake in the status quo.

Stability also requires incorporation of a sufficient segment of the middle and lower strata and, absent democracy, this depends on successful socioeconomic policies. In the authoritarian republics the coincidence in the 1960s and 1970s of economic growth and redistributive policies—land reform, state employment—gave parts of the lower strata some stake in the state. But the failure of the radical states to effectively create a Pan-Arab order eroded their nationalist legitimacy and turned elements of the masses to Islamic-inspired opposition.

In the oil monarchies, command of oil revenues during periods of oil boom enabled the state to incorporate the minority of the population who held citizenship as a privileged constituency with a stake in the status quo—as against the possible demands of migrant labor for similar rights. The oil resources accruing to these states provided them the resources—without resort to taxation and accountability—to establish substantial autonomy from society. They also used the transfer of aid to conservatize the radical states.

In this phase, autonomous elites, balancing social forces and presiding over more stable states less vulnerable to ideology and enjoying greater resources, generally attained greater freedom from domestic pressures and

global constraints, increasingly allowing the conduct of foreign policies according to geopolitical reason of state. This tendency drove a considerable convergence in the foreign policies of monarchies and republics.

4. A fourth stage, already apparent in the 1980s, emerged fully in the 1990s with the end to bipolarity. The exposure of grave vulnerabilities in the newly consolidated states—economic crisis and loss of Soviet patronage in the republics and military shock (the Iranian threat, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait) in the monarchies—exposed the limits of regional autonomy and induced movement toward the reintegration of regional states into the global capitalist system.

The "overdevelopment" of the state encouraged by the oil boom and the exploitation of economies for military ends translated into growing economic constraints once the oil boom ended. The most visible policy response, especially in the republics, was *infitah*—economic liberalization. There was a consequent change in the social base of the state, manifested in moves toward power sharing with the bourgeoisie and demobilization or exclusion of popular strata. This was accompanied by a moderation or abandonment of nationalist policies and realignment toward the West. Even as some of these states had previously harnessed their economies to foreign policy, so economic troubles now drove many to harness foreign policy to the economy, that is, to the acquisition of economic aid and investment from the West. In the oil monarchies, the main change was growing Western dependence: a much more overt reliance on Western military protection and a new indebtedness to the West incurred to maintain the distribution state and to make massive weapons purchases in a time of falling oil prices.

To the extent the post–Gulf war intrusion of the U.S. hegemon into the region constrains the regional power struggle, the main threat to elites may again come to be domestic instability. The *infitah* era's replacement of distributive welfarism with trickle-down capitalism has tended to simultaneously give successful capitalists a stake in the state and the economic opening while leaving a more or less large segment of the public excluded from state patronage. While economic troubles make the public more tolerant of whatever policies promise relief, when this coincides with increased subordination to Western patrons, the losers may be mobilized by opposition groups deploying the symbols of sub- or suprastate identity: thus, the marginalized victims of economic liberalization appear to be among the main constituents of Islamic opposition movements. But such movements, so far unable to make Islamic revolution against today's stronger states, may be forced to settle for incremental Islamization of the state.

Foreign Policymaking

A state's particular responses to the three arenas—global, regional, and domestic—that it must negotiate are most immediately a product of leadership and the political process in which policies are drafted and decisions made and implemented.

Policymaking Context

Omni-balancing. Foreign policy in Middle East states, ultimately rooted in state elites' desire to defend their regimes, aims not just at deterrence of external threats, but also at legitimating the regime at home against domestic opposition and mobilizing economic resources abroad. In attempting to balance these needs, elites face potential contradictions: for example, responsiveness to domestic demands mobilized by suprastate ideologies for autonomy from the West clashes with states' dependency on the core powers. Both pressures—from below and from the outside—potentially constrain state sovereignty.

Steven David argues that decisionmakers "omni-balance" between external and internal pressures and the main location of threats (as well as opportunities and resources) shapes the decision context.[31] Thus, when the primary threat is *internal,* a regime may align with an external power to get resources to contain it. But it could also seek to appease domestic opinion and enhance legitimacy by indulging in anti-imperialist rhetoric or irredentist campaigns. Where the primary threat is *external,* a regime may mobilize new domestic actors into politics to expand its internal power base and seek alliances with similarly threatened states. When economic troubles are acute, elites may seek to *contain* domestic nationalism in order to pursue the accommodation with the core powers needed to access economic resources; when the economy is secure, they are more likely to risk *mobilizing* this nationalism to challenge or adjust the impact of external forces on the state. The particular location of threats and opportunities that leaders face obviously varies over time and from state to state and cannot be settled a priori. But few can escape a complex balancing act if they are to survive.

Foreign-policy role. A state's foreign-policy role (or ideology) can be thought of as a durable formula or tradition that incorporates experience by state elites in balancing and reconciling such elements as economic needs, geopolitical imperatives, domestic opinion, and state capabilities. Role implies an identity and defines orientations toward neighbors

(friend or enemy), great powers (threat or patron), and the state system (revisionist or status quo).[32]

Geopolitical position seems to have an especially enduring impact on the historical ambitions institutionalized in a foreign-policy role conception. Thus, Egypt's centrality and weight in the system has led its decisionmakers to seek influence in the Arab East, North Africa, and the Nile Valley. On the other hand, the frustration of identity may also produce enduring reactions: artificial or truncated states such as Syria and Iraq have sought protection and fulfillment in a wider Arab role. Israel's conception of itself as a besieged refuge for world Jewry afflicts it with both insecurity and an irredentist need for territorial expansion.

Although manipulated by elites, once a role is constructed and propagated, it sets standards of legitimacy and performance that, to a degree, constrain elites; it also shapes the socialization of the next generation of policymakers. It may therefore impart a certain consistency to foreign policy despite changes in leadership and environment.

Policy Structure and Process

Since roles seldom provide ready-made solutions to particular challenges and because often-incompatible demands require trade-offs, there are many possible rational decisions in any situation. The actual choices of policymaking elites will, therefore, be shaped by their values and interests and, where elites conflict, the power distribution among them that is defined by the state's governing institutions.

The pluralist tradition, which tries to open the black box of decisionmaking, has produced a wealth of literature on how the policy process can produce varied—and often suboptimal—responses to systemic pressures. The "bureaucratic politics" model's stress on conflict between interests over foreign policy and studies of leadership misperception both have their analogues in the literature on Middle East foreign policymaking.[33]

In the personalized authoritarian regimes typical of the Middle East, the choices and style of the leader are decisive, particularly in a crisis or a critical bargaining situation.[34] Whether this is a liability depends in part on the experience and character of the leader. Thus, while Syria and Iraq are ruled by branches of the same party and have similar leader-army-party regimes, big differences between the styles of Asad (the cautious and calculating general) and Saddam (risk-taking ex-street-fighter) seemed to explain key differences in their foreign policies.

Bureaucratic politics plays a greater role in shaping "normal" politics. A limited number of elite actors are involved in this game, such as presidential advisers, senior military and intelligence officers, key cabinet members, and foreign-ministry officials. Each of these may propose different policies, shaped by their special roles and material interests, and they may even constitute veto groups. In the authoritarian republics, the dominance of the president sharply constrains such dynamics, as compared to monarchies such as Saudi Arabia, where the senior princes of the royal family expect to be consulted by the king, and pluralistic states, such as Israel, where the prime minister must keep senior cabinet colleagues satisfied.

The conduct of bureaucratic politics and the range of actors included in it are likely to have bearing on the direction and rationality of decisions and the effectiveness of their implementation. Overconcentration and personalization of power may restrict the information and policy options considered, to the detriment of rational choice; yet where foreign policy becomes a weapon in factional struggles, it may be equally crippled. The salient role of the military and intelligence agencies, even in pluralistic Turkey and Israel, and the relative weakness and limited professionalism of most foreign ministries may bias policy toward coercive options and prioritize "national security" issues over others.

Input into foreign policymaking from outside the governing establishment is typically very limited in the Middle East. Business has only limited access to decisionmakers. Yet economic imperatives require state elites to remain cognizant of business needs: where a "national bourgeoisie" is ascendant, its demands for protection from foreign competition may reinforce a nationalist foreign policy, while satisfying *infitah* bourgeoisies, by contrast, is likely to require a pro-Western policy designed to entice foreign investment.

Broader public opinion is likely to play a greater role in regimes having electoral accountability mechanisms, such as Turkey and Israel. In personalized authoritarian regimes, it may have an indirect impact on foreign policy if leaders must defend legitimacy under attack by rivals or if the mass public is aroused by crisis.[35] In normal times when the public is divided, for example, by class or ethnicity, elites enjoy more autonomy to act as they please.

The effectiveness of policy implementation depends on the instruments of influence available to state elites, notably economic rewards and punishments, propaganda machinery, and military capabilities. Outcomes cannot, however, be adequately explained merely by the balance

of such tangible resources among states. The diplomatic skills and bargaining strategies of leaders, including intangibles such as "credibility" and "will," also count. As Telhami observes, even when there is no formal bargaining, much of the relations of states—even war—is tacit bargaining, and the leader's performance can make a decisive difference. Thus, Telhami argues that Sadat's failure to play his hand effectively in the Camp David negotiations produced a suboptimal outcome.[36]

Foreign-Policy Behavior and the Evolution of the Regional State System

According to neorealism, the state *system*—particularly the distribution of power—is the main determinant of the behavior of its constituent states. Yet, there is never only one possible response to the systemic environment, and the orientations of Middle Eastern states toward it have varied radically. In particular, while some states challenge the status quo, others support it; indeed, the *same* states may change from supporters to challengers of the status quo, as Iran and Iraq did after their respective revolutions. Pluralism and structuralism see domestic and transstate forces as the keys to such variations in state motivation and behavior. In fact, foreign-policy behavior can only be adequately explained as the product of an interaction between the state's domestic needs and the state system in which it operates. The character of this interaction in the Middle East has altered over time.

Revisionism Versus Status Quo: The Differential Domestic Roots of Foreign Policy

The main initial foreign-policy difference among Middle East states, that between status quo and revisionist orientations, was, in the first instance, a product of subsystemic domestic forces. Revisionism is endemic in Middle East societies, rooted in irredentist conflicts over identity and borders or in reactions against Western penetration and expressed by suprastate ideologies—Arabism, Zionism, Islam, and so on. Such forces have been particularly potent in weak, unconsolidated, or divided states that may be forced to seek legitimacy by championing revisionist causes. Periodically, revisionist movements come to power and harness the capacity of states to their ambitions. Thus, Nasser's Egypt, militant Israel, Ba'thist Iraq and Syria, and Khomeini's Iran have all challenged aspects of the status quo.[37] Such revisionist regimes threaten

those wedded to the status quo, typically ruled by landed, tribal, or commercial elites who consolidated their power with Western aid or have a stake in Western markets and who therefore look westward for protection from revisionist neighbors.[38]

Systemic Dynamics and Foreign Policy

Even if domestic forces determine what a state *wishes* to do, it is, according to realism, the system level, starting with a state's position in the distribution of power, that determines what it *can* do. Moreover, state systems have a built-in equilibrium mechanism that tends to preserve them against revisionist challenges. As Rustow argues, "while many Middle Eastern countries individually nurse expansionist or hegemonic ambitions, all of them collectively, by their preference for the weaker side and their readiness to shift alignments regardless of ideology, offer strong support for the status quo . . . ; as such, the system enjoys 'self balancing features.'"[39]

This mechanism depends on state actors adhering to the reason of state deemed rational in the realist tradition: by adopting "realistic" goals (subordinating ideology to the realities of the power balance) and by increasing capabilities or striking alliances against threatening states. Realism also argues that, in fact, the state system itself tends to recast its constituent parts into such "realist" agents of system equilibrium, in part because successful regimes, which play by these rules, are imitated, and in part because those that violate them tend to suffer disaster and are replaced.[40] There is evidence that the logic of the state system has increasingly so impressed itself on the behavior of its parts in the Middle East. The evolution of the regional system is detailed in Chapter 2, but the pattern can be briefly anticipated here.

Balancing. In the early weak oligarchic states, foreign policies were often driven by domestic-rooted revisionism, which largely took the form of rhetoric because states had little power to threaten each other or Western penetration constrained them. However, owing to the unevenness of state formation, some states were consolidated earlier and could, therefore, threaten or constrain other states. In the Arab world, the early consolidation of Nasser's Egypt allowed it to export its Pan-Arab revolution against weaker regimes. Walt, in his classic realist study *The Origin of Alliances,* shows, however, that even at the height of Pan-Arabism, which enjoined inter-Arab cooperation, Arab states widely balanced against each other and specifically against the Egyptian threat.

Not only did the conservative monarchies do so, but even Pan-Arab regimes in Syria and Iraq balanced against their ideologically natural Egyptian leader because the threat from Nasser overrode all ideological considerations.[41] This balancing preserved the state system against the Pan-Arab challenge. What Walt ignores is that just as Nasser's threat was mainly to domestic legitimacy (i.e., was political, not military), so balancing largely took the form of domestic state building to make regimes less permeable to ideological subversion. Pan-Arab transstate movements, having failed to overthrow the state system, gradually declined: states had outlived their main nonstate challengers.

The socialization of revisionist states. The state system was also entrenched by changes in its constituent parts, particularly the decline of revisionism. The pursuit of domestically driven revisionist policies to the neglect of the power balance, notably the Pan-Arab outbidding on the eve of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war or Islamic Iran's attempt to export revolution, typically led to military disasters.[42] These precipitated changes in leadership, the socialization of formerly revisionist states into more "realistic" behavior, and the state building required for survival amidst the anarchy of a state system. This was most dramatic in the case of Syria, where a weak regime's reckless policies toward Israel—partly followed for reasons of domestic legitimation—led to the 1967 military defeat, the rise of new realist leaders, and considerable state building, which gave leaders the internal autonomy of domestic pressures and the military capabilities to effectively balance external threats. This turned Syria from a victim of regional politics into a formidable actor.[43]

The unstable power balance. Throughout the region, heightened external threat fostered the consolidation and militarization of states during the 1970s and 1980s. While, as a result, states were better able to contain internal pressures and subordinate suprastate identity to reason of state, at the same time, this very state strengthening enhanced the potential threat each posed to the other. Regional order was now chiefly dependent on the balance of power, but unfortunately this balance proved widely unstable.

Power imbalances were built into the very fabric of the regional system. The unevenness of state formation allowed states consolidated earlier to threaten late developers—notably, giving the non-Arab periphery the advantage over weaker, less developed Arab states. There was also the arbitrary boundary drawing that created nonviable or ministates

(around oil wells—Kuwait; or as buffers—Jordan) alongside large neighbors dissatisfied by these boundaries.

On top of this, power was not static and high insecurity induced states to improve their power position, potentially threatening existing power balances.[44] Indeed, regional power balances were repeatedly upset, in part because of the rapid differential growth in the relative power of certain states owing to their exceptional access to oil revenues and/or foreign aid and hence to arms deliveries from external powers. Thus, Israel and Iraq achieved power superiority over neighbors, providing the occasion—when combined with irredentist leaderships—for, altogether, four wars: Israel's 1967 preemptive war, its 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and Iraq's two Gulf wars. "Buck-passing," that is, the failure of stable alliances to maintain credible collective deterrents against such powerful threatening states, was also part of the problem. To be sure, in the end, power balances were subsequently restored, but only after very costly wars: thus, balancing preserves the system but does not necessarily keep the peace.

Order and power politics. To the degree a state system is consolidated, geopolitics becomes, as realism expects, an increasingly important determinant of foreign policy. A state's capabilities, plus the strategic importance or vulnerability of its location, shapes the main threats it faces and its likely ambitions: hence, small powers (Jordan, Gulf states) are more likely to seek the protection of greater ones and stronger powers are more likely to seek spheres of regional influence (e.g., Syria in the Levant, Saudi Arabia in the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries). Once ideological revisionism is replaced by geopolitics, the balance of power is more likely to be stable. This tendency is apparent across the Middle East, with the abnormal exception of Iraq, and is, so far, the main source of regional stability.

Realist solutions to the problem of order remain more relevant in the Middle East than elsewhere because, as Yaniv argues, transnational norms restraining interstate conduct are the least-institutionalized there.[45] This, in turn, is arguably because the conditions that pluralists expect to generate the norms that tame the power struggle—democratic cultures and economic interdependence—are absent or weak in the region. Economic dependence on the core states and autarky-seeking neomercantilist reactions against dependence have both stunted the regional economic interdependence that pluralism expects to generate shared interests in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Moreover, not only do most regimes remain authoritarian but, against pluralist expectations,

relative democratization does not necessarily lead to less risky or more status quo foreign policies because populations have remained mobilizable by transstate and irredentist ideology. Thus, democratic Israel has repeatedly attacked its semidemocratic neighbor, Lebanon. In the Gulf crisis, the more democratization permitted public opinion to express itself over foreign policy, the more pro-Saddam opinion forced leaders into distancing themselves from the anti-Iraq coalition. This is consistent with the findings of Mansfield and Snyder that established democratic regimes may be more pacific, but fragile *democratizing* regimes are actually *more* inclined to war than stable authoritarian ones since winning elections encourages resort to the nationalist card.[46]

With the end of the Cold War and the onset of U.S. hegemony and globalization, pluralists such as Etel Solingen argue that zones of peace are spreading. Economic interdependency, she argues, is associated with the rise of internationalist coalitions to power inside states that seek integration into the global economy. This requires moderating nationalist ideology and settling regional conflicts.[47] Certainly, economic liberalization in the Middle East has led to the co-optation of internationalist-minded *infitah* bourgeoisies into power and state attempts to demobilize masses susceptible to revisionist ideology. However, as realism argues, only when threat declines does the pursuit of economic gain displace security atop state agendas. In the Middle East, however, irredentism keeps the Arab-Israel conflict alive while Iraq's defiance of the West manifests the continued resistance to Western penetration. As long as these conflicts continue to generate insecurity, the spread of "zones of peace" will not soon rewrite the dominant realist rules of Middle East international politics.[48]

Plan of the Book

Chapters 2 through 4 look more closely at the international and regional environments in which the foreign policies of Middle East states are conducted. Chapters 5 through 14 examine case studies of key states, and Chapter 15 summarizes their findings. First, the book examines the major Arab powers that have been at the heart of the Arab system, namely Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, as well as Saudi Arabia, the major Arab financial power and the world's major oil producer. In addition, Israel, a major player in the conflicts at the heart of the regional system, is considered here. Additional Arab actors that are distinctive or representative for various reasons are then examined. Libya, an eccentric radical

regime seen as a pariah state in the West, is, in some ways, a leftover from the previous age of ideology, while Tunisia, a Maghreb republic that is pioneering economic integration into the global market, may be the wave of the future. Yemen, a rising Arabian Peninsula power that alone has made a unity project successful, is also likely to be a weightier actor in the future. Then, the other major states (besides Israel) of the "non-Arab periphery" are examined, namely Iran and Turkey. The case studies attempt, so far as is practical, to take systematic account of the same variables, as indicated below.

- *Foreign-policy determinants.* The *why* of foreign policy is a function of such durable determinants as (1) the "external" threats, opportunities, constraints, and resources issuing from the international and regional systems; (2) domestic politics, shaped by identity and state formation: specifically the need to preserve regime legitimacy; and (3) economic needs and interdependencies.
- *Foreign policymaking.* The *who* and *how* of foreign policy concerns the effect of (1) elites' goals, perceptions, ideologies, and historic role conceptions; and (2) state institutions and policy processes, notably how the domestic power structure affects (a) the capacity of bureaucratic actors and public opinion to affect policymaking and (b) the leadership autonomy and capabilities that facilitate rational and effective policymaking and implementation.
- *Foreign-policy behavior.* The *what* of foreign policy includes long-term strategies and patterns of persistent behavior as well as watersheds of change in foreign policy—wars and conflict resolution, alignments and realignments—that, together, "construct" the regional system.

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