The Impact of Regional Powers' Competition on the Middle East Regional Order, 1945–2010

Martina Ponížilová

Abstract *To understand the current character of the Middle East region, one must have a clear picture of the context in which the prevailing order was formed. One must take into account the relationships between parties, the dominant behaviour patterns of the entities and institutions that created and shaped the regional order and interference from external forces. However, periods of stability and instability and ongoing security issues are best explained the by power, ambition, behaviour and interaction of the regional powers (Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey). The relationships and conflicts between these powers, as well as examples of cooperation and integration, will be at the centre of our examination of the changes in the regional order of the Middle East during the past seven decades.*

Keywords: Middle East, regional powers, regional order, integration, conflict, region, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey

Introduction

Since the 1990s, regional institutions, conflicts and powers have been gaining ground as topics of discussion regarding the new global order, the changing distribution of power in the post-Cold War world and the unequal development of the economies and security in different regions. The decentralisation of international relations helped both to strengthen the autonomy of regions, which were no longer influ-

enced by the great powers´ rivalry, and to increase the assertiveness of non-Western powers in *international* politics. Already during decolonisation, the regional security dynamics in non-Western regions was strengthened[1] by the emergence of new states and the limited influence of traditional powers. Economic and regional institutions were born and from the 1950s onwards, regional power centres became providers of public goods together with the world powers, thus contributing to the formation of regional orders. The transformation of a bipolar system into a 'world of regions'[2] therefore helped non-Western entities rise to power. This, in turn, increased academic interest in these regions, creating the 'regional turn in IR theory'[3]. Even in spite of this, some aspects of research remain largely neglected. For instance, efforts to conceptualise the term "regional power" or to approach theoretically its influence on the regional order, are scarce and insufficient. Therefore, this text aims (1) to contribute to the theoretical debate about the connection between regional power distribution and the character of regional order and (2) to support previous research on Middle East power hierarchies.

The Middle East[4] is a suitable case for the research of power hierarchies, as it is 'crowded' by powers.[5] The structure of this region is therefore multipolar, although there is no consensus as to which states can be considered regional powers. In our text we consider Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey to be the regional powers.[6] The region should also be remembered when examining the form and stability of regional orders, as it is a region connected to descriptions such as 'Shatterbelt'[7] or 'war zone.'[8] Dispute over which nation is the *dominant* regional power[9] is characteristic of the Middle East, though no state has reached that status yet as rival efforts are effectively preventing it.[10] Bearing in mind the absence of a 'dominant power', the conflicted and unstable character of the regional order[11] and the underdeveloped system of regional governance, the following question arises: Is the struggle for a privileged position in the region and the enforcement of different versions of regional order contributing to conflicts and the deterioration of interstate relations?

Authors of hegemony theories such as the Power Transition Theory view the existence of a dominant or hegemonic power, or a group of states supplying its position, as a condition for maintaining security, stable order, cooperative relations and intraregional integration.[12] They form a regional order for the benefit of other states by building struc-

tures for regional governance and the management of public goods. Therefore, the suppositions of this theory imply that if a region has no dominant power, or cooperative group of powers, it has a negative impact on the stability of the order. This results in conflict in relations and a low level of integration and institutionalisation. This leads to the following question: How does the current distribution of power in the Middle East influence regional cooperation and integration, when there is no dominant regional power that would support and maintain cooperation and integration within the region, and when regional powers are competing against each other and cannot supply the role of dominant power? The present paper reflects on the influence of the existence of multiple power centres and their relations on the development of regional order in the Middle East in 1945–2010,[13] using the assumptions of the Power Transition Theory.

The First Phase in the Formation of Regional Order, 1945–1967

At the beginning of the 20th century, a large part of the Middle East was under the influence of the UK and France. After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, it was the Western powers who wanted to organise the emerging region as a Westphalian system of sovereign states.[14] However, as the order was defined by external powers, it was challenged from the very beginning by both existing and newly independent Middle East states. World War II weakened the influence of colonial centres, which boosted the growth of local power centres. Under these conditions, a regional order was forming. It was characterised by the establishment of diplomatic ties, the first major integration projects and conflicts, the evolution of (pan)ideologies, power ambitions of Egypt and the efforts of the USSR and the USA. These superpowers promoted their interests through client relationships with local leaders, which divided the region into rival blocs. However, many states in the region had their own ideas, which often opposed the policies and interests of the world powers.

Although the idea of a modern nation state was imported into the Middle East by the Western powers, it was initially accepted by those who strived for independence. Pan-Arabism, which flourished in areas under foreign governance, supported the idea of countries achieving independence independently and uniting later as an Arab state.[15] The popularity of pan-Arabism showed that a regional order modelled on

the West was not the organisational ideal of Middle East societies.[16] Thus appeared the first major issue of Middle East politics—the expansion of the Westphalian system of states combined with pan-Arab views, which directly endangered the sovereignty and legitimacy of emerging states. At the same time, new political elites strived to protect their nations' newly acquired independence from transnational movements, imperial powers and regional rivals. Thus they soon adopted the institutions of sovereignty and state-centred nationalism,[17] which compromised their legitimacy in the face of existing substate and growing supranational identities. The crisis of the legitimacy of the modern state manifested itself fully in the 1950s and 60s, when the promoter of pan-Arabism, Gamal Nasser, led the 1952 overthrow in Egypt, and this revolutionary spirit spread to Iraq (1958), Yemen (1962) and Libya (1969). Nasser's vision of Middle East arrangement spread in a similar way, using a combination of pan-Arabism, anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, neutrality and socialism.

The Impact of Regional Powers' Competition on the Middle East Regional Order, 1945–2010

The late 1940s in the Middle East were marked by the start of the prolonged Arab-Israel conflict and the first fragmentation of the region due to differing views on the ideal form of regional order. The importance of both conflicts is obvious, since 'historically, the regional Arab system has evolved around two main conflictual foci—inter-Arab competition for regional hegemony and the Palestine problem.'[18] The Arab-Israeli wars repeatedly disrupted regional security and were accompanied by a number of smaller military clashes in Israel and its surroundings. Moreover, the fight against the Jewish state became an indispensable part of the regional powers' foreign policies. The second conflict was related to normative ideas about the functioning of the region. On one hand, Transjordan and Iraq supported the efforts of European powers to create regional security structures.[19] On the other hand, Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia criticised the activities of the Western powers in the region and saw the creation of Israel as the culmination of their neo-imperial politics. By the end of the 1940s, pro-Western regimes had started losing legitimacy because they were unable to protect Palestine, while revolutionary ideas were spreading, starting disputes in the Arab camp.[20] [21] The impulse for the formation of the Egypt-Syria-Saudi Arabia coalition came from the integration efforts of the Hashemite monarchies and the emergence of the Baghdad Pact.[22] This was an alliance of conservative states backed by the US and the UK, meant to balance the influence of Egypt and to prevent the

penetration of the USSR into the region.

The collapse of the Baghdad Pact, the defeat of Western powers and Israel during the Suez crisis and the creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) led to the height of Nasser's fame in the region during the second half of the 1950s. This era can also be described as 'a decade of contestation over the legitimacy of the state and the "requirement" for pan-Arab institution-building.'[23] Jordan and Iraq, concerned by the growing power of Egypt, created the Arab Federation as a response to the emergence of the UAR. Egypt set up the 'informal *pan-Arab regime*'[24] with the idea that the foreign policies of its Arab supporters would adapt to the common Arab interest, which, however, Egypt had defined. This "Arab interest" included a negative attitude towards cooperation with the European powers and criticism of Israel. Many radical and formally Socialist republics (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya) considered revolutionary pan-Arabism inspiring, but the pro-Western monarchies (Saudi Arabia, Jordan and, at that time, Iraq) saw it as a tool of Egyptian dominance. That is why they promoted a state-centred version of Arabism called 'Political Arabism', which, unlike Pan-Arabism, does not aim to create a united Arab state and does not put Arab interests above the interests of individual states (which are, however, defined by Arab values and can be limited in the name of Arab solidarity).[25] This ideological struggle of regional powers between 1958 and 1964 was fittingly called the 'Arab Cold War.'[26] The subject of dispute was the desired normative order of the Arab world[27]—revolutionary Egypt strived to establish an Arab state, while conservative Saudi Arabia wished to maintain the status quo in the region.

However, several events changed both the regional environment and the policies of Arab states. First and foremost, the position of Egypt—the leader of the Arab world up to that point—began to diminish. Its participation in the Yemen conflict and wars against Israel weakened its material forces, and its camp of "revolutionary" republics fell apart when Syrians and Iraqis became worried about its dominance. Their disputes over which nation best represented the one and only correct Arabism led to the radicalisation of Arab nationalism and a number of risky activities in the name of the Arab cause, mainly the Six-Day War. Egypt also lacked the economic resources to maintain its leading position and was becoming dependent on foreign aid from oil producers, including its former rival Saudi Arabia. Their defeat in the Six-Day War eventually proved Egypt was not capable of protecting Arabs from

Israel, which led to 'the collapse of Egyptian material and symbolic hegemony.'[28] It also meant a major change in the regional order, because the conflict ended the Arab Cold War and changed the rules of modern Arab politics.[29]

The plan to unite all Arabs failed not only due to ideological disputes in the Middle East, but also because of competition between the US and the USSR, which limited autonomous regional development. They were each trying to expand their influence in strategic areas, gain allies and secure access to supplies of oil and natural gas. Cooperation within the region could not be facilitated even through integration projects; they often did not last long, and many of them strengthened the division between the competing camps of Arab states without improving regional unity. Economic integration and inter-Arab trade remained very low, due to political competition, underdeveloped economies and trade with countries outside the region, mainly in the West. Perhaps the only issue that Arab states agreed on was the non-existence of Israel—only the non-Arab countries of Turkey and Iran recognised Israel's independence.

Throughout the 20th century, Iran participated in regional politics much more actively than Turkey and was not immune to the activities of regional rivals, especially Egypt. Disputes arose from their incompatible interests as they both had leadership ambitions. From the 1940s to the end of the 1970s, Iran was one of the main pillars of American policy in the Middle East, together with Israel and Turkey. With US support, the Shah's Iran was 'the centre of regional hegemony' in the Persian Gulf.[30] However, as a US ally and member of the Baghdad Pact, it met with the resistance of anti-West Egypt. Tehran saw the rising popularity of Nasserism as a threat to territorial integrity, should the Arab minority living in Khuzestan respond to the Pan-Arab call. During the Arab Cold War, Shah Pahlavi supported conservative governments against the revolutionary forces, as overthrowing the allied monarchies would strengthen Egypt's influence and jeopardise Iran's interests. Hateful propaganda by both states, coupled with Egypt's support for the Iranian opposition that was striving to overthrow the Shah's regime, made relations cool from the 1940s to the 1960s. In 1960, after Tehran recognised Israel's independence, diplomatic relations were suspended altogether.

The Second Phase in the Formation of Regional Order,

When Egypt lost its position, it left room for other states in the region to increase their influence. For oil producers, this was possible thanks to rising income from the sale of oil, for non-oil producers through the consolidation of power (connecting the political and military elite). Even Saudi Arabia wished to replace Egypt as the Arab leader. It took advantage of weakening Pan-Arabism and introduced its own alternative version of supranational identity, more suited to its own interests that did not undermine the legitimacy of the regime: 'pan-Islam.' Pan-Islam can be described as 'an ideology calling for the unity of Muslim peoples worldwide on the basis of their shared Islamic identity.'[31] In this context, King Faisal initiated the formation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1969. Within this organisation, the kingdom was able to strengthen its position among Muslim Arab states, thanks to its religious authority. The affiliation of most Middle East countries with the Islamic world implied Islamic solidarity and unity. This would replace the idea of unity primarily promoted by Egypt, which was based on belonging to the Arab world. It turned out, however, that the OIC became yet another platform for competition between powers (Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran) who could not agree on the role of the OIC or on a single interpretation of Islam. Their disagreement limited the capabilities of the organisation to unite Muslim states and the OIC evolved into another 'limited intergovernmental alliance.'[32] However, inter-Arab relationships improved with tighter cooperation between the new Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and the Saudis and growing tensions between Arab states and Israel.

The Arabs' need to coordinate the fight against Israel during the Yom Kippur War (1973) led to the creation of a trilateral alliance composed of 'the largest (Egypt), richest (Saudi Arabia) and most pan-Arab (Syria) states.'[33] In spite of their ideological disputes, these countries managed to decide consensually on regional issues and stabilise at least the Arab part of the Middle East, since the alliance was 'powerful enough to set the Arab agenda in the postwar period.'[34] Saudi Arabia participated in the war solely through political and financial support for the fighters, but its role was crucial. It declared an oil embargo against the US and the Netherlands as countries supporting Israel, which strengthened its position as defender of the "Arab cause." It did not become a regional leader because it lacked the military power necessary to maintain the set regional order, yet together with Iran it still was an important

player in the Persian Gulf. These two significant US allies created a 'twin pillars policy' based on security cooperation that attempted to maintain stability in the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless, the Iranian Islamic Revolution (1979) turned the relationship of cooperation into rivalry and no new sub-regional order was created.

The temporary cohesion of regional powers was supported by the growing economic ties between countries. In the 1970s, a specific 'division of labour in a pan-Arab market'[35] was established, based on the principle that oil producers provided capital to poorer neighbours (Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Palestine) as development aid or defence funding, in exchange for cheap labour. Even intraregional labour migration grew this way, further interconnecting Arab society. At the same time, regional organisations were created, making room for strengthening trade within the region or providing an institutional platform for inter-Arab development aid.[36] However, a relatively low level of trade, the state-centrism of the poorer countries and tightening of the rich countries' economic relationships with external actors limited the development of inter-Arab economic cooperation. Even extensive financial aid from the Gulf countries to poorer areas did not diminish the differences in economic levels, which reflected differing interests.[37] Egypt and its bad economic situation led to cooperation with the US, which offered financial aid and the return of the Sinai Peninsula occupied by Israel. For Cairo, it was economically unsustainable to stand at the head of the Arab world in the fight against Israel. In the late 1970s, Sadat made peace with Israel, which changed the regional environment significantly. Mistrust grew between Arab countries, producing selfish behaviour, because they had no guarantees that more states would not choose the path of a separate peace in exchange for US economic incentives. Fear and hostility towards Israel seemed to be 'the strongest bond among the Arab states' for a long time.[38] But since Egypt and Saudi Arabia were dependent on American military support, their interests deviated from the interests of the Arab world and helped to destroy the order that had worked until to the mid-1970s, thanks to their cooperation.

Since the 1960s, it had become apparent that the Westphalian system was no longer seen as a "temporary" form of regional arrangement, but prevailed over other alternatives including a single Arab state.[39] Even with new efforts at integration, countries focused more on intergovernmental cooperation and did not create federative formations that

would limit their sovereignty. Political integration projects from that time ended unsuccessfully, with the exception of the SAE.[40] However, the idea of Arab solidarity and unity survived and, until the early 1990s, it prevented violent conflicts between Arab states and influenced the functioning of the League of Arab States (LAS). At LAS-organised summits, the countries coordinated a joint course of action against Israel, supported the Palestinian cause and suppressed more radical regimes, weakening the exhausting inter-Arab competition.[41] In the following decades, the LAS repeatedly faced challenges it was not able to deal with[42] which had negative impact on its functioning and authority in the Arab world.

The Third Phase in the Formation of Regional Order, 1979–1990

The end of the 1970s was marked by the collapse of the order established by the Arab triangle and by the events of 1979—the Egypt-Israel peace treaty and the Iranian Islamic Revolution—which radically influenced regional politics. The regional isolation of Egypt and the weakening of Iran as a result of the revolution made it possible for other local powers to consolidate their position. During the following decade, the region was affected both by power struggles between states whose opposing ideas on the character of the order could not help stabilise the regional environment, and by non-state political and armed movements.

After concluding peace with Israel, Cairo became an important ally of the US. However, it had got on the wrong side of most of the Arab world, so it strengthened cooperation with its non-Arab neighbours. However, the Islamic Revolution soon overthrew the allied monarchist regime and destroyed the American idea of regional arrangement maintained by the 'triangle of stability'[43]—Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia. After the Camp David negotiations, other moderate Arab regimes, supported by the US, were supposed to recognise Israel and keep peace and stability. But the American efforts failed, since excessive identification with US politics and strategic aims alienated some of the countries from their neighbours (Egypt) or created internal instability (the Shah's Iran). This is why the Saudis did not want to let themselves be tied to Washington's position, although to this day they remain dependent on American military supplies. Moreover, US allies started competing for the financial and military support of the Americans, which further

weakened the pro-America coalition.

Together with the power vacuum that appeared in the Arab world after Egypt's isolation, regional politics was also destabilised by the Iranian revolution. The revolution changed the rules of Middle East politics, overturning existing commitments between allies—Iran cut diplomatic ties with Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco and waged an exhausting war with Iraq. The US lost a key ally, and the new Islamic regime became a threat to their interests and the main rival for their allies—Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. 'The downfall of the Shah also signified the breakdown of the old regional order' and the following development in political and security relations can best be interpreted as 'the search for a new regional order.'[44] Iran rejected the status quo and its idea of new regional order lay in the fight against imported culture and an effort to spread Islamic values.

The weakening of Iran caused by the revolution was welcomed by Iraq and Saudi Arabia, who became, arguably, the most powerful Gulf countries. But the situation was not completely positive: The establishment of the Islamic government created a threat to both neighbours. Iraq underestimated the power of the new Iranian regime and provoked the longest and bloodiest war in modern Middle East history. The conflict proved that for most countries in the region, Iraq was unacceptable as a leader. After all, it could not even manage to persuade other Arab countries to take a united anti-Iran position. Some Arab countries (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, etc.) aided Iraq with money and military supplies, but their motivation was fear of a Shiite Iran victory, not good mutual relations. Moreover, Syria and Libya, Iraq's power rivals, supplied arms to Iran.[45] In the 1970s and 1980s, Iraq had sufficient material resources to become a regional power. However, Saddam Hussein's aggressive politics, which caused two wars and a worsening of relations with Iran, Syria and the Gulf monarchies, could not achieve a leading position among Arab states.

The Shah's downfall had both positive and negative consequences for Saudi Arabia. The collapse of one US ally strengthened the positions of others, including the Saudis. But the efforts of the Iranian government to export the ideas of the Shiite revolution beyond its borders was a threat to conservative Sunni regimes, especially those with large Shiite populations—Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Their leaders feared Iranian support for opposing Shiite movements on their territory, so they decided to give massive financial aid to Iraq in the Iraq-Iran

war. The victory of Iran would have far-reaching consequences for the balance of power in the region, as well as for the home affairs of conservative monarchies.[46]

The Islamic Revolution was also significant for the Middle East regional order because it added a strong ideological element to the power struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which had previously been absent from their relations. Both countries claimed the position of leader of the Islamic world and were trying to promote their own opposing version of 'Islamic universalism.'[47] The general aim of Islamism is to 'establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia and eventually uniting all Muslims, the whole umma.'[48] Islamic unity should ostensibly erase all national, linguistic and tribal borders across the Islamic world, which would be more than just a consolidation of Muslim solidarity. The Saudi idea of pan-Islamism,[49] however, is based on strengthening the unity of Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity, while maintaining state borders. The Saudis also pursue the spreading of 'Wahhabism' (a form of Sunni Islam). The Iranian conception of pan-Islamism also lies in the strengthening of Islamic regional unity, but it tries to spread the ideas of the Islamic Revolution, drawing on anti-Americanism, anti-Zionism and monarchist regime criticism. This is why it supports Shiite and radical Sunni movements fighting non-violently or violently against Israel, the US and some Arab monarchies.

The fight between Tehran and Riyadh for the role of the Islamic world leader transferred to the grounds of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. It became an arena for the dispute over who would oversee the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*);[50] the holy Islamic sites of Mecca and Medina are in Saudi territory, while Iran is the only Islamic state run by the clergy. Therefore, Riyadh tried to stop the spread of revolutionary Iran's influence in the region and to weaken its dependence on the US, which reflected on the effort to balance Israeli power and keep US interference in regional politics at the necessary minimum. One of the means to achieve this was supposed to be the new sub-regional organisation, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In 1981, King Khalid initiated its establishment, and Saudi Arabia continues to dominate the organisation thanks to its size and power. Through security measures and cooperation, the GCC was meant to help members protect themselves from external threats (Iran) and instability stemming from the Iraq-Iran conflict, and the interference of powers in regional politics.[51] In the military sphere, the Gulf states are still dependent on Western

(mainly American) military technologies.[52] In security issues they still prefer to rely on external rather than regional powers, from whom they fear possible dominance and interference in their internal politics.[53]

Although political and security integration within the GCC has its limits—stemming from unresolved (usually border) disputes or differing attitudes towards key issues of regional politics (relations with Israel and Iran, for example)—the GCC is still one of the most successful organisations in the Middle East. Especially in the economic and cultural fields, the council has seen some success in the form of members' cooperation (a customs union was established, for example) and together it creates a 'political and economic micro-climate.'[54] Most importantly, the creation of the GCC, together with the continuing weakening of the LAS, led other countries in the Middle East to establish alternative sub-regional organisations aimed at strengthening and deepening political and economic cooperation.

The Defence Council of Libya, Ethiopia and South Yemen (1981), joined states that disagreed with Saudi politics on many counts and was meant to fight imperialism, Zionism and reactionary politics.[55] In 1989, the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), a defence and economic pact, joined Iraq, Egypt, Jordan and North Yemen as states 'left out' of integration in the GCC.[56] However, Egypt criticised the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait (1990) and the ACC stopped working. Also in 1989, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya created the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), whose aim was to implement a policy of the free movement of goods and persons and to connect forces in negotiations with the stronger European Community. Deeper economic integration was not reached, however, because states competed in the economic field over investments, and were divided by power rivalry between Algeria and Morocco and differing positions on the West Sahara issue. Lastly, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan created the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1985.[57] Nevertheless, relations between secular Turkey and theocratic Iran changed radically after 1979, and even though mutual trade was flourishing, relations were cooled at the political level. Kemalism, the official ideology of Turkey, became a target of criticism by Ayatollah Khomeini. Moreover, Iran tried to weaken Turkish secularism through Islamist propaganda smuggled into the country.[58]

It is obvious that outside the GCC, other sub-regional organisations had very limited success or else failed entirely after a few years. This was caused by cultural and economic differences, opposing interests

on key political issues, mutual mistrust and the fact that more powerful countries used organisations as platforms for their power struggles. It seems that 'the conditions for the development of the region's secondary institutions never existed.'[59] Authoritarian governments were unwilling to compromise and delegate part of their sovereignty to a higher entity, which prevented long-term integration, states did not trust one another and integration initiatives by the regional powers provoked fear of dominance in weaker countries. Moreover, the fact that integration occurred on a sub-regional level contributed to further fragmentation of the region.

In the 1980s, the Iraq-Iran war, the Israeli intervention in Lebanon (1982) and the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1989) showed a certain disunity within the Arab world.[60] Arab states, polarised by a number of opposing interests, strengthened their own military forces through massive armament, which heightened insecurity in the Arab camp about others' intentions. This led to self-motivated behaviour and the consolidation of alliances with external actors, who were a lesser threat than their own neighbours. With these new security dilemmas, the "Arab brothers" saw one another as potential military threats. The League of Arab States could not ease the negative consequences of an anarchist system. It was unable to respond to the Israeli invasion in Lebanon, or the Iraqi plea for help when, after 1982, the Iraq-Iran war started turning to Iraq's disadvantage. Also in the 1980s, LAS' authority was diminishing and it was becoming the symbol of inter-Arab conflict. Governments managed to consolidate their power[61] sufficiently to withstand supranational ideologies (pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism) and they prioritised state interests. The preference of state interests over pan-Arab ones led to a fragmentation of the Arab core of the Middle East and kindled its internal conflicts. In addition, it strengthened Arab states´ vulnerability to threats from non-Arab countries (Iran and Israel), manifesting itself fully in the Iraq-Iran war and the Israeli operation in Lebanon (Arab states were unable to create a united alliance). In the 1980s, pan-Arabism had no real appeal and the surviving idea of Arab solidarity was being weakened by the fragmentation of the Arab world. This was taking place partly due to pan-Islamism and partly to solidify the institution of the modern state. The competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia for leader of the Islamic world and the growing popularity of Islamist movements make it obvious that pan-Islamic ideology had a real impact on regional politics.[62]

Also in the 1980s, a rather atypical alliance of Middle East actors was born—Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and, originally, Hamas. Syria supported Iran in its war against Iraq, while Hezbollah, funded and armed by Tehran, fought in Lebanon against Israel, thus helping Syria protect its interests and shift the balance of power in its favour.[63] From the point of view of world powers, Israel and "moderate" Arab states, this alliance created a 'potentially dangerous cocktail'[64] regarding their interests and the question of regional leadership. The Middle East and its Arab core were fragmented and weakened and there was nobody to unite it. The end of the decade, however, brought an important change, when, after decades of isolation, Egypt, 'by far the largest and most important Arab state,'[65] began to participate in regional politics and the power struggle again. A balance of power prevailed in the region, sufficient, perhaps, in maintaining the system, though not enough to keep the peace.[66] The situation was unstable, since it was based on balancing power between Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iraq (which had strong revisionist tendencies). The Iraqi invasion and attempted annexation of Kuwait commenced a decade of instability and insecurity in the Middle East, and the further shattering of the Arab world. Thus began a new phase in regional order development.

The Fourth Phase in the Formation of Regional Order, 1990–2010

1990 is significant in Middle East politics in two important ways. First, it symbolises the end of the Cold War, which strengthened the position of the US, in the world and in the region. Second, after the annexation of Kuwait, the crisis in the Persian Gulf occurred. This had a deep influence on power distribution in the region and the level of stability and security.

Since the 1990s, the basis of American strategy in the Middle East has been two-pronged. First, the US has attempted to increase the power of its allies (Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia) through military and financial aid. Second, it has strived to weaken and isolate countries who criticise American interference in regional politics and the spreading Western political and cultural values. (It has punished Iran through economic sanctions, for example). This has deepened the polarization of the region and weakened regional institutions which, in order to function, need consensus and cooperation of the majority (or all) of the regional countries.[67] Regarding the formation of regional or-

der, two American military interventions (1991, 2003) that served also as tools to establish American hegemony in the Middle East, were even more significant. It is open to debate whether the US confirmed its hegemonic position,[68] or if any *Pax Americana* system emerged,[69] but, in any case, US influence on the character of regional order cannot be marginalised. Military interventions and alliances with local states limit the autonomy of the Middle East.

The Gulf Crisis directly caused the disintegration of the existing regional order, because it led to the redistribution of power in the region, the beginning of the peace process and the culmination of the fall of pan-Arabism. Saddam Hussein's Kuwait adventure was meant to secure for Iraq the leading position in the Arab world, but in ultimately caused its downfall. As a consequence of the conflict and sanctions imposed on it in the 1990s, the country was economically ruined. The weakening of political influence was partly caused by the fact that by attacking a "brother" Arab state, Hussein made enemies of a number of Arab countries. The balance of power in the Middle East swerved in favour of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, an important player in freeing the annexed Kuwait.[70]

The increase in power was apparent especially in Iran. Saudi Arabia was directly involved in the war and, because it felt threatened, it hosted hundreds of thousands of American troops on its territory, which provoked unprecedented criticism in the Muslim world; Iran tried to use this fact to strengthen its position. In the 1990s and 2000s, struggles between Iran and Saudi Arabia continued, intensifying after the Saudis participated in the anti-Iraq coalition and moved closer to the US. The threat Iraq presented to the Gulf monarchies made the GCC countries strengthen their alliances with Western states, mainly the US, and started a new round of armament, further escalating tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. This was deepened by the support of competing factions in the Afghan civil war (1992–1996), building the Iranian nuclear and missile programme, and opposing views on the ideal form of regional order and the conception of pan-Islam.[71]

Even though Iranian foreign policies are often pragmatic, ideology is an integral part of Iranian regional politics and the promotion of the Islamic revolution, anti-Western rhetoric and the fight against Israel must make room for practical policies. Tehran is trying to change the regional status quo from a political (ideological) standpoint, by 'framing the regional agenda,' not through a war among powers.[72] However,

the Iranian regional project has serious flaws. Arab states prevent the spread of Islamic revolutionary ideas on their territory and '[n]one of them wishes to exchange the United States for Iran as a security manager of the region.'[73]

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Due to bad relations with Sunni Arab regimes, Iran is trying to win the favour of the 'Arab street' and the Muslim *ummah*. Iran presents itself as a state fighting against US interference, Israeli politics and "traitor" monarchist regimes.[74] These regimes allegedly act as puppets of the West and their political system is supposedly incompatible with Islam. Iran is trying to de-emphasise differences between Shiites and Sunnis and between Arabs and Persians in order to maintain the support of the Arab Sunni majority in the Middle East. However, not all Shiites want an Islamic government modelled on Iran.[75] Another obstacle for the Islamic order may be the fact that Iran is not a constructive power. It criticises its rivals, but cannot solve the issues that are destabilising the Middle East, causing Arab countries turn to other local or world powers.

The Gulf War in 1991 also offered an opportunity to start a peace process between Arab actors and Israel, which became one of the most important milestones in the development of Middle East order. In 1994, Israel concluded a peace agreement with Jordan. To this day, however, Israel has not established diplomatic ties with most countries in the region, which weakens the institutions of sovereignty and diplomacy in regional politics. The Palestinian National Authority was also established (1994), although a sovereign state never emerged. The question of an independent Palestine has always been a cause for the 'Arab Street', thus helping regional powers to gain 'political points' in power struggles.[76] [77] Since the 1970s, the importance of the Arab-Israel conflict for Middle East politics has lied mainly in the political and symbolic realm and it can no longer be considered 'the epicentre of the region´s violence,'[78] which has moved to the Persian Gulf.

Egypt and, to a lesser degree, Saudi Arabia have played important roles in the peace process. Egypt has hosted a number of peace talks and has participated in multilateral negotiations on various practical issues, providing impetus for regional development programmes and economic cooperation. It has also acted as mediator in bilateral talks.[79] When the second Palestinian *intifada* (2000–2005) caused a blow to the peace process, Saudi Arabia tried to revive the peace talks by presenting the Arab Peace Initiative (2002), though it could not prevent

their collapse. This was a disappointment for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, though not for Iran or Iraq, who had criticised the peace process all along. Regional order partially reverted to where it had been a decade earlier. The war in Iraq in 2003 buried all chances of restoring peace talks. The Arab-Israel conflict lost its significance in light of American war efforts. The war radicalised the positions of some key players in the Arab-Israel conflict (Syria, Israel, Hamas) and increased instability in the region and the sense of insecurity on the part of the Jewish state.[80]

The third reason why we consider the Gulf conflict a significant event in the formation of regional order, is the fact that the conflict destroyed 'the last remnants of the pan-Arab idea.'[81] After all, it was the first war between Arab states, which up to that point had only engaged in ideological disputes. The conflict itself was made possible by the fact that Arab states diverged from Arab norms, tearing down all normative limits of behaviour. Their behaviour was now governed by each nation's own interest and the logic of the balance of power. When this system failed and the balance of power tipped towards Iraq, the first aggression toward an "Arab brother" occurred. Furthermore, the war divided Arab countries into two camps—members of the anti-Iraq coalition (Egypt, Syria, the Gulf monarchies, Morocco) and Iraq supporters (Yemen, Libya and Sudan). The fragmentation of opinion in the Arab world also influenced the functioning of the LAS, making it 'the chief institutional casualty' of the Gulf War,[82] when the summit of August 1990 ended in a fiasco. The summit symbolised both the deep divisions between states, and the toothlessness of the League, as the solution eventually fell to foreign actors (mainly the US and the UN), significantly lowering the authority and trustworthiness of the organisation.

The war in Iraq ended the process of the formation of the modern state system in the Middle East, which, however, did not go hand in hand with fostering state identity. Arab countries could not manage to overcome their weaknesses, partly because of their authoritarian character. The drop in popularity of the pan-Arab idea, and the existence of hated regimes who had touted the ideology in previous decades, helped spread Islamic ideology. Political Islam was on the rise in the Middle East even before the annexation of Kuwait. Islamist groups in various Arab states comprised the main opposition, criticising governments for denying liberties, usurping power, bad economic policies, socio-economic inequality in society and cooperation with the West.

Political Islam transferred legitimacy from states to political movements, building their objectives on Islamism.

Because of the gap between progressive Westphalianisation of the Middle East system and the strengthening of supranational Arab-Islamic identity in the population, there is no significant overlap between state and nation. This further weakens states' legitimacy and the institution of sovereignty.[83] We can speak of a 'New Arab Cold War'[84]—an ideological conflict between the Arab public that is represented by various movements[85] and defends the Arab-Islamic order,[86] and governments criticised for their regional politics and cooperation with the US.[87] US intervention in the region has provoked strong criticism from the Middle East public, and deepened anti-West and anti-US sentiment.

The new Arab ideological conflict dates back to 2006,[88] when the Israel-Hezbollah War took place. It was the culmination of processes that gathered pace after the second war broke out in Iraq (2003–2011) and resulted in the weakening of regional autonomy and the growth of the supranational Arab public sphere. The consequences of American intervention were mostly negative for the region. The level of violence and instability grew, mistrust between states deepened and the wave of migration out of Iraq destabilised its immediate surroundings. Also, there was the threat of ''Balkanisation' in the country, as the position of armed groups operating in Iraq was stronger and, once more, regional organisations proved themselves powerless in solving conflicts. The start of the millennium in the Middle East was marked by a 'new regional disorder,'[89] following the previous development phase of the region and characterised by instability and a high number of conflicts.[90]

The weakening of Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime also influenced the regional distribution of power. Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria got rid of a long-standing rival, and the resulting power vacuum started regional power struggles over which nation could promote its own vision of regional order. This boosted the rivalry between two camps—the 'radicals' (those who were anti-West, the revisionist states of Iran and Syria and non-state movements such as Hezbollah, Hamas and others) and the 'moderates' (conservative, pro-American states wishing to maintain the status quo—namely, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel).[91] At the start of the 21st century, there were proxy conflicts, which became an opportunity for a regional ideological power struggle between the radicals, led by Iran, and the moderates, led by

Saudi Arabia and Egypt. These were the July War (2006), Israeli interventions in the Gaza Strip (2008-2009, 2014) and the civil war in Syria (since 2011). In addition to existing economic (rich oil producers vs. low-income countries) and ethnic (Arab vs. non-Arab countries) fragmentation, which had influenced the dynamic of regional politics for decades, there were new struggles between these so-called radicals and moderates. These struggles, particularly Saudi-Iranian rivalry, also display strong sectarian tendencies and represent yet another sign of regional fragmentation: the Sunni-Shia divide. Sunni Arab states feel threatened by both Shiite Iran and Shiite minorities within their own territories. This sectarian divide became one of the main features of contemporary Middle East, particularly after the fall of Saddam Hussein, and has strong potential to further destabilise regional security.

The war in Iraq 'increased fragmentation of the region [...] and continued to a crisis of regional leadership'[92] for several more years. This crisis was nothing new for the region, but it seriously complicated any collective solution to regional problems at a time when the Middle East was facing the extremely urgent issue of the strengthening of Islamic armed groups. The example of Iraqi insurgent groups was followed by a range of radical opposition movements in neighbouring countries. Thus, the Iraq war helped consolidate these actors' positions at the expense of the states. These insurgent groups' activities have increased sectarian violence and internally weak countries have been unable to cope. At the same time, some groups are also a tool for Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia to project power, using regional instability to debilitate their rivals.[93]

Neither in the Iraqi nor in other conflicts did the LAS or the GCC play a significant role in the renewal of peace. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey tried to mediate in some conflicts, but regional organisations were often paralysed by struggles between states. The first Gulf War became the cause of the break-up of the Arab Cooperation Council and no new (sub-)regional organisation has emerged since the 1990s. With increasing frequency, actors striving to maintain the status quo have turned to Western powers led by the US for help in balancing the power of enemy regimes and non-state militias. With help from these Western countries, they build their own military power, only increasing criticism from anti-Western regimes and Islamic groups.

The stability of the Middle East, peaceful relations between countries and economic development have all been disrupted since the

1990s due to many events and processes: intra-Arab and intra-Muslim disputes; the collapse of the peace process; the outbreak of two *intifadas* (1987, 2000); massive long-term armament of states; two Gulf Wars and resulting post-war instability; the strengthening of non-state actors; and pressure from the US on Middle East countries to join them in the war on terror after the 9/11 attacks. At the same time, no region-wide institutional structures have been built with support of cooperating regional powers, which could solve the emerging crises and raise the region's autonomy in the face of interventions by world powers.

Conclusion

From the end of WW2 until the start of the 21st century, there were several regional powers in the Middle East—Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey—and a number of other countries claiming this status. None of these powers became the dominant one or the leader of the entire region. On the contrary, their relatively balanced power led to all these nations claiming the leading position and enforcing their own version of regional arrangement. At times, they assumed the role of protector of the regional status quo (as Saudi Arabia has done for decades); at others, its violator (in various periods this was the case of Egypt or Iran). As individual powers and "candidates" competed for this privileged position in the Middle East, the region became polarised. Instead of efforts to cooperate and integrate, and thus strengthen regional unity and stability, conflicts erupted. Without any fundamental consensus, it was impossible to define the main regional problems and find solutions.

Even though it was usually the powers who initiated the establishment of regional and sub-regional organisations, they often used them as platforms for power struggles, instead of pushing for standards and policies supporting the peaceful coexistence of states. For these reasons, the Middle East is lacking a central unifier in the region. By contrast, the distribution of power has changed several times during the period under study. This has occurred as the consequence of exhausting wars (Egypt); significant changes to the domestic political scene, including related changes of foreign policy (Egypt and Iran); and power growth in other countries (mainly Saudi Arabia and, in the 1970s and 1980s, Iraq).

When there is no dominant power with the potential to unite and

stabilise the region, a calm environment can only be ensured by a shared attitude of a coalition of regional powers, which will maintain a *stable* balance of power and avoid conflicts. In the Middle East, such a situation has not yet occurred. Neither a dominant power, nor a group of states supplying this role, has contributed to the creation and upkeep of regional order and the distribution of public goods. In such a situation, a country's dependency on external powers increases, because they supply the function of local powers, thus weakening their own country's position and the overall autonomy of the region. The limited stability of the region is the result of the absence of systemic legitimacy. In this case, peaceful relations depend largely on the unstable balance of power between the several most powerful actors, and on the creation of fragile alliances.

Since power in the region is distributed relatively evenly and there are contrasting visions of regional order, it is unlikely that any of the current powers will soon emerge as the dominant force. The events that have afflicted the region since late 2010, when the Arab Uprising started, have caused a change in the distribution of power in the region and confirmed that there is an intra-regional power struggle underway, fragmenting the region internally. Egypt and Saudi Arabia, both being Arab regional powers, have some advantage, in that most Middle Eastern countries deem their ideas on the region's arrangement more acceptable than the ideas of non-Arab powers. On the other hand, Egypt has long-term economic problems, and its dependency on aid from oil monarchies and the US has always weakened its position, which has become even weaker since the 2011 revolution. Saudi Arabia is one of the richest states in the region, but it has a weak demographic base and its military capabilities are not strong enough to maintain and guarantee regional security. A relative advantage for Iran and Turkey lies in their strong demographic and military power bases, but in a mostly Arab region neither is a strong contender for the dominant power. Iran's military strength, while an asset regarding the nation's role as security guarantor, is also a hindrance, when most states in the region view Iran as a military threat. Turkey must deal with the fact that geographically and politically—at least for most of the period from WW2 to the 2000s—it is on the periphery of the Middle East, and for it to emerge as the dominant regional power, it would have to participate more actively in solving regional issues.

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Martina Ponížilová is Junior Assistant in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic. She can be contacted at mponizil@kap.zcu.cz

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Notes

1 Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15–16.

2 Peter Katzenstein (2005), *A World of Regions. Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.

3 Nadine Godehardt – Dirk Nabers (2011), 'Introduction,' in Nadine Godehardt and Dirk Nabers (eds.) *Regional Powers and Regional Orders,* London, New York: Routledge, p. 1.

4 The Middle East is defined as the region including territory from Morocco to Iran and from Turkey to Yemen.

5 Simon Murden (1995), *Emergent Regional Powers and International Relations in the Gulf: 1988–1991*, Reading: Ithaca Press, p. 15.

6 See Martina Ponížilová 'Delimitation of Regional Powers in the Middle East in the 20th and 21st Century ' [article draft to be published in the journal *Medzinárodné vzťahy* in 2016].

7 Saul B. Cohen (2003), *Geopolitics in the World System*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 337, 339.

8 Etel Solingen (1998), *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn. Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy*, Princeton, Chichester: Princeton University Press, pp. 71–78.

9 A region can only include one dominant power or hegemony (a subsystem with unipolar structure), but there may be more than one power centre (bi- and multipolar subsystems).

10 Øyvind Østerud (1992), 'Regional Great Powers,' in Iver B. Neumann (ed.) *Regional Great Powers in International Politics*, New York: St. Martin´s Press, p. 13.

11 Regional order is understood to be the general organisation directing activities and relationships between units in a region. It comprises a set of informal institutions (sovereignty, diplomacy, territoriality, great power management, nationalism, /pan/ideology, religion, conflicts, security dilemma, arms race, balance of power) and formal institutions (international

organisations and regimes), which influence the behaviour of parties and their interactions. Different forms of order are caused by the different character of relations between units. They can fall anywhere on the scale ranging from high instability and conflict to stable order with peaceful relations and widely shared values and norms.

12 R. L. Tammen et al. (2000), *Power Transitions. Strategies for the 21st Century*, Washington: CQ Press.

13 It was only after WWII that a 'critical mass of independent actors' emerged. It was necessary for the development of regional security and a political dynamic free of the dominance of colonial powers (Buzan – Wæver /2003/, p. 188). The final year of the period examined was another milestone in the development of regional order, which has been deeply changed by the events since the end of 2010, in connection with the Arab Uprising. A new phase in the development of order has emerged, and since it is still underway, it has not been included in this paper.

14 Samuel P. Huntington (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 51.

15 Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez (2009), 'The Primary Institutions of the Middle Eastern Regional Interstate Society,' in Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez (eds.) *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 94.

16 Louise Fawcett (2011), 'Regional Order in the Middle East,' in Amitav Acharya – Katsumata, H. (eds.) *Beyond Iraq: The Future of World Order*, Singapore, Hackensack, London: World Scientific Publishing, p. 159.

17 Raymond Hinnebusch (2009), 'Order and Change in the Middle East: A Neo-Gramscian Twist on the International Society Approach,' in Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez (eds.) *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 214.

18 Avraham Sela (1998), *The Decline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Middle East Politics and the Quest for Regional Order*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 14.

19 e.g. the Middle East Command, the Middle East Defence Organization and the Baghdad Pact

20 Hinnebusch (2009), p. 214.

21 The first disagreement on regional order is best expressed in these words: 'The Hashimite bloc stood for a continuation of the British regional order, which the Triangle Alliance sought to destroy'.; Michael Doran (2004), 'Egypt: Pan-Arabism in Historical Context,' in L. Carl Brown (ed.) *Diplomacy in the Middle East: The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers*, New York: I. B. Tauris, p. 100.

22 The Arab Defence Pact, Islamic Middle Eastern regional pact or the so-called Greater Syria.

23 Simon Murden (2009), 'The Secondary Institutions of the Middle Eastern Regional Interstate Society,' in Barry Buzan – Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez (eds.) *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 120.

24 Hinnebusch (2009), p. 216.
25 Morten Valbjørn, – André Bank (2012), 'The New Arab Cold War: rediscovering the Arab dimension of Middle East regional politics,' *Review of International Studies* 38(1), pp. 9–11.
26 Kerr citation according to Valbjørn and Bank (2012), p. 5.
27 Michael Barnett (1998), *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 6–7.
28 Hinnebusch (2009), p. 217.
29 Hilal Khashan (1997), 'The New Arab Cold War,'. *World Affairs* 159(4), p. 159.
30 Raimo Väyrynen (1984), 'Regional Conflict Formations: An Intractable Problem of International Relations,' *Journal of Peace Research* 21(4), p. 347.
31 Sohail H. Hashmi (2009), 'Islam, the Middle East and the Pan-Islamic Movement,' in Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez (eds.) *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 170.
32 Murden (2009), p. 135. The idea of Islamic unity did not generate a response among the Middle East countries. On the contrary, there was a dispute between the socialist republics and Saudi Arabia, which criticised them for collaborating with the USSR with its unacceptable atheist ideology of communism.
33 Hinnebusch (2009), p. 218.
34 Gregory L. Aftandilian (1993), *Egypt´s Bid for Arab Leadership: Implications for U.S. Policy*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, p. 25.
35 Hinnebusch (2009), p. 219.
36 Only in 1968–1979 were ten regional developmental institutions established.
37 The asymmetrical mutual dependency did not have the potential to foster Arab solidarity (Murden /2009/, pp. 122–123) and in the mid-70s Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia started quarrelling over the Arab-Israel conflict solution instead of cooperating.
38 C. G. Smith (1968), 'The Emergence of the Middle East,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 3(3), p. 14.
39 Murden (2009), pp. 121, 137.
40 e.g. the Federation of Arab Republics joining Egypt, Libya and Syria in 1971–1977.
41 Sela (1998), p. 171.
42 Such as the collapse of the agreement on Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation, the annexation of Kuwait, etc.
43 Väyrynen (1984), p. 347.
44 Väyrynen (1984), p. 347.
45 Eduard Gombár and Lukáš Pecha (2013), *Dějiny Iráku*, Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, p. 511.
46 Saudi support of war-time Iraq therefore aimed 'to maintain a status quo in the Persian Gulf and in the Middle East.'; Väyrynen (1984), p. 348.
47 Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp (2004), *Iran-Saudi Arabia Relations and Regional Order. Iran and Saudi Arabia in the balance of power in the Gulf*. In-

ternational Institute for Strategic Studies ADELPHI Paper No. 304, Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 15, 71.

48 Luboš Kropáček (2002), *Islám a Západ. Historická paměť a současná krize*, Praha: Vyšehrad, p. 83.

49 Murden (2009), p. 137.

50 Murden (2009), p. 135.

51 Sela (1998), p. 234.

52 GCC countries have limited military force and in this aspect the organisation, even as a whole, cannot compete with the military capacities of Iran or, previously, Iraq.

53 Murden (2009), pp. 125–126, 131.

54 Fawcett (2011), p. 52.

55 Väyrynen (1984), p. 349.

56 Curtis R. Ryan (1998), 'Jordan and the rise and fall of the Arab Cooperation Council,' *The Middle East Journal* 52(3), pp. 386–389.

57 It continued the function of the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), uniting these three states from 1964 to 1979.

58 Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli (2001), *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East*, London, New York: Zed Books, p. 147.

59 Murden (2009), p. 133.

60 Different interests and visions of regional powers who, for instance, in the Lebanese war funded competing groups: Iran, the Shiite factions Hezbollah and Amal, Saudi Arabia the Sunni armed movements.; Tony Badran (2009), 'Lebanon's Militia Wars,' in Barry Rubin (ed.) *Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 47.

61 Oil monarchies could satisfy the socio-economic needs of citizens, who in "exchange" overlooked shortcomings in the country's political life. Republics (e.g. Syria, Iraq) consolidated power mainly by repressing the opposition and military mobilisation.

62 And it was the 'growing weight of the Islamic discourse', which underscored even more strongly the downfall of pan-Arab nationalism.; Sela (1998) p. 219.

63 Eyal Zisser (2006), 'Hizballah and Israel: Strategic Threat on the Northern Border,' *Israel Affairs* 12(1), p. 98.

64 Fawcett (2011), p. 44.

65 Murden (2009), p. 126.

66 Hinnebusch (2009), p. 222.

67 Yezid Sayigh (1999), 'Globalization Manqué: Regional Fragmentation and Authoritarian-Liberalism in the Middle East,' in Louise Fawcett – Yezid Sayigh (eds.) *The Third World beyond the Cold War: Continuity and Change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 203.

68 Sayigh (1999), p. 202.

69 Hinnebusch (2009), p. 223.

70 Even though it does not have sufficient coercive capacities to assume the role of 'regional security guard', its participation in the anti-Iraq coalition was politically significant.; Rosemary Hollis (1999), 'Capitalizing on Diplo-

macy,' in Phebe Marr (ed.) *Egypt at the Crossroads: Domestic Stability and Regional Role*, Washington: National Defense University Press, p. 142.

71 Michael Axworthy (2009), *Dějiny Íránu. Říše ducha – od Zarathuštry po současnost*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, p. 209; Buzan and Wæver (2003), p. 204.

72 Hokayem citation according to Shahram Chubin (2009), 'Iran´s Power in Context,' *Survival* 51(1), p. 166.

73 Chubin (2009), p. 181.

74 During the government of reformist president Mohammad Khatami (1997–2005) Iranian politics were "lighter" on ideology and relations with Arab monarchies and the US became warmer. The loss of emphasis on ideology was partially caused by the high costs of the war with Iraq. Iran realised (much as Arab countries led by Egypt had done) that subordinating foreign policies to ideology is too expensive (Hinnebusch /2009/, pp. 221–222). The rhetoric of conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005–2013) was, once more, full of anti-Israeli and anti-American slogans, and the criticism of regional rivals led to a renewed coolness in relations with Saudi Arabia and the US.

75 Axworthy (2009), p. 211.

76 Buzan and Wæver (2003), p. 191.

77 Most inter-state conflicts in the region in the past century were related to Israel, and no Arab leader could afford to ignore the Palestinian issue

78 Buzan and Wæver (2003), p. 215.

79 Abdul Monem Sa´id Ali (1999), 'From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics,' in Phebe Marr (ed.) *Egypt at the Crossroads: Domestic Stability and Regional Role*, Washington: National Defense University Press, pp. 156–157.

80 Fawcett (2011), p. 45.

81 Fareed Zakaria (2007), *The Future of Freedom. Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, p. 106.

82 Michael Barnett – Etel Solingen (2007), 'Designed to fail or failure of design? The origins and legacy of the Arab League,' in Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston (eds.) *Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 209.

83 Hinnebusch (2009), pp. 222–223.

84 Valbjørn and Bank (2012), p. 5.

85 e.g. Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, al-Qaeda

86 Trans-Arab media such as the Qatar TV channel *Al-Jazeera* and the Saudi *Al-Arabiya,* which dominate the media space in the Arab world, contribute to the creation of regional politics.

87 For instance, in the Hezbollah-Israel war (2006) the Arab public sympathised with Hezbollah, while Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan criticized the movement for its activities (Valbjørn and Bank /2012/, p. 8).

88 Valbjørn and Bank (2012), p. 15.

89 Fawcett (2011), p. 39.

90 In each decade of the 20th century, at least one inter-state conflict broke out and a number of inter-state and out-of-state conflicts. Meredith Reid

Sarkees and Frank Whelon Wayman (2010), *Resort to War: A Data Guide to Inter-State, Extra-State, Intra-state, and Non-State Wars, 1816-2007*, Washington: CQ Press, pp. 77, 197, 344–346, 487.

91 Murden (2009), p. 138.

92 Fawcett (2011), p. 53.

93 Hashmi (2009), p. 192.