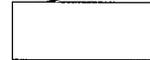


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**Interagency
Intelligence
Memorandum**

Arab Leadership Perceptions of the US

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18 February 1976
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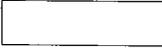
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ARAB LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS OF THE US

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ARAB LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS OF THE US

NOTE

This memorandum attempts to identify broad trends in the attitudes of the Arab states toward the US. It is not meant to be all-inclusive and, for the sake of brevity, it does not examine each Arab state in detail. Rather, individual states are discussed as they exemplify trends and illustrate the wide range of opinion among Arabs. In most cases, the states used as examples were selected because of their importance in the Arab world—and thus their importance to the US—either as key players in the Arab-Israeli dispute or as key economic powers. The trends noted in these states, however, also exist in other Arab nations that are not specifically discussed because of their lesser importance. The differences and particularities of the many Arab states and Arab leaders add to the difficulty of making generalizations about “the Arabs” but in no way eliminate the need to make the attempt.

The memorandum was prepared by CIA and generally concurred in by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and representatives of the US Army, Navy, and Air Force intelligence organizations. It reflects impressions gained following extensive discussions with officials of US embassies in Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Algeria.

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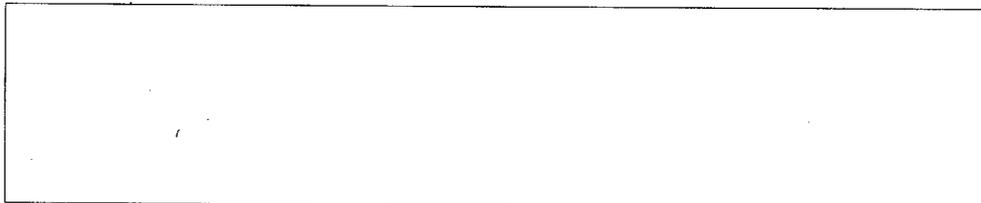
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PRECIS

Arab leaders, once ideologically rigid in their political outlook and thus seen as either pro- or anti-US, are today less emotional, more flexible, and more willing to consider the possible advantages of cooperation with the US. To one degree or another, they now recognize—where many would or could not recognize a decade ago—that the US holds the key to many of their most important objectives: to regain territories occupied by Israel, to obtain the technology to accompany their new economic power, and to find a market for their oil.

The extent to which any Arab state is willing to remove old ideological blinders about the US is largely a function of the degree of its pragmatism.

- In general, the greater an Arab state's inclination toward unemotional diplomatic flexibility, the greater its willingness to attempt cooperation with, if not necessarily to look favorably on, the US. Conversely, the greater its reliance on ideology, the more it is likely to be suspicious of the US and to remain aloof from contact with Washington.



- Others of the Arab states have also adopted a more flexible approach toward foreign policy in general and toward the US. But they have an ambivalent attitude toward the US that demonstrates, on the one hand, a greater willingness to try cooperation but, on the other, a lingering ideologically inspired suspicion that inhibits cooperation.

The Arab states' attitudes toward the US are conditioned in large measure by their perceptions of why the US supports Israel and by their understanding of the US political process and its potential effects on US foreign policy.

- As a rule, those Arab states, such as Egypt, that have had extensive contact with the US tend to be more tolerant of the

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“special” US-Israeli relationship and to recognize that US aid enables the US to press Israel for concessions. They are also more understanding of the difficulties the Administration can encounter from Congress in the implementation of foreign policy and, for this reason, they are more patient.

- Those Arab states with minimal contact and a residual suspicion of the US, on the other hand, have fundamental doubts about US willingness to pursue a peace settlement. Syria, for instance, regards US aid to Israel as merely reinforcing Israel’s reluctance to withdraw from Arab territories and believes that the Administration, far from being inhibited by Congress, simply does not want to alter the Middle East status quo.

US policies on energy problems and to some extent on the Arab-Israeli issue, as well as Congress’ increasing involvement in foreign policy, have adversely affected the viewpoint of Washington’s traditional friends among the Arab states.

- Saudi Arabia, for instance, is increasingly pessimistic about the US ability and willingness to broker a peace settlement, and Saudi leaders are disturbed over what they see as a rising tendency in the US to challenge rather than to cooperate with them.
- The Saudis still recognize the benefits that accrue to them because of the relationship with Washington, but recent developments in the US have raised new questions among them about the value of continued heavy dependence on the US.

Despite the Arab states’ less negative attitude toward the US in recent years, US-Arab relations remain fragile and subject to disruption. These relations, particularly in the area of the Arab-Israeli dispute, depend far less on objective circumstances than on Arab leaders’ still subjective measurement of US performance.

- Despite their increased pragmatism, Arab leaders still judge the Arab-Israeli conflict in large measure by their emotions, and they test the US by the results it produces rather than by its intentions. As far as they are concerned, the US has not proved itself as yet, and there will be no permanency in the political relationship until the Arabs come to believe it has.

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A decade ago, Arab leaders could be categorized with reasonable accuracy as "conservatives" or "progressives" and thus were seen as pro- or anti-West and pro- or anti-US. The Arab states' approach to the world was relatively simplistic. For the conservatives—some of whom, like Saudi Arabia, had not known Western domination—the West and the US represented a positive force against the forces of atheistic communism. These states also saw the US as their protector against subversive efforts by pan-Arabists like Egypt's Nasir. For the progressives, the US, as the leader of the Western world, symbolized Western colonialism and represented the force that had created and was sustaining Israel's alien presence in the midst of a supposedly unifiable Arab nation. The US was also locked in Cold War with the only major nation, the USSR, that championed Arab interests in the struggle with Israel.

2. Today the Arab states are neither so conveniently categorized nor so simplistic in their outlook. Arab leaders have grown in sophistication, and the Arab people have begun to demand more from their leaders. The people have generally grown weary of the rhetoric and empty promises on which many Arab leaders thrived before the 1967 war, and their own sense of greater realism has created a climate that requires greater pragmatism in their governments. Increased internal stability and economic development, moreover, have facilitated a more pragmatic approach to foreign policy.

3. Arab leaders have also been affected by outside factors. The dichotomy between East and West, which had profoundly influenced their world view in the 1950s and 1960s, is no longer so clear-cut. Both US-Soviet detente and international economic factors have made power relationships outside the Arab world more intricate. The Arabs have also found the US in recent years to be more attentive to their interests and more receptive to their overtures—a factor that has tended to make their own pragmatism a more attractive and productive policy.

4. As a result of these changes, Arab leaders' views of the US, once largely governed by emotion and ideology rather than by pragmatism, are now characterized by a greater adaptability. Arab attitudes can no longer be defined in terms of black or white. Although emotion still colors the outlook of many, and some who consider themselves progressives continue to look on the US with suspicion simply because it is the US, Arab leaders tend now to regard the US in less conspiratorial terms. They think primarily in terms of what the US might do *for* them and less in terms of what it might do *to* them.

5. Their individual attitudes vary, and it is not possible to single out any one Arab viewpoint as indicative of a norm. The variance is one of degree rather than of fundamental outlook, however, and there is a common thread that runs through the thinking of virtually all Arabs about

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the US—be they conservative or progressive, moderate or radical. The US holds the key to some of the Arabs' most important objectives: if they are to regain territories occupied by Israel, this will come only through the efforts of the US; the US can provide the technology necessary for their economic development plans; and the US can provide a market for their oil. With few exceptions, all Arab states have reached the point at which they can remove the ideological blinders that once made them unwilling to acknowledge, and often even to recognize, the potential advantages of Arab-US cooperation.

II. INDIVIDUALITY AND POLITICAL "MATURITY" AS FACTORS

6. The extent to which any individual Arab state is willing to act on this reality is a function of both the particular style of its leader and the degree of its pragmatism. Government in the Arab world is a highly personalized matter. Policies depend as much on the inclinations of individual leaders as on the demands of either the people or political institutions, and differing styles among the leaders of the separate states contribute in large measure to differing policies among those states.

7. The Arab states and their leaders also vary in the degree of their pragmatism. Some are better able than others to perceive the realities of a situation with minimal emotional and ideological inhibitions. Some are easily able, others less so, to formulate and gain domestic acceptance for a foreign policy that has strategic ends and is more than merely a shield for domestic weakness. Some are more capable than others of exercising tactical flexibility, of perceiving where self-interest is best served, and of accommodating the interests of other states. As a general rule, the greater an Arab state's inclination toward this unemotional flexibility, the greater its willingness to attempt cooperation with, if not necessarily to look favorably on, the US. Conversely, the greater its reliance on ideology, the more it is likely to be suspicious of the US and to remain aloof from contact with Washington.

8. An examination of Egypt's policies will illustrate the former point. The policies of Syria, the Palestinians, and Iraq illustrate in varying degrees the latter point.

A. Egypt Under Sadat

9. The policies of Egypt's President Sadat over the past few years provide the most striking example of the Arabs' growing flexibility in the pursuit of strategic goals. Although Sadat is often accused by his Arab critics of pawning Egypt's interests to the US. [redacted]

[redacted] his continual conflict with the Soviet Union is evidence enough of his fear of outside domination and his obsession with preserving Egypt's independence. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] he has developed a foreign policy that is based on the establishment of mutually cooperative relationships with any nation that can aid Egypt [redacted]

[redacted] The US heads his list.

10. Sadat believes, and has stated repeatedly, that the US "holds all the cards" in the effort to reach a negotiated settlement that would see the Israelis withdraw from occupied Arab territory. This is the Arabs' most vital goal, and Sadat's turn toward the US involves nothing more complex than an acknowledgement of the fact that only the US can bring about real progress toward that goal—something neither Arab military strength nor Soviet diplomacy is likely to achieve. There is also nothing complex in Sadat's belief that, if he is to fulfill his goal of reconstructing Egypt economically, he must seek Western, including US, investment and technical assistance.

11. [redacted]

Sadat often talks of the changed US attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict and takes full credit for forcing the US, through the 1973 war, to recognize "where its true interests lie." [redacted]

[redacted]

12. With his rejection of the Arabs' often typical diplomatic rigidity, Sadat has also rejected the

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notion that political cooperation must necessarily require unanimity of political views. Despite his close relations with the US, Sadat recognizes that there remain fundamental differences between Egypt and Washington on some of the issues—the Palestine question, for instance—most deeply involved in their mutual search for a negotiated Arab-Israeli settlement. [redacted]

[redacted]

13. Sadat has taken at least some of the basis for his cooperative approach to foreign policy formulation from the example of US-Soviet detente, [redacted]

[redacted]

Detente was initially a sharp disappointment for Sadat, who had expected the Soviets to press the Arab case during the US-Soviet summits in 1972 and 1973. [redacted]

[redacted]

14. The example of the superpowers' accommodation on some of the major issues that divide them demonstrated the [redacted] approach to foreign relations that Sadat has now built into his foreign policy. [redacted]

[redacted]

B. Syria Under Asad

15. Ambivalence best characterizes Syria's political outlook and its attitude toward the US; it is

at once open to US overtures and deeply suspicious of the US.

16. In his five years of leadership, President Asad has brought a degree of internal political stability to Syria that previous leaders were never able to achieve in the state's first quarter century of independence. [redacted]

[redacted] he has gained more for Syria socially, economically, and politically—particularly in relation to the Arab-Israeli dispute—than was possible under previous Syrian regimes. Asad [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] has won both more independence from Baathist pressure and more genuine popularity than his predecessors ever enjoyed. His foreign policies have required an accommodation and adjustment to international realities [redacted] never before considered tolerable by Syria's doctrinaire Baathists.

17. [redacted]

Yet many of the ideological principles in which the Baath Party was originally grounded, and which inspired its political and diplomatic inflexibility, still animate the thinking of party and government leaders. The party hierarchy tends to be dogmatic and unbending. [redacted]

[redacted]

18. The party was founded in the 1940s with three goals—liberation from foreign domination, Arab unity, and socialism. Each goal was inspired by a desire to restore honor and prestige to the Arab world; each was also inspired by xenophobic, principally anti-Western, sentiments. Baathists believed, and still do, that it was the West that was largely responsible for the Arabs' political impotence and their economic and social backwardness. They set Arab unity and socialism as goals to combat Western political and economic strength. The US—as the principal Western power when the Baath party was emerging and as a champion of Israel—became the principal villain. Although rejection of US policies and ideas is today no longer automatic by any means, a residual suspicion of

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much that is Western continues to dictate extreme caution in dealing with the US.

19. This suspicion is reinforced by Syrian personality traits that do not readily facilitate diplomatic flexibility or receptivity to outside ideas and influences. The Syrians are an intensely proud people, but their experience with the West gives them a sense of inferiority; they are deeply fearful of humiliation and therefore reluctant to compromise and to accommodate others' interests. They are somewhat taciturn and inclined to be suspicious of everyone outside their immediate circle, whether this is the family, the village, or the nation. [redacted]

20. As a result, Syria's threshold for tolerating disagreement or differences of political viewpoint is low, and its capacity for a give-and-take relationship with other states is limited. Syrian leaders do not respect differing US viewpoints on Middle East issues; they distrust them. In Syria's view, a relationship with the US, as with any state, must be more a matter of take than of give if the ties are to be cemented. Every political issue is a matter for intense bargaining, and the Syrians' fear of being humiliated makes them reluctant to go half-way unless the other party has moved there first. With the US, they were ready for a better relationship when it was proved that the US could and would achieve for them a disengagement agreement on the Golan Heights; now when a second agreement is less certain, they are not only less willing to negotiate but also more inclined to view the US with suspicion.

C. Palestinians

21. The Palestinians do not fall neatly into categories with regard either to their political sophistication or to their attitude toward the US. The movement—if it can be described at all in the singular—is like the Arab world in microcosm: divided over

tactics, unable to agree even on strategy, unwilling to follow the guidance of a single leader, and differing widely in levels of pragmatism and perceptions of the US. The moderate leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization is nonetheless the most cohesive of the Palestinian groups and, to the extent its views are united, it is the group best able to formulate a unitary policy toward the US. For the purposes of this study, therefore, only the views of the PLO will be considered.

22. In a very real but paradoxical sense, the PLO—the centerpiece of the Arab struggle with Israel and the element that most readily induces the Arab states to espouse an emotional and inflexible policy—has itself pursued a policy with the Arab states that is generally pragmatic and self-interested. Years of existence at the mercy of other Arabs have made the Palestinians skilled practitioners of the art of political give-and-take, at least among the Arabs. [redacted]

23. Internal problems within the Palestinian movement—the division over strategy between Palestinian “rejectionists” and those prepared to consider negotiations with Israel, as well as division over tactics within the PLO itself—have forced [redacted] the PLO to a far less adaptable [redacted] position where the US is concerned. Like Syria, the PLO is deeply suspicious of the US and reluctant to *initiate* any compromise that could break the deadlock in the US-Palestinian political stand-off; PLO leaders feel they must have concessions *from* the US before they will make concessions themselves. But the PLO is not entirely rigid or opposed to the US. Although they doubt US sincerity, PLO leaders recognize that for now the key to a Middle East settlement lies in US hands. They have unofficially reacted favorably to the Administration statement on the Palestinian issue made in November 1975, and they have repeatedly signaled their readiness for contact with the US.

D. Iraq

24. Iraq is a unique mixture of self-interested pragmatism and ideological rigidity; its relations with the US are a combination of openness and deep suspicion. In the economic field, oil and the realities of the marketplace have induced a considerable degree of pragmatism among Iraqi leaders, and they have few inhibitions about maintaining and increasing commercial and economic ties with the US. Baghdad's first priority is rapid economic development, a goal that Iraqi leaders believe requires good commercial relations with the US. In 1974 Iraq became the fifth largest Arab market for US goods—after Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, and Lebanon—and US exports to Iraq for 1975 far exceeded the 1974 total of \$285 million. The Iraqis have shown a marked preference for US industrial goods and technology over that available from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Iraqi strongman Saddam Husayn Tikriti has openly espoused the idea of expanded commercial contacts with US companies.

25. In the political field, Iraq's attitude is less easily defined. The regime is to a large extent hidebound in its political relations with the US because of an ideological outlook that permits little compromise. Despite the proliferation of commercial deals between Iraq and the US in the past few years, Baghdad retains a xenophobic view of the West that dictates extreme suspicion of the US. Iraqi leaders are concerned at the extent of US cooperation with Iran, and their views of the US are also highly colored by their attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. Iraq is the only Arab state among those that broke with the US in 1967 over the Middle East war that has not reestablished full diplomatic ties with Washington, and it severely limits official contact with the three US diplomats who staff the US interests section in Baghdad.

26. Iraq's aloofness from the US is not dictated solely by unreasoning ideology. It is not a case of blind refusal to consider political ties but a deliberate decision by Iraq that its interests are best served by maintaining a political distance. For the moment, Baghdad simply sees no advantage in moving closer to the US politically. The Iraqis question US ability and willingness to negotiate

an Arab-Israeli peace settlement and, by remaining aloof until they are either vindicated or proved wrong, they can retain the "purity" of their Arab nationalist credentials without damaging their economic interests.

III. ISRAEL, THE US, AND US COMMITMENTS

27. Within the limitations imposed by the Arab states' differing levels of political sophistication, all regard the US as potentially the key factor in the Arab-Israeli political equation. Almost to a man, the Arabs believe the US has it in its power to effect a total Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, but the degree of their patience, as well as their understanding of the difficulties, vary. Arab perceptions of how effectively the US can and will act differ according to their views of why the US backs Israel.

28. The Arab states fundamentally disagree with the US over the importance that support for Israel has for the US. In their eyes, US interests would be far better served by closer ties with the Arabs, or at least by a less "special" relationship with Israel. Those Arab leaders who have had extensive contacts with the US, however, tend as a rule to be more tolerant of the "special" aspect of US-Israeli relations. They understand that it is only because of these ties that they can hope to achieve progress toward an Israeli withdrawal.

29. The Arabs' views of US trustworthiness and of its ability to live up to commitments, either bilateral or in connection with peace negotiations, also vary according to the level of their understanding of the US political process and its effects on foreign policy. Most Arab leaders do not fully understand this process and the independence of Congress from the Administration. Those who do not understand tend to think that the Administration itself is insincere in making commitments; the minority who do understand are inclined to worry that Congress will thwart what are otherwise good US intentions. In either case, the effect is a skeptical attitude, varying considerably in intensity, toward US pledges.

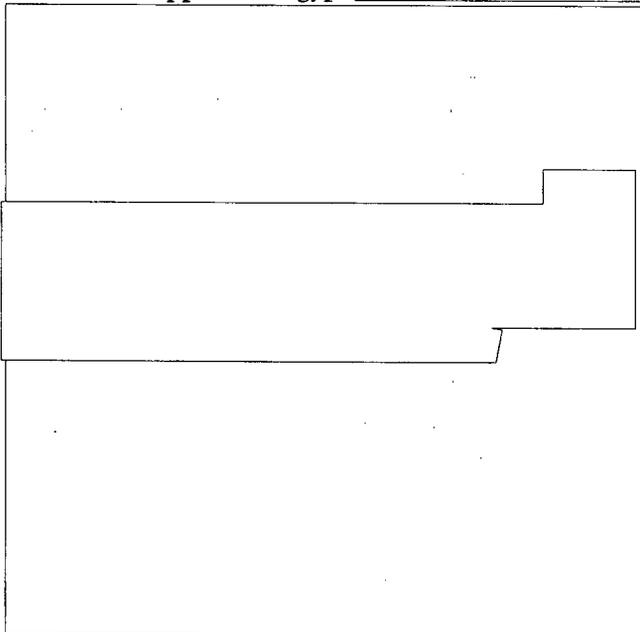
30. Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan are examined below as illustrating the range of opinion in the Arab world on US support for Israel and on the dependability of US commitments.

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A. Egypt

31. Egypt recognizes that US aid to Israel is the prime factor in Washington's ability to maintain leverage on the Israelis for political concessions. The Egyptian Government's attitude toward the US is dependent, however, on whether the aid is in fact used to apply pressure in Tel Aviv. Before the 1973 war, when Egyptian officials believed that the US supported Israel not only militarily but politically in its occupation of Arab territories, each new increment of aid, no matter what its size, brought an automatic and vociferous negative reaction. Cairo felt that the aid only reinforced Israel's ability to maintain its occupation. Far larger doses of aid since the war, on the other hand, have brought no more than a weak and largely pro forma protest. The Egyptians—President Sadat at least—now acknowledge that aid used as pressure produces more results than no aid at all, and Egypt has clearly benefited from that pressure.

32. Although the Egyptians do not really understand why support for Israel should be an important and emotional issue for many non-Jewish as well as Jewish Americans, Egyptian leaders accept it as a fact and as a challenge to their own ability to win American support for Egypt. [REDACTED]



33. The Egyptian government is nonetheless ambivalent about the long-range prospects for its relationship with the US. Egyptian officials have

gained a sophisticated understanding of the difficulties the Administration occasionally faces in Congress on issues related to the Middle East, and they tend for this reason to worry about US inability to move rapidly. At the same time, their understanding of the US political process makes them more sympathetic to the Administration's difficulties than many other Arabs.

34. Egypt is concerned that Congress will not allow the US to meet either bilateral commitments or pledges on negotiations, and it is frustrated that even the Administration has not moved to establish the full political, economic, and military relationship that Cairo seeks. On the other hand, Egyptian officials are encouraged by the progress they have made with the US in the past two years, and they are acutely aware of every small sign of greater improvement. They read even the US withdrawal from Vietnam as an encouraging sign, as an indication that the US does eventually face up to "reality," or what they perceive to be reality. They take encouragement from Vietnam that the US will eventually see the "reality" that its true interests lie in pressing Israel to reach a satisfactory peace agreement with the Arabs.

B. Syria

35. Syria, as noted, is less understanding and less optimistic. Syrian leaders recognize that there are some in the US who support Israel wholeheartedly and some who question such close support. The Syrians' expanded contacts with US officials in recent years, as well as with US Congressmen and journalists, have made them somewhat more aware of the workings of the US political process. But their appreciation of the subtleties, and even of the not-so-subtle aspects, of that process remains almost zero. They look on any differences between Administration and Congressional attitudes toward Israel as insignificant, and they have fundamental doubts about the US desire to pursue what they consider a just peace. Syrian officials believe that the Administration basically does not want to alter the Middle East status quo, and that the US has undertaken some efforts at mediation only as a tactical move either to lull the Arabs or because it was forced into action by the Arabs' military strength and their control of oil supplies.

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36. Syrian leaders believe that the US could, if it chose, force a total Israeli withdrawal simply by cutting off military and economic aid. To this extent, they recognize the value of aid as a means of exerting pressure on Israel, but they tend to feel it is illusory to regard such aid as accomplishing anything but the reinforcement of Israel's reluctance to withdraw from Arab territories. In the Syrian view, Israel is an expansionist state, a "fact" the US either does not properly understand or supports, and US military aid only enhances Israel's appetite. The Syrians read continued high levels of US aid to Israel as proof that the US does not after all desire a settlement that would satisfy the Arabs.

C. Saudi Arabia

37. Saudi Arabia, with typical ambivalence, falls somewhere between Egypt's considerable trust in the US and Syria's particular skepticism. The Saudis, conscious of their vulnerability in the Arab world, were for years far ahead of the other Arabs in their pragmatic willingness to establish a cooperative relationship with the US despite fundamental—in their case particularly deep and emotional—differences with the US on its support for Israel. They are now increasingly pessimistic about Washington's ability and willingness to negotiate an overall Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

38. Friction between the Administration and Congress since Watergate has eroded Saudi willingness to rely on promises from the Administration. Although many Saudis consider the US political system incomprehensible, if not irrational, contacts with Americans over the years have brought the ruling and business classes, as well as the younger generation of US-educated elites, to a fair understanding of Congress' potential for restricting the Administration's maneuverability in foreign policy matters. Saudi leaders have always been somewhat doubtful that the Administration itself is willing to exert pressure on Israel to any significant extent, and their concern over the muscle recently shown by Congress, which they perceive as unalterably pro-Israeli, has reinforced suspicions that the US is too biased to broker a settlement.

39. Congress' increasing involvement in foreign policy has also affected the Saudi attitude toward the US on bilateral issues. Saudi leaders have a long

list of grievances against Congress: its agitation against the Arab boycott and against Riyadh's restrictions on the entry of American Jews to Saudi Arabia, its exposure of agent fees paid to prominent Saudis by US companies, and its reluctance to conclude arms agreements with Arab countries. Saudi Arabia has no wish to deal with an ascendant Congress, and it is beginning to look more closely at other options for obtaining the arms and developmental assistance that make it dependent on the US.

40. Conflict with the US over energy problems has had a still deeper impact on Saudi perceptions of US dependability as a partner. Saudi officials originally looked on their partnership with the US as a way to impose bilateral management over, and bring an amicable resolution to, problems of price and production. But they have been disillusioned by US insistence on treating the problem as one of all producers versus all consumers, and they regard the US refusal of their offers of cooperation—as they see it—as indicating that the US is insincere in its desire to establish a partnership in other areas of mutual interest. This feeling has been reinforced by veiled US threats to seize Saudi oilfields.

41. Saudi leaders, in discussions with US officials, have also pointed to the US withdrawal from Vietnam as a reason for doubting US willingness to stand by its Arab allies. Whereas most Arab countries were little affected by, and even applauded, the end of the US role in Vietnam, Saudi Arabia was one of the few countries in the world that wholeheartedly supported the war. The Saudis saw it as a crusade against atheistic communism, and there is probably a tendency among them

to regard the withdrawal in moral terms, as a knuckling under to the forces of evil.

42. Saudi leaders still generally accept the US as a credible ally; they simply cannot believe that Congress or the Administration would act to make normal commercial intercourse impossible between Saudi Arabia and the US. They know that this is an immensely profitable relationship to the US and that the US needs Saudi oil, at least for the short term. The relationship is also, of course, of value to them and, whatever their doubts about US ability to achieve a peace settlement, they recognize that

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the best hope for progress at present lies with Washington. But recent development within the US, as well as Saudi Arabia's own increasing confidence in its economic and political power, have raised questions as never before among the Saudis about the value of continued heavy dependence on the US.

D. Jordan

43. Jordan, like Saudi Arabia, has traditional ties with the US and a built-in tendency to rely heavily on and trust Washington. But a conjuncture of events over the last year—some of US making, others involving the US only indirectly—has caused Amman to take a second look at the relationship.

44. As the most moderate by far among the states in confrontation with Israel, Jordan has long been able to accept, if not understand, the US relationship with Israel, and [redacted]

[redacted] has brought rewards in terms of badly needed US aid. [redacted]

[redacted] Jordan's tameness since the 1967 war has made its concerns less pressing than those of the other confrontation states. Israel and the US treated Jordan as the Arab country least to be feared, the one whose military and political problems could be left until last. While Jordan waited, the other Arabs at the Rabat summit in 1974 stripped it of any title to the West Bank. [redacted]

45. Recent events in the US have added to this uncertainty. The fall of Vietnam raised serious questions about Washington's ability to stick with its allies, and Congress' near rejection of the sale of Hawk missiles to Jordan early last year has caused doubts about the Administration's ability to carry through on commitments. The Administration's subsequent vigorous efforts, and ultimate success, on behalf of the Hawk deal have helped restore its stock with Jordanian officials, but there

is now a general feeling among them that the Executive does not have a firm hold on its relations with Congress and that in the future Administration sincerity might not be enough.

46. Jordan's strong ties with the US have not been seriously weakened, but they have been buffeted enough recently to diminish a previous sense of unquestioning trust and Amman is quickly learning that friendships might be formed elsewhere as well. Jordan is refurbishing its ties with the Soviets. Although the move is cautious and hesitant, it is meant primarily as a challenge to the US. Jordanian leaders are learning how to play one friend off against the other.

IV. THE US GLOBAL POSITION

47. Like most peoples, the Arabs tend to be self-centered in their view of international developments. They do not dwell at length on global strategic questions, except as these impinge on the Arab-Israeli situation or the Arab economic position. Many Arab leaders rue the fact that US-Soviet detente has deprived Third World nations of a degree of leverage on the superpowers by diminishing their ability to play one off against the other, but this is only in rare instances a cause for real concern or even much attention. If anything, the Arab states seem to believe the US hand in the Middle East has been strengthened because of detente, and they have striking evidence of rising US influence in the area in recent years. Few Arab leaders consider the longer range picture or give serious thought to long-term prospects for US strength, either in the Middle East or globally. For the present, whether the US is stronger or weaker in relative terms, Arab leaders still regard it as the chief world power. They are not necessarily pleased with this conclusion, but they make their calculations on this basis.

48. Among the few Arab states that do give consideration to broad international issues beyond the Arab-Israeli situation, detente is viewed negatively, but the US position has not necessarily been damaged. In many ways, the Cold War was a comfortable situation for the Arabs, whose own inclination toward confrontation politics was reinforced by US-Soviet confrontation. The Arab states could always count on one superpower for assistance,

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or at least for political support, if the other would or could not help them. This is less the case now, and many of the Arab leaders, although not averse to the diminished potential for conflict between the US and the Soviets, see detente as shifting the focus of international confrontation from one between superpowers to one between both superpowers on the one hand and Third World nations on the other. They view detente as having removed the Third World's principal champion, the Soviets, from the fray and thus as having diminished the less developed nations' opportunities for economic and technological advancement.

A. Algeria

49. Algeria exemplifies this view. Its primary interest lies in the economic issues that go to the heart of the developed versus developing nations conflict and, as self-appointed spokesman for the nonaligned movement, it has a more direct interest than the other Arabs in the broader impact of detente. Algeria views detente as a potentially harmful alliance against the interests of the Third World, but in a negative sense the US has gained precisely for this reason. In Algerian eyes, the US had always been the villain on the world scene; the Soviet Union, if not the hero, had at least championed the "right" causes. Now, as a result of detente, the US is no worse; the USSR, somewhat diminished in revolutionary stature.

50. Algeria's missionary zeal for Third World causes and its support for the world's revolutionary movements places it naturally in opposition to the US, which Algerian leaders still consider an imperialist exploiter of small nations. Yet the revolutionary fervor does not get in the way of a pragmatic readiness to deal with the US that has been all but institutionalized in Algeria. US businessmen are Algeria's commercial partners, the US is a market for its natural gas exports, and US technicians are aiding it on the road to economic development.

V. CONCLUSION

51. There is no single Arab perception of the US. Viewpoints vary with the Arab states' emotional attachment to ideological or revolutionary principles, with their differing economic strengths and

needs, and with the styles of individual leaders. There has, however, been a general if not at all uniform shift of Arab opinion away from the negative. The movement has been minimal in some cases, as with Iraq; it has been dramatic in others, as with Egypt. In many instances, indeed in most, a shift from the automatic negative does not necessarily produce a favorable opinion. Syria and Algeria, for instance, have both become more open to cooperation with the US in recent years, but neither can be said to regard the US favorably.

52. Where Arab attitudes have moved away from the negative, the shift has been a matter of simple self-interest. Rarely, perhaps only with Saudi Arabia, are close ties with the US an emotional, ideological issue. The US does, however, more than any other single state, possess the economic, technological, and political resources to assist the Arab states in the attainment of their goals. Their increased pragmatism now allows them to take advantage of this without the ideological inhibitions that once led them into unreasoning and usually unproductive confrontation with the US.

53. But no less a factor in the Arab states' changed attitudes has been Washington's own responsiveness, at least as the Arabs measure this. No Arab state reestablished diplomatic relations with the US after the 1973 war until the US had involved itself, to a degree the Arabs believed served their interests, in active peace negotiations. Sadat turned toward the US in 1973 not only because *his* tactics had changed but because the US began to pursue policies that he saw as beneficial for Egypt.

54. This is not a trend that the US can entirely control, for while the US can facilitate the Arab states' shift to a less ideologically rigid outlook through overtures and actions that demonstrate the tangible benefits of a pragmatic policy, it is the Arabs, using their own *subjective* standards, who will measure how the US is performing. For this reason, US-Arab political relations are far more fragile than economic relations and far more subject to disruption.

55. Arab leaders are pragmatic enough to maintain at least limited economic ties when political disagreements arise. Although they could and would disrupt oil, trade, and investment relations to hurt

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the US over an issue of overriding political importance to them, there is a point beyond which they would refuse to endanger their own national interests.

56. In the political field, particularly in the area of the Arab-Israeli dispute, the situation is not so clear-cut. Political relations depend far less on objective circumstances than on US performance on

an issue that Arab leaders gauge in large measure by their emotions. The US is judged more by what it *does* produce than what it hopes or even attempts to produce. For the Arabs, the US has not fully proved itself as yet, even as far as the most enthusiastic leaders like Sadat are concerned, and there will be no real stability in the political relationship until they come to believe it has.