The Middle East Politics: Post Ottoman Empire and the Cold War

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Abstract

According to this study, the Middle East is made up of an Arab core that shares a common identity but is divided into numerous territorial states. The Arab periphery, which includes Turkey, and Iran, is made up of non-Arab states that are closely involved in the region's conflicts and power dynamics. This paper will explain its propensity for war and long history of hostilities, the region of the Middle East is perhaps the focal point of global crises. It seems to be the area where the realism paradigm continues to have the most importance and where the chaos and insecurity that the realistic view of international politics saw as the core characteristics of state systems remain most evident. As much as it has formed the units of the region, the recent and unconsolidated regional structure has been opposed by them. Furthermore, the realism that assumes conflict is mostly the inevitable result of anarchy within a state system ignores the primary causes of the exceptional war and insecurity that exist in the Middle East. This paper analyses the root cause of conflict and state conduct in the Middle East. Understanding the core-dominated system that limits the fates of local peoples and causes tremendous conflict in the Middle East.

The Middle East is widely recognized for its instability, which is primarily attributed to the competition between major countries in the area. Nonetheless, the area saw stability throughout the Ottoman Empire until its demise. Stability followed the creation of nation-states in the area for a period, until foreign forces left. In this view, a force capable of uniting the states of the region in an inclusive fashion, like the Ottoman Empire did in the past, is necessary for stability. The region has been the subject of a great deal of research, but not much theoretical framework analysis has been done on it. The Middle East is currently experiencing significant geopolitical and socioeconomic changes. Revolutions from below are making their way from Algeria to Lebanon. A hazardous competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran is raging across the region, with forces backed by both countries engaged in proxy conflicts spanning from Yemen to Syria. Both the United States & Russia are engaging in regional and local politics, albeit in very different ways, which may also be endangering the southern flank of Europe. Under Donald J. Trump's leadership, Washington is withdrawing from the area while at the same time supporting long-standing regional allies like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel. Moscow has acted quickly to position itself as the region's most stable and dependable partner by taking advantage of the US's actions as well as the unrest in the area. Is the Middle East experiencing a new Cold War? Not exactly. However, it is important to comprehend how the region's initial bipolar conflict developed because many of the effects of the decisions made by the superpowers and their allies throughout those four crucial decades are still felt today.

Keywords: Middle East, Politics, Rivalry, Statehood, International Relations, War, Cold War, Ottoman, Arab World.

Introduction

The Middle East's political landscape is firmly established in its extensive and multifaceted past, which has been molded by several civilizations, faiths, empires, and outside factors. Some of the oldest civilizations in history were founded in the Middle East, including Ancient Egypt along the Nile and Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, and Assyria in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq). These societies created city-states, kingdoms, and eventually empires, some of the earliest examples of governmental organization. One of the first significant empires in the area, the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550–330 BCE) stretched from the Indus Valley to Greece. It was renowned for its intricate road and bureaucratic systems, which promoted trade and communication. Greek political thought and culture spread over the Middle East after Alexander the Great's conquests. Following Alexander's death, two important Hellenistic governments emerged: the Seleucid Empire & the Ptolemaic Kingdom. Next is the Roman Empire, which grew to include parts of the Middle East such Egypt, Syria, and Judea. The Eastern Roman Empire, often known as the Byzantine Empire, remained to be very influential in the politics of the area even after the Roman Empire was divided.

Islamic Empires and Caliphates

The advent of Islam and the founding of the Islamic Caliphate occurred in the seventh century, with the Rashidun Caliphs leading the way, then the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. By uniting huge provinces under one single religious and political authority, these caliphates propagated Islamic governance and culture. The Ottoman Empire began to gain prominence in the 14th century and eventually ruled over most of the Middle East, North Africa, and portions of Europe. The intricate legal structure and hierarchy of the Ottoman administrative structure combined Islamic law with regional norms.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European colonization and interference in the Middle East intensified. Following the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the British as well as French empires, in particular, assumed sovereignty over numerous regions, frequently through protectorates and mandates. Nationalist groups also gained traction in the early 20th century. Following World War II, a number of Middle Eastern nations attained independence, giving rise to contemporary nation-states. Significant political turmoil occurred during this time, including the Iranian Revolution, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and several coups and revolutions.

Additionally, Cold War and Later, The Middle East became the center of the geopolitical conflict between the US and the USSR during the Cold War. Oil politics also became more prominent during this time, with Middle Eastern nations emerging as key participants in the world energy market. The Middle East's political landscape is complicated and varied today, containing a mixture of authoritarian regimes, republics, and monarchies. The politics of the area are still shaped by concerns including economic hardships, foreign meddling, sectarianism, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Thus, this synopsis offers a foundation for comprehending the intricate and varied political chronicles of the Middle East. The political, social, as well as cultural landscape of the area has been influenced permanently by each era and event.

Decline of Ottoman Empire and Middle East politics

One of the biggest and most enduring empires in history was the Ottoman Empire. It reached its height under the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566), when it expanded to include Hungary and the Balkans until finally reaching Vienna's borders. But following its defeat at the Battle of Lepanto (1571)

and the loss of nearly its whole fleet, the Empire started to crumble. The First World War and the Balkan Wars essentially put an end to it as it continued to deteriorate over the ensuing generations. In the Muslim world, the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Ottoman Caliphate) had a profound effect. Through the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Britain and France changed the Middle East and created a new region where the petrodollar and oil dominated the region's politics and economy. The agreement also paved the way for the ten-year battle that has been existing in the occupied lands between European Jewish settlers and native Palestinians.

It is common knowledge that the primary actors in the Middle East can be divided into two categories: regional and international. However, some parties attempt to assert their dominance over the region by entangling themselves in local conflicts. The USA and the Russian Federation can be viewed as the major global players in the region, while Israel, Turkey, and Iran might be regarded as regional actors. However, it is evident that no established state, with the exception of Iran and Turkey in terms of historical links and geopolitical proximity, genuinely belongs to or has organic ties with the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire, which governed the Arab Middle East from multiple times in the 16th century, began to lose power. This was one historical development that occurred prior the Arab Middle East emerged what it became after 1914. This chapter investigates the extent to which the fall of the Ottoman Empire may be linked to the sudden and fierce emergence of Arab nationalism and the aspiration to break free from Turkish domination and create new nation states. Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, neither of the administrations that sprang from it nor the "Middle East" as an entire region have experienced a time of security or peace within their borders. This study argues that the instability is caused by the artificiality that exists in the area. Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi's evolving hypothesis, the Barakah Circle principle, holds that other states will be impacted in proportion to their distance from Islamic Jerusalem if there is instability there. It is evident that countries farther away are less affected and former Ottoman territories near Islamic Jerusalem are in fact more affected.

Ottoman Empire: Stabilizer or a Cause of Instability?

Beginning of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire made the Middle East a more powerful and populated region. Relative stability prevailed initially. It is common knowledge that the Ottoman Empire resisted European imperialism for nearly six centuries and remained powerful in the meanwhile. According to the study's theoretical framework, this position is the outcome of Syria and Egypt coming together. However, one may argue that its inclusivity policies, together with its military force and political system, were the cause of this.

"The Ottomans preferred to offer their non-Muslim citizens an adequate amount of independence as long as they continued obedient & paid their taxes," as Hathaway contends in her book. Minorities and non-Muslim groups also have rights of their own, including the freedom to practice their particular religion and/or beliefs while being protected by the government. Put another way, during their time in power, the Ottomans didn't put in regulations that separated people based on their nationality or faith. The Ottoman Empire was home to numerous religious and ethnic communities throughout its history, and until nationalism began to interfere with this cooperative connection, their connection with the state at large was amicable and cooperative.

The Ottoman government's recruitment of governors is another indication of its cooperative spirit. Up until 1622, the Ottoman Empire implemented a policy known as Devşirme, which provided education to people of many ethnic backgrounds. The Polish settlement near Istanbul serves as another illustration.

When Polish refugees fled Russian domination in the 19th century, they were granted land to settle on in the Ottoman Empire, which became known as the Polonezköy, or Polish Village in English. Some of the instability in the Middle East today, including the tense relations between Israel and Palestine, can be attributed to the Ottoman Empire's demise. It is tenable to argue that the defunct interactions between the region's states are the result of nationalism. Eagleton says that nationalism can be considered a type of alienation. Or, more precisely, one of the primary causes of instability in the Middle East is the emergence of nation-states in the area. Nation-states created an exclusivist rationale in the minds of region governments' decision-makers since creating nation-states in the region entails splitting Arabs. Furthermore, racism is an excessive form of patriotism that will support Western nations' colonial activities.

Furthermore, nation-states in the contemporary world are based on their own conventions, values, peoples, and wars. In the Middle East, nearly all of the nation-states are man-made, having been established by Imperial powers following World War I. Therefore, the origins of instability in the vicinity are the artificial borders imposed by the colonizers as a result of their colonial demarcation tactics. It is interesting to note that the decline of the Berlin Wall, or more accurately, the end of superficiality in Europe, marked the beginning of Europe's true ascent. Nation-states, however, are not the sole manifestation of the Middle East's exclusive character. Islamism blends with nationalism in the larger picture of rebellion towards non-Muslim foreign domination as well as occupation" describes the current state of affairs. Nevertheless, despite the ongoing dispute over its status as a Western power, Russia continues to pursue colonial policies. Restoring the state machinery in Syria in accordance with Russian theories is one of Russia's plans, for example. One study made the case that the region's unrest is caused by the democratization process being undermined. The author suggests that the existence of foreign forces is the cause of unrest or instability, even though his answer does not follow the same lines as this study. Stated differently, instability in the region can also be attributed to foreign presence or dominance.

Due to its loss in the conflict, the Empire was forced to accept the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement involving France and Britain after World War I. As per the terms of this deal, Palestine went to Britain and the area that is now known as Syria to France. This share is intriguing because it shows that Britain was interested in Palestine and France was interested in Syria. The territory was shared by the superpowers of the day, but why? From a shared perspective, it might be argued that the region's raw minerals were a commonality. Furthermore, the US and Russia's power struggle over oil is the reason for the ongoing instability in the region.

To be sure, this is partially accurate, but it is not a complete explanation. The perspective that is centered on oil misses the geopolitical rationale behind colonialism and just concentrates on the raw materials.

The Ottoman administrative system was founded on decentralization during its period of domination. Laws bounded every captured territory to the center. Every province, notably Egypt, did, however, have certain rights and the freedom to manage their own affairs. The Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha granted Egypt a legislation in 1525 that gave Egyptian governors various rights, like acting as the safe deposit box for local taxes that were transferred to Istanbul. Ultimately, an Egyptian governor threatened Istanbul by abusing these rights for personal gain. Following the threat posed by Egypt's Muhammad Ali Pasha's attempt to proclaim independence in 1838, the alliance of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Britain preserved the Ottoman Empire.

The fact that each of these nations was pursuing a distinct strategy to drive the Ottoman Empire out of Anatolia & the Middle East strikes me as intriguing. Then, one must question why they made an effort to

support the Ottoman Empire. From a geopolitical standpoint, the response is straightforward. The rise of an assertive and strong Egyptian state that posed a threat to the global balance of power was not something that Western countries were ready to allow, according to Quataert. In this way, rather than assisting a burgeoning empire, Western colonial superpowers chose to back a collapsing one at that period. The Ottoman Empire survived when the West & Russia planned to destroy the state. The intriguing aspect of the Barakah Circles idea is that the Ottoman Empire was threatened with what appeared to be complete destruction at the hands of a united Egypt and Syria. In his theoretical perspective, El-Awaisi often emphasizes the significance of Egypt and Syria's union as forming a potent posture in the international arena. For example, following the conflict of Marj Dabiq in 1516, the Ottomans defeated the Mamluk Sultanate and took control of Old Syria. during their victory at Marj Dabiq, the Ottomans marched on Egypt, where they defeated the Mamluks in 1517 during the Battle of Ridaniya. El-Awaisi claims that Selim's endeavor is proof of the natural connection between ancient Syria and Egypt. According to this theory, a power—like the Ottomans—will lose its dominant position or ability to rule over these two regions if it is unable to combine and govern them. The Ottoman Empire made every attempt, but it was unable to stop the inevitable conclusion. All that the end of World War I brought was the start of the Ottoman Empire's final fall, which had started decades before. During this procedure, already developing disputes in the area peaked. In this way, it could be argued that regional instability is more visible in areas where regional powers are weaker. For example, the Jewish population in Jerusalem increased considerably with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and Israeli occupation grows the longer the current pattern of lack of a regional power persists. In addition, terrorist groups like ISIS and the YPG are prone to endure in the area due to the absence of a strong regional force that can restore order.

The new entities that were formed by the two international powers who accepted the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 are the origins of the strife in the region. She contends that in breaking up the Ottoman Empire, these new nation-states were "suited to their interests." From this vantage point, one could argue that rather than sovereign governments, it was outsiders who brought war to the area. Additionally, the stability in the area was somewhat replaced by these newly formed states. The point being made is that political entities headed by a family or small group are more common than true nation-states. Nonetheless, the Middle Eastern colonial powers and the ruling classes profit from the existence of these "nation-states." This brings up the subject of the region's political unrest. Third-world countries' societies are at the core of the security problems.

As such, insecurity functions at the level of regimes. Even while it could appear innocuous to the outside world, there is an important matter that requires understanding. An foreign intervention could result from this kind of unrest, as it did in Syria. Furthermore, any confrontation in the area might have global ramifications. In this way, area states' nature and the nation-state dilemma play a major role in the instability that followed the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The region's strife arises from the persistence of colonial policies. A useful starting point for comprehending Britain's involvement in Palestine is El-Awaisi's research. El-Awaisi's research indicates that in order to facilitate the implementation of British colonial policies, Britain attempted to create a place of refuge in Palestine to divide the Arab World from Africa.

A number of individuals assert that the founding of the state of Israel served as a "symbolic of Western imperialism's triumph over the whole Arab world." The creation of nation-states in the area served the interests of Britain and other superpowers, as was previously indicated. Following the conclusion of World War II, the United States of America replaced Britain as the dominant power in the Middle East, a role it

has held ever since. In terms of their similarities in upholding "colonial" practices, US humanitarian intervention strategy to intervene the region as in the case of Iraq's invasion and British efforts to support nation-states in the region are comparable. Mather's study makes clear that US geopolitical power is maintained through humanitarian operations. The aims have been hidden through the use of globalization. The West's backing of democracy being a consequence of globalization is illustrative of this duplicity. Though it "stopped short of declaring the downfall of Mohamed Morsi a coup," the US did not recognize Hamas' electoral triumph. Not less significant, major powers have endorsed el-Sisi's actions under the guise of "restoring democracy." From this vantage point, one could argue that the Western world only backs democracy when it serves its own interests.

Thus, globalization may be viewed as a new strategy or a different moniker for preserving the West's hegemonic position over the "Third World," or more precisely, the Middle East.

Although the attempt at Arab unification was unsuccessful for a variety of reasons, this case study highlights a crucial component of Middle East stability. An alliance is more inclined to form as long as there aren't any superpowers in the area, as the Arab coalition against Israel has demonstrated. However, the split among regional actors and the presence of the US, Russia, and other forces on the ground make the formation of an alliance in the vicinity seem impossible. For example, the region's instability persisted because of Syria's susceptibility to the intrusions. Stated differently, interactions amongst regional states ought to transcend nationalistic movements, such as those that the Ottoman Empire had instituted. It should be highlighted that the exclusivist aspect of the Arab alliance may have played a significant role in the failure of the coalition against Israel, notwithstanding the unification of Egypt and Syria. As was previously mentioned, a welcoming mindset is necessary for Middle Eastern security.

The Ottoman Empire had significant hardships in its attempts to uphold stability over its territories while defending its place in history against Western colonial policies. The Empire sought to administer just governance to its people. For ages, the Empire, as a force that upheld inclusive policies, was able to keep the Middle East stable. But as its influence waned, instability emerged as the region's new hallmark. History demonstrates that an increase in instability is directly correlated with the degree to which a power's collapse in the region is obvious, as was the case during the Ottoman or British mandate periods.

Even now, creating stability or even creating a draft handbook on how to do so is unlikely to happen anytime soon because multiple powers, like the USA and Russia, want to establish their influence in the region. Long-term stability in the Middle East is also unlikely until the nation-states that created it as a result of the policies of colonial powers are changed. In addition to the nation-state problem, instability is brought about by region states' security understanding, which draws in opportunistic aggressors.

Cold War Era and the Middle East

There were only five republics in 1956: Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Sudan. Each of these Arab nations adhered to the philosophy of Arab nationalism to varying degrees. A Hashemite monarchy ruled both Iraq and Jordan. There were autonomous kingdoms in North Yemen, Morocco, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. The Trucial States, South Yemen, Algeria, and Oman were all occupied by the British or the French. In 1960, there were republican administrations or Arab nationalist uprisings in North Yemen, Algeria, Iraq, and Tunisia. A near-civil war was raging in Lebanon at the same time between Arab nationalist groups aligned with Egypt and the Soviet Union and government factions supported by the United States Source to differ in the times of the events throughout this time. According to Jordanian

sources, the Arab Cold War started in April 1957, but according to Palestinian sources, the most important years for them in the larger Arab context were 1962–1967.

The Arab Cold War, which lasted from the beginning of the 1950s until the late 1970s in the Arab world, was a political competition that was a component of the larger Cold War. It is widely acknowledged that the 1952 Egyptian revolution, which resulted in Gamal Abdel Nasser obtaining president of Egypt in 1956, signaled the start of the Arab Cold War. After that, Saudi Arabia-influenced conservative traditionalist Arab monarchs and recently established Arab republics, motivated by revolutionary secularism and Nasser's Egypt, fought one other politically. This era of internal strife and rivalry is generally seen to have come to an end with the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the rise of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to the position of Iranian leader. The agony of intra-Arab strife was overshadowed by a new age of Arab-Iranian hostility.

In response to the Arab monarchies' alleged collusion with Western meddling in the Arab world, Nasser advocated secular pan-Arab nationalism and socialism. He also objected to the monarchies' endorsement of Islamism and rentierism. Subsequently, Nasser adopted a pan-Arabist framework but nevertheless supported the Palestinian cause. Nasser and his associated philosophy gained popularity in other Arab countries, from Iraq in the east to French-occupied Algeria in the west, following Egypt's political success in the 1956 Suez Crisis, also known as the Tripartite Aggression in the Arab world. Revolutionary republican governments have taken the place of conservative administrations in a number of Arab nations, including Libya, North Yemen, and Iraq. In the meantime, nationalist movements seeking national freedom occurred in other Arab nations occupied by the West, including Algeria and South Yemen. Concurrently, Syria, which had already developed a strong Arab nationalist identity, united with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic, a temporary federal union. There were numerous further attempts, all of which failed, to bring the Arab states together in different forms.

The monarchy of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Morocco, together with the Gulf nations, came together after gaining their independence in the early 1970s to oppose Egyptian influence, either directly or indirectly. Former adversaries over the conflicting claims of their respective dynasties, Saudi Arabia and Jordan collaborated closely to back the royalist side in the North Yemen Civil War. The war changed to a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Egypt in 1962 after the Nasserist Yemen Arab Republic was established.

American political analyst and Middle East expert Malcolm H. Kerr coined the phrase "Arab Cold War" in his 1965 work of the identical name and later reprints. The Arab Cold War wasn't a confrontation between communist and capitalist economic systems, despite its name. Actually, all Arab countries openly opposed communism and outlawed the actions of communist activists inside their borders, with one notable exception for the Marxist government in southern Yemen. Furthermore, because the great majority of Arab governments were members of the Non-Aligned Movement, they did not pursue membership in the Warsaw Pact or NATO.

The Cold War in the Arab world was associated with the international conflict between the US and the USSR. The US backed the conservative monarchs headed by Saudi Arabia, as the USSR backed the socialist republics led by Egypt. This was true even when domestic Arab communist movements were suppressed by the republics. Outside of the Arab realm, the Arab insurgent nationalist republican movement backed revolutionary movements that opposed the United States, the West, imperialism, and colonialism, including the Cuban Revolution. The Arab monarchist movement, on the other hand, backed conservative regimes in nations with a large Muslim population, like Pakistan.

For many different reasons of reasons, the Arab Cold War is believed to have stopped in the late 1970s. The strategic superiority of Nasser and Egypt was compromised by the State of Israel's victory in the 1967 Six-Day War. The Yemeni Republicans, supported by Egypt, won the North Yemen Civil War, despite the fact that it was mediated by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and Nasser. The fierce competition between Egypt and Saudi Arabia subsided somewhat as focus shifted to Egypt's attempts to free its own region that was occupied by Israel.

Anwar Sadat, who took over as president following Nasser's passing in 1970, diverged greatly from Nasser's revolutionary agenda on a national, regional, and global level. Sadat specifically aimed to forge a strong strategic alliance with King Faisal's Saudi Arabia, which was essential to Egypt's victory in the initial phase of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Building on these first achievements, Sadat ended Egypt's strategic partnership with the Soviet Union and sided with the United States, thereby distancing himself from Nasserism. He worked with the state of Israel to draft a peace accord in 1978 that called for the evacuation of all Israeli settlers and military forces from Egyptian territory. Sadat's peace accord infuriated Islamists, who condemned him as an apostate, in addition to alienating Nasserists and other secular Arab nationalists. This ultimately resulted in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad assassinating him in 1981. Egypt became essentially alone in the area when it was expelled from the Arab League. Islamism gained traction in the interim, leading to the Iranian Revolution of 1979. This made Shi'a Iran a regional force dedicated to toppling the republican and monarchical governments of Arab states, which are primarily Sunni. In the early 1980s, when the Iran-Iraq War broke out, Egypt—which was still barred from the Arab League—joined Saudi Arabia in backing Sunni-led Iraq towards Shi'ite Iran. Concurrently, the Sunni-Shi'a dispute in other regions, like Lebanon, evolved into a new proxy war between the two Muslim sects' regional forces.

De colonization and the Cold War

The terms of international expansion in the Middle East were altered by decolonization and the bipolar Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. To be clear, the Western great powers did not have the intention of abandoning the region after Arab political independence due to the extraordinary prominence of Western interests there, including oil, transit routes, and Israel's protection. The USSR was seen as a threat to the West's regional interests, which increased the stakes during the Cold War. In fact, the Truman Doctrine marked the start of the Cold War since it provided Western support to these states in response to Soviet demands for a portion of Iranian oil as well as entry to the Turkish straits. The United States (US) & Western policy were thereafter shaped by the "containment" of Soviet communism's "threat" to the region. In this struggle, oil, Israel, and "containment" were closely related. While core and peripheral Western support for Israel fueled pro-Soviet sentiment in that area and raised the threat to oil, the Soviet Union needed to be kept out of control of the Middle East's oil resources in order to stifle Western Europe. Following World War II, nationalist parties and regimes attempted to take advantage of Soviet might as a counterweight to the West, while direct imperialist dominance in the region faded. Under these circumstances, the Western superpowers had to devise new, more nuanced strategies than they had previously used to safeguard their interests, but their efforts were generally ineffective at first. The two primary regional attempts to rebuild a more equal connection with the "core," namely the emergence and demise of Nasserite Pan-Arabism and the rise and prevention of OPEC, will be analyzed in order to shed light on how the relationship between the major powers and the region developed during the Cold War. The decade of Arab nationalism and the withdrawal of Western powers. The majority of Arab states were

ostensibly independent by the early 1950s.

However, because of the region's persistent reliance on Western aid for economic purposes and the control of client elites who required Western security from internal dangers, they remained subservient to the old imperial powers. Moreover, because they had bases as well as treaties with numerous regional governments, the former colonial powers continued to have the capacity to interfere militarily if their objectives were challenged.

The Tripartite declaration of May 1950 provided the Arab-Israeli status quo and imposed arms shipment conditional on an Arab-Israeli peace, while the initiative for a regional security organization, which eventually evolved into the Baghdad Pact and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), aimed to harness regional states to the prevention of the Soviet Union. The British and French sought to hold onto their bases, and as the perceived Soviet danger increased, the US participated in them in an effort to set up a new pro-Western regional order. The ascent of Gamal Abdul Nasser, who contested Western rule over the region in the name of Arab nationalism, marked the first turning point in the struggle among great power domination and regional autonomy. Nasser's initial motivation stemmed from his desire to end British rule over Egypt, namely their persistent army presence in the Suez Canal region. Egypt originally attempted to use its influence to negotiate the British withdrawal since the West required Egypt in order for its Middle East safety measures to be approved. Nonetheless, impacted by the non-aligned movement's growth. Middle Eastern international politics Nasser eventually came to see the anti-Soviet agreement as a neo-imperialist attempt by the West to impose indirect dominance. It would turn the area into a battleground, as it had been disastrously in the last two world wars, and entangle it in the Cold War. The West's refusal to give Egypt the aid or armaments it needed to protect itself from an activist Israel until Egypt made peace alongside Israel and acceded to the planned agreement further strained Egypt's relations. Egypt therefore proposed a notion for a collective Arab security pact inside the framework for the Arab League as an alternative to the intentions of the West.

Iran: The onset of the Cold War

One of the main venues of the Cold War conflict from the beginning was the Middle East. One of the first significant Cold War crises had actually occurred in 1946 at the eastern end of the Middle East, even before the Berlin blockade of 1948, which is widely acknowledged as the beginning of the bipolar rivalry and in which the Soviets shut off the Western Allies earthly access to the town in an effort to compel them to give up their control of West Berlin. The issue had its roots in the early stages of the war, when Iranian territory was taken by Soviet and British forces in 1941 in an effort to keep Iran from siding with the Axis powers. The Anglo-Soviet takeover of Iran, which occurred only a few month after the German invasion of the Soviet Union's territory (Operation Barbarossa), fulfilled a vital geostrategic goal by guaranteeing the USSR's continuous supply of military hardware during the war. Five million tons of weapons entered the Soviet Union throughout 1941 and 1945 with the approval of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the recently installed Shah of Iran. But as soon as the battle stopped, issues started to surface inside the Allies.

The Soviets showed no intention of leaving the northern region of the country as it became more and more obvious. The Azerbaijan People's Government and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad are two autonomous socialist republics that the Kremlin sponsored the creation of. It also supported Azeri and Kurdish separatists who were attempting to secede. Stalin saw the newly formed Kurdish and Azeri states as crucial assets to defend the Soviet interests in the region's oil facilities and resources. Stalin had been deeply dissatisfied by the wartime Allies, who had allowed thousands of Soviet soldiers to perish while repeatedly

delaying the opening of an additional war front. The Soviet Union was forced to leave Iran after some time of intense diplomatic pressure applied both bilaterally and in multilateral fora like the newly established United Nations. However, by the end of 1946, Iranian forces had recaptured control of Mahabad and Azerbaijan with the help of the United States. Local leaders were forced to flee for their life or hanged as a result of their independence experiment's failure.

Three key components that would unfold in the Middle East for the majority of the ensuing decades were encapsulated in the Iran issue. First, the crisis demonstrated the significance of the area for both Russia and the United States at a time when British power was declining. Second, the events of 1946 demonstrated how invested both superpowers had been in the region's resources and further attested to their willingness and ability to use force to defend such interests, since a large portion of the crisis centered around the use of oil facilities situated in northern Iran. Third, the brief Soviet assistance to regional separatisms demonstrated how simple it might be for foreign powers to facilitate regional ethnic and spiritual identities in the service of their own geopolitical objectives. These factors the superpowers' curiosity about the area and its resources, their willingness to meddle in domestic affairs, and their tendency to exploit sectarian and religious divisions for their own political ends would define a large portion of the Middle Eastern Cold War during the ensuing forty years. The bipolar confrontation was not the source of these dynamics; foreign powers had been interfering in the affairs of the region for a considerable amount of time. However, as the Cold War intensified, Middle Eastern regional players became more embroiled in the superpower competition. This resulted into a "overlap of rivalries," which made regional conflicts more difficult to settle.

Iraq: The Cold War's elusive end

Berlin was not the end of the Cold War. The communal memory of the conclusion of forty years of rivalry that drove us all to the verge of nuclear omnicide will always be dominated by the thrilling images of millions of people scaling the Berlin Wall during the fall of 1989. However, not too long later, a much more significant phase started to take place in the Persian Gulf. In contrast to Kuwait's oil production rates, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein launched a brief military operation in the neighboring fuel-producing nation nine months after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The reasons behind Saddam's actions were primarily related to his need to restore the severely damaged Iraqi economy after a long and expensive war of attrition towards Iran (1980–1988), which is estimated to have claimed the lives of over 1.5 million people, both Iranian and Iraqi. These reasons had little to do with any supposed economic warfare by Kuwait. On August 2, 1990, Saddam gave the order to invade and occupy Kuwait because he did not fully understand the implications of the end of the Cold War for his own personal regional goals.

Following the failure of diplomatic and monetary efforts to dissuade him, the United States spearheaded the largest international coalition since World War II, with the approval of the UN Security Council. This coalition launched a five-week military campaign that drove Saddam's forces back to Iraq and restored the Kuwaiti king and queen to power. The effort was successful, and it may have had far-reaching effects. President George H. W. Bush had spoken to the US Congress just before the intervention, emphasizing the significance of that one-of-a-kind and historic occasion. "The Persian Gulf crisis offers an outstanding chance to move toward a historic period of cooperation," he said. A new global order one that is safer from the threat of terrorism, more powerful in the fight for justice, and more assured in its pursuit of peace may come from these turbulent times.

Unambiguous UN approval and the worldwide military campaign's quick success cemented the campaign

campaign's legitimacy and ushered in a period of triumphalist confidence hubris in the potential of this "new world order" and in the US government's capacity to shape it. By the point that the Cold War ended, a number of experts and scholars saw bright futures for the nations in the area. One of the foremost authorities on Middle Eastern studies, Nikki Keddie, contended that understanding the significance of "Soviet reconciliation in Afghanistan, [the] decline in Soviet arms moves to Iraq and Syria, and this peaceful efforts of the Soviets in the Gulf" required acknowledging the "change of the Soviet Union from a nation willing to put out funds and weapons overseas to one that requires to save money as well as concentrate in reconciliation and collective action security." This is part of the broader shift to a unipolar world, in which Third World nations can no longer negotiate advantages between two rival Great Powers, and many feel forced to conform to US policies in order to obtain benefits and aid from the US that they could no longer hope to obtain from the USSR.

As Keddie noted, a decline of the Arab-Israeli conflict might represent the most important stability-oriented result in the region since the dawn of the end of the Cold War, such transition has the potential to greatly improve regional prospects for peace. Keddie's prediction was supported by significant information. First, the Soviet Union promptly supported the US-led military campaign in the first Gulf War, even though Iraq was one of its principal clients in the region. In fact, US Secretary of State James Baker as well as Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met during Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and swiftly released a joint statement denouncing Iraq's actions against Kuwait.

Second, when Keddie wrote this, the two superpowers were co-sponsoring an unprecedented multilateral settlement conference in Madrid that was co-hosted by President Bush & Soviet President Mikhail Gobachev. The conference included delegations from Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and Syria. Co-chairman Gorbachev emphasized in his opening remarks that "the right lessons have been gained from the Gulf War" and that we would never have witnessed the enormous subjective changes in global affairs that currently make it possible to speak about the dawn of an entirely new age, an age for peace in world history" if not for an enormous leap forward and then a major shift in Soviet-US relations.

Conclusion

The fall of the Ottoman Empire in the post-Cold War era have had a significant impact on the political situation of the Middle East. In addition to creating the conditions for the rise of contemporary nation-states, the fall of the Ottoman Empire during World War I also left behind a legacy of shattered political systems and intercommunal conflicts that still affect regional dynamics. Long-lasting disputes and instability resulted from colonial powers' arbitrary border-drawing, which frequently overlooked the diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural situations on the ground. The Middle East had new chances and difficulties in the post-Cold War era. Under American hegemony, bipolarity ended and unipolarity emerged, changing the balance of power in the area and intensifying intra- and inter-state rivalries. While the Arab Spring brought with it the promise of democratic changes, the decline of authoritarian regimes also brought about a number of unforeseen consequences, such as the emergence of extremist groups and political fragmentation.

In these times of profound change, the Middle East has proven remarkably resilient and adaptable. Nonetheless, the region's historical legacies and the continuous battle to balance traditional identities with modern states continue to have a significant impact on the region's political destiny. Gaining an understanding of how historical legacies interact with modern politics is essential to appreciating the

complexity of the Middle East today. To promote peace and collaboration in one of the most strategically important regions in the world, policymakers and academics must take into account both historical contexts and contemporary dynamics as the region continues to change.

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