

Arab Alternative Futures (AAF) Main Features, Implicit Assumptions and Basic Conclusions

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Abstract

المستقبلات العربية البديلة: المعالم الأساسية الفروض الضمنية والنتائج الرئيسية

يعرض البحث مشروع المستقبلات العربية البديلة الذي تم تنفيذه عن طريق منتدى العالم الثالث بالقاهرة بتكليف من جامعة الأمم المتحدة في طوكيو، خلال الفترة ١٩٨٠-١٩٨٥. فيقدم خلاصة عن المشروع مركزة على ما يميزه عن مشروعات الدراسات المستقبلية، مع بيان الأسباب والفروض الضمنية التي تكمن وراء إختيار موضوعات الدراسة ومنهجيتها. وأوضح البحث أن المشروع سعى إلى إستكشاف ملامح المستقبلات العربية الممكنة حتى عام ٢٠٠٠، وأنه عالج هذا الموضوع من وجهة نظر مجتمعية شاملة، حيث أن التنمية الحقيقية للبلاد العربية تجرى في إطار من تطور ثقافى وإجتماعى محدد. ومن هذا المنطلق تضمن المشروع العديد من الدراسات حول عناصر مختلفة من عناصر التطور الثقافى والإجتماعى والسياسى العربى. وعنى المشروع بصفة خاصة بالموضوعات التي لم يسبق دراستها دراسة كافية، وإهتم بالدراسة التاريخية للظواهر من أجل التعرف على العوامل المحددة لإتجاهات السلوك العربى وتقصى احتمالات تأثر هذه العوامل بالتغيرات الإقليمية والدولية. وشملت دراساته دراسات خاصة بكل من الهياكل والعمليات فى العالم العربى. وقد إشمعل المشروع على إثنى عشر موضوعا، أوضح البحث تفاصيلها والفروض الضمنية التي إستند إليها هذا الإختيار، كما عرض منتجات المشروع التي تضمنت نتائج الدراسات التي تمت فى إطاره، وإصدار ملف المستقبلات العربية البديلة، والتقرير المبدئى للمشروع. ثم عرض ملخصا للتقرير المبدئى الذي إحتوى على مقدمة وفصلين. عرضت المقدمة بعض الملامح الرئيسية للوطن العربى، وناقش الفصل الأول الأوضاع العربية إذ ذاك، بينما عرض الفصل الثانى للمستقبلات البديلة فى شكل مشاهد بديلة، إستند أولها على المد الخطى للإتجاهات التي كانت قائمة فعلا. كما بين التقرير المبدئى الإتجاهات الراديكالية المضادة التي تستند إلى رؤية جماعات الإسلام السياسى من ناحية، ورؤية القوى القومية والتقدمية من جهة أخرى. ثم عرض التقرير لمشهد معيارى يسعى لتحقيق الأهداف الرئيسية للشعوب العربية. وإنتهى البحث بإبداء عدد من الملاحظات النقدية المستندة إلى أعمال الإجتماع العلمى الذي ناقش التقرير المبدئى فى إجتماع دام ثلاثة أيام فى القاهرة خلال شهر مايو ١٩٨٦، قدم عنه الدكتور محمد محمود الإمام عرضا وأقيا، وإلى ملاحظات قدمها الكاتب نفسه.

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The UNU AAF project which was implemented during the period 1980-1985 was one of the earliest future studies undertaken by Arab scholars that covered the Arab region as a whole.

The project aimed at the exploration of the future of the region that included member countries of the league of Arab states up to the year 2000, in the light of the then anticipated changes whether in the world, wide or in the region itself. The purpose of such exploration was to raise the awareness of the Arab people about their future, and to make them conscious of the fact that they might face more than one possible future. The probable futures they might have are in some way or another determined by the decisions taken then. Such decisions would have their impact on the future in one direction or the other.

1- Distinctive Features :

The project had some distinctive features that should be clarified:

(1) The project dealt with the future from a comprehensive societal approach.

The project departs from an awareness that the evolution and development of the Arab nation would not be the function of its economic growth alone nor would it be measured in terms of possible increase in some indicators of production, distribution or consumptions. Real Arab development cannot take place but in the context of over all cultural evolution. Accordingly the research areas to which the project had to address itself included many studies on various elements of Arab cultural development.

(2) The project looked at future studies as attempts to envision features of the alternative futures to which Arabs might be headed because of the decision makers choice of options and of the courses events might take. Futures are formed by mutual interactions between the set of options selected and courses followed and between them and various aspects of the socio-economic cultural order of society.

The ability to envision such alternative futures is thus linked to the understanding of the socio-economic cultural order and its substructures and relations as well as of how events interacts within the framework of the over all order.

The greater the scientific knowledge of the researchers of the

prevailing realities and of how the present emanates from the past and the future from the present, the greater is the ability to envision accurately the possible futures.

Serious future studies, therefore must begin by acquiring scientific knowledge of prevailing realities., their origin and historical development, with special emphasis on substructures systems, relations and process through which change and development occur within the framework of the overall society.

As many aspects of Arab realities had not been subjected then to serious and exhaustive studies, the project had to undertake research and analysis of many variables that were considered to have their impact on future development.

(3) The research program carried on had at the sometime to plunge back in history in order to pinpoint the durable factors that are continuing to shape the present and influencing the future, and identify the main trends governing Arab development at the present time and investigating their likely behavior in the future taking into account changes in the world order.

(4) Researchers had to include both structures and processes in the Arab region. Coverage of both structures and processes stems from the fact that the Arab region is still in the making. It is passing through a stage of accelerated pace of change that involve every facet of socio-economic and cultural life. Many of the processes of change that are occurring are still informal and sometimes insidious. To satisfy oneself with a snap shot of existing structures may lead in future studies to entirely misleading conclusions. Identification, analysis and forecasts of the different possible outcomes of the various change processes were hence considered to be the most pertinent endeavour.

(5) Discussions held within the framework of the planning meetings of the AAF project and other brain storming sessions led to the sponsoring of 12 research areas. These included:

- (i) Socio-Political Structure and Development:
- (ii) The Process of Decision-Making:
- (iii) Democracy, Mass Communication and Participation:
- (iv) Socio-Political and Cultural Attitudes

- (v) Mechanisms of Dependency:
- (vi) The Arab Region and the Changing World Order:
- (vii) The Unexplored Effects of Oil Wealth:
- (viii) Human Resources:
- (ix) Resources and Uses of Science and Technology:
- (x) Arts and Literature:
- (xi) The Institutional Framework for Arab Integration:
- (xii) Arab Unification and the Issues of Minorities:

(6) Quantitative tools were recognized by the project to be necessary to acquire a high degree of sophistication in the future studies. Such means do not only allow accurate presentation of phenomena studied and results reached. They also offer tools with which it is possible to identify the different long term results of the various policy options, and help to avoid the conflict that may arise between the paths of the different variables in both the short and the long term.

However the AAF did not aspire to the building of quantitative models of possible development of the Arab World in spite of their importance. The project had only limited financial resources. It chose to have a modest aim of arousing Arab awareness of the importance of future studies, as a step along the path of future studies to be undertaken by citizens of the region who are familiar with the cultural components of the Arab people and aware of the problems facing them. Priority was given to qualitative studies of variables which are highly relevant to the identification of likely futures of the Arab nation as mentioned before.

The studies did not aim to produce prophecies about the future or specific details of future events but to shed some light of the possible alternative futures as they are related to events actions and human aspirations.

For AAF better knowledge of what is going on is indispensable for the definition of parameters and determination of independent variables and of what is endogenous and what is exogenous among these.

Elegant mathematical presentation were hence thought to mask

controversial assumptions in the case of the weakness of data base.

Moreover as good number of factors that affect the development of society are hardly quantifiable they are not amenable to model building techniques.

(7) The AAF considered the prospective method to be the most appropriate methodology, scenarios in such methodology are not conditional forecasts based on predetermined assumptions about the future, scenarios are rather based on knowledge of the situation in the base period, putting aside developments of the dynamics which are invariable during the period of study and concentrating on those suspected to be altered by decisions of actors or by uncertain events.

Thus it becomes necessary to understand projects that the actors would try to realise and consequently condition their future behavior.

In order to imagine the different possible futures at a distant point of time, such methodology requires a thorough analysis of the trends that led to the situation existing in the base period and to grasp the dynamics of their concrete evaluation.

Priority is given by this method to the actors. Trends are considered to be determined by the intentions of human-being, the realization of which depends on the interplay of social forces and the behavior of the ecosystems. For this purpose a larger room must be given for the description and analysis of qualitative factors, while quantifiable data are to play a more minor role.

Different trends have to be assessed and weighed. As all trends do not have the same weight or the same direction, distinction must be made between prevailing trends and other that contest them in some way or another. Society being heterogeneous in interests and ideologies it is normal for opposing trends to co-exist.

To assess the prevailing trends researchers have to identify the governing trends among all the prevailing ones, these should be followed more closely as they have their impact on other trends.

Future does not depend only on action of prevailing trends. It is determined by interaction of both the prevailing and counter trends that oppose them.

Counter trends should be those that objectively exist in the real

society and are not simply the result of the own thinking of the prospectivits.

Social forces in society are never entirely satisfied with prevailing conditions. It is the nature of men to seek improvement. Moreover the benefits of the socio-economic system are not satisfactorily distributed. Some opposition to the system always exist. Counter trends even if not global nor offering a societal articulate alternative are needs of change. Study of the possible evolution of such counter trends are of major importance to the determination of the different possible futures.

While certain counter trends may die out others may grow more rapidly and lead to marked change in the landscape.

While counter trends exist in society in different forms including relatively widespread ideas, movements association for the defence of some social groups, some historical rights or some environmental features that are perceived to be in danger because of aggression committed or allowed by the dominating socio-economic system, the most advanced forms take the shape of alternative societal projects that are struggled for by a well structured social or political forces.

Senarios of the future must not be imagined by researchers. They should have their roots in to-days realities, problems, conflicts and future projects.

Extrapolation of prevailing trends gives only one possible alternative of the future. Such seniors that may be called the trend senario is what is to be expected in the future if the package of prevailing trends already existing continues in the future.

Beside the trend senior, the AAF. deemed it necessary to present a set of modified trend seniors, and other counter senarios.

II. Some Basic implicit Assumptions:

Assessment of both prevailing and counter trends are to be based on knowledge about the various factors that are thought to have major impact on the future evolution of the Arab region.

A number of such factors were covered by earlier studies. Basic data are available concerning a number of economic factors. Substantial scientific knowledge concerning some major political

social and cultural factors were however lacking. Research and analysis had to be undertaken to overcome such shortage and to gain better knowledge of such factors and trends and their interrelations and possible behavior.

A number of topics were chosen to be analyzed as mentioned before. The choice was guided by certain assumptions about the importance of the impact of such factors on the future evolution of the Arab nation. It may be useful to express explicitly some of the implicit assumptions that stood behind such choice of research topics.

(1) The choice of development patterns and policies and the kind of inter-Arab relations, and the degree of integration of various Arab societies into the existing international order are all greatly affected by the national power structures of the various Arab societies. These in turn are related to the existing social structures and the relative strength and weight of the different social groups in the process of decision making in the different societies.

Such relationships and relative weights are not static. They are apt to change as development and evolution of the society takes place.

Study and analysis of class stratification in the various Arab societies and the dynamic change in relationships of social forces are deemed to help in the assessment of alternative paths of development taken place in the Arab societies.

Eight studies were carried on covering different states at different stages of economic and social development, in the various subregions of the Arab nation. A synthesis study based on the eight case studies and earlier literature presented a picture and tentative typology of social stratification in the Arab region.

(2) The future of any society is not imposed on it. Today's decisions and policy options determine future paths of development to a great extent. Decision are not however always rational. Rationality of decision making being a function of the quantity and quality of information available to decision makers, it is doubtful that countries living without free flow of information, freedom of speech and freedom of academic research could ever approach rationality. Being aware of the importance of rational decisions and the role of

democracy in avoiding tragic mistakes, the project opted for empirical research to gain information about how decision making at the country level are actually made, the respective roles of institutions and individuals and the relative weight of internal and external factors and the relative shares of experience, research, preparation and expediency in the decision making process.

(3) The most common practice in the Third World has been to sacrifice democracy in the name of development. Security and order were assumed of utmost importance for development and progress. This accordingly necessitated limitation of democracy and human rights.

The AAF project assumed to the contrary that absence of participation by the masses due to undemocratic means of governing will have dire consequences on the struggle for national liberation, independence and development. Empirical studies were carried on concerning eight Arab countries representing four different types of states, to uncover both the special and the most common features pertaining to different Arab societies and to all Arab states in the field of government, freedom of association, degree of respect of human rights, and control of mass communication media and ability to manoeuvre public opinion ...etc.

(4) As scenarios of the future are conceived to be the result of the interaction, conflict, and struggle between prevailing and other counter trends, the different political and cultural trends in the region were submitted to analysis with a view to assess their bearing on the Arab future. The most radical counter trends namely the Arab progressive and the Islamic revival were given special emphasis. Representatives of each of these trends participated in the seminars concerning these movements to get first hand information about each through direct participation of actors.

(5) Development of the Arab world is not only shaped by endogenous factors and actors. The Arab World is being more and more integrated with the world center to the detriment of endogenous development and Arab integration. Special attention must thus be given to the mechanisms of dependency in the era of

transnationalization. The concept of dependency and its new and changing mechanisms, especially the actions of transnational corporation should be analyzed in concrete terms to reveal how such processes have their impact on the future of the Arab region.

This analysis was based on set of assumptions and basic concepts concerning international economic relations and especially between developed and developing countries. These basic concepts and assumptions are:

(a) The World system is nothing else but the world system of capitalism.

(b) World market is basically a capitalist market which continue to be under the hegemony of the advanced capitalists states in the center. The existence of a socialist camp and the political independence of a number of Third World countries did not alter this fact or change the dominance of the central states.

(c) Development is not always good. Development describe broad structural changes in the society and its economy. This development might be good or bad depending on the political stand of the analyst.

Development is conceived to be good only if it aimed at self reliance, satisfaction of material and non-material needs of the majority of the population, and allowed participation in decision making and implementation of plans that are self-centered and balanced so that it could be self sustaining.

Self reliance entails individual, local and provincial autonomy and democracy and necessitate collective self reliance at the regional level.

(d) Capitalism is becoming transnational since the end of II World War. The power full actors in the world economy are the transnational corporation which engineer strategies for the world market and penetrate national boundaries and enforce their control over the economies of the newly independent countries through various economic means of mergers, crossinvestment, consortium, Joint ventures, common subsidiaries financial pressures, take overs, technological advances ... etc.

TNCs one gaining control of newly independent countries without

dependence on military occupation.

(6) Being a geographically continuous area, and closely related by a common language and a common culture, there is a feeling of solidarity and common purpose among the Arab people which extends back in history at least to the time of the rise of Islam. The struggle against the enemies of Arab World as manifested in the Wars that colonialism and Zocioism in modern times contributed to the feeling of solidarity which expressed itself in common struggles against took place in area from 1948-1973. At the grass roots a feeling of a common sense of belonging to one big nation, and an aspiration for a kind of unity have been always existing.

This strong lasting political will for unification was behind the establishment of the Arab league and its many specialized agencies and the rise of an over growing number of non-governmental inter Arab organizations.

Despite such will actual steps in the path of integration and unification were rather very limited and are more than once interrupted.

The future of the Arab nation will depend on the strength and the push and pull of the unifying and centrifugal powers that are growing more and more since the establishment of separate Arab states.

Envision of possible future development necessitated analysis and studies of a number of factors that pull the Arab world in different direction. A number of research topics were undertaken to get a better grasp of the various factors that made for integration and unification in the one hand, and that push in the direction of regional disintegration from the other side. These researches include:

- i- Arts and literature as factors of unity and diversity in the Arab region.
- ii- Assessment of the institutional framework for Arab integration and means to render them more effective.
- iii- Arab unification and the issues of minorities.

(7) Being a part of the developing countries having the main feature with other parts of the group of the 77 to which all Arab countries belong, the Arab countries are apt to be affected by changes

in the world order and the outcome of so-called north-south dialogue. Consequently planning for the future necessitated a clear vision of the role of the region in the emergence of the new world order. A study was undertaken in order to obtain such a clear vision of the Arab region and the changing world order.

(8) Beyond the great impact of the rise of the prices of oil after the 1973 war and the sudden increase of oil wealth on the economic development in the area, new phenomena that were caused or affected by such wealth called for investigations and assessment. The project gave emphasis to the noneconomic effects of oil wealth, specially as they pertain to changes in values and relative weights of individual Arab countries in Arab policy and shifts in political alliances and directions of national liberation struggle.

(9) Being among the key factors in development of the Arab region, human resources and uses of sciences and technology had to be studied and assessed. Human resources were to be studied both quantitatively and qualitatively. Analysis were to include processes of formal and informal learning and skills acquisitions.

The issues of motivation of labour force had also to be addressed especially in its relation to the huge brain drain from the region.

Arab potential in science and technology are to be analyzed to uncover factors that impede their full use in further growth and assess the feasibility of building up local and regional scientific technological capabilities.

III. Outputs and Scenarios:

During the five years duration of the AAF projects, quite a large of Arab research institutions, individual researchers scholars as well as statesmen and other public figures became involved in the project in various capacities and for different span of time.

All in all 9 academic research institutes in various states of the Arab world other than TWF took direct part in the research activities of the project. Contacts were kept with other institutes who felt that the topics are too sensitive for their participation.

More than 200 individual researchers and scholars participated in the activities of the project either as principal investigators,

researchers, reviewers or attenders of launching workshop or seminars to discuss the products of research. Attendees of seminars were themselves in certain cases the main source of information and data.

The output of the project include:

(1) Results of research activities covering the various research topics that were undertaken.

Out of the twelve research areas listed in the project document, ten research areas were covered. Research on human resources, and on resources and uses of technology were not carried on because of shortage of available funds.

Results of research activities deemed worth of publications by peer reviewers designated by UNU appeared in Book forms in a series entitled "AAF Library". Three Arab publishers participated in publication. The following is a list of books and monographs including the results of the research activities.

Books:

Title	Author/s	Publisher
1. Images of the Arab Future.	Ismail Sabri Abdalla Ibrahim Saad El-din Abdalla Ali Nassar Mohamoud Abdel-Fadil	Centre for Arab Unity Studies Beirut, Lebanon, reprinted 1985.
2. The Process of Decision Making in the Arab World	Ibrahim Saad El-Din Abdalla Mohammed El Sayed Selim Walid Khaddouri	Centre for Arab Unity Studies Beirut, Lebanon, 1985
3. Impact of Oil Wealth on Arab Political Interrelationships	Ahmad Youssef Ahmed Ahmad Bahaa El-Din	Dar Al Mustaqbal Al Arabi Cairo 1983
4. State and Capitalist Development in Iraq (1968-1978)	Issam Khafaji	Dar Al Mustaqbal Al Arabi Cairo 1983
5. Egyptian Model of Dependent State Capitalism: Class Transformation in Egypt (1974-1982)	Adel Ghoniem	Dar Al Mustaqbal Al Arabi Cairo, Egypt, 1986.
6. Democratic Experience in Morocco	Mostafa Qabbaj, Driss Marakichi Abdel Hafez Rifai Mohammed Taleb Habib Djedeerah Mohammed Ekreen Tareq Al Beshri	Dar Al Mustaqbal Al Arabi Cairo-Egypt 1987.
7. The 23rd of July Regime and Democracy (1952-1970)	Mostafa Filali Mohammed Abid Al-Jabri	Center for Arab Unity Studies Beirut, Lebanon 1988.
9. Studies in Islamic Revival Movements in the Arab World	Mohammed Ahmed Khalafalla Abdel Baki Hermassi Shukri Faisal Abdalla Al-Nafissi Rachid Ghnooushi Abdel Karim Ghalab Mohammed El	Center for Arab Unity Studies Beirut, Lebanon 1987.

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| 10. Studies in Arab Progressive Movement | Ghazali
Ismail Sabri Abdalla and others | Center for Arab Unity Studies
Beirut, Lebanon 1987 |
| 11. Measurement of Dependency in the Arab World | Ibrahim El Issawi | Center for Arab Unity Studies
Beirut, Lebanon 1989 |
| 12. Factors of Unity and Diversity in Arab Literature | Abdel Moneem Telemah
Hussein Nassar
Shukri Ayyad
Ceza Qassem
Mohammed Barrada
Mohmoud Makki
Abdel Hamid Ayyub
Abdel Hamid Hawwas
Medhat El Gayar
Mahmoud Fattouh
Ahmad Ferial Jaboury
Ghazoul
Mohammed Hafez Diyab | Center for Arab Unity Studies
Beirut, Lebanon 1987 |
| 13. The Arab Cinema and National Identity | Farouq Khourshid
Hashem El Nahhas
Kamal Ramzi | Center for Arab Unity Studies
Beirut, Lebanon 1986. |

Monographs

-Class Structure in the Maghreb Countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) in French

- Class Structure in Yemeni Society

- Socio-Economic Development in Sudan

- Class structure in Jordan

- Democratic Experience in Kuwait

- Democracy and Mass Participation

A Study of the 1964 Democratic Experience in Sudan

- Democracy in Algeria

- The Role of Mass Media in influencing the Arab Mind

- The Arab Region and the Changing World Order

- The Effect of Rapid Accumulation of Oil Wealth on Social Values in the Arab World: The case of Egypt

- The Effect of Rapid Accumulation of Oil Wealth on Social Values in the Arab World: The Case of Yemen

- Factors of Unity and Diversity in Arab Architecture: the Maghreb Countries

- The Institutional Framework for Arab Integration

- Minorities and the Arab Unification

- Salient Features of Arab Development During the Last Two Decades

Abdel Latif Benashnou

Habib Malik

Azzam Mahjoub

Mohammed Ben Ramadan

Contemporary Social and Economic Variables.

Hamoud El Aody

Hayder Ibrahim

Hani Hourani

Osman Abdel Malek

Mostafa Khojli

Brahim Brahimi and others

Nabil Dajani

Awatef Abdel Rahman

Mounir Nassar

Abdib Al Jader

Atef Ghaith

Mohammed Ali Mohammed

Gharib Sayed Ahmad

Ahmad Mohammed Khalifa

Al-Sayed Abdel-Atti

M o h a m m e d A h m a d

Bayyoumi

Samia Mohammed Gaber

Abu Bakr Al Saqqaf and others.

Munir Zouieb

Munira Hadj

Masouda Tayeb

Moustafa Ali Kozkoz

Habib Bida

Mohammed Mahmoud

El-Imam

Saad Eldin Ibrahim

Gouda Abdel Khaleq

2. The AAF Dossier:

The AAF Dossier was published as an instrument for dialogue and network building. Twenty two issues were published, including launching workshops, summaries of research manuscripts and seminars. Scholars were invited and encouraged to comment.

The dossier was widely distributed and exchanged with other publications across five continents. About one thousand copies were distributed among individuals organizations, universities and research centers both inside and outside the Arab region.

* A total of 118 Universities & Research Centers in the Arab region received regularly the AAF Dossier. Seventeen centers exchanged their regular publication with the AAF Dossier. Other centers exchanged their annual reports, seminars, or occasional papers with the AAF Dossier. Those centers which did not have any publications, either subscribed for the AAF Dossier or received free copies.

* A total of 82 Organizations, whether international, regional, professional, industrial ... etc. in the Arab region received regularly the AAF Dossier.

* Individuals in the Arab region receive 353 copies.

3. The Draft Final Report:

The coordinators of the project presented a draft final report to a symposium attended by over 50 Arab Statesmen, Journalist, social scientist, diplomats and politicians. The draft final report was based on the result of the research undertaken as well as on other available literature.

The draft final report consisted of an introduction and two parts.

The introduction presented some basic features of the Arab region. Part one dealt with the then present state of affairs. Part two discussed the alternative futures. Beside the trend senario and unacceptable senario that resulted from the extrapolation of existing trends, the report presented the features of the two main radical counter trends and normative senario that can achieve the main objective of Arab people.

A resume of the draft final report is here presented.

INTRODUCTION

The Arab Region

The "Arab Region" is featured as part of the Third World. It represents the different aspects that exist among the so-called "developing" countries. However, among the Arab countries important differences exist:

THE IBRD singles out Oman, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates as "high income oil exporters". The per capita GNP of this group is slightly higher than that of the 18 industrial market economies: \$ 12370 against \$ 11060 in 1983. Apart from this group of countries, the rest of the Arab countries, are more similar to the Third World countries, more or less poor, where the per capita GNP is 50% inferior to that of Spain, which has the lowest figure among industrial countries. -Per capita GNP \$ 250, in Somalia and \$ 22870 in the U. A. E., in 1983.

- While Qatar has only 0.3 million inhabitants, Egypt has about 50 million.

- It terms of size, Bahrain occupies 1000 km² and Sudan 2,506,000 km².

The premature death of Abdel Nasser in 1970 and that of Boumedienne a few years later, and the advent of oil wealth, mark the setback of the Arab liberation movements. Since the early seventies nationalist economic policies - often coupled with a drive towards social equity - were abandoned in favor of the "Open Door" policy. The economies of all Arab countries became more than ever extraverted and dependent: poor Arab countries are heavily indebted to the West, rich oil exporters invested their surplus in the USA and Western Europe. Now these countries are in external deficit and are forced to draw on their reserves.

There is a fundamental characteristic that distinguished the Arab region from other Third World regions, namely that all Arab countries are part of one nation. They share a common culture and a common history. Except for Algeria and Palestine, no foreign language was imposed on the Arab people. The system of Koranic schools preserved the national tongue and written Arabic is the same across the region.

Also, colonial rule did not last for centuries. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen have never been conquered by the Europeans. As for Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, foreign rule was limited to a period of 25 - 30 years.

Thus the Arab people never lost their common cultural identity.

It is to be added that the reality of the Arab nation does not mean that all people living on the territories of Arab states are all Arabs. There are some national minorities such as Kurds, the inhabitants of the Southern Sudan, the Berbers, ...etc.

Part One

The Present State of Affairs

Ecology and Demography

1. A vast desert

The Arab countries occupy a total area of 13,771,000 km² which places the region in the fourth place after China, India and the USSR.

Unfortunately, about two thirds of Arab lands are inhospitable, sub-tropical deserts. With the exception of Lebanon, every Arab country has more or less extended deserts.

2. Two physical constraints on agriculture

Limited resources of water represent the first constraint on agriculture. Exploited water resources amount to 173 billion cubic meters per year. It is expected that by the beginning of the twenty first century, the increase in the demand for water under the combined effects of population will increase and economic growth would lead by then to a serious shortage in water supply.

The second constraint is the relative scarcity of arable land. Cultivated land represents only 16% of the total territory. Only 25% of it is irrigated so as to allow for multi-cropping during the year. The remaining 75% allow only for one season cropping.

3. Energy and minerals

Arab countries have practically no coal. The potential for hydro-electricity is limited. Major oil reserves exist in Saudi Arabia and to a certain extent in Iraq. Prospects for solar energy are great.

Other than fossil energy, the region is not richly endowed with mineral resources. Phosphate minerals are abundant especially in Morocco. Iron ore is available in several countries with large deposits in Mauritania.

Nevertheless, the region's output does not exceed 2% of the world production.

4. Population, size and growth

The total population of Arab countries amounted in 1985 to 193.7 million; and was growing at an average rate of 3.2%. Relying on UN demographic projection, the source forecasts a population of 289 million by the year 2000.

The region as a whole is in a stage of accelerated rate of population growth. The demographic pressure is a serious problem in the region from the point of view of impact on the environment.

Like most Third World regions, the Arab region suffers from a squeezed urbanization pattern. But unlike what happened historically in industrial countries, urbanization in the Arab region is not linked to growth in industry and industry-related activities.

Macro-Economic Developments

1. Growth of production

The Arab economies have grown faster during the seventies compared to the sixties. Much of the increase in growth was due to the rise in oil revenues that occurred in the wake of the oil price increases of 1973-1974, and later in 1979-1980. This factor accounts for the discrepancies in rates of growth and the change in the relative shares of the various Arab groups, classified as follows:

Group I: Algeria and Iraq (countries rich in hydrocarbons, a varied resource base and a relatively large populations).

Group II: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Libya (countries rich in oil and natural gas resources but with a narrow resources base and a relatively small population).

Group III: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia (countries with a more sophisticated economic structure and a large

population).

Group IV: Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen Arab Republic, and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (the "least developed" among the Arab countries).

Group I has more or less maintained its relative position in Arab GDP, amounting almost to one fifth. The share of Group II rose from 24.3% in 1960 to 56.6% in 1983. Whereas the share of Group III fell from 42.3% in 1960 to 20.9% in 1983. As to Group IV, its share fell from 9.5% to 3.5%.

2. Structure of production

The twenty years 1965-1985 brought a noticeable change in the pattern of sectoral shares in GDP, reflected as follows:

a. The share of the mining sector in the total GDP of the region grew significantly.

b. The share of construction increased markedly in oil rich countries (Group I & II). Also, it increased albeit to a lesser degree in the other Arab countries.

c. The contribution of trade and finance to GDP increased in most of the Arab countries.

d. There was a noticeable decline in the share of agriculture though with varying degrees in the Arab countries.

e. Also, the share of manufacturing in GDP declined in many countries.

Accordingly, it could be concluded that there has been over the last twenty years a process of teriarization in the Arab region.

3. Structure of demand

Two different patterns emerged between 1960-1970 and 1970-1981. The first represents countries whose total uses exceeded their GDP (resource - deficit -pattern). This group includes the majority of the Arab countries. The excess of uses over resources was due to the rise in the rate of investment, and in the rate of current consumption as well, in particular government consumption. The other pattern represents countries whose total uses fell short of their GDP (resources - surplus countries). This group of countries includes

most of the oil-producing countries. It is interesting to note that against this backdrop of falling rate of internal resource absorption, there was a manifest rise in the rate of domestic investment in almost all countries. Also, there has been a rise in the rate of government consumption; whereas the rate of private consumption declined.

4. Labour force and employment

The growth rate of the labour force over the same twenty years was ahead of that of population growth in some countries, namely, Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, Tunisia, Sudan and Libya. The rate of unemployment fell during the seventies due to the oil boom.

It was noted that the labour force grew mostly in the secondary and the tertiary sectors and least in the primary sectors notably in agriculture. On the other hand, employment opportunities seem to have grown faster for the skilled professional and the unskilled, uneducated categories, and much slower for the young educated but inexperienced.

Intra-regional exchanges

1. A dense institutional network

The first step towards Arab cooperation in modern times was the establishment of the League of Arab States in 1945. The Economic Council of the L. A. S. was established in 1952.

The Arab League took the example of the UN /and created a set of sectoral specialized agencies; thus the establishment of the Arab equivalent of FAO, UNIDO, ILO, etc...

In the sixties, there was a new start focusing on economic cooperation for development. The Council for Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) emerged in 1964.

In 1968 the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) was found to enable the Arab member countries in the OPEC coordinate their stand at OPEC meetings.

In addition, there are two other types of /organization: The first is parastatal: the industrial union, e.g. , Arab Iron and Steel Union, Arab Union of Textiles, ... etc. The second is professional: medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc... .

To assess the extent of the contribution of this dense institutional

network to the quantity and quality of inter-Arab exchanges, movements of trade, labour and capital are to be evaluated.

2. Trade

Arab foreign trade statistics indicate that the share of intra-Arab trade in total Arab foreign trade, in the period 1965-1984, was modest, amounting to nearly 5% on average for exports, and nearly 8% on the average for imports.

However, the percentage increase in the ratio of intra-Arab trade to total Arab trade over the mentioned period is disappointing: 1.6% for exports and 0.5% for imports.

3. Labour movements:

Owing to the latest migration statistics - the number of migrant workers is estimated at 1.8 million in mid 1975, 3.7 million for 1980 and 3.1 for 1982. Compared to the figures of the early seventies (600 to 800 thousand) one notes a quantum jump in 1975, a steady increase culminating in 1980 and a noticeable decline in 1982.

4. Financial flows

According to the Unified Arab Economic Report (1985) intra-Arab official development assistance (ODA), during the period of 1970-1983, amounted to about \$ 35.8 billion. This volume of intra-Arab ODA is significant and is without precedent in the Third World.

With regard to Arab direct investment abroad, it was estimated that by the end of 1983 nearly 62.2% of it went to Arab countries. It is to be mentioned that intra-Arab direct investment has a marked bias in favour of banking and finance. Manufacturing occupies the second place in investment allocation. While the food deficit in the region has taken terrifying dimensions, agriculture has been the main neglected sector.

Estimates of intra-Arab workers' remittances are as follows; \$1012 million in 1975, \$5833 million in 1980 and \$3955 million in 1982. However, these remittances are those channeled through the formal means only; one might easily double these figures considering the huge parallel currency market in the labour exporting countries and the transfers in kind.

Transnational Integration and Regional Disintegration: Transnationalization:

Since the end of World War II capitalism has become transnational. The powerful actors in the world economy are transnational corporations (TNCs) that engineer strategies for the world market. National boundaries are receding under the combined effects of "common market" and free trade zones on the one hand and cross-investment on the other. With TNC's everything in our daily lives is turned into a saleable product rapidly thrown into the world market. The information communication revolution has virtually transcended all borders. The Arab region became vulnerable in many fronts namely.

1. Food

Nothing could better illustrate the vulnerability of Arab countries more than the figures of the growing food deficit. For example, the percentage of wheat deficit increased from 56% in the period 1975-1979 to 66% in the period 1980-1984. Arab wheat imports increased from 4.8 million tons in 1970 to 19.9 million tons in 1983, an increase of 314.5% in 12 years. This is alarming since wheat is by no means a normal commodity. Wheat is a political commodity.

Despite the grave situation of the growing Arab food deficit, no effective regional actions have been taken yet to reduce food insecurity. This is a typical example of transnational integration and regional disintegration.

2. Weaponry

The world armament statistics show the Middle East and North Africa (the Arab countries plus Israel and Iran) at the par of the Third World that pile up more weapons than any other region.

According to the Overseas Development Council "Agenda for Action: 1983", the share of our region in world military expenditure rose from 2.8% to 7.3% (higher than China). According to the same source, among 141 country studies for 1979, the highest per capita military expenditure in the world was found in Saudi Arabia (\$1837) followed by Israel (\$1464).

As percentage of GNP, military expenditure in Israel reached a

peak of 32% during 1973 - 1975, then declined gradually to 12% in 1983. (1) As for Arab countries, according to the unified Arab Economic Report (1985), the share of defense and security in government expenditure amounted to 23.7% in 1983.

It is important to note that Arab countries rely almost exclusively on imported weaponry and spare parts, as well as foreign know-how and training.

3. Finance

a) The debt situation

According to the Fund for Economic and Social Development, and the IBRD (World Development Report, 1986), Arab foreign debts octupled between 1972 and 1984 (from \$10.5 billion to \$82.5 billion). However, the figure of \$ 82.5 billion is grossly underestimated, it does not include the foreign debts of both Morocco and Iraq, credits for purchasing arms (military assistance), and short term credits.

b) Investment abroad

Total Arab holdings abroad were by the end of 1983 around \$400 billion. Roughly, they were distributed as follows: 80% in OECD countries (of which 20% in the USA), 14% in the Third World (including Arab countries), and 6% in international financial organizations.

Forms of Arab investments abroad are numerous: bank deposits with foreign bank or portfolio of "blue chips" managed by a foreign bank; - large portfolio investment operated by foreign banks or Arab/foreign banks and other financial institutions registered at home or abroad; acquisition of a sizeable part or the equity capital of a transnational corporation without the ambition to run it, examples here are the share of Libya in the capital of Fiat and Kuwait's share in that of Mercedes Benz; investment in real estate: hotels, office buildings, ... etc; setting new companies with mixed Arab/non Arab equity participation. The number of enterprises set up with foreign partners amounted in 1983 to 521, with a total equity capital exceeding 30 billion dollars. Among these enterprises, there are 102 banks and financial corporation. Foreign participation often implies affiliation to some TNC's. Thus, Arab are subjecting their money to the game of

transnational corporations and by doing so facilitating the transnationalization of Arab resources of all kinds. Accordingly, far from emancipating Arab countries capital outflows have become an instrument of exploitation (since they always remain the marginal partners in the international financial market) and dominance. Wealth does not necessarily end exploitation and dominance, it may increase both.

4. Unequal trade:

The exposure index (the sum value of imports and exports as percentage of GDP of the Arab countries jumped from 50% in 1970 to 90% in 1975 and to 91% in 1981.

Such exposure makes the internal performance of the Arab countries vulnerable to the sharp ups and downs of world trade and the behavior of terms of trade.

The performance of the Arab region in the field of foreign trade during the period 1970-1980 was rather disappointing. There was a decline in the export/import ratio in all groups of commodities except in two: fuel, lubricants and minerals, and chemical products.

On the other hand, the export concentration coefficient jumped from 56% in 1970 to 89.4% in 1980. This greater concentration of export structure over the mentioned decade signals growing vulnerability.

With regard to the geographical concentration, the share of the OECD countries in total Arab imports amounted to 76.9% in 1980, and their share in total Arab exports amounted in the same year to 71.5%.

(5) Two Way Road to Technological Dependence

a) Turn key growth

The rich Gulf countries used, when they were less wealthy, Arab expertise whenever possible, being cheaper. With the windfall of big oil revenues they sought the top experts and the most up-to date technology.

Amazingly, poor countries, traditionally exporters of high level professionals, like Egypt, abandoned the previous tradition of reliance on national expertise and used Arab aid and foreign aid to import

foreign expertise consultancy and construction services. This massive foreign presence in all walks of life and often in positions very close to decision making, could not go without leaving an impact on the ideological levels as well as on the value system. Anti-imperialism receded and patriotism came to be an archaic concept. This impact is more detrimental to autonomous self-development than the considerable waste of resources.

b) Brain drain

On the other side of the coin is the brain-drain. There are no records of emigration of Arab professionals and academics. It is believed, however, that the number is considerable. This is due to a number of reasons, primarily because of professional frustrations. They do not feel that their countries appreciate their talents.

Historically, scientific progress and technological advance were a function of social demand and not vice versa. In the Arab region there are plenty of universities and research centers, but both governments and businessmen rarely commission research to a local research unit or center.

Under Nasser, Egypt usually rejected turn-key projects. Egyptian were involved with the concerned party in all phases of the project and were trained to run it once it was completed. Now reliance on foreigners not only pushes to emigration but also creates a reaction of laxity among government officials and technicians.

Societies in Transition

1. Some social indicators

Due to lack of income distribution data in the Arab region we refer to education and health indicators only.

Regarding education, all Arab countries identify more than 50% of their population simply as illiterate with the exception of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and United Arab Emirates. Egypt with modern schooling system still has 56% illiterates and the primary school enrollment has not yet reached 100%. A very wealthy country, Saudi Arabia, has a literacy rate of 39% and primary school enrollment rate of 69% males and 59% females. As for the quality of education, total public expenditure and per capita expenditure on education are very

low. With regard to health, its standards - even in wealthy countries (with the exception of Kuwait) - are below those prevailing in industrial countries. The infant/ mortality rate is below 12 per thousand in Western countries and below 20 in East European countries. Whereas this rate in Arab countries (in 1981) was as follows; 82 in Algeria, 94 in Egypt, 74 in Iraq, 50 in Jordan, 61 in Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, life expectancy in industrial countries, is on the average, over 70 years for males and 75 years for females. In the Arab region only Kuwait and United Arab Emirates are in the vicinity of these figures. The great majority of Arab countries show a life expectancy of less than 60 years and in several cases less than 50 years.

As for physicians in industrial countries, there is 1 physician for every 400 inhabitants or less. Whereas this ratio is as follows in some Arab countries: 1 physician for 800, 1790, 1170, 600, 606, 17230 in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya and Morocco respectively.

2. Social Stratification

There is a lively debate among Arab and foreign scholars concerning the modes of production in this region before the emergence of capitalism.

There are different approaches to this issue. Some authors try to define the "Islamic system" as deduced from the Holy Koran and the Prophet's traditions assorted with reference to eminent jurists and theologians who wrote some ten centuries ago. On the other end, there are scholars who concentrate on the immediate pre-colonial period. Several scholars attempt to read a new Arab history, in the light of modern social sciences.

However, it seems implausible to try to identify one mode of production or a single social formation common at a given time in all Arab countries. On the contrary, it is easier to identify social formations varying along geographic and climatic differences rather than along kingdom borders.

3. Impact of Western Colonialism

The impact of Western colonialism on Arab countries can be identified in some respects as follows:

a) The colonizers introduced to local legislation the notion of private property alien to the previous culture and legal system. In Islamic Arab lands there used to be significant cases of common, or collective ownership like water resources and pasture lands.

b) Colonial powers corrupted old institutions in order to form and strengthen local classes favorable to their presence.

c) Colonial powers introduced banks and montage companies owned by foreigners and often employing foreigners and controlling the economic life and consequently influential in politics.

d) Everywhere in almost all Arab countries the colonial powers dragged national economies, mainly through links with the colonial economy, into the capitalists "international division of labour" leaving the region with a set of distorted extraverted economies.

4. The transnationalization of the Region:

What the seventies and eighties brought was the large scale capital flight towards Western countries. The upper strata of the Arab bourgeoisie invested most of its capital abroad under the auspices of TNC's. It is already a transnational strata. Under its pressure the national states are far than ever from the historical tasks accomplished by Nation-States in the West. Instead of protecting and advancing nation-building, these states tend to become the transmission belts of the transnationalization process.

5. Changing Values:

No single factor had affected value systems in the Arab region more than the sudden huge flow of oil revenues over a very limited time span.

Suffice it to illustrate the extent to which the change in life styles has taken place - a car "wagonette" often replace the camel in front of the tents of the nomads in Saudi-Arabia, while colour T. V.'s and Video sets could be seen in humble village homes.

The demand for consumer goods remains the main feature of the new style of life. In this race for consumer goods, individualism grew widely to the detriment of family responsibilities. Moreover, the general disinterest in the origin of wealth pushed back other social values like the degree of education and the prestige of some public

offices and professions. Under such circumstances growth basic commodity sectors and social development services were bound to declined proportionately.

Patriotism and sense of belonging receded under the pressure of new life type giving place to a sense of frustration and lack of trust in national development. For many young people the way out was to emigrate. The pride of consuming national products which was the backbone of import-substitution industrialization faded.

Last but not least, the political outcome of these changes was the growing depoliticization of public opinion.

V. Political Turmoil

1. Limits to independence

As part of the Third World, Arab countries are subject to imperialist and domination by the mere fact of their distorted and extraverted development. The usual tools for this are foreign aid, Western investment, military ties, "special relations", social groups with special links with TNC's compradore, ...etc.

In this respect it would be important to spell out some of the new special ties that took place in the Arab region.

With the exception of Syria, Libya and PDR of Yemen, all Arab countries buy armaments from the West: the USA far ahead, followed by France, U. K., Italy and Spain. But only the US is giving military assistance. Among the recipients of American military aid for the fiscal year 1983, twenty countries received 97.2% of the total aid. Among these 20 major recipients eight Arab countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, Somalia and Oman) receive together 32.1% of the total US military assistance. Oil rich countries are not in need of assistance, but they rely on the US as the main supplier of weapons. Key logistic infrastructure and sophisticated weapons are in some cases manned by Americans. The US has military arrangements with ten Arab countries. Some of which are not formalized nor published.

2. Democracy: The focus of hope

Noticeable is the rapidly spreading idea that democracy is the real starting point for reform because authoritarianism is believed to be at

the heart of all misfortunes. Nevertheless, the form and the content of the desirable democracy are far from reaching unanimity.

However, one cannot talk about democracy unless the following conditions are met:

- a) Enforcement of due respect to basic human rights;
- b) Political pluralism;
- c) Peaceful change of power through constitutional mechanisms of free elections.

The following are the common feature pertaining to all Arab countries in this respect.

Constitution: Almost all Arab countries have a constitution or a constitutional document, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Libya. Yet none of them goes as far as writing down the usual public freedom and systems of checks and balances. Several constitutions omit fundamental rights like to instance freedom of association. In other cases constitutions explicitly state prohibitions in the name of "defense or revolutionary changes" for example.

Powers of the Head of States: The monarch or president enjoys vast, and often discriminatory, power. He is never truly elected by universal suffrage in Arab republics. In the ephemeral parliamentary regions he is usually chosen by the parliament. Otherwise, he is chosen by the single party or the ruling junta.

The legislative: Six Arab countries have no parliament. There are however "peoples assemblies", "national assemblies" or "chamber of deputies". This is at the so-called formal level. But to really assess the representative capacity, one needs to be more cautious.

The Judiciary, The independence of the Judiciary is very rare in the Arab region. It is especially in Egypt that the magistrates defend their independence. Elsewhere, the government has a say in the selection, promotion and dismissal of judges.

Trade unions and other association: Quite a number of Arab countries deny workers and professionals the right to organize themselves in trade union. In other countries trade unions are completely subject to the ruling party with the only qualification of being auxiliary organizations of the party. In a third group they are

organised by a law that prohibits any union outside the legal structure.

In most Arab countries the right to strike is denied even where trade unions are legalized.

The local government: Arab states tend to be highly centralized. Local and provincial officials are part of the central civil service. Local bodies have no decisive role, they are more akin to a consultative institution than to the most limited forms of local government.

Political parties: These are alien to Arab societies. Until the mid-seventies, their absence was not broadly perceived as a major defect in the political system. The public image of political parties is not very attractive. Up till now many people still believe that parties politics are devisive and that out societies need consensus.

3. Governing by T. V. :

It is to be expected in the light of what has just been said about democracy that the freedom of press in the Arab World is a chimera. Meddling with the press is achieved through different means. The simplest is censorship and administrative seizure. But up-stream there is the right of the administration to authorize or deny the birth of a newspaper or magazine.

The radio and T. V. are state-owned T.V. looks tailored to fit the dictators' ambitions. No opponent has access to the small screen. With direct brain-washing, misinformation and insidious propaganda, T. V. is a means of governing.

4. The process of decision making:

It is doubtful that countries living without free flow of information, freedom of speech and freedom of academic work could ever approach rationality in their decision - making. Rationality in this process is a function of the quantity and quality of information available to decision - making.

An enlightened public opinion helps in bringing decisions closer to rationality. Also, scientific contributions through policy analysis centers and other think-tanks is of importance in respect.

Part Two

What Future

1. The prevailing trends in the Arab region have been amply underscored in part one of the report. The project had also to identify the counter-trends. It went on to extrapolate those trends to elaborate alternative scenarios. Finally, it proposed a normative scenario inspired by objective popular aspirations and what is believed to be a good development for the Arab region.

2. Counter trends: The two radical counter trends are presented in the following:

A) Islamic Revival Movement

Schematically the various groups in this movement could be classified as follows:

(i) The fervent extremist

This group is called the Qotbists after Sayyed Qotb, the doctrinaire of fundamentalism, one of the prominent leaders of the Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt. His central idea was that the whole society had fallen back into a situation similar to that of the Arab before Islam "Jahelia". True Moslems are a small minority, they have to purify themselves from the impious society and its daily sins, and strengthen their group in order to carry on with the noble mission of re-islamizing the lands of Islam.

(ii) Semi-fascists

Opposite to those who sin by excess of idealism, there has been in the region a unique case of opportunism ending in a semi-fascist power structure. This is the case of the Sudanese Moslem Brotherhood who backed Numeiri when he lost all political base Sudan. This, for them, was a short-cut to power. Numeiri's rule was abhorred and links to it were a major liability.

(iii) The bourgeois political party:

Many Moslem Brothers escaped persecution in Egypt and settled in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Quite a good number of them became wealthy businessmen. When Sadat launched his infitah, they returned to Egypt and took place immediately among the multimillionaires produced by the policy. They also established banks

and a host of Islamic investment companies.

If this group forms a legal party, it would be a conservative bourgeois party.

(iv) **Protesting Islam**

Many Moslem intellectuals seek in Islamic ethics and principles for practical life the foundation for a modern efficient moral and just society. They want to invest the deep religious feelings of the masses in building up a new society, and to study carefully the Islamic legacy in order to establish a system of reference with solutions to contemporary problems. Besides the group mentioned above, there are other groups such as the "Republican Brothers" in Sudan, the "Islamic Socialist Front" in Syria and the "Movement of Islamic Trend" in Tunisia.

The following conclusions are to be noted:

- The political base of political Islam is large. The most attracted to it are the middle and poor classes.

- The movement is terribly divided.

- Up till now, the movement has not produced any articulate societal project.

B) Arab Progressive Movement:

This movement includes all groups struggling for "Freedom Socialism and Unity" of the Arab countries. Renewing of thought, programs and slogans are needed, by engaging in research of the concrete situation of the Arab countries as well as changes that took place everywhere in the world.

3. The Unacceptable Scenario

Extrapolation of those trends, outlined in part one, over the next thirty years.

A) Population and ecology

According to IBRD demographic indicators, one could expect, in light of the prevailing rate of growth of the Arab population, that the total population will reach 700 million thirty five years from now, that is to say 3.5 times its present size. Here crucial questions arise. Would the life supporting system be able to cope with the expected size of the population? To what extent would the ecology resist the population

pressure?

The basic national resources of the region's physical environment are threatened. Arabe land endowment is limited. In many countries desertification is already tangible (Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, ...). Soil deteriorates by water logging and increasing salinity. The unsurmountable constraint on land reclamation is the shortage of water supply.

Food deficit will reach unbelievable proportion by the year 2000. There is fear that the region would never be able to feed 700 million people. As to oil resources, the energy crisis is looming in countries like Egypt and Tunisia. Output of oil will drop seriously in the early decades of the twenty first century in Kuwait and Algeria. In fact only Iraq and Saudi Arabia have abound reserves. There is a serious pollution problem in the region.

B) Human resources:

The region's labour force, estimated in the mid-eighties at about 100 million, is expected to reach 350 million by the year 2015. That is to say, the Arab countries must achieve during the next thirty years a cumulative growth that quadruples job opportunities. Labor productivity will remain a serious constraint. A striking evidence as illiteracy. More than half of the population of fifteen years or more is still illiterate. Because of schooling and education shortcoming, illiteracy is reproduced. Thus, it is expected that the region's literacy rate will be at best, in the following thirty years, around 65%.

With regard to science and technology, there is no sign of a shift in attitude towards local expertise. Crowded universities leave no time for serious research. The efforts of scientific centers are dispersed, and often unknown to scholarly communities and learned societies. Arab countries do not care to encourage research efforts in vital technologies namely information - communication, biological engineering, new and renewable sources of energy. Arab development will remain largely dependent on the industrial countries for the coming thirty years.

C) Transnationalization

As already mentioned, the Arab economies have been integrated

into the center of the world order more than even during the past fifteen years.

Heavily indebted Arab countries' only possible hope is to perpetuate their indebtedness by borrowing to service former debts. Nothing allows the observer to predict any time horizon at which one of those countries would be able to reduce its indebtedness by 50% not to mention reaching a debt is appalling is the fact that no single country is aiming at dispensing with foreign capital.

Having relied completely on the West for equipment and know how, Arab countries will be forced to import spare parts and some intermediate goods from the same source. Representatives of suppliers have a vested interest in continuing to rely on the same countries. They will certainly use their political clout to avert the reorientation of foreign trade. Moreover, Western monopoly of military supply in most Arab countries is a long term commitment.

D) Disintegration

a) At the regional level

Each new link with the center of the world system is an additional obstacle to regional co-operation. World capitalism does not welcome the enhancement of the bargaining power through the joint action of any group of Third World countries.

Reference was made before to the weakness of intra-Arab economic relations. This has been the result of a deliberate choice by the ruling elites that have their reason for acting in this manner, which resulted in a strong anti-integration trend. The intensification of new ties with the center of the world system has consolidated this trend. It is important to note the numerous sustained tensions among the Arab countries (Libya and Egypt, the two Yemen, Iraq and Syria, ... etc.

b) At country level

Most country-states of today acceded to independence within borders drawn by colonial powers. Historically, no national bourgeoisie has succeeded in integrating the people of an Arab country in the sense country in the sense conveyed by the term "Nation-State" as it emerged in Europe, and consequently no country enjoyed Western democracy. Democracy's greatest practical merit is

that it allows settlement of conflict in the society by vote. What happened in Lebanon deserves a serene analysis, it is the epiphenomenon of what threatens to happen in several Arab countries.

There are some vast Arab countries representing regions with a long history of separate existence. Unless sustained and regionally balanced development really unites the regions by common progress, separatist movement could take place.

E) Israeli Hegemony:

Israel is unable to provide "European" living standards to all its Jewish population relying solely on its own resources. The main source of income should be the role of Israel as a broker for Arab resources, as a "comptoir" for T. N. C's. in the region and as an exporter of manufactures to the Arab markets. The strategy of implementation is rather simple: Israel must inflict defeat and humiliation on Arab countries with a view to bringing them with the help of the USA - to normalize their relations with Israel. Israel will use every possible means available to accelerate the process of Arab disintegration and impose itself not simply as a country of the region but as a hegemonic state.

4. All Arab Autonomous Development

A) A Normative scenario:

A consensus could be reached on a list of grievances among large social forces:

a) Poverty, in sense that a sizeable portion of the population lives under the absolute poverty line. Their conditions constitute a threat to social and political stability.

b) Social equity, even where absolute poverty is not a serious problem, people are far from accepting unearned and ill-acquired conspicuous wealth. They want more equal opportunities and less discrepancy in earned incomes.

c) Human rights, the most shared ideal in the Arab region is actually democracy at least insofar that basic human rights are currently grossly violated.

d) National independence, the vast majority of Arab people feel with great anxiety the American hegemony in the region.

e) Arab unity, the sentiment of common destiny has never been as acute as it is nowadays among the Arab people at large.

f) Cultural identity, almost every Arab is living an identity crisis. How to participate in twenty first century modernity without effacing Arab basic cultural traits.

In light of these legitimate aspiration, we present in this part of the report a normative scenario i.e. a scenario that adequately meets these aspirations.

B) Economic and cultural decolonization

a) The end of illusions

No meaningful change other than the unacceptable scenario could be envisaged unless the Arabs rid themselves of the thrust of certain illusions. The illusion is the possibility of "catching up" with capitalist industrial countries. Underdevelopment is not historical backwardness that could be overcome by forcing ahead the pace of economic growth, it is a bad development, distorted and extraverted. Consequently, good development is basically a structural change to free the economy of these distortions. This goal is impossible to achieve economically only. Concomitant social political, and cultural changes are indispensable. Development is an overall societal renewal or else it is not development at all. The second great illusion is the incredible belief that former colonial powers would help the Third world achieve full development. The basic law of capitalism is competition and not co-operation.

b) New orthodoxy

During the late sixties and seventies, research for development alternatives was active. Notions like direct attack on poverty, meeting basic needs, self-reliance, the New International Economic Order ... etc. gained currency. But since the beginning of the eighties, the world economic crisis waged a terrible blow to the Northern liberals. The developed North witnessed the ferocious attack on the welfare state and the arrival of concentrative parties. The world looks as if it has bowed to the orthodoxy and admitted that in hard times there is no room for reformation.

c) The second phase of national liberation

Arabs are against the new orthodoxy and believe that the decisive battle for Arab development is on the intellectual front. A kind of cultural revolution is needed to emancipate the Arab mind from the servile acceptance of Western paradigms. In fact real development is nothing more than the second phase of national liberation; that of achieving cultural and economic decolonization.

3. Autonomous development

Its basic elements are

a) Self-reliance

Autonomous development means for a given society to depend basically on its own capabilities to the limit without any foreign aid. The principal national capability is its citizen. Accordingly, production of sufficient "wage goods" is the first of 'heavy industries'; production of desirable labour force is by no means less important than production of capital goods. In the second place, the improvement of living conditions requires saving part of its production to accumulate means of production necessary for increasing output.

b) People's needs

Since a country has to rely on its labour force it must improve labour productivity by meeting their needs, material and non-material.

c) Self-centeredness

The necessity of meeting human needs forbids the haphazard choice of production mix and erratic resource allocation. The fundamental question here is for whom do we produce? The answer is to meet the human needs of the population. Thus, the targeted market is by and large the home market. In this way, the economy becomes inward looking, integrated and self-centered.

d) Selected delinking

Autonomous development aims at a selective delinking from the world system, because any exchange with the center is by nature unequal. Yet, complete delinking is neither possible nor desirable.

e) Science and technology

After answering the question of: for whom to produce and what to

produce, a third question arises, namely, how to produce? In other words what are the appropriate technologies? Technology is value loaded and not natural. It can be always traced to its country of origin, it bears its specific genetic code. Accordingly, local scientific and technological capabilities are a must for sustained development.

f) Eco-development

Turning to nature, self-reliance requires the optimum use of natural resources. Capitalist growth proved catastrophic for the physical environment. Industrial countries have to pay a high cost for combatting pollution and improving the quality of life. One of the rare good chances of Third World is that Third World countries can from the outset seek the optimum management of their environment.

g) Cultural identity

The birth and growth of capitalism is inseparable from the history of the cultural revolution in Europe. It is really naive to try to analyse economic development in the third world without understanding the colonial background, the national liberation movement, the natural aspirations of the people for the right to be different, etc....

Autonomous development will have better chances if it is related to cultural identity and using positive cultural values as levers for mobilization and good performance.

In the Arab context no single Arab country is able to bear alone the renewal of Arab culture. Saving Arab cultural identity, without which autonomous development would be incomplete, requires joint Arab development efforts.

4. Participatory democracy:

Self-reliance is the backbone for autonomous development, side by side with participation. Self-reliance cannot be reduced to a government policy, it is a social behaviour for the whole society from the family nucleus to running the country. The participation of all concerned people in the process of decision - making is the essence of advanced democracy. Such participation is unthinkable without due respect of human rights.

People must believe that they are working for the betterment of their own interests. Such a belief could only be sustained through

people's participation in decision making.

Participatory democracy should not be viewed as a substitute for political parties and trade union. On the contrary it works better when citizens enjoy complete freedom of association with political parties, trade unions, etc... .

5) Arab collective self-reliance:

All the authors who propounded self-reliance believe that the chances for its success would be greater if the same strategy is followed by a group of countries. If these countries belong to one great culture and share one language, it would be a unique opportunity.

The strategy for autonomous development solves many issues that remain controversial. Unity be force or by democratic choice is no longer a question, since this strategy is based on participatory democracy. Local particularism will be respected. The same will be offered to national minorities - added to it the freedom to use their language. Class exploitation will be subject to attacks since autonomous development is based on the rejection of the Western capitalist model. It paves the way to socialism with a caveat: there is no preconceived model of socialism.

IV- Comments and remarks:

The symposium that was held in Cairo for three days during May 1986, discussed at length the draft final report of the AAF. The meeting was reported about by Dr. Mohammed Mahmoud El Emam one of the most eminent economist and econometricians in the Arab region.

According to the report on the symposium the project was highly commended because it dealt with the issues from a comprehensive societal approach and was not captive to traditional modes of research. It led to a series of field studies, original researches and brain storming sessions in areas hardly tackled before.

One of the merits of the project mentioned was that it covered a wide range of problems substantiated by a wealth of information. Moreover the presentation in draft final report went beyond the recording of facts to handle them in a coherent analytical framework.

The AAF report was however criticized from a number of angles. In the following the main critical remarks on the report by the symposium coupled with remarks on shortcomings of the project as seen by the writer of this review are presented:

(a) The draft final report was criticized for being dependent on indicators pre-prepared by certain international organizations. While it is true that such indicators are derived from data presented by the countries themselves, it would have been preferable to spend some effort in constructing more relevant indicators even if this involves further cross sectional surveys. This was said to be applicable particularly in the social field where existing available studies were ignored. It can be here added that some results of the project own studies in this area were hardly benefited from. Reference is here made in particular to the studies on the impact of oil wealth on changes of values undertaken by both the University of Alexandria and the University of Sanaa. The outcome of both studies were delayed to such an extent that made their use practically impossible.

b) The tone of the report was considered pessimistic and that it frequently concentrated on the negative elements. The need to draw future potentials was said to call for indicating the positive side of the picture. This was in particular mentioned in connection with the resources available. Some positive elements were said to be ignored Mediterranean climate, and has in many parts advanced infrastructures and industries.

c) Even though the project undertook a number of social and cultural studies, the final report was dominated by economic analysis with some weight given to political issues but less than desirable in the technological and sociological spheres.

It can be here added that the pre-occupation with the study of the past was on the expense of the study of factors that have more impact on the future.

While it was true that the project lacked enough financial resources to cover all the twelve research areas, the fact remains that within the limited financial means priorities were given to the studies of issues other than Human resources, and the resources and uses of technology

which have the greatest impact on future development in the Arab nation.

Besides the result of some of the studies, however important in themselves were kept in storage as far as the definition of possible future scenarios was concerned. An example is the study on literature and arts as factors of unity and diversity in the Arab world. While the studies themselves were very valuable, it was very hard to define the impact of the phenomena studied on the possible future of the Arab region.

d) While it was agreed that the prospective method was capable of dealing with some of the issues involved, there was a feeling that resort should have also been made to model building which is considered more appropriate for qualification and for providing more than two alternative scenarios through manipulation of parameters. Models could have been used besides proscription for the benefit of the project.

(e) Concerning what future a number of questions were raised about the scenarios presented: (1) As for the unacceptable scenario was concerned a question was raised about... whether it is a scenario at all in the sense of the proposed methodology. It seemed to be just a magnification of current shortcomings. According to some critiques no room was allowed to the possibility that the negative elements of the present may provoke positive actions. Policies were also assumed to remain passive, which can be hardly accepted. Another unacceptable assumption is that social politico-economic trends will remain the same.

Things like the effect of the change in the structure of the economy and possible changes in oil revenues should have been taken in consideration.

Other elements that were ignored in this and other scenarios as well are changes in external factors. The fact that dependency was assumed to continue is not enough. Lots of changes are taken place in the capitalist, and socialist system as well as in the third world.

There is a change in the center of gravity in the capitalist world to the benefit of the Pacific region, there is also a trend toward the

marginalization of the third world taking the shape lessening industrial countries in dependence on natural resources including energy. Such factors and their consequences on trade, balance of payment and indebtedness should have been considered.

The Arab world is so vulnerable to external change which makes it necessary to treat possible change in the area in more details.

(ii) Concerning counter trends it was observed that contrast between the Islamic and progressive attitudes was magnified. Each of these tendencies covers a variety of shades. The report was said to have selected to make emphasis on the role of the extremists among the Islamic variants. Other Islamic groups might be closer to the progressive attitudes. Hence discussion was required of the contrast between fundamentalism and modernism advocated by Islamic protesting groups. The difference between different shades of the same movement calls for an assessment of the weight of various groups to estimate their impact on the future scene.

It can moreover added that the fact that both radical trends lack a coherent societal project made it difficult to reach any conclusions about possible future scenes in case of victory of one or another trends.

The project thus satisfied itself with the description and analysis of the various problems facing counter trends without to present scenarios of what might happen in the case of political change.

(iii) To compensate for such shortcoming the coordinators resorted to the presentation of a normative scenario based on autonomous Arab development.

This alternative seems however to be the product of intellectual aspiration rather than a possibility in the future. There is no regional of country institute that hold such vision. No social groups or movements are actually struggling for its achievement.

The normative scenario also overlooks the differences between Arab countries especially between rich and poor countries.