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THE "ARAB STREET"?
PUBLIC OPINION IN THE ARAB WORLD

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PREFACE

The remarkable events of recent years force a rethinking of conventional wisdom on many fronts. In the Middle East, the Gulf War shattered many stereotypes and preconceived notions, not least among them, about the so-called "Arab street." It has often been assumed that there is, properly speaking, no such thing as Arab public opinion in the Western sense. Rather, commentators regularly depict a mythologized and often demonized "Arab street"—an ominous urban mass that is sometimes depicted as intimidating regimes, sometimes as being held captive by them; and sometimes, oddly enough, as both.

Thus it was that during the Gulf crisis, many analysts predicted a mass uprising of the "Arab street" in opposition to the deployment of U.S. and UN forces in Saudi Arabia; a display of unrest that would endanger regimes and greatly hamper, if not cripple outright, U.S. military and diplomatic maneuverability. In the event, no such thing happened. Allied coalition forces successfully drove Iraq from Kuwait, and subsequently undertook major humanitarian operations in northern Iraq, all without eliciting the much-feared protests of the "street."

In this pathbreaking Policy Paper, David Pollock examines this very important episode and offers one of the first serious analyses of Arab public opinion, arguing that it does indeed exist, can be measured despite the closed nature of most Arab countries, and, perhaps most significantly, that public opinion in various Arab countries does roughly correlate with those states' respective policies. His thought-provoking analysis,

certain to be of great value to all students of Mideast politics, both scholarly and professional, is a look at a subject whose significance is sure to grow as Arab-Israeli peace talks progress, and more generally as the momentous changes that have been reverberating throughout our world make their influences felt in the Middle East, as well.

Barbi Weinberg
President
January 1993

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the Gulf crisis many sober people worried that the Arab masses, out of enthusiasm for Saddam, would frustrate U.S. policy, wreck the coalition, even topple their own governments. As we all know, that is not what happened. Today, however, some people take this episode and draw exactly the wrong conclusion, i.e., the Arab masses were too afraid of their regimes to openly support Saddam. Others see Islamic fundamentalism replacing radical pan-Arabism as a mortal popular threat to Arab regimes. Both extremes neglect the internal diversity of Arab opinions, the interaction of those opinions with Arab government policies—and even the idea of trying to measure what those opinions are before assessing their impact. Arab opinion is not uniform, but diverse, and operates in dynamic interaction with Arab government policies; moreover, its very nature must not be assumed but measured.

The first tool for assessing Arab public opinion is anecdotal information, both public and private. The second tool is the so-called "literature" of Arab opinion: academic papers, journalistic reports, and of course the Arab media themselves. The third major tool for trying to understand Arab opinion is poll and survey data, which can be treated seriously when the people gathering the data have reputations for accuracy and professionalism. Still no poll is perfect, and care must be exercised in interpreting even the best data.

During the Gulf crisis, polls showed that while Saddam certainly had his admirers, he was not the pan-Arab hero many in Washington imagined. In fact, the U.S. enjoyed

considerable support in some non-elite Arab quarters and many people who disapproved of Washington's response to the invasion of Kuwait had little use for Saddam. Within most Arab countries, the balance of opinion was broadly consistent with official policy. There was not one but many different Arab streets, and Arab leaders were well positioned in terms of their own publics to ride out the storm.

In the Gulf States, for instance, majorities of 70 percent or more rejected Saddam's behavior from an Islamic standpoint, condemned his occupation of Kuwait, and refused to settle for a partial Iraqi withdrawal. Outside the Gulf, but still inside the coalition, opinions were likewise anti-Saddam, but more nuanced as to how to deal with him. For example, the Egyptians and Moroccans sympathized more with Kuwait than with Iraq. When it came to war, however, these two Arab publics parted ways. In Egypt a plurality was prepared to back hostilities, while only about one-quarter of Moroccans agreed.

Looking at two Arab states that stayed out of the coalition, Jordan and Yemen, illustrates contrasting ends of what might be called the "pro-Iraqi" spectrum. In both places the "street," statistically speaking, clearly sympathized more with Iraq than Kuwait. Yet there were also some areas of divergence between Jordanians and Yemenis. For example, only in Jordan did a majority think that Saddam's actions were in accord with Islam, or that he would somehow benefit Arabs in general.

In view of the sentiments on their respective streets, it was no surprise that the governments of both Jordan and Yemen stayed out of the coalition, and much the same could be said of Algeria and Tunisia. Ironically, this may have actually turned out better for the U.S.—since staying out of the coalition, but on the right side of the street, helped preserve all four of these relatively friendly governments.

If Saddam's pan-Arab uprising never happened, it was not because the Arab street did not matter; to the contrary, it was because, where the government opposed Saddam, so too, almost without exception, did the people. Conversely, where the street was mostly sympathetic to Saddam so was the government. This rough congruence between policy and public opinion must be more than coincidence.

Today, on the Arab-Israeli front, polls show that key Arab publics generally, and, it seems, genuinely, accept the current peace process. Not with much evident enthusiasm, but

enough—more or less as in the Gulf crisis—to enable their leaders to stay the course. Overall, the mood on the Arab street regarding the peace process can be said to be positive in principle; skeptical on specifics; but also, only intermittently engrossed, except where it hits very close to home. Today public opinion seems focused more on domestic than on foreign policy issues. Yet in the long run, of course, Arab attitudes will be crucial to the possibility of lasting peace. For now, the overall impression is of the routinization of Israel, a process begun during the Gulf War, particularly in the Gulf itself. In the time preceding the Madrid Conference it was noteworthy how little media hostility was visible regarding the prospect of peace talks with Israel, as distinguished from complaints about assorted Israeli policies. And ever since Madrid, while "Israel bashing" remains common in the Arab media, the "mere" fact that the Arabs are engaged in peace talks seems to be generally taken for granted in the media—and ignored on the street.

In some Arab countries to be sure, surveys demonstrate that only about half the public are prepared for what they view as concessions, such as interim agreements, or normal relations with Israel once a final agreement is achieved. Yet Arab attitudes *are* affected both by American and by Israeli actions. Arab opinion is not some kind of primal force, immutable and impervious to good news or bad. The brightest spots seem to be among those either furthest away from or closest to Israel. In the wake of Desert Storm, the Gulf States really are the new moderates on Arab-Israeli issues. Among Israel's partners to the bilateral negotiations, attitudes are more mixed—but sufficiently receptive to leave the leaders leeway to pursue the peace talks. Palestinians in the territories seem comparatively moderate, though their opinions are subject to change. But Jordan's public is divided on the peace process, mandating a cautious approach on the part of the government in the negotiations. The Syrian public seems to accept the talks, if not the notion of "real peace"; and Lebanese public opinion is largely holding its breath in anticipation of Syria's progress, or lack thereof, in its negotiations with Israel.

While it is clear that Islamists are predisposed against the Jewish State, it is not clear that the Islamists will be able to ride the street to power anywhere, anytime soon, or ever. Arab opinions are not monolithic—not even about Islam. The debate

among Arab publics is not about whether one is for or against Islam—but about how high a priority to place on Islamic politics in comparison with other national goals. And surveys reveal considerable variation both within and among various Arab societies on exactly that issue.

If the Islamists remain an "interest group," even a strong one, Arab leaders may still choose to pursue the peace process. And they may still have, as they now do, broad support for this from their publics. And even if Islamists begin to exert irresistible pressure on official policy, they might concentrate on internal rather than external affairs. Islam is not an automatic impediment to Arab-Israeli peace.

Three policy conclusions follow. First, Arab public opinion is measurable, and it matters, as do the different ways in which different Arab governments respond to it. We should not assume that official Arab politics represent only a thin and brittle upper crust. In most cases, the Arab street matters some; in some cases it matters very little; but in a few and quite critical cases, it matters quite a lot.

Second, Arab opinion is anything but uniform, or static, even on such enduring and seemingly mobilizing issues such as Islam (or democracy). We ought to tailor our approaches, as much as possible, to fit individual Arab governments, societies, and circumstances.

Third, the Gulf crisis has produced attitudinal as well as political and strategic changes. The result is an opportunity for Arab-Israeli peacemaking accepted not only by most Arab elites, but also by most Arab "streets." We can best pursue that opportunity by keeping both elites and "streets" firmly in mind, emphasizing issues on which Arab publics as well as leaders are most amenable to give and take.

INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE

Consider the "Arab street," as public opinion in that part of the world is commonly called. The very name evokes exotic images of mystery, mobs, and mullahs; it sounds vaguely subterranean, if not sinister; and it is most often regarded in the West with a peculiar mixture of fascination, dismissal and fear. Indeed, the whole subject of Arab public opinion seems, even to those who acknowledge its importance, to be extraordinarily elusive: how much it matters, how to measure it, even just what it really is. This essay will attempt first to deal with these conceptual issues, then analyze some real-world cases, and finally suggest some of the policy implications to be drawn from a survey of Arab public opinion.

First, how much does the so-called Arab street really matter? Actually, this is just a special case of a very general and vexing problem in political analysis; namely the connection, if any, between public opinion and government policy. It is hard enough to answer that question in democratic countries, but it gets increasingly harder as one descends down the democratic scale. Until, that is, one hits bottom— where the question suddenly becomes very easy inasmuch as there is *no* connection between policy and public opinion. One

could coin a phrase to cover those extreme cases: where you can't measure public opinion, it doesn't matter—until the revolution! But that is not, it will be argued here, the prevailing situation in contemporary Arab politics.

In defining the parameters of that situation today, one might begin with the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991. It is hard to recapture, some two years later, the pervasive sense of uncertainty and even foreboding about the Arab street all during that period—but the perception at least was very real. Many sober people worried that the Arab masses, in their alleged enthusiasm for Saddam, would frustrate U.S. policy, wreck the coalition, even topple their own governments. Of course, that is not what happened. Today, however, some people take this episode and draw exactly the wrong conclusion. Saddam, they say, had the hearts and minds of the Arab masses, but they were too afraid of their regimes to do very much about it—which supposedly proves that the Arab street doesn't matter, and perhaps doesn't even exist.

But it took only an aborted election in Algeria, and other supposed signs of militant Islam on the march, to start the intellectual pendulum swinging back toward the opposite extreme: now the street, in fundamentalist garb, is said to be:

> Once again on the move, shaking the foundations of government and culture in even the most stable Arab states.[1]

We will return to the special subject of Islamic street politics later, but for now the point is that there seems to be a certain cyclical pattern, or perhaps confusion, in even the most informed assessments of this entire issue. The reader could be forgiven for asking, well, which one is it? Does the Arab street count for everything, or nothing?

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[1] Judith Miller, "The Islamic Wave," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 31, 1992, p. 23.

I REVIEW OF "THE LITERATURE":
TWO PARALLEL MYTHS EXPOSED

The stark alternatives posed in the introduction are not simply straw men. Rather, they are the dominant interpretations in much of the writing, whether academic or journalistic, on this subject. With some unavoidable oversimplification, and with apologies to those whose more nuanced approaches will be considered in our conclusion, published assessments of the Arab street can be roughly divided into two major—and rival—schools. There is, if you will, the "underrated school," typified by the sigh of relief after Saddam's pan-Arab uprising failed to materialize. Then there is the "exaggerated school," typified by the alarmist expectations earlier in the Gulf crisis, and now again by visions of Islamist upheaval on the Arab street. Neither school, it will be argued here, is correct; but it is precisely in order to establish why they are not that each is worthy of some consideration, before suggesting a synthesis that more accurately approximates reality.

THE "UNDERRATED" SCHOOL OF THE ARAB STREET

An excursion down the mythical, rather than the real, Arab street rightly begins with the more prevalent of the two alternatives just outlined, namely, the "underrated" school. Among its adherents, the most frequent and obvious argument is that in the absence of Arab democratic institutions public opinion in those countries is politically irrelevant. A striking formulation of this notion, unusually blunt in style if quite

commonplace in content, is prominently featured in both the introduction and the conclusion of a recent book-length "Interpretation of the Arabs":

> Nowhere is there participation in the political process corresponding to any conception of representative democracy. No parliament or assembly except by appointment of the power holder, no freedom of expression throughout rigidly state-controlled media, no opinion polls, nothing except a riot to determine what public opinion might be. . . In the absence of institutions . . . and pending the introduction of pluralism in whatever form may be suitable, the Arab masses must remain uninvolved in influencing their own fate. . . [1]

In countering this claim, some point to significant, if still limited, exceptions to the "rule" of unmitigated Arab autocracy. For example: relatively "pluralist" elections to parliament (though not to the chief executive positions) are a reality, or at least a realistic prospect, in Jordan, Yemen, Morocco, Egypt and Kuwait. There is a relatively open press in much of North Africa; there are traditional forms of political "consultation" even in more conservative Arab states; and so on. This rebuttal to the sweeping generalization that "Arab masses don't matter" has some validity. If the spectrum of democratic practice is small, it is large enough to make the various Arab states not entirely alike—and, in fact, rather different—in this respect.

But quite apart from such particulars, the approach taken here is at once more general and more down-to-earth. This analysis does not seek to evaluate individual Arab governments on a scale of free expression and representative institutions, the sinews that connect public opinion with public policy in ideally democratic regimes. Rather, it asks whether and how that connection works in the real world of less-than-fully-democratic or just plain dictatorial Arab regimes, many of which of course attempt to suppress or select the truths that their people can hear. And that difficult setting is the point of departure, and not the end point, of our inquiry.

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[1] David Pryce-Jones, *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), pp. 17, 406.

To begin with, even in those Arab countries where the local media are indeed totally subservient to the state, the public may have its own sources of information on which to base its own opinions. Recent experience in what was then the Soviet bloc has suggested that this might be so, but one need not venture so far afield to search for analogies. Three Arab examples amply make the point.

In Syria, to take one of the most controlled environments, the regime's authoritarian apparatus has no monopoly on public access to information, politically embarrassing as it may be. At the height of the Gulf War, for example, reliable commercial survey data (about which more later) showed strikingly high levels of listenership to foreign broadcasts: one-third of adults in Damascus and Aleppo tuned in the free-wheeling (and distinctly not pro-coalition) Radio Monte Carlo; while acknowledged regular listenership to the BBC, Saudi Radio, and even Israel Radio reached low double-digits as well. Among those with at least a high school education, foreign radio audiences were even higher: fully two-thirds listened to Radio Monte Carlo, and around half tuned in the BBC. Equally striking were the overall percentages who cited "word of mouth" as a source of "more details" about coalition attacks on Iraq (49 percent) or about Iraqi attacks on Israel (61 percent)—double the number who said they followed these developments in the official Syrian press.[1]

In Algeria, where the press has been more open (and, incidentally, has stayed that way even after the January 1992 military crackdown) the audience for foreign news broadcasts is nevertheless quite large. A few months before the Gulf crisis, a third of adults in and around the capital listened regularly to Medi-1, a semi-private station broadcasting from neighboring Morocco; Radio Monte Carlo attracted half as many.[2] It is a safe bet that audiences for these and other foreign radio stations climbed abruptly as the crisis unfolded. That pattern can be

[1] Frederick C. Huxley, "Urban Syrians Followed Gulf War By Radio, Word of Mouth," United States Information Agency (USIA) Office of Research Memorandum M-172-91, October 25, 1991.

[2] *Idem*, "Residents of Algiers Rely Heavily on French-Language Press, Provide Important Audiences for Western Radio and TV," USIA Office of Research Memorandum M-100-90, September 14, 1990.

demonstrated from periodic media surveys in the United Arab Emirates, at the other end of the Arab region: BBC listenership there more than doubled (from 15 percent to 34 percent) during the Gulf crisis, while the Voice of America's audience share rose to double-digits as well.[1] Clearly, there is a pervasive, and often well-deserved, cynicism among Arabs about their own domestic media; but just as clearly, many of them will find alternative sources of information, especially during a crisis. Actual data about Arab political culture, as we will see time and time again, belie the one-dimensional image of ignorant, indifferent, or "manipulated" masses.

Moreover, public opinion, however well- or ill-informed, may have political effects even where there are no institutional mechanisms for implementing it, consulting it, or even defining it. One way of conceptualizing the question, especially in the least democratic (and therefore most difficult) cases, is simply this: where there really is "nothing except a riot to determine what public opinion might be," one might well ask what it is that provokes such riots—and what the government in question does, if anything, to respond to that prospect. This is not democracy, to be sure, but it is surely a useful area of both intellectual and practical inquiry.

Some more careful writers acknowledge that street politics sometimes do matter in the Arab world—but not usually about anything really important. One "instant analysis" of "Why Arabs Aren't Rioting" during the Gulf War was that the masses were, if not indifferent, then intimidated by their own rulers, or else impressed to the point of passivity by the raw power of the anti-Iraqi onslaught. Mobs, according to this author, would turn out over petty pocketbook issues, but not over politics or principle, where the operative motto was "kiss the hand you cannot bite."[2] Entirely neglected (though closer to the truth) was the possibility that different Arab publics generally supported the different policies pursued by their own

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[1] For some additional details and an overview of this subject, see David Pollock, "Mideast Media in the Gulf Crisis," in *The Gulf War and the Media: A Closer Look*, Occasional Monograph of the School of Journalism, University of California at Berkeley, 1991.

[2] Daniel Pipes, "Why Arabs Aren't Rioting," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 22, 1991.

governments toward the crisis—or that some of those governments had taken popular sentiment into account in formulating their policies in the first place.

Still other writers prefer to avoid this whole issue, apparently on the grounds that Arab public opinion—regardless of whatever importance it might have—is simply unknowable, and therefore unfit for serious discussion. Stripped thus to its bare essentials, this assumption sounds at once pathetic and presumptuous, a sorry combination of self-professed intellectual arrogance and impotence. As such, this "know-nothing" posture would itself be unworthy of discussion, were it not for the fact that it sometimes still pervades what passes for political analysis of the region. It can be neatly dispatched as follows: For one thing, it is (or should be) self-evident that you cannot dismiss the Arab street just because you don't understand it. For another thing, there *are* ways, as will be discussed below, to understand the Arab street—so that one can assess, instead of simply ignore, its possible political impact.

A more sophisticated version of that abdication of analytical responsibility is this: even if we outsiders could know the opinion climate of the Arab street, Arab governments themselves do not know, or care, about it—so in the end it cannot really affect their decisions. The fact is, though, that Arab governments demonstrably do care about the mood of their citizens, or subjects—at least enough, unlike some analysts, to try to find out what that mood might be. Other scholars have not been blinded by the search for functioning Western forms of popular sovereignty or "consent of the governed." The late Elie Kedourie, for example, argued that experiments in representative constitutional government have been and probably will remain doomed among the Arabs. Yet he conceded that the thin veneer of the contemporary bureaucratic state overlays an Arab historical tradition in which "informal representativeness [was] a valuable, albeit uncodified, element of governance."[1] In contemporary Arab politics, there remain a whole host of such informal devices by which governments attempt to take the measure of the street:

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[1] Elie Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1992), p. 23.

from the ritualized gabfests of the Gulf (the *majlis, diwaniyah,* or *husseiniyah*); to the "listening posts" (a sort of government-run collection of neighborhood discussion centers) of Egypt; to the diverse channels of communication between North African officialdom and a considerable network of autonomous citizens' associations, local leaders, and quasi- or even overtly political groups.

Perhaps in some places only a major riot will fully command official attention; in most places, however, a demonstration, petition, or just a persistent rumor will not go unnoticed. In a few recent cases, such as Morocco and Jordan, Arab governments have actually taken to consulting opinion polls. What they do with any of this grass-roots input once obtained is of course an open question, but that they do obtain it is hardly in question at all. The outside analyst can therefore not afford to ignore the "street" factor, if only because Arab governments most assuredly do not ignore it either.

Finally, however, among disciples of the "underrated" school of Arab public opinion, there is one recent variant that does capture an important part of the emerging picture—but only a part. This is the view that tends to equate "the Arab street" with old-fashioned pan-Arabism, concluding that because the latter is moribund, the former must also be politically powerless. A classic example of this reasoning, worth quoting at some length, can be found in the reported comments of an anonymous American diplomat in April 1992:

> I don't think Washington sees an Arab landscape out there any more. We see Egyptians, we see Saudis, we see Libyans and Algerians. While there is still some appreciation of the concept of Arab solidarity, it no longer plays a role in our calculations. . . [T]hings have changed irrevocably since the tense period less than two years ago when the United States showed great deference to Arab sensitivities during the gulf crisis. Since then the United States has concluded, among other things, that the so-called "Arab street"—the power of public opinion—is more myth than potent threat to American interests. . . [T]he individual interests of Arab states like Saudi Arabia, which needs American protection, and Egypt,

which needs American money, transcend by far any notion of Arab solidarity.[1]

This judgment sounds reasonable as far as it goes, but in an ironic sense it does not go far enough. For, even if one grants for the sake of argument that Arab street politics are no longer very "contagious" across national borders, that does not mean they lack influence at home. The "street" phenomenon has fragmented, but it has not disappeared. In fact, greater popular concern with local needs or national interests—as opposed to more nebulous notions of pan-Arabism, which might more easily be satisfied with slogans—could conceivably give the streets more, not less, to say about the domestic and even the foreign policies of individual Arab states.

In any event, it would appear advisable, precisely because of this new "politics in one country" posture of (and toward) the Arab masses, to evaluate the agenda and the impact of public opinion in each country, on a case-by-case basis. Thus it seems that even this relatively reasonable post-Gulf War reaction of "writing off" the Arab street applies to the whole but not the parts—and therefore leaves much to be desired.

THE "EXAGGERATED" SCHOOL OF THE ARAB STREET

Let us now turn to the opposite view of how much the Arab street matters: the "exaggerated" one. This view, which also has several variants, is often conveniently oriented not toward the present, but rather toward the indefinite future (or sometimes the distant past). The most common version, to oversimplify again only a little, goes like this: the ruling Arab elites are already hopelessly alienated from the masses. As a result, popular revolution (or at least paralyzing instability) is always around the corner in the Arab world, just beyond some receding horizon. Today, in other words, the "street" matters not at all, so tomorrow it will be all that matters.

Curiously, this very argument may be advanced for diametrically opposed but equally self-serving or partisan purposes. It may be allied with the claim that, because of the

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[1] Youssef Ibrahim, "The Arabs Find A World In Which They Count Less," *The New York Times*, April 5, 1992.

supposedly simmering street/elite dichotomy, American friendship with Arab governments is inherently fragile— unless American policy shifts dramatically to respond to the "real" interests and aspirations of the Arab people.[1] Alternatively, the logic of this argument may be turned on its head: precisely because the street/elite split makes official U.S.- Arab friendship so fragile, some say, that friendship should be overridden by an alliance with more democratic and therefore more stable regional partners.

Whichever of these contradictory uses is made of it, the beauty of this argument is that it is invulnerable to disproof— because its proof lies always in the future, which of course always lies ahead. Nevertheless, the "tomorrow comes the revolution" school of the Arab street suffers from a fatal flaw: there is little evidence to support it, and much that tends— convincingly though not, by definition, conclusively—to refute it. The fact is that there has not been a successful popular uprising, as opposed to a "palace coup," in any Arab state (excluding only the special, and highly debatable, case of Lebanon) for at least the past thirty-five years, if ever.[2] Indeed, there have been only isolated instances even of unsuccessful ones. Well, retort the armchair "revolutionists," that means it's time! One could more easily dismiss this rebuttal as merely circular, if not silly, but for the recent example of "velvet revolutions" in the former Soviet bloc and scattered parts of the Third World. But even so, it would behoove the forecasters of analogous Arab upheavals to demonstrate, rather than merely assert, that Arab societies are indeed in an equally pre- revolutionary situation—whether "Islamic" or otherwise.

In the meantime, by the same logic, one is obliged to explain why such revolutions are conspicuous only in their absence. This argument does not imply that Arab leaders are free to rule in splendid isolation from their people. Quite the opposite: it implies that one must be alert to intermediate forms

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[1] For a recent restatement of this hypothesis, see, e.g., As'ad Abu Khalil, "A New Arab Ideology?: The Rejuvenation of Arab Nationalism," in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter 1992), pp. 22-36.

[2] The Egyptian revolution of 1952 and the Iraqi revolution of 1958, while in large measure military coups against those monarchies, did include significant doses of popular uprising as well.

of interaction between rulers and masses, in that vast grey area between blind repression and brewing revolution. Popular influence on government, however undemocratic, is both more subtle and more real in the Arab context than popular uprising against it; in fact, the presence of the one may go a long way toward explaining the absence of the other. Yet it is this very possibility that disciples of the "exaggerated" school of the Arab street ironically, and falsely, define away.

A NEW, IMPROVED APPROACH

At this point, having examined parallel caricatures of Arab public opinion and having found both barren, it is natural to ask whether there is some fertile middle ground between them.[1] The thesis proposed here, however, is that the truth lies not between but beyond the two extreme, "all or nothing" views of the Arab street. What will be advanced is not some intermediate generalization, but a different and complex pattern of particulars; only by looking carefully at the trees can one appreciate this forest. In part, of course, this is merely a matter of allowing for differences among Arab societies and states. Yet more important, the idea advanced here also allows for subtle, informal and limited interaction between policy and public opinion—not just the artificial dichotomy between repression and revolution—across the Arab world. It is precisely this dimension of degrees that is missed by the two broad-brush images of Arab opinion—which paradoxically share certain overarching and thus critically flawed assumptions.

Both the underrated and the exaggerated schools, it will be noticed on reflection, assume that Arab opinion is quite uniform—when in truth it varies considerably, within and among different Arab societies, and over time. Second, the two erroneous extremes assume a static relationship between Arab governments and public opinion—when in fact that relationship may be quite dynamic. It is possible, in other

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[1] For one of the few theoretical treatments of public opinion in predemocratic societies, see Charles Tilly, "Speaking Your Mind Without Elections, Surveys, or Social Movements," and Comments by James R. Beniger and Leo Bogart, in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Winter 1983), pp. 461-489.

words, that most Arab governments do respond to their own publics—and not always, or even often, with either brute repression or blissful ignorance. And it is equally arguable that large segments of various Arab publics actually agree with their governments on various issues, or at least come to accept the official position.

But the third fallacy of these extreme schools of the Arab street—the underrated and the exaggerated—is perhaps the most egregious. Both assume that one can somehow assess its impact without ever bothering to find out what "the Arab man in the street" really thinks. The truth, of course, is that any such assessment must begin with some kind of data about Arab opinion. To summarize: diversity, dynamics, data—those are the correct directions down the Arab street. And when one finally arrives at the end of that metaphor, what one finds is this: in most cases, the Arab street matters some; in some cases, it matters very little; and in a few but quite crucial cases, it matters quite a lot—but not in the way many people think. This hypothesis fairly begs to be tested against actual cases, and will be: first, with reference to the Gulf crisis; and then to the current and future Arab-Israeli arena.

To clarify the overall argument: it is *not* that, in their responsiveness to public opinion, Arab governments are democracies *a la* Westminster or Washington. And it is certainly not a proposal for a whole new paradigm of Arab politics, centered on the street. *It is* rather an argument that the usual stereotypes of Arab publics so passive that they have no effect on their heedless rulers, or else so hostile that they hold those rulers hostage, both yield greatly misguided assessments—which can be corrected by a more open-minded and less rigid approach.

A few quick caveats are in order. First, on a purely semantic level, there is no intent here to suggest some subtle point by using the terms "Arab public opinion" and "the Arab street" interchangeably. As used here, this is mainly a matter of style—though occasionally public opinion will be divided into the better-educated "elite" and the less-educated "street," as that distinction becomes relevant. Beyond that, the term "Arab street" has only one deliberate connotation here: it limits the field to the major urban centers, leaving aside the provincial, rural, and peasant populations—which are still numerically significant in many Arab states, but politically much less so.

There is a substantial scholarly literature that attempts to explain why this has been the case in the Arab region, as in many (though not all) other post-colonial developing countries; but all that is outside the scope of this discussion.[1]

Within just the major urban centers, the public can be said to comprise three distinct strata that are sometimes loosely lumped together. There is the "upper crust" of leading merchants and professionals, including academics, journalists, and government or military officials, who usually form the first line of contact for interested foreign observers. At the opposite pole, are the truly "fringe" elements, who may include underground terrorist cells and the like. In between is the vast middle, which includes just about everybody else. They are the primary focus of this study, partly for the obvious reason that they are by far the most numerous component of the Arab "street," but partly because their political attitudes, oddly enough, have been the least accessible to systematic analysis, and therefore the most misunderstood.

A second, more substantive caveat is that this analysis makes no claim to completeness, and the examples it adduces are meant to be illustrative, not comprehensive. They will cover just some aspects of some issues, mostly in the realm of foreign rather than domestic policy, and only in some Arab states—and then only for the past couple (and maybe the next couple) of years. As a result, this discussion is self-consciously susceptible to the objection that the cases chosen are in some sense "special" rather than typical. The most efficient rebuttal is simply that, even if that were so, these are important cases, and that any general theory of the Arab street must take them into account.

Finally, as an outsider expounding on what "the people" of a foreign culture believe, a certain humility is hereby proclaimed. This is particularly appropriate regarding sensitive issues, whether personal or political—and even more particularly regarding issues, like Islam, that straddle those two domains. It can only be hoped that the discussion which follows will make up in detachment what it may lack in

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[1] See, for example, Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury, Editors, *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991).

intimate understanding "from the inside." With these three caveats in mind, and before proceeding to specific cases, a brief detour is now required to dispose of the issue raised earlier: How does one know what Arab public opinion is, anyway?

II TWO PIECES OF THE PUZZLE: THE ORAL TRADITION, AND THE WRITTEN

This basic query, "how does one know what Arab public opinion is?" invokes the specter of methodology—which may help explain why others have found it so tempting to avoid the issue entirely by dismissing (or inflating) the importance of the Arab street *a priori*. A more considered discussion, however, cannot entirely avoid the methodological issue of how to actually measure Arab public opinion. Fortunately for the reader, a simple sketch will suffice.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

The discussion may be enlivened by admitting that the first tool for assessing the mood of the Arab street is so-called "anecdotal evidence." Every traveler to the region has a favorite cab driver or street vendor story to provide a personal perspective on "public opinion." Many report flashes of insight into elite, if not street, attitudes, gleaned from a salon discussion, a scholarly seminar, or a sermon in the local mosque. An accumulation of such vignettes, drawn from a variety of sources, offers a window on Arab opinion that is as indispensable, for purposes of analysis from afar, as it is impressionistic. The perceptions recorded in this fashion naturally cover the range from profound to preposterous, and everything in between. As in any cross-cultural contact, some apparently common misconceptions seem, from a distance, downright bizarre. Yet it is precisely in uncovering these unexpected twists in popular imagination, and putting them in

perspective, that informal or unsystematic reporting performs its most valuable function.

A classic category is the regional (or perhaps global, in view of some hallmarks of American and other popular cultures) penchant for conspiracy theories.[1] Among some Arabs, such theories enjoy many permutations: they can be either sectarian or secular in character; they can just as easily suggest wishful thinking as fabled "Arab fatalism"; they may appeal unpredictably across more and less sophisticated social strata; and, it almost goes without saying, they may have some basis in fact. On the other hand, the perceived conspiracies are often not just intrinsically illogical but mutually contradictory as well. A fine example of such a pairing is the argument occasionally encountered that, if Saddam survived the Gulf War, then he must be an "American agent"—alongside the argument that the all-powerful American government, which could also "deliver" Israel if it wanted to, is actually at the mercy of the "Zionist lobby." For the analyst of Arab opinion, however, the point is not the objective veracity of these perceptions (or of other, arguably more accurate ones), but the depth and breadth of their hold on popular consciousness. And here the stories told by travelers and diplomats, or filed by foreign correspondents—especially the more casual, "human interest" articles—contribute raw material that can provide at least a "feel" for the subject at hand.

To this mix of reportage, one adds a vast fund of what might be called behavioral rather than narrative anecdotes: for example, local elections for business, student, or professional associations; demonstrations; petitions; even graffiti—or the lack thereof. Various expert observers dissect the details, which might have particular significance quite apart from the light they shed on "the street." For the specialist on that more diffuse topic, the task is to cast a wide net and skim the surface, and use what turns up to refine the very blurry and fragmentary picture produced by compiling what are, after all, really just glorified snippets of conversation pressed into larger analytic service.

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[1] For a lively discussion of this topic, see Daniel Pipes, "Dealing With Middle Eastern Conspiracy Theories," in *Orbis*, Winter 1992, pp. 41-56.

Taken together, these two kinds of anecdotal evidence provide a useful impression of Arab opinion—especially where other evidence is lacking, or is itself inconclusive. The problem, of course, is that all this material is inherently selective, subjective, and second-hand. Ideally, at least, anecdotes should supply the essential flavor, but not the meat, of an analysis of Arab public opinion.

THE ARAB MEDIA

That leads us to the other traditional tool of analysis: the "primary literature" of Arab opinion, namely the Arab media. Because direct measures of Arab public opinion have been so hard to find, some have depended upon the local media as a kind of mirror to the street. And it is true, as was argued above, that urban Arabs have access to a surprisingly wide variety of facts and opinions, even in supposedly tightly controlled information environments. But that does not mean that one can infer their opinions by following the media in the Middle East. In fact, there are some major pitfalls with this approach.

Generally speaking, the media throughout the Arab world are censored or self-censored in ways hardly imaginable in the West. This is particularly true of radio and television, which in almost every instance are entirely and directly government-owned and operated—and show it. Consequently, when it comes to controversial political topics, these broadcasts are practically useless as indicators of the public mood. Indeed, there is a pervasive cynicism across the Arab world—evident, as already noted, in the extent to which this audience tunes in to foreign signals and the *radio trottoir* rumor mill—about their own broadcast networks. At best, then, the electronic mass media may be a rough guide to what the government thinks is on people's minds. And even at that, common sense suggests many caveats and qualifications.

As for the print media, the extent of official control varies more widely among Arab countries, and over time. The current range can be illustrated as follows: from Syria, where the press is totally subservient to the government in every respect, and where all three daily newspapers take exactly the same line every single day; to the Gulf, where a certain amount of independence in some newspapers is evident; to Egypt, where there is a limited but still modestly influential

opposition press; to Morocco, where opposition papers are actually more numerous and have more readers, and presumably more impact, than the semi-official "palace press."

But even where the press is not merely the mouthpiece of the party line, it may be just the sounding board for the intelligentsia, or some other unrepresentative segment of the elite. Its relationship to popular opinion is therefore murky, even where it cannot be discounted as entirely official (and hence artificial). And even where the press has a popular following, it would be hard to say whether the views it expresses or implies aim to reflect, or to create, public opinion. In either case, it would be a leap of faith to infer agreement between the people and the press.

To be sure, it is by now a truism to claim that the information and opinions purveyed by the media set the "agenda" for political discourse. Yet it is difficult to demonstrate that the media in the Middle East, whether foreign or domestic, actually change people's minds about anything in particular. Rather, it may well be that Arabs, like most people, tend to pick out what they are already predisposed to agree with or to believe—and to ignore the rest. If so, even heavily slanted media coverage and editorial opinion would tell us only a little about popular attitudes.

THE ARAB MEDIA IN THE GULF CRISIS

All of these abstract problems can be made concrete by looking, very briefly and schematically, at Arab media behavior during the Gulf crisis. Overall (but as always with some notable exceptions), it would be fair to say that Arab media became unusually open during that period—but "open" in the sense of "explicit," not "balanced." They covered stories and dealt editorially with topics that in many cases had only recently been taboo in most of the regional domestic media. At the same time, in most countries, there was very little diversity of opinion, let alone investigative reporting or critical analysis—and very much of a party line—conveyed by the press in each case. This tendency was apparent right from the start, and intensified as the crisis progressed. An analysis for August 1990 showed, not surprisingly, that Maghrebi and "Gulfi" media were already poles apart—but with Egypt and Syria still somewhere in the middle, not just in geographic but

also in media terms. During the next few months, the press polarization became nearly complete: among the coalition states, whatever the "normal" degree of press control exercised by the government, one found the papers almost totally one-sided in support of the coalition; among the others, almost totally one-sided in opposition.

There was, however, an interesting exception to prove the rule: Morocco. The government there was officially on the side of the Saudis against Iraq; and yet, out of sixty editorials counted in the major Moroccan dailies that explicitly took sides during the first month of war, fully fifty were hostile to the coalition. Moreover, as noted above, actual readership surveys showed that the opposition papers, where most of those editorials appeared, were more popular than the "palace press"—nominal circulation figures to the contrary notwithstanding.[1] Here then was a case where it made some sense to argue that the press did not echo official views, but probably served instead as a "safety valve" for widespread opposition.

The Moroccan example is especially instructive in a methodological sense, because it offers what may be the best case for reading the press for clues to public opinion. Content analysis of Arab media is most revealing on that score where the press is relatively free—and where there are commercial survey data about such things as media credibility, competition from other information sources, or audience sizes and demographic profiles. Still, even in the Moroccan case, the exact extent to which press and public views of the Gulf crisis really matched remained a mystery. Other evidence, to be discussed below, revealed that while the Moroccan public, like its press, was indeed predominantly opposed to Western intervention in the Gulf, it was not pro-Iraqi. Indeed, popular sentiment, at least on the eve of the war, sympathized more

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[1] See Frederick C. Huxley, "Arab Media Split By Gulf Crisis, Part One: G.C.C., Egypt and Syria, Maghrib Oppose Iraqi Invasion but Differ on U.S. Role," USIA Office of Research Foreign Media Analysis, August 31, 1990; Elaine El Assal, "Arab Media on Gulf Crisis, Part Two: Media in Jordan and Yemen Show Deep Distrust of U.S. Motives but Recent Moderation in Strong Pro-Iraqi Slant," *ibid.*, October 15, 1990; Huxley, "Egyptian, Syrian, and Saudi Media Back Coalition; Moroccan Press Supports Saddam," *ibid.*, February 15, 1991.

with Kuwait than with Iraq—though one would never have known this by reading Moroccan newspapers. And everywhere else, with the media marching in lockstep with the respective governments of a divided Arab world, it was harder than ever to gauge public opinion simply by reading the papers. Altogether, if the media can be said to mirror the public mind, in the Arab context they provide only a very imperfect reflection—and one whose degree of distortion is very difficult to determine. Clearly, another method of measuring Arab public opinion is needed to supplement both the anecdotal and the literary sources.

III SURVEYING THE STREET: ARAB OPINION POLLS

The preceding observations lead us directly to the third major tool for trying to understand the Arab street: actual polls of Arab public opinion. Almost everyone assumes that there are no such polls—but the truth is that sometimes there are. Because this method of measuring the Arab street is so unfamiliar, so central to the case studies presented below, and so promising for future application, it warrants special consideration. Three issues are involved: availability, validity, and interpretation.

First, politically relevant Arab survey data are admittedly available only irregularly. Where "virtually all of the countries of the region," as a senior U.S. official delicately put it, "would benefit from an increase in popular political participation,"[1] public opinion polls are certainly still very much the exception rather than the rule—and it hardly needs saying that official U.S. sponsorship of Arab opinion polls is currently out of the question.

Nevertheless, while political polling is still decidedly a novelty in the Arab world, media and market research and some kinds of social surveys are better established there, and more widely and frequently accepted. Practitioners range from small-scale and ad hoc academic teams, to local affiliates of European marketing firms, to fairly substantial regional

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[1] Richard N. Haass, "One Year After the Gulf War: Prospects for Peace," *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, April 13, 1992, pp. 296-99, at p. 296.

companies. Typical clients include local governments; domestic or regional media interests; advertising or trade associations; consumer product or other manufacturers or distributors; or (rarely) international non-governmental scientific, philanthropic, or social service institutions. Naturally, the substance of these surveys is almost always confined to narrow practical areas: media audience ratings and demographics (or, in the fashionable trade jargon, "psychographics"); product or service awareness and preferences; market development feasibility factors and prospects; and so on.

Occasionally, though, as part of this process, some broader questions touching on social or cultural attitudes, "international images," and the like may also be included. The Gulf crisis itself spawned a variety of attempts by assorted academic institutes, media outlets, or market research companies to take the pulse of the Arab street this way. Some of their findings became available after the fact, on a commercial "off-the-shelf" basis. Others were published in a number of places: Tunisia's *Le Maghreb*, or Jordan's *Al-Ra'y* (whose name means "opinion" in Arabic)—or the East Jerusalem Palestinian *Al-Bayadir Al-Siyasi*, *Al-Nahar*, *Al-Fajr*, *Al-Sha'b*, and so on. Some of this activity, unfortunately, did not outlast the Gulf War; but the Madrid Arab-Israeli peace conference and subsequent negotiations inspired another round of spotty efforts of the same sort.

Some of these survey findings, too, were published, or offered commercially by subscription. But in the Arab world as elsewhere, normal professional practice is for the client or the survey company to exercise exclusive proprietary rights to the findings, in order to protect the legitimate interests of both. The result is usually a long embargo on the release of any survey details, with perhaps only a very general outline available in the meantime. Because such surveys are undertaken at the initiative of a wide range of local scholars or entrepreneurs, and are subject to the formidable political vicissitudes of the region, their scope, timing, and overall quality are difficult to predict and impossible to control. But the alert consumer will find that anticipated demand has a way of creating supply, so such material is occasionally out there just when one wants it most. In any case, one tends to settle for

what one can get, and then look more closely at each item to see just how much it may be worth.

That brings us to the second issue, validity. Any survey has the superficially seductive appeal of "hard data," but it must be emphasized that one should not necessarily believe any old numbers one comes across. In fact, there is a long list of items that purport to be Arab polls, but really are not worthy of the name: for instance, a *semi-official* Jordanian survey showing near-unanimous acclaim for the Madrid Conference; or an Algerian poll published just *after* the January 1992 crackdown showing the popularity of Islamic politics barely reaching double digits; or a Syrian plebiscite showing 6.7 *million* supporting Assad compared to just 396 opposed. The point is that when data are dismissed, it should *not* be because they run against the analyst's preconceptions, or anybody else's; it should be because something is known about the dubious circumstances or faulty methodology of certain surveys, or about their utter incompatibility with other and better data, that makes their numbers highly suspect. Conversely, when one finds solid surveys, they should be taken seriously, even—or especially—when their message goes against the grain.

How then does one know which surveys are reliable? The basic rule of thumb is "go to the source." Survey or market research is primarily either a scholarly or a business enterprise, with professional ethics, technical conventions, and (above all) reputations to uphold. Surveys worth taking seriously come from people who have to maintain high standards in order to continue their work. Such people have operated in the Middle East for years, with an international commercial clientele. They know what they are doing, and where and when to do it—or not do it. They are straightforward, they take their time, and they do not interview too many people—sometimes only in selected cities, and sometimes only men. (It is worth recalling, in this connection, that with a proper procedure it only takes about 200 respondents to constitute a statistically significant representative sample, with a margin of error of approximately nine percentage points.) Also, their questionnaires don't have too many questions, particularly political ones, or *any* questions about especially sensitive subjects. The ones they do ask, if they're good, would (a) be mixed in with more routine fare, (b) avoid slogans or other "loaded" wording, and (c) refrain from

suggesting what might be the "right" or the "wrong" answer.
Much of this, of course, is standard scholarly or commercial
survey practice. Still, one must be careful about interpreting—
and not overinterpreting—even the best Arab data one comes
across. No poll is perfect; and even after the basic integrity and
competence of a survey are established, its proper
understanding raises a host of other issues, and not necessarily
just statistical ones.

In principle, Arab survey findings can be evaluated from a
technical point of view by the same criteria applied to other
surveys. This means due consideration of, and if necessary
allowances for, all the methodological issues that should be
routinely examined, such as: potential "courtesy" or other
biases; subtleties of survey timing or question wording and
sequence; and the other multitude of sins covered by the
standard fine print about how, beyond the "sampling margin
of error" of a few percentage points, "practical problems may
introduce other possible sources of error." In the Arab context,
these last typically include very limited sample sizes or
geographic (and usually gender) distribution; lack of
independent, comparable data for purposes of validation or
establishment of trends over time; and high rates of refusal to
be interviewed or "don't knows." Then there is the possibility
of disingenuous answers from respondents suspicious of or just
unfamiliar with surveys—which is very nearly an
indeterminate problem, and therefore particularly difficult. In
practice, then, Arab surveys may be more problematic than
most. Yet there are both quantitative and qualitative ways of
dealing with these admittedly complex problems. And good
survey data, if taken with a suitably sized grain of salt, can
make a very useful contribution, provided that those problems
are squarely acknowledged (at least half the battle) and
addressed.

For example, sampling frames and procedures can be
designed to minimize outright refusals to be interviewed, or
worse reactions, from contacts approached at random. In some
cases, this means that some of the most exclusive (and also of
the most squalid) neighborhoods, or occasionally even whole
areas, are placed off-limits to conventional "random route"
sampling; and, as a methodology of last resort, the "controlled
snowball" technique of selection from lists of "blind" referrals
is applied to appropriate proportions of the total sample. Also,

where in-home interviews are culturally inappropriate or just impractical, some respondents may be intercepted at work or even on street corners. These methods fall short of ideal probability procedures. But if properly used, they can still ensure a reasonably representative overall sample by means, for example, of "quotas" for certain demographic categories of respondents, or statistical "weighting" of their responses, to conform to the known demographic distribution of the target population as a whole.

Equally important, cheating by interviewers in this risky business can be controlled by means of rigorous field supervision, including random reviews of completed questionnaires. The practice is standard worldwide, but the required rate of return interviews varies considerably from one country (or even one type of survey) to another. Lying by fearful or hostile respondents can be reduced to some extent by means of elaborate assurances of confidentiality. To be sure, the appearance of anonymity provided by phone polling is usually precluded, in Arab surveys, by the sampling problem of relatively limited and uneven "penetration," that is, the percentage of households with working telephones. (This, of course, is the old "Dewey Beats Truman" conundrum.) Fortunately, however, an endearing if seemingly illogical feature of Arab society is that people are often more willing to talk freely to strangers in person than over the phone. Lying can be further reduced in some measure by clever question wording, including explicit but selective permission for "don't know" responses.

Finally, all of these refinements can be supplemented by computer-aided quantitative analysis of the tapes or diskettes containing the raw survey findings. Such analysis can, for example, spot implausible inconsistencies (or unrealistic uniformity) in the results obtained from questionnaires collected by specific interviewers, each of whom is assigned an identifying code; from different batches of interviews scanned by region or some other demographic variable; or even, if necessary, from anonymous individual respondents. Once all of these checks are performed, all that remains to be done (ha!) is judicious interpretation.

At the simplest level, this is mostly a matter of common sense. For instance: if the samples are small, resist the temptation to overanalyze small differences over time, or

among various issues, or countries, or groups within any one country. If, on the other hand, the samples are sufficiently large, then pay close attention to major demographic variables, so that one can spot distinctions between the opinions of the elite and of the street, more narrowly defined. If the fieldwork was confined to just a few cities, be cautious about extrapolating to the country as a whole—let alone to the entire Arab world. If there are lots of "don't knows"—and very occasionally, in some questions on some Arab surveys, they run as high as 50 percent—then be extra cautious before jumping to conclusions about what those people are trying to tell us, or not tell us. If the fieldwork had to be done gradually, think hard about what events might have intervened to influence or even distort the results. And if subtle cross-cultural issues are involved, as they often are, be sure to double-check the question wording—in Arabic if possible.[1]

One concrete illustration will capture many of these points. There is a relatively solid set of recent commercial survey data showing, at first glance, unexpectedly high support among many Arab publics for something that came across in translation as "Islamic government." But it turns out, on closer inspection, that the original Arabic text had actually asked about something softer: "government enlightened by religious values and Islamic law." Solid majorities offered at least lukewarm support—but who knows what they really meant? Moreover, most people also liked other ideals—such as "good relations with the West"—as well. Much more interesting was the follow-up question, which asked people to rank those ideals. And here one found some major variations, both within and among countries. In the Gulf and Jordan, around 75 percent or even more picked Islamic enlightenment as their first or second political priority; while in Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen,

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[1] Probably the only book-length treatment of this whole subject is Mark A. Tessler, Monte Palmer, Tawfic E. Farah, and Barbara Lethem Ibrahim, *The Evaluation and Application of Survey Research in the Arab World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.) While this volume is a pioneering and worthy contribution, it is of only very limited relevance for present purposes, because: it largely reflects work that is now a decade old, or more; it focuses heavily on methodological problems rather than substantive findings; and, to the extent that the latter are discussed, the emphasis is on social or economic rather than political issues.

that proportion plummeted to around 25 percent—well behind, say, economic liberalization. Clearly, a close examination of such numbers can help refine or even quantify our understanding of a pervasive but also elusive and diverse impulse in contemporary Arab societies.

In short, one can supplement the anecdotal and literary sources with relatively systematic—and sometimes quite counter-intuitive—survey data on Arab opinion. Because these data are among the more objective, interesting, and also unfamiliar pieces of evidence in this field, they will serve as an empirical anchor for the case studies of the Arab street that follow. First, the Gulf crisis, with a postmortem on its larger lessons and lingering unfinished business. Then, a look at Arab opinion on the Arab-Israeli peace talks, with some reference to the Islamic factor—both of which are still very much alive.

IV THE GULF CRISIS, PART I:
WHERE WERE THE ARAB STREETS?

Almost from the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, there was a heavy air of apprehension, alluded to earlier, about the likely reaction of "the Arab masses" to Saddam's adventure. From an American policy standpoint, a compelling calculation was that the U.S. should not intervene directly without significant Arab political support—and that such support might well be precluded or disrupted by the Arab street. As late as a week before the war, some veteran area hands reportedly counseled the President in private that this could be a major flaw in U.S. calculations. As one allegedly argued,

> . . . if there was a full-scale war, the longer it lasted, the worse it would be because many Arabs would rally to Saddam as the man standing up to the West. He would grow into a hero. Winning is very important to Arabs. . and even losing to the superpower could be winning. Saddam had some potent issues to exploit—the Palestinian question, deep suspicion about neocolonialism, and the divisions between rich and poor Arabs.[1]

Other analysts, by contrast, painted a much more diversified, even polarized picture of Arab popular reaction, in which different "streets" in different states lined up on opposite

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[1] Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), p. 359.

sides of the issue. Every twist and turn in the Gulf crisis, and in tangential developments within or even beyond the region, rekindled the debate about how "the Arab masses" would respond. For example, the October 1990 Temple Mount incident in Jerusalem ignited an especially fierce internal debate of this kind, revolving around the question of how convincingly Saddam could exploit that episode to his advantage on the Arab street. But there was no shortage of other stimuli for this debate: all the diplomatic maneuvers of that tense interlude; the "hostage" headlines; the variations on Iraqi propaganda themes; even the signs of doubt or division in the U.S. Congress and in the American media. There were arguments, often inconclusive, about how all those things would affect Arab popular attitudes—and indirectly, perhaps, political behavior—regarding the volatile situation in the Gulf.

The first step in confronting this analytical challenge was to recognize that in spite, or actually because, of all the preconceived notions and conflicting accounts of incipient reaction on the Arab street, there really was not a great deal of information on the subject—and much of what was at hand was hopelessly subjective, speculative, or both. Accordingly, the first draft interagency crisis assessment of Arab opinion was helpfully (and tentatively) titled, "What We Think We Know—And What We Know We Don't"! The combination of perceived importance and uncertainty of this "street" factor made it advisable to obtain an independent, on-the-spot, objective confirmation—or refutation—of diverging assumptions about Arab views of Saddam and the crisis he had provoked.

Fortunately, as previously noted, some information of exactly this nature was coming to light. In the fall of 1990, as the Gulf crisis deepened, some commercial firms included questions about it in several sets of market research surveys in selected Arab cities. The samples involved were small enough (typically around 200 adult males) to be interviewed discreetly, but large enough (since they were chosen by methodologically sound geographic probability procedures) to provide a statistically significant picture of the broad magnitude and direction of opinion. As important, the companies involved were generally known to be both competent and honest. And while many experts were at first understandably skeptical about the validity of such unusual

polling data, subsequent events suggested that it was precisely these polls that offered the clearest and most credible understanding of Arab public opinion.

Such timely "hard data" from roughly a dozen different Arab societies supplemented the more traditional methods, outlined earlier, of estimating the mood on the Arab street. On this basis, it was rather quickly concluded that a large part of the apprehension on that score stemmed from a fundamental *misapprehension* of Arab attitudes toward the Gulf crisis. Instead, the judgments rendered then could be summed up as follows:

(1) While Saddam certainly had his admirers, he was not the pan-Arab hero many people imagined. The U.S., on the other hand, had considerable popular support among many of its Arab coalition partners—not just in the elite but also in the street. And in some other places, even people who did not much like what the coalition was doing had little use for Saddam, either.

(2) Within most Arab countries, the balance of opinion was broadly consistent with official policy—whether that meant joining the coalition or staying aloof. In effect, there was not one but many different Arab streets, with different Arab government policies more or less to match. Consequently, Arab leaders were well positioned in terms of their own publics to ride out the storm.

In formulating these judgments, the essential insight contributed by polling data was that the Gulf crisis had polarized the Arab *public*—not just the Arab ruling class. The wide range of popular attitudes across the region was evident in the very definition of what the crisis was about: large majorities of Egyptians, and of Gulf Arabs, saw it as a conflict "between Iraq and the rest of the world"; but just as large a majority in Jordan, for example, said the crisis represented a conflict "between the Arabs and the United States." In between those poles were the publics of Morocco and Yemen—where neither view of the Gulf crisis attracted a majority of adherents in polls conducted in October and again in December 1990 (with many respondents simply refusing to pick between those two stark alternatives, or volunteering other views of their own). This insight and its implications are important enough to warrant extended discussion, including some other previously undisclosed illustrations of actual survey data from

both inside and outside the multinational coalition that got Iraq out of Kuwait.

ASSESSING THE DIFFERENCES

In the Gulf states, to begin with, majorities of 70 percent or more rejected Saddam's behavior from an Islamic standpoint, condemned his occupation of Kuwait, and refused to settle for just a partial Iraqi withdrawal. There was more variation among different Gulf publics regarding military options—but in each case at least a plurality, and sometimes as many as 80 percent, approved military action if necessary to liberate Kuwait, and agreed that in those circumstances Arab soldiers should join the fighting.

Outside the Gulf, but still inside the coalition, opinions were likewise anti-Saddam, but more nuanced about how to deal with him. By comparison with the Gulf publics, a preference for peaceful solutions was more prevalent; and there was virtually no popular backing for a "punitive" war that, as one pollster put it, would "severely damage Iraq's own power and get rid of Saddam." The near absence of support for this approach did not, however, imply support for Saddam. In fact, the opposite was more nearly the case. Throughout the Fall of 1990, for example, Egyptians and Moroccans continued to sympathize more with Kuwait than with Iraq. Moreover, Egyptians overwhelmingly and Moroccans predominantly supported economic sanctions against Iraq. The "street" in both Cairo and Casablanca mostly rejected Saddam's claims to be acting on behalf of Islam, the Arabs, the have-not Arabs, or even just the Palestinians.

If it came to war, however, these two Arab publics parted ways: in Egypt, a plurality was prepared to back—and to participate—in hostilities against Iraq if necessary; but only about one-quarter of Moroccans agreed. Interestingly, Morocco was thus a country with a distinctly ambivalent street—and, I think not by accident, a distinctly low profile in the coalition. Interestingly too, the overall pattern of opinion, in the coalition camp at any rate, supports the notion that the closer you get to Saddam, the less you tend to like him.

Now let us turn briefly to some Arab states that stayed out of the coalition. Our focus is on two—Jordan and Yemen—whose publics represented contrasting ends of what might be called

the "pro-Iraqi" spectrum. Both had many views in common. For instance, large majorities—up to 90 percent—in both countries rejected the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia, and opposed not only military pressure but even the economic sanctions against Iraq imposed by the UN. Not surprisingly, a poll sponsored by that organization and conducted in Jordan during October 1990 found that, "while all socio-demographic groups displayed extensive knowledge of the United Nations," only one-quarter of Jordanians thought it was generally doing a "good job."[1] Had such a poll been taken in Yemen, awareness of the UN would probably have been lower; but approval of its performance, under the circumstances, almost certainly no higher. For in both countries the "street," statistically speaking, clearly sympathized more with Iraq than with Kuwait.

Yet within this broadly shared orientation, there were also some divergences between Jordanians and Yemenis. For example, only in Jordan did a majority think that Saddam's actions were in accord with Islam, or that he would somehow benefit the Arabs as a whole. And only in Jordan—where, by the way, something over half the samples, as of the population, were Palestinians—did a majority say Saddam would help the Palestinian cause. By contrast, just 30-40 percent of Yemenis concurred with any of these assertions. Perhaps these distinctions help explain why Jordan in particular provided Iraq with considerably more than just rhetorical support during this period. Of course, geography (and even geology) had something to do with that as well.

On January 18, 1991, the second day of Operation Desert Storm, President Bush was asked at a press conference about "the enormous amount of concern about what the reaction in the Arab world would be." His response, apparently based on information and not just political instinct, deserves citation:

> . . . I believe when you see the Arab League, and Egypt itself, which I guess is the largest in population of Arab countries, strongly supporting what we are doing, that this idea. . . [of] the Arabs versus America is phony. . .

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[1] "Public Opinion in Jordan About the United Nations," UN Department of Public Information, Issue No. 12, Document No. DPI/1126-40278-March 1991-2M.

> There is a strong Arab element in this coalition. . .
> There are some that oppose us. There are some of the
> more radical elements that will always oppose the West
> and the United States. . . We've had a longstanding
> relationship with King Hussein. But he's in a very
> difficult position there. . . I don't accept the premise that
> Saddam Hussein tried to sell the world, that was the
> Arabs against the United States. There is overwhelming
> evidence to show that he is wrong. . .[1]

In retrospect, it appears that Arab popular opposition to, or
support for, Saddam was surprisingly independent of
perceptions about his prospects for success or failure. For
example, a comparison of polls taken in October and again in
December 1990 showed that Egyptian opinion actually
hardened against Saddam during that period, even as he
seemed to be "winning" by prolonging his occupation of
Kuwait. Saudis remained overwhelmingly behind military
action to dislodge him, if necessary—even though, as of
December 1990, only about half thought that option would be
quick and easy. Yemenis, on the other hand, were about
equally uncertain regarding Iraq's military prospects—but
generally supported Saddam anyway. And, perhaps most
tellingly, Saddam lost only a little of his popularity in either
Yemen or Jordan—even after he lost the war.

ACCOUNTING FOR THE DIFFERENCES

But this discussion has concentrated on what these various
Arab publics felt about Saddam, not why they felt that way.
There are almost as many theories about that as there are Arab
streets. Egypt's impoverished masses, for instance, are said to
have widely resented their treatment as laborers in Iraq, and
possibly also that country's rivalry for Arab leadership with
their own. The somewhat less impoverished North Africans,
by contrast, are said to have directed their resentment instead
at the "arrogant" and *nouveau riche* Gulf Arabs, and at "Western
imperialism." The "man in the street" in the Gulf is said to
have been concerned mainly to save his own skin. Jordanians

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[1] President Bush press conference, January 18, 1991, transcript in *The New York Times*, January 19, 1991.

and especially Palestinians are said to have supported Saddam, and even "danced on the rooftops," mainly for the emotional appeal of revenge against Israel. Islamic "fundamentalists" in all those places are said, maybe more significantly, to have been torn between contradictory calculations: scorn for Saddam's secularism, and solicitude for Saudi support, on the one hand; and relish at the prospects for populist agitation against Israel, the West, or their own governments, on the other.

Of course, many "non-fundamentalist" individuals, and sometimes whole Arab societies, no doubt also harbored mixed feelings about Saddam. The analysis is properly of collective tendencies, not some absurdly monolithic mindset. The larger point, though, is that this analysis deliberately avoids all such unavoidably speculative (and often condescending) explanations for the origins of Arab attitudes. Included in that category, and likewise neglected, are the possible effects of the various public diplomacy or propaganda campaigns waged on opposite sides of the Gulf crisis. It is the author's judgment, based on personal experience, that the U.S. and its coalition partners mounted a first-class effort in that regard; but its impact is impossible to isolate, submerged as it was in other, deeper currents. All of these factors, in any event, are incidental to this discussion. The thrust here is to correct the common misconception about what Arab attitudes really were—and then to analyze, not their causes, but their consequences.

In that connection, ironically, it may actually have been better for U.S. policy that the governments of both Jordan and Yemen—and of Algeria and Tunisia—stayed out of the coalition. In view of the sentiments on their streets, that was probably the minimum required to help keep those relatively fragile (and relatively friendly) governments in control. The point was well made during January 1991 in, of all places, the Syrian press. Citing an unnamed USIA official, a semi-official daily claimed that "surveys showed no Arab government will face domestic political trouble because of its stance in the Gulf crisis."[1]

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[1] *Al-Thawrah* (Damascus), January 25, 1991.

Though that prediction was cleared for use "on background," it was more dismaying than flattering to see it pop up in a front-page headline in Damascus just then—all the more so since the headline left out the word "unmanageable" in front of "domestic political trouble." Yet it was also intriguing that the controlled Syrian press chose to publish the comment at all—since it lent some credence to speculations that local authorities sought to bolster their own self-confidence on precisely that point. Indeed, Syria is one place where, even without benefit of any opinion polls, one strongly suspects that the decision to side with the U.S. against Saddam was not very popular. Then again, Syria is one place where such factors usually matter only a little. In that sense, Syria is an exception that proves the rule about the impact of the Arab street in the Gulf crisis, and beyond—a rule to be discussed below.

V THE GULF CRISIS, PART II:
POSTMORTEM AND LARGER LESSONS

From today's perspective, the Gulf crisis already seems almost like ancient history. What, one might ask, is the lasting significance of this case? For our purposes, what stands out *analytically* is that the policies of most Arab governments—whether in the coalition or outside it—seemed attuned to attitudes on their respective streets. This harks back to the basic issue raised in the introduction to this essay. If Saddam's pan-Arab uprising never happened, it was *not* because the Arab street did not matter. Quite the contrary. It was because, where the government opposed Saddam, so too, almost without exception, did the street. Conversely, where the street was mostly sympathetic to Saddam, so was the government. In fact, Arab governments seemed to calibrate their policies partly according to what the traffic—on the "street"—would bear.

Unfortunately, one cannot fully answer the obvious "chicken and egg" question just yet; but the rough congruence between policy and public opinion must be more than mere coincidence, and is still relevant today. The larger lesson is that, regardless of "which comes first," there is often an *interaction* between popular attitudes and policy outcomes in many Arab states—even, or perhaps especially, on important decisions, in which a regime's very survival may be at stake precisely because its public's attention is heavily engaged. To be sure, an Arab government may attempt to educate ("manipulate," its opponents might say) the masses toward approval or at least acceptance of its policies—but its capacity to do so is surely neither infinite nor immediate. Failing that, it

may opt to ignore or, *in extremis,* coerce its own public; but here again, that approach will usually be effective only up to a certain ill-defined point. And usually, before it gets to that point, the government will "switch rather than fight"—in other words, adapt its policy to public opinion, despite what may be strong countervailing "geopolitical" or other pressures.

In the Gulf crisis context, as one postwar analysis aptly put it, "King Hussein of Jordan is a case in point":

> Eager to maintain leadership over his restive pro-Saddam constituency. . . the King first kept his distance from the anti-Iraq coalition while simultaneously opposing Iraq's invasion and adhering to U.N. resolutions. When Saddam was able to evoke massive support. . . the wily King lost his maneuvering room and had little choice but to join the refrain, despite the damage he would suffer in Washington.[1] [*or, one could certainly add, Riyadh!*]

Tunisian policy presented a variation on this theme; as leading scholar Abdel Baki Hermassi afterward noted, the government made a "strategic decision" to sacrifice other interests on the altar of public opinion.[2] Yemen, too, paid a heavy economic price for catering to Saddam's aroused domestic constituency. Similar calculations underlay PLO policy both during the Gulf crisis and later, in line with what American analysts have labeled,

> Arafat's approach of following the man in the street. . . (T)he PLO chairman tended not to pull sharply in any one direction; if the mood in the street was to support Iraq in the Gulf crisis, he did that, and if the mood then shifted to support American peace efforts, he did that as well.[3]

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[1] Augustus Richard Norton and Muhammad Y. Muslih, "The Need for Arab Democracy," *Foreign Policy,* No. 83, Summer 1991, p. 12.

[2] *Le Temps* (Tunis) March 26, 1992.

[3] Tom Friedman, "U.S. Pondered Arafat's Fate With Studied Ambivalence," *The New York Times,* April 9, 1992, p. A6, citing unnamed "U.S. officials."

Conversely, on the coalition side, some Gulf governments seemed to stiffen their resolve against Iraq as they became increasingly convinced that public opinion was staying solidly behind that policy.

A compelling inference from this experience is that the Arab street has a life—and often a political impact—of its own. Even entrenched Arab leaders appeared unable to mold their publics' attitudes at will, or to turn off the flow of independent information and opinion. Rather, public opinion appeared able to substantially modify—or substantially reinforce—the initial policy inclinations of major Arab governments on either side of this very high-stakes issue.

Aside from this conceptual legacy, two issues merit consideration: the "unfinished business" in the Gulf itself, and the transition to decidedly new diplomatic business elsewhere in the region.

First, Saddam has lost much of his luster in all but a few places where he was once a hero. He does remain remarkably popular at least in Yemen and especially in Jordan, with an enviable approval rating (as of late 1992) in the latter country of nearly 90 percent. (This, incidentally, is about three times as high as Qadhafi's rating, even in that almost reflexively "Arab nationalist" society—which helps explain why, despite renewed concern in some quarters about the Arab street, the imposition of sanctions on Libya has passed so quietly thus far.) And the public in Jordan was nearly unanimous (98 percent) in "strongly" opposing further economic sanctions, let alone military action, against Iraq. Clearly, as a practical matter, early postwar efforts to tighten enforcement against "sanctions-busters" in Jordan had to be evaluated against this backdrop of popular emotion.

Elsewhere, Saddam is still roundly disliked throughout the Gulf, not to mention inside Iraq itself. Recent surveys in selected GCC cities show eight-in-ten or even more "not at all satisfied" with the Iraqi leader. And *even* in Damascus, if a late 1991 commercial survey can be believed, Saddam is viewed negatively by something like a two-to-one margin. Nevertheless, popular backing for further sanctions against Iraq has eroded somewhat in Gulf War coalition countries. In both Syria and Egypt, for example, only about one-third of the urban public backed military or even economic pressure on Baghdad by late 1991. In the Egyptian case, this represented a marked

change from a year earlier, when the public in Cairo and Alexandria had solidly backed sanctions and narrowly approved force to liberate Kuwait. Furthermore, the intensity of attitudes on this issue in 1991 was differentiated rather sharply across urban Egypt's social pyramid: two-thirds of the less-educated *strongly* opposed both economic and military pressure on Iraq; while among the better-educated, only half as many felt strongly that way.

Even more to the point, perhaps, was the shifting attitudinal terrain in the Gulf itself away from harsher measures towards the recalcitrant Saddam. As of October 1991, economic sanctions against Iraq were still endorsed by a solid majority of the urban public in both Saudi Arabia (79 percent) and the United Arab Emirates (72 percent). Half or more were also willing to back the renewed use of military force, "if necessary." But even so, that represented an apparent softening of attitudes by comparison with the immediate pre-Gulf War profile of those two publics. And there is reason to think that the level of popular support there for further economic and military pressure on Saddam, while still relatively high, declined further in early 1992. The trend in nearby Bahrain could be described as an accelerated miniature of the same. By late 1991, reversing the prewar pattern, a majority on that island actually opposed the renewed use of force against Iraq—and a plurality (49 percent vs. 38 percent) had turned against even economic sanctions. Among Bahrain's elite, this probably reflected fear of Iran's resurgence as Iraq weakened; among Bahrain's largely Shi'a masses (if that is the right word for less than half a million people), opposition to sanctions probably reflected concern or even resentment over the fate of their co-religionists in southern Iraq. Overall, this erosion of Arab popular backing for continued pressure on Saddam does not yet seem to have affected actual policy. But, as previously in the Gulf crisis, one should be alert for signs of any effects these shifting attitudes might have.

The second aspect of our review of Gulf crisis-related Arab attitudes is their connection to the Arab-Israeli issue. It does appear that reactions to the former issue revealed, and probably accelerated, emerging trends regarding the latter. There has been a great deal of overblown rhetoric, reinforced throughout the Gulf crisis by the concentration of Western media reporting in Amman, about how Saddam could manipulate the

Palestinian issue, whether by launching propaganda barrages about it or by raining Scuds on Israel, in order to mobilize the Arab masses behind him. It is true that, even in some coalition countries, there was considerable underlying popular support for the sort of diplomatic "linkage" Iraq disingenuously proposed between Kuwait and Palestine. In Egypt and Morocco, for example, small surveys in December 1990 showed three-quarters and two-thirds of urban men, respectively, accepting some version of that proposition—with over half expressing "strong" agreement. But even then, before any postwar disenchantment with Saddam's pan-Arab pretensions, such sympathy for the logic of "linkage" clearly did not yield much popular support for Iraqi policy, particularly among Egyptians.

Today a more fundamental reconsideration is in order. On the one hand, recent surveys show that many publics, even in the Gulf, still predominantly say that Arabs should continue to support "the Palestinian cause." On the other hand, it is now less clear than ever what that support is supposed to entail in practice, and the degree to which that cause is a key to success on the Arab street—the touchstone, as some once thought, of popularity and indeed political legitimacy "from the Atlantic to the Gulf." On the contrary; there is some evidence that attitudinal changes set in motion by the Gulf crisis have left a lasting imprint on selected Arab opinions—and policies—regarding Arab-Israeli issues. Which brings us to our second case study.

VI THE ARAB-ISRAELI ARENA, PART I: NEW ATTITUDES AND IMPLICATIONS

The first thing to note about Arab attitudes toward Israel today is that, by comparison with the Gulf crisis, the street in many places is simply not as big a factor in the political equation. Rather, the street now seems focused more on domestic than on foreign policy issues—especially in North Africa but also in other Arab societies. In the long run, however, the evolution of Arab attitudes will be crucial to the possibility of what Israelis call "real peace." And even in the short run, one could plausibly claim that the opinion climate on various Arab streets sets the broad margins of diplomatic maneuver for the respective players.

Second, because the peace talks are still going on, Arab attitudes toward them are a "moving target," and thus measurements of those attitudes must be considered preliminary. Looking ahead, one can identify some important imponderables on the horizon, as will be discussed below.

Third, so far, so good. In other words, key Arab publics generally, and it appears genuinely, accept the current peace process. Not with much evident enthusiasm, but enough—more or less as in the Gulf crisis—to enable their leaders to stay the course. On the whole, then, one could characterize the mood on the Arab street regarding the peace process as positive in principle, skeptical on specifics, but also only intermittently very interested, except where it hits close to home.

THE ROUTINIZATION OF ISRAEL

For the time being, the general impression—and here the anecdotal evidence is convincing, if not conclusive—can be captured in a phrase: the routinization of Israel. This process started during the Gulf War, particularly in the Gulf itself. During that time, one could watch, with some astonishment, uncensored [albeit English-language] CNN broadcasts in that area showing Israeli officials, academics, and ordinary citizens talking about Scuds—and even about how some Israeli-designed weapons were in use against Saddam. The taboo, as many others have already observed, was broken, in a small but significant way. Of course, some Arabs in some other places applauded Saddam's Scuds. Yet even there, the manifest failure of this attack on Israel cannot but have registered on popular consciousness. This generated some resentment, no doubt, but probably also resignation that Israel is here to stay for quite a while.

That resignation is apparent, for the most part, in what was earlier labeled the "behavioral" dimension of the Arab street, and in the Arab media. In the period preceding the Madrid Conference, for example, it was noteworthy—as demonstrated by quantitative content analysis—how little media hostility was visible regarding the prospect of peace talks with Israel, as distinguished from complaints about assorted Israeli policies.[1] And ever since Madrid, while "Israel-bashing" remains common in the Arab media, the "mere" fact that Arabs are engaged in peace talks is generally taken for granted in the media—and ignored on the street.

Still, one should not paint too rosy a picture, because the devil as always is in the details. In many Arab countries, only about half the public now recognize that the U.S. will not simply "deliver" Israel, and thus Arab concessions will be required as well. And only about half—an optimist would say "fully half"—are prepared for such concessions, on both symbols and substance: Palestinian political objectives, the idea of interim agreements, and even normal relations with Israel once a final agreement is achieved.

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[1] USIA Office of Research Briefing Paper, "Arab Media: Rejectionists Nearly Silent, But Optimists Also Scarce," October 28, 1991.

One should note here that this is not a one-way street; Arab attitudes *are* affected both by American and by Israeli actions. That sounds self-evident, but it is not. Some people (perhaps especially in Israel) still view Arab opinion as some kind of primal force, immutable and impervious to good news or bad. Reality, however, is different. For example: whatever else one may say about the loan guarantee controversy, it can be demonstrated statistically that it won over significant segments of the Arab press—and of Arab public opinion as well.[1] This, in turn, probably helped in launching, and maintaining, the peace talks that began in Madrid. Conversely, recent surveys showed that new Israeli settlements in occupied territory were indeed especially inflammatory as far as some Arab publics were concerned—and not only among the Palestinians. In the fall of 1991 and the spring of 1992, respondents in seven Arab countries were asked to choose between a series of paired "hardline" and more conciliatory options regarding a range of Arab-Israeli issues: from Jerusalem to nuclear weapons, from the U.S. ability to "deliver" Israel without Arab concessions to the acceptability of "interim" diplomatic agreements. Of all these issues, the one that pretty consistently drew the most negative responses was whether or not to reach any agreement with Israel before it stopped colonizing the occupied territories.

OPINIONS AMONG ARAB PUBLICS

As argued above, however, it is analytically dangerous to lump all the Arabs together, and more meaningful to look at individual societies or at some intermediate groupings. Comparing broad survey response patterns, one could say that the brightest spots for the peace process, at least from a "public relations" perspective, seem to be those either furthest from or closest to Israel: the Gulf Arabs and the Palestinians.

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[1] David Nozick, "Loan Delay Wins Over Arab Media; Israeli Views Moderate," USIA Office of Research Foreign Media Analysis, FMA-17-91, October 2, 1991.

The Gulf

First, there are the "Gulfis," who in the wake of Desert Storm truly are the new Arab moderates on Arab-Israeli issues—always bearing in mind that this refers to collective tendencies, not some uniform view. It is probably too much to suppose that the Gulf War instilled an enduring respect for Israeli restraint, a widespread conviction about a shared Iraqi threat, or a conscious acknowledgement of Israel's longstanding claim that other regional problems deserved priority—even among the "Gulfis." Still, all of those feelings, fleeting or scattered as they may have been, have left a residue of greater acceptance of Israel, though hardly affection—and also considerably less affection, to put it mildly, for the Palestinians. As a result, most Gulf publics predominantly support the idea of peace talks with Israel—and even the notion, hypothetically, of "real peace" with Israel some day. In small-scale but representative surveys of Gulf nationals taken in October 1991, large majorities—larger than in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, or Egypt—backed the idea of an Arab-Israeli peace conference, with somewhere between half and three-quarters of each public favoring its own country's participation.

A closer look reveals specific areas of unexpected pragmatism among these publics—along with lingering skepticism or reservations about Arab-Israeli peacemaking, on Islamic or other grounds, and some interesting variations among individual Gulf societies. For example, contrary to conventional wisdom, a clear majority in Saudi Arabia, and around half in the United Arab Emirates, were willing to accept Israeli control over most of Jerusalem as the price for concessions on other issues. Interim confidence-building steps such as easing the Arab economic boycott of Israel, as well as normal relations with that country after a final peace accord, attracted solid public support in the UAE, and narrow approval among Saudis. In both countries, around two-thirds said Arabs should make direct peace overtures, rather than rely solely on American pressure to "deliver" Israel. (In tiny Bahrain, by contrast, the public split between those two options.)

At the same time, on the eve of the Madrid Conference no more than half the public in any of these Gulf states expected that Israel would actually offer significant concessions for the sake of peace. And no more than half thought peace talks with

the Jewish State were acceptable from a specifically Islamic standpoint—with that proportion dropping to just a third in Saudi Arabia, and just a quarter in predominantly Shi'i Bahrain. What is perhaps most striking, though, is that despite these reservations, Gulfis (as noted above) were overwhelmingly favorably disposed toward the October 1991 peace conference at that time. By early 1992, while some of that initial enthusiasm may have abated, surveys suggested that around half the Gulf publics remained basically satisfied with the diplomatic start that had been made in Madrid. These same surveys, it may be worth noting, also show that the remaining Arab *expatriates* in the Gulf are generally only marginally less moderate on these matters than their hosts—lest anyone argue that in some of these states, the Gulf nationals are actually only a minority of their own publics! In any case, Gulf Arab attitudes and actions have less impact on the conflict than the policies—or publics—of Israel's more immediate neighbors.

Let us then leave the Gulf for the Levant, and Israel's partners in the bilateral peace talks: the Palestinians, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Here the streets also appear inclined to accept the peace process, but more narrowly than in the Gulf. A capsule overview is as follows: among Palestinians, the picture is mixed. Predictably moderate are Israel's own Arab citizens; more fluid yet still fairly moderate, it seems, are attitudes in the territories; even more mixed are Palestinian attitudes across the river, in Jordan. In both Lebanon and Syria opinion is also mixed overall, but sufficiently receptive to leave the governments leeway to pursue the peace talks.

The Palestinians

More specifically, taking each of these societies in turn, pride of place goes to the Palestinians, whose "streets" are most directly affected by (and probably have the most direct impact on) policy decisions in the Arab-Israeli arena. It is worth touching briefly on a segment of this public that is often neglected, in more ways than one: the Arab citizens of Israel, inside the pre-1967 borders. They are an interesting special case, and by no means negligible in either numerical or potential political terms. And because they are Israelis, they also happen to be a group—unlike all the others—among

whom the USIA actually commissions survey questions from time to time. As a result, the author has been able to observe, with considerable satisfaction, both the sampling procedure and some actual interviews in the field among this community.

Three overall relevant findings emerge. First, as a group, Israeli Arabs are at the same time more pessimistic but no less moderate than they were two years ago. Few, for example, voice any inclination to give the *intifada* more than moral support, or to launch one of their own. Second, they have very mixed views about Islamic politics, and are not at all shy, at least in private, about expressing those views one way or the other. Third—and here lies, for the time being, the primary political impact of Israeli Arab opinion—their votes proved just enough, as the polls predicted, to give Israel's Labor/Left camp an extra two or three Knesset seats for its winning mandate in the June 1992 election, above and beyond the five seats claimed by Israel's Arab "ethnic" parties.[1]

The art of public opinion polling among West Bank and Gaza Palestinians pales by comparison, of course, but is not entirely unknown. In the past several years, there have been months at a time when nothing of this nature (at least not of any consequence) appears in the local papers or elsewhere, punctuated by periods when various factions play out a veritable contest of competing polling data in the press. These periods offer the reader an embarrassment, if not of riches, then of raw material for reflection. If nothing else, they are mute testimony to the importance attached by Palestinians themselves to perceptions of popular backing.

The consistency of these Palestinian polls has resided thus far mainly in their questionable reliability. But they do supply some intriguing hints about which way the political winds are blowing in the territories—or at least which questions are deemed worthy of posing to the public. The basic problem with these polls is that they lack accepted controls to ensure objectivity in sample selection, or at any rate do not provide

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[1] Frederick C. Huxley, "Israeli Arabs Approve Talks, Expect Mideast Peace," USIA Office of Research Memorandum, M-110-92, June 18, 1992; *idem*, "Israeli-Arab Vote Likely to Split as Before; Opinions Also Mixed," USIA Office of Research Briefing Paper, B-14-92, March 17, 1992.

sufficient information to make confident judgments about this key methodological issue. As a result, they often seem to be "proving" some political point for their sponsoring organization—whether "mainstream" PLO, "pro-Jordanian," or rejectionist—rather than measuring actual popular sentiment accurately. Nevertheless, many of these surveys represent genuine and well-intentioned efforts in the right direction, and are apparently tolerated by Israeli occupation authorities. Moreover, as of late 1992, there are indications that Palestinian experts themselves are moving further toward reliable polling in preparation for self-government, and even putting together an "inter-factional" consortium to obtain professional training in this area. Sifting through this material, and discounting for its doubtful provenance, some rough patterns emerge. It seems, first of all, that some of the initial satisfaction with the new Palestinian role in the Madrid-era peace talks has dissipated; but also that only a minority is ready to revert to a "rejectionist" posture. In factional terms, Hamas, it appears, can claim the allegiance of perhaps a third of this community; but the mainstream nationalists are holding their half. Also, there are some signals that King Hussein retains much of the credit he recouped in the Gulf crisis, and then as partner to the Palestinian nationalists in the peace process. Finally, the idea of an election to test that proposition enjoys wide public favor, which is perhaps of most immediate policy interest. While the outcome of such an election is at once uncertain and potentially problematic, the process itself possesses the twin virtues of popularity and acknowledged linkage to the peace process.

In all of these ways, the aforementioned surveys seem to confirm the consensus of expert observers working with avowedly anecdotal evidence. But this is cold comfort, from a methodological viewpoint, to the professional poll-watcher, who would warn that these Palestinian views are subject to change without notice. The most one could safely say is that today, Palestinians in the territories seem relatively moderate, at least by comparison with their equally numerous cousins across the river, whose opinions are solicited less often but in more "quality-controlled" Jordanian surveys.

Jordan

In Jordan, the mix of political liberalization, Palestinian population, and Islamic activism presents a lively and also relatively accessible opinion climate (see the Appendices for a detailed exemplar of professional polling results, as discussed below). Notwithstanding the Islamic opposition, the overall public accepted the peace talks, at least by a narrow margin. At the same time, there is some reason to think that the idea of real peace with Israel, so clearly promoted lately by official Jordanian spokesmen, has not yet been absorbed in popular consciousness. And there is also some evidence of diverging views between the native Jordanian and the Palestinian segments of that country's population.

The overall public in Jordan, on the eve of the Madrid Conference, supported their government's decision to take part (according to one credible commercial poll) by the clear if not crushing majority of 58 percent vs. 34 percent. Yet this generality, reassuring as it may be, masked a major ethnic/attitudinal divide between East Bankers of Jordanian and of Palestinian origin. A few numbers suffice to tell this tale. While the "ethnic" Jordanian minority of the country's population backed going to Madrid by a three-to-one margin (72 percent vs. 23 percent), the Palestinians split down the middle: 44 percent vs. 45 percent. There were also some more subtle differences between the two groups. For instance, despite all the outside talk of a "two-state solution" to the Arab-Israeli dilemma, "an independent state in all of Palestine" was still clearly preferred by Jordan's Palestinians over a "West Bank/Gaza state" (57 percent vs. 22 percent) as their "most realistic" current political goal. Jordanians, by contrast, were evenly divided (39 percent vs. 37 percent) between those two options. Also, as of October 1991, Jordan's Palestinians were more likely—but just barely—to express overall satisfaction with Yasser Arafat (51 percent) than were ethnic Jordanians (39 percent). For the Palestinians in Jordan, those numbers, taken together, could reasonably be taken to mean that a considerable number rejected Arafat's leadership at the time, not because he was too "radical" or "pro-Saddam"—but because he was seen as too accommodating, or even defeatist, vis à vis Israel.

Alongside these clear differences of opinion over diplomatic tactics, there were also some striking similarities between Jordan's two major ethnic communities. Eight out of every ten Jordanians—and, less surprisingly, nine out of ten Palestinians in the country—wanted greater Arab support for "the Palestinian cause." On a more specific (and discouraging) note, equally large majorities rejected the notion of step-by-step or "partial" agreements with Israel, as opposed to a "comprehensive final settlement"; and insisted that such a settlement must provide for Arab control of "most of" Jerusalem, "even if that makes Israeli concessions on other issues impossible." Moreover, about two-thirds among both Palestinians and Jordanians agreed with a long list of what could fairly be described, in the contemporary Arab context, as hardline positions: peace talks with Israel were un-Islamic; normal relations with Israel should be rejected even after a peace agreement; Arabs should offer Israel no inducements, but rely on American pressure to extract concessions; Israel was unlikely to make any genuine peace offers; and even if Israel did take the first steps in that direction, the Arabs should refuse to reciprocate with mutual confidence-building measures of their own. In all, these widely shared and relatively uncompromising views suggest that, while amenable to a "peace process," the overall public in Jordan was hardly ready for "real peace" with Israel. And in this sense, at least, the Palestinians in Jordan were collectively rather more like their Jordanian fellow-citizens than like their Palestinian kinsmen west of the river.

Given this public's uneven and unenthusiastic welcome even for Madrid, it is probably safe to suppose that opinion in Jordan today is roughly divided in three: some basically satisfied with the ongoing peace talks; some opposed; and the rest withholding judgment or just indifferent. And by comparison with other Arab players, it is probably fair to say that Jordan's King Hussein is a bit "ahead" of his own public on the peace process—about as far, one might add, as the Gulf monarchs, from a safer distance, are "behind" their own publics on this issue.

This situation, to digress back to our conceptual theme, nicely illustrates both the limits and the leverage of public opinion in determining Arab policy. Clearly, there is rarely a perfect match between them; Arab leaders retain considerable

leeway to factor other things into the equation, or to simply go their own way. By the same token, though, the "street" factor helps explain why, declarations aside, Jordan must either pause or offer other concessions to popular sentiment before proceeding much farther in the peace talks, and why the Gulf states have gone along as far as they have.

From a policy standpoint, a reasonable implication might be that one should deal gingerly with Jordan on peace issues— and also that one could prudently press the Gulf governments to follow their "streets" further in that positive direction, for example on relaxing the Arab boycott of Israel. But since the analysis of public opinion and its impact is as much art as science, and since appreciation of the art is far from universal, there is bound to be a fair amount of uncertainty in the application of these insights.

Lebanon

Returning to our survey of peace process players, we come next to Lebanon. Because it is still both divided and dependent to such an unusual degree, it is of course a special case from the public-opinion-and-policy perspective, as from so many others. In narrow professional terms, there was some relevant polling done among the Lebanese public around the time of the Madrid Conference—although, for practical reasons, almost all the country's Shi'a population, probably over one-third of the total, fell outside the geographical scope of survey coverage. The results can therefore be considered representative of the urban Sunni and Christian public only; but they are nevertheless not without interest, and even encouragement. Approximately two-thirds of that public backed the idea of an Arab-Israeli peace conference, along with Lebanese participation in it. A narrower majority were also willing to endorse normal relations with Israel after a full-fledged regional peace settlement. As for Lebanon's Shi'a, there is plenty of circumstantial if not survey evidence to suggest that they are rather less favorably disposed.[1] Thus, a plausible estimate for the Lebanese public as a whole, to the

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[1] Heavy support for "fundamentalist" or other hardline candidates in Lebanon's recent election suggests this.

extent that this is not a contradiction in terms, is that perhaps around half are explicitly willing to give the current peace process with Israel a chance. This is broadly comparable to the situation among the other partners to the bilateral peace talks with Israel; and it is arguably enough to allow the leadership some negotiating latitude, at least from a domestic political standpoint.

But there does appear to be one important "red line" for the Lebanese, even if the Shi'a are excluded from the calculation: the specter of another partial or "separate deal" with Israel. Fully four-out-of-five in the October 1991 survey rejected that option in favor of "holding out for a comprehensive final settlement, even if that delays progress on some issues." In a similar vein, a majority rejected even interim confidence-building measures, short of formal regional peace. The prevalence of this sentiment undoubtedly reflects Lebanese concern, derived from painful experience, about hosting unresolved Arab-Israeli conflicts on their own soil—or else about getting too close to Israel too far ahead of Syria.

In this respect, the public opinion "trend data" for Lebanon, while admittedly subject to the atypical vagaries of sampling in that country, are not especially heartening. Much of the Lebanese public was behind the peace talks when they first got underway. Yet as things started heating up again in the south, Lebanese understandably took a more jaundiced view of Israeli intentions, and showed no more than what might be termed "average" inclination for Arab-Israeli compromises. Lebanon's policy, in any case, responds less to internal than to external inhibitions, which immediately leads to the next and quite intriguing country, Syria.

Syria

The Syrian "street," too, provides an interesting study, though of a more controlled kind, in the domestic political component of peacemaking. For the first time in memory, as the tight political constraints in that country loosened slightly, some information about popular attitudes toward selected Arab-Israeli options began to trickle out. In the fall of 1991, a modest commercial survey (in Damascus only) suggested mixed views of the upcoming Madrid Conference: 30 percent in favor; around 40 percent opposed; and the remainder unwilling to

take a position. Regarding Syria's own participation in the conference, however, fully half of those interviewed refused to venture any opinion—presumably, in many cases, for fear of contradicting the official line on that touchy topic, which was still relatively new and therefore perhaps unfamiliar or uncertain. Similar non-response rates were achieved (if that is the right word) on a long list of other, more specific peacemaking options. Generally, though, about one-fifth were inclined to accept a range of such conciliatory measures, including interim agreements and ultimately even normal relations with Israel. An equal number were explicitly opposed.

These limited but still intriguing results suggest two conclusions. First, the Syrian "street" probably remains only marginally relevant to that country's foreign policy, so long as the public remains so unwilling, even in a relatively private setting, to make known its views on the subject. Second, steps toward peace with Israel, while not actually popular among Syrians, are no longer unthinkable. By now, after several more months of exposure to the new party line on peace talks with Israel, the percentage of the Damascus public who would voice some satisfaction with that process has probably doubled, no doubt partly because the official view has trickled down. To be sure, the Syrian public is hardline on many issues, and still shows little sign that it might one day be ready for "real peace" with Israel. But as for just sitting at the same table, the Syrian street does now tend to accept the idea.

One might reasonably ask, "so what"? since, as one expert has written, recent stylistic reforms in Damascus would "not even register on a Richter scale of democratization." It may be that, while President Assad cares enough about public opinion to try to control it, he would not let a dip in the ratings get in the way of his principles of the moment. Nevertheless, to quote that author again, "the essence of how politics is conducted in a regime like Syria's" includes "the important extent to which popular sentiments are able to shape official rhetoric and policy, and to command the attention of elites."[1] To the extent

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[1] Steven R. Heydemann, "Can We Get from Here to There? Lessons from the Syrian Case," *American-Arab Affairs*, No. 36 (Spring 1991), pp. 27-30, at p. 30.

that the Syrian public accepts the peace talks, this has at least what might be called negative significance for policy: Syrian officials cannot credibly argue, as perhaps they could on some other occasions, that they are tightly constrained from working with the U.S. (and of course Israel) on the peace process by a hostile domestic climate—prisoners of their own propaganda, or whatever.

Much the same seems applicable to the Gulf (though for the rather different reasons outlined above), and probably also to the other non-contiguous Arab states. Prevailing popular acceptance of the negotiations in late 1991 was generally holding up a year or so later, to judge from the usual combination of anecdotal, media, and especially polling evidence. Closest to the conflict, however, where the streets matter most, public opinion is itself more dependent on fluctuating perceptions of what is actually happening on the ground. Another influential factor will be the competing claims on local loyalties of moderate nationalists and Islamic "fundamentalists." The medium-term prospects this portends are the subject of our next section, which brazenly carries this discussion forward into the unforeseeable future.

VII THE ARAB-ISRAELI ARENA, PART II: FUTURE SCENARIOS

The preceding discussion has portrayed Arab "street" reaction to the prospect of peace with Israel as modestly encouraging—but will it stay that way? On the whole, Arab publics seem settled in for the long haul, and hopeful about the new Labor-led Israeli government; they are, however, still skeptically awaiting concrete results. Looking ahead, one can identify three main imponderables—not "wild cards" in any immediate sense, but medium-term variables at a minimum.

One is simply the passage of time, and with it American and Israeli actions, or inaction—both of which, as noted, do affect Arab attitudes. If popular expectations were clearly raised by the June 1992 Israeli election, that is a double-edged sword. It is hardly original, but nonetheless accurate, to point out that great hopes can gradually give way to great disappointment, or worse. One does not sense any acute impatience—and after what did not happen in the Gulf crisis, those who invoke the specter of the Arab street bear a heavy burden of proof. Nevertheless, if Arab-Israeli peace prospects do not improve eventually, in more tangible fashion, then time may take its proverbial toll on Arab attitudes and actions alike.

Another, related imponderable is the possibility of a split on this issue between the elite and the street. Here the Egyptian experience may be instructive. The elite, on the whole, seems

clearly to have a "moderate" foreign policy orientation.[1] But, while there are no current polling data from that country, results from 1991 showed signs of sharply diverging views between the elite and the street: the former generally supported broad moves toward peace with Israel; the latter were noticeably more noncommittal, at best. In a survey taken in Cairo and Alexandria shortly before the Madrid Conference, half of those with more than a secondary education said peace talks with Israel were acceptable from an Islamic standpoint. By contrast, only one-quarter of Egyptians with intermediate or secondary education agreed with that moderate view; and two-thirds of those with just primary or less education felt "strongly" that such peace talks were unacceptable to Islam. Similarly, on the practical issue of whether Egypt should or should not participate in further Arab-Israeli peace talks, two-thirds of those with at least an intermediate education said yes. But fewer than a third of the less-educated urban "masses" agreed—and this after more than a decade of formal peace with the Jewish State. In strictly methodological terms, the overall sample for this survey was small enough (about 500) to put these smaller educational subsamples just barely within the realm of statistical validity. Yet the gap between "street" and "elite" is so wide as to be unquestionably significant, both from statistical and socio-political standpoints.

This gap has arguably affected Egyptian policy only on the margins—but it would be hard to argue that it has helped the quality of "real peace." A similar street/elite split may eventually crystallize among the Palestinian public, where—because they have no government of their own—the street probably matters more than usual. If so, another and surely unhelpful uncertainty will be added to the mix.

A third imponderable—and it is a major one—is the religious dimension of the Arab-Israeli atmosphere: Hamas, Hezbollah, the various Muslim Brotherhoods, and all the other, less organized sympathies and sentiments they profess to represent. What can be said, in this connection, about Arab attitudes toward Islam? At the risk of venturing a bit beyond the

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[1] David Pollock, "Egypt's Elite Rate U.S., GCC States High; Iraq and Libya Low," USIA Office of Research Memorandum, M-107-91, July 23, 1991.

available data, and perilously close to (if not over the edge of) sheer speculation, a few observations may be offered.

First, it is clear that the Islamist "fundamentalists" are fairly popular, and that they are predisposed against the Jewish State. But it is far from a foregone conclusion that the Islamists will be able to ride the street (or any other means) to power anywhere, anytime soon, or ever. Partly this is because Arab governments, if pressed, show little inclination to surrender to the street in this fashion. But it is partly because the streets themselves are not monolithic, even about Islam. In fact, Arab opinions about political versions of Islam—as distinct from the "motherhood and apple pie" varieties—are quite diverse.

One is accustomed to hearing that Islam (unlike, say, mainstream Christianity) is not just a religion but a whole way of life. Yet paradoxically, perhaps it is precisely for this reason that Muslims can so passionately disagree about the public policy implications of their religion. The debate is not about whether one is for or against Islam, but about how high a priority to accord it by comparison with other national goals. And there is considerable variation both within and among various Arab societies on exactly that issue. Naturally, as in any society, a well-organized interest group like the Islamists (leaving aside their violent fringe) can use diffuse popular sympathy to advance its own agenda. Such groups, however, also have to select their own priorities carefully, or risk running into popular as well as official opposition.

So, if the Islamists remain an interest group, even a strong one, Arab leaders may still choose—as many already have—to pursue the peace process anyway. And in so doing those leaders may still have, as they now do, support from a more diffuse but larger segment of their general publics. This begins to explain why Islam should be considered an imponderable, rather than an automatic impediment to the peace process.

Furthermore, even if the Islamists do take over someplace, or begin to exert irresistible pressure on official policy, it is not too naive to wonder whether they might concentrate their effort on internal rather than external affairs. Moreover, the record reveals wide latitude in formulating an Islamic foreign policy. What, for example, was the "Islamic" response to the Iran-Iraq War, or to the Gulf crisis? Just to ask the question suggests the degree of ambiguity involved.

More to the point, there is also some reason to wonder whether that ambiguity—call it pragmatism, if you like—might even apply toward Israel. The reference is mainly to popular Islamic practice, but sometimes even to its organized ideologues. For example, what does it mean that Israeli Arab Islamists (or Hamas in the territories) have on occasion been more inclined than other groups in their communities to engage in practical dialogue with Israeli authorities? Or, what does it mean that most people in many Arab countries consider peace talks with Israel at least a little bit un-Islamic—but also offer at least lukewarm support for their government's participation in those very talks? Or, what does it mean that a religiously conservative Arab public is willing to compromise even on Jerusalem, if that is what it takes to obtain other Israeli concessions?

We may be surprised or perplexed by such ambiguities, but we should not be. True, the nature and political role of public opinion in Arab societies are not the same as in the U.S. Yet we should not unthinkingly attribute to Arabs a fanaticism or a mob psychology—images falsely conjured up by the very phrase "Arab street," as others use it—that we would hardly ascribe to ourselves. Rather, mixed views in society as a whole, and seemingly contradictory but actually quite nuanced attitudes among large segments of it, are characteristic features of public opinion everywhere, including Arab countries. Certainly this phenomenon has its analogue in Israel, but that is a story for another time. For now, let us just conclude our long journey down the Arab side of the street.

CONCLUSION: WHITHER THE ARAB STREET?

This paper has attempted to offer a balanced analysis, buttressed by actual evidence, of the nature and impact of Arab public opinion on a couple of critical issues. We will conclude with some broader comments on the overall significance, substance, and structure of "street politics" among the Arabs today—and on their possible fate in the future.

One might begin with a reminder that some scholars still belittle the entire subject, taking refuge in empty phrases like "Arab autocracy" or, more fashionably, "the *mukhabarat* state." At the other extreme, some still imagine a revolutionary groundswell of "Arab nationalism" or of radical Islam, almost as if nothing had changed since Nasser but the slogans. But others, happily, have escaped these caricatures of the Arab street, whether underrated or exaggerated. They recognize the limits but also the power of public opinion in Arab politics, and a few even acknowledge its complexity and diversity. One must, however, be careful to attribute its significance, not to some independent weight it carries across Arab borders, but to the subtle influence it exerts on individual Arab regimes.

One must take care, too, to distinguish presumptions of popular influence, which are often right, from assumptions about its direction, which are often wrong. A recent and telling example of unfortunate juxtaposition of this kind can be cited from an otherwise useful essay:

> The stereotype of Arab leaders as autocrats free to ignore the popular will is fading as the phenomenon of public opinion emerges in the Arab world. The development of more vocal popular sentiment reflects advances in

> literacy, access to media, and increasing awareness of events outside the region; it is leading to a growing sense of empowerment that partially constrains the policy choices available to presidents and monarchs.[1]

One can hardly quarrel with this assessment, agreeing as it does with the whole tenor of the preceding discussion. But this keen insight is coupled with a misleading view, based on a one-sided selection of pro-Saddam examples from the Gulf crisis and an unsupported assertion regarding subsequent trends, about what these increasingly "empowered" Arab publics actually advocate. The result is a typically overstated impression, not only of Saddam's original appeal, but also of the enduring relevance of the causes he pretended to champion and (in the authors' phrase) the Saladin/Bismarck/Robin Hood image he sought to project. In fact, as we have seen, the evidence suggests that Saddam's popularity among the Arab masses was limited even at its height—and that most Arab publics have since adopted a more pragmatic approach to the Palestinian issue he attempted to usurp. In other words, one can heartily applaud the authors' appreciation for the significance of Arab public opinion, even while disagreeing with them about its substance.

A similar qualification applies to discussion of the "structural" mechanisms through which Arab public opinion exercises its political impact. Here one cannot avoid addressing, however briefly, the debate about Arab democracy. A number of scholars, recognizing the growing importance of grass-roots pressures in many Arab states, have lately been engaged in a commendable effort to analyze new Arab experiments in democratization. But one must take care to distinguish between informal popular input, which is often a reality, and institutional democracy, which is often still just a dream. Indeed, these two tendencies may even operate at cross-purposes before they ever converge—and if they do converge, the result may well be messy. As one astute academic observer put it:

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[1] Augustus Richard Norton and Muhammad Y. Muslih, "The Need for Arab Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, No. 83, Summer 1991, p. 12.

"prodemocratic" factors in many Arab societies now include the strengthening of Islamic movements, the growing unruliness of associational life, the unavoidable task of confronting economic hardship and the pervasive fear of popular revolt. . . Thus far, pro-democratic forces have done more to prevent and contain mass protest than to lead it. But. . . [their] future is likely to be far more tumultuous.[1]

In the meantime, in the absence of full-blown democracy, some scholars, including some leading Arab intellectuals, have rediscovered its precursor, "civil society"; that is, the realm of autonomous associations and activities that can fill the political vacuum between individual citizens and the state.[2] But civil society, while arguably a necessary condition for democracy, is not by itself sufficient. Besides, the associations and activities it comprises may well be more naturally suited to Arab elites than to their "streets." And elite and "street" attitudes may well be quite at variance with each other on many matters—including, as in the case of some mass Islamist movements, the value of democracy itself. Finally, faced with uncharacteristically unmanageable popular demands, the state may retain the ultimate sanction of simply (and almost literally) closing down the streets—or perhaps even, if all else fails, reducing some of them to rubble. As a result, the march from civil society toward Arab democracy is anything but inevitable.

This does not, however, mean that there is something absolutely and inherently inimical to democracy in Islamic civilization, or in Arab society. It may be true that no Arab state has ever been a stable, full-fledged democracy, but the future need not be a prisoner of the past. Deterministic arguments based on history or culture, erudite as they may be, extrapolate too much—and they fly in the face of counter-examples demonstrating that some cultural predispositions and historical patterns can be abruptly reversed. The past few generations

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[1] Robert Bianchi, "Democratization in the Middle East: Four Reasons for Optimism," *American-Arab Affairs*, No. 36 (Spring 1991), pp. 5-7.

[2] See, for example, the monthly journal *Al-Mujtama' Al-Madani* (Civil Society) started in Cairo in 1992 by the highly-regarded sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim and his colleagues at the Ibn Khaldoun Center.

have witnessed the creation of functioning democracies in many places with almost no such tradition: in Europe (Germany); in Asia (Japan, India); and in the Muslim world (Turkey)—not to speak of Israel, whose people possessed not even the experience of sovereign statehood for two thousand years, or of the dramatic but still uncertain and uneven developments in the former Soviet bloc.

These examples suggest that a democratic transformation, at least a rapid and radical one, may first require the complete collapse of some old imperial or other order, often if not always in war. Yet there are alternative historical models of more evolutionary democratic progression (or else of sudden regression in a different direction) as well. In the long run, Arab politics may take any of those paths, or perhaps none. More likely, given the existing diversity of these societies and political systems, individual Arab states will undergo a number of different intermediate variations. The prospect is one of assorted fits and starts and a great deal of hazy "muddling through," as various Arab governments (and, on the margins, their foreign friends) respond to popular pressures by juggling conflicting impulses and interests.

The key imperative, for the time being, is to watch how popular attitudes percolate upward into policy even under undemocratic Arab governments, in the real world that lies between repression and revolution, democratic or otherwise. Indeed, if there is one lesson to learn from this discussion, it is the importance, intellectual as well as practical, of careful measurement and analysis of the Arab street, devoid of preconceptions about what it wants or about how its influence is felt and how much. Arab public opinion emerges as a major variable, in every sense: it differs in both significance and substance across time, space, and topic; it has its own internal dynamic, while interacting with other factors; and, probably of most practical importance, it may or may not be conducive to U.S. policy. The emphasis throughout has therefore been on individual cases, as opposed to some sweeping scheme for anticipating the Arab street or strategy for dealing with it. Nevertheless, in the interest of clarity, it will not be out of place to offer the following trio of capsule conclusions, each with a corresponding policy recommendation.

First, Arab public opinion is measurable, and it matters. The corresponding policy recommendation is: pay attention to it—

and pay particular attention to the different ways in which different Arab governments respond to it. In other words, do not underrate the Arab street, but do not exaggerate it either. Above all, do not assume that official Arab policies represent only a thin and brittle upper crust. Because, as this essay has argued at such length, that is not necessarily or even usually so.

Second, Arab opinion is anything but uniform, or static, even on such enduring and mobilizing issues as Islam (or, for that matter, democracy). Policy recommendation: try to tailor our own policies, as much as possible, to fit individual Arab governments, societies, and circumstances—particularly on the most divisive or controversial issues. This is much easier said than done, of course, but well worth the effort.

Third, the Gulf crisis and the ensuing Arab-Israeli peace talks have produced *attitudinal* as well as political and strategic changes. The result is an opportunity for Arab-Israeli peacemaking supported not only by many Arab elites, but also in large measure and to this day, by many different Arab streets. Policy recommendation: do not let go of the opportunity, especially if it runs into trouble—and try to keep both the streets and the elites firmly in mind. One might, for example, first look for evidence that Arab publics support not just the idea of peace talks, but with it the idea of a real give-and-take—or that they don't. Then, one might try to discern which specific issues are most or least amenable to such give-and-take—from the standpoint of various Arab streets, and therefore maybe their governments.

To be sure, in Arab societies as elsewhere, the nexus between public opinion and policy is not just a numbers game. The elite usually counts for more; there are always countervailing currents of opinion; and well-organized or well-placed groups, even small ones, can have disproportionate political influence. Still, the degree of popular support for the peace process suggests that Arab policy in this regard is on solid ground. Under the right circumstances, it could be encouraged to move further, without straying too far off the street. And possibly, with this kind of approach, assessments of Arab opinion could play a supporting role not just in analyzing, but also in influencing the regional political climate, on all these important but, increasingly, not intractable issues.

APPENDICES

TABLE 1.[1] Views on Jordan's Having "Normal" Relations With Israel Following Settlement

"If there is an Arab-Israeli settlement, would you favor or oppose our country's having normal diplomatic and other relations with Israel? Strongly or only somewhat?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian[2]	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Strongly favor (%)	1	2	3	1	1	6	3	2	2
Somewhat favor (%)	15	17	7	7	14	20	20	9	14
Somewhat oppose (%)	12	15	15	10	15	15	16	13	14
Strongly oppose (%)	62	56	62	69	59	54	53	59	60
Refused (%)	4	5	3	4	5	4	4	5	4
No answer (%)	6	3	9	8	6	2	5	11	6
Total (%)	100	98	99	99	100	101	101	99	100

[1] Each of these tables are based on the results of a survey by a reputable market research firm. Interviews were conducted among a representative national sample of 499 male and female Jordanians aged fifteen and over, September 28-October 12, 1991; and among another sample of 149 Palestinians in Amman, October 13-21, 1991.

[2] The Palestinian subsample includes 281 interviews from the national urban sample, plus an additional 149 interviews among adult Palestinians in Amman only. **These additional interviews were not included in the "Total" sample results shown in the tables.**

TABLE 2. Views on Arab Initiatives to Promote More Peaceful Arab-Israeli Climate

A. "And in the meantime, do you think the Arabs should or should not take some steps that might promote a more peaceful Arab-Israeli climate, such as reducing the economic boycott of Israel?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Strongly favor (%)	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
Somewhat favor (%)	6	15	7	7	7	18	17	5	10
Somewhat oppose (%)	14	16	14	8	18	15	18	12	15
Strongly oppose (%)	61	51	50	64	53	51	48	59	55
Refused (%)	5	6	9	6	6	8	6	7	6
No answer (%)	12	10	19	14	16	6	10	16	13
Total (%)	99	99	100	100	101	101	100	100	100

B. "Would you still feel that way if Israel also took some steps in this direction, such as reducing its economic pressure on the Palestinians?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases[3]	159	134	55	78	175	94	145	304	348
Yes (%)	80	81	78	81	80	80	83	79	80
No (%)	6	3	2	5	4	4	4	4	4
Somewhat (%)	6	5	4	3	7	4	6	5	5
Refused (%)	1	2	4	1	1	3	—	3	2
No answer (%)	7	8	13	10	7	9	7	10	8
Total (%)	100	99	101	100	99	100	100	101	99

[3] Based on those opposing the Arabs taking steps that "might promote a more peaceful Arab-Israeli climate."

TABLE 3. Are Peace Talks With Israel Acceptable Under Islam?

"Do you think that peace negotiations with Israel are or are not acceptable from the standpoint of Islam? And do you feel that way strongly or only somewhat?"

| | By Age | | | By Education | | | By Nationality | | |
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Strongly accept (%)	7	9	10	3	8	14	11	5	9
Somewhat accept (%)	10	10	3	4	8	15	10	9	9
Somewhat unaccept (%)	4	7	14	7	9	4	8	7	7
Strongly unaccept (%)	57	57	60	70	55	52	56	55	58
Refused (%)	1	*	1	2	1	—	*	1	1
No answer (%)	20	15	10	15	18	15	14	23	16
Total (%)	99	98	98	101	99	100	99	100	100

*= Less than one-half of one percent.

TABLE 4. How Willing Should Arabs Now be to Make Peace With Israel?

"All things considered, do you think the Arabs should now be more willing or less willing to make peace with Israel?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
More willing (%)	42	39	40	35	42	41	48	33	40
Less willing (%)	23	23	21	28	22	20	20	22	23
No change (%)	16	17	14	13	15	20	17	17	16
Refused (%)	5	13	8	7	10	8	7	11	9
No answer (%)	14	8	17	18	11	10	7	18	12
Total (%)	100	100	100	101	100	99	99	101	100

TABLE 5. Support for Arab-Israeli Peace Conference

"As you may know, there is a proposal for Israel, Arab states, and Palestinians to participate in an International Peace Conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Do you favor or oppose such a conference? Strongly or only somewhat?"

| | By Age | | | By Education | | | By Nationality | | |
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Strongly favor (%)	23	30	28	21	28	29	37	18	27
Somewhat favor (%)	32	29	26	23	30	35	33	26	30
Somewhat oppose (%)	10	11	8	11	10	11	6	14	10
Strongly oppose (%)	27	24	24	30	25	23	17	33	25
Refused (%)	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
No answer (%)	6	3	12	12	6	1	4	7	6
Total (%)	99	99	100	99	101	100	99	100	100

TABLE 6. Views on Jordanian Participation in Peace Conference

"And would you favor or oppose our own country's participation in such a conference? Strongly or only somewhat?"

| | By Age | | | By Education | | | By Nationality | | |
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Strongly favor (%)	28	36	28	24	33	34	39	23	31
Somewhat favor (%)	29	25	24	23	25	31	33	21	27
Somewhat oppose (%)	9	11	8	9	10	10	8	10	10
Strongly oppose (%)	25	22	24	28	23	23	15	35	24
Refused (%)	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1
No answer (%)	7	4	13	13	7	1	5	8	7
Total (%)	99	99	99	99	99	100	101	99	100

TABLE 7. Views on Chances of Israel's Making Significant Peace Concessions

"And how likely do you think it is that Israel would make significant concessions in exchange for peace: very likely, fairly likely, fairly unlikely, or very unlikely?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		Total
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Very likely (%)	6	4	1	2	4	8	5	4	4
Fairly likely (%)	20	20	15	13	19	23	23	14	19
Fairly unlikely (%)	14	14	10	9	15	13	15	12	13
Very unlikely (%)	51	51	49	56	49	49	50	52	51
Refused (%)	—	2	—	1	1	1	*	1	1
No answer (%)	9	9	24	19	12	6	7	17	12
Total (%)	100	100	99	100	100	100	100	100	100

*= Less than one-half of one percent.

TABLE 8. Views on Priorities for the Arabs

"Sometimes people must choose between competing priorities. I would like to list some possible choices the Arabs might face; for each pair, please tell me which one you think we should choose:"

A. "Developing an Arab nuclear capability to match Israel's" or "Avoiding the nuclear option as part of an agreement to limit weapons on all sides."

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Develop Arab nuclear capability (%)	95	92	88	90	93	94	90	93	92
Avoid nuclear option (%)	5	8	12	10	7	6	11	7	8
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	100	100

B. "Requiring Arab control over most of Jerusalem even if that makes Israeli concessions on other issues impossible" or "Accepting Israeli control over most of Jerusalem in order to obtain Israeli concessions on other issues."

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
Requiring Arab control (%)	93	95	97	97	95	92	93	96	94
Accepting Israeli control (%)	7	5	3	3	5	8	7	4	6
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

C. "Trying to get the U.S. to put pressure on Israel for concessions without any Arab offers to Israel" or "Trying to show Israel directly that concessions would bring peace, without giving up the hope for American pressure as well."

Get U.S. to pressure Israel (%)	58	58	56	51	61	57	59	60	58
Show Israel directly (%)	42	41	44	49	39	42	41	40	42
Total (%)	100	99	100	100	100	99	100	100	100

D. "Accepting a partial settlement with Israel even if that leave some issues unresolved" or "Holding out for a comprehensive final settlement, even if that delays progress on some issues."

Accept partial settlement (%)	19	15	12	11	16	21	16	15	16
Hold out for final settlement (%)	81	84	88	89	84	78	84	84	84
Total (%)	100	99	100	100	100	99	100	99	100

TABLE 9. Views on Arab Support for Palestinian Cause

"All things considered, do you think the Arabs should now give the Palestinian cause more support, less support, or about the same level of support as in the past?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
More support (%)	90	89	91	91	88	92	84	92	90
Less support (%)	*	1	—	—	*	1	1	*	1
Same level (%)	6	6	3	5	6	5	8	5	6
Refused (%)	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
No answer (%)	2	2	3	4	3	—	4	2	2
Total (%)	99	99	99	101	99	99	99	100	101

*= Less than one-half of one percent.

Table 10. Views on "Most Realistic Political Objective" for Palestinians

"All things considered, which one of the following do you think is the most realistic political objective for the Palestinians at this stage: limited self-government in the occupied territories, union with Jordan, an independent West Bank/Gaza state, or an independent state in all of Palestine?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Limited self-government (%)	8	10	5	5	9	9	7	9	8
Federation with Jordan (%)	19	10	17	21	12	15	17	13	15
Independent West Bank/Gaza state (%)	23	36	26	22	28	33	37	22	28
Independent state in Palestine (%)	50	44	52	51	50	43	39	57	48
Other (%)	*	—	—	1	*	—	*	—	*
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	99	100	100	101	99

*=Less than one-half of one percent

TABLE 11. Satisfaction with Regional Policies of Gorbachev, Bush, Arafat, Perez de Cuellar, and Saddam Hussein

"Now I would like to list a few individuals for you. For each one, please tell me how satisfied you are with his policies in our region—very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not so satisfied, or not satisfied at all:"

Mikhail Gorbachev

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Very satisfied (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fairly satisfied (%)	2	1	5	—	3	4	2	2	2
Not so satisfied (%)	8	12	8	6	7	18	13	7	10
Not satisfied at all (%)	88	84	77	84	88	77	82	85	84
Refused (%)	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	—	*
No answer (%)	1	1	10	10	2	—	2	5	3
Total (%)	99	99	100	100	100	100	100	99	99

George Bush

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Very satisfied (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	—
Fairly satisfied (%)	—	—	1	—	*	—	—	*	*
Not so satisfied (%)	1	*	1	1	*	1	1	2	1
Not satisfied at all (%)	98	98	92	93	98	97	96	96	97
Refused (%)	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	*	*
No answer (%)	1	1	6	7	1	—	2	2	2
Total (%)	100	100	100	101	99	99	100	100	100

Yasser Arafat

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Very satisfied (%)	20	11	12	16	17	11	13	21	15
Fairly satisfied (%)	23	34	35	21	27	39	26	30	29
Not so satisfied (%)	23	21	17	20	20	25	25	17	21
Not satisfied at all (%)	27	23	24	27	27	20	28	25	25
Refused (%)	*	5	1	2	3	2	1	2	2
No answer (%)	6	5	10	14	6	2	6	6	6
Total (%)	99	99	99	100	100	99	99	101	98

Perez de Cuellar

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Very satisfied (%)	1	*	—	—	1	—	*	1	1
Fairly satisfied (%)	3	4	2	2	4	4	3	4	3
Not so satisfied (%)	15	18	14	8	14	26	20	13	16
Not satisfied at all (%)	77	73	73	80	76	68	72	77	75
Refused (%)	—	1	—	—	*	1	1	*	1
No answer (%)	3	3	10	9	4	1	4	4	4
Total (%)	99	99	99	99	99	100	100	99	100

Saddam Hussein

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Very satisfied (%)	78	70	80	85	76	67	75	73	75
Fairly satisfied (%)	17	20	14	9	18	23	17	20	17
Not so satisfied (%)	1	2	2	1	1	4	2	3	2
Not satisfied at all (%)	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	3	2
Refused (%)	—	4	1	3	*	4	2	1	2
No answer (%)	2	1	—	1	2	1	2	1	1
Total (%)	100	99	99	100	100	100	101	101	99

*= Less than one-half of one percent.

TABLE 12. Views on the West Sending Forces to Gulf

"Some people say Western countries were wrong to send their forces to the Gulf area, because they only wanted to control Arab oil. Others say Western countries were right to send their forces there, because they came to protect their Arab friends. Which view is closer to your own?"

| | By Age | | | By Education | | | By Nationality | | |
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
West wrong (%)	96	92	92	92	96	91	92	94	93
West right (%)	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
Different view (%)	3	5	1	3	2	6	5	2	3
Refused (%)	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	1	*
No answer (%)	—	1	5	5	—	1	1	1	1
Total (%)	100	100	100	101	100	100	100	100	98

*= Less than one-half of one percent.

TABLE 13. Views on Economic Sanctions Against Iraq

"As you may know, the UN has been trying to enforce Iraq's agreement to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction, protect refugees, and respect Kuwait's sovereignty. In this connection, do you favor or oppose economic sanctions against Iraq? Strongly or only somewhat?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Strongly favor (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Somewhat favor (%)	—	*	—	—	*	—	—	*	*
Somewhat oppose (%)	1	3	2	2	2	4	2	3	2
Strongly oppose (%)	99	95	95	96	97	96	96	96	96
Refused (%)	*	1	2	2	1	1	1	*	1
No answer (%)	—	*	—	—	*	—	—	*	*
Total (%)	100	99	99	100	100	101	99	99	99

*=Less than one-half of one percent.

TABLE 14. Views on Military Action Against Iraq

"And how about military action against Iraq, if necessary? Would you favor or oppose it? Strongly or only somewhat?

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Strongly favor (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Somewhat favor (%)	—	*	—	—	—	1	—	*	*
Somewhat oppose (%)	2	3	1	—	2	4	3	2	2
Strongly oppose (%)	97	95	97	98	96	94	96	96	96
Refused (%)	—	1	2	2	*	1	1	*	1
No answer (%)	1	1	—	—	1	1	*	1	1
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	99	101	100	99	100

*= Less than one-half of one percent.

TABLE 15. Confidence in Selected Countries and UN to Deal Responsibly With Regional Problems

"I would like to list a few foreign countries or international organizations for you. For each one, please tell me how much confidence you have that it will deal responsibly with the problems in our region—a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all:"

Soviet Union

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Great deal (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fair amount (%)	2	3	3	1	2	6	4	2	3
Not very much (%)	13	13	14	7	12	21	19	9	13
None at all (%)	83	78	70	79	83	72	73	82	79
Refused (%)	—	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
No answer (%)	2	3	10	12	2	—	2	6	4
Total (%)	100	99	99	101	100	100	100	100	100

The United States

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Great deal (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	—
Fair amount (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not very much (%)	4	5	3	1	4	8	5	4	5
None at all (%)	93	89	88	89	92	90	92	91	91
Refused (%)	—	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
No answer (%)	2	4	6	8	3	1	2	5	4
Total (%)	99	100	99	101	100	100	100	101	101

Iran

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Great deal (%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fair amount (%)	7	7	7	3	7	9	8	5	7
Not very much (%)	24	30	23	14	25	39	33	19	26
None at all (%)	64	54	58	71	62	44	52	65	59
Refused (%)	*	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
No answer (%)	5	6	10	11	5	5	6	9	6
Total (%)	100	99	99	100	100	100	100	99	99

Great Britain

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Great deal (%)	—	1	1	—	1	—	*	*	1
Fair amount (%)	*	—	—	—	—	1	—	*	*
Not very much (%)	9	6	7	3	7	12	8	6	7
None at all (%)	86	86	81	82	88	83	86	86	85
Refused (%)	—	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	2
No answer (%)	4	4	8	12	3	3	4	7	5
Total (%)	99	100	99	100	100	100	100	100	100

UN

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Great deal (%)	*	2	—	—	2	1	1	*	1
Fair amount (%)	2	3	1	—	3	3	3	1	2
Not very much (%)	11	14	16	9	11	20	14	12	13
None at all (%)	83	74	71	79	79	72	76	79	77
Refused (%)	*	3	2	2	2	3	3	1	2
No answer (%)	3	3	9	9	4	1	3	6	4
Total (%)	99	99	99	99	101	100	100	99	99

*= Less than one-half of one percent.

TABLE 16. Views on Bush Handling of U.S. Loan Guarantees to Israel

"As you may know, there has been some discussion recently about whether new American loan guarantees to Israel will or will not be linked to Israeli concessions, such as stopping Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. How well do you think U.S. President George Bush has handled this issue: very well, fairly well, fairly poorly, or very poorly—or haven't you heard enough about this to say?"

	By Age			By Education			By Nationality		
	15-24	25-44	45+	Elementary	Secondary	University	Jordanian	Palestinian	Total
No. of cases	212	201	86	107	249	142	218	430	499
Very well (%)	8	8	6	4	7	12	11	3	8
Fairly well (%)	11	16	10	10	10	19	16	10	13
Acceptable (%)	10	14	12	8	13	13	15	10	12
Fairly poorly (%)	11	12	9	5	14	12	11	10	11
Very poorly (%)	29	25	19	25	24	29	21	33	26
Haven't heard enough (%)	17	12	16	23	16	8	15	15	15
Refused (%)	4	6	6	7	5	4	4	5	5
No answer (%)	9	5	22	18	10	3	7	13	10
Total (%)	99	98	100	100	99	100	100	99	100

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