Geopolitical Divergence in the League of Arab States from a Neorealist Point of View

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Abstract

The League of Arab States (also known as the Arab League) is well past its sixth decade of establishment. However, it has a long way to go to achieve the objectives enumerated in its charter. In a sense, there is much stronger propensity towards disintegration than integration in the league. This article seeks to study the reasons that account for the failure of such integration in the Arab League. Current trends in the Arab Union are studied through the lens of Neorealist Theory. To that end, the paper seeks to find an answer to this question: What are the reasons for the failure of integration in the Arab League? The main hypothesis of this article is that the member states' main concern is survival, security, and relative gains rather than convergent cooperative behaviors conducive to integration; as a result, six decades after its birth, integration is yet to be achieved.

Keywords: The Arab League, convergence/ integration, divergence, hegemon, neorealism, relative gains.

Introduction

Trends towards integration and cooperation have assumed an integral role in defining the behavior of actors on the international arena in today's world, and states are more inclined toward achieving their objectives and serving their interests through integration. In an effort to promote integration and

cooperation, unions and leagues were formed in a more earnest fashion after World War II. The formation of the Arab League, which was simultaneous with the end of World War II could be assessed in this regard. The founders of the Arab League sought to construct a platform on which they could serve their interests more effectively. As a first step, the current paper takes a historical account of the formation of the Arab League, then moves on to employ the Neorealist theory to study the integration and divergence in the entity. In a sense, it is argued that at the core of actors' behavior in the Arab League lies a rather divergent predisposition than an integration-oriented mindset, which is explicable from a Neorealist point of view. In other words, this article seeks to clarify the reasons that account for the failure of such integration in the Arab League as well as the divergence that exists in the league. Current trends and approaches inside the Arab League have been analyzed through the framework of Neorealist theory. To this end, the article's main question is the following: What are the reasons for the failure of integration in the Arab League? To answer this question, the paper's main hypothesis is as follows: The member states' main concern is survival, security, and relative gains, rather than convergent cooperative behaviors conducive to integration. As a result, we see that six decades after its birth integration is yet to be achieved. This paper will apply a qualitative methodology; library and first hand document and quotation and statements that will help clarify the main reasons for this convergence.

Literature Review

Significant research has been conducted regarding the subject of our paper. There is significant research. One of the most important books is *The League of Arab States* written by Robert MacDonald (1965). In this book, the author focuses on the dynamics of regional organization and the impacts of league of

Arab states, and studies the treaties among member countries including defense and economic cooperation treaties.

Another significant article about this issue is the article titled *The Arab League as a Regional Arrangement*, by Majid Khadduri (2017), which studies the way in which Arab countries aspired to form a union, and the way in which movement towards that ideal came to be known as Pan-Arabism. In addition, the author indicates that the roots of the movement go back to the time when the various nationalities of the Ottoman Empire rose in revolt against Turkish domination and sought an eventual separation from Ottoman sovereignty.

In the article *The efforts of the Arab League Education, Culture and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) in the field of renewable energy*, written by Alnaser et al. (1995), the authors present and discuss the activities and efforts organized and sponsored by the Arab League Education, Culture and Scientific Organisation in the field of renewable energy for the sake of promoting this technology in the Arab world. Moreover, the outcome of the Arab ministers' meetings, the permanent Arab Committee for Renewable Energy, publications in the field of renewable energy achieved by ALECSO and Arab-Arab and Arab-international cooperation are highlighted.

The last important article about the Arab league is *The League of Arab States Approach towards Arab Spring: Paradoxical and Dualism*, written by Majid Bozorgmehri and Tohid Sahraei (1394 [2015 A.D]). In this article, the authors' most essential argument is the different and paradoxical policy of the Arab League member states towards the political and security challenges inside the union, specially the Arab spring, rooted in different national interests, different economical levels and different approaches among member states.

The above literature mostly focuses on historical, political

and security dimension of this union; it covers many aspects of the Arab League, except the roots and reasons of the failure of integration inside the league. This gap in the existing literature explains this paper's main objective. In this research, we will discuss the root of this divergence, which mainly consist of the member states' central concerns of survival, security, and relative gains, rather than convergent cooperative behaviors conducive to integration. We therefore observe that six decades after its birth, integration is yet to achieve within the Arab League.

The Quest for Identity and the Formation of the League

What is known today as the League of Arab States is the outcome of a century of aspirations, which succeeded in 1945 on an initiative by Egypt. As the first international organization of Arab-Islamic origins, the league was initially established by the participants in the first Arab Congress; Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Jordan were the signatory parties and they soon achieved national ratification. The league has since been open to membership of other Arab states, and witnessed the joining of newly independent Arab states after World War II. Presently, the Arab League has all the Arab-speaking nations as its members (including 21 states from Asia, Africa and the PLO), namely Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Yemen, Bahrain, Sudan, Somalia, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Djibouti and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (Aghaee, 1393 [2014 A.D]: 329-330).

However, pan-Arabism is one of the main pillars of the league, whose formation dates back to the integration processes of the Ottoman era and the Arab identity-seeking circles of 1847 when the 'Art and Science Association' was established in Beirut. According to Antonius (1969: 21-2), the organized

modern form of Arabnational movements came into existence in 1875 when the Secret Association was formed, which, in turn, found its roots in the establishment of the Art and Science Association of 1847. It considers the Wahhabi movements in the Arabian Peninsula and Mohammad Ali Pasha in Egypt as the forerunners of Arabism. The Association, which strived to push Syria and Lebanon towards independence and establish Arabic as their official language, brought about freedom of speech and reduced censorship, and aimed for the non-deployment of local soldiers beyond the borders of Syria and Lebanon, completely disappeared in 1885 (Bouhamidi, 2011: 32). For this reason, certain researchers, e.g. Rajaee (1373 [1994 A.D]: 290), refute Antonius' argument and maintain that the inception of Arabism dates back to pre-Islamic era or the Sho'obieh Movement. Other researchers believe that until the twentieth century, no significant nationally motivated political movement existed among the Arab States (Watt, 1998: 117). There is also a good number of other researchers who hold that the most vivid accounts of initial Arab sentiments have been expressed in '*Tabeye'o l Estebdad*'[1] published by AbdurRahman Kawkibi in Egypt in 1989 (Gomaa, 1977: 80). As a laic theoretician of Arab unity, he urged the Arabs to break with the Turks and flock under a common banner despite their conflicting religious ideas. In his book '*OmmolGhora*' he called for the restoration of Caliphate to its origins, i.e. the Arab World.

Contrary to the backdrop of unification and integration ideas, the Young Turks Revolution in the Ottoman Empire sparked hopes for reforms amongst Arabs. The year 1908 witnessed the establishment of the first almost-grassroots organization of Arabs under *The Ottoman Arab Brethren*[2] whose only nationalist characteristic was their demand for equal status for Arabic and the promotion of the language and cultures of the

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Arab states (Lutskii, 1969: 339-340). However, things did not go on this track for long and in the fall of 1908, the Young Turks reclaimed the concession they had given in Paris, set out for suppressing the Armenian and Arab associations, and headed towards establishing Turkish as the official language. This suppressive stance by the Turks, as Hamid Enayat puts it, pushed the Arabs towards a distinct independent identity to acquire national independence (Gomaa, 1977: 226). Therefore, it can be assume that in reality, the Young Turks planted the early seeds of separatism among the Arabs.

From this time on, the Arab states pursued their independence through forging ties with anti-Ottoman states, the most important of which was Great Britain. It was against this backdrop that in 1916, Hussein ibn Ali Sharif of Mecca contacted the British and obtained their green light to stand against the Turks, which finally paid off and under Sykes-Picot Agreement, Hejaz was allocated to him. Some believe that as of this stage, the Imperial powers replaced the Ottomans as the main antagonist of Arabs' struggles, since it was the Imperialist who had divided the Arab world into minor states of weak status, which held them back from reaching their ideal of an Arab unity (Enayat, 1370 [1991 A.D]: 226). At the same time, as the conclusion of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Britain reached a deal with the Jews, which intensified the Arab states hostility towards it. In conclusion, it could be said that the most important Arab nationalist measures of this era until the Second World War could be broken down into three spheres of acquiring autonomy through uprising and rebellion, nourishing the idea of Arab unity, and providing support for the Palestinian Arabs against Jewish immigrant settlers and their acts of aggression (Hourani, 1984: 291-2).

Among the measures taken by Arabs during this era, that is prior to World War II, there were numerous plans for unity,

namely that of Faisal I of Iraq for creating a league of Arab states of Iraq, Syria, Transjordan, Palestine and Hejaz. After Faisal's demise, his brother Abdullah who was the Emir of Transjordan followed in his footsteps and continued his plans. However, Saudi and Egypt's disagreement on the one hand, and Iraq's prime minister Nouri Saeed's activities for securing Britain's approval for the creation of a league including Iraq, Syria and Palestine which would jeopardize Abdullah's leadership role on the other, caused the plan to fall apart. The plan proposed by Abdul Aziz Al Saud during 1936-7 for the creation of an Arab League under his own leadership was another reason that other efforts went in vain (Asayesh Talab, 1380 [2001 A.D]: 789).

World War II and New Security Arrangements

As the flames of the Second World War began to rage, Britain tried to bring order to West Asia by means of new security arrangements. On a greater level, Britain had to deal with a Germany, which aspired to outmaneuver it in other spheres of influence. Rashid Ali Gilani's Coup d'état in Iraq, and Iran's inclination towards Germany under Reza Shah signaled the need for Britain to keep a closer watch over the region. In a sense, the British government, which was a major obstacle in the way of Arab unity, was now the main champion of the Arab cause in fear of an emerging Germany. The new British policy in favor of Arab unity was announced by Anthony Eden, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on May 29, 1941 (Macdonald, 1965: 34-5). The strategic exigency of including the Middle East in political and military considerations was effective in Britain's decision. Also important was Britain's hopes for re-ingratiating itself with Arabs within the framework of expanding the Allied forces. The hopes have been expressed in Eden's words as "The Arab World has taken long strides towards concluding an agreement at the end of the war and many Arab intellectuals are

aspiring for a step beyond the unity of Arab nations. To reach this unity, they hope to be supported. Her Majesty the Queen will offer her full support to any plan proposed by the Arabs" (Hassouna, 1975: 428).

In the wake of Britain taking this stance, Arabs tried to come up with plans, among which Nouri Saeed, Iraq's prime minister, and Amir Abdullah of Jordan offered noteworthy proposals, which fell through (Salem, 2013: 77). Simultaneously Egypt's Nahhas Pasha tried to conclude the Arab unity plan. Claiming to have closely studied Eden's plan, he revealed his intentions to mediate between various proposed plans for unity and, to that end, held numerous meetings with Arab leaders in 1943-44. As negotiations advanced, he invited Arab states to a conference and on September 25, 1944, a preliminary committee of Arab states was created. In March of 1945, the representatives of Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia signed the Charter of the Arab League according to which membership was open to every Arab nation. This pact is also known as Alexandria Protocol, as it was signed in Alexandria; thus was created a nascent union known as the league of Arab States. The important point stressed in the league's charter is the recognition of separate Arab states as the independence of the signatory parties was recognized and the binding nature of decisions were put to unanimous vote. In addition, the principle of non-intervention in Arab states' sovereign matters was salient (Hoveyda, 1371 [1992 A.D]: 295).

Structure of the Arab League

As mentioned earlier, in order to create a union, the Arab states had a quest of a hundred years, which bore fruit in 1945. Currently, the headquarters of the Arab League is in Cairo. The principal institutions of the Arab League are three Councils, several Committees and the Secretariat General.

1. The Council of the league. The Council of the league is the league's supreme organ. It is composed of the representatives (Prime Ministers) of the member states. The Council shall, by unanimous decisions, determine the course of action to be taken and the member states are required to respect each other's sovereignty and avoid war. In matters irrelevant to members' independence and sovereignty, the Council could take measures to resolve disputes. The members are free to conclude deals and agreements with countries outside the league. However, they are required to submit a copy to the Council (Sadr, 1350 [1971 A.D]: 263).

2. The Joint Defense Council. It is composed of Foreign and Defense Ministers of the member states, and supervises the workflow of the Military organization and the army of the league. The military organ of the league was created to better assess the military status of the member states and give recommendations on strengthening their defenses. Due to deep disagreements amongst the members, the Defense Council has effectively been without significant functionality.

3. The Economic Council. Its main objective is to establish and coordinate economic policies, and is composed of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the member states.

4. The Committees. The committees are composed of all member states and are responsible for cooperation in economic, cultural, social, health, telecommunication, judiciary, and policing fields among member states. In 1946, the Council decided to create a Political Committee to establish political order and coordinate political matters among the member states.

5. The Secretariat. A Secretary General presides over the

Secretariat, which is the permanent institution of the Arab League responsible for implementing decisions taken by the Council of the league. The Secretary General is elected by a majority of two-third of the members from among the Arab ambassadors. The Secretary General is a key player in the political workflow of the league. Since its inception, the Arab League has been headed by the following Secretary Generals: Abdul Rahman Azzam (Egypt) 1945-52, Abdul KhalekHassouna (Egypt) 1952-72, Mahmoud Riad (Egypt) 1972-79, ChediKlibi (Tunisia) 1979-90, Ahmet Asmat Abdel Meguid (Egypt) 1991-2001, Amr Moussa (Egypt), 2001-2011, Nabil Elaraby (Egypt), 2011-present.

Since 1946 at Jamal Abdunasir's invitation, the heads of Arab states have been convening at conferences to discuss matters of political, economic or military importance. The Summit of the Arab heads of State have grown to be rather important, in a way that it turned into a supreme institution of the League where major guidelines and political agenda of the Arab nations are discussed and regulated. Furthermore, the Arab League includes various specialized agencies in different fields, which the member states could join should they want to (Aghaee, 1393 [2014 A.D]: 330).

Specific Specialized Agencies of the Arab League are: the Arab League Educational, Cultural, Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Arab Labor Organization (ALO), Arab Agricultural Development Organization (AADO), Organization of Arab Petroleum Producing Companies, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab Economic Unity Council, Arab Establishment for Investment Guarantee, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab Monetary Fund, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Arab Atomic

Energy Board, Arab Science and Technology Academy, Arab Satellite Communication and Organization, Arab Industrial & Mineralogy Organization, Arab Civil Cooperation Organization (Yousef Nezhad, 1384 [2005 A.D]: 41-80).

Common Rhetoric vs. Practical Conflicts

Although more than half a century is past from the Arab Leagues establishment, however, a historical overview of its member states' behavior, reveals that rarely did the member states take a similar stance; national interests and survival have always been on top of Arab states agenda. It is important to note that that there are many interests' conflicts and challenges among members like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. There is also the question as to why the Arab League, having its origins earlier than the European Union, has not succeeded in reaching levels of integration comparable to that of the EU. In fact, there seems to be a myriad of problems and contradicting behaviors among the member states. An overview of deep-seated disagreements and the stances taken by the actors within the Leagues reveals an inclination towards Neorealist approaches rather than integration processes on the part of the member states; member states seem to prefer to adhere to the principles of this theory. To examine the point, the Neorealist theory of International Relations will be discussed and then different approaches of the League's members will be examined accordingly.

Neorealist Principles of State Behavior in International Relations

As a theory of International Relations, Neorealism was first outlined by Kennet Waltz in an attempt to make a more practical sense of realism. As realism was criticized for its being unscientific and traditionalist, certain realists tried to outline a

more practical version of the theory, which better fit the conventional scientific criteria (Moshirzadeh, 1384 [2005 A.D]: 107). In the late 1970's, Realism was the target of harsh attacks and bitter criticism from Neoliberals on the one hand and Marxist theories on the other. Under such circumstances, Kennet Waltz, Robert Keohane, Steven Krasner, Robert Glipin, Robert Talker, George Modelski, John Mearsheimer, and Charles Kindleberger started theorizing a way out (Sarraf Yazdi & Sabri, 1391 [2012 A.D]: 38). In other words, another Realist theory with a more precise definition of key concepts and theorems was born, which could stand empirical tests and provide Realism with more accuracy (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1384 [2005 A.D]: 195).

Neorealism is rich in tradition and is articulated in various forms. From a methodological point of view, Neorealism seeks to provide a more meticulous and systematic analysis of the international security structure. Another point in Neorealist methodology is its detachment from essentialist theories on human nature (Kolin, 2002: 18). In other words, although the two schools of thought take a pessimistic view of human nature and intentions, this pessimism is essential to Realists, and Neorealist take the imperfect human nature to be rooted in the anarchic international system, i.e. society and cultural nurturing can weaken or strengthen human capacities (Nasri, 1386 [2007 A.D]: 229).

Neorealism is mainly identified with the following attributes: First, the state is the main actor and unit of analysis in International Relations. Second, the states are in pursuit of relative rather than absolute gains. Third, as the main actors of International Security, the states solely seek their national interests. Fourth, international economic and political institutions play a significant role on the international arena. Fifth, the states pursue their interests in an anarchic environment

and their rationality is constructed accordingly. Sixth, the states' behavior is meaningful only within the framework of international system. In other words, perceiving the states as unitary rational actors is only rendered through a military framework (Nasri, 1386 [2007 A.D]: 222).

According to Colin Hay, there are three key concepts to Neorealism: (1) Balance of Power, (2) Relative gains, and (3) The need for a hegemon. As far as relative gains are concerned, the neorealists maintain that the important point is not the obstacles that the state can create for reaching gains, but how the state acts as compared to its rivals? What matters here is a kind of rivalry or competition, not the absolute deprivation of other states or acquisition in favor of the other. If we imagine international opportunities to be a cake, the Neorealists pay attention to the slices that every state will receive. Therefore, every rational actor is wary of the amount it receives compared to others (Baylis & Smith, 1995: 117). Moreover, regarding the importance of a leader, Neorealist argue that as long as there is an international hegemonic power to check and balance the rogue elements, the international system will enjoy stability. The need for such stabilizing element in the system is because it can put a damper on states' thirst for rivalry and expansion and the pursuit of their imperialistic desires, thus endangering the stability of the entire system. Another raison d'être for having a mighty hegemon is that when a hegemon exercises leadership and unfolds its umbrella of preponderance of power, it sets for peace and stability under which international institutes and organizations can thrive.

As far as cooperation is concerned, Neorealists maintain that cooperation, which is like the prisoners dilemma where there are no defined set of rules. As a result, states are in permanent consternation about the possibility of dishonest behavior in the process of cooperation. Neorealists argue that states are insistent

upon relative, not absolute, gains. Under such circumstances, as states fear that their partners are benefitting asymmetrically from cooperation, they might forsake cooperation (Grieco, 1988: 487). Neorealists maintain that this applies both to military arrangements, which directly affects state survival, and economic pacts, for in the end, economy is significantly important for military power (Snidal, 1991, 703). Another point to be noted is that states are worried that cooperation might lead to interdependency. For in an international system void of a central authority, the main policy would be self-help and self-sufficiency; this policy is a more rational choice than interdependency and vulnerability (Salem, 2013:16).

According to Neorealists, cooperation occurs when proper rules are set forth by the hegemon and the fear of dishonest behavior is diminished, or states are facing a collective threat from outside (Snidal, 1991: 722). However, when there is a significant threat against nations, they might consider interdependency a desirable policy choice. Defensive neorealists assert that survival is the main driving force for states cooperation where the diminishing of independence and sovereignty is deemed more desirable that total annihilation. According to Weber (1997, 325), "The intensity of a threat mostly defines the level of cooperation", i.e. the more a serious a threat becomes the more extensive states are likely to cooperate. Furthermore, other defensive neorealists argue that states might cautiously seek cooperation as a replacement for challenging security rivalries (Glaser, 1994/95: 58).

Neorealism is closely tied to Kennet Waltz's name and theories. Waltz's main question was why states were inclined to behave in similar ways despite their political differences. To him, the characteristics of the units of the system cannot account for this similarity and a more precise analysis should employ a systemic approach to study international politics. To Waltz, the

structure is the system-wide component that makes it possible to think of the system as a whole (Waltz, 1979: 79). Structure is not something we see. We discern structure in the concrete reality of social events only by virtue of having first established structure by abstraction from 'concrete reality' (Waltz, 1979: 80). Therefore, structure is a concrete matter. This structure is defined based on three principles by which it is ordered or organized: First, the principle by which the system is ordered, that is, the Ordering Principle. It determines the functions of units and distributes the capacities. This principle is hierarchy in domestic politics and anarchy in the international politics, i.e. this system is without a central authority. Therefore, the international system is based on self-help. The ordering principle is anarchy; if this is changed, inter-unit interaction would also change. In contrast to separate units in domestic politics, such distinction does not exist in international politics; the ordering principle of the two structures are distinctly different, indeed, contrary to each other (Waltz, 1979: 88). In Anarchy, different units exist in a self-help system; there is no functional differentiation among them mainly because the main concern of states is security, and survival is defined as a function. In the international political system, the distribution of capabilities between the units distinguishes them from one another, and defines the extent of security every unit might enjoy. Thus, whenever the distribution of capabilities is between two states, the international system is bipolar, and if contending states are more, the system is identified as multipolar (Moshirzadeh, 1384 [2005 A.D]: 114). Structure determines and limits the conduct, i.e. states are bound to the structure in which they function. Structure is capable of so doing through socialization and competition.

There is very limited cooperation in the international system. However, states might obtain economic gains from integration, although political interests overshadow it. States are constantly

worried about the outcome of cooperation and that it might not be distributed fairly. Therefore, despite the importance of absolute gains from cooperation, what matters more is the relative gains. In case the scales are not tilted in their favor, states might quit the cooperation. Anarchy is the other factor that puts limits on the extent of cooperation and the areas it covers (Griffiths, 1992: 83).

The Arab League: Integration or Neorealist Rivalry

Various definitions of integration have been suggested. Certain scholars define integration as a situation where organizations, entities or nations engage in extensive cooperation for the realization of collective interests and thus march toward unity (Amjad, 1382 [2003 A.D]: 195). Ernest Hass defines integration as a process by which the political leaders of different nations are convinced and willing to modify their expectations and political activities in line with a new authority whose institutions have legal jurisdiction and represent nations-states (Khadduri, 1366 [1987 A.D]: 242). According to Donald Puchala, Integration is a series of processes that create and sustain a system of harmony at international levels. That is a kind of international system where actors are always able to harmonize their interests and reap the benefits of interaction (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1384 [2005 A.D]: 699).

According to the aspects of the neorealist theory explained above, it seems that member states' behavior in the Arab League is rather indicative of three principles of Survival and the supremacy of sovereignty, inclination towards relative gains, and the destructive entry of a hegemon. Elaborating on the examples of each principle provides a better outlook on the relationship between neoarealism and actors' conduct.

1. **Survival and Supremacy of Sovereigny**

As mentioned earlier, the neorealist theory of International Relations deems the state to be the main actor in international relations. First and foremost, the Charter of the Arab League has explicitly accepted the independence of member states. According to the Charter "strengthening relations between member states, coordinating political plans as a means to foster actual cooperation, upholding the independence and sovereignty and public attention to the interests of the Arab World" (Kazemi, 1370 [1991 A.D]: 165). In other words, the point that the Arab League is implicitly stating in its Charter is the distinct separation between the member states; the Charter recognizes the independence of member states and the implementation of every decision is dependent upon unanimous vote. Members are to refrain from interference in each other's sovereign matters (Hoveyda, 1371 [1992 A.D]: 295). The most important driving force of Arab countries' gathering together was political elements. The League attempted to integrate the newly independent Arab states after the Second World War in an effort to support them (Ataei & Sardashti, 1389 [2010 A.D]: 79).

Moreover, Arab history is fraught with border disputes between the states, which signifies their preference for sovereignty over integration processes. For example, there have been conflicts between United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Oman and Saudi Arabia, Oman and Yemen, United Arab Emirates and Oman over expansionist policies. There are disputes between Iraq and Kuwait over sea borders and Varbeh Island, Bubian and Kuwait's existence. Moreover, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia dispute over sea borders at Khourolovieh and Selva bay; same with United Arab Emirates and Qatar over sea border at the Heyhaloul Island. United Arab Emirates and Oman fight over continental shelf border and the Heymosandam peninsula, and Qatar and Bahrain over sea borders and the islands of Hovar and Navarziarah (Bouhamidi, 2011: 165).

In the wake of the Cold War and after the second Persian Gulf War, border and territory disputes erupted anew among the states in the region. For example, Saudi Arabia aspired for the annexation of two thirds of Yemen's territory to its own, and Yemen sought the return of the three provinces of Asir, Najran and Jizan, which had been given to Saudi Arabia under *Taef* pact of 1934 for a period of 20 years. The pact was extended in 1954 and again in 1974. The occupation of two Yemeni islands by Saudi Arabia in 1998 fomented dispute between the two countries. Lack of an accurate demarcation of borders has, on multiple occasions, led to border clashes (Bouhamidi, 2011: 84). Saudi Arabia invaded Qatar and occupied the southern parts of this country. Saudis claimed that the islands of Kuwait Gharou Vam Almardam belong to its territory. Furthermore, the expansion of Qatar's territorial waters has caused border disputes with Bahrain (Salem, 2013: 11).

In Sudan, another member of the League, conflict and civil war was intense to the point that in 2011, South Sudan was established with Juba as its Capital City. The civil war in Sudan purportedly inflicted human casualty of more than 1.5 million lives. Deep-seated cultural and racial conflicts between the north and south of Sudan drove them to their final divide and secession. Northerners are mostly Muslims, whereas the majority of the inhabitants of south Sudan are Christian. The fundamental divide between the north and south has led certain authors to talk about 'The separation of the Africans and Arabs in Sudan', 'lack of a mutual balance', and 'Ambivalence in an unequal land' (Salem, 2013: 55). However, Sudan is not just having problems within its borders; it is engaged in border disputes with Egypt too. The political relations between Sudan and Egypt have had their highs of friendship and lows of hostility. Until 1985, bilateral relations between the two were friendly to a degree that in 1976 they signed a mutual defense pact and in 1982 the signed a Unity Charter (Bouhamidi, 2011: 91).

As Omar al-Bashir took office, the relations between the two countries suffered. During the second Persian Gulf War, the mutual relations between the two deteriorated significantly. Egypt supported the coalition against Iraq while Sudan supported Saddam. There are political, ideological, territorial and border conflicts and disputes between Sudan and Egypt. Sudan's support of Islamic fundamentalists in Egypt (prior to January 25, 2011 revolution), close ties between Iran and Sudan. In addition, Egypt's support of anti-government forces in Sudan, the conflicting positions taken by the two after the second Persian Gulf War in 1991, and the dispute over Halayb and WadiHalfa are the leading causes of chilly relations between Sudan and Egypt (Salem, 2013: 92).

WadiHalfa is geographically shaped like a finger extending into the Egyptian territory, and is located on the banks of the Nile and is 24 kilometers long. The 22nd parallel north, which marks the border between Sudan and Egypt lies a few miles to the north of WadiHalfa. Sudan claims that the Agreement of June 19, 1899 separated WadiHalfa from its territory and permanently gave it to Egypt. Egypt, on the other hand, claimed that the transfer was an administrative matter, not a sovereign affair (Ataei & Sardashti, 1389 [2010 A.D]: 121-2).

Halayb is also located in Egypt and Sudan along the 22nd parallel north on the Red Sea's African coast. The land has been disputed by Egypt and Sudan since the beginning of the 20th century. Under the 1899 Agreement, the area is considered to be on the Sudanese territory. However, three years later in 1902 amendments were made to the Agreement and Sudan acquired control over the tribes inhabiting the north of the border and Egypt was put in charge of the tribes living in the south of the border. At the time, the area drew its importance from its grazing pastures. Since independence in 1956, Sudan has been intent on its sovereign rights over this area. In response, Egypt

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has dispatched its military to this area; the tension rose to such a level that the UN Security Council had to interfere (Georgre, 1969: 100). After the discovery of oil in Halayeb, Egypt gave a Canadian firm the extraction concession, which was fiercely opposed by Sudan. Border disputes have even dragged the two countries into conflicts that were exacerbated by Sudan's support of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Egypt. What made the situation even worse was Anwar Sadat's assassination (Waltz, 1979:14-9).

Another example of border disputes is the long-standing conflicts between Algeria and Morocco. According to Sariolghalam, Algerian independence in 1962 marked the beginning of discord and tension between the two countries. Moroccan nationalists have always harbored the thought of 'Great Morocco', which comprises an area of Algeria. The Moroccan King Mohammad V helped the liberation movement during the independence and had hopes for Algeria to gain its independence. Prior to attaining independence, he had received assurances from the interim leaders of the Algerian Republic that once independence is achieved, border will be demarcated and Moroccan territorial claims will be addressed. However, events took an unfavorable turn and the Algerian leaders were reluctant to settle the issues and address the Moroccan territorial claims. In the border, dispute broke into war, known as "Sand War". The war intensified the mistrust, struggle and wariness between the two countries and marred the mutual relations on all fronts (Sariolghalam, 1369 [1990 A.D]: 77).

Current borders of Algeria and Morocco were demarcated as a result of the treaty of 18 Mars 1845, signed between Morocco and France. "Tondof" desert was originally a part of the traditional Kingdom of Morocco, which, after the March 18 Treaty, was transferred under the sovereignty of Algeria and set in motion a series of future developments in the Arab Maghreb

countries. Algeria-Morocco border disputes persisted through the period of Moroccan independence to Algerian Independence, but intensified after Algerian independence in 1964. A concrete example of these tensions is the Ramal War, which broke in 1963 and revealed Moroccan influence in the Tondof region. Arab and African countries mediated during a short Summit Meeting of Arabs heads of states in 1964 in Cairo and put an end to the conflict. The discovery of Hadid mines in Tondof region was another reason for the persistence of border crisis during the era (Afaq e Karan Studies Center, 1388, Internet Source). Briefly speaking, West Sahara issue is a channel which gives voice to political and ideational conflicts between Algeria and Morocco (Sariolghalam, (1369 [1990 A.D]): 80)

Nowadays, border disputes in the European Union, which was once the primary cause of wars, are long gone and the European citizens can freely travel throughout the entire union and live wherever they may wish. In other words, relations among member states in the Arab League are primarily defined in terms of high politics exercised by the states.

2. Focus on Relative Rather than Absolute Gains

According to assumptions attributed to the neorealist theory of international relations, states are keen to pursue relative, rather than absolute gains in their conduct of affairs, that is, to say to make calculations of their status before and after cooperation and assess the gains. In contrast to neoliberalists who maintain that a person's benefit is the determining factor in cooperation, neorealists assume that cooperation occurs whenever the other side has not gained more. To them, the position of a state after cooperation must have enhanced compared to pre-cooperation time. Assessing the examples of cooperation among actors in the Arab League substantially demonstrates this issue

As an OPEC member and a significant petroleum producer,

Qatar has invested massive financial resources in the development of Natural Gas, specifically LNG. LNG was introduced in 1997 and Qatar is now the largest LNG supplier in the world (Grieco, 1988: 48). Qatar also possesses the largest independent gas field- excluding oil- of the world, which has turned the country into the biggest producer of LNG. According to 2011 statistics, Qatar has exported 3600 billion cubic feet of LNG; Britain, Japan, India and South Korea were the main export destinations of Qatar's LNG. Beside this market, European countries such as Belgium, Britain and Spain were among the important buyers of Qatar's LNG who had bought 42 percent of Qatar's gas export in the same year (Grieco, 1988: 56-59).

At a close distance to Qatar, which is the largest LNG exported in the world, is located Kuwait which happens to be one of the biggest consumers of this commodity. To meet the demands for the production of electricity for domestic use, Kuwait started the import of LNG in 2009 and struck long-term deals with the British-Dutch Company Shell and Switzerland's Vitol from 2010 to 2013. According to reports, there is no agreement on long term supply contracts between Kuwait and Qatar despite the fact that the two counties are geographically in close proximity (Shana News Agency, 1390 [2011 A.D]).

In addition to insufficient domestic gas production, Kuwait faces deficient infrastructures in gas, and the maximum transport capacity of the upstream network of gas pipelines of K.O.C, with the exception of Saudi-Kuwait Neutral Zone gas transport facilities, is 900 million cubic feet per day (Hafez Nia, 1385 [2006 A.D]: 112). According to IEA reports, the main export destinations for Qatar's LNG export were Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, and Malaysia with 450, 280 and 230 million cubic feet respectively in 2010. Kuwait, on the other hand, procured 270, 140 and 400 million cubic feet of LNG from Australia, Egypt

and Malaysia respectively in 2011 (Khadduri, 1366 [1987 A.D]: 29). Furthermore, in 2012, Kuwait took steps to reach a long-term deal with Angola, which it has not yet took with Qatar.

Kuwait's reluctance to import gas from Qatar is better understood in light of Relative Gains framework. On the one hand, Qatar holds that if it exported gas to Kuwait (before cooperation), it would become dependent on Kuwait and in case Kuwait refrains from buying gas, it would lose greatly (after cooperation). On the other hand, Kuwait perceives the same problem: if it imports gas, it would become dependent and in case the import is disrupted, it would face grave consequences. Notwithstanding the fact that the two nations belong to the Arab League and are both members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, they cannot yet join their security and survival. In this regard, Mearsheimer, one of the most prominent theoreticians of neorealism points out that the states that are dependent on others for procuring their economic and vital needs, fear the disruption of supply or excessive prices by the supplier in times of crisis. Widespread dependence and fear of trade disruption in times of crises hugely motivates the great powers to resort to preventive measure to guarantee the supply of strategic commodities (Copeland, 1996: 7).

3. Deleterious Effects of Hegemon on Integration

The role played by the Hegemon is another issue discussed in the Neorealist theory. To neorealist, the Hegemon must assume a role in integration processes in order to facilitate them, and prevent dishonest behaviors through the creation of international regimes. For instance, the American effect on the European integration during the bipolar atmosphere of the Cold War proved to have a positive effect.

Most of the neorealist's commentary and interpretation on European cooperation, are focused on the US hegemony. In this view, the extraordinary inter-state cooperation in Western

Europe is founded on neorealist principles and the entire process is facilitated by the hegemonic structure created by the US. As a hegemon, the US has a massive army equipped with nuclear weapons, which has eradicated the fears of a German revival of expansionist policies in Europe and diminished the security dilemma among European states. It has therefore greatly contributed to reducing the potentials of conflict under anarchy (Jonesa, 2003: 128-131). By securing the European states and balancing the different consequences of disparate economic growth and interdependence among states, the American order has greatly fostered cooperation (Mearsheimer, 1990a: 47). "Living in the superpower's shadow, Britain, France, Germany and Italy quickly saw that war among them would be fruitless and soon began to believe it impossible. Because the security of all them depend ultimately on the policies of others" (Mearsheimer, 1990b: 117).

Unlike the European experience, integration in the Arab League, though assisted and facilitated by the British in the first stages, was not entirely successful. In addition, as it proceeded and entered a bipolar world, the two superpowers were the main reasons for divergence in the League, with certain members tilting towards the US and others favoring the USSR. In other words, although the Arab League was successful in its initial stage, accomplished some of its goals, and contributed to the independence of many Arab nations, it has been plagued by a myriad of problems at various periods. During the 50's and 60's, the encounter between the 'modernist' and 'conservative' states divided the Arab League. At that time, each side emphasized its way of defending the national interests and welfare of the Arab nations, and only considered its own methods as perfect. The main point of friction and contention during the 70's and 80's was the Israel issue, specifically the signing of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Consequently, Egypt was expelled for ten years from the Arab League. In addition, in 1990, the

various reactions of Arab states to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its annexation to Iraq revealed the League's inability for taking effective measures (Rajaee, 1373 [1994 A.D]: 213).

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the United States preferred coalition building in different areas rather than integration. In this regard, one can point to the first national security strategic document after the Cold War and the completion of military operation in Iraq in 1992. This document was named the 'Defense Policy Guidelines' and was operationalized during the presidency of George W. Bush. A perusal of this document reveals that the United States had set in motion a gradual 'Dominance Strategy' (Daheshyar, (1382 [2003 A.D]): 40). The main objectives expressed in this strategy are 'Absolute Predominance', 'Absolute Security', and 'Absolute Invincibility'. The document strongly recommends and predicts the absolute prevalence of the United States and frequent military interventions to exert control over Eurasia. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, the US raised the banner of anti-terrorism policies and introduced the 'Greater Middle East' to accomplish its goals in the region. Two economic and political sections are discernible in this initiative. The first objective was harmonizing the economies on the international stage along the lines of the liberal economic order. In other words, the Middle East was to undergo reform both economically and politically. The underlying assumption for this economic and political reform was the fact that domestic dissent and people's dissatisfaction with their respective governments could potentially endanger the West, specifically the US; as a result, democracy had to be promoted to the region (Sharabi, 1368 [1989 A.D]: 134).

Seeking to strengthen its hard power foundation, the US has signed numerous arms sales contract with the Arab League's member states. The sales have been soaring up until recent years

within the framework of which the US sold a number of F-15 bombers in 2010 at an estimated value of 30 billion dollars to Saudi Arabia (Tailiaferro, 2000: 142). Another sales contract was in 2011 between the US and the Emirates at a value of 3.6 billion dollars. According to a report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), seven percent of the arms sold in the entire world, is purchased and imported by the Middle Eastern countries, the main supplier of which is the US. Based on that report, between 2008 and 2012, the United Arab Emirates topped the list with 19 percent of purchased arms, after which stood Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iraq with 18, 17 and 10 percent respectively (Nik Ayin, 1351 [1972 A.D]: 79).

On the other hand, the Arab League actors have forged bilateral security ties individually with the US rather than creating a collective security complex, or have approached other lesser powers in thrall to the hegemony (Sabaghian, 1385 [2006 A.D]: 57). Territorial disputes, ideological conflicts, political and security imbalances, single product economy and inability to manufacture industrial goods and high-end products have set the stage for the intrusion of foreign powers. In a sense, instead of creating a security complex that provides all member states with security, every individual member of the League has forged bilateral ties with the US or other powers in thrall to the hegemony. Under such circumstances, smaller countries such as Kuwait and Bahrain seem to be more inclined toward foreign powers due to their more severe vulnerabilities and higher demands in security. The trend has been more visible in the littoral states of the Persian Gulf.

The abovementioned examples reveal that the relevance of a hegemon in the Arab League relations is not to facilitate integration and prevent dishonest behavior, but merely to guarantee individual gains and interests. The US has sought its own interest through forging bilateral ties rather than collective

ones, and has not engaged in meaningful integration process. On the other hand, the Arab League member states have turned away from cooperative trends towards security and prefer to adhere to principles of self-help and strike separate deals with great powers. As a result, not only is the hegemon's role not constructive for integration in the Arab League, it is very destructive indeed.

Conclusion

The paper assessed the reasons behind the failure of integration processes in the Arab world. In fact, we examined the functionality of the the Arab League, created to unite and integrate Arabic speaking countries over six decades ago, in order to understand why the institution could not fulfill its role successfully like the European Union.

Regarding the history and background of the Arab league, we should mention that when the Arab States won their independence one after the other, the hitherto-suspended goal of unity and integration of Arab states after 25 years struggle and challenges for independence, came to command once more the attention of the Arabs. However, the struggles and the experiences of those twenty-five eventful years have not failed to leave their mark on the Arab situation and the Arab mind. The conditions for, and the concept of, unity and integration have changed. The form and degree of unity, possible and desirable in the early 1940's expressed itself institutionally in the Arab League to achieve unity and integration.

To address this issue, in this article we tried to answer the following question: What are the reasons for the failure of integration in the Arab League? Moreover, the main hypothesis of this article and its preliminary answer was that the member states' main concern is survival, security, and relative gains rather than convergent and cooperative behaviors conducive to

integration. As discussed, the main reason for the failure of integration processes in the Arab League was the prevalence of a neorealist approach in the conduct of states' affairs in the League. As mentioned, three factors have contributed to the failure of the Arab League in their move toward integration: the prevalence of a basic view of security and survival, which means that the main concern and approach among the actors inside the Arab League is survival and security gains rather than convergent and cooperative behaviors. As mentioned earlier, the neorealist theory of International Relations deems the state to be the main actor in international relations. First and foremost, the Charter of the Arab League has explicitly accepted the independence of member states. The most important deriving roce of Arab countries gathering was political. The League attempted to integrate the newly independent Arab states after World War II in an effort to support them. In other words, the point that the Arab League is implicitly stating in its Charter is the distinct separation between the member states; the Charter recognizes the independence of member states and the implementation of every decision is dependent upon unanimous vote. Members are to refrain from interference in each other's sovereign matters

The second reason for the failure of integration among the countries of the Arab League is that states are keen to pursue relative rather than absolute gains in their conduct of affairs. This emphasis on relative, rather than absolute conducive gains to integration, is clarified through analysis of their status before and after cooperation based on other assumptions attributed to the neorealist theory of international relations. So assessing the cooperation among actors in the Arab League demonstrates this issue very well.

The last reason is the intrusion of hegemony not as a constructive force, but a destructive one; in other words, the role

played by the Hegemon was another issue discussed in the neorealist theory. To neorealists, the Hegemon must assume a role in the integration processes in order to facilitate it, and prevent dishonest behaviors through the creation of international regimes. Unlike the European experience, integration in the Arab League was assisted and facilitated by the British in the first stages. However, as it proceeded and entered the bipolar world, the two superpowers were the main reasons for divergence in the League; with certain members tilting towards the US and others favoring the USSR. In other words, the Arab League, though successful in its initial stage and achieved some of its goals and contributed to the independence of many Arab nations, has been plagued by a myriad of problems. Which cause to many difficulties to achieve integration as a main of Arab league. Thus, as a conclusion of this three reason, six decades after the birth of the Arab League, integration is yet to be achieved.

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