CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Historical overview

During the period from 1945 to 1980, the main American foreign policy objectives in the Middle East were established. The cold war phenomenon brought about an intense rivalry between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union. At the same time a strong Pan-Arab movement emerged in West Asia. The spheres of influence were identified, their strategic and economic importance were evaluated and assessed.

The Arab world had been changing constantly since the US first began to assume responsibilities towards it at the end of the second World War; both in its internal and external relations. The US role in the Arab world was essentially that of a policing function, responsible for keeping communism under control, preserving law and order and intervening to prevent or end conflict.¹

The interests of the US in West Asia have relatively been few and direct. The strategic position of the Middle East in relation to global security and international order had been the major factor that had influenced the US interests. The Arab nationalists envisaged the role of America as an ally of the Arab cause, identifying their interests with a strong, free and progressive Arab world.

The principle long term US objective in West Asia was to limit Soviet influence in the region. The second US long term

interest in the oil-rich Persian Gulf area was clearly to ensure that billions of petro-dollars that had become available to those countries, especially Saudi Arabia, were recycled to the west in a mutually acceptable manner. The third major US interest was economic in nature, which included access to markets for American goods and services; cooperation with the wealthier states in the region to maintain a sound international financial order; and assisting the orderly economic development of the region.² There is a shared belief among the American policy makers regarding a global freedom of access to the world’s resources. This indicated that a significant relationship existed between the domestic economy and the foreign policy.³

The Oil Dimension

The region of West Asia (Middle East) has more than sixty percent of proven oil reserves of the world.⁴ American interest in West Asia has primarily been to ensure continued freedom of access to the region’s oil supplies. West Asian


markets for American goods and investment opportunities have also been significant, as has been the US concern over limiting the spread of the Soviet influence after the second World War. The corporate interests of the American oil companies (Texaco, Exxon, Chevron, Mobil and others) had been paramount, and the US government had utilized every means at its disposal to make certain that the property and right of access of these Americans were fully protected.

Several important developments that occurred in the late 1940s in the Middle East enhanced the position of the American-based multinational oil corporations in the region. As the second World War was nearing its end, it became very clear that the Middle East oil resources were going to be developed at an accelerated pace. The anticipated rise in demand for oil in the post-war period by Europe and Japan and the realization that traditional exporters of oil in the western Hemisphere - the US and Venezuela - could not meet the increase in demand left the Middle East as the only oil-producing region that was capable of increasing its supply to meet the projected rise in demand. To ensure a bigger role for US-dominated multinational oil corporations, Secretary of State, Dean Acheson instructed the Economic Corporation Administration (ECA), the agency responsible for dispensing funds to European countries under the Marshall plan.

"It is ECA policy that in every petroleum transaction an American company must be involved. Not only the firms
residing in the US were incorporated, they were eligible to receive ECA financing. The ECA procurements for petroleum further contain the following provision: Deliveries from sources other than the US and its possessions will be eligible only if made by American owned and operated companies.\(^5\)

One of the significant changes in the structure of the Middle East oil industry occurred in 1947 when Exxon and Mobil bought forty percent equity in the Saudi oil company, Aramco, which up to that point had been owned by Chevon and Texaco. This transaction, which cost the two corporate buyers a mere $102 million, enabled the four American companies to combine their productive and marketing resources throughout the world in such a manner as to ensure the orderly entry of the vast amount of Saudi oil into the world economy. In 1950, Aramco and the Saudi government, with the help of the US Treasury, concluded an important agreement, which allowed the Saudis to impose a 50 percent income tax on Aramco's profit instead of the previous system which had fixed the payment to the government at 25 cent per barrel of oil.

The new agreement was patterned after a similar agreement which had been concluded with Venezuela in 1946 and represented a major change in the pattern of relations between companies and Middle East governments. The new fiscal

arrangements increased sharply the per barrel revenue. It created a vested interest for governments in oil price changes, because such changes directly affected their revenue. The rise in Middle East oil output coupled with the rise in revenue (25 percent to 75 percent per barrel) increased very sharply the role of the oil sector in the Middle East economies. Oil became the main source of foreign exchange earnings and main source of government revenue. As the determination of oil prices and oil output remained in the hands of the oil companies it followed that the economic and political stability of the Middle East countries became increasingly dependent on multinational oil corporate decisions.

So far as the US government and oil producing states of the Middle East were concerned, the relationship soon became a two-way process. These states followed a pro-American policy because, among other things oil revenue was involved. The US government entered into close alliance with these regimes since the property and other rights of American oil companies were involved. Further these states, non-democratic and unrepresentative in character, were only too happy when political nationalism and radicalism were suppressed by the US.

The concern with petroleum led President Eisenhower to write in his personal diary on 13 March 1950:

The oil of Arab world has grown increasingly important to
all of Europe. The economy of European countries would collapse if those oil supplies were cut off. If the economy of Europe would collapse, the US would be in a situation of which the difficulty could scarcely be exaggerated.\(^6\)

In attempting to promote modernisation in the Middle East, while preventing any expansion of Soviet influence, the US strategists have pursued a variety of options to bridge the gap between vastly expanded national interests and power to protect them ever since the Arab League have been formed. These options included (1) The Truman Doctrine, (2) The Eisenhower-Dulles Policy of promoting regional security treaties, (3) John F. Kennedy’s push for economic and political reforms, (4) The Nixon-Kissinger reliance on regional powers, (5) Jimmy Carter’s promise of human rights and (6) Ronald Reagan’s reliance on the threat of force to stabilise the Middle East.\(^7\)

The above statements also indicated that successive Presidents had perceived the Middle East to be vital to the US national interests, that stability must be maintained in this region, and that the US would not be oblivious to any threat to its stability in the area.

The Truman Doctrine of March 12, 1947 was implemented successfully in Greece and Turkey through the US economic and


military aid. Next to follow was the Eisenhower Doctrine of January 18, 1970 that was never implemented, primarily because no Middle Eastern country ever called on the US to invoke this doctrine. The application of the Nixon Doctrine on February 18, 1970 in the Middle East was dramatically illustrated in Washington’s support to the Shah of Iran as the policeman of the Gulf. However, the collapse of the Shah, as a result of the revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had convinced the US policy makers that protection by proxy was unpredictable and that to protect its strategic interest in the Gulf, the US might become increasingly involved directly. The Carter Doctrine in January 23, 1980 was prescribed as a direct US involvement whereas the Nixon Doctrine called for partnership, strength and willingness to negotiate peace through partnership. These were the necessary follow up of the commitments on the part of the US doctrines as mentioned earlier. This experience from 1947 to 1980 made the US Presidents realise an increasing need to clearly define the area that they perceived as vital to US national security and strategic interests.

This containment of communism had been based on both military, political and ideological factors. Harry S. Truman became President on April 12, 1945 after the death of Franklin Roosevelt. The new President had inherited a policy toward Palestine in which Rooseveltian platitudes and vague promises

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8 Ibid., pp.20-21.
had been offered to the Zionists in public. Truman had been sympathetic to the plight of the Jews, particularly the homeless Jewish refugees who had survived the holocaust.\textsuperscript{9}

By the end of 1945, Truman and his national security advisor had come to believe that the Soviet Union sought to dominate the Middle East. The Russians were putting pressure upon the Turks for territorial concessions and control of navigation in the Dardanelles. They were fermenting disorder in Iran, and they were perceived as a possible threat to American oil holdings in Saudi Arabia and along the Persian Gulf. The "White House" took an active part in deciding both strategy and tactics.\textsuperscript{10}

The US foreign aid became a dimension of foreign policy. Economic assistance was administered under a variety of programmes "such as the Point Four Public Law 480" etc. The preponderance of the US assistance, however, was earmarked for military purposes. Thus, in the years 1947-1959 the US military assistance to the Middle East was $1.93 billion of which about 90 percent went to Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, countries either sharing borders with Soviet Union or were very close to it. He further pointed out that "totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundation of international

\textsuperscript{9} See, Badeau S. John, n.1. p.17.

peace and hence the security of the United States".\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{Baghdad Pact}

The Baghdad Pact aroused the antagonism of nearly all the Arab nationalists because of Britain's pressure in the alliance. Dynastic rivalries between Iraq and Saudi Arabia were embittered because of Iraq's participation in the alliance. Egypt was angered along with her other allies, Syria and Yemen. The Arab states ratified the Arab League collective security pact, that was drafted in 1950 to integrate the Arab military forces, in case fighting with Israel flared up again. The Arab League members were quite different from the Baghdad pact. In so far as its raison d'être was the threat from Israel. But Iraq's participation in the Baghdad Pact in 1953, indicated Iraq's abandonment of neutrality in favour of a pro-western alignment. It was considered as a setback to Egypt's aspirations. It made difficult for Nasser to carry out his plans for the unification of the Arab world.\textsuperscript{12}

The US policy towards the (Arab-Israeli dispute) Middle East involved three levels of decision making - the global, the regional and the actual. Any administration would always have global aims (e.g. containment of the Soviet Union, human rights, free trade). These aims relate directly to the Middle


East as in Eisenhower’s and Dulles’s pursuit of the Baghdad Pact and Carter’s pursuit of stability for energy supplies. At other times the Middle East was peripheral to the Administration’s main concerns as it was to Truman’s containment policy or Kennedy’s multiple options doctrine. There would also be regional aims, such as the promotion of a pro-American Arab unity or the attempt to build Iran as a protector of the Persian Gulf. Finally, there may be specific plans for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as Eisenhower’s, Johnston plan, Kennedy’s Johnson Plan, and Nixon’s Rogers plan. And lastly, Reagan’s diplomatic initiative of the peace plan.

Regional objectives could sometimes conflict with goals related to the Arab-Israeli differences. But neither regional nor Arab-Israeli policy would contradict the global objectives knowingly. The Arab-Israeli dispute temporarily became part of a global ideological conflict."

The US government’s Middle East Policy therefore, was largely shaped by the fear of a growing Soviet influence even dominance in this region. The Middle Eastern countries situated on or near the border of Russia, i.e., Turkey, Iraq and Iran received most attention and aid from the US. A strong Israel had usually been considered the best instrument for keeping the stability in the rest of the region.

13 Spiegel L. Stevan, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict making America’s Middle East Policy from Truman to Reagan, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), p.4
Moreover, the US seemed to have adopted the policy of arms sales to all parties in the Middle East as the easiest way to make friends and the most efficient means for paying for the increasing price of its oil profits.

The Middle East was the scene of surging forces of nationality in the 1950s. It embodied a large element of anti-colonialism directed against Britain and France. Between 1953 and 1958 the US moved from the position of a peripheral actor to the role of leading western powers in the Middle East. This transformation was symbolised first, by the failure of Britain and France to impose their will on Egypt by military means in the Suez crisis of 1956 and secondly, by the enunciation of the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957, and remained so in the following decades.

**Eisenhower Doctrine**

President Eisenhower addressed a Joint Session of the Congress on 5 January, 1957, his address consisted of giving military and economic aid to those countries or "groups of nations" which desire such nations requesting military help which were endangered by the "over armed aggression" of international communism. Eisenhower Doctrine was approved on 9 March, 1957.\(^\text{14}\) The economic provisions to spend free of existing restrictions upto $ 200,000,000 of previously

appropriated foreign aid funds for special military and economic projects in the area. The Eisenhower Doctrine was a cover for the US intervention in the Middle East region to protect her oil interests there. Those countries that had already supported the West, and Lebanon, announced their strong support for the Doctrine.\(^{15}\)

The Eisenhower Doctrine, however, proved to be largely irrelevant to the real challenges to American policy in the Middle East. Its limitation of overt aggression by states controlled by the international communism was clearly demonstrated in the case of Jordan and Syria in 1957.

Erich Johnston had been appointed as a special representative of the President in 1953 to work on the problem of the Jordan River waters, and was then in the midst of protracted negotiations with the Arab states and Israel. These did not produce any agreement but the basis of American aid efforts in effect. The US indicated that it was willing to assist both the Arab states and Israel to complete projects which were in accord with the Johnston proposal. Thus, though the Johnston plan was not in principle, accepted, it was in practice, largely implemented. In 1954, the water plan was developed by a US Presidential envoy the late Eric Johnston. The Arab and Israeli technical experts agreed that Israel would get 40 percent the water. (The largest collection of

Arab leaders had assembled in Cairo at the invitation of UAR President General Abdel Nasser to decide how to cope with the nation they all regard as an enemy, Israel). "For us the water plan was of vital importance, any attempt to obstruct the implementation of this plan will be considered an act of aggression and will be dealt with accordingly."16

In 1961, the Kennedy administration established friendly ties with the Arab countries. The new secretary of State, Dean Rusk, had been an intimate friend and advisor of John Foster Dulles and shared with him many of the conceptions of American role in the world arena. In April 1961, Secretary Rusk announced "that the US would continue the policies of the previous administration in regard to the CENTO alliance."17 While the U-2 flights no longer set aid and political standards, for American policy in Pakistan and Turkey, continuation of other intelligence and military activities and facilities closely hedged in American policy in those areas i.e., Iran, Libya and Morocco. These activities and commitments were of profound consequence for American policy in the Arab countries.

When the Saudi Arabian government asked the United States to move its military units out of the Bahrain Airfield, in


April 1961, the US was quick to consent, to surprise and apparently to disappoint the Saudi Arabian government. The American government was somewhat more disturbed by General Qasim of Iraq, due to its hegemony over Kuwait. Since Kuwait was more important to the British than to the Americans, Great Britain undertook the initial steps to preserve Kuwaiti independence.

One aspect of the problem in the Middle East had been the dilemma of Palestine. In September 1961, the President was determined to try a new approach by arranging for the United Nations to send Joseph Johnson, the President of the Carnegie Foundation and a former member of the policy planning staff. He was to consult with the governments in the area on the means to settle the refugee problem.

Johnson’s plan involved giving priority to the wishes of the refugees within limited areas of choice, and under the active supervision of the United Nations. His plan called for the expression of preference by the refugees on whether to return or not. Then, under the United Nations auspices, for the processing of individual refugee families through security clearances, travel to Israel, or payment of compensation for settlement outside Israel.

As Johnson pointed out, neither the Arabs nor Israel would get what they wanted. Both would have to give up something. Israel, he pointed out, would have to take in some refugees it did not want, without any prior agreement on the
number, "I am convinced, would, under the procedures I propose be very small, fewer than one-tenth of the total of true refugees and their descendants". He subsequently pointed out, "if the American government which of course means the President, decides to pursue such a course as I have proposed, it must at the same time anticipate and be prepared to meet a well-organised, efficient, determined, pervasive effort to alter that course". The American government was not willing to make such an effort, neither did the Israeli government give the plan serious consideration as the means of settling the conflict.

The crisis at once brought the Super Powers into the dispute on 23 May 1967. In a broadcast to the nation, President Lyndon B. Johnson said that the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba had added a new and grave dimension to the crisis. He declared that the US considered the Gulf to be an "international waterway" and that the blockage was "illegal" and "potentially disastrous" to the course of peace. He made it clear that "the US was firmly committed to the political independence and territorial integrity of all the nations of the region...the US would earnestly support the efforts of the United Nations to reduce tensions and restore stability in the

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19 Ibid.
During the 1960s, internal social revolutionary changes took place. The June 1967 war and the October 1973 war brought about peace between the Arab states and Israel. Before the Nixon Administration took office in 1969, the President appointed a new foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger, established an office in New York and advisers on virtually every aspect of American foreign policy. The President indicated that he would welcome negotiations aimed at reducing tensions in the Middle East and leading towards the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 242. He said, he was prepared to agree to demilitarize the Sinai peninsula, opening of the Suez Canal and, in due course, exchange of diplomatic representatives between Egypt and Israel. The political atmosphere was not conductive as Nasser’s war of attrition had only just begun to take effect and the bitter memory of Nasser as the man who falsely accused the US of initiating the air attack on Cairo in June 1967 still rankled in Washington. The US opted for an initiative limited to four power discussions at the United Nations during 1969.

In a speech, Secretary Rogers reaffirmed the policy of the Johnson Administration opposing unilateral alteration of the status of Jerusalem by Israel and reaffirmed that there

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can be no lasting peace without a just settlement of the problems of these Palestinians whom the wars of 1948 and 1967 had made homeless.\textsuperscript{21}

Kissinger was widely reported as having said that Washington wanted to expel Soviet combat force (from Egypt). Though he made it clear that he hoped to achieve this as part of a peace settlement and not by force.\textsuperscript{22}

The most tangible outcome of the Roger's plan was the agreement, ultimately effected on August 7, 1970 for a 90 days ceasefire. Henry Brondon's article in The Sunday Times which gave an insight into the background of the negotiations of the agreement. It called for a military position on the Suez front and the commencement of talks with Ambassador Jarring on the basis of Security Council Resolution 242. The agreement was at the time regarded, at least by the administration, as having made a significant contribution to peace. It attained both the Egyptian and Jordanian public expression of consent to Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders, and the Israeli commitment to accept negotiations. The US gave an assurance to Israel that if the ceasefire stands till terms were violated, the US would act to compensate any disadvantage which Israel might suffer; from Egypt. The US promised restraint in further delivery of military aircraft to

\textsuperscript{21} William Polk, n.18, n.343.

\textsuperscript{22} International Herald Tribune (Paris), 19 July, 1970.
Israel.23

The picture changed dramatically in the 1970s. The Palestinian nationalism emerged as an international factor, oil became a political weapon. The oil companies were replaced by the policy makers of the producing states through OPEC. The continued availability of oil to the industrial world at reasonable prices became problematic and an Arab desire for an accommodation with Israel emerged. The three-way linkage and the US concern for the Persian Gulf stability since 1972, have been persistent themes not only in Presidential statements but also in practically many "Congressional Hearings" and in several official statements on the Middle East.

In 1973, the Assistant Secretary of State Joseph J. Sisco enunciated the broad principles that would guide the US policy in the Gulf. Four such US objectives were:

First, support for indigenous regional collective security efforts to provide stability and to foster orderly development without outside interference. Second, peaceful resolution of territorial and other disputes among the regional states and the opening up of better channels of communication among them. Third, continued access to gulf oil supplies at reasonable prices and in sufficient quantities. Fourth, enhancing the US commercial and financial interests.24

By the late 1970s, it became apparent that new policies were required in three areas: energy, the Palestinian conflict; and Gulf security. These areas became the focus of the Carter Administration's Middle East policy. In 1978 alone, the US sold to Saudi Arabia over $5 billion worth of military hardware. However, the Iranian experience had revealed the possible disastrous long-term effects of such a policy to the US interests.25 The petro-dollars which were accumulating in the oil rich Arab countries could be invested with great productivity in the Middle East once the explosive political and military situation in the region was diffused.

The advent of 1980s marked a continuation of the Palestinian conflict and Israeli occupation of the Arab lands. A persistence of chaos in Iran, a tenacious Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and a destructive border war between Iran and Iraq. The US foreign policy makers began to reorder their policy objectives towards the Gulf to take Soviet expansion into consideration. The new decade began with President Carter's response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, stating among other things that resisting Soviet expansionism had become a major policy goal. Secretary of Defence, Harold Brown in 1980 identified Washington's interests in the Persian Gulf as follows - to promote stability in the region, and to advance the Middle East peace process, while ensuring the

continued security of Israel.  

Those conflicts frustrated successive US Administrations. The shortcomings of the Soviet policy coupled with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 provided new opportunities for the Reagan Administration. These in short were the US foreign policy objectives in the Arab region. Of course the policies of the US in the Arab world were only one part and not necessarily the leading part of bilateral and multilateral relationship that constituted the US relations with the Arab world during these years.

Formation of the Arab League

The formation of the League of the Arab states in 1945 was largely inspired by the Arab awakening of the 19th century. This involvement sought to recreate and reintegrate the Arab community which, though for four hundred years was a part of the Ottoman Empire, had preserved its identity as a separate national group. They were held together by the memories of a common past, a common religion and a common language and, had a common cultural heritage.

The leaders of the Arab movement in the 19th century revolted against the Turkish rule (during the First World War) and sought to achieve their goal through the succession from the Ottoman Empire. They then formed united and independent

Arab states comprising of all the Arab countries in Asia. However, the 1919 peace settlement divided the Arab world in Asia (with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Yemen) into British and French spheres of influence and established in them a number of separate states namely, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine.

However seven of these countries had achieved their independence by 1943. An Arab conference met in Alexandria in 1944 and formulated the Alexandria Protocol which delineated the outlines of the Arab League.  

It was found that neither a unitary state nor a federation could be achieved, but only a league of sovereign states.

A covenant establishing such a League, was signed in Cairo on 22nd March 1945 by the representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen. There were (in 1980) 21 members of the League: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouts, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine Liberation Organisation, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, PDR of Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic; now there are 22 states. (see Appendix 1).

The Arab League was formed in Cairo on 22nd March 1945. It was laid primarily by the external factors. The four important factors that accounted for its growth were: (i) the


growing Arab solidarity concerning the Palestine problem and wider issue of inter-Arab cooperation, (ii) the increasing role of territorial ambitions in Arab Asia, and was not involved in the dynastic rivalries which had frustrated all past efforts towards Arab unity. It was, therefore, in a better position to play a conciliatory role, (iii) the Arab revolt in Palestine between 1936 and 1939 further heightened the Arab federation, (iv) the war for the promotion of economic regionalism, and for the end of French domination over Syria and Lebanon heightened. 29

The confrontation among the local factors and the pressure generated by the external forces in the Arab world brought about the formulation of the Arab league.

The League of the Arab states was a regional grouping of the twenty two Arab states. It had also acquired an international character. The most vivid reflections of which were the "observer status" it enjoyed at the United Nations and the formal recognition extended to its many missions abroad by the host countries.

Objectives

The League was founded and launched to realize the following objectives:

a) To foster and promote relations among the member states in economic, financial, transport, cultural and health fields,

b) To coordinate the policy plans of member-states for the purpose of safeguarding their national security and maintaining their independence and sovereignty, and

c) To promote the common interests of member-states.

Cairo became the permanent seat of the League. The League council, specialised ministerial councils and committees could however, meet at other Arab venues if so requested by a number of member-states or on an invitation to this effect.

Official Language

Arabic became the official working language in all the League activities and its meetings. It might be worthwhile to recall in this context that Arabic had also been one of the five working languages of the United Nations.30

The first article of the "Alexandria Protocol" emphasised that "a League (of the Arab States) will be formed of the independent Arab states which consent to join the League. It will have a council which will be known as the Council of the League of Arab states and will be represented on an equal

footing".\(^{31}\)

In his inaugural speech the Egyptian Prime Minister, Mustafa an-Nahas, gave a brief account of his efforts for Arab unity and said:

The plan, as you know, has successfully passed the first stage of consultations. Today we are in the second stage of the preparatory committee which we hope will lead to the final stage of a General Arab conference.\(^{32}\)

The talks had already led to important result. Those with the Arab states, were concerned only with collaboration. There was no reason why another name, such as Arab union alliance or federation should not be chosen later, according to the results of the discussions to describe more accurately the situation as it finally emerged.

The preparatory committee held eight meetings which lasted from September 25 to October 7, 1944. The discussions centred round the nature of cooperation among the Arab states and the machinery to be evolved for such a cooperation for the formation of a central government for all the Arab countries. At the end of its first session, on October 7, the committee published a protocol along with a brief statement. The protocol contained decision of the committee and called for


the establishment of a League of Arab States. This protocol later came to be known as the Alexandria protocol.\textsuperscript{33}

Once the choice of political organization had been made the conference could move to a consideration of internal structure and functions. This work was done in six committees, concerned respectively, with political, social, economic, health, cultural and communication problems. The subjects of joint defence and foreign policy proposed in Nuri's "Blue Book" were eliminated from consideration and one or two other categories were absorbed into other subject headings. The committee's framework thus stressed technical or "functional" activities including the provision of economic and cultural ties emphasised by Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, in 1941 and 1943 and endorsed by the US.

\textbf{The Pact of the League of Arab States}

A committee of Arab Foreign Ministers and other experts met in Cairo during February and March 1945 to draft the constitution of the Arab League. Two days after the approval of the Alexandria Protocol, Nakhas Pasha was relieved of his position as Prime Minister of Egypt; Egyptian political leaders denounced Nakhas and his followers as traitors and castigated the proposed Arab League as unworkable. Reaction was particularly violent in Beirut where the christian Arab

community, led by the Maronite Patriarch and Phalangists, denounced the Alexandria Protocol as an attack on Lebanese sovereignty. The pact laid emphasis on its retention, desirous of strengthening the close relation and numerous ties with the Arab states for support and strengthening.}\(^4\)

The main features of the pact of the League as evolved during the meetings of a subsidiary committee, the preparatory committee, and the general Arab Congress, were as follows:

1) General purpose and functions
2) Membership and relations between members
3) Council
4) Secretariat

**General purpose and Functions:** The aim of the Preamble was copied from Article 2 of the protocol, with a significant addition specifying that the achievement of these objectives would be on the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of these states. This principle was embodied in both the Iraqi and the Lebanese drafts, and was endorsed by the Saudi delegates.

The Preamble of the pact protocol concerning the general Arab nature of the activities and interests of the League stated that the League had been formed in response to the wishes of Arab public opinion "in all the Arab lands". Its

purpose was to concert efforts towards the common good of all the Arab countries, the improvement of their states; the security of their future, and the realisation of their aspirations and hopes.\textsuperscript{35}

**Membership of the League:** Membership is restricted by Article 1 to independent Arab states; subsequent to the establishment of the League, any such state may apply for membership. Members pledge themselves by Article 8, to respect the sovereignty of other member states and not to take any action "calculated to change established systems of government".\textsuperscript{36}

**The Council:** The supreme policy-making body is the Council of the League while the General Secretariat, its subsidiary organs and specialised agencies serve as the executive arm of the League. The League Council may meet at the level of Heads of State, or Foreign Ministers or permanent delegates of member states. League Council Chairmanship is assumed by rotation according to Arabic-alphabetical order.

The supreme organ of the Arab League consists of representatives of the 22 member states, each of which had one vote, and a representative for Palestine unanimous decisions

\textsuperscript{35} Ahmed M. Gomaa, n.29, p.241.

of the council shall be binding upon all member states of the League, majority decisions would be binding only on those states which had accepted them. The purpose of the League was to supervise the execution of agreements, among the member states. It was also to decide upon the means of cooperation with future world organizations (Article 31). It was empowered to mediate in any dispute which might lead to war, and to arbitrate in any disagreement referred to it by the parties concerned (Article 5). It was also authorized to decide upon the action to be taken to repeal any aggression against a member state (Article 6). It was to appoint the Secretary-General his assistants, and the main officials in the Secretariat. It was to approve the annual budget (Article 13) and to decide on the cases in which representatives from the non-member states could participate in the activities of the specialised committees (Article 4). 37

General Secretariat: The secretariat carried out the decisions of the council and provided financial and administrative services for the personnel of the League. There are a number of departments, economic, political, legal, cultural, social and labour affairs, petroleum finance, Palestine, health, information, communication protocol. The most recently formed department deals with African affairs.

Nuri Pasha suggested that the Secretary General should have an assistant from among the nationals of each member state, and the Secretary General would be the most important element in the whole organization. The Secretary General was appointed by the League Council by a two-third majority of the member states, for a five-year term. He appointed the assistant secretaries and principal officials with the approval of the council. He had the rank of Ambassador and the assistant secretaries have the rank of ministers.

The original seven members of the League of Arab States completed a treaty in 1950 officially known as the Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Treaty between the states of the Arab League. The treaty usually known as the Arab collective security pact, was signed by Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen on June 17, 1950. Iraq signed it on February 16, 1952. The treaty became effective from August 23, 1952.

The treaty was somewhat unique in its juncture of functional and security problems. Though the ostensible reason for the treaty was to bring the Arab League in line with the United Nations charter in matters of collective security. The preamble stated that the participating governments desire to cooperate for the maintenance of security and peace according to the principles of both the Arab League pact and the United Nations charter. The treaty also restated the objectives of

38 Robert W. Macdonald, n.36, p.244.
the pact of the League which was the consolidation of the relations between members, maintenance of independence and development of economic and social welfare.

The strategic aspects of the Arab world were three: geographical position, manpower and oil. The third strategic resource of the Arab world, its oil deposits.

**Secretariat**

Secretary General: Dr. Ahmad Esmat Abd-Al-Meguid (Egypt)

Economic Affairs: Abdul Rahman Al-Souhaibani (Saudi Arabia)

Information Affairs: Dawo Ali Siwedan (Libya)

International Affairs: Adnan Omran (Syria)

Military Affairs: Muhammed Said Ben Hassan El-Berqdar (Syria)

Palestine Affairs: Said Kamal (Palestine)

Social and Cultural Affairs: Ahmed Qadri (Egypt)

Palestine: Palestine is considered an independent state as explained in the charter Annex on Palestine, and therefore a full member of the League.

**Achievements:** The mere fact that the League has survived for more than 45 years and grown in terms of its objectives and the areas it covers implies sufficient indication of the extent of achievements that this organization has managed to make.

The League has served as a forum for member-states to
coordinate their policy positions and deliberate on matters of common interest. The League has also been instrumental in the formulation of peaceful settlements for some inter-Arab disputes. The proposed establishment of an Arab Court of Justice would enormously enhance this capacity.

In the economic field, the League has served as a platform for the drafting and conclusion of almost all landmarks, documents promoting economic integration among member states. The Joint-Arab-Economic Action charter sets out the principles for economic activities within the framework of the League. The Economic Action strategy which defined the steps to be taken along with the path for economic integration and the Investment Guarantee Agreement which laid the basis for the expansion of inter Arab investment enterprises and facilitated the movement and flow of capital. 39

In the cultural field: The specialised agencies and subsidiary organs have played an equally unforgettable role. The preservation of manuscripts which form the main bulk of the Arab cultural heritage, the launching of literacy campaigns, the reproduction of intellectual masterpieces and the translation of modern technical terminology are some of its noteworthy achievements. With the marked growth of League cultural activities in the early seventies, the Arab League

Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) - a specialised agency along the pattern of UNESCO - was created to take care of all such activities.

In the Social field: The League has been considerably active in encouraging the efforts of social defence against crime, combating narcotics and the abuse of drugs, surveying the problem of Arab migrants workforce, facilitating the movement of labour among Arab countries and promoting cultural and other exchanges between unionist movements. The League has equally paid due care to the sector of sports and youth affairs, encouraging broader relations among Arab countries in this sector. Special efforts have also been devoted towards advancing the role of women in Arab societies and promoting child welfare activities.\(^{40}\)

In the field of science and technology: The League seeks the coordination and development of the respective capacities of member states with a view to ensuring that the Arab world as a whole is capable of coping with global advances. This theme has been at the centre in all League efforts, and a case in point is that Euro-Arab dialogue.

In the field of management and administration, the League has launched the Arab Agency for Administrative Development to upgrade management techniques and administrative practices

\(^{40}\) Ibid.
throughout the Arab world.

Within the framework of its efforts to enhance the international relations of the Arab world, the League called the First Arab-African Summit Conference in 1976, and has since sought to consolidate and explore new and political vistas for Arab-African cooperation.

Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf: The council was founded in 1982 by Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to promote solidarity and political, economic and social cooperation between the Arab oil-producing states on the west coast of the Palestinian Gulf. A later declaration enjoins members to combine efforts to protect their mutual sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.⁴¹