PREFACE

West Asia is a region of great significance in world politics. Political, social, strategic, emotional, ethnic, religious and economic upheavals have diversified its character. It has been a centre of Arab nationalism, pan Arabism, ups and downs of external political influences and persisting problem of Palestine and superpower's rivalry.

Since the end of the world war II, the United States has been a major actor in West Asia. Its rich resources and proximity to Soviet Union makes the area as an arena of superpower's rivalry. Up to the end of world War II, western powers played their effective role in this region and US did not feel that its active presence was required in this region. Prior to the world war II, the US reputation in West Asia was that of social work and missionary appeals. Specially Britain played its influential role in West Asia.

After the end of world war II and beginning of the cold war in 1945 when all the western powers withdrew from here, Soviet union advanced the cause of Arabs. Coming closer to them it supported politically and militarilly against the creation of Israel state in 1949.

The US presence started in reaction of Soviet moves in this region. In fact it was actually started to materialize since Truman doctrine 1947, Baghdad pact and CENTO (1954-1955) The US participation in this region created a new intensity and dimension to the cold war on the region. Shortly after, the Egyptian president Nasser announced Suez canal nationalization in 1956 and US got another opportunity to reassess her role by declaring Eisenhower doctrine of 1957. Consequently, some new postures were added in US policy towards West Asia. The US foreign policy towards West Asia has been characterized and determined by three important factors during the cold war -
1. Soviet containment
2. Support to Israel
3. Exploitation of oil and other resources of West Asia.

Significantly, US got consolidated its position only after 1970 when Soviet influence slightly decreased in the region after the arrival of President Sadat. The US has been very particular to establish friendly relations with Arab monarchies. The US-Saudi relations established since 1933 and at that time ARAMCO and SOCAL companies with US-Saudi collaboration strengthened their ties. Israel factor has always been sensitive to US-Saudi relation and due it, their relationship several times got strained.

In 1973-74, Saudi Arabia including other OPEC members imposed oil embargo on US and other western oil dependent countries. Relations were again very tense. The arrival of President Carter gave an opportunity to the US to fulfil its objectives, unfortunately Camp David Agreement (1978) and Egypt Israeli Treaty 1979 again proved a set back and shock for Saudi Arabia. Their friendship soured again. Eventually, the year 1979 proved very much decisive in this regard. USSR'S intervention in Afghanistan, Islamic Revolution in Iran, Mecca incident in Saudi Arabia, energy crisis during Iran-Iraq war etc - all threatened to US economic interests and Saudi security in the Gulf. They realized each other's significance and came closer again.

In 1981, generally speaking, relations between US and Saudi Arabia were on smooth sailing. Despite their mutual ambivalence and differences on matters their economic and diplomatic relations did not get disturbed. The formation of G.C.C., Fahd plan and Ronald Reagan's proposal for AWACS played very important role in this direction.

However, 1982 Israel-Lebanon war again embittered US-Saudi relations. President Reagan tried his best to mend the fences. It took time but
the relations again levelled up after the approval of AWACS transfer from Congress.

The year 1990-91 underwent some major incidents specially Gulf war 1991, Soviet disintegration and US supremacy etc. During the Gulf war, Saudi Arabia emerged as leading partner of US and offered its land for coalition forces. During these days the weak Soviet Union provided a fertile ground for US to take full advantage in West Asia and all over the world with its monopoly and dominance.

When the US forces continued to be on the Saudi soil they became apprehensive of US designs in the region. Apart from it, unsettled Arab-Israeli problem, US' harsh behaviour with Iraq and unnecessary US intransigence—all these factors are being proved very pernicious so far as US-Saudi relations are concerned. Saudi Arabia, very vigilantly and consciously denied for further stationing of US troops. The future prospects at present moment are not very healthy as US initiative to improve relation with Iran, sufficiently proves this point.

The present study consists of six chapters revealing US-Saudi relations and major thrusts that determine their ties from 1970 to 1991. The first chapter outlines the geographical framework of West Asia, geopolitical situation of Saudi Arabia and its rich sources. Establishment of ARAMCO and roots of US-Saudi ties and founding developments have also been covered in this chapter.

The second chapter explores the different shapes and contours of US foreign policy in West Asia in changing world scenario from 1945 onwards. It has also touched Soviet role in the region and superpowers rivalry.

The third chapter presents a panorama of linkages and strains during oil embargo 1973 and Saudi reactions on different issues as Camp David
Agreements etc. The implications of Saudi-US relations in the promotion of trade and commerce in the region have also been analysed.

The fourth chapter sheds light on Reagan period and Saudi AWACS deal. It also traces out the causes of their adherence immediately after some political turmoils in 1979-80 and abruptly strained relations after 1982.

The fifth chapter deals with recent major incidents that directly and greatly affected the entire international community and especially West Asia like Soviet disintegration, Gulf war, German unification and dramatic end of the cold war etc.

Finally in the sixth chapter an attempt has been made to investigate the causes of recent developments in West Asia, specially, US-Saudi strained relations after 1994. It highlights on permanent thrust areas and fixed priorities that determine and compel their relationship to be sound in future. Some important tables and diagrams related to their oil export, transfer of military equipments and commission to strengthen their economic and defence relations have been included in the appendices.