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The Origins of Alliances

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intentions are in fact hostile. Balancing will thus be viewed as the safer response when intentions cannot be reliably determined.

Determining intentions is not easy. Accordingly, statesmen often seek shortcuts to identify friends and foes. One approach is to focus on the domestic characteristics of potential partners in order to ally with those whose beliefs or principles resemble one's own. The next chapter assesses the impact of ideological solidarity on alliance formation.

[6]

Ideology and Alliance Formation

In this chapter I analyze the impact of ideological solidarity on alliance formation. I define *ideological solidarity* as a tendency for states with similar internal traits to prefer alignment with one another to alignment with states whose domestic characteristics are different. I consider three questions. First, how powerful is this tendency? Second, does its impact vary as predicted in chapter 2? Third, do certain ideologies exert divisive effects by provoking conflict among adherents rather than encouraging cooperation?

I reach three main conclusions. First, there is a modest association between ideology and alignment. As expected, this association is more pronounced in relations between the superpowers and their regional allies, particularly in the case of the Soviet Union. Second, the observed association probably exaggerates the true impact of ideology. In particular, the extent of ideological agreement between the superpowers and their allies is fairly limited, and the correlation between ideology and alignment may be partly spurious. Third, as proposed in chapter 2, the nature of the ideology is itself a crucial factor. Certain ideologies are more a source of division than of unity, even though the ideology explicitly prescribes close cooperation among the adherents.

I begin the chapter with a broad overview of the relationship between ideology and alliances in the Middle East. Next, I examine this relationship in more detail, beginning with alliances between the superpowers and the Middle East states. Finally, I address the role of ideology in inter-Arab politics, focusing on (1) the ethnic solidarity of the Arab states against Israel, (2) the divisive ideology of pan-Arabism, and (3) the monarchical solidarity among the conservative Arab states.

IDEOLOGY AND ALLIANCE FORMATION IN
THE MIDDLE EAST: AN OVERVIEW

The importance of ideology as a cause of alignment is difficult to measure precisely.¹ If ideology does play a major role in alliance choices, however, then states whose domestic system or governing ideology has changed should seek different allies and alliances between states sharing important domestic traits should be more common than alliances between states that are different, even when an alliance entails significant costs.

Are these predictions confirmed by the alliances examined in this study? Only in part. The record does show that when a new regime with a different ideology takes power, it tends to acquire new alliance partners. Thus Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact and its alliance with Jordan after the 1958 revolution; the leftist rebels who overthrew the Imam of Yemen in 1962 quickly turned to Egypt and the Soviet Union; the neo-Ba'th ascendance in Syria and the Marxist revolution in South Yemen led to new links with the Soviet Union; the Iraqi Ba'th's seizure of power in both 1963 and 1968 produced important shifts in Iraq's international position;² and Sadat's shift to the West coincided with a simultaneous move to liberalize Egypt's quasi-socialist economy.

The evidence that states with similar domestic systems are more inclined to ally is more ambiguous. Within the Middle East itself, for example, ideology has generally not been a reliable determinant of alliance choices. And when ideology has played a role, the resulting alliances have not been very durable. Although it is true that relations between conservative and progressive Arab states are often hostile and always guarded, hostility among the progressive Arab states is also quite common, as the recurring conflicts between Egypt, Iraq, and Syria have revealed. Indeed, as Malcolm Kerr has shown, "Nasser's relations with his fellow revolutionaries tended to be more difficult than those with the 'reactionaries.'"³ Furthermore, alliances between radical and

1. The difficulty occurs because (1) common ideological designations (e.g., socialism) can mean different things to different people (thereby creating an erroneous impression of agreement); (2) statesmen may deliberately exaggerate the extent of ideological agreement for instrumental purposes (e.g., to gain greater support from an ally); and (3) alliances between similar states may be produced by other causes (e.g., an external threat), creating a misleading impression that ideology is at work.

2. In 1963, the Iraqi Ba'th first sought alignment with Syria and Egypt in the Tripartite Unity Agreement. When this agreement collapsed, it formed a bilateral alliance with Syria. The Ba'th's ouster by Aref brought Egypt and Iraq back together. After seizing power again in 1968, the Iraqi Ba'th actively courted the Soviet Union; it signed a Treaty of Friendship with Moscow in 1972.

3. Kerr, *Arab Cold War*, p. vi. See also Paul C. Noble, "The Arab System: Opportunities, Constraints, and Pressures," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder, Colo., 1984), pp. 67-68.

conservative Arab states have occurred on several occasions, which suggests that ideological differences are not an insurmountable barrier.

Even more important, the historical record reveals that regional powers have usually ignored their ideological preferences when fidelity to them would entail significant costs. When threatened by the Baghdad Pact, for example, Nasser responded by allying with Syria (at that time a mildly left-wing parliamentary democracy) and the Saudi, Jordanian, and Yemeni monarchies. Revolutionary Egypt and revolutionary Iraq were bitter rivals from 1958 to 1963, and Nasser joined forces with Saudi Arabia and Jordan in 1961 to deter Iraqi annexation of Kuwait. After an intense campaign against Arab reaction in the early 1960s, Nasser suddenly began a détente with Saudi Arabia and Jordan in 1964 to isolate the revolutionary regime in Syria. Both progressive and conservative Arab states closed ranks prior to the Six Day War, and Israel's conquest of the West Bank and Sinai made revolutionary Egypt and monarchical Jordan partners until 1970. Indeed, Nasser abandoned his ideological concerns entirely at this point and sought an all-Arab consensus against Israel instead.⁴

For the same reasons, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt ignored their own ideological differences to prepare for the October War. Even more remarkably, Hussein ignored the principles of Arab solidarity to accept Israeli support during his confrontation with the PLO and Syria in 1970. Four years later, however, the Ba'th regime in Syria and the Hashemite monarchy in Jordan joined forces to oppose Egypt's separate peace with Israel. Finally, the growing threat from Iran helped cement an alliance between Ba'thist Iraq and the Saudi and Jordanian monarchies in 1979. In short, ideological consistency has been readily abandoned when threats to other interests emerged. In particular, ideological preferences have been less important than more immediate issues of security.

Alliances between the superpowers and the Middle East states, however, suggest the opposite conclusion. The Soviet Union has allied almost exclusively with "progressive states" governed by one-party authoritarian regimes committed to some form of leftist or socialist domestic policy. Moreover, Soviet relations with Middle East democracies (Lebanon, Israel) and the Arab monarchies have generally been poor. The United States, by contrast, has usually opposed the "progressive" Arab states and consistently supported monarchies and democracies. In short, ideological considerations seem to have played a

4. As Mohamed Heikal wrote in July 1967: "Social differences should be relegated to the past or future. Right now, there is a persistent need for a broad national and patriotic [inter-Arab] front." He also stated that "the defense of Arab territory is the joint responsibility of all the Arabs, regardless of their social and political differences." According to Nasser himself: "We do not want to change the social system in any Arab country. . . . [W]e want every Arab country to be truly Arab. . . . The battle calls for the mobilization of every Arab rife, every Arab piastre, every Arab individual." Quoted in *MER* 1967, p. 135.

major role in determining alliance relations between the superpowers and their various Middle East clients.⁵

This association supports the hypothesis that, in a bipolar world, states will ally with the superpower with which they are most compatible ideologically.⁶ From a practical standpoint, the apparent affinity between the Soviet Union and the various leftist dictatorships in the region suggests that the ideology is a powerful force binding the Soviet Union to its various clients. Before these conclusions are embraced, however, some important caveats should be noted.

Caveats

For several reasons, any observed association between domestic character and international alignment probably overstates the true extent of the relationship. First, as noted in chapter 2, if states base their foreign policy on the belief that ideology determines how others will act, they may cause others to behave in ways that appear to confirm this belief. Similar states will become one's allies because one offers them friendship and support, reflecting the expectation that they will reciprocate. States that are different are more likely to become one's enemies if one acts on the belief that they already are. Thus the belief that ideology determines foreign policy will often be a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁷

The same process may also force similar states to form an alliance when they otherwise would not. If one state is hostile to those that are

5. A rough measure of this association can be calculated as follows. In the period 1954-1979, there have been five left-wing dictatorships in the Middle East: Egypt 1954-1973, Syria 1963-1979, Yemen 1962-1970, Iraq from 1958 on, and the PDRY. There also have been nine other regimes (either democracies, monarchies, or moderate/right-wing authoritarian governments: Egypt 1974-1979, Syria 1954-1958, Iraq 1954-1958, North Yemen 1954-1961 and 1971-1979, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Israel. If ideology had no effect on superpower alliances, then we would expect each superpower to ally with a leftist dictatorship 35 percent (5/14) of the time and to ally with the other regimes 65 percent (9/14) of the time. Instead, six of the eight Soviet alliances in the Middle East were with leftist dictatorships and two were with other states (Syria 1954-1958 and Yemen 1955-1961). (Moreover, Syria during these years was an avowedly leftist state with a large Communist Party.) The United States never allied with a leftist authoritarian regime in the region. Thus the Soviet Union allied with leftist dictatorships more than twice as often as would be expected if ideology had no effect (75 percent instead of 35 percent) and the United States allied with right-wing or democratic regimes almost 50 percent more often than a random expectation would predict.

6. On this point, see Snyder and Diesing, *Conflict among Nations*, pp. 420-21; Dinerstein, "Transformation of Alliance Systems," p. 593 and passim; and Waltz, "Stability of a Bipolar World."

7. As George Kennan once wrote: "It is an undeniable privilege of every man to prove himself in the right in the thesis that the world is his enemy; for if he reiterates it frequently enough and makes it the background of his conduct, he is bound eventually to be right." George F. Kennan (Mr. X), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, 25, no. 4 (July 1947).

different, this hostility will encourage the latter to ally even if they would not ordinarily do so. The situation further magnifies the apparent effect of ideology: similar states end up together because a third party believes they are both hostile and possibly in cahoots, not because they are independently inclined to ally.

In both cases, in short, what appears to be ideologically motivated behavior is really a form of balancing. When it occurs, the observed association between ideological or internal similarities and alliance commitments will exaggerate the true impact of the former.

The evidence suggests that these biases are at work in the events considered here. In the mid-1950s, for example, the United States became alarmed by the emergence of a leftist government in Syria. As a result, it began a campaign to coerce or subvert the Syrian regime, which encouraged the Syrians to move closer to Egypt and the Soviet Union. The United States' own actions helped confirm the belief that a leftist regime in Syria would be hostile and pro-Soviet and increased the degree of cohesion among the leftist governments in Syria, Egypt, and the Soviet Union.⁸ In the same way, Nasser's repeated attacks against the Arab reactionaries encouraged Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq to ally together against Egypt, despite their traditional dynastic rivalries. These alliances were more the result of Nasser's actions than of the independent power of monarchical solidarity.

Finally, there is the possibility of spuriousness. If a third variable affects both domestic ideology and the propensity for certain alliances, then the observed association will exaggerate the relationship between ideology and alignment. Thus the apparently strong effect of ideology on superpower alliance choices could be due to a third variable that has affected both the type of regime (democracy, monarchy, etc.) and the propensity for alignment with one superpower over the other. If this hypothesis is correct (and I will show later that it does appear to be), then the true impact of ideology is smaller than the observed association.

This overview suggests that the relationship between ideology and alignment is complicated. Let us turn, therefore, to a more detailed analysis of the alliances, beginning with the role of ideology on relations between the superpowers and their regional clients.

IDEOLOGY AND SUPERPOWER ALLIANCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In describing the ideological affinities between the superpowers and their clients, this section will focus on three questions: (1) Exactly what

8. This is not to say that ideology played no role in Syria's alliance choices, only that any tendency to ally with other leftist states was undoubtedly encouraged by U.S. policy.

beliefs or traits do they share? (2) To what extent do these traits encourage or discourage alignment? (3) What conditions affect these tendencies? The analysis will reveal that ideological agreement between the superpowers and states in the Middle East is confined primarily to the realm of foreign policy. In other words, the alliances are based on common foreign policy aims rather than on shared domestic characteristics. Ideological solidarity therefore is essentially a form of balancing behavior and the apparent relationship between domestic characteristics and alliance preferences is partly spurious. Let us first consider the Soviet case.

The Soviet Experience

Soviet analysts allege that Marxism-Leninism provides a scientific basis for analyzing world events. Because this ideology posits that foreign policy is the product of a state's class content, the Soviet Union should be especially sensitive to domestic and ideological factors when choosing allies.⁹ If ideology is an important factor in these alliances, then we would expect the Soviet Union to be allied with states that are (1) ruled by a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, (2) following socialist economic policies, or (3) ideologically committed to opposing imperialism. If ideology is not that important, however, Soviet allies should include states whose domestic characteristics or ideological traits are different. What does the record show?

Domestic Ideology: Marxism-Leninism versus Arab Socialism

Several noticeable similarities exist between the domestic political systems of the Soviet Union and its principal Middle East allies. With the exceptions of Syria and Yemen in the mid-1950s, all of its allies have been authoritarian systems dominated by a single political movement (e.g., the Ba'th). All have proclaimed some form of revolutionary socialism as their official ideology. All have been relatively intolerant of internal dissent. In this broad sense, therefore, the Soviet Union has allied with states having similar domestic characteristics.

At the same time, however, significant differences exist. Both Syria

9. I found the following works especially helpful for understanding the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy: Karen Dawisha, "The Roles of Ideology in the Decisionmaking of the Soviet Union," *International Relations*, 4, no. 2 (1972); R. N. Carew-Hunt, Samuel L. Sharp, and Richard Lowenthal, "Ideology and Power Politics: A Symposium," in *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. Erik P. Hoffman and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr. (New York, 1980), pp. 101-36; and Vernon V. Asparturian, "Ideology and National Interest in Soviet Foreign Policy," in *Process and Power in Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. Vernon V. Asparturian (Boston, 1971).

and Iraq allowed rival political parties for much of the period under consideration here, something quite unknown in the Soviet Union. The military has played a much larger political role in both these countries (and in Egypt and Yemen as well) than it has in the Soviet Union. Most important of all, the Soviet Union's Middle East allies—with the exception of the PDRY and (briefly) the neo-Ba'th in Syria—have explicitly rejected Marxism-Leninism. Indeed, Communists within these states were often systematically repressed, just as happened elsewhere in the Arab world.

The historical record shows that an acceptance of Marxist ideas and a tolerant attitude toward local Communists are not prerequisites for alignment with the Soviet Union. Yet the evidence also suggests that these factors are not completely irrelevant either. Tolerance toward local Communists is usually rewarded, and brutality is occasionally penalized. Although ideological agreement is clearly limited and other factors are much more important, it would be a mistake to conclude that domestic political factors exert no effect at all.

In the case of Egypt, Nasser saw the local Communist movement as a disloyal faction that posed a significant threat to his regime.¹⁰ This view was no secret to his Soviet patrons. As Khrushchev revealed in 1956: "Is Nasser a Communist? Certainly not. But nevertheless we support Nasser. We do not want to turn him into a Communist and he does not want to turn us into nationalists."¹¹ Although this statement suggests a tolerant attitude toward ideological differences, Nasser's attacks on Communism in Egypt and Syria led to serious polemics between Cairo and Moscow in 1959 and 1961. Nasser described Communists in Egypt and Syria as "stooges" and accused them of "carrying out orders to place our country inside the zone of Communist influence."¹² Khrushchev responded by calling Nasser "a hotheaded young man" and described his opposition to Communism as "a reactionary undertaking."¹³

In 1961 Khrushchev told a visiting Egyptian delegation: "Some of those present here will become communists in the future, because life imposes itself on man."¹⁴ The Egyptian reply was straightforward: "We do not believe that the historical development of mankind runs along the blind alley, of which capitalism is the beginning and communism is

10. See Heikal, *Cairo Documents*, p. 41; and Nutting, *Nasser*, pp. 50, 85.

11. Quoted in Karen Dawisha, "The Soviet Union in the Middle East: Great Power in Search of a Leading Role," in *The Soviet Union and the Third World*, ed. E. J. Feuchtwanger and Peter Nailor (New York, 1981), p. 119.

12. Quoted in Laqueur, *Struggle for the Middle East*, p. 65.

13. Quoted in McLane, *Soviet-Middle East Relations*, p. 30; and Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 275-78.

14. Quoted in Heikal, *Cairo Documents*, p. 152.

the imperative end. We believe that the field of ideological thinking is open to all peoples."¹⁵ To reinforce the point, Nasser's semi-official spokesman, Mohamed Heikal, then published a series of articles outlining in detail the differences between Egypt's Arab socialism and Soviet Communism.¹⁶

The expansion of Soviet-Egyptian ties in 1964 was encouraged by a partial compromise on these issues. Nasser agreed to release a number of Egyptian Communists from prison, provided that they joined the official party, the Arab Socialist Union. The compromise suggests that the issue was of some importance to both parties but not important enough to prevent their extensive collaboration in other areas.¹⁷

Thus Egypt continued to reject Marxism while welcoming Soviet support. Even after the Six Day War, with Egypt now dependent on unprecedented levels of Soviet aid, Heikal argued that Soviet-Egyptian cooperation was due primarily to common interests. In matters of ideology, he wrote, "It was a mistake to look upon everything the Soviet Union says as handed down from on high and beyond dispute."¹⁸ And in 1970, Nasser revealed that his attitude had changed little since the 1950s: "The Soviet Union is a Communist country and we are not. Is this a matter of any consequence? No, it is not. . . . Russia has not asked us to adopt Communism and we have not asked Russia to change, or to adopt our political system."¹⁹ In the same spirit, Anwar Sadat told the Soviet ambassador: "We Arabs will never be Marxists. . . . [W]e will not allow a Marxist regime to exist in our region."²⁰ Yet this conviction did not stop Sadat from maintaining Egypt's ties with the Soviet Union as long as they served Egyptian interests.

Soviet relations with Syria and Iraq have also been affected—but not determined—by elite attitudes toward Marxism in general and toward local Communists in particular. Soviet support for Syria in the mid-1950s was encouraged by the fact that the Syrian Communist Party was the largest in the Arab world.²¹ Unfortunately for the Soviet Union, the

15. The Egyptian reply took the form of a letter to Khrushchev from Anwar Sadat, head of the delegation to whom the Soviet leader had addressed his remarks. It is reprinted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, p. 343.

16. See Mohamed Heikal, "Communism and Ourselves: Seven Differences between Communism and Arab Socialism: History Does not Unfold on a Closed Path," *al-Ahram*, August 4, 1961; reprinted in *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East*, ed. Kamal H. Karpat (New York, 1982), pp. 117-22.

17. See Shamir, "The 'Licensed Infiltration' Doctrine in Practice"; and Horelick, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East," pp. 577, 580.

18. Quoted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, p. 468 and passim.

19. Quoted in Pennar, *USSR and the Arabs*, p. 81.

20. Quoted in Schwartz, "Failed Symbiosis," p. 22.

21. Indeed, it was the Ba'th Party's fear of a Communist takeover that led the party to seek union with Egypt in 1958.

party was suppressed during the union with Egypt, and the Ba'th remained hostile to Marxist ideas. According to a co-founder of the Ba'th: "There is no link or relationship between Communism and the history of the Arabs, between Communism and the intellectual traditions of the Arabs and their past and present life. [Marxism] deforms the true socialism that the Arabs need."²² Soviet commentators were equally critical of Ba'th policy toward the most progressive forces (i.e., the Communists) in Syria, and Soviet support for Syria was modest until the mid-1960s.²³

As the Syrian Ba'th grew increasingly radical and adopted a number of Marxist tenets, however, Soviet support increased significantly. By 1966 the neo-Ba'th had welcomed several Communists into the cabinet, had allowed Syrian Communist Party leader Khalid Baqdash to return from exile, and had spoken approvingly of the "important lessons" that the Soviet Union could give to countries "on the road to socialism."²⁴ The Soviets began providing Syria with substantial diplomatic, military, and economic assistance for the first time since 1958 and now viewed Syria as one of the leading progressive regimes in the Middle East.²⁵

Subsequent Soviet-Syrian relations also suggest both the relevance and the limitations of these concerns. The Soviet preference for Salah Jadid over Hafez el-Assad during the power struggle between the two in 1969-1970 may have reflected Jadid's greater sympathy for Marxist doctrines. But when these actions and those of the restored Syrian Communist Party led other Ba'thists to question Soviet intentions, the Soviet Union quickly took a neutral position.²⁶ And though the Communists were later granted a nominal role in Syria's National Front, the Ba'th guarded its dominant position carefully.²⁷

22. Quoted in Robin Buss, "Wary Partners: The Soviet Union and Arab Socialism," *Adelphi Papers No. 73* (London, 1970), p. 2. See also Pennar, *USSR and the Arabs*, pp. 101-3.

23. See Smolansky, *Soviet Union and Arab East*, pp. 245-62; Yodfat, *Arab Politics in the Soviet Mirror*, pp. 111-17; and Laqueur, *Struggle for the Middle East*, pp. 84-86.

24. See Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 419-24, 432-34; and Avigdor Levy, "The Syrian Communists and the Ba'th Power Struggle, 1966-1970," in Confino and Shamir, *USSR and the Middle East*, pp. 396-98.

25. Syria received a \$120 million loan in 1966, military aid worth approximately \$200 million, and a Soviet pledge to finance and build a long-delayed dam on the Euphrates River. For details, see SIPRI, *Arms Trade with the Third World*, p. 548; Lenczowski, *Soviet Advances in the Middle East*, pp. 113-15; and McLane, *Soviet-Middle East Relations*, pp. 91-92, 96.

26. See Levy, "Syrian Communists and the Ba'th"; and MER 1969-1970, pp. 427-29, 432-32.

27. See Pennar, *USSR and the Arabs*, pp. 114-15. As an illustration of Ba'th dominance, in the People's Council elected in August 1977, 125 out of 195 representatives were Ba'thists. In August 1976 the Syrian cabinet included 21 Ba'thists out of 36 (with 2 Communists). The crucial portfolios of prime minister and ministers of foreign affairs, defense, and interior were all in Ba'th hands as well. See MECS 1976-1977, pp. 608-10.

The same is true for Iraq as well. Soviet-Iraqi relations have been at their peak when the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) has enjoyed a position of influence or has at least been tolerated. The height of Soviet support for Qassem coincided with the heyday of the ICP, which Qassem used to defeat his Ba'athist rivals in 1959. Indeed, the Soviets favored Iraq over Egypt during this period for precisely this reason.²⁸ But when Qassem moved to suppress the ICP, Soviet support declined rapidly.²⁹ It was not suspended, however, because Qassem's anti-imperialist views were still a considerable improvement over Iraq's earlier membership in the Baghdad Pact.³⁰

From a Soviet perspective, Qassem's Ba'athist successors were far worse. Until their ouster by General Aref in 1964, the Iraqi Ba'ath waged a bloody campaign against the ICP, which they blamed for their defeat in 1959. The Soviet response illustrates that ideological considerations are not entirely irrelevant; the Ba'ath regime was described as fascist, its leaders were accused of "mass reprisals" and "monstrous murders," and Soviet economic and military aid was suspended.³¹ Although relations improved under Aref, the ICP was still banned and Soviet support for Iraq was modest compared to the assistance given to Egypt and Syria. Significantly, Iraq was termed a "progressive" regime only with reservations.³²

When the Ba'ath seized power again in 1968, the rapprochement that led to the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1972 was accompanied by significantly greater Iraqi tolerance toward local Communists. As in Syria, the Communists were welcomed in a National Front, a move intended "to smooth the way towards the Friendship Treaty."³³ The tactical nature of this concession is revealed by its sequel. When several dozen Communists were discovered forming cells in the armed forces in 1978, the Ba'ath regime executed them and suppressed the ICP once again. Interestingly, the Soviets did not cut off their support this

28. In a direct challenge to Nasser, Khrushchev stated in 1959 that "a more advanced system is being established in [Iraq] . . . than in neighboring countries of the Arab East." Forced to choose between two anti-imperialist Arab states, the Soviets preferred the one in which the Communist party was playing a leading role.

29. See chapter 3, note 79, of this book.

30. Smolansky, *Soviet Union and Arab East*, chap. 7 and p. 108.

31. See Smolansky, *Soviet Union and Arab East*, pp. 235-36; Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, p. 363; SIPRI, *Arms Trade with the Third World*, p. 557; and Fukuyama, "Soviet Union and Iraq," p. 25.

32. Aref's conservative views and strong religious beliefs contributed to his antipathy toward the Iraqi Communists, but he did not actively suppress or persecute them. See Uriel Dann, "The Communist Movement in Iraq since 1963," in Confino and Shamir, *USSR and the Middle East*, pp. 378-81. For examples of Soviet appraisals of the progressive Arabs, see MER 1967, pp. 7, 26-28.

33. See Fukuyama, "Soviet Union and Iraq," pp. 44-45; and Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq*, pp. 81-87, 97-99, 145.

time, although these events may have contributed to the overall decline in Soviet-Iraqi relations in the late 1970s.³⁴

Finally, Soviet relations with both Yemens illustrate the limited importance of domestic ideology. The Soviets supported the Imamate in the 1950s—despite its feudal character—and have maintained good relations with Yemen since then, despite the fact that neither the revolutionaries nor the moderate regime that gained power in 1970 showed any Marxist predilections. By contrast, South Yemen remains the only Middle East state with a true Marxist-Leninist ruling party. As its ruling factions have grown increasingly enamored of Soviet-style Marxism, relations with the Soviet Union have grown apace. One result was a formal treaty between the two countries in 1979. The Soviets have supplied arms, economic aid, and advisers to the North as well, but their ties with the less populous but ideologically more compatible regime in the South have been both more extensive and more consistent throughout this period.³⁵ As with other Soviet clients, in short, acceptance of Marxist ideas encourages alignment, but it is far from a prerequisite.

Domestic Economic Policy

Given the primacy of economic factors on Marxist-Leninist ideology, one would expect the Soviet Union to ally primarily with states whose domestic economic policies resemble its own. The evidence is mixed. The Soviets have encouraged their clients to adopt a variety of socialist economic policies (e.g., nationalization of key sectors and development of heavy industry), and they usually have preferred allies whose economic policies are roughly similar to the Soviet model. However, conformity to Soviet economic practices has been quite limited among Soviet Union's Middle East clients, which suggests that this factor is not very important in determining alliance choices.

In the 1950s, for example, the Soviet Union was more than willing to extend support to Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, despite the fact that none of these countries followed economic policies similar to those of the Soviet Union. By the mid-1960s, however, Egypt's avowedly socialist development program (begun in 1959 and featuring the nationalization of banks and industry, state support for the public sector, and an ambitious Five Year Plan for industrial development) had prompted Khrushchev to praise Egypt's efforts to build socialism during

34. See Fukuyama, "Soviet Union and Iraq," pp. 49-52, 56-58, 69; Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq*, pp. 87-91; and Helms, *Iraq*, pp. 77-82.

35. For analyses of the internal politics of the PDRY and the Soviet-PDRY relationship, see Mylroie, "Soviet Presence in the PDRY"; and Francis Fukuyama, "A New Soviet Strategy?" *Commentary*, 68, no. 4 (1979): 55-56. For additional details, see Katz, *Russia and Arabia*.

his visit in 1964. Similarly, Soviet support for Syria increased significantly after the Ba'th began an even more radical socialist program in 1965-1966.³⁶ Soviet economic assistance made it possible for Iraq to nationalize its oil industry in 1971, and Iraq's own program for socialist economic development may have helped pave the way for the Treaty of Friendship signed in 1972.³⁷ In short, a mild relationship between Soviet support and the degree to which Soviet clients adopted socialist economic principles can be observed throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. It seems more likely, however, that international conditions (e.g., the Yemen War and the accelerating arms race with Israel) played a greater role in the expanding ties between the Soviet Union and its Middle East clients.

Moreover, there were important differences between Soviet economic practices and those of their allies. For example, although all Soviet client states nationalized certain sectors (e.g., banks and heavy industry), the role of the private sector remained quite important. In the same way, the role of central planning was much more limited in the Arab socialist countries than in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, despite the support the Soviets provided for the development of heavy industry, light industry and consumer goods received far more emphasis in Egypt and Syria than they did in the Soviet Union.³⁸ And although land reform was a key part of Egyptian and Syrian socialism, these efforts were much less extensive than the large-scale collectivization practiced by the Soviets.³⁹ In short, the Soviet economic model won few converts in the Middle

36. On Egypt's socialist program, see Waterbury, *Egypt of Nasser and Sadat*, especially chaps. 4 and 5; and Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution*, pp. 60-69 and passim. On Syria, see Rabinovich, *Syria under the Ba'th*, pp. 139-45, 178-79, 207. On the Soviet reaction to these events, see Yodfat, *Arab Politics in the Soviet Mirror*, pp. 64-75, 124-45.

37. On Iraq's development plans, see Penrose and Penrose, *Iraq*, chap. 18; Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq*, chap. 6; and Peter Mansfield, *The Middle East: A Political and Economic Survey*, 5th ed. (London, 1980), pp. 345-55. On relations with the Soviet Union, see Fukuyama, "Soviet Union and Iraq," pp. 35-36, 49, 54.

38. In Egypt, for example, production of consumer goods expanded over 50 percent during the first Five Year Plan. By contrast, production of intermediate and capital goods actually declined during this period. See Waterbury, *Egypt of Nasser and Sadat*, p. 89. Majid Khadduri reports that Iraqi investment in the private sector increased during the 1970s despite the regime's commitment to public sector development. See his *Socialist Iraq*, p. 130.

39. On Egypt, see Waterbury, *Egypt of Nasser and Sadat*, chap. 12. On Syria, see Mansfield, *Middle East*, pp. 537-38; and Petran, *Syria*, pp. 205-9. One should not make too much of this point, given that the trends in Syria point in the direction of greater collectivization (e.g., via agricultural cooperatives) and that Egypt was forced to limit its land reform program after the Six Day War. Although progress has been slow, Iraq has pursued the most aggressive land reform of all, seeking to eliminate the rural private sector through the establishment of cooperative, collective, and state farms. See Penrose and Penrose, *Iraq*, pp. 454-60; Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq*, pp. 117-23; and Robert Springborg, "New Patterns of Agrarian Reform in the Middle East and North Africa," *MEJ*, 31, no. 2 (1977).

East; there were as many differences between the Soviet Union and its Middle East allies as there were similarities.

Finally, fidelity to Soviet economic practices does not appear to have been very important in determining the level of Soviet support. It has already been noted that it mattered little to the Soviets in the 1950s. In addition, John Waterbury has suggested that the Soviet Union may have encouraged Nasser to moderate Egypt's socialist program in 1966 while refusing to provide the aid Egypt needed to continue its socialist transformation. Even more telling is the fact that Soviet diplomatic and military support for Syria increased after the October War, despite Assad's 1974 decision to reverse a number of the socialist decrees the Ba'th had enacted in 1965. Moreover, the Soviets maintained a close alliance with Iraq during the same period, although the Iraqis were concentrating on improving their economic ties with the West. Finally, the Soviets have supplied large-scale military aid to North Yemen on several occasions, despite the fact that its economy has remained almost entirely in private hands.⁴⁰ In short, if the Soviets prefer to ally with states whose economic policies are similar to their own, they have also been more than willing to ignore this criterion when heeding it would be politically costly. In the same way, alignment with the Soviet Union does not mean that the regional powers were attracted to the Soviet model of development.

Two points have emerged thus far. First, the Soviet Union has shown a mild preference for states that accept or are at least tolerant toward Marxist ideas or that are pursuing avowedly socialist economic policies. Similarly, such regimes appear more inclined to favor alignment with the Soviet Union. Second, and much more important, the Soviet Union has been willing to ignore these preferences when the opportunity or need arises. We can therefore conclude that purely domestic factors are of some importance, but not much. Let us now examine the impact of ideology in the realm of foreign policy itself.

Opposition to Imperialism

The principal ideological link between the Soviet Union and its Middle East allies has been mutual opposition to imperialism. Given that the Soviet allies are former colonies or protectorates, whose ruling elites have been understandably sensitive to foreign (i.e., Western) interference, this link is not surprising.

Soviet efforts to exploit these sentiments began in earnest in 1956, when Khrushchev added a new category—a "vast zone of peace"—to

40. On these points, see Waterbury, *Egypt of Nasser and Sadat*, pp. 96-97; Mansfield, *Middle East*, pp. 147-48, 354, 535, 541; and Petran, *Syria*, pp. 251-52.

Stalin's "two camps" (the capitalist and the socialist). In particular, Khrushchev praised the former colonies for their refusal "to participate in closed imperialist military alignments."⁴¹ In 1961 the 22nd Party Congress devoted an entire section to the National Liberation Movement, and the so-called national democracies in the Third World were described as "a progressive, revolutionary, and anti-imperialist force."⁴² By 1964 Moscow spoke of "revolutionary democrats" who "sincerely advocate non-capitalist methods."⁴³ According to one Soviet scholar, these elites "were fighting against the oppression of the . . . imperialist bourgeoisie. The anti-imperialist orientation of the national liberation movement makes it a constituent part of the world socialist revolution."⁴⁴ Although Soviet commentators were divided on the best way to exploit the alleged affinity, the belief that these states would be useful allies against imperialism was largely unchallenged.⁴⁵ This view was supported by the fact that the ruling elites in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and South Yemen all shared Soviet suspicions of imperialist activity.

In Egypt, opposition to imperialism was a constant theme throughout Nasser's career, as well as an important motive for Soviet-Egyptian cooperation.⁴⁶ By 1957 Soviet reservations about the Free Officers in Egypt had given way to the claim that "Egypt's anti-imperialist, anti-feudal program had taken concrete shape."⁴⁷ Soviet writers praised Egypt's rejection of "imperialist military alliances," and the joint communiqué issued after Nasser's first visit to the Soviet Union denounced

41. See Laqueur, *Soviet Union and the Middle East*, p. 156; Yodfat, *Arab Politics in the Soviet Mirror*, p. 6; and Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, p. 156.

42. Quoted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 351-52.

43. See the discussion and references in Schwartz, "The Failed Symbiosis," pp. 5-9.

44. V. L. Tyagunenko, *Problems of Contemporary National Liberation Revolutions*, quoted in Schwartz, "The Failed Symbiosis," p. 8.

45. For evidence on this point, see Schwartz, "Failed Symbiosis"; Katz, *Third World in Soviet Military Thought*; and U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Soviet Union and the Third World*, pp. 17-37.

46. The following quotations illustrate the continuity of Nasser's statements on this subject: (1) "In the event of aggression, [the Arabs] undertake to defend this area without any link or partnership with the West. . . . Thus we will be secure from the menace of imperialism." Quoted in Love, *Suez*, p. 88. (2) "Throughout the years, imperialism was working for the division of the Arab World. . . . Not only was imperialism against the unity of the Arabs, but it was against their unity of purpose, because . . . [unity] was a powerful force to confront imperialism." Quoted in Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, p. 125. (3) "The Arab-Israeli conflict is the result of the contradictions between the Arab nation desiring political and social emancipation, and Imperialism wishing to dominate [the area] and continue its exploitation." *MER 1969-1970*, p. 97. See also Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes*, pp. 142-51; Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution*, p. 46; Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*, pp. 230-39, 274, 350-53; and Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, p. 127 and *passim*.

47. V. B. Lutskiy, "The Revolution of July 1952 in Egypt," reprinted in *The Middle East in Transition*, ed. Walter Z. Laqueur (New York, 1958), p. 502.

colonialism "in all its manifestations."⁴⁸ As Khrushchev stated in 1959, "We and the leaders of the UAR have different views in the ideological field, but in the question of the struggle against imperialism . . . our positions coincide with the positions of these same leaders."⁴⁹

As the Soviet-Egyptian alliance deepened, the public emphasis placed on cooperation against imperialism increased. The communiqué issued during Khrushchev's visit to Egypt in 1964 contained an explicit condemnation of imperialism and foreign military bases, and the Soviets labored to create a "united front of progressive forces against imperialism" during the mid-1960s. By the War of Attrition, Nasser saw a direct link between Soviet support for Egypt and his own anti-imperialist views: "The only means to make the continuation of our struggles possible is to get allied with the Soviet Union. . . . We either succumb to the United States, . . . [and] submit to imperialism, or we fight and struggle. Here we must agree with the Soviet Union. We are struggling against imperialism and we support national liberation."⁵⁰ As Karen Dawisha concludes in her own study of Soviet-Egyptian relations, "The anti-imperialist component of Soviet ideology was certainly shared by the Egyptian leaders who throughout the 1950s and 1960s pursued a consistent anti-Western policy."⁵¹

The same convictions helped bring Syria and the Soviet Union together. Given the anti-imperialist sentiments of groups such as the Ba'th Party, Western attempts to pressure Syria in the mid-1950s merely encouraged closer ties with Moscow.⁵² Thus Syrian premier Khalid al-Azm praised (and greatly exaggerated) Soviet support for the Arabs during the Suez crisis, claiming that "this intervention delivered the Arabs from the major catastrophe which imperialism wanted to inflict upon them."⁵³

As the Ba'th grew more radical in the 1960s, both the level of ideological affinity and the scope of Soviet-Syrian cooperation increased. In 1963, the Sixth National Congress of the Ba'th declared that "it is pure fantasy to think that the construction of a new society . . . can be achieved without a continuous struggle against imperialism," and it

48. "President Nasser's Visit," *New Times*, May 1958; and *Soviet News*, May 16, 1958. Both reprinted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 252-54.

49. Nikita S. Khrushchev, "On the Middle East—Speech to the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, January 27, 1959." Reprinted in *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, ed. Alvin Z. Rubinstein (New York, 1969), p. 401.

50. "Abd-al Nasir's Secret Papers," p. 5. See also Rubinstein, *Red Star on the Nile*, pp. 59-65.

51. Dawisha, *Soviet Foreign Policy towards Egypt*, p. 118.

52. See Torrey, *Syrian Politics and the Military*, pp. 269-70, 294-96, 303-4; and Devlin, *Ba'th Party*, pp. 31-32.

53. Quoted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, p. 232.

concluded further that "the policy of non-alignment must not prevent the strengthening of ties between the people of the socialist world."⁵⁴

The neo-Ba'th faction that gained full power in 1966 placed even greater weight on ideological compatibility. According to the joint communiqué issued during Syrian prime minister Yusuf Zuayyin's visit to Moscow in April 1966: "[The two sides] . . . proclaimed their determined support for the struggle of the Arab people . . . against foreign occupation by imperialist powers. . . . They support the struggle of States, which have gained freedom, against inequitable treaties . . . imposed upon them by the imperialist States, and also support the struggle for the liquidation of foreign bases."⁵⁵ Although the neo-Ba'th was ousted in 1970, Syria has continued to maintain a consistent opposition to all forms of imperialism while maintaining close relations with the Soviet Union.⁵⁶

Soviet relations with Iraq showed similar tendencies. Soviet support for the revolutionaries who overthrew Nuri al-Said followed predictably from Soviet opposition to the "imperialist" Baghdad Pact.⁵⁷ After Aref ousted the Iraqi Ba'th in 1963, his consistent, if mild, opposition to imperialism led the Soviets to describe Iraq as "among those Arab countries that resist imperialist machinations."⁵⁸ When the Ba'th returned to power in 1968, its anti-imperialist ideology encouraged the Soviets to view Iraq's desire for closer ties favorably. According to the Iraqi National Charter of 1971, Iraq's foreign policy stressed "the resolute adherence to the policy of struggle against world imperialism, . . . [and] consolidating relations with the peoples and governments of the so-

54. "Resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party," *Arab Political Documents 1963*, p. 444. The Congress also declared that strong ties with the socialist camp would "create new and genuine possibilities of demolishing imperialist strategic positions." These resolutions were not embraced by a number of Ba'th leaders, and the stated goal of improving ties with Moscow was not implemented for several years.

55. Representatives from the Syrian Ba'th and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued a joint communiqué in January 1967 stating that "Both parties . . . condemn the intrigues of imperialism and reaction in the Arab world. . . . They affirm the need for the further rallying of all the socialist and progressive forces in the world for a complete victory over colonialism, imperialism, and reaction." These statements are quoted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 422-23, 434.

56. For evidence on Syrian beliefs about imperialism, see Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*, pp. 103, 106, 108, 147, 152, 182, and passim; and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Revisionist Dreams, Realist Strategies: The Foreign Policy of Syria," in Korany and Dessouki, *Foreign Policies of Arab States*, pp. 291-92.

57. See Khadduri, *Republican Iraq*, pp. 10-11, 14, 47; Fukuyama, "Soviet Union and Iraq," pp. 23-24; and Smolansky, *Soviet Union and Arab East*, pp. 102-6, 112-16.

58. Quoted in Yodfat, *Arab Politics in the Soviet Mirror*, p. 180. Aref claimed that the Egyptian-Iraqi unified political command "breeds a power that stuns imperialism." See Khadduri, *Republican Iraq*, p. 225. After the Six Day War, Aref told Brezhnev that the Arabs viewed the Soviet Union as "a friendly people that stands with them in the struggle against imperialism." See "'Abd-al-Nasir's Secret Papers," p. 20.

cialist camp in a manner securing mutual interests, and elevating the balance of world struggle to defeat imperialism."⁵⁹ Thus the Soviet-Iraqi Friendship Treaty of 1972 committed the two countries "to wage an unrelenting struggle against imperialism and Zionism."⁶⁰ According to the Political Report of the Iraqi Ba'th Eighth Regional Congress in January 1974: "Our struggle is directed mainly against certain international forces . . . imperialism, Zionism and their local allies. . . . For these reasons, alliance with other international forces with comparable . . . resources, . . . is a correct move. The Soviet Union and the socialist countries are closest to us of the strong and advanced countries. This is in spite of differences of opinion on many matters. They are closest to us in principles, aims and interests. . . . The alliance of revolutions is natural."⁶¹ As with Syria and Egypt, therefore, opposition to imperialism has been the principal ideological bond between the Soviet Union and Iraq.

Finally, opposition to imperialism also encouraged Soviet ties with both Yemens. Although the Imamate was in no way progressive, Soviet commentators praised Ahmed's hostility toward British imperialism while providing military equipment and training to his armed forces.⁶² This case is especially revealing, as it shows that domestic characteristics can be utterly irrelevant if foreign policy goals coincide. The revolutionaries who overthrew the Imamate provided more promising opportunities to undermine imperialist influence on the Arabian Peninsula, and the Soviets gave considerable support to the republican faction until the end of the civil war.⁶³ As for the PDRY, its consistent hostility to imperialism—a legacy of its lengthy struggle against British rule—provides ample ideological justification for close ties with the Soviet Union.⁶⁴

59. Reprinted in Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq*, pp. 228-29. The communiqué issued during Iraqi vice president Saddam Hussein's February 1972 visit to Moscow "condemned the attempts of international imperialism . . . to break the solidarity of the Arab countries and peoples and the cooperation with their friends—in the socialist countries." Quoted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 565-66.

60. Reprinted in Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq*, pp. 241-42. According to Francis Fukuyama, "any sympathy for the Soviet Union on the part of the Iraqi Ba'th has always been on the level of foreign policy, coming as a corollary of Ba'thist anti-imperialism." See his "Soviet Union and Iraq," p. 16.

61. See *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973: The Political Report Adopted by the Eighth Regional Congress of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party-Iraq* (Baghdad, 1974), pp. 219-21 and passim.

62. See V. Maevski, "In the Interests of Peace and Security in the Near and Middle East," *Prauda*, November 5, 1955, reprinted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 14648; and Wennert, *Modern Yemen*, p. 176, especially note 10.

63. See Dawisha, "Saudi Arabia's Search for Security," pp. 20-21; and Katz, *Russia and Arabia*, pp. 24-32, 44-45.

64. For a sympathetic view of the PDRY by a British Marxist, see Fred Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans* (New York, 1975), pp. 265-71. For representative statements of Soviet and South Yemeni views, see *MER 1969-1970*, 1: 447-48; and *MECS 1976-1977*, pp. 559-60.

Of course, as the only Marxist regime in the Middle East, it has more substantial ideological ties as well. In this sense, South Yemen is more the exception than the rule.

The analysis so far can be summarized as follows. Although there is some relationship between domestic characteristics and alignment with the Soviet Union, it is not strong. Soviet allies have almost always rejected Marxism-Leninism and have often been less tolerant of domestic Communists than many other states (including the United States and Israel). Furthermore, although most Soviet allies have adopted certain socialist economic policies, they do not follow the Soviet model. Yet these differences have neither prevented them from seeking Soviet help nor convinced the Soviet Union to withhold it.

The key is opposition to imperialism. As Nasser put it: "We have one common aim with the Soviet Union—to resist imperialism. . . . Our ideological and national interest is against imperialism, the Soviet Union's ideological interest and strategy are against imperialism."⁶⁵ Or in the words of Syrian president Assad: "[The Soviet Union helps us] with its own interest in mind—that is to combat the expansion of American power. But . . . Soviet interest coincides with ours."⁶⁶ And the Soviets have apparently agreed. According to a leading Soviet expert: "The important thing is not . . . that 'national democracy' is still a non-Marxist trend [but] its actual fight against imperialism . . . and that the revolutionary democrats make a constructive effort to build a new society. . . . That is what determines the Marxist attitude to revolutionary democratic programs in the developing world."⁶⁷

The fact that ideological agreement is largely confined to foreign policy raises an important question of interpretation, to which we will return in a moment. If the most important element of ideological solidarity is agreement on a key element of foreign policy, opposition to imperialism, it is just another way of saying that states are more likely to ally when their foreign policy interests are similar. And if ideological solidarity is confined primarily to the realm of foreign policy, then ideological solidarity should be seen as merely another form of balancing behavior. In particular, the Soviet Union and its allies are united by their desire to oppose what they perceive as a common threat. The question thus becomes: If it is opposition to imperialism that unites the Soviet Union with its Middle East allies, then why have the leftist regimes in the Middle East viewed imperialism (however they define it) as es-

65. "Speech to the Arab Socialist Union on the 16th Anniversary of the July 23 Revolution," quoted in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, p. 488.

66. Quoted in Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*, p. 75.

67. R. Ulyanovsky, quoted in U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Soviet Union and the Third World*, p. 23 and passim.

pecially threatening? Because the answer to this question helps explain the alliances of the United States as well, I will describe the U.S. experience before offering an answer.

Ideology and U.S. Alliances in the Middle East

If ideological solidarity were the most important determinant of alignment, the United States would have few allies in the Middle East. The fact that the United States has been allied with the conservative monarchies of Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, the parliamentary democracies of Israel and Lebanon, and (since 1975) the moderate authoritarian government in Egypt suggests that ideological factors have been relatively unimportant.⁶⁸ Moreover, the United States sought closer relations with both Syria and Egypt on several occasions (ignoring their avowedly socialist policies) and provided military and economic aid to the authoritarian regime in North Yemen in the late 1970s.⁶⁹

As with the Soviet Union, ideological solidarity between the United States and its Middle East allies is confined largely to issues of foreign policy. Just as Soviet allies proclaim a consistent opposition to imperialism, the United States and its Middle East allies share an aversion to revolutionary change in general and Soviet Communism in particular. For the conservative Arabs, Communism is suspect because it is both atheistic and openly hostile to monarchical rule. Thus both Saudi Arabia and Jordan have favored alignment with the United States because they recognize that the United States is equally hostile to Communism.⁷⁰ By

68. Although U.S. support for Israel is frequently justified by the fact that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, the relatively minor role of this factor is revealed by the fact that the United States refused to make an explicit security commitment to the Jewish state until 1962. If ideological solidarity had been all that important, one would have expected to see an alliance between the two states much sooner. It is also worth remembering that Israel originally adopted a policy of nonalignment and received military aid from the Soviet bloc, only to shift toward the West when Soviet friendship waned in the early 1950s.

69. As John Badeau, a former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, wrote in 1968: "It would be impossible to conduct a foreign policy in which the fostering of democratic institutions and a free enterprise economy is rated equal in importance with strategic interests. . . . In fact, no country in the Arab world either fits the American prescription for democracy and free enterprise or shows much likelihood of doing so in the next few decades. Rigorously applied, a policy of promoting democracy and free enterprise as basic interests would impede U.S. relations with all Arab states." See Badeau, *American Approach to the Arab World*, p. 116.

70. As William B. Quandt has written: "Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Saudis were particularly concerned about the indirect Soviet threat to the region. Radical ideologies—Nasserism, Ba'thist socialism, and Communism—were viewed by the Saudi leadership as disruptive forces that served to advance Soviet interests in the Arab world." See Quandt, *Saudi Arabia in the 1980s*, p. 65. For additional evidence of Saudi and Jordanian hostility toward Communism, see Holden and Johns, *House of Saud*, pp. 248-49, 307, 357, 390; "Abd-al-Nasir's Secret Papers," p. 129; Hussein, *Uneasy Lies the Head*, pp. 95-96, 210-11; and MER 1960, p. 334.

the same logic, the inability (and unwillingness) of the United States to foster good relations with Nasser's Egypt, the Ba'th in Syria, and the PDRY may have been due in part to the commitment of these states to revolutionary goals (such as Egypt's intervention in Yemen) and to their perception of the United States as the world's leading imperialist power.

Ideological solidarity between the United States and its allies is limited in other respects as well. Just as the Soviets did not embrace Arab unity, Arab socialism, or the liquidation of Israel, the United States is neither a welfare-state theocracy such as Israel nor an Islamic monarchy such as Saudi Arabia and (nominally) Jordan. The United States officially rejects both the ideological basis for Israel's claims to the West Bank and the anti-Israeli dogma of the various Arab allies of the United States. Although Saudi Arabia still refuses to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, ideological differences have not prevented Hussein of Jordan from establishing relations with Moscow or from threatening to go further if U.S. support wavers. In short, the total degree of ideological agreement among both Soviet and U.S. allies in the Middle East is not perfect, even in the area of foreign policy.

Explaining the Impact of Ideology

What does this analysis reveal about the relationship between ideology and superpower alliances in the Middle East? Three things primarily. First, although the Soviet Union has allied with leftist regimes and the United States has not, neither superpower has insisted that its allies follow domestic policies similar to its own. The clients of the two superpowers, in turn, have shown little desire to do so. Having seized power ostensibly to eliminate foreign influence, the nationalist leaders of the progressive Arab states have been understandably reluctant to embrace a foreign ideology. Thus Nasser stressed that "Egypt is determined to have and maintain ideological independence from all foreign ideologies," and Michel Aflaq, co-founder of the Ba'th Party, insisted that "Communism is strange to the Arabs, just as the capitalist system is."⁷¹ As for the conservative Arabs, the spread of any foreign ideology would have undermined their traditional authority and invited political suicide. Thus most Middle East states have rejected both superpowers' domestic ideology.

Second, to the extent that ideological agreement has affected alliance choices, it is confined to foreign policy preferences such as opposition to imperialism. As a result, the observed association between domestic ideology and superpower alignment may be partly spurious. In particu-

71. These statements are found in Torrey, *Syrian Politics and the Military*, p. 371; and Love, *Suez*, p. 645. See also Buss, "Wary Partners," pp. 2-6.

lar, it is due in part to the legacy of British and French imperialism and to the self-fulfilling dynamics described in chapter 2.

The imperialist legacy had several effects. The imperial powers based their rule on close ties with the traditional authorities in the regions under their control (e.g., the Hashemites in Jordan and Iraq and King Farouk in Egypt). Opposition to British and French rule thus tended to be opposed to the conservative political and social order that prevailed in these countries. As a result, wherever the revolutionaries gained power, they adopted domestic and foreign policies at odds with those of their conservative predecessors. Thus the progressive regimes were leftist because their domestic opponents were conservative, and they were anti-imperialist because the regimes they overthrew were products of the imperialist past.

The close collaboration between the imperial powers and the traditional rulers encouraged the revolutionary Arabs to be suspicious of the West. Moreover, the fact that these movements overturned existing Western allies (e.g., the Hashemites in Iraq) meant that their suspicions were usually justified. Predictably, this increased the tendency of the revolutionary states to ally with the Soviet Union. As Mohamed Heikal has described it, "The nationalist leaders . . . needed allies, and the natural direction for them to turn was towards the Soviet Union . . . because the Soviet Union was innocent of a colonial past in the area."⁷²

This factor suggests that regime change, not domestic ideology itself, is the common factor linking domestic characteristics with alliance preferences. The pattern is striking: the principal allies of the Soviet Union in the Middle East have been states whose postimperial governments were overthrown by nationalist revolutions; the principal allies of the United States in the Middle East have been the states in which the regimes created by the West remained in power.⁷³ Indeed, the latter have favored the United States because they owe their positions to Western support and because leftist change poses a direct threat to their own authority. Thus the historical experiences of both leftist and conservative regimes have conditioned their attitudes and policies toward both superpowers.

72. Heikal, *Sphinx and Commissar*, p. 276. See also Hudson, *Arab Politics*, chap. 5; and Kerr, *Arab Cold War*, pp. 2-5.

73. The exceptions do not challenge this interpretation. Israeli democracy is mildly leftist in orientation, but the Western powers ultimately played a constructive role in creating the Jewish state. Accordingly, Israel found it relatively easy to abandon its early policy of nonalignment to favor the West. Similarly, conservative Yemen was a nominal Soviet ally in the 1950s, but primarily to gain Soviet support in its challenge to British rule in Aden. Thus Israel could be leftist and pro-Western because it has had no imperialist past; Yemen could be conservative and pro-Soviet because the Imam had his own quarrel with a Western power.

These historical factors were reinforced by subsequent events. The conflict with Israel—viewed as an imperialist creation by the progressive Arabs—reinforced incentives to align with the Soviet Union. Moreover, because the United States and Great Britain viewed the revolutionary states with suspicion and occasional hostility (in part because they suspected them of pro-Soviet inclinations), the progressive states were forced even closer to Moscow. As described in chapter 3, the Baghdad Pact, the Suez war, the Eisenhower Doctrine, and the U.S. intervention in Lebanon merely confirmed Arab suspicions that the United States had inherited the imperial role abandoned by Britain and France. By contrast, the Soviet Union welcomed the progressive Arabs, not because they shared its domestic ideology but because they were useful allies against the West. Thus the alignment between the progressives and Moscow was reinforced by how each superpower behaved.

The process worked the other way as well. When the progressive states turned to Moscow for support, the conservative Arab preference for alignment with the United States increased. Thus, as suggested earlier, the division of the Middle East between the two superpowers was at least partly the result of self-fulfilling beliefs and predictable responses. In short, what might appear to be ideological alliances also contain important elements of balancing behavior.

If this interpretation is correct, it means that the true impact of ideology on superpower alliances is less than it appears to be. The distinction is important, because it reveals that these alliances were not the product of domestic political affinities. Instead, they were produced by the ways that each superpower's actions reinforced their opponents' fears. The fears, in turn, were based primarily on the different perceptions and preferences derived from the historical experience of colonial rule.⁷⁴

Finally, these alliances offer modest support for the hypothesis that ideology is more important when other threats are low or when defensive advantages exist. Because neither superpower has tried to conquer the region (which would encourage balancing with the other superpower irrespective of ideology), the regional states have been free to indulge their ideological preferences.⁷⁵ In other words, because the superpowers deter each other, the regional powers enjoy a diplomatic defensive advantage vis-à-vis both. As a result, they are free to align with the superpower they perceive as most compatible (even if the sim-

74. I am not suggesting that ideology has no effect, as the cases of the Marxist regime in South Yemen and the neo-Ba'ath in Syria suggest. Rather, I am suggesting that the impact of ideology is probably exaggerated.

75. See chapter 5 for further discussion on this point.

ilarity is small), because they need not be as worried that either one is preparing to attack.

By contrast, as noted earlier, Middle East states have readily ignored ideological distinctions when major threats have emerged from within the region itself. This tendency reflects the fact that direct threats from other regional powers have been more common. It also implies that an attempt by either the United States or the Soviet Union to seize significant territory in the Middle East would probably lead its present allies to ignore ideology in their rush to obtain support from the other superpower.⁷⁶

Summary

Ideological solidarity has played an important but ultimately limited role in alliances between the superpowers and the various Middle East states. A final lesson is that its impact may be due less to the intrinsic appeal of either superpower's system (i.e., Marxism-Leninism or liberal democracy) than to the overall context in which the alliances occurred. In a bipolar world in which nuclear weapons are present, in a region outside either superpower's sphere of influence, and in the decades immediately following decolonization, it was overwhelmingly likely that regional states would choose their patrons along rough ideological lines. We may question how durable this division would be if bipolarity eroded and the colonial legacy faded, and thus question the lasting importance of ideology as a cause of these alliances. The realignment of Egypt in the 1970s, the nonaligned policies of Iraq and North Yemen, and the recent hints that conservative opposition to the Soviet Union may be moderating all suggest that the impact of ideology on superpower commitments may be gradually declining. Thus what seems to have been an important cause in the past may be of little consequence in the future, should more pressing threats confront the regional states or more promising opportunities beckon the superpowers.

IDEOLOGY AND INTER-ARAB POLITICS: UNITY AND DIVISION

The evolution of inter-Arab alliances from 1955 to 1979 supports the hypothesis that the content of a given ideology determines its effects on

76. Among other things, we would expect that a U.S. attempt to seize Middle East oil fields would probably drive the Arabs closer to Moscow, and a Soviet effort to expand in the region would lead its present allies to move toward the West. One piece of evidence to support this prediction is Iraq's move closer to the West in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

alliance formation. As elaborated in chapter 2, when an ideology calls for its followers to form a centralized, hierarchical movement, it is more likely to incite conflict than cooperation among them. Conversely, when the ideology proclaims more modest goals and does not threaten the independence of the various member states, durable alliances are more likely and intense ideological rivalries are discouraged.

This section will examine the three ideological issues that have dominated Arab politics in the postwar period: (1) the ethnic nationalism that has inspired Arab cooperation against Israel; (2) the ideology of pan-Arabism, which has advocated the uniting of the Arab nations into a single state; and (3) the conflict between progressive and conservative regimes within the Arab world. Two questions are salient. First, in what ways did each set of ideological beliefs either encourage or discourage alignment? Second, what explains their varied effects?

Ethnic Solidarity: The Arabs versus Israel

The belief that the Arab peoples form a single nation has been a recurrent theme in contemporary Arab politics. As we have seen, cooperation rarely has been assured—indeed, inter-Arab quarrels often have been extremely vicious—but the power of the idea is still substantial.⁷⁷ Indeed, as suggested in chapter 5, balancing behavior in the Arab world usually takes the form of seeking to isolate and weaken one's rivals by portraying them as violating this basic norm, which testifies to its enduring relevance.

The most obvious example of ideologically inspired cooperation among the Arabs is their universal opposition to Israel. This opposition follows from the belief that the inhabitants of the various Arab states form a single nation (including the Palestinians) and that Israel is an illegitimate and alien presence on Arab territory. As a result, all Arab states are obliged to cooperate in the struggle against Israel in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the Arab nation as a whole.⁷⁸

Because of these beliefs, no Arab state has ever openly allied with Israel (Israel's support for Jordan in 1970 is but a partial exception) and only Egypt has been willing to sign a peace treaty and establish diplomatic relations with Israel.⁷⁹ In addition, the Arab League imposed an

77. See Hudson, *Arab Politics*, chap. 2, especially pp. 54–55. For a discussion of Arab solidarity with special reference to Egypt, see Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, chap. 10.

78. Examples of these Arab beliefs are far too numerous to present here. For summaries, see Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes*, especially pp. 362–83; Hudson, *Arab Politics*, chap. 5, especially pp. 115–19, 124; and Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, p. 128.

79. Jordan did rely upon tacit Israeli support during the civil war in 1970 and on Israeli forbearance during the October War. These examples however, support the argument that Arab states believe overt cooperation with Israel to be illegitimate, as Jordan and Israel did not publicize these actions as such.

economic boycott against Israel; troops from Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia fought together in the 1967 and 1973 wars; and the Arabs created and financed the PLO, sought to divert the Jordan River to reduce Israel's water supply, and provided economic assistance to the states that bore the greatest military burdens in the conflict. And as the Arab reaction to Camp David showed, any Arab leader who breaks ranks to make peace is certain to be ostracized by the rest of his Arab brethren. These various measures often are ineffective and motivated as much by inter-Arab rivalries as by hostility to Israel itself. But the fact that this issue could be used to discredit opponents or enhance one's own position reveals its political potency: the ideal of Arab solidarity has been a constant force sustaining Arab alignments against Israel, irrespective of Arab conflicts with one another.

The central lesson is that Arab solidarity against Israel has been nearly universal because it usually has not been very demanding. To be a good Arab has required opposing the "Zionist entity" but has not required agreement on how to deal with Israel's continued presence and potent capabilities. In addition, it has not involved great sacrifices on the part of the Arab states, at least prior to 1967. Then, as now, the impact of Arab solidarity was primarily negative; it could impede recognition of or cooperation with Israel, but it provided little positive force for alignment.

The Six Day War marks the key historical division. Before the war, Arab cooperation against Israel was largely symbolic.⁸⁰ From 1957 to 1967, Nasser showed that one could demonstrate impeccable Arab credentials by making fiery speeches while simultaneously stressing that the time was not yet ripe for action.⁸¹ In May 1967, however, a combination of overconfidence and misleading information led Egypt and Jordan to take the demands of Arab solidarity too seriously, leading to what Hussein later termed "our historic error." What should be emphasized, however, is that the heavy price the Arabs paid in this war was unin-

80. This symbolism is nicely illustrated by the Arab summits between 1964 and 1966. Pressed by the Syrians to take more direct action but aware that direct action was unwise, Nasser defused the pressure by arranging an Arab summit to endorse rather innocuous actions (such as the establishment of the PLO and the diversion of the Jordan River waters away from Israel's water projects). The diversion was never completed, and the PLO remained firmly under the control of the states providing it with financial support, but Egypt and the conservative Arabs had shown fidelity to the Arab cause.

81. For example, in 1965 Nasser declared: "We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand. We shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood." Quoted in Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes*, p. 38. Yet despite pressure from his rivals in Syria and elsewhere, Nasser made it clear that he would not "fight at a time when I was unable to do so. I would not lead my country to disaster and would not gamble with its destiny." Accordingly, he called incessantly for strengthening the Arab states for the coming battle but refrained from provoking a conflict until his major miscalculation in May and June 1967. On this point, see Kerr, *Arab Cold War*, pp. 98–100; *MER* 1960, pp. 171–73; *MER* 1961, pp. 181–83; and Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes*, pp. 4–6 and *passim*.

tended and the war itself was due as much to inter-Arab rivalries as to hostility toward Israel. Because Arab losses in 1967 provided a far more powerful incentive for cooperation, a gradual trend toward more effective Arab action began to emerge, culminating in the Arabs' successful surprise attack in October 1973.

To summarize: The nationalist solidarity of the Arabs has been a constant force for cooperation against Israel, but usually not a very powerful one. The Arab alliance against Israel is large but lacks cohesion, except when more tangible incentives are present. For any Arab leader, failure to support the cause invites criticism, but meeting one's obligations is relatively easy to do. Although this component of Arab ideology encourages a broad Arab alignment against Israel, the coalitions that it creates have been neither especially cohesive nor effective, unless direct material incentives reinforce the general ideological line.

Birds of a Feather Flying Apart: The Effects of Pan-Arabism

According to Fouad Ajami, "Pan-Arabism dominated the political consciousness of modern Arabs."⁸² If, as one writer suggests, the "Arab world has been awash with ideology," the prominence of pan-Arab ideas helps explain why it was also awash with conflict.⁸³ In simple terms, the ideology of pan-Arabism called for the unification of the Arab nation in a single state.⁸⁴ Yet the more widely it was accepted and the more intently the goal of unity was pursued, the more conflictive inter-Arab relations became. This conflict is the paradox of pan-Arabism; although the ideology called for close cooperation and was widely accepted, it was in fact a source of intense division among the elites who claimed to embrace it.

There are ample grounds for the concept of Arab unity, including a common language, religion, and culture.⁸⁵ Moreover, the widespread

82. See Fouad Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," *Foreign Affairs*, 57, no. 2 (1978-1979): 355.

83. Hudson, *Arab Politics*, p. 20.

84. For representative statements, see Abdullah al-Alayili, "What Is Arab Nationalism?" in Haim, *Arab Nationalism*, pp. 120-27; and "The Background of Arab Nationalism," in Karpas, *Political and Social Thought*, pt. 1, sec. 2. See also Hudson, *Arab Politics*, chap. 2; Devlin, *Ba'th Party*, chap. 3; Sayegh, *Arab Unity*; Gershoni, *Emergence of Pan Arabism in Egypt*; and Binder, *Ideological Revolution in the Middle East*, chap. 7, especially pp. 204-12.

85. To say that there are ample grounds for Arab unity does not mean it is very likely; it means only that unity is a plausible vision for the Arabs to embrace. There are important schisms within both the Islamic and the Arab spheres, including the existence of minority groups such as Lebanese Christians, Egyptian Copts, Syrian Alawites, and Iraqi Kurds. The division between Sunni and Shi'ite Moslems has become increasingly important, to say nothing of the linguistic, tribal, and judicial divisions that exist throughout the Arab world. My point is that although there are important divisions, the existence of equally important common features combined with a popular ideology that stresses the similarities among the Arab peoples and extolls the virtues of Arab nationalism has made the idea of formal political unity plausible.

belief that the division of the Arab world was the result of foreign interference increased the conviction that this artificial situation should be corrected.⁸⁶ Thus it is not surprising that pan-Arabism became popular.

For many Arabs (and many others as well), Nasser's rise to power heralded a new Arab resurgence through political unification. As one of his Ba'thist rivals admitted, "Nasser was the first and only Arab leader capable of taking the leadership of an Arab renaissance."⁸⁷ For Nasser and Egypt, moreover, invoking pan-Arab ideals provided a potential defense against imperialist interference (through Arab cooperation) while enhancing Nasser's own charismatic authority.⁸⁸ According to Adeed Dawisha, by the end of 1955 "Egypt had . . . firmly moved from the periphery to the core of the Middle East international system and as such had become the focus not only of the Arab political situation, but also, and perhaps more importantly, of its major ideological manifestation, the 'Arab nationalist movement.'"⁸⁹ And despite the fact that Nasser was a late convert whose true commitment to formal unity was questionable, there is little doubt that he saw himself as the rightful leader of that movement.⁹⁰

Between 1955 and 1979, at least five attempts to implement the goal of Arab unity were made, all of them failures. They reveal how ideologies such as pan-Arabism ultimately can be more divisive than unifying, that birds of a feather can and do fly apart.

The most important example, the union of Egypt and Syria into the UAR, restored the momentum Nasser had lost when the Arab Solidarity Pact unraveled after the Suez War. The decision to unite was based on both ideological and pragmatic motives, as Nasser and his Syrian partners each sought to enhance their internal and external positions by exploiting pan-Arab sentiments.⁹¹ The immediate response reveals the

86. In the words of Kemal Karpas, "Nasser's foreign policy . . . can be regarded as born out of protest against the artificial division of Arab lands into several states, and against their backward economic, social, and political systems. . . . The ultimate goal of this view was a Pan-Arabism that would lead eventually to unification and integration in the form of one Arab state." See Karpas, *Political and Social Thought*, p. 159; and Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, pp. 142-43. The goal of Arab unity was even more explicit in the ideology of the Ba'th. See Devlin, *Ba'th Party*, pp. 23-29.

87. Quoted in Stephens, *Nasser*, p. 343. See also the statements quoted by Malcolm Kerr in *Arab Cold War*, pp. 55-56; and Safran, *From War to War*, chap. 2, especially pp. 68-74.

88. See Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, pp. 11-12, 135; Hudson, *Arab Politics*, p. 242; and Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir*, chap. 4. Interestingly, Nasser's own pan-Arab views emerged rather late in his rise to power. On this point, see Seale, *Struggle for Syria*, pp. 225-26.

89. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, p. 14.

90. See Seale, *Struggle for Syria*, pp. 225-26; and Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, pp. 134-35.

91. Both sides wanted to prevent a Communist takeover in Syria—which Nasser's prestige could quell—and to enhance their standing within the Arab world at large. See Seale, *Struggle for Syria*, chap. 22; Torrey, *Syrian Politics and the Military*, pp. 378-81; Kerr,

power of the pan-Arab ideal: the union was acclaimed throughout the Arab world, and Nasser's rivals in Jordan and Iraq immediately sought to imitate the UAR by forming their own Federal Union.⁹² When Nasser was joined by the Imam of Yemen and (briefly) by the Iraqi revolutionaries in 1958, progress toward "one Arab nation with an immortal mission" must have seemed almost inevitable.

These hopes were soon dashed. General Qassem ousted the pan-Arab forces in Iraq and reasserted Iraq's separate national identity. When Nasser called the UAR "the first achievement of Arab nationalism" and pledged that the UAR "would endeavor to realize complete Arab unity," Qassem spoke of "the immortal Iraqi republic" and argued that "every Arab country has its independent political identity which all must recognize."⁹³ Qassem's explicit rejection of formal unity thus challenged Nasser's position as leader of the pan-Arab movement, and Egypt and Iraq remained rivals until Qassem's assassination in 1963.

In the UAR itself, Nasser refused to share power with his Ba'thist partners and imposed Egyptian institutions on Syria's political system and economy.⁹⁴ By 1961 dissatisfaction within Syria led a group of Syrian army officers to stage a coup and secede from the UAR. The post-mortem by Ba'th leader Salah Bitar was revealing: "The rupture between Nasser and the Ba'th was caused by a certain Egyptian hegemonic view of the union."⁹⁵ Although Nasser and the Ba'th apparently shared similar goals, the first attempt to implement the pan-Arab vision had failed.

The turbulent relations between Egypt, Syria, and Iraq after the Syrian secession illustrate the paradox of pan-Arabism even more fully. After an unsuccessful attempt to mollify pan-Arab sentiment by moving closer to Iraq, the secessionist regime was overthrown by a Ba'thist coup in March 1963. The Iraqi Ba'th had seized power in Baghdad several weeks earlier, and suddenly three openly pan-Arab regimes faced the challenge of fulfilling their stated commitment to unity.

The result was the abortive Tripartite Unity Agreement of April 1963. Both its origins and its failure are revealing. The civilians in the Ba'th were committed to unity, but a union with Egypt was sought primarily

Arab Cold War, pp. 7-12; Heikal, *Sphinx and Commissar*, pp. 86-87; and Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, pp. 19-21.

92. As noted in chapter 5, this alliance was essentially another case of balancing. By enhancing Nasser's prestige and thus his ability to invoke the symbols and power of pan-Arab ideology, the formation of the UAR threatened the legitimacy of Nasser's rivals. Imitation was both a sincere form of flattery and a reflection of sincere concern on the part of King Hussein and Iraqi Premier Nuri al-Said.

93. Qassem also avoided any references to the goal of formal unity. See *MER* 1960, pp. 116-20.

94. See Rabinovich, *Syria under the Ba'th*, pp. 16-18; and Devlin *Ba'th Party*, pp. 135-45, 196.

95. Quoted in Stephens, *Nasser*, p. 343.

to keep their domestic political rivals (and especially the Nasserists) at bay. As Itamar Rabinovich points out: "The [Syrian] government constituted a unionist regime in the sense that its leaders wanted to establish normal, even close relations with Nasser. One important lesson of the previous eighteen months was that this had become a prerequisite for political stability in Syria."⁹⁶ Or in the words of Malcolm Kerr, "The weight of Nasser's prestige was the priceless asset that the Syrian and Iraqi delegations had come to [the Tripartite unity talks] to seek."⁹⁷ Because pan-Arabism was the dominant ideological vision and Nasser was its leading apostle, his support had become a crucial component of legitimacy for any Arab regime whose popularity rested on support for similar ideals.

Not only did the negotiations themselves reveal little practical basis for cooperation—each party had different ideas regarding how unity might be achieved—but the resulting agreement for union collapsed quickly.⁹⁸ When Nasserist forces continued their attempts to overthrow the Syrian government, the Ba'th was forced to repress them violently. (Indeed, the Ba'th military, never enthusiastic about the prospect of another union, welcomed the opportunity.) Nasser then renounced the unity agreement and left Syria and Iraq to their fates. The two Ba'th regimes continued the union on a bilateral basis until November 1963, when yet another coup in Iraq removed the Ba'th from power and brought the alignment to an end.

Over the next three years, Syria and Egypt waged an intense ideological conflict, while the Syrians adopted increasingly extreme positions at home and toward Israel.⁹⁹ But because neither Egypt nor the conservative Arabs wanted a war with Israel at this time, and because their extremism made the Arab monarchies even more suspicious of the Ba'th than they were of Nasser, this policy succeeded only in keeping the Ba'th isolated within the Arab world.

These events are extremely revealing. Still claiming allegiance to the

96. Rabinovich, *Syria under the Ba'th*, pp. 52-54.

97. Kerr, *Arab Cold War*, chaps. 3 and 4, especially p. 56. For an Egyptian account of the Tripartite talks, see *Arab Political Documents* 1963, pp. 73-213. I have found Kerr's fascinating analysis of these negotiations extremely helpful in preparing this section.

98. To avoid a repetition of their experience in the UAR, the Syrians sought to limit Nasser's formal powers. Predictably, Nasser insisted on reserving the dominant role for himself or his supporters. Given that the Syrians and Iraqis needed him far more than he needed them, Nasser got his way. See Kerr, *Arab Cold War*, pp. 50, 57, 70, 75-76.

99. As a leading expert on the Ba'th described this trend: "The Ba'th realized that it was politically even more imperative . . . to demonstrate that it did have an ideology distinct from Nasser if not superior [to him]. Since they could neither effectively dispute Nasser's leadership of Arab nationalism nor afford to speak for Iraqi and Syrian particularism, they felt they could legitimize their conflict with him by convincing Arab public opinion that it was an ideological one." See Rabinovich, *Syria under the Ba'th*, p. 84.

ideal of Arab unity, the Ba'th was forced to compromise repeatedly in 1964 and 1965. Whenever Nasser called for an Arab summit, the Syrians faced the unenviable choice of cooperation on Nasser's terms or complete isolation. Until 1966, their lingering commitment to unity and still-precarious internal position effectively prevented an independent Syrian policy.

By contrast, the neo-Ba'th radicals who seized power in February 1966 faced no such problem, and they turned the tables on Nasser with remarkable ease. The neo-Ba'th rejected the traditional goal of Arab unity and maintained its authority through unchallenged control of the Syrian armed forces. As a result, it had little need for Nasser's support. And because it was willing to act alone against Israel—despite the costs and risks—Nasser was unable to call its bluff by threatening to isolate it.¹⁰⁰ Having seized the initiative on the crucial issue of Palestine and having proclaimed a far-reaching socialist program at home, the neo-Ba'th forced Nasser to join forces on its terms in order to preserve his own position as acknowledged leader of the Arab revolution. Ironically, once the Syrians abandoned the ideology of pan-Arabism, their ability to pressure Egypt into supporting them in fact increased.¹⁰¹

Significantly, the potential for conflict inherent in highly centralized movements is illustrated by the fate of the Ba'th party itself. Originally the chief advocates of Arab union, the radicals of the Syrian Ba'th Party provoked a quarrel with the Iraqi branch of the party. This quarrel soon led to a complete rift within the avowedly transnational movement. The schism has divided Iraq and Syria ever since, and it has helped discredit the pan-Arab ideal even more. As Nadav Safran points out, "If a small group of leaders from one and the same party could not operate in harmony, how could they bring together the leaders and peoples of the different Arab countries?"¹⁰²

The Arab Unity Pact between Egypt and Iraq in 1964 suggests an answer to this question: formal unity was possible only when it was not taken very seriously. Having ousted the Iraqi Ba'th, President Aref was free to pursue his personal admiration for Nasser and his earlier commitment to unity.¹⁰³ But in contrast to the UAR, neither Iraq nor Egypt

100. Nasser's ability (and willingness) to do so was also reduced by the decline in Egypt's relations with Jordan and Saudi Arabia in 1966.

101. See Kerr, *Arab Cold War*, pp. 121–22; and Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, p. 48.

102. Safran, "Arab Politics: Peace and War," p. 395.

103. Aref had been co-leader (with Qassem) of the Iraqi government that succeeded Nuri al-Said and Feisal II in 1958. He had negotiated a union agreement with Egypt at the time but lost a power struggle with Qassem and was forced into exile. He returned to power in 1963 in partnership with the Ba'th and then ousted the Ba'th several months later. Evidence regarding Aref's pan-Arab convictions can be found in Roi, *From Encroachment to Involvement*, pp. 379–85; and Heikal, *Cairo Documents*, pp. 155–57.

became heavily involved in the other's internal affairs. Although Aref began a number of domestic reforms in order to facilitate the union, they were quickly abandoned when they proved unsuitable for Iraq.¹⁰⁴ Several Nasserist plots against Aref discouraged additional progress, although the Egyptian role in these events is unclear.¹⁰⁵ Egypt and Iraq remained loosely aligned until after the Six Day War, and the modest success of the Unity Agreement lay precisely in the fact that the participants sought very limited objectives throughout. Thus pan-Arab alliances could succeed if and only if the sovereignty of the member states was not seriously challenged.¹⁰⁶

What explains the failure of pan-Arabism? Why did its most enthusiastic proponents find cooperation so difficult to sustain? The answer lies in the contradictory premises of the ideology itself. Pan-Arabism threatened the security of the separate Arab regimes, because it called for them to merge into a single state. The long-range goal of unity could not be openly abandoned, because it provided an important source of legitimacy for the revolutionary Arab states. But if the goal were ever achieved, all regimes save the one that emerged on top would be replaced. Thus the various attempts to implement an Arab union quickly became struggles for hegemony. As the collapse of the UAR illustrates, even the most serious efforts were highly unstable. Indeed, even the most dedicated advocate of pan-Arabism, the Ba'th, fell victim to bitter factional quarrels once it acquired political power in more than one country. In the politics of pan-Arabism, in short, nothing failed like success.

Finally, because the ideology of pan-Arabism was an important source of legitimacy, setbacks required renewed efforts and a search for scapegoats. For example, Nasser blamed reactionary forces for the break-up of the UAR, and the National Charter that Egypt adopted in 1962 openly proclaimed Egypt's right to intervene against these opponents.¹⁰⁷ Thus pursuit of the pan-Arab ideal undermined relations

104. See Khadduri, *Republican Iraq*, pp. 224–28, 233–36, 247–49, 252–61.

105. For different versions of these events, see Lenczowski, *Middle East in World Affairs*, pp. 303–4; Khadduri, *Republican Iraq*, pp. 245–46, 255; and Penrose and Penrose, *Iraq*, pp. 329–30, 345.

106. Much the same description applies to the Federation of Arab Republics formed among Egypt, Sudan, Syria, and Libya in 1971. Largely the brainchild of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi (who was an intense admirer of Nasser), the federation was a rather limited affair that Anwar Sadat probably agreed to join simply to show loyalty to Nasser's ideas. See Peter K. Bechtold, "New Attempts at Arab Cooperation: The Federation of Arab Republics, 1971–7?" *MEJ*, 27, no. 2 (1973).

107. As the charter stated: "[Egypt] . . . is bound to spread its mission and put the principles upon which it rests at the disposal of all the Arabs, disregarding the wornout notion that in doing so it is interfering in other people's affairs." Quoted in Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, p. 35.

between its advocates and its opponents alike. The reason is simple: as an ideology explicitly aimed at all Arab states, its success posed a potential threat to all regimes save the ultimate victor, regardless of whether the regime shared the same goal or not.

This interpretation receives additional support from the evolution of Arab politics after Nasser's death. His successor, Anwar Sadat, possessed neither the charisma nor the desire to pursue pan-Arab ideals. For Sadat, legitimacy could be won only through practical achievements. As he put it, he was more interested in the "essence of Arab unity" than the forms. In other words, effective alliances were more important than leadership over a united Arab world. As we have already seen, this more modest goal proved to be quite feasible.¹⁰⁸

In short, pan-Arabism is a classic example of how an ideology that calls for its members to form a centralized movement is likely to produce precisely the opposite result.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, Nasser seems to have drawn the same lesson from his experiences with the UAR and the Tripartite Unity Agreement. The more realistic appraisal that these failures produced is a fitting summary to this analysis: "A natural, legitimate union is assured and inevitable. . . . But nowadays the concept of Union itself is in crisis. . . . This kind of multiplicity of nationalist activities seems to lead us to clashes. . . . While every Arab country boasts a [revolutionary] party, union seems utterly impossible. True political opposition would degenerate into regionalism, with Syria at odds with Egypt, Iraq at odds with Syria, and so forth."¹¹⁰

Birds of a Feather Flocking Together: Monarchical Solidarity

In contrast to the conflicts that pan-Arabism produced among the various progressive regimes, the conservative Arab monarchies main-

108. In Sadat's own words: "What are the disputes that have endangered Arab solidarity? First of all, ideological rifts, which we transposed onto our differences of opinion, and used to categorize Arab regimes [into different slots]." There is also evidence that the disaster of June 1967 had led Nasser to similar views. His willingness to cooperate with Jordan and his efforts to promote an all-Arab front against Israel (with no intimations of formal unity) suggest that he too had abandoned pan-Arab ideals under the pressure of external circumstances. Sadat's preferences are revealed both by his statements and by his decision to change Egypt's formal name from the United Arab Republic to the Arab Republic of Egypt. On this aspect of Sadat's policies, see Kerr, *Arab Cold War*, p. 129; Hudson, *Arab Politics*, pp. 248-49; Heikal, "Egyptian Foreign Policy," p. 720; Heikal, *Road to Ramadan*, pp. 133-34; Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution*, p. 126; and Israeli, *Public Diary of Sadat*, 1: 403, 369, 2: 501.

109. Majid Khadduri puts it well: "As an ideology, Arab socialism was intended to be a unifying rather than a disruptive factor in the movement towards Arab unity. But no sooner had the nucleus of an Arab union been achieved—the United Arab Republic—then several variants began to develop, stemming partly from parochial and partly from personal and procedural differences." See Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World* (Baltimore, 1970), pp. 171-72.

110. Speech on the eleventh anniversary of the July 23 revolution, reprinted in *Arab Political Documents 1963*, p. 333 and passim.

tained generally good relations throughout the period examined here. Not only did they avoid serious rivalries from the early 1950s, but their similar domestic orders provided a strong motive for cooperation, as the Kings' Alliance, the Iraqi-Jordanian Federal Union, and the bilateral defense treaties between Saudi Arabia and Jordan in 1962 reveal.

Two lessons should be drawn from these events. First, these alliances were not the result of any intrinsic affinity between monarchical regimes. Indeed, the Hashemites in Jordan and Iraq and the House of Saud had been dynastic rivals for several decades, and King Saud initially allied with Egypt against the Baghdad Pact. The monarchical solidarity that developed later was based primarily on the common threat posed by the revolutionary Arab nationalism of Nasser and the Ba'th. As a result, the independent power of monarchical solidarity was probably slight.

At the same time, the ease with which the conservative Arabs maintained good relations with one another stands in sharp contrast to the behavior of the progressive states that proclaimed broader pan-Arab goals. Unlike the revolutionary Arabs, the Arab monarchies based their legitimacy on traditional values and allegiances.¹¹¹ For them, "Arab unity" meant nothing more than seeking a consensus among the Arabs, beginning with acceptance of one another's sovereignty. As King Hussein summarized his differences with Nasser: "My own concept of Arab nationalism . . . is quite different from . . . Nasser's. . . . He believes that Arab nationalism can only be identified by a particular brand of political unity. . . . I disagree. The seeking of popular support for . . . one form of leadership . . . has fostered factionalism to a dangerous degree. . . . It is nothing more than a new form of imperialism, the domination of one state by another. Arab nationalism can survive only through complete equality."¹¹² Saudi Arabian views were similar, and the Saudis actively opposed the Arab revolutionaries on several occasions.¹¹³

Although the threat from revolutionary movements is the principal cause of monarchical solidarity, these alliances were easier to maintain because cooperation did not at the same time pose a threat to the independence of the states involved. Because the basis of monarchical rule is

111. See James Piscatori, "Islamic Values and National Interest: The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia," in *Islam and Foreign Policy*, ed. Adeed Dawisha (Cambridge, England, 1983).

112. Hussein, *Uneasy Lies the Head*, p. 92 and passim. See also Hussein's statements in *Arab Political Documents 1963*, pp. 349-50, 362-64.

113. Saudi Arabia supported the royalist forces in the Yemen civil war and fought a border war with South Yemen in the 1970s. See Dawisha, "Saudi Arabia's Search for Security," pp. 7-8, 20-21; and King Feisal's press conference of June 5, 1965, in *Arab Political Documents 1965*, p. 232. The Saudi attitude toward the goals of the Ba'th Party are revealed by Feisal's terse comment to Nasser during a meeting in 1969: "May God destroy the Ba'th Party." See "'Abd-al-Nasir's Secret Papers," p. 127.

the absolute sovereignty of each monarch over his own realm, interference in the realm of another legitimate sovereign violates the political principles upon which one's own rule was founded. Where pan-Arabism called for its advocates to sacrifice their sovereignty in order to unite (and, in Nasser's view, justified interference or subversion to bring unity about), the implicit ideological basis of a monarchical alliance reinforces the sovereignty of each monarch. Thus relations among the conservative Arabs have been remarkably stable since 1955. This stability does not mean that dynastic rivalries will not occur; it means only that they will not arise from ideological competition.

CONCLUSION

The history of alliance formation in the Middle East offers only modest support for the hypothesis that states with similar domestic systems are more likely to ally with one another. Not only are alliances among dissimilar states almost as common as those among similar ones, but the degree of ideological conformity within many of the alliances is small. Furthermore, the evidence confirms that states are usually willing to ignore ideological considerations when strict fidelity to them would be costly or dangerous.

As predicted, ideological factors exerted their greatest effect on relations between the superpowers and their regional allies. This association, however, probably exaggerates the true importance of ideology. Ideological agreement has been confined primarily to the realm of foreign policy, and these alliances have relatively little to do with shared domestic traits. Instead, they are the result of particular historical experiences (e.g., colonialism) and the beliefs that these experiences encouraged, reinforced by how both superpowers subsequently behaved. Indeed, ideology may be more of a rationalization than a cause.

Although the general proposition that like states attract appears questionable, several other hypotheses receive greater support. First, as just noted, states are more likely to respond to ideological factors when they do not face imminent threats from other sources. Thus ideology does affect how regional powers select superpower patrons, because the direct threat that either superpower presents is small. And because both superpowers are usually eager to gain new allies, regional powers can choose whichever is ideologically more compatible, even if the true degree of ideological similarity is slight. Moreover, it is surely no accident that ideological rivalries in the Arab world were most influential before the Six Day War. When Israel's victory created a new and vital set of security concerns, the importance of ideology in the Arab world de-

clined precipitously.¹¹⁴ This result is especially important; it suggests that ideological alliances will be rather fragile if they are subjected to serious conflicts of interest among the members.

Second, the failure of pan-Arabism provides an especially strong test of the hypothesis that ideologies seeking to bring the members into a single unified movement are unlikely to promote effective alliances. Despite widespread popular support, a charismatic leader (Nasser), and a common enemy (Israel), the repeated attempts to translate the pan-Arab dream into practical reality succeeded only in dividing the movement's followers further. Like the Communist International, pan-Arabism led to conflict because it required its members to give up their privileged positions at home and subordinate themselves to a foreign elite. They rejected this choice and gradually abandoned the centralist premises of pan-Arabism in favor of the more modest (and thus more feasible) goal of simple Arab solidarity.

Third, these alliances also indicate that nationalism remains the most common form of ideological solidarity. Despite their other differences, the Arab states have all agreed on the need to support each other (and the Palestinians) in the conflict with Israel. Although this support rarely has required more than symbolic gestures, on several occasions the need to show solidarity against Israel has imposed significant costs. The Six Day War provides the most obvious example, but by no means the only one.

We should also recognize, however, that this type of nationalist solidarity is rather rare in international politics. Inter-Arab relations are unusual in part because the Arab nation is larger than the individual states that compose it. As a result, Arab nationalism encourages alliances against a perceived foreign presence such as Israel.¹¹⁵ Because the division of one nation or people into many states is unusual, we can conclude that the number of cases where ethnic solidarity will be an important cause of alignment will be small.

Finally, the analysis performed in this chapter reveals that the common distinction between ideological solidarity and external threats is often mistaken. When states lack legitimacy, the ability to manipulate a popular ideology can provide opponents with a potent offensive capability. In the Arab world, the threat of ideological subversion has been

¹¹⁴ This tendency is nowhere better revealed than in Egypt's withdrawal from Yemen and Nasser's calls for an "all-Arab front, regardless of left or right political ideology," against Israel, which began after the Six Day War.

¹¹⁵ The most notable other example of this type of solidarity is the British Commonwealth. In this case, ethnic solidarity helps explain why Australia and Canada fought on Britain's side in both World Wars, even when their own security was not directly threatened.

far more important than the threat of direct conquest. Thus ideological quarrels—between conservatives, progressives, and pan-Arabists alike—are not all that different from the external threats examined in chapter 5. In the same way, the strong association between ideology and superpower alliances is due primarily to the fact that the historical origins of these states left the superpowers and their respective clients with similar views on which states posed the greatest threats. It is also worth noting that these ideological challenges usually led the endangered states to balance against the states that posed them. Thus balance of threat theory in fact subsumes ideological explanations, at least under certain conditions.

In this way, these alliances also illustrate what happens when statesmen exaggerate the unifying effects of ideology. If one statesman believes ideology to be the most critical cause of alignment and conducts his relations with others on that basis (as Nasser did in the early 1960s), then we would expect to see sharp ideological divisions emerge (as indeed they did). As suggested earlier, such divisions occur because similar states will be courted and dissimilar ones attacked (as they were following Syria's secession in 1961). But if ideology is in fact not that powerful, differences among the alleged brethren will rapidly undermine these fragile alliances. The turbulent state of inter-Arab relations prior to 1967 provides several examples of this dynamic: ideological divisions were created because Nasser took ideology seriously, but the alliances of Arab revolutionaries broke down because he greatly exaggerated its unifying effects.

One sees elements of this dynamic in superpower alliances as well. Both superpowers have taken certain ideological criteria very seriously (e.g., both are sensitive to leftist states, albeit in opposite ways), thereby helping create the very divisions they expect. But these affinities may have been exaggerated by both sides; in particular, Moscow's assorted leftist clients have shown remarkable independence, even, as in the case of Egypt, to the extent of defecting to the West. External forces and leaders' personalities may be far more important than ideological solidarity.¹¹⁶

In sum, one might say that there is less to ideological solidarity than meets the eye. The tendency for states with similar domestic systems

116. On this point, see Adeed Dawisha, "The Soviet Union in the Arab World: The Limits to Superpower Influence," in *The Soviet Union in the Middle East: Policies and Perspectives*, ed. Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha (London, 1982), pp. 19-21. For evidence that the Soviets are increasingly aware of the limited impact of ideological solidarity, see Elizabeth K. Valkenier, "Revolutionary Change in the Third World: Recent Soviet Reassessments," *World Politics*, 38, no. 3 (1986); and Francis Fukuyama, "Gorbachev and the Third World," *Foreign Affairs*, 64, no. 4 (1986).

form effective alliances is greatest when they are fairly secure, when the ideology does not require that sovereignty be sacrificed, and when a rival movement creates a powerful threat to legitimacy. In other words, ideology is an important cause of alliance formation when states face no significant external threats, when threats are equally distributed, or when ideological factors are part of the threat itself. As the analysis in chapter 5 showed, the characteristic response in such circumstances is to counter the threat by forming an alliance against it.