

**Middle East Studies Center
Jordan**

Arab-International Relations

Reality and Horizons

Reviewed by

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Seminars

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Abstract

Arab-International Relations: Reality and Horizons

This book is the result of a scientific seminar titled “Arab-International Relations: Reality and Horizons” held on 13-14 November, 2016 with participants of the scientific and academic communities from Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq and Britain.

This book studies Arab-international relations from its different horizons, basis, levels, forces, topics and fields and its reflections on the Arab world; in addition to the future of these relations and location of this geographical region on the international relations map with the perspectives of Arab-Arab relations to increase global dynamism and draw out futuristic scenarios from Arab-international relations and present a joint vision to weave together Arab foreign policies.

In his seminar’s opening speech Mr. Jawad Al Hamad, director of the Middle East Studies Center, stated this activity is part of the program provided by MESC to heighten the level of Arab political thought outside the arena of struggles and differences between the ruling elites. It is also an attempt to place the Arabs in the globe and in world policies for research purposes and come up with a new vision to bring Arab interests together and channel their efforts to build a system of international relations and strengthen the Arab umma and enable it to grow on all levels and preventing its rupture, whilst curbing its international isolation, neglect and attrition.

Under the title of “Arab-Arab relations and its role in Arab-international relations” the book begins its introduction of how the Arab system is being re-formed. It points out since the beginning the Arab system has been distinguished by the fact that the world system was very much involved in intervening in this region to the point of global risk with theoretical analysis of Arab policies, Arab state rivalry, exploitation of Arabism, disappearance of joint Arab action, lack of rule and organization, Arab populism and its relations to the international capitalist system.

Part 1 of the book examines Arab-American-Russian relations. In the first stage it examines Arab-US relations, focusing on oil since the 1970s while the second stage looks at the Palestinian issue that continued till the end of the 1990s while the third stage on terrorism under the George W Bush and the Barack Obama administrations. The fourth stage is topped by US president Donald Trump and the creation of American populism against Arabs, Muslims and Islam. Then the book identifies American targets in the Middle East as center-stage Arab-American relations underpinned by American foreign policy objectives to force its control on the Gulf oil resources, protection of Israel and ensuring its military power in all Arab countries and making sure American companies trade and invest freely in this region of the world.

As far Arab-Russian relations, the book states Russia should study the international changes and aim to put forward a strategic policy to protect its “special interests” to avoid falling into the trap of becoming embroiled into endless wars with the peoples of the Middle East, as happened in Afghanistan. The Arab and Gulf countries must open up to Russia and assure it and allay its fears especially in the light of the sanctions imposed on that country by the United States and Europe. The book states this does not mean Arab states should succumb to Moscow but accommodate it and not to enter into a confrontation with it. Russia’s entry into the Syrian conflict was to protect its interests; the Syrian regime was a bridge for this wrongful entry

embroiling it in an international crisis. The Syrian regime wants Russia to be entangled in a quagmire and place her in confrontation with the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Part 2 of the book states that European countries need to look at the security of Arab Gulf in terms of “energy security”, the critical role it plays in this and the grave risks it carries beyond this geographical area. A research paper is also presented on Arab-British relations and the historical tensions and confrontations that developed between the United Kingdom and the people of this area, their ambitions and dreams. The relationship of the British colonizer in its various forms and its changing forms in the region is examined to the contrary of one that prevailed with the ruling elites, created and/or assisted by Britain to establish their influence in the region. In relation to the nature of the new developments in the region, affected by her intention to leave the EU, Britain will in future “focus” on the Arab system for her investments, relying on her past and present relations to confront terrorism, extremism and violence while strengthening economic relations and cracking down on collective immigration and protecting the security and existence of Israel.

As shown in **part 3** of this book on Arab-African relations with Nigeria, South Africa and African Union as case studies, the level of cooperation is below what is required in both the political and economic fields and the wish of Arab and African states to come together in spite of the political conditions and upheavals presented after the Arab Spring. This part also looked at the weakness in economic relations between Africa and the Arab world, relating to the nature of development projects in different economic investment fields.

As far Arab-Asian relations **part 4** provides a summary of the objective developments of these, calling on Arab elites to benefit from the modernization process going on in these states.

China is a role model to follow because of the five principles it pursues in its foreign policy including non-intervention in the affairs of others, respect for sovereignty and economic dimension of development and service of joint interests whilst stressing Arab-Chinese economic relations since the beginning of the 21 century as a “great leap forward” across diversified sectors including a balance between development, investments and trade. Also Japan benefited from its technological and communication revolutions to build strong relations with Arab countries. Japanese diplomacy has been keen to increase relations with all Arab countries, giving financial aid, technology and technological transfer, logistics, and development support.

In the framework of Arab-Latin American relations, the book clarifies Arab-Latin American cooperation holds a special place because the volume of benefit and opportunities that can be realized in expanding relations between the two sides. Because of this, it pushed Arab countries and Latin American states to widen their diplomatic relations with Arab states establishing more embassies in addition to honorary consulates with the latter doing the same. As well, the trade balance between Arab and Latin-American increased in volume with joint agreements signed in many fields.

In conclusion, the book states that Arab countries can play an effective role in the international political changes with an agreement to express a united vision and a total one on regional and international issues and this requires reform of Arab-Arab relations that is suffering from division and schisms. What is also needed is the re-evaluation of the development of resource indicators in the Arab world and treating disorder in the structure of the Arab economy and dealing with issues like the challenges of youth employment, widen the decision-making process and greater democratic openness.

