

**The Nature And Role Of The Arab  
Press In The Arab Foreign Policy**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
at the University of Leicester**

By

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June 1999

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**Dedication**  
**To My Wife HALAH**

HALAH during the years of my agonies stood firm by me. Providing me with love, encouragement, hope, and support. Without her, this study would never ever be able to accomplish its mission. She was not only my wife and my right hand, but she was also my doctor. Genuinely and truly, HALAH deserves to share with me this PhD. There is no way whatsoever to express my appreciation, gratitude, and love to HALAH.

## **Acknowledgment**

This study started in 1990 and was interrupted countless times during the years by severe illness. Illness kept striking hard with no mercy. Therefore, according to medical advice the PhD was abandoned in 1994. Towards the end of 1995, I realised two important factors. First, I had a strong commitment towards the subject under investigation. Second, quitting the PhD is another means of failing and failure is too hard to live by. I also failed to convince my community that I did not fail but became ill. As a result this study was resumed early in 1996. During the course of this study, I was fortunate to receive the support and encouragement of many people. There is no doubt my mother Fatimah Abdullah Al-Thabit was one of the most leading people who provided me with love and care. My mother not only taught me the meaning of communication, but also taught me how to be patient and faithful. There is no way I can acknowledge what my mother has done for me. My uncle Mustafa Idris is another significant person who played an important part in my years of education. Without his support neither the MA nor the PhD could be achieved. Both my mother and my uncle deserve the dedication of this work, but, however, they will be the first people to understand why this work is dedicated to the person to whom this work is dedicated. There is no way I can pay back my mother and my uncle for what they have done for me. I also thank my mother-in-law Badriah Ashy for her support and for raising four wonderful ladies. My thanks extend also to my children Najlaa, Alyaa, Mustafa, and Mohamed for the love they provide me with. I also thank my sisters and brothers Saud, Madihah, Ebtihaj, Maher, Khalid, and Maram. I also thank my cousins Zaky, Hani, Sultan, and Azam for extending useful hands in the time of need. My thanks also extend to Mr. Hani Basha a magnanimous man and genuine friend. During the course of this study it was not easy to gain access to some officials and journalists in the Arab world. A few prominent journalists played an important part in this regard, such as Mrs. Salwa Ostwani, Mr. Amin Al-Seba'i, Mr. Waheeb Ghourab, Mr. Abdullah Al-

Qubie, Mrs. Sawsan Abu Hussain, and Mrs. Bare'a Alumuddin. This study gives a great deal of thanks to each and every official and journalist who accepted to be interviewed for this research. A special thanks goes to Mr. Nihad Al-Mashnoug for arranging the interview with Mr. Fares Bois the Lebanese Foreign Minister. Finally, I extend my special thanks to the supervisor of this work Dr. Ralph Negrine. His supervision and comments have been crucial to this study. During the years of illness, Ralph allowed me to suspend this work many times without giving it up for good. I also thank the CMCR for not abandoning me due to the many interruptions to this work.

## **Abstract**

The study is an attempt to explore the nature and role of the Arab press in the Arab foreign policy. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first effort to investigate empirically the relationship between the press and foreign policy in a regional context. The Arab region which consists of 22 sovereign and independent Arab states was selected to conduct this research. However, 4 Arab countries were chosen, as a sample, for their active influential and participative role in Arab foreign policy and diplomacy. This study has two levels of investigation: the general level and the particular one. Under the general level there are three aims. (1) The main aim is to investigate the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in Arab foreign policy. (2) The second aim is to investigate the nature and role of the émigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy. (3) The subordinate aim is to investigate the relationship between the Arab press and the intelligence service. Under the particular level, there are two revealing case studies. The first one between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and the second one between Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Both case studies investigate the role of the various Arab press in the foreign policy and diplomacy of those selected countries.

For this study, I interviewed prominent Arab officials and Arab journalists in four major Arab capitals: Beirut, Damascus, Cairo and Riyadh. Also some Arab officials and Arab journalists were interviewed in London because this Western capital has become significant for the émigré Arab press.

“Media is not supposed to be shared: That’s an infringement of editorial autonomy. It is not supposed to be controlled: That’s censorship. It is not even supposed to be influenced: That’s news management! But why should media personnel be exempt from Lord Acton’s dictum that all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely? And if they are not exempt, who exactly is best fitted to guard the press guardians, as it were?”

Jay Blumler

quoted in (Graber, 1993: 8)

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CHAPTER ONE

**Media And Foreign Policy**  
**The Theoretical Framework**

## **Introduction**

In 1978 I decided to gain a BA degree in mass communications in general, and in journalism in particular, from King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. During the first year there was a concentrated effort by the Egyptian teachers to teach us the major principles of journalism and its professions. We were taught how the freedom of the press and journalists could lead a society to a bright and prosperous future. We were also taught that journalism is one of the most noble professions and journalists are the real guard of society from wrong-doings or corruption. Not only that, but journalists are also the representatives of the interest of public opinion. The journalists who undertake these tasks, rely on their objectivities, credibilities, truth, and honour. We were also introduced to new names for journalism such as "the troubled profession", "the fourth estate", and "her majesty". We were also told how various leaders around the world fear the press and the pens of journalists. For example, the Emperor Napoleon once said, three hostile newspapers were more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.

Journalists, according to our teachers, are above all different authorities because they are the legitimate representatives of national interest and the interests of all people. One teacher said the most important task of a journalist is to get the news. While doing so a journalist must not reveal who the source was. It is the duty and right of a journalist to protect his sources no matter what happened and no matter what the pressure was. This Egyptian teacher provided us with an important example. He said, during the Vietnamese War an American journalist could have published many secret documents which could have contributed to the American withdrawal from the war. The impact of journalism's teaching, at least on me, was tremendous.

I began to think of the principles of journalism as the holy book. And that journalists are in fact angels descended from the heavens. So, I decided to become a Saudi journalist or angel. Before even graduating from the university, I worked for a Saudi

local newspaper called *Al-Nadwah*, the only newspaper which was published in Makkah city and of the least quality compared to other Saudi local newspapers. In January 1981, the newspaper gave me a golden opportunity to cover the Third Summit Islamic Conference held in Makkah and Taif. I was one of many multinational journalists from around the world.

Each one of us journalists wanted to obtain news especially exclusive news. In the final analysis this is what we were paid for. Not to mention the desire of any journalist to obtain exclusive news for the sake of career and fame. Nothing is greater for a journalist than to see his name printed in a very obvious way in his newspaper. Gathering news is big trade and there is great competition among the various journalists.

During the conference, I managed to obtain the most secretive document every journalist was dreaming of. That document was the outcome and production of the talks, negotiations and discussions of the Muslim leaders. The document which was called "Makkah Declaration or Call" was the core of the Third Summit Islamic conference. Immediately, I sent the document to my newspaper, requesting them not to publish the article as it was. Instead, we should take some of the information and attribute it to "knowledgeable sources". Obviously, my request was rejected and the editor-in-chief considered the publishing of this secretive document as a journalistic victory which should not be wasted. Indeed, the full text of the document was published next day in the front and second pages.

The cover page of the document says:

### **Makkah Call of the Third Summit Islamic Conference**

“We the Kings, Presidents, and Princes of the Islamic countries and governments who represent the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as we have met in the 3rd Summit Islamic Conference which was convened at Makkah Al-Mukaramah and Taif during the period from 19 to 22 of Rabea’ Awal 1401H. corresponding to 25 - 28 January 1981G.”

The document went on, saying:

“We take this good occasion to issue and direct this call to the Islamic nation in particular, and to peoples and leaderships of the world in general. We hope it would be a place for response and acceptance and an outstanding opportunity to clarify our common path in the way of right, guidance, and prosperity.”

Of course, my name was also printed in a distinguished way. In the beginning everybody congratulated me including an American journalist who shook my hand in admiration. Suddenly, news within the conference started to emerge saying that some Arab and Muslim foreign ministers had protested to the Saudi Foreign Minister about the publishing of this document which was not yet approved by the leaders. Then, those who congratulated me began to put heavy pressure on me saying that I was in danger for what I did. Pressure and anxiety are mild words and cannot express how my feelings were at that time. A friend of mine inside the Royal Protocol asked me to face the pressure and not escape from it; and this is what I did. I requested to see the Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Al-Thinian who agreed to see me immediately. The Saudi official looked at me and asked, Do you know what you did? I said, I did my job. Then, he furiously replied, "You have embarrassed your country and jeopardised its national interest." The impact of the official's words were like a bomb hitting my head. I left his office thinking about what he said and realised that the issue was bigger than I thought. Because of the pressure, I decided to leave the conference. In spite of that, some colleagues began calling me saying some security forces were looking for me. As a result, I called my editor-in-chief who asked "What are you escaping from?" and recommended that I should go directly to the newspaper's headquarters. Once, I arrived, the editor-in-chief called a high security official and told him that I was available. Within a few minutes the official arrived and said that the publication of the document had put Saudi Arabia under heavy pressure from the participants inside the conference. He also said, "We want nothing from you but your source." I decided not to reveal the name of my source and replied, I found the document in the press conference room. Perhaps one of the Foreign

Ministers forgot it there, I added. The interview took around half an hour, during which the official reminded me again of the significance of the issue and said, This is the national interest of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia we are talking about. Then I said, My source was not an official, in fact, he was an Arab journalist and I gave the official his name.

Thusfar, what is the conclusion of the above story? Some analysis can explain the entire affair. First, the newspaper and myself were very occupied with obtaining news and scoring journalistic points. We paid no attention to the political consequences which might evolve. However, no doubt, we had no intention to jeopardise the national interest of Saudi Arabia.

Second, the publishing of the document is indeed part of a leakage game. Therefore, who leaked this secretive document and with what intention? There are two answers which could clear up the issue. The first one suggests that the Foreign Ministry of Saudi Arabia had leaked the document in order to exert pressure on the Muslim leaders to approve it. This conclusion does not seem acceptable because traditionally the government of Saudi Arabia does not follow this journalistic path. Also, during the conference Saudi Arabia faced some heavy challenges. The second answer lies in the intentions of Nabeel Gazawy, an Arab journalist, who provided me with a copy of the document. It is not unusual for journalists to exchange news and views. However, this document was something else. In fact, Mr. Gazawy and myself had no relations whatsoever. I never met him or even heard about him prior to the conference. He came to me saying, I can see you have a bright future, therefore, I am giving you hot news. Of course, I was happy with that, in the final analysis it is the news which is to be had. During the conference Mr. Gazawy did not hide his hatred of Saudi Arabia. In one of our journalistic gatherings he spoke, for example, about the belief that Hijaz (the western part of Saudi Arabia) does not belong to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia but is a part of the Hashimite Monarchy. This provoked some Saudi journalists who threatened to take the issue to the Saudi Information Minister. So, who leaked this

document to Mr. Gazawy? Why did Mr. Gazawy exchange with me his exclusive news? Did Mr. Gazawy have some interest in making trouble for the Saudi government? Anyhow, soon after, I decided to leave the local newspaper *Al-Nadwah* to join an international one, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.

Prior to 1994, Yemen was divided into two sovereign independent countries. South Yemen was a communist state, while North Yemen was considered a socialist or nationalist country. Towards the end of 1983, a Saudi writer named Ali Al-Omair who worked for *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper vigorously attacked a North Yemeni intellectual, Dr. Abdulaziz Mogallih. The publication of the article provoked some intellectual circles inside North Yemen. As a result the co-publishers of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, Hisham and Mohamed Ali Hafez decided to send me to North Yemen in order to accomplish the following. First, to attend and cover the celebration of the September Revolution. Second, to repair the damage caused by the Saudi writer of such an aggressive article.

Once I arrived, I approached Dr. Mogallih requesting a private meeting. Dr. Mogallih accepted the idea of the meeting, but however, in the presence of prominent North Yemeni officials and intellectuals and therefore this is what happened. During the informal meeting I extended apologies on behalf of the newspaper for what Al-Omair wrote and praised the intellectual status of Dr. Mogallih. It was evident that the Yemenis who were present at that time were furious and upset about the article. Ali Lutf Al-Thoor, the Foreign Minister at that time looked at me and said, I would like to ask you, "Why does your newspaper insist on calling us North Yemen while the name of our country is the Yemen Arab Republic?" I replied saying it is much easier to use the name North Yemen to save some space in the newspaper. For example, we refer to the Saudi King as "the Saudi King" and not by using the entire title. The Foreign Minister then said, being a Saudi newspaper which insisted on using the names of the North and the South Yemen, that concealed some political considerations. Immediately I responded saying, I assure you there were no political

considerations at all and these names are also used by others. Second, *Asharq Al-Awsat* is not a Saudi newspaper only, it is the newspaper of all Arabs. The Yemeni Foreign Minister again looked at me and said, "You are still young". When I came back to Jeddah, I briefed the co-publishers about the remarks of the Yemenis on the Al-Omair affair, and how Dr. Mogallih told me that he was approached by some officials in South Yemen to exploit the issue in their press which he refused. I also told the co-publishers how the Yemeni Foreign Minister was hinting that we were forced by the government of Saudi Arabia to use the names of the North and South Yemen to enhance the separation between the two countries. Immediately, the co-publishers ordered all publications to use the name of Yemen Arab Republic instead of North Yemen and that was the end of the story. Both the North and South Yemen were united after a heavy war in 1994.

In 1983 I interviewed, over lunch, Yassir Arafat, the Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), presently known as the Palestinian President. The interview was published in *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper on 12 February. I asked Arafat, who is also called by the Palestinian people Abu Ammar, saying, "How is it possible to perceive the amendment of the Palestinian National Convention in order to recognize Israel?" The question basically meant changing the Palestinian constitution in order to recognise the state of Israel. Obviously, my question triggered something in the mind of other Palestinian leaders who were present and who stopped eating, while everyone was looking at everyone else. Then, furiously, Arafat said, "So, I am astonished to be asked such a question by an Arab journalist." In response I said, "It is a fact that I would like to reiterate ..... all people are demanding that Abu Ammar should recognize Israel....." Arafat interrupted my comments and said, "Before you ask me about the recognition of Israel, ask about the rights of the Palestinian people, this is the basic question that I direct to the entire world, where are the rights of the Palestinian people? I dislike to be asked this question by an Arab journalist. Before you ask me this question, it is my right to ask the entire world, where are the rights of our Palestinian people?"

It was evident that my question also provoked some Arab readers who called me in protest. One of the callers accused me of being "an American agent", while another said that I was trying to damage the Arab cause. I had no idea that I would be accused of all that by asking a very basic question.

Towards the middle of 1983, the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C) and myself had an informal agreement to supply the British radio with some news. Again, in June 1983 I interviewed Yassir Arafat and presented myself as the correspondent of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and the B.B.C radio. The interview was published on the 8th of the same month. Before replying to any of my questions, Arafat asked me which media is the interview for? I said, for *Asharq Al-Awsat*. It was evident that Arafat used to select a message which was suitable for the media he was talking to. One of my questions was: "Following your rejection of the Lebanese-Israeli agreement, what is your opinion for an alternate solution? What would your position be if Lebanon officially asked you to withdraw from its land?" It was also evident that the question provoked the Palestinian leader. While answering the questions, Arafat took out of his pocket a newspaper cutting and started to read the following:

"The Atlantic Alliance is concerned with the city of Beirut. Those militarists are pointing to the rare cities, and Beirut, wherein the Palestinian fighters were fortified last summer, conforms to the specification of such cities. The militarists say such traps are the first to meet an army which is forced to fight in urban areas. And that what's had happened to the Israeli army, which is one of the most powerful armies in the Middle East, when it encountered the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance. Before the withdrawal of the Palestinian fighters, the Israeli tanks could not cross the southern and eastern borders of the capital, as the buildings located along these areas were transformed into real bastions and fortresses."

Then Arafat looked at me and said, "This is Sharon, he killed women and children, but could not, with the admission of the Atlantic Alliance experts, enter Beirut. But, with regret, he entered it with connivance when we went out of it. I reserve the right

to ask before you tell me about the withdrawal: What are the securities you can offer for 450,000 civil Palestinians in Lebanon?"

Thusfar, the foregoing argument, and much more has resulted in my great interest in studying academically the press and foreign policy relationships. Having said that, the questions were, how and where should it begin? In fact, the framework of the relationship between the press and foreign policy did not exist in my mind at that time. Instead, there was a considerable amount of confusion and uncertainty about the definition of this relationship. It was not clear how to classify this research. Does it come under the title of media and politics? or media and government? Or, perhaps there was a sub-field called the press and foreign policy. Under this heading there was only one reference; it belongs to Bernard Cohen (1963, reprinted 1983). However, it was not enough for any student to build his/her theoretical framework. Reading through some materials in the mass communications field which seem relevant, there were some scattered ideas and findings. For example the work of Colin Seymour-Ure, The Political Impact of Mass Media, 1974, explains the role of *The Times* newspaper in what was known as the appeasement of Hitler. The first part of Seymour-Ure's study is to examine the ground for such judgment and seek to interpret the paper's role. The second part of the same study considers the criticisms that have been made of the paper and their underlying assumptions about what ought to be the role of a paper like *The Times* in relation to government policy. (Seymour-Ure, 1974: 68). According to Seymour-Ure the "national institutional status" of *The Times* newspaper allowed opinion abroad to always assume that *The Times* spoke with special knowledge of government intentions, if not with government approval. (Seymour-Ure, 1974: 71).

Another important study belongs to Leon V. Sigal Reporters and Officials, 1973. Sigal, through a case study, examined the role of the press in the Skybolt controversy between the United States and United Kingdom. The Skybolt controversy was that the U.S.A had agreed to sell the British some Skybolt missiles if their development were

successful. The works of Sigal focused on the question, how, if at all, did the ways in which news was gathered and transmitted contribute to its outcomes. (Sigal, 1973: 151). According to Sigal, officials exploit the press tactically in order to achieve the government outcomes they desire. (Sigal, 1973: 132). He also said, reading dispatches from newspaper correspondents abroad can provide a useful corrective to the intelligence reports and diplomatic cables that cross their desks each day; indeed, a good many of those reports and cables are themselves based on analyses of stories in the foreign press. (Sigal, 1973: 151). As a legitimate prescription Sigal concluded that, if officials in one government rely on foreign correspondence as a source of information, then officials in another government have some incentive to use the press to transmit information to them. (Sigal, 1973: 151).

As a result of the work of Seymour-Ure and Sigal it was more than evident that case studies are one of the best methodologies to examine the press-foreign policy relationships. But were the works of Seymour - Ure and Sigal about the press and foreign policy? It was clear that their work was only part of their attempt to explore the political relationships of the press and government. Having said that, both have exceeded the national framework to examine, via their case studies, the role and impact of the press in the foreign policy process in an international level. This wider level is needed to examine this important relationship in our future study. Thus a legitimate question might be raised at this point, why are those works mentioned previously not included in the literature review section? First, they are here to explain the development of this study. Second, the literature review section is committed to the concept and title of media and foreign policy or diplomacy.

Meanwhile, it seems that most journalists around the world accept the definition of foreign policy as made by their own government. Most journalists support the national interest of their respective countries and act accordingly. Actually few journalists can deny this fact. For example, in 1949, Lester Markel, the Sunday Editor of the *New York Times*, was chairman of a group council consisting of some

American journalists such as James Reston, Hanson Baldwin, Cabell Phillips, and Shepard Stone formed to study how to advance the national interest of America and influence both public opinion at home and abroad. (Markel, 1949 reprinted 1972: 5). According to Markel, "In the United States there is free press, but we have yet to develop a fully responsible one." (Markel, 1949 reprinted 1972: 18). In other words, those journalists want to participate in advancing and supporting the American foreign policy.

In spite of the foregoing argument, the boundaries of this study to this point were still unclear and undefined. However, it was clear that some case studies were needed for this research. Having said that, the effect of mass media on foreign policy has long been assumed rather than investigated. In fact,

"this concern has never been translated into systematic exploration of the relationship of the press and foreign policy, either by journalists or by students of government and policy." (Cohen, B. 1983: 3).

This statement by Bernard Cohen was originally made more than 30 years ago, and, yet, is still valid to some extent. In reality Cohen's work could be considered one of the pioneering empirical attempts in the subject. The business of media and foreign policy is growing in magnitude in both concern and scope. It was a cottage industry 30 years ago and has become a big business today. (Bennett and Paletz, 1994: 8). However, for students in the mass communications field it is difficult to find a solid ground of literature to draw on. In the coming review of the available literature, we could not find a guiding framework, other than scattered ideas and findings in areas of the field of mass communications. The need for drawing the boundaries of the field of mass media and foreign policy is greater than ever before for the simple reason of the growing, complex role of mass media in our time. Early focus was on the press, while we are witnessing a serious effort to study television as a major medium, influencing, at present, both policy-makers and public opinion. Meanwhile, most of the findings and contributions at our hands are the result of the study of the

interrelations of mass media, government and politics. A promising start, yet the picture is incomplete.

However, it does seem that paying attention and giving more focus or analysis to some stories and experiences in the relationship of media and foreign policy is a very lucrative plan. This could be done via case studies or by other systematic tools. Furthermore, if we select some events where we can observe some kind of significant role of the media in the process of foreign policy, and study and explain it carefully, we could at the end of the analysis come up with cumulative knowledge which could help in the building of the theory of media and foreign policy.

The content of mass media has exceeded geographical boundaries and clashed with ideological, cultural, and political differences. As Jean Baudrillard said, "There is more and more information, and less and less meaning." (Taylor, 1997: 3). For example the ethnic war in the former Yugoslavia between Christians and Muslims is a significant case study to explain and analyse the role and effect of mass media in the process of foreign policy. We should look at how the mass media affected both decision makers and public opinions in various countries by the heavy coverage. Indeed,

"How many people, for example, could honestly own up to understanding what was happening in the war in former Yugoslavia, even though it was covered extensively by the media for three and a half years? In other words, as more people have more access to more information, more rapidly than ever before, is this aiding clarity or merely creating confusion." (Taylor, 1997: 3).

I am afraid the mass media coverage of the war in former Yugoslavia has led to more confusion than clarity. Although, I claim that I have a high interest in foreign policy matters, it was not easy for me to comprehend what was going on in former Yugoslavia. What made it even more difficult are some confusing comments that I heard and read. Being a Muslim interacting with other Muslims around the region, it was easy to hear some comments and analyses about this regrettable war. I was

stunned to hear from many Muslims that this war is against Islam by the new crusaders. Therefore, I found myself reluctant to ask those Muslims who concluded this remark, a few questions to somewhat clarify the issue. Usually I asked: When did you hear for the first time about Yugoslavia or Bosnia? They responded when the war started. Then, I asked: How did you hear about Bosnia and your Bosnian Muslim brothers there? They said through the mass media. Then, I also asked: Which media? They responded, the Western media. As a result, I also asked: How then is it a war against Islam while the Christian mass media is reporting to you the suffering of your Muslim brothers? No convincing answers were given. To clarify the previous argument, it was evident that some Muslims were affected by the coverage of the Western mass media of former Yugoslavia to the point where they view the war as a conflict between Islam and Christianity. If it is true this war was against Islam, then why did the Western mass media volunteer to report to Muslims the suffering of their brothers in Bosnia. Meanwhile, most of the Muslim mass media was absent from covering the war, why? I do not believe this war was based on religious grounds. However, it is more than evident that it is an ethnic war, deeply rooted in Yugoslavian history. Having said that, the extensive coverage by the Western mass media of the war in former Yugoslavia led to dangerous conclusions and interpretations. The effect or the "side effect", if I may say, of the extensive coverage of the Western mass media about the suffering of the Bosnian Muslims caused other Muslims to sympathise with their sects and brothers. The conspiracy theory is widely believed by some Muslims against the Western intentions and behaviour. By concentrating too much on this war, the Western mass media helped to open the door on suspicions and conspiracies. Furthermore, the former British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd said in September 1993 the following statement:

"Bosnia has been selected by the Europeans for television coverages. We must also realise that several other bloodier tragedies are also happening elsewhere in the world without audiences. Most journalists have become interventionists." (*The Guardian* Newspaper, 10-9-1993).

Obviously, Douglas Hurd has raised a significant question not only about the agenda-setting role of the mass media, but also about the role of journalists as major participants in the foreign policy process. So far we do not know how this coverage has complicated the foreign policy process among nations, especially those who represent Muslim countries. I assume the sympathy of the Muslim people around the world with their brothers in Bosnia has pressured the Muslim governments to campaign for their rescue. It was evident that Muslim and Arab governments and mass media were criticising the West for not advancing fair efforts to put an end to this war as they did in the Second Gulf War. The issue is too difficult to analyse or explain. However, a few points might be made to clarify the picture somehow. As Douglas Hurd said, "Several other bloodier tragedies are also happening elsewhere in the world without audiences." Thusfar, we do not expect the mass media to cover each and every conflict. In the final analysis any medium targets a few things. First, the story must be sensational. Second, to be sensational it is most likely to be negative in order for it to sell well. Third, the size of the audience is very important. The bigger the audience is, the bigger the financial profit will be. The war in Bosnia maintained those characteristics. The wide audiences can be found in the United States, Europe, and the Muslim and Arab world. Furthermore, in order to explain this puzzle, I would provide another example which might clarify the Bosnian issues. The Arab international newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, based and published in London, is considered by many observers as the representative of the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper concentrated on its front page coverage on news and developments about Yemen and the Sudan to the point where readers would think those two Arab countries are the most important in the Arab foreign policy. Of course, this is not true. Meanwhile, the government of Saudi Arabia does not force *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper to pay more attention to Yemen or the Sudan. The truth is that one of the major consumers and buyers of this newspaper are the Yemeni and Sudanese expatriates who reside in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Satisfying both Yemeni and Sudanese readers would increase the newspaper's

circulation and distribution and would also increase its advertisement revenue. (see Chapter 7).

Thusfar, whether the previous argument about the war in Yugoslavia is convincing or not, it is not an easy issue to analyse or explain. As I said earlier, this particular puzzle about the media and foreign policy or the media and international relations needs a full and separate case study to make our understanding and judgment more accurate and adequate.

## **Media and Foreign Policy**

### **Literature Review**

One of the earlier and pioneering studies about the media and foreign policy belongs to Bernard Cohen (1963, reprinted 1983). One of the reasons that had inspired Bernard Cohen to carry on with his work was:

"The fear from the potential danger that the press might be introduced into the political bargaining process between East and West." (Cohen B, 1983: 14).

Bernard Cohen described his concern as "asymmetries" in which media on the Soviet side strengthened their bargaining position by having a concealed hand of cards (Cohen B, 1983: 14). Furthermore, Bernard Cohen's effort was due to the

"lack of attempt to establish empirically the nature of behaviour that shapes the content of foreign affairs coverage or the character of the mechanism by which that coverage has an effect on the political processes of foreign-policy making." (Cohen B, 1983: 4).

Bernard Cohen concludes that both the American government and the press affect and use each other mutually in what came to be known as the symbiotic relationship. These findings came out of more than 250 interviews with American journalists and officials inside the United States. Bernard Cohen stressed in his study that newspapers play a more distinguished role in the foreign policy process than the other mass media. He said,

"The higher one goes in the formal and informal structures of foreign policy-making in the United States, the more time and attention one finds being paid to the newspaper rather than to radio and television as the important source of foreign affairs news and comment." (Cohen B, 1983: 8).

The result of Bernard Cohen's investigations and interviews with the reporters is that they see themselves as "neutral, active participants" in the process of foreign policy making (Cohen B, 1983: 20). Under the neutral role, Bernard Cohen elicits three functions for reporters as perceived by them.

### 1. The Press as an informer:

Most reporters in the field of foreign affairs believe that their main responsibility and role is to provide factual information about foreign affairs, as it originates abroad and in Washington, to the American people, members of the American Congress, and executives. The reporters think that they are not only providing the American people with information, but also playing the role of educator. (Cohen B, 1983: 24).

### 2. The press as interpreter:

According to Bernard Cohen, there are two reasons why reporters refer to interpretation as an important role and function they are playing,

"Firstly because of the complexity of the foreign affairs subject. Secondly because of the technological developments in the mass communications field in recent decades." (1983: 27).

It is no longer the job of newspapers to provide information first. Radio and television have been the major competitors in this regard.

### 2. The Press as an instrument of government:

Bernard Cohen said,

"The more 'neutral' the press .. that is, the more it tries faithfully to transmit a record of 'what transpires'

(including therein the policy statements of officials), and the more constrained it feels about making judgments concerning the meaning or importance of 'what transpires' .. the more easily it lends itself to the uses of others, and particularly the public officials whom reporters have come to regard as prime sources of news merely by virtue of their position in government." (1983: 28).

Without attribution, Bernard Cohen quoted the words of a reporter who said, "Play on the press as you would on a piano." (1983: 29). Thusfar, Bernard Cohen sees the overall role of the press in being a "neutral observer" as a "handmaiden to the three branches of our constitutional government." (1983: 31).

Meanwhile, under the participation role, Bernard Cohen summarised four functions the reporters see themselves playing in the field of foreign policy. According to Bernard Cohen, the press claims to function or play under this role so that it: "may conveniently be viewed as an extra constitutional, fourth branch of government." (Cohen B, 1983: 31). "The reporters seem to see themselves as in competition with interest groups and other expressions of public opinion", since both of them are trying hard to seek or maintain power through their role of participation. (Cohen B, 1983: 31). The four participation functions which Bernard Cohen summarised are:

#### 1. The press as representation of the public.

Under this heading correspondents see the press as the guardian of the public interest and their voice in foreign affairs. (1983: 32).

#### 2. The press as critic of government:

Relating to the above point, the press under a libertarian philosophy provides a "check on government, which no other institution could provide", to prevent any wrong doings. (1983: 33).

#### 3. The press as advocate of policy:

Policy advocacy is a recognised and accepted function of newspapers.

"The chief locus of the function is the editorial page, and when most reporters talk explicitly about advocacy as a newspaper function (rather than as something they themselves might engage in), they will assign it to the editorial page." (1983: 37).

According to Bernard Cohen policy advocacy is also found in the news columns of the press "which is a much more interesting circumstance - - and potentially a more significant one in a political sense, so far as the ordinary reader is concerned." (1983: 37).

#### 4. The press as policy maker:

According to Bernard Cohen, foreign affairs reporters under this role "are actors in the process, trying to influence the opinion of both the public and the government officials." (1983: 39). This in practical terms,

"brings the press very close to the stream and the structure of policy-making, even to the point of actual participation in both the political process and the decision-making process involved." (Cohen B, 1983: 39).

To complete the picture of the role of the press in foreign policy making, Bernard Cohen investigated policy makers whose responsibilities, thoughts and actions, are the objects of the correspondents' interest. Bernard Cohen sees policy makers use of the press as two sided. They

"contribute to and extract from the fund, or the flow, of foreign policy news; and both the putting in and the taking out help to define the nature of the press's participation in the process of foreign policy-making."

(Cohen B, 1983: 134).

At this point, Bernard Cohen tried, through the evidence he had collected, to explain what policy makers get out of the press that has a bearing on the foreign policy environment. According to him, there are five elements as follows:

## 1. Information:

Under this heading Bernard Cohen differentiates between the use of this information by the executive on one hand, and the congress on the other. For the executive, he

"turns to the press for basic factual information about the international political world he lives in- information from abroad as well as from his own immediate environment."

(1983: 209).

Meanwhile, the press provides the executive with an independent report, outside the diplomatic channel, on what is happening around the world. (Cohen B, 1983: 210). Besides, the press usually have faster channels for providing information than do official sources. (Cohen B, 1983: 210). Local press in other countries provide another source of information for diplomatic officials. Not only in the foreign policy field, but also in the domestic field. (Cohen B, 1983: 210). As far as members of the Congress are concerned, because Congressmen lack other official sources of information, the press is considered as a major factor in the foreign policy field. (Cohen B, 1983: 210).

## 2. Ideas, Evaluation, Analysis, Interpretation:

Policy makers turn to the press also for ideas, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation in order to deal with "a range of problems that confront them", and the same applies to Congress. (Cohen B, 1983: 219).

## 3. Importance:

Under this heading for the executive,

"Policy makers also draw from the press some measure of the comparative importance of events in the eyes of others— that is, the significance that is being attached to particular developments or issues as a result of evaluations made elsewhere in the political system."

(Cohen B, 1983: 224).

## 4. Standards:

The press provide foreign policy makers in various parts of the government with standards by which to measure or judge what those involved in the political process

are reading about foreign affairs. This is even more important for the Congress. (Cohen B, 1983: 230).

## 5. Opinions and Reactions:

It is widely acknowledged among officials that the press is important to measure the reaction and opinion of the public, according to Bernard Cohen,

"the press provides policy makers with the ingredient that has long been assumed to be its chief contribution: a measure of public opinion." (1983: 230).

Newspapers according to a senator, provide Congressmen with editorial reactions, personal reactions, of people who are informed, people whose reaction is an important gauge of the significance of developments abroad. (Cohen B, 1983: 238). As a concluding note and as said earlier, Bernard Cohen finds that both the American government and the press affect and use each other mutually in what came to be known as the symbiotic relationship.

A contrary position is given by Nicolas O., Berry who formed in 1990 a new school of thought by criticising previous schools, and proposing that the press is "neither a powerful force in foreign policy, nor is it managed by the government in what it reports about foreign policy." (Berry, 1990: Preface). In contrast to Bernard Cohen, Berry had used statistical analysis. In order to verify his assumptions, he had selected the *New York Times* newspaper and five case studies of notable foreign policy failures. These are as follows:

1. President Kennedy and the Crisis of the Bay of Pigs.
2. President Johnson and the US Combat in Vietnam.
3. President Nixon and the Cambodian Incursion.
4. President Carter and the Iran Hostage Crisis.
5. President Reagan and the 1982-84 Intervention in Lebanon.

To substantiate his theory, Berry had criticised what he called "the conventional wisdom." referring to the following schools of thought:

**The First School:**

"portrays the press as player or participant in the foreign policy process. For members of the school, the press plays the role of the fourth branch of government. Journalists influence policy. Sometimes the press is so vigorous - - a few would say, so biased - - that government officials complain that their foreign policy is being sabotaged." (Berry, 1990: Preface).

**The Second School:**

This school of thought contradicts the first one by shifting the direction, focus and purpose of the statement that,

"governments manipulate the press. Officials stage events, leak selective information, cover up facts behind a wall of secrecy, overwhelm the media with barrages of press releases, and, yes, lie occasionally to the point that the press becomes putty in the hands of the President and his legion of media managers." (Berry, 1990: Preface).

As a result Berry's key criticism of the above two schools of thought is focused on their failure to categorise foreign policy into three stages of formation, implementation and outcome. To him, both schools "don't hold up" and "no other study on the interaction between the press and foreign policy-makers starts with that distinction." (Berry, 1990: 143).

Consequently Berry's findings could be summarised as follows:

A. The press, here restricted to reporters who get the news for page one and those who comment on the editorial op-ed pages, is unable to interpret or evaluate foreign policy in its early stages when policy is formulated and executed. In these stages the press focuses on getting the story, and what US officials say and do constitutes most of the news. (Berry, 1990: XII)

- B. Not being analytical scholars, reporters accept the assumptions and consensus of foreign policy establishment. These assumptions define the nature of the foreign threats and opportunities the US faces, and the role of the US in the world. (Berry, 1990: XIII)
- C. Reporters, by accepting the assumptions, are disposed to accept the particular foreign policy that addresses these threats and opportunities as officially designated. (Berry, 1990: XIII)
- D. Reporters accept the official definition of national interest, designation of goals and selection of strategies. (Berry, 1990: XIII)
- E. The cultural bias of the journalists and their patriotism makes them congenial to foreign policies designed to meet the nation's problems. Along with other US citizens they want the US to be successful. (Berry, 1990: XIII)
- F. Satisfying the expectation of editors and the pressure of headlines leave little time or inclination for forecasting. (Berry, 1990: XIII).
- G. Protecting access to sources and the sources themselves prevent critical analysis. (Berry, 1990: XIII)

Berry concludes, as a result "the press cannot conduct a debate on the wisdom of foreign policy, cannot yet refute what official Washington says and cannot be assertive when it has early opportunities to separate facts from fiction." (Berry, 1990: XIII).

It has recently been noticeable that concern and focus have shifted to the role of TV broadcasting in the process of foreign policy. Patrick O'Heffernan's work on mass media and foreign policy is another contribution to the subject. He has laid special emphasis on the role of TV in the process of foreign policy. O'Heffernan considers his work as an update of Bernard Cohen's 1963 research. However, it is not meant to be a complete update of Cohen's landmark research. (O'Heffernan, 1991: XII). Unlike Bernard Cohen, O'Heffernan investigated only the policy community under the

promise that a second phase of the study will involve the media. (O'Heffernan, 1991: XIV). He also examined the period of US foreign policy roughly from November through March 1988 by means of case studies.

In his study O'Heffernan asked three basic questions:

1. "Did the mass media and particularly the TV, influence US policy officials' perceptions of the character of events during the research period?" (O'Heffernan, 1991: XIII)
2. "Did the mass media, and particularly the TV, influence the outputs of US policy officials regarding the Middle East?" (O'Heffernan, 1991: XIII)
3. "Has a change occurred in policy-makers perception of the influence and utility of the mass media since the Carter Administration?" (O'Heffernan, 1991: XIII)

The findings of O'Heffernan could be summarised as follows:

First:

"The mass media play active roles in US foreign policy development and execution, The theory derived from the research proposes that, in specific situations, the mass media are active players in the policy process, directly affecting specific policy outputs and events. It also recognises that the government plays in media coverage and actually uses the media as policy tools." O'Heffernan has described his theory by the term "Interdependent Mutual Exploitation". (O'Heffernan, 1991: 6).

Second:

"Mass media exert a pervasive influence on the foreign policy process, shaping its tone, style and emphasis of US foreign policy in various ways, both in specific situations and across the board this influence stems from policy-makers perception of the media importance and utility, especially of the importance of the broadcast media and from the media's injection of certain biases into the policy making-process." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 6).

Not surprisingly, O'Heffernan has acknowledged the special role the print media play in the process of foreign policy. He also found the mass media today in comparison with Cohen's time "play distinct roles in the shaping and reality of American foreign policy." They function as

1. "a rapid source of information useful for policy decisions." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 37).
2. "an agenda setter which influences the agendas of the U.S and other nations." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 37).
3. "a proxy for diplomats." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 37).
4. "a diplomatic signalling system with policy influence." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 37).
5. "a tool used by terrorists and Non Government Organizations, NGO's." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 37).
6. "Television also plays distinct diplomatic roles through space bridges and on-air negotiations, sometimes called 'television diplomacy'." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 37).

According to O'Heffernan, "the extensive use of the mass media in diplomacy, the so-called 'public diplomacy', has transformed both the appearance and the substance of diplomacy." (1991: 53). O'Heffernan outlined three aims or objectives for this use through his study:

1. Influencing other governments.
2. Influencing the people of the other nations.
3. Foreign governments use of the mass media to influence U.S policy. (O'Heffernan, 1991: 56).

Meanwhile, O'Heffernan has replaced Cohen's "symbiotic relationship" by what he calls:

"Co-evolution, the process by which the two entities grow and develop with each other, incorporating one another into

their own existence, sometimes for mutual benefit, sometimes for mutual injury, often both at the same time. The resulting relationship is one of interdependent mutual exploitation." (O'Heffernan, 1991: 82).

Thusfar, before we proceed any further in this literature review we should provide at this point some analysis and comments about the previous arguments and studies. It is important at this stage to ask are the previous studies really about media or press and foreign policy? Before we answer this question, it should be stated that researchers, in dealing with the role and effect of mass media in the foreign policy process, have been focusing on and exploiting two areas:

First: The role and effect of mass media in the process of foreign policy within a given country, especially in the US, by investigating the nature of the forces and interactions between governments and mass media. Most research has been devoted to this line of thought.

Second: The role and effect of mass media in the foreign policy process amongst nations and governments by disclosing the media influence on decision-makers, public opinion, and events alike. This line of thought has attracted less scholars and researchers and our present state of knowledge is the outcome of some of the findings derived from the first research line.

However, a few studies have started to emerge. It is essential to comprehend both areas and their interrelations. As we have seen in the literature review, most of the studies, including Bernard Cohen's, Nicholas Berry's, and Patrick O'Heffernan's have explored the press or media foreign policy relationship internally, rather than externally. By this, I mean most of these studies were confined to the media-government relationship - the way they interact, affect or use each other. Indeed it would be a useful strategy to analyse the media-government relationship. However, this was not the relationship which I thought to explore since I was mainly concerned with governments and their external and international relations. Therefore, more

focus and attention should be paid to those interactions amongst states or governments and the obvious role by the mass media. Evaluating both the national and international forces that shape the content of mass media is the most lucrative strategy. For example, it will be very useful to see how the American mass media affect or play a role in the decision-making process in Saudi Arabia. I ruled out Saudi public opinion because I do not know how many Saudis actually speak English or follow the American mass media. However, if we are so concerned about the Saudi public opinion then we should look at the American effort through various media such as the Voice of America in the Arabic language. In the coming few pages we will discuss in further detail the role or effect of the mass media on both government and public opinion. For the time being, a few points and comments should be made about the previous literature. It is not surprising that O'Heffernan has replaced Cohen's and others' "symbiotic" relationship by what he calls the "co-evolution" relationship. So many things have happened and changed since Bernard Cohen carried out his work. The mass media-government relationship in the United States has been affected by a number of political developments, such as the Vietnam war and the Watergate scandal.

Nicholas Berry, on the other hand, categorised foreign policy under three stages: formation, implementation and outcome. At each stage the tone of the press is expected to be different as a natural consequence of the development of a political event. This, of course, happens only in a democratic climate. Having said that, a few criticisms might be introduced to Berry's analysis:

1. Berry selected five case studies of notable American foreign policy failure. Looking at those case studies per-se one can predict the national and international pressure in the political development. The American press play an active role in the build-up or the formation of those foreign policies. However, it has no ability to tell whether this foreign policy will fail or not. Not even the White House would know. No government on earth carries out foreign policy with pre-knowledge that it is going to fail. At the same time if the American press can conduct a debate on

the wisdom of foreign policy, can refute what Washington officially says and can be assertive and separate facts from fiction, then in fact the American press would rule, not report.

2. It is true that the press and reporters are a source of information. However, they lack significant formal and secretive information to provide an opinion or judgment.
3. Berry said the press is not managed by the government. Yet, he said, reporters accept the assumptions and definition of the officials about foreign policy.
4. When a foreign policy fails, the press play an extra critical role because American public opinion starts to emerge clearly after seeing the negative evidence. We do not know for sure how much do the American press believe in the coming slogan: we are with you on success and you are on your own in failure. It seems Berry is asking of the American press an extra-ordinary job.

On the other hand, we will provide in the forthcoming pages some extra literature reviews. The reason they are separated from the previous ones, is because they are categorised differently in terms of dimensions, focus, and analysis as we shall see.

In 1986 Yoel Cohen produced a pioneering contribution to the field under investigation by studying the relationship of the news media and modern diplomacy in Britain. According to Yoel Cohen his aim was to examine British diplomacy and,

"to pinpoint these areas where the media impinge on the foreign policy either in terms of having an influence on public opinion, by providing new information to policy makers, or in terms of being used by officials as channels to other governments and to the public at home and abroad." (1986: Preface).

Yoel Cohen made an important prescription by saying "a useful way to examine the media-diplomacy relationship is to evaluate at each stage in the making and implementing of foreign policy any media effect or media role." (1986: 9). For his

study Yoel Cohen interviewed 250 officials and journalists alike in Britain and abroad. Meanwhile, Yoel Cohen did not investigate the press in particular. However, he had acknowledged the special role played by the press in foreign policy. The findings of Yoel Cohen can be summarised as follows:

### **1. Information:**

According to Yoel Cohen, the foreign policy-making in any country begins with the gathering of information about developments abroad, and news media are basic sources of information about world affairs. (Cohen Y, 1986: 21). In fact the element of the media as a source of information is a basic finding that Bernard Cohen and others share with Yoel Cohen. This in reality brings the media not only into the realm of foreign policy, but also into the realm of the intelligence services, since all professions deal with the same intellectual product - information. Yoel Cohen also said that "Diplomatic missions prepare their reports to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), in London by gathering information from the local media, as well as from other sources." (Cohen Y, 1986: 21). Meanwhile, the British media in London are secondary sources of information for officials for the reports which they receive from overseas posts. (Cohen Y, 1986: 21). Journalists, according to Yoel Cohen, "are an additional source of information since often they have spoken to sources in and outside the government which are less accessible to the foreign diplomat." (Cohen Y, 1986: 23). An important conclusion was made by Yoel Cohen when he said:

"In reflecting what the government is telling the people, state-controlled media become an important element of an overseas mission's political reporting. They are one additional channel in a government's network of communications with other countries. In addition, state-controlled media reflect the changing balance of political power in the government." (1986: 24).

As far as British ministers and the Prime Minister are concerned, Yoel Cohen said ministers at the FCO see very little of the foreign press. However, "they rely on their

staff to bring particular pieces to their attention, and on ambassadors to include summaries of the local media in their reports to London." (Cohen Y, 1986: 31), while the Prime Minister tends to read the British national press to follow domestic affairs, and relies on the private secretary responsible for foreign affairs to brief him and select the important cables for the FCO. (Cohen Y, 1986: 30). At the same time, the wider public, interest groups, and Members of Parliament, do not have access to the telegrams from overseas but are dependent almost totally on the British media for their information about international developments. (Cohen Y, 1986: 32). To sum up the arguments of Yoel Cohen, the wider British public uses the media as its primary source of information, while officials and ministers use them as a secondary source to supplement the official reports they receive.

## 2. Image of the World:

This element is related to the above information factor. Because the media is the prime source of information to the wider public, it has the ability to shape the image of the world or the image of a particular country. "Even those people who have other means of widening their knowledge of world affairs, such as through education or travel, cannot encompass the entire spectrum of international developments or gain an up-to-date picture without the media." (Cohen Y, 1986: 36).

According to Yoel Cohen, "communication technology has profoundly affected the speed of foreign news gathering." (1986: 38). Meanwhile, Yoel Cohen referred to some factors that play a role in creating the image. Governments restrict access to places and news for a number of reasons: First: "a government may be sensitive about information regarding the internal situation reaching the outside world." (Cohen Y, 1986: 40). Second: "governments impose restrictions on foreign reporters because they fear that their reports will filter back to the population at home." (Cohen Y, 1986: 41). Third: "governments bar access, or limit it, if they take exception to a particular news organisation's record in reporting the country and the journalist's own record." (Cohen Y, 1986: 42).

In the same time, media editors through their definition of what is news and what is not news play a role in creating the image. First, "the media emphasize and sensationalize crises and dramatic events." (Cohen Y, 1986: 43). Second: "editors emphasize personalities and elites." (Cohen Y, 1986: 44).

Third: "there is a tendency for culturally proximate countries to make the news and culturally distant ones not to." (Cohen Y, 1986: 44).

The last factor influencing the media's image of the world is

"the inclusion of political values by reporters and editors. Description of foreign leaders or governments as being conservative, moderate, extreme, revolutionary, populist, or radical may be meaningful to a western audience but may be inaccurate or meaningless in describing them."

(Cohen Y, 1986: 46).

Thusfar, does the image created by the media have implications for diplomacy? The answer is "by playing up or playing down an issue, the media influence the diplomatic process." (Cohen Y, 1986: 48). According to Yoel Cohen, "The media's image inspires reactions and counter-reactions from governments and public." (1986: 48). Finally, "in certain cases the media not only mobilize public involvement in an event but are themselves engulfed in a socio-psychological atmosphere which they have created." (Cohen Y, 1986: 50).

### 3. Public Opinion:

The influence of the media can also be found in its relation to their audiences, the wider public, interest groups, and MPs "and the extent to which ministers are receptive to pressures from these." (Cohen Y, 1986: 52). The media, Parliament, public opinion, and interest groups form an interdependent system sometimes called the "domestic environment" (Cohen Y, 1986: 52). "The media are dependent on these other elements in the domestic environment." (Cohen Y, 1986: 52). Yoel Cohen, described the influence of the media on government is through "the impact of the

media on Parliament which then comes to ministers." (1986:52). According to Yoel Cohen, 'Interest groups and, to a lesser extent, MPs use the media as a channel to communicate and a means to bring pressure on the government.' (1986: 53). In addition, the media usually reflect public opinion. At the same time, some MPs are engaged in journalistic activities and are leading members of interest groups, while some journalists are actually members of, or identify with, interest groups. (Cohen Y, 1986: 53). Again how is policy influenced?

"The views expressed in the media are equated with public opinion. Through reading the press, FCO officials gauge public reaction to foreign issues. A function of the FCO's News Department aside from explaining foreign policy to the media, is to advise the office about public attitudes."

(Cohen Y, 1986: 59).

#### 4. International Negotiation:

In international negotiation, communication is a key element or factor. "One government communicates to another in the hope of persuading it to behave in a way which is in the interest of the first state." (Cohen Y, 1986: 68). Yoel Cohen said, governments communicate through various channels, and he divided those channels as follows:

##### 1. Formal Channels:

"These include the formal diplomatic framework involving diplomats presenting their government's messages to their counterparts in other countries."

(Cohen Y, 1986: 68).

##### 2. Informal Channels:

Among these channels "are news media, the audiences of which include foreign governments." (Cohen Y, 1986: 68). According to Yoel Cohen, "the wide use of the media in international negotiation today makes a mockery of the diplomatic convention of confidentiality." (1986: 68). Secret diplomacy has declined through

modern history as Yoel Cohen and others see it. "The growing need to keep public opinion informed and to avoid speculation about secret agreements and commitments, has further strengthened the link between negotiation and the media." (Cohen Y, 1986: 69).

Yoel Cohen acknowledged, as other scholars, the use of leaks technique in international negotiation. Meanwhile, the role that media play in international negotiation varies from case to case. For example, according to Yoel Cohen, "The media may be used by one government to state its objectives to another government, for instance where no formal diplomatic channels exist between the two." (1986: 74). Governments also use the media as faster channels than the formal diplomatic ones. (Cohen Y, 1986: 75). Also, the news media play an integral role in negotiation. "Bargaining, ultimately, concerns one party communicating to another its wishes and intentions." (Cohen Y, 1986: 78). Yoel Cohen provided four channels, for example, if the British government uses the media to communicate with the US government

1. "A communication in the form of a press statement, leak, or interview by the FCO in London to the British media to be picked up by the US Embassy in London." (1986: 80).
2. "A communication by the FCO in London to the US press corps to be picked up in Washington by the US State Department." (1986: 80).
3. "A communication by the British Embassy in Washington to the American media to be picked up in Washington by the State Department." (1986: 80).
4. "A communication by the British Embassy in Washington to the British press corps to be picked up by the US Embassy in London and sent back to Washington." (1986: 80).

## 5. Moulding Opinion Abroad:

One of the important aspects of foreign policy is gaining the support of the public abroad:

"With foreign governments and other actors using public opinion in order to influence international relations, there has remained no choice for a British government but to interpret and persuasively present its policies to the public abroad. The British approach to propaganda is that it remains an adjunct to diplomacy." (Cohen Y, 1986: 83).

Yoel Cohen explained under this heading some of the efforts made by the British government to mould opinion abroad via, for example, the BBC. However, he found that "a few officials recognised the fact that much of the image about Britain in the foreign media is created not abroad but by the correspondents in London." (Cohen Y, 1986: 88). The aim of the British government under this heading is basically to gain foreign public understanding and support for Britain and its policies.

### 1. Moulding Opinion at Home:

One of the main elements of the FCO is to mould opinion at home about foreign policy. The relationship of the FCO with the British media has two main characteristics: "the projection of foreign policy at home, and sometimes satisfying, but at other times deflecting, pressure from journalists." (Cohen Y, 1986: 99). The FCO are aware of the opportunities to gain public support for foreign policy through the media, and ministers are anxious to avoid arousing hostile reaction from Parliament and from the public. (Cohen Y, 1986: 101). In spite of the fact that the FCO feels that international reactions require some kind of confidentiality, "lack of information leads to public speculation and suspicion that secret deals have been made." (Cohen Y, 1986: 100). The relationship between the FCO and the diplomatic correspondent is characterised by three elements:

"secrecy, propaganda and response to journalist's inquiries. When the relationship has throughout the last 80 years possessed each of those elements, there has been a shift in emphasis from the element of secrecy, and more recently from the propaganda element, towards that of responding to media inquiries thereby beginning to create a genuine sense of trust between the FCO and the media." (Cohen Y, 1986: 112).

In the absence of defined boundaries of the mass media and foreign policy, the work of Jarol Manheim (1994) could be seen as another aspect and contribution to the field under discussion. Manheim's work is a very significant study on international public relations. However, he called his work Strategic Public Diplomacy & American Foreign Policy. According to Manheim, the term "public diplomacy" in recent time has come into vogue to characterise activities that would once have been described as propaganda. (1994: 5). The term 'public diplomacy' has been defined as:

"A government's process communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies." (Manheim, 1994: 5).

In a further elaboration about the title of his book, Manheim said:

"Strategic public diplomacy is public diplomacy practiced less as an art than as an applied transnational science of human behavior. It is, within the limits of available knowledge, the practice of propaganda in the earliest sense of the term, but enlightened by half a century of empirical research into human motivation and behavior." (1994: 7).

Throughout history, nations have long recognised the importance of managing the perceptions of them that governments and citizens of other countries hold. Based on this fact Manheim outlined two concerns of his study. First, emphasis on strategic communication efforts directed toward the United States by other countries. Second, a substantial proportion of foreign agent activity in the United States is undertaken on behalf of foreign-owned corporations and others essentially commercial enterprises, the principal emphasis being on government-initiated efforts. (Manheim, 1994: 11) The methodological strategy Manheim adopted to explore his study was three case studies alongside interviewing journalists, consultants, and government officials.

In his book, Manheim outlined four distinctive aspects of diplomatic activities as an introduction to his public diplomacy. (1994: 3).

1. Government-to-Government. This refers to the traditional form of diplomacy, the exchange of formal messages between sovereign states. The media here is excluded from the process.
2. Diplomat-to-Diplomat or personal diplomacy. This refers to the individual level interaction among those involved in diplomatic contacts. Here also the media is excluded. While the remaining two aspects involve the media.
3. People-to-People, referred to as public diplomacy is characterised by cultural exchanges to explain and defend government policies and portray a nation to foreign audiences.
4. Government-to-People contacts, which is another form of public diplomacy. It includes efforts by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage.

The last aspect of diplomatic activity constitutes the core of Manheim's analysis and study. In one of Manheim's case studies, which is suitable for our study, he called the image management of the Second Gulf War as "the real smart weapon". Successfully, Manheim explained in this case study, for instance, how the Iraqis, the Kuwaitis, the Bush Administration, and the Pentagon tried to manage the image of the American public opinion and members of the political establishments in the United States. He also explained how a public relations firm can do a lot in terms of lobbying and persuasion.

According to him, the Hill and Knowlton public relations firm is the one who made up the story of Iraqi soldiers pulling newborns from their incubators so that these could be removed to Iraq. The young woman identified only as Nayirab got into Capitol Hill with the help of Hill and Knowlton and told a hearing of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, chaired by Representative Tom Lantos, that she had witnessed this event first hand. (Manheim, 1994: 47). *The New York Times*

revealed the fact that Nayirab was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States and that Hill and Knowlton had helped to prepare her testimony, which she had rehearsed before video cameras in the firm's Washington headquarters. (Manheim, 1994: 47). The story affected George Bush, by the frequency with which he cited it and also influenced several members of Congress when the time came to vote on authorizing a US military response. (Manheim, 1994: 48). It could be argued that the story facilitated a few things regarding mobilising public support. The Americans would go to war as a matter of significant national interest. Also, the Second Gulf War was a very obvious case in which there was a common interest of the key external players -the Kuwaitis- and the key internal players -the American administration and military establishment- and where that common interest produced a remarkably well integrated communications effort. (Manheim, 1994: 52).

Finally, in 1997, Philip Taylor widened the investigation angle of the media and foreign policy issue in an important book titled, Global communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945. Taylor in his book analyses the nature, role and influence of communications within the international arena in the modern world and its interaction with foreign policy. Through his qualitative analysis of international history since 1945, Taylor investigated the impact of the media and their relationship with the international system. Taylor traced the increased involvement of the media in issues of war and peace since 1945. "Wars appear to be principally the type of event upon which the media thrive." (Taylor, 1977: 99). By investigating case studies such as the Vietnam and Gulf wars, Taylor detailed contemporary problems of reportage of media in a historical context. Taylor's work "stems from a long-standing interest in the role of news and image management in the context of twentieth-century foreign policy." (Taylor, 1997: Preface). One of the reasons that encouraged Taylor's work was "the lack of historical context in much news reporting and with the extent to which journalists were so easily being manipulated by the largely American-led military and political establishment." (Taylor, 1997: Preface). Taylor acknowledged that his work aims at explaining some of the historical roots of the media's role in

international affairs which is frequently overlooked in academic studies and to encourage "debate, not only about the way the media and communication have been used and abused in the past but how they are likely to be in the future." (Taylor, 1997: XV). Two elements were clear in Taylor's work, that he concentrated on the broadcast media and the United States of America. According to Taylor,

"Indeed, as Hamid Mowlana has pointed out the technologies and institutions of communication that have become so central to world politics and economics over the past couple of decades have fundamentally altered the nature and sources of power and influence, both domestically and internationally." (1997: 2).

Taylor believes that, we have scarcely begun to appreciate the relationship of mass media with the international system whether as contributors to, or merely conveying a sense of, its order and disorder. (1997: 4). He blamed the historians for this. In the words of Taylor

"Modern communication is indeed about technology, but it also about human creativity. Because something is communicated to someone, an impact or an influence is likely to be the result, which often depends on how creatively the content of communications is deployed." (1997: 5).

To measure this impact or influence has been the subject of continuing, and often ferocious, debate. (Taylor, 1997: 6). In studying mass communication issues, Taylor suggested importantly that this effort needs a multitude of disciplinary approaches. (1997: 6).

It is obvious that Taylor in his study stressed the role of psychology in the mass media coverage. Based on the Alvin Toffler philosophy, Taylor agrees that societies evolve in three waves: (1991: 11). First wave: Agricultural base. Second wave: Industrialization. Third wave: The more recent post-industrial or post modern era.

Therefore:

"The gathering, processing, evaluation and presentation of information about the world in which we live forms the basis of this third wave now making its way to the shoreline of many countries, and not just in cutting-edge info-societies like the United States but in other countries — developed and developing." (Taylor, 1997:11).

In this information age or the 'age of propaganda', everyone is affected by the access to, or denial of, global information because information has become the lifeblood of our contemporary world. (Taylor, 1997: 18).

Philip Taylor acknowledges in his study the participatory role of the media in events. Nation states deal with each other in many traditional ways and at a variety of different levels, "but all of these dealings involve communication of some sort (Taylor, 1997: 20). Taylor outlined four dimensions through which inter-state relations constitute or build: 1- Diplomacy. 2- Economic. 3- Military. 4- Communications. According to Taylor:

"Communications have become so important in the way states perceive and deal with one another that they constitute a fourth dimension worthy of analysis in its own right." (1997: 20).

A further dimension is the "hidden dimension" which refers to the "intelligence activity, namely the gathering of secret information to fuel the activities of the political and military establishments to assist their bargaining positions." (Taylor, 1997: 21).

"But because this type of work feeds all the other dimensions and is generally covert, for our purposes here we are going to subsume this activity into the fourth dimension. This is what may be termed the psychological or informational dimension, which involves the gathering and communication of information, ideas, perceptions and messages." (Taylor, 1997: 21).

In international communications and international politics since 1945, how events were reported and perceived became a critical consideration for diplomats, politicians, and soldiers under increasing public scrutiny. (Taylor, 1997: 28). International relations, the control, manipulation and dissemination of information about the other side constituted a permanent and highly bureaucratized 'fourth dimension'. (Taylor, 1997: 28).

"Too readily dismissed as 'propaganda' by scholars, this dimension was not only important in and of itself, it informed the entire environment in which politics, economics, diplomacy and warfare were conducted between 1949 and 1989." (Taylor, 1997: 28).

The mass media not only became integral to the everyday domestic workings of the modern state during the course of this century, but also have come to play an ever-increasing role in the external relations between States." (Taylor, 1997: 58). According to Philip Taylor, foreign policy in the age of mass media is not the same as before. In the past, diplomacy was the sport of Kings and conducted in secrecy. Nowadays foreign affairs could no longer be conducted in quite the same sort of seclusion. "Moreover, the modern media had proved to be considerable allies in selling the war and sustaining public support for it." (Taylor, 1997: 59). Meanwhile, Taylor described the relationship between reporters and officials in the early days as more towards cooperation than conflict. (1997: 60). Having said that, at present officials cannot neglect the mass media, yet try to manipulate and shape the media's agenda. Two key elements have transformed the reporters-officials relationship. (Taylor, 1997: 62). They are:

1. Trust
2. Technology. We refer here to the growth of mass communication technologies.

"What is felt to have changed the old level of mutual cooperation and trust more than any other event, at least in America, was the Watergate scandal of the mid 1970s, coming as it did at the end of the Vietnam war." (Taylor, 1997: 63).

As far as the public opinions that are concerned about foreign policy, Taylor asked, how many people are really interested in international affairs? In his answer to such a question he said:

"These are the elites who care about foreign events because they recognize that the flapping of a dictator's arms in one part of the world can possibly influence foreign, economic or military policy elsewhere in the world a month or so later. These are the real citizens of the global village, who watch their neighbours' behaviour because they realise it can affect their own livelihood in some way, and these are the people who rely heavily on the international media, including, the news agencies, the wire services and a multiplicity of other specialised sources." (Taylor, 1997: 72).

At the same time, Taylor concluded that the relationship between the practice of diplomacy and the media production process has rarely been a comfortable one. (1997: 74). This is because diplomacy is about negotiation and conflict resolutions, while the media thrive on conflict rather than conflict resolution. (Taylor, 1997: 74). Thus, Taylor outlined two approaches in which governments themselves conduct their own direct media activities designed to influence the image of a nation abroad. (1997: 77). They are:

First: Cultural diplomacy which is a long-term activity. This can be seen in education and in other forms of cultural contact.

Second: Public diplomacy which is a short-term activity. This can be seen in the form of external radio, and now television, broadcasting.

It was obvious that Taylor paid extra attention to broadcasting in general and television in particular. Because, "public debate is no longer run by events, but by the coverage of events." (Taylor, 1997: 92). Furthermore, television has the ability to set the agenda of foreign affairs at least in the mind of the public. This fact in itself appears to have transformed diplomatic practice. (Taylor, 1977: 95). Finally, Taylor

through his study did not hide his critical views toward journalists or media. He concluded by saying:

"For good or ill, the media are today a central part of the foreign-policy making process - whether as observer, participant or catalyst. They cannot any longer be ignored or dismissed as being irresponsible or a nuisance. If they are, they are likely to cause more trouble and jeopardise the operation under review." (1997: 201)

Thusfar, as we did with the first category of this literature review, we should provide some analyses and comments about the second category. To begin with, it should be acknowledged that the work of Yoel Cohen is still considered as concerning domestic affairs. Yoel Cohen's work is still about the British press influencing both the British domestic policy-makers and opinion. As we said earlier, we need to go beyond the internal framework of studying the media-foreign policy phenomenon since this issue is an international behaviour and interaction. However, Yoel Cohen provided some roles of the media in international diplomacy. Perhaps, it would be useful for Yoel Cohen, for example, to study the role of media in the British-US diplomacy, because traditionally there is heavy news traffic between the two countries. Also, Yoel Cohen did not elaborate on his preference for using the term diplomacy rather than foreign policy. Are they different things? And what is the inter-relationship of both terms? A few explanations will be provided later on.

Meanwhile, Jarol Manheim did not explain how the American mass media establishment perceived its role and effect during the whole process. He did not elaborate, for instance, whether or not the mass media was indeed a symbiotic force to the foreign policy establishment in the United States as Bernard Cohen explained previously. Or, that the American mass media, in fact, cannot conduct a debate on the wisdom of foreign policy, cannot yet refute what official Washington says, and cannot be assertive when it has early opportunities to separate fact from fiction as Nicolas Berry concluded earlier. Manheim left us to believe that the American mass media was no more than a megaphone to any foreign policy activities in the United

States and that it can be used and abused by foreigners and national players. Perhaps, the American mass media shared with the political and military establishment the same interest. It has to be acknowledged that the work of Jarol Manheim emphasizes the external framework of foreign policy in comparison with the domestic emphasis of Patrick O'Heffernan for example. However, Manheim did not explain what he means by the term 'public'. He dealt with the term 'public' as a collective phenomena. This analysis of this issue is no longer valid, at least since the work of Gabriel Almond in his book The American People and Foreign Policy, (1960). Almond identified four key publics: the general public, the attentive public, policy and opinion elites, and the official leaders. (Almond, 1960).

Finally, it should be mentioned that the growing concern about the role of television in the foreign policy process has been very noticeable. Thus, the more we focus on and investigate broadcasting — television in particular— the more we would talk about and analyse public diplomacy or propaganda and vice versa. What we need is to examine the real life of foreign policy. By this I mean to evaluate the communication between government-to-government, bearing in mind that most scholars have acknowledged the special role of the print media in the foreign policy process, and that governments prefer to use the press in their international and diplomatic communication, because it is the elite medium.

## **Media and Diplomacy**

Most scholars cited in this chapter did not explain what foreign policy is and what diplomacy is. However, it has become more than evident that the mass media has a special relationship with diplomacy. This particular study confirms this important fact. Instead of defining both terms, we will draw some boundaries of this inter-relationship between foreign policy and diplomacy. In fact both of them are actually two faces of the same coin. Foreign policy cannot be made on its own without the work of diplomacy or diplomats. "Diplomacy is the central technique of foreign

policy." (Said, 1995: 69). To this point I shall accept the definition of James F. Larson who said,

"Foreign policy will generally refer to a process of planning and implementation of: choosing goals in the conduct of one nation's relations with others and selecting strategies and tactics for achieving these goals. Diplomacy, on the other hand, is fundamentally a communication process: it is the art or practice of communicating the substance of one government's policies to other governments. As such, diplomacy is a part of implementation rather than the planning phase of foreign policy." (1988: 10).

Furthermore, "the foreign office in any given country is the brain of foreign policy, while the diplomatic representatives are its eyes, ears, and mouth, its finger tips, and, as it were, its itinerant incarnations." (Morgenthau, 1993: 364). There are three basic functions which diplomats fulfill for their governments symbolic, legal, and political. (Morgenthau, 1993: 394). Based on those functions, a significant role diplomats perform is the gathering of information. Once information is introduced, it is very difficult to rule out the mass media and the intelligence services from the whole process. In the final analysis, upon the information gathered, the foreign policy of any nation is founded. But, what is information? There is a kind of consensus among scholars to define information as "power". As a result, we should also ask what then is power? Power is "man's control over the minds and actions of other men". (Morgenthau, 1993: 30). Again, once minds are introduced, it is impossible to neglect the psychological impact and power of mass media in the communication process. In the final analysis the information of one man can be considered as propaganda for another. Over the years states have developed a variety of ways to communicate with one another. Recently, the mass media have been used heavily in political and diplomatic communication. Indeed, there is an urgent requirement to re-define some social concepts such as diplomacy, intelligence, and the press. Nowadays, in each embassy there is a press or information attaché. The basic duties of those attachés are "to further the foreign policies of their governments, to combat

hostile propaganda, and to inform their own governments of foreign attitudes". (Lee, 1968: XI). Having said that, it is essential to acknowledge at this point that formal diplomacy has begun to lose some of its substance. In the past diplomacy was a very private affair. "In the tranquil days before World War I, foreign policy was decided by a handful of specialists in striped pants closeted in quiet rooms". (Lee, 1968: IX). So many things have changed since World War II. "Diplomacy has declined and has lost its vitality, and its functions have withered away to such an extent as is without precedent in the history of the modern state system". (Morgenthau, 1993: 367). There is no doubt that the decline of diplomacy is due to the incredible technological and communication relations. This fact has forced, for instance, the Libyan President Moa'mer Qaddafi in 1996 to suggest that there is no need for embassies in the presence of modern communication. The entire system of the international community has also changed. In the past, there were only 23 independent states, while presently there are 185 state-units. Indeed, "this is the age of public diplomacy, the era of people-to-people dialogues, the day of human communications". (Lee, 1968: X). Governments around the world are communicating with each other in a very speedy way via the mass media. They exploit the mass media in general and the press in particular to signal, pressure, negotiate, and persuade each other in a way that public opinion might not be aware of. Politicians no longer have a monopoly of information. However, they use it and abuse it to advocate their national interest. This study in particular revealed, in an acceptable way, the role of the Arab press in the diplomatic process of the Arab world. For instance, Fares Bois, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, called the role of the Arab press in the Arab foreign policy a Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy. By this he means the Arab press in fact play a formal diplomatic role in Arab foreign policy. (see Chapter 4). It does seem that the informal diplomacy represented in the media as described by Yoel Cohen overlaps with the formal diplomacy. Having said that, "the use of media diplomacy as a theoretical concept has been highly confusing and misleading." (Gilboa, 1998: 56). Three main

factors are involved in diplomacy: the government, the media, and public opinion. (Gilboa, 1998: 56).

"The communication revolution, the growing mass participation in politics, and fundamental changes in international relations produced new types of interactions between mass media and diplomacy and new terms to describe them, such as public diplomacy, media diplomacy, populist diplomacy, instant diplomacy, teleplomacy, and even photoplomacy." (Gilboa, 1998: 56).

In a very useful study Eytan Gilboa provided an attempt to correct the theoretical confusion. Gilboa outlined three concepts:

#### First: Public diplomacy

"The core idea of public diplomacy is one of direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments." (Malone, 1985: 199).

"In terms of content, it describes activities, directed abroad in the fields of information, education, and culture, whose objective is to influence a foreign government, by influencing its citizens." (Frederick, 1993: 229).

"The emphasis in these and other definitions is on an activity specifically directed toward a foreign audience." (Gilboa, 1998: 58).

#### Second: Media diplomacy

"Media diplomacy has often been confused with public diplomacy. Here, it refers to the use of the mass media by policy makers in specific cases to send signals and apply pressure on state and non state actors to build confidence and advance negotiations as well as to mobilize public support for agreements." (Gilboa, 1998: 62).

#### Third: Media-broker diplomacy

"This refers, for example, to Walter Cronkite from CBS News who helped to arrange the historic visit of Al-Sadat to Jerusalem. Therefore, media-broker-diplomacy refers to:

"international mediation conducted and sometimes initiated by media professionals. The definition points to the main differences between media-diplomacy and media-broker diplomacy. The differences lie in the actual activities of the journalists in the two models and in the source of that activity. Whereas in media diplomacy reporters pursue professional journalism work and follow moves initiated by policy makers, in media-broker diplomacy, they act as diplomats and not as reporters, sometimes initiating and conducting diplomatic moves." (Gilboa, 1998: 67).

In fact this particular study confirms strongly that journalists sometimes function as diplomats (see Chapter 6). Therefore, "an appropriate conceptual model should be developed to account for this type of relationship between media and diplomacy." (Gilboa, 1998: 67). As a result, two concluding notes should be made at this stage. First, it is more than evident that media play or have a special relationship with diplomacy. Second, a more in-depth investigation of this significant inter-relationship will help us to build an acceptable framework of the roles of mass media in international foreign policy or international relationships, I think this media-diplomacy issue should be the starting point.

Thusfar, the entire previous arguments from the introduction, through the literature review, to this particular line are quite lengthy. However, it is important and necessary to explain and build upon the theme of this study. Consequently, what is this study about? And what kind of problems is it investigating?

### **The Framework of the Study:**

It is important in the beginning to summarise a few points in order to explain the theme of this study. First, it has been noticeable that there is a growing concern about the influence of one nation's mass media on the public opinion of another nation. This has been known in the mass communications literature as propaganda, a name which has been replaced by the new term 'public diplomacy'. In short, this is one of the roles played by the broadcasting media, radio and television, in the government-people

communication or diplomacy. Second, the diplomatic role of the mass media has been more than evident. Scholars have been describing this role of the media as, proxy of diplomats, informal diplomacy, media-broker diplomacy, and sometimes, as some interviewees suggest in this study, formal diplomacy. Third, most scholars acknowledge the fact that, the press is the medium of foreign policy, being the preferred medium of governments, intellectuals, elites, and politicians. So far we have known some of the tactics of the press in the diplomatic relationship, such as negotiations and leaks. However, we have yet to produce an acceptable definition of the press or media diplomacy. Diplomacy is the arm of foreign policy. Therefore, the press extends, usually, a very useful hand to diplomacy, and as a result, to foreign policy. Both diplomacy and the press go hand-in-hand to achieve one nation's interest. Therefore, this study proposes that our efforts of studying the role of mass media or the press in particular should be based on the external level. Meaning that, we should focus on the government-to-government communication, diplomacy or contacts with the press playing a special role in the process. For instance, it would be very useful to analyse the role or effect of the press between the United States and United Kingdom or between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We need to know in particular how the press is used by two separate sovereign governments to communicate or influence each other. Of course, by investigating the role of the press in the foreign policy process we exclude the ordinary public opinion, for example, how many British people read the French newspapers.

Therefore, I wish to apply the foregoing arguments to the context of the press in a regional setting. This study has tried to investigate the nature and role of the Arab national and international or emigré press in the Arab foreign policy process in a regional context. Perhaps, this is the first attempt to explore the issue regionally. This was done in the Arab region; a region which consists of 22 sovereign countries. Each country has its own government, flag, and national anthem. Under the American and European political systems, where a multiparty democracy is implemented, studies investigating the participatory role of the press in foreign policy-making were worth

trying since the political system tolerates the complexities under the principle of freedom of the speech. On the other hand, however, any similar attitudes would not only be unwise in the Arab world, but futile as well. For obvious reasons, the Arab press does not enjoy freedom of speech. It is either controlled, managed or manipulated by governments. This factor per se gives this study even more legitimacy to seek to uncover the nature and role of the press in the processes of foreign policy-making and to find out whether, why, and how does it facilitate or hinder policies. (see Chapter 4). Contrary to other studies, the aim here is not to investigate the internal process of the making of foreign policy in any given Arab country, but rather to expand beyond the internal framework and explore systematically the issue in a regional context. The study really and practically explores the nature and role of the Arab national and international or emigré press in the foreign policy of the Arab world. Having said that, this research is not meant to investigate each and every Arab country. Instead, it concentrated on four major Arab countries—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon. These countries are very active participants in the foreign policy process of the Arab world. In other words, these selected countries are the major players, for example, in Middle East issues. Furthermore, these Arab countries have some political and military weight and significant impact across the Arab region. It also happens that Arab countries share the same language, which is an important medium for the communication process, history, geography, and culture. Basically, this study tried to explore the nature and role of the national and international or emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy by selecting four important countries as samples. The study interviewed both prominent officials and journalists in the aforementioned countries, seeking their views about the nature and role of the national and international or emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy. Meanwhile, in order to investigate the issue under discussion in more specific ways, two case studies were selected as a second major methodology. Both case studies, I believe, are self-explanatory in the way their stories were told and explained. A very brief elaboration will be given here about both case studies. The first case study which is called "The

Green Newspaper" concerns Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This name was given by the former Egyptian President, Anwar Al-Sadat to the international Arab daily newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat* when it was first published in London in the late 1970s. In a major news conference, the Egyptian President claimed that the Saudis had established the newspaper simply to attack him and undermine his policies. This case study assessed Al-Sadat's claim and investigated its motivations. Since then, and even before, Egyptian-Saudi political relations was affected by some journalistic material. For example, the same newspaper caused a diplomatic crisis between both countries in 1997 which was solved, to some extent, and mediated secretly, by a prominent Egyptian journalist. (see Chapter 6). The second case study is called 'Khadhraa Al-Diman' newspaper and concerns Saudi Arabia and the Sudan. In 1993 the Sudanese government closed down the offices of the international Arab daily newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, in Khartoum and arrested its correspondent and accused him of being a spy or of having a relationship with the Saudi intelligence service. The case study investigated those accusations and the main reasons behind the closure of the newspaper's offices. (see Chapter 7).

Thusfar, in a further explanation, we should outline and explain the aims and the problems this study is investigating and focusing upon.

### **Aims of the Study:**

This study began with a mixture of interests and problems to research in the Arab world, some of which have been discussed previously. However, these can be summarised into three aims:

#### **A. The Main Aim:**

Under this aim the study seeks to uncover at least some of the nature of the national (domestic) Arab press and its role in the field of foreign policy in the Arab world. The press in the Arab world lack freedom of expression and speech. It is either managed or controlled by the various Arab governments to the point where some

scholars considered the state-controlled media as "another branch of government". (Cohen Y, 1986: 23). Therefore, to what extent do Arab politicians and decision makers take into consideration the content of the national Arab press in making their Arab foreign policy decisions? What kind of role does the national Arab press play in this regard? It must be acknowledged that in every country around the world, one or two, or even more, national newspapers stand out as prestigious or quality newspapers. These newspapers are constantly monitored by governments, diplomats, intelligence services personnel, and journalists for news and views.

The officials interviewed for this study revealed and discussed some of the roles played by the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics as follows: First, the no role theory was one of the conclusions of some Arab officials. Second, the mirror role. Third, leaks and trial balloon role. Fourth, the role of being a source of information. Fifth, the press as a psychological weapon. Sixth, the diplomatic role. By contrast, the Arab journalists interviewed for this study came up with the following roles: First, the no role theory. Second, the mirror role. Third, leaks and trial balloons role. Fourth, the role of being a source of information. Fifth, the press as a psychological weapon. Sixth, the diplomatic role. Seventh, the role of post man. (see Chapter 4).

### **B. The Second Aim:**

Under this aim the study seeks to discover the special role that the international, or the emigré, Arab press plays in the field of foreign policy in the Arab world, bearing in mind that its content is solely about inter-Arab politics and international affairs. These press are published outside the Arab region. They are located mainly in Europe in general, and in London in particular. Thus, what are the differences between the national and the international or emigré Arab press? What is the political need for the international or emigré Arab press? What are the other names or descriptions of these Arab press? What is the historical background of the development of these press? Finally, what does this press add to the Arab foreign policy process? Since the

comments and analyses of both Arab officials and journalists interviewed for this study cannot be classified with the main aim, Chapter 5 provides good answers and explanations.

### **C.A Subordinate Aim:**

This aim is to test the validity of a claim, through deductive and inductive reasoning, that information is a basic element and a common product that the press, foreign policy officials and the intelligence services personnel deal with. Because of their interaction, one must assume that there is a relationship between the press and the intelligence services. It is essential at this point to stress the fact that this aim is a subordinate aim. However, it is known that most foreign policy decisions are based on information gathered by diplomats and intelligence services. So far, we have argued the inter-relationship of the press or media and diplomacy or diplomats. We have also seen that some journalists play the role of diplomats. How did they do that? Was it in cooperation with the foreign policy establishment or with the intelligence services? If some of the media roles are seen as media-broker diplomacy, why not then call it media-broker intelligence services? How and where should we draw the boundaries? Previously, we argued that Philip Taylor described the communication role of the media as the fourth dimension. Taylor also introduced a further dimension related to the one above called the hidden dimension which refers to the intelligence services' activity of gathering secret information to fuel the activities of the political establishments. Consequently, if some journalists are used in diplomatic missions, why should we exclude them from the realm of intelligence services; collecting, exchanging, and providing information. Having said that, nothing is easier than accusation in the Arab world. For example, Mustafa Amin, a prominent Egyptian journalist, has been accused widely in the Arab world as being an agent of, or having a relationship with, the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Also, many Arab journalists who work with the international or emigré Arab press are accused of having a relationship with some Arab intelligence services. The only purpose of this subordinate aim is to begin to explain this issue and its interaction with the press and

foreign policy according to the views of Arab officials and journalists. Again, does this relationship exist? What does it add to the process of foreign policy in the Arab world? This study suggests the invalidity of the question of whether or not there is a relationship between the press and intelligence services. Instead, the question we should ask is: Is this relationship considered acceptable or still taboo? (see Chapter 5).

Finally, it was acknowledged previously that the Arab press is either controlled or managed by Arab governments. However, the Arab press is not as heavily managed or as restricted as the "*Pravda*" newspaper in the former Soviet Union. The political boundaries within which Arab journalists work are very clear and sensitive. Despite this fact, Arab journalists try from time to time to interpret political developments according to their own visions. These trials sometimes lead to diplomatic crises in the Arab world. (see Chapter 6). The question here is, is there a danger of differentiating between the journalistic and the official views? Does each and every word in an Arab press represent the views of that particular Arab government? How seriously can this problem affect Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics? (see Chapter 4.)

Although this chapter explains how this study is structured and will be researched and investigated, the following (second) chapter discusses in further detail the methodologies selected for this research.

CHAPTER TWO

**Methodologies and  
Empirical Plans**

Within the field of mass communication, news media have been investigated from different angles seeking to uncover their various effects. Meanwhile, in the subfield of the press and foreign policy, the cumulative knowledge which we have to review and cite is so little. The systematic exploration of the relationship of the press and foreign policy has been very slow in coming. It seems the complexity of the issue is an important factor. It is a field, as discussed in the previous chapter, with no genuine boundaries to encourage researchers or students to especially carry on a task of this nature. Most of the works which have explored the press-foreign policy relationship concentrate mainly on the internal interaction of this phenomenon. To the best of my knowledge, the researches of Bernard Cohen and Nicolas Berry are the only works which studied specifically the press and foreign policy in the United States. Their works, as discussed earlier, are more confined to the media-government relationship. There are considerable evidences which suggest that governments around the world refer to, and rely upon, the press in particular for their communications and negotiations. It would have been more useful for us if both Bernard Cohen and Nicolas Berry had investigated the role of the press in the foreign policy process at external or international levels to view how various governments around the world use the press in order to advocate and advance their national interests. Of course, studying the entire world is impossible. However, we could select two or three sovereign countries to investigate. Although the task of filling the gaps left by some previous studies is not an easy one, our present study is an attempt to bridge some of these gaps by exploring the issue externally. In the theoretical framework chapter, we outlined the interests and the aims of this study. The possibility of investigating the three aims of this study is provided by the methodologies adopted in implementing this research.

### **Selected Methodologies:**

The methodologies selected to carry out this study have been dictated by the nature of the research in question and, indeed, according to the rule stated by Klaus Bruhn

Jensen and Nicholas W. Jankowski, "The method one should choose when approaching any topic, including news, depends upon the question one wants to answer." (1991: 79)

### **Two major forces stimulate the selection of methodologies:**

1. The first one stems from various readings and literature reviews. During this process a notable reliance upon the use of qualitative approach is unavoidable. Most researches exploring the media-government relationship or opening the box of media-foreign policy have used the tool of qualitative methods.
2. The second major force is the multipurpose nature of this research. It is important to stress the fact that the choice of methodologies is not a matter of personal preference. It is rather due to the sensitivity and complexity of the issue at hand. No other tool of research can adequately explore this highly delicate and secretive field other than the armory of qualitative methodology.

### **Qualitative Methodologies:**

The simplest way of defining qualitative methodologies is:

"Any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or quantification. It can refer to research about persons' lives, stories, behaviour, but also about organizational functioning, social movements or interactional relationships." (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 17)

On the other hand, Thomas R. Lindolf sees qualitative research as follows: "To preserve the form and context of the human behaviour and to analyse its qualities, rather than subject to mathematical or other formal transformations." (1995: 21)

Therefore, the qualitative approach consists of four common techniques as follows: (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991: 140)

- First - Field observation.
- Second - Focus groups.
- Third - Intensive interviews.
- Fourth - Case studies.

To complete this study, I have selected two main techniques:

Intensive or lengthy interviews and case studies. An extra explanation of these selections will be seen in the forthcoming pages.

### **Intensive Interviews:**

Intensive interviews are the most powerful in the armory of qualitative research (McCracken, 1988: 9). Interviews are conducted to understand people's "perspective on a scene, to retrieve experience from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that are normally unavailable for observation, to trust, to understand a sensitive or an intimate relationship or analyse certain kinds of discourse." (Lindolf, 1995: 5)

In addition, it could be argued that intensive interviews help "learning about things that cannot be observed directly by other means." (Lindolf, 1995: 166). For specific analytical and descriptive purposes, the intensive interview is the most revealing method.

"It can take us to the mental world of the individual to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. It can also take to the life world of the individual to see the contrast and pattern of daily experience. The long interview gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves." (McCracken, 1988: 9)

By reviewing the literature on the area under investigation, it becomes notable that the intensive interview is a methodology used by some distinguished scholars.

Bernard Cohen, in his pioneering work, The Press and Foreign Policy, (1963, reprinted 1983), relied solely on the intensive interviews for his study. This study will partly adopt his methodology of conducting interviews "to open up the tape of practice, experience, and evaluation to the maximum extent." (Cohen, 1983: 11)

As far as the number of interviewees is concerned, the study is not aiming at discovering what kind or how many people share a certain characteristic. It is rather "to gain access to the cultural categories and assumption according to which one culture construes the world." (McCracken, 1988: 17). Grant McCracken argues that "The first principle is that: less is more. It is more important to work longer, and with greater care with a few people than more superficially with many of them. For many research projects, eight respondents will be perfectly sufficient." (1988: 17)

This study sought to conduct as many interviews as possible, equally divided between Arab journalists and officials in the field of Arab foreign policy. The location of these interviews were elicited and simulated by countries that are active and influential in foreign policy making in the Arab world. Nevertheless, the strategy of this research was to contact as many journalists and officials as possible so as to insure that a large number of interviews could be carried out. The officials interviewed were divided into three categories as follows:

**The first category:**

Consists of former Prime Ministers.

**The second category:**

Consists of Foreign and Information Ministers.

**The third category:**

Consists of ambassadors, diplomats and officials in the influential foreign and information ministries and embassies of the Arab world. The selection of the interviewees under this category is comprised of officials that are distant from their

homeland and foreign ministries. The reason for this is to test how the press help them perform their duties. Yet, a number of interviewees were contacted in their homeland for the significance of either their position or their role in the foreign policy of the Arab world.

Successfully, this research conducted twenty five interviews with prominent Arab officials in the following Arab countries:

1. Egypt
2. Lebanon
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Syria

#### **The fourth category:**

Meanwhile, this study was also fortunate to conduct another twenty two interviews with prominent Arab journalists of different Arab nationalities. Some interviews with Arab officials and other Arab journalists were conducted in London because this Western capital has become a very significant city for the Arab mass media in general and the Arab international or emigré press in particular. (see the Appendix for the full interviewee list).

Before we discuss the second methodology, a few points should be made at this stage.

Interviewing prominent politicians and journalists for academic purposes in the Arab world is a difficult task. In fact these difficulties can be applied to any part of this world. During the implementation process of this study, two strategies were adopted and relied upon to maintain appointments:

First: Direct and constant contact by phone and fax was used to maintain appointments for interviews.

Second: Maintaining appointments for interviews via well connected Arab journalists and writers.

During the process of interviews twelve politicians and diplomats, out of twenty five, refused to tape-record the interviews (see the Appendix for the full interviewee list). In fact they also refused to allow me even to take notes. In the beginning this was a very difficult task. However, I realised later that only important comments and information stayed in my mind. But it was very important to write down the content of the interviews immediately afterwards. Generally speaking interviews lasted between forty five minutes to one hour and a half. The impression I was able to notice or record from the interviewees was as follows: First, there were those officials who were very frank and thoughtful about the subject. Second, some officials drifted from the subjects under discussion and talked aimlessly. Perhaps they did not wish to reveal any solid information, or maybe they had never thought at length about the study's theme. Finally, there were those officials who tried to mislead the study.

Having said that, conducting a research in the Arab world is not easy by all means. Most Arab countries require formal governmental permission to conduct a research project. For example, when I began this research, I knew that some obstacles might slow down the process of this research. One Arab country, for instance, requires special permission for any researcher prior to conducting interviews with officials or journalists. Therefore, I went in person with a letter of request to the Information Ministry of that Arab country hoping to smooth the way. Regretfully, one authority in that Arab Information Ministry was uncooperative. He told me first that the time was not right to interview both officials and journalists due to the political activities taking place in that period. He encouraged me to leave his country at that time and coordinate with him over the phone to arrange the required interview. I knew that this would probably never happen due to both political and bureaucratic reasons. Therefore, I started to search for other powerful political means to achieve my research ends. Meanwhile, three, out of twenty five Arab officials, criticised the framework of this study. (see Chapter 4).

## **Case Studies:**

Through history, case studies have been one of the major methodologies used by scholars and authors of significant works. However, it is most disputed among social science scholars. There are four essential characteristics of case study research as follows:

### **1. Particularistic:**

"This means that case study focuses on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon making it a good method of studying practical real life problems." (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991: 150).

### **2. Descriptive:**

"The final result of a case study is a detailed description of the topic under study." (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991: 150).

### **3. Heuristic:**

"A case study helps to understand what is being studied. New perceptions, new perspectives, new meaning and fresh insights are all goals of a case study." (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991: 150)

### **4. Inductive:**

"Most case studies depend on inductive reasoning. principles and generalizations emerge from an examination of the data. Many case studies attempt to discover new relationships rather than verify existing hypotheses." (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991: 150).

On the other hand, Robert K. Yin sees case study as a research strategy used in many settings, one of which is political science. (1994: 13)

Yin defines a case study as follows:

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- ◇ investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context;
- ◇ when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident;
- ◇ and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." (1994: 23).

According to Yin, "Single and multiple case studies can be used." (1994:13).  
 Meanwhile he divided case studies into three categories as follows: (1994: 13).

1. Explanations
2. Explorations
3. Descriptive

Having said that, Yin considers a "pluralistic" case study the most appropriate view of these different strategies. (1994: 15)

As a result, case studies were selected as the second major methodology of this research. Therefore, the expectant aim of the final conclusion will be a "pluralistic" one. There are two different case studies. Each of them represent a different perspective of the relationship between the press and foreign policy in the Arab world. The goal here is to show a new insight or explanation to this relationship through the totality of those perspectives. To enhance the "pluralistic" analyses of those case studies, this research conducted five interviews for Case study #1 and four interviews for Case study #2. Those interviewees were major participants in both case studies. The following is a brief outline of the nature of those case studies:

### **Case Study #1:**

This case study is called "The Green Newspaper" and it covers the press and foreign policy between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The former Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat attacked the international Arab daily newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* when it was first published in London in the late 1970s and called it "The Green Newspaper". In a major news conference, the Egyptian President claimed that the Saudis had established the newspaper only to attack him and undermine his policies. Since then,

and even before, Egyptian-Saudi political relations were affected by some journalistic articles. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the same newspaper caused a diplomatic crisis in 1997 between the two countries and was mediated secretly by a prominent Egyptian journalist.

### **Case Study #2:**

This case study is called "Khadhraa Al-Diman Newspaper" and it covers the press and foreign policy between Saudi Arabia and Sudan. In 1993 the Sudanese government closed down the offices of the international Arab daily newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, in Khartoum and arrested its correspondent. This act by the Sudanese government generated international condemnation both from European countries and the United States. The political relationship between Saudi Arabia and Sudan deteriorated because of some political stands where the press played an important role. When the Sudanese government arrested the correspondent of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, they accused him of having a relationship with the Saudi intelligence services.

Before concluding this chapter, it is important that we mention a few points. *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper was selected for both case studies for two reasons: First, the easy access to the archive of the newspaper and its reporters. Second, the newspaper is considered as one of the most leading daily international or emigré Arab newspapers based in London.

At this stage two questions might evolve: First, what is the need for both case studies? Second, what do these case studies demonstrate? To begin with the first question, a prominent official interviewed for this study criticized the framework of this research as being too wide or generalised. Consequently, both case studies provide a more particular or specific level of analysis by looking at how the press play a role in the foreign policy process between the two given countries. Finally, both case studies demonstrate some significant analyses and issues such as:

1. How some Arab governments use the press in the foreign policy process and also are affected by it.
2. How some Arab journalists can damage or enhance a certain Arab foreign policy or certain Arab diplomacy.
3. The real danger of differentiating between the official and journalistic views in the Arab press.
4. The exploration of the role of the press in a non-western setting and where different practices and routines apply.

It is worth mentioning at this stage that a considerable number of Arabic texts were translated into English. For example, all personal interviews were conducted in the Arabic language, and then translated into English. Moreover, all cartoons included in Chapter 3 are originally Arabic, then translated into English. Also, important material and information was translated from some Arabic books, reports, and newspaper cuttings into English.

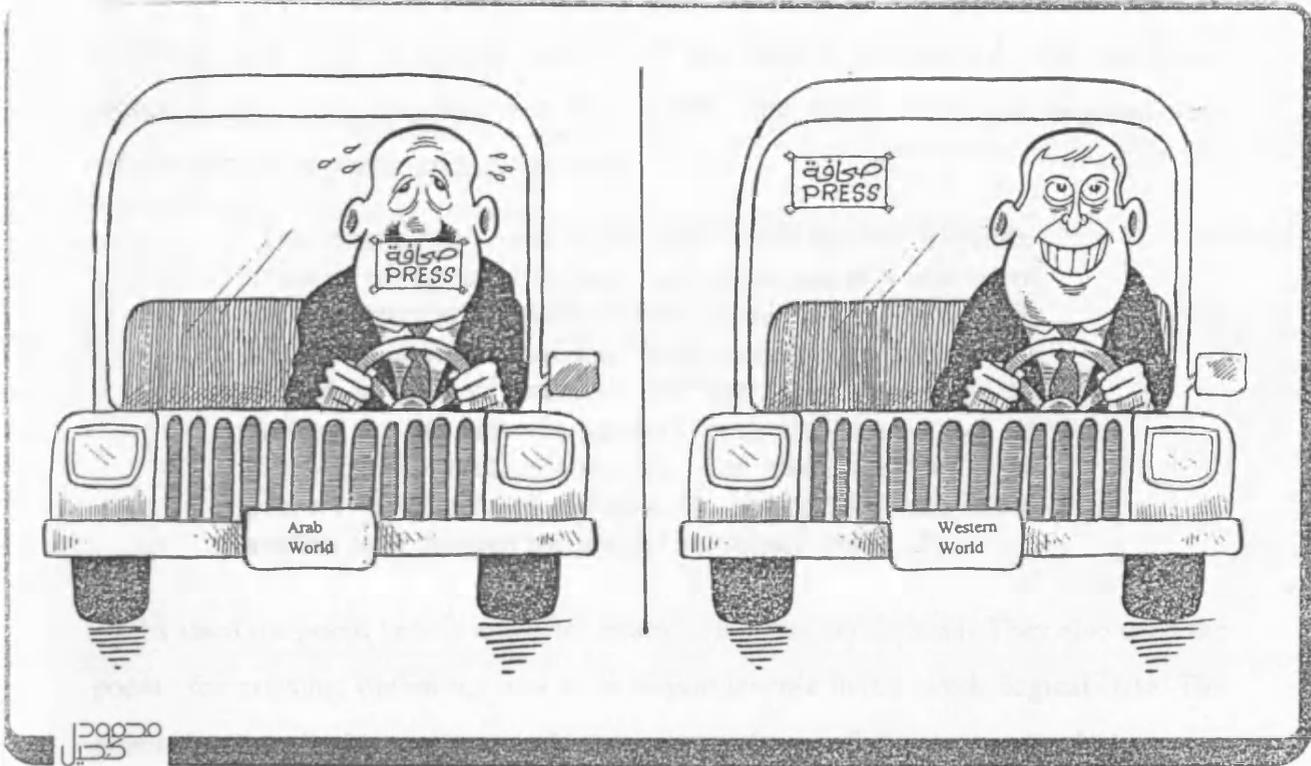
The next chapter provides background about the Arab press in general and its relationship with Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics.

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CHAPTER THREE

**THE ARAB PRESS**

## The Impact of the Word



Source: Asharq Al-Awsat - Tuesday 20/5/1997

1

Before Islam the Arabs used to live in what has been known in the Muslim culture as the *Al-Jahilya* era. The name of *Al-Jahilya* or the state of ignorance was given because the Arabs did not believe in one God, Allah. Instead they worshipped idols which they sculptured and made by their own hands. A funny and true story, very well known in the Muslim culture, says that some Arabs used to make idols to worship out of palm dates and when they became hungry they ate their own date gods. Since that time, and perhaps to the present date, Arabs have been known for their tribal fanaticism. Nothing reveals this more than the story of two Arab tribes who fought each other for forty years over a horse. The present state of inter-Arab politics can easily be called the second era of *Al-Jahilya*. Having said that, looking on

<sup>1</sup>All cartoons in this chapter are adopted from *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper. They belong to the cartoonist Mahmoud Kaheel and have been translated into English.

at things positively, the Arabs were very well known for all kinds of positive characteristics. They were known for their generosity, heroism, commitment to promises, and their incredible mastery of the Arabic language. A very significant aspect of the Arab language was the poetry. The poetry is a formal language with refinements of grammar and vocabulary.

"The poetic form most highly valued was the *ade* or *qasida*, a poem of up to 100 lines, written in one of a number of accepted metres and with a single rhyme running through it. Each line consisted of two hemistiches: The rhyme was carried in both of them in the first line, but only in the second in the rest. In general, each line was a unit of meaning and total enjambment was rare; but this did not prevent continuity of thought or feeling from one line to another, and through the poem." (Hourani, 1991: 12).

Arabs used the poem before and after Islam to express enthusiasm. They also used the poem for praising, defaming, and as an important role in the psychological state. The poem for the Arabs was not only an artistic form of the language, but it was a significant mass medium. Through the only mass medium available to the Arabs they used to exchange news and other values mentioned previously. During that time each tribe had its own poet who praised his tribe or allies, and attacked his or their enemies. The impact of poetry in Arab history was tremendous. Nothing reveals this more than the following story in the anthology of the Arab poet Al-Hutai'a.

"Anfu Alnagha" was one of the ancient Arab tribes. The story goes that Al-Shammas clan was ridiculed with the nickname "Anfu Alnagha" which literally means "the nose of a she-camel". Anfu Alnagha was originally Gaafar Ibn Tameem. He was nicknamed Anfu Alnagha when his father slaughtered a young she-camel and divided the meat amongst his wives. The mother of Gaafar sent him to fetch some more meat, if any still remained, Gaafar could find nothing but the she-camel head. He held it by the nostrils and returned to his home. When asked by curious people, he replied "Anfu Alnagha". The nickname provoked the tribe's anguish and it could not raise its head among the Arab tribes, feeling humiliation and shame. Then a very famous Arab

poet Al-Hutai'a changed the whole story around when he wrote a poem in favour of the mentioned tribe, saying:

Some people are the nose,  
Others the tail,  
Yet, who could ever equate,  
The nose of a she-camel to the tail (Al-Hutai'a, 1958: 17)

The whole episode was transformed into a cause of self pride. Paradoxically enough, the obscenity implied by the infamous nickname soon turned to praise following Al-Hutai'a's verses.

The above story illustrates a very important fact which is that the word has a very significant impact on the Arab mind. It is very well known that the Arabs are the nation of the word. They master the language and are affected by it. When Islam came, God chose and sent the Arabic prophet with a most significant miracle, an Arabic Book, the Qur'an. The language and style of the Holy Book, the Qur'an, has astonished Arabs throughout history. In fact the Qur'an challenges Arabs and non-Arabs to produce a similar book. The Qur'an says:

"If mankind and the Jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another." (Al-Isra Chapter, Verse 88).

The Qur'an says:

"Or they say, 'He (prophet Muhammad peace be upon him) forged it (the Qur'an)' Say: 'Bring you then ten forged Surahs (chapters) like unto it, and call whomsoever you can, other than Allah (to your help), if you speak the truth.' (Hud Chapter, Verse 13).

In fact, the Arab unbelievers accused prophet Muhammad peace be upon him of being a magician, mad and a poet. In this regard the Qur'an says:

"And We have not taught him (Muhammad peace be upon him) poetry, nor is it meet for him. This is only a reminder and a plain Qur'an." (Ya-Sin Chapter, Verse 69).

Neither the Qur'an nor the Prophet, have forbidden poetry. But indeed they have drawn up some restrictions on its content. The truth is one of these restrictions. In this regard, the Qur'an also says:

"O you who believe, if a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done." (Al-Hujurat Chapter, Verse 6)

The Qur'an criticises poets in several ways. It says:

"As for the poets, the erring follow them, see you not that they speak about every subject in their poetry. And that they say what they do not do. Except those who believe (in the oneness of Allah - Islamic monotheism) and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah much and reply back (in poetry) to the unjust poetry (which the pagan poets utter against the Muslims). And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned." (Ash-Shu'ara Chapter, Verses 224-227)

Thus, through poetry, the Arab Muslims wage a psychological war with the Arab disbelievers. In fact, the Prophet himself had his own poet. Hassan Ibn Thabit took the responsibility for conveying Islamic rulings and defending the Muslims' Prophet. Once the Prophet peace be upon him entered Makkah to perform Umrat Al-Qada (a lesser pilgrimage) while Ibn Rawaha was saying the following poem:

Leave the sons of Unbelievers free  
Today we shall beat you for  
Your misinterpretation of "the Qur'an"  
A beating that causes you not  
To rest at sleep, and  
That causes intimate friends to part

Then Omer, a companion of the prophet said, "Oh.....Ibn Rawaha, you are saying this poetry in the holy land and in the presence of the Allah's apostle!" The Prophet said,

"By He in whose hands my soul is, his words are harmful and harder to them than an arrow strikes." (Al-Qurtuby, 1997: 137).

There is no doubt the emotional attitude of the Arabs made the impact and effect of words even more profound. Presently, poetry has lost most of its strength and artistic appeal in the absence of good poets. Therefore, poetry is no longer the only mass medium available to the Arabs. Nowadays, modern mass media in general and the press in particular has replaced the psychological role of poetry. However, it did not replace its linguistic and artistic role. Through modern history, Arabs have used and abused the press by praising and defaming each other in an obscene way.

In the past, Arab leaders have used poets to praise and defend them in exaggerated style, while the poets themselves were traveling among tribes from one region to another, using their poetry to achieve some economical and power gains. There seems little difference between those poets and poems in comparison with some present day journalists and press.

### **The Press and Arab Politics:**

As mentioned in the Arab Information Strategy chapter (Chapter 8), most of the Arab provinces were under the ruling of the Ottoman Empire prior to the Second World War. Soon after the First World War, the geopolitics of the Arab world was changed under the colonies of the super powers at that time, Great Britain and France. Both powers divided the Arab world under their ruling and influence via a very well known agreement dubbed "The Sykes Picott Agreement" in May 1916. Subsequently, Arab countries began to seek liberation and independence. Eventually, most Arab countries found their own way to becoming independent and sovereign states. However, some Arab leaders and intellectuals started to reject the superficial boundaries that separated the Arab countries. Their belief and desire stemmed from the fact that the entire Arab countries belong to one geography, culture, religion, language, and history. The re-emergence of the so-called Pan-Arabism or Arab nationalism was not

new by any means in Arab history. The call for one sovereign Arab nation ruled by one government under one independent flag was an emotional call rather than a realistic ambition. The person who was behind the idea of one Arab nation or pan-Arabism was no doubt the former Egyptian President Jamal Abdulnaser. Naser said that Arab unity is a mission that needs a leader. And he saw in himself the legitimate leader who could achieve this mission or dream.

Naserists throughout modern history believe that Naser was an inspiring and capable Arab leader who could be the only uniting leader for the Arab world, while other Arabs see in Naser's attempts, no more than the means to achieve some political and personal ends. They accused Naser of having a lust for power and leadership. Naser came to power in Egypt in 1952 by overthrowing the monarchy in Egypt under the Crown of King Farouq. At that time most countries of the Arab world were ruled by the monarchy system. After Naser's revolution, Qaddafi overthrew the monarchy in Libya. Qaddafi himself did not hide the fact that he was inspired by Naser. In any case, Naser began to work to overthrow most monarchy systems in the Arab world, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He did that by using all means available to him, including military intervention and influential mass media. Therefore, Naser interfered directly in Yemen to overthrow both the Yemeni and the Saudi monarchies. However, he suffered a great defeat on the Saudi borders. During the Yemen war and revolution, Naser was opposing both directly and indirectly his rival King Faisal, the King of Saudi Arabia. The defeat of Naser in 1967 by the Israeli army halted all his ambitions and interference in the Arab world in general, and in Saudi Arabia in particular. Thus the dream to establish one united nation from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf lost its appeal.

Naser was not the only Arab leader to call for Arab nationalism and Arab unity. This ambition was also found in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. By this time, the political map of the Arab world was divided between two camps. The first camp called itself the nationalists with the evidential trend of socialism; this camp considered itself the

progressive power of the region. The second camp was called the conservatives with the prevailing system of monarchies; this camp was named by the first one as the backward power. This name stems from the fact that those monarchies led by the Saudis are holding onto Islam as a way of life and conduct. Notably, the Arab Christians in the Arab world were a major force behind the Arab nationalism call. For instance, Micheil Aflag was the one who founded the Ba'th (Resurrection) party in Iraq and Syria. The division of the Arab ideologies appeared as the following. The nationalists, led by Naser at that time, consisting of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Algeria, Yemen, and Tunisia, the conservatives, led by King Faisal at that time, consisting of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Morocco and Jordan.

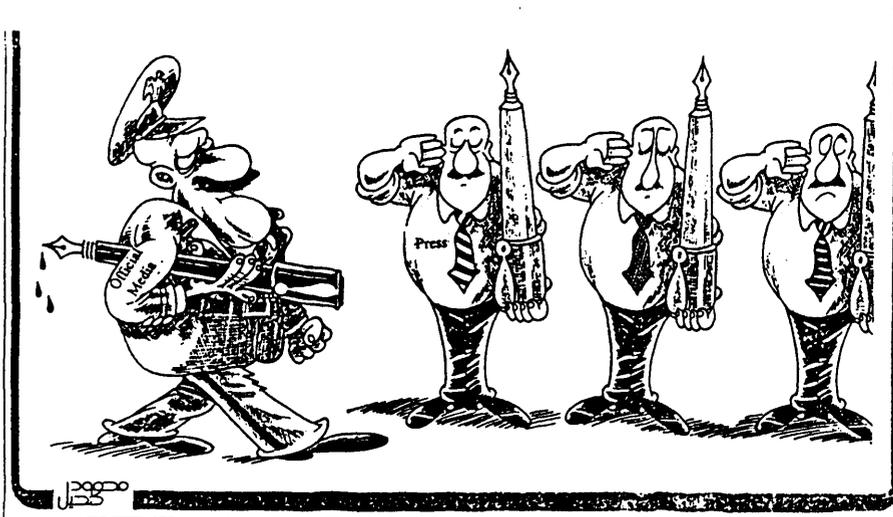
It is unfair to describe the conservatives as being anti Pan-Arabism or anti nationalism. In the final analysis, what can we call the commitment of King Faisal during the 1973 war to the Arab cause. Most Arab conservatives in general, and the Saudis in particular, saw the nationalism movements as mere attempts to overthrow the national system; to take the lead of the Arab world and control its wealth and resources. In fact, during the implementation of this study, while visiting an Arab capital, I saw a huge map portray, in the centre of an important tourist attraction area, the entire Arab world from the Ocean to the Gulf, and in the middle of that map the head of the President of that country was placed. The map suggests this President is, or should be, the sole legitimate leader of the entire Arab world. There is no doubt Saddam Hussain, the President of Iraq, has greatly damaged the cause of the so-called nationalist movement or Arab unity.

Indeed, as Naser said, Arab unity is a mission that needs a leader. However, do the Arab people really want to be united? Are the Arab people allowed to be united? Do the Arab people trust their leaders? Finally, is the Arab unity really and significantly important?

The creation of the state of Israel has played an important role in the confrontation and cooperation of the two ideologies. In the wider framework, the Arab region

became a significant part of the Cold War, or the struggle between the United States and the former Soviet Union over the region and its resources. The Arab nationalists sided and allied with the socialist and communist bloc, while the conservatives sided and allied with the capitalists.

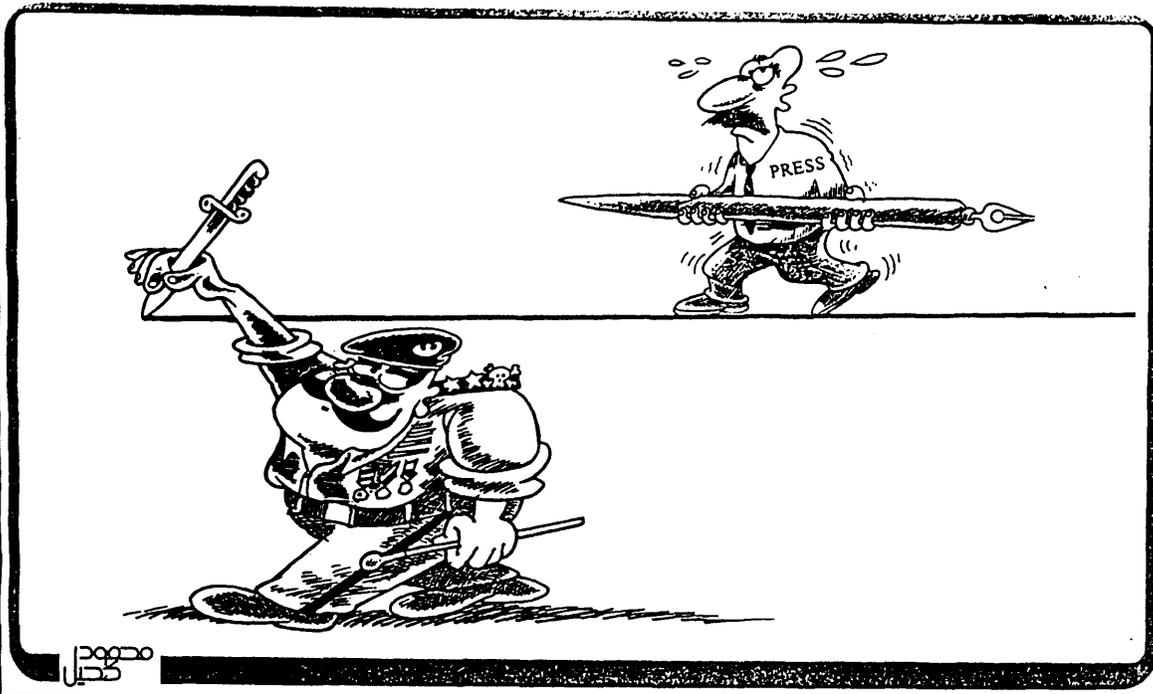
Thusfar, after reviewing the political map of the Arab world, we should ask, where is the Arab press lying in this complicated analysis? Can the Arab press be categorised according to the two mentioned ideologies? Any attempt to do so, would be considered a very superficial analysis. There is no doubt the Arab press is an important tool for each ideology. However, throughout modern history, we have witnessed many kinds of cooperation and alliances between various nationalists and conservatives as part of the political game in the region. This in itself has its impact on the various local Arab press. In politics the enemies of today may become the friends of tomorrow. To analyse the role of the local or national Arab press in the process of Arab foreign policy, one should pay serious attention to the polarisation process in the Arab world. The secret word that this analysis relies upon is "polarisation". It is true that we have divided the politics of the Arab world into two main ideologies or camps. However, in the following we should shed light on the cooperation, confrontation, and polarisation in the Arab political systems in order to understand the Arab press situation.



Source: Asharq Al-Awsat - Monday 30/8/1993

The 1967 war helped a great deal to open the door of reconciliation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. President Anwar Sadat, the successor of Naser, had abandoned the Soviet bloc and became a significant ally of King Faisal. Eventually, the two leaders joined hands in the 1973 war against Israel. Syria was also a part of that alliance. Soon after the war, Sadat started his mission of peace with Israel. This resulted in the Camp David Agreement. As a result, the Arab system had been brought into a deep polarisation and was divided into three groups, as will be explained in Chapter 6.

Under the leadership of King Khaled and the Crown Prince Fahd, Saudi Arabia rejected the outcome of Camp David. Consequently Sadat opened a mass media war against Saudi Arabia. (see Chapter 6).

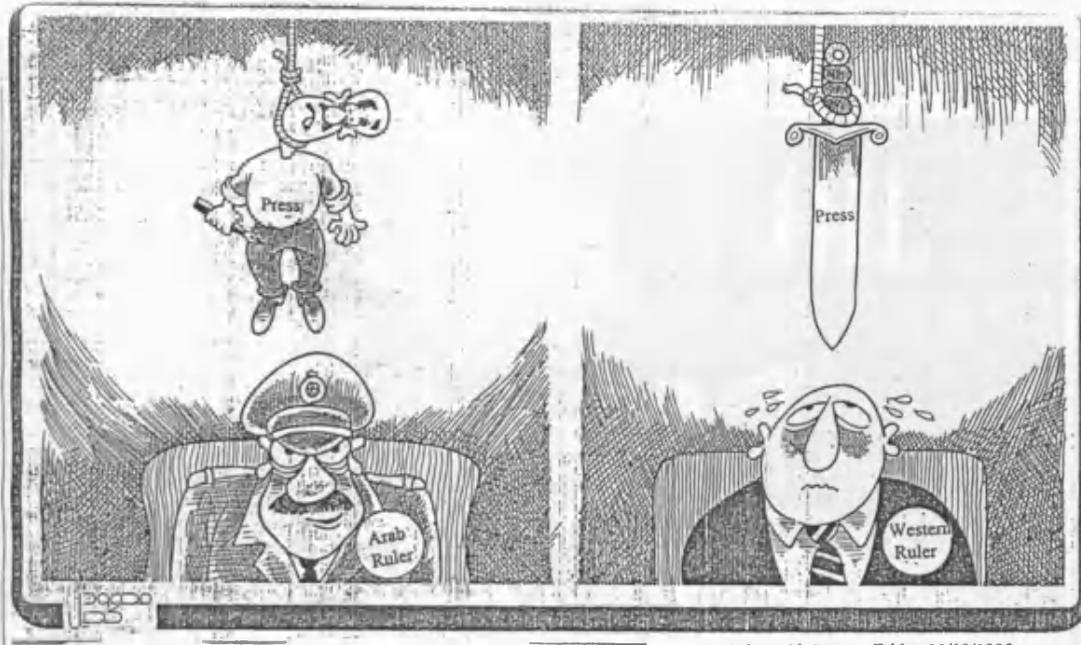


Source: Asharq Al-Awsat - Monday 29/9/1997

President Mubarak came to power in Egypt after the assassination of President Sadat. At that time Iraq, under the leadership of Saddam Hussain, began war with Iran. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan were the strong allies of Iraq since they consider Saddam as the guardian of the eastern door of the Arab world. Amazingly, Syria, which shares with Iraq the same ideology of the Ba'th party, sided with Iran. During the Second Gulf war, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan, and Jordan sided with Iraq in its invasion of Kuwait. While we saw the Jordanian support of Iraq, it was very clear that Syria was a part of the coalition against Saddam.

This brief analysis of the political trends in the Arab world, is evidence of how a conservative country can ally with a nationalist one. In the final analysis, foreign policy is about national interest. Therefore, viewing the press or categorising it based on the two main ideologies, is terribly wrong. The foreign policy that any given Arab country adopts has a great impact on the trends and content of the Arab press. The Arab press -or the poetry of yesterday- is a very important indicator or barometer to measure foreign policy trends in inter-Arab politics.

We saw for example, within the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) a deep polarisation between Qatar and Bahrain. Their press were attacking each other in spite of being one family. We also witnessed a similar press campaign between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Another heavy press campaign was between Qatar and Egypt. Citing the entire polarisation process of the Arab world needs a book in itself. For our present concern, it is more than evident that the local or national Arab press are very important tools of Arab foreign policy and diplomacy. The Arab press has gained this role because it is more or less under the control of the Arab governments.



Source: Asharq Al-Awsat - Friday 20/10/1995

To conclude this argument, it is clear from the foregoing explanation that the orientation of the foreign policy of any given Arab country determines the content of the press and not the ideology as some people would assume.

We saw how the foreign policy trends of some Arab countries contradict with the core of their ideology. It is not the ideology that we should concentrate upon in our analysis, it is the polarisation and the present national interest that matters the most.

### **The Arab Press**

Typically, we would refer to the different Arab national or local presses as the Arab press. The reason behind this lies in the fact that the Arab world consists of 22 sovereign and independent states. Each one has its own national press. In the absence of Arab unity or one Arab sovereign independent country, it is misleading, to some extent, to use the term Arab press. For instance an Egyptian Ambassador criticised this study for using the term Arab foreign policy. (see Chapter 4). According to him, Arab foreign policy does not exist. Instead there is the Egyptian or the Saudi, etc. Arab foreign policy. To please the Ambassador I suggested using the term foreign policy of inter-Arab politics. Whether convincing or not, there are many terms that need to be defined in the Arab world.



Source: Asharq Al-Awsat - Sunday 5/11/1995

Discussing and analysing the system within which the Arab Press operates, is one of the most difficult tasks that faces any student. The reason behind this fact stems from the following:

1. Arab libraries suffer a great deal from a lack of published work on the subject mentioned. There is hardly any published material on the press and the government, or the press and foreign policy. In the meantime, perhaps there is no study available on the various systems of the Arab press. And even if one exists, it would already be out of date..
2. The subject matter discourages any researcher because it involves an extremely controversial issue-- politics. In the Arab world politics and the press are inseparable.
3. Studying the entire system of the Arab press is very costly and difficult to implement.

To gain access to the archives of Arab newspapers and trying to approach Arab politicians and journalists is difficult. It is not the task of one student or researcher. And also to be taken into account are the obstacles which Arab governments put

before Arab and non-Arab researchers. Studying a phenomenon such as this needs official permission. Having said that, it is important to argue at this stage that this study is not about the various systems of the Arab press and their laws. It is an attempt to understand, by listening to both Arab officials and Arab journalists, the nature and role of the various Arab press in the Arab foreign policy process.

Perhaps one of the most well known studies on the Arab press system is by William A. Rugh (1987). According to Rugh the Arab mass media participate very actively in politics and their commentaries, and how and what they report or omit are matters that Arab politicians, government officials on all levels, and many others, watch carefully on day-to-day basis. (Rugh, 1987: XXI).

At this stage it is important to note that Rugh himself was an American ambassador to what was known as the Yemen Arab Republic from 1984 to 1987. Also Rugh says that;

"Observers of political and other trends in the Arab world follow the Arab media closely. Foreign correspondents reporting on the area use Arab media as a source for their stories. Foreign embassies in Arab countries depend heavily on the local press for their reporting back to their home governments." (1987: XXVII).

Not surprisingly Rugh acknowledged the role of the Arab press as being primarily a medium reaching elite groups. (Rugh, 1987: 4). Rugh's book is about the functions of the Arab press in the Arab society. It analyses and describes the organisation of the press and its relationship to the government and the political press.

Along with many other researchers, Rugh suffers from a lack of published material on the role and function of the Arab media, the motivations and constraints which influence the behaviour of Arab journalists, and the governmental and other influences affecting the media. (Rugh, 1987: XXII). According to Rugh, the Arab media do not fit neatly and completely into any one of the following categories:

1. Authoritarian
2. Libertarian
3. Socially responsible
4. Totalitarian

Therefore, Rugh believes that some elements of all four categories are present in the Arab world. (Rugh, 1987: 25).

Rugh has divided the system of the Arab press into three categories:

### **First: The Mobilisation Press**

This system can be seen in seven Arab countries; Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Algeria, Libya and South Yemen. (Note: South Yemen and North Yemen were united following a fierce war in 1994).

Under this system the press does not criticise the basic policies of the national government. The foreign policies of the government are particularly unassailable, while the major lines of domestic policy are never attacked. Meanwhile, the personalities heading the national government are never criticised. (Rugh, 1987: 31).

On the other hand, the regimes in these seven countries consider the press a very important tool for the mobilisation of popular support for their political programmes.

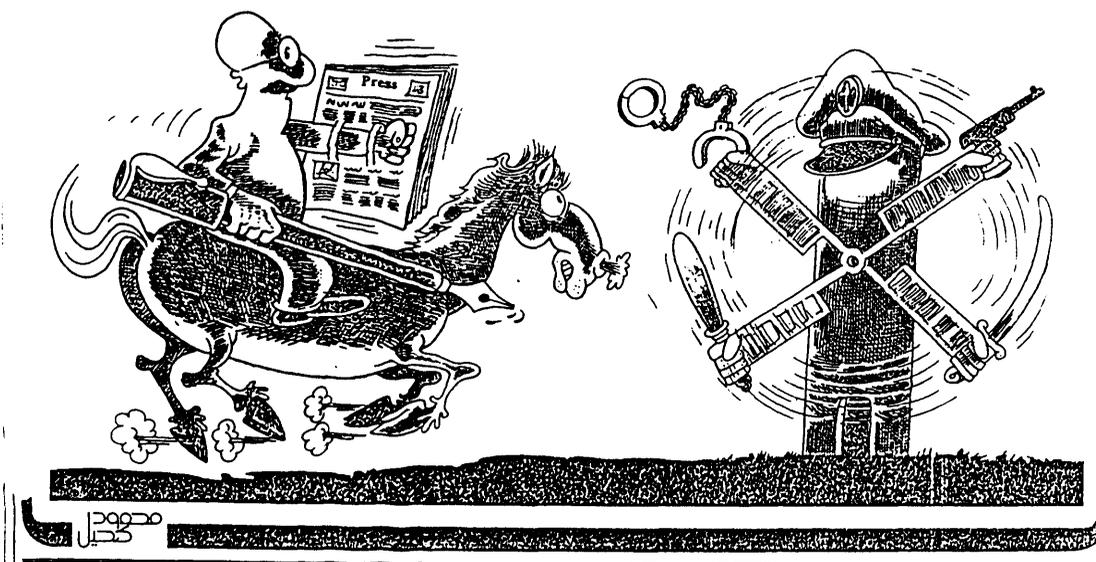
### **Second: The Loyalist Press**

This system can be seen in six Arab countries; Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Under this system the press are consistently loyal to and supportive of the regime in power despite the fact that they are privately owned. (Rugh, 1987: 71)

### **Third: The Diverse Press**

This system can be seen in three Arab countries; Lebanon, Kuwait and Morocco. The 'diverse press' name is used by Rugh because the newspapers are clearly different

from each other in content and apparent political tendency as well as in style. (Rugh, 1987: 89). For him, categorising the press under this system implies that at least some of the newspapers, if not all, print news and opinion that is not supportive of the regime in power. Having said that, Rugh acknowledges the fact that Kuwaiti and Moroccan newspapers also have some of the loyalist press characteristics. (Rugh, 1987: 89).



Source: Asharq Al-Awsat - Thursday 22/5/1997

The three-fold division, for purposes of analysis, into mobilisation, loyalist, and diverse systems is a rough one. (Rugh, 1987: 164). Indeed Rugh's division of the Arab press systems is not indicative of neat categories. Therefore, his work can be criticised based on the following arguments:

1. The three categories Rugh mentioned overlap with each other. Nobody can deny the fact that all the Arab press are being used for mobilisation on both levels; national and international. This is even more evident when it comes to foreign policy issues. If the press can be used for mobilisation, then it must be loyal as well. No Arab press can go against the national interest of its country. The question of ownership means nothing in the analytical process. Whether it is owned by the government or the private sector, in the end it serves the present leader and government. An apple is the same whether it is in the tree or on the

ground. In both cases the Arab governments always hold the upper hand against the press.

2. The "diverse" name of some Arab press is misleading to some extent. It must be understood in this regard that diversity in the Arab world is completely different from any diversity in the Western world. No one can draw a comparison between the two systems. The diverse press, as Rugh calls it, cannot dare to criticise the government or the personnel of the leadership. Also, it cannot go against the national interest. These are taboo issues. Diversity in the Arab world is granted as a part of the political game and as an attempt to leave room for the national political forces to breathe within a kind of demarcation zone. The diversity of the press or even of the political system in the Arab world is not more than a superficial game to observe some tensions.
3. There are many changes that have occurred in the Arab press system since Rugh produced his work. For instance, he categorised the Egyptian press under the mobilisation system. This is correct. However, nowadays the Egyptian government allows some kind of political and press diversity. The Egyptian intellectuals identify the press which is owned by the government as the national press, while they identify the rest of the press as the diverse or opposition press. In practice, when the Egyptian government wishes to attack an Arab government, it uses the opposition press to do the job. If the case is intense, the entire Egyptian press participates in the mobilisation process. For instance, "The Green Newspaper" case study in this thesis (see Chapter 6) reveals how the Egyptian government used the press to attack Saudi Arabia in 1996. Meanwhile, the same press was ordered by the Egyptian government not to attack Saudi Arabia in 1997.

Indeed, diverse press have no ability to be genuinely diverse. Even if they are somehow free, at the end of the analysis, they support their own national governments, their peoples, and their interests.

Most of the Arab press can of course criticise some kind of national policies and some low-ranking officials. In Syria for example, the press criticise government ministers openly. It must be acknowledged that the free press philosophy as practised in the Western world does not exist in the Arab region. To use another example, in Lebanon, the diversity of its press is no longer the same as it used to be both prior and during the 1975 civil war. We will discuss the Lebanese case, especially concerning Arab foreign policy matters below (pp 84-88).

The Sudan is another good example of the change in press systems. During President Numeiri's rule, the press was heavily controlled, and of course, as Rugh says, it was an important mechanism in the mobilisation process. After Sewart Al-Dahab's revolution, till the era of the Prime Minister Sadiq Al-Mahdi in the late 1980s, the Sudanese press were considered diverse and free. The Turabi's revolution in 1989, which overthrew the elected government, put an end to the diversity and freedom of the Sudanese press to the present day. The press in Yemen today is more diverse and free than in other Arab countries. Meanwhile, the diversity of the Kuwaiti press faces some challenges by its government, especially after the Second Gulf War. Finally, in 1989, King Hussain of Jordan allowed some kind of diversity in the political system which was reflected in the Jordanian press. Saddam Hussain found a golden opportunity to interfere in Jordanian affairs and serve his interests. Saddam once said the cost of using the press is equivalent to the cost of two tanks, which is nothing, of course, compared with what he has spent on his army. Based on this fact, Saddam started to buy some Jordanian journalists and press. He built villas, granted cars, and gave a lot of cash to those journalists. This scandal was very well known in the Arab world. As a result, the Jordanian press opened fire on the allies in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, showing no mercy. After the war, King Hussain would not tolerate the content of the Jordanian press. Nobody knew if the Jordanian press served the Jordanian national interest or Iraq's policies. Therefore, in 1997, King Hussain introduced a new law concerning the press. He said:

"We have taken into consideration in the law of printed matter and publishing, the control of transgressions and the turning of freedom into chaos, as we cannot tolerate for the press to hurt our relations with sisterly countries or to use press freedom to harm the reputation of people, blackmail them and denying each and every achievement." (*Al-Hayatt* Newspaper, 6-6-1997)

The Jordanian Monarch considered the limits of freedom as not encroaching on the freedom of others, not harming the country or playing with its interests and not injuring national unity in any way. He further said, "Much talk is going on about the ceiling of freedom... freedom has no ceiling. Its ceiling is the vast space." He also added, "I hope this will be a signal to whomsoever uses this expression to seek another expression."

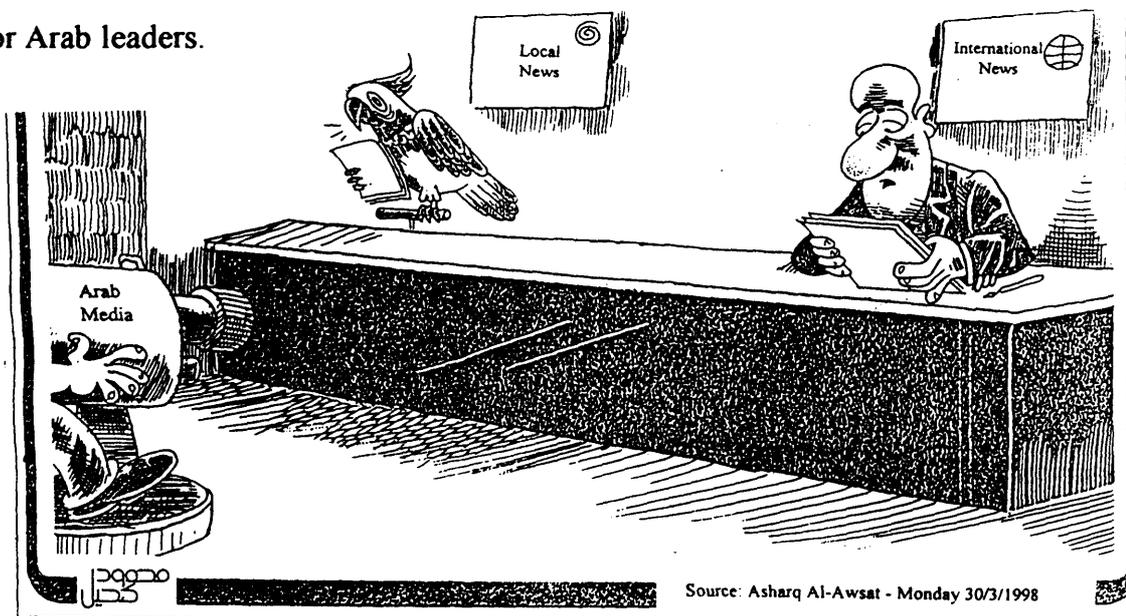
Thusfar, studying the systems of the Arab press is no easy task. It is incredibly changeable and extremely difficult to comprehend or analyse.

4. William Rugh, by studying and analysing Arab press systems, would seem to have wasted a golden opportunity to explain to us the effect or role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. This fact stems from the qualifications Rugh holds. For example, he has been a Fellow on the Foreign Relations Council. He was also a foreign service officer with the US Information Agency (USIA) since 1964; he has served in Beirut, Cairo, Jeddah, Riyadh, and Damascus. In 1984-1987 he was the American Ambassador to the Yemen Arab Republic. It is important to assert at this stage that, in the Arab world, news has no values but it has political criteria.

### **The Pan-Arab Press:**

It is important to start this section by asking: Is there such a thing as the Pan-Arab press? Who is behind this name? What is the definition of the Pan-Arab press? Nobody knows for sure how this Pan-Arab press phenomenon has occurred. It is easy for any Arab government or any Arab newspaper to claim that their press is a Pan-

Arab one. For example, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, published in London, claims that it is the "leading Arab international newspaper". The truth of the matter is, that this newspaper is a Saudi one, and it serves first the Saudi foreign policy and national interest. *Al-Arab* newspaper, also published in London, claims the same; that it is the newspaper of all Arabs from the Ocean to the Gulf. The reality is, that this a Libyan newspaper, and it serves the ideologies of Qaddafi and strongly attacks Saudi Arabia. This study does not believe in the myth or the existence of any Pan-Arab press. Most Arab press which hide behind this label are in fact serving certain Arab governments or Arab leaders.



Traditionally, the Pan-Arab press is the press which is published outside its homeland. Also, it can be referred to as the press which serves external powers. In Chapter 5 we discuss the various names of this unique phenomenon. It has been identified by Arab intellectuals as:

1. The Pan-Arab press.
2. The Emigré Arab press.
3. The incoming Arab press or (Al-Wafidah).
4. The international Arab press.

In the absence of Pan-Arabism, there cannot be a Pan-Arab press. This study believes Arabism in general has never existed in the modern history of the Arab world. Instead, some Arab leaders used the call of Arabism as a curtain to hide some personal objectives. Having said that, we will review in the following section some developments of the so-called Pan-Arab press and their implications for Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. An extra analysis will focus on the Lebanese era because of its significance in the role of the Arab press in the Arab foreign policy.

### **The Lebanese Era**

When Jamal Abdunaser came to power in Egypt in 1952, his mass media was the most influential in the Arab world. Through *Sawt Al-Arab Radio*, "The Arab Voice", Naser was mobilising Arab public opinion around his call of Arab Nationalism. *Al-Ahram* newspaper, Naser's mouthpiece, was an influential medium to various Arab leaders especially King Faisal. Since then *Al-Ahram* newspaper and other Egyptian newspapers have been identified as the nationalist press.

During that time Lebanon was enjoying some kind of political and journalistic pluralism. Naser started to pay a great deal of attention to the writings of the Lebanese press. In fact, it is very well known in the Arab world that Naser was affected by what the Lebanese press published. This was understandable and legitimate, because Lebanon at that time, especially from the 1960s, became a battleground for both Arab nationalists and Arab conservatives. Beirut was also one of the capitals around the world where the United States and the former Soviet Union engaged in their Cold War. The superpowers and many Arab countries started to establish voices in Beirut to serve their interests. The biggest battle was the one which took place between Naser and King Faisal. Syria, Iraq and Libya entered the press game in Beirut to mark and enhance the ideological wars. It is quite wrong to suggest that only the pluralism or diversity of the Lebanese system was the reason behind these struggles and interference. Some Lebanese journalists are the best money can buy. A Lebanese editor said, the papers may not be bought but they are "rented".

(Rugh, 1987: 92). Also the Lebanese Education Minister declared that "All our newspapers and all our journalists can be bought, sold and hired." (Rugh, 1987: 92).

In fact the Lebanese President Charl Al-Hilu used to say upon his receipt of the Lebanese journalists, "Welcome to your second home Lebanon". Meanwhile King Faisal used to say about the Lebanese press system that, "There is press freedom in Lebanon. However, the press is not free." There is no doubt the press in Lebanon is an important case study to explain the effect and role of the Arab press in the Arab foreign policy. If the press and politics are inseparable in the Arab world, then it is impossible to separate between the press and political money. The press war in Beirut was very intense even through the years of the civil war. For example,

"It was assumed by readers of the Lebanese press that *al-Nida*, *al-Sharq*, *al-Safir*, and *al-Kifah* had connections -and probably received subsidies from- Russia, Syria, Libya, and Iraq respectively. Similarly *Al-Hayatt* was thought to have Saudi and conservative Lebanese backing." (Rugh, 1987: 92)

Speaking of *Al-Hayatt* newspaper, it was the leading opposition newspaper against Naser. Having said that, the truth of the matter is that the Saudis were not the publishers of this important newspaper. It was the United States that published *Al-Hayatt* newspaper. On May 16, 1966, the publisher and editor-in-chief of *Al-Hayatt* newspaper, Kamel Moro'ah, was assassinated in his office by a member of the Naserist movement. Robert W. Akem, the Deputy Director of the US Information Agency (USIA), revealed that the USIA produces *Al-Hayatt* newspaper. (Lee, 1968: 9). Presently *Al-Hayatt* newspaper is owned by the Saudi Prince Khaled Bin Sultan and published from London.

As a result, can we call this press the Pan-Arab press? During the whole struggle in Lebanon, Arab governments began to put pressure on the Lebanese government to stop this press war. The former Lebanese Prime Minister Saleem Al-Hus told me an interesting story. He said,

"I attended the Arab summit on the 25th of October 1976 in Cairo as a consultant of the Lebanese President, then I became the Prime Minister in December 1976. At the Cairo summit we were promised the establishment of Arab deterrent forces in Lebanon, and a committee, consisting of four Arab countries Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Syria, was established to help the Lebanese President implement the Cairo's summit agreement. We came back to Lebanon with promises to help our cause. All these were announced at that time, but what was not announced is that the Arab leaders asked the Lebanese President to impose censorship on the Lebanese newspapers."

The Prime Minister Al-Hus added,

"During a session of the Council of Ministers I opposed the legislative decree which controls the press. Then I was told inside the Council of Ministers that if we don't begin with control of the press, there will be no Arab deterrent forces, or Arab committee, or even any Arab aid. Therefore, the decision to control the press was the first legislative decree my government took. It was the legislative decree No. 1 on Saturday 1-1-1977."

"With regret," Al-Hus continued, "we took the decision because we had to." Prime Minister Al-Hus added another example when he said,

"A conference was held for the Foreign Ministers of the Arab Countries who are concerned and involved in the Arab deterrent forces in 1978. During the conference we took some positive decisions. Another committee was established to follow up the implementation of our decisions. This committee consisted of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Then when we met I asked where shall we start? They responded, by controlling the press. Then I asked the Saudi Ambassador, Ali Al-Sha'ir, and the Kuwaiti Ambassador to help us control the radio as well as the press. Al-Hus added, there was no benefit in controlling the press and leaving various radio stations to say what they wanted. As a result they said we agree, and they started to contact various powers which own these radio stations. In one of their missions to convince Al-

Kata'ib (sects) forces to close their radio station (The Voice of Lebanon), their helicopter was shot down and Ambassador Al-Sha'ir was injured in the leg and hospitalised. This incident puts an end to the process of controlling radio. I gave these examples to show how Arabs give priority to media, the media first, the media first."

In another elaboration on the No. 1 legislative decree which the Al-Hus government took, the Prime Minister wrote, in a book:

"The arrangement which was carried out by the government for controlling printed matter came in fact as a result of the painful situation we have reached in Lebanon. With our deep sorrow the events have shown that the position of some newspapers was one of the reasons which triggered the trial and disruption of security in the country. Some newspapers appeared to us in the past with sensational headlines and big news but fabricated others that in no way serve the public interest. And most of this news is a call for dissension and the excitation of sectarianism to serve private ends. This is in addition to wrongfully dealing with matters concerning sisterly Arab countries or friendly countries with whom we are maintaining brotherly ties and common interests that we should not sacrifice. We must work collectively to preserve and support these ties to be firmer and stronger." (Al-Hus, 1992: 60).

He also said,

"The honour of our Arab brothers is a part of our honour, and one of the first objectives of the Lebanese government through this legislative decree was the care we have for our homeland Lebanon and avoidance of all matters that may cause disagreement -God forbids- between sisterly Arab countries, and reinforcing the pioneering role of Lebanon in uniting Arabs to be on more intimate terms with each other." (Al-Hus, 1992: 61).

Thusfar, due to the control and pressure the Lebanese government imposed on the press, alongside the various kidnapping and assassination attempts against journalists,

some "rented" press had to flee Beirut. This is not to suggest that some honourable Lebanese journalists did not exist.

Indeed, Lebanon is a very good case study, not only because we can analyse its role in the civil war, but also because we can see its role and effect on inter-Arab politics and the former Cold War. Some Arab governments began to search for another capital in which to fight and defend each other through the so-called Pan-Arab press. Also, some Arab and Lebanese journalists do good business by using the press to blackmail some Arab governments and leaders, which reminds us of the role poetry had in the Arab system. There is no doubt that some Arab journalists are some of the most corrupt professionals. This regrettable fact needs a separate study by itself.

Consequent to what has been discovered and following on from the Lebanese Prime Minister, Saleem Al-Hus', remarks about how Arab governments consider media concerns first, the Arab governments via the Arab League began to search for a solution to the press or media's problems. Therefore, they have attempted to establish the so-called Arab Information Strategy, not only to put an end to their mass media struggle, but also to enhance their image in the outside world. (see Chapter 8 and the Appendix).

## **The London Era**

Another important characteristic of the so-called Pan-Arab press is that this press deals mainly with Arab foreign policies and Arab political affairs. They pay no attention to local news or views in any given Arab country. Their interest and focus on inter-Arab politics is evident and revealing. A reader of any of this press can immediately find out which Arab country it is supporting. As we said earlier there was a genuine quest to replace the Lebanese era. Arab press and journalists began to emigrate to Cyprus, France, and England. Later London became known as "Beirut on the Thames". One thing is sure, Arab journalists and Arab governments understand very well that establishing an Arab medium in London will be affected directly and

indirectly by inter-Arab politics, or Arab foreign policy. We have witnessed during modern history explosions at press buildings and assassination attempts against Arab journalists in Europe in general, and London in particular. Four Arab countries, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iraq were the main participants who entered the media game in London. The Libyans were the first to establish a daily Arab newspaper and Saudi businessmen followed them shortly afterwards. During the Lebanese era, and even during the London's era, some Arab journalists began to blackmail the Saudi government by cursing and attacking them in a very aggressive manner. In fact it became well known that the road to wealth was by establishing a one-page newspaper against Saudi Arabia. The Saudis realised this fact. Therefore, they started to establish their own mass media in London. Iraq and Libya share the same wealth as Saudi Arabia, but however, it has been spent on other missions which need no further elaboration or explanation. Recently the broadcasting mass media was introduced as an important Pan-Arab media in Europe in general, and in London in particular. Modern technologies made it possible for the Pan-Arab press and media to reach Arab public opinion in the Arab region. However, the so-called Pan-Arab press still has no power to exceed Arab boundaries. While the press struggle is taking place in London, its effect is felt in the Arab world. The Arab press in London whether we call it the emigré press, the international Arab press, or the incoming press, are important tools and armories of Arab diplomacy and Arab foreign policy, but it is not a Pan-Arab press. (see Chapter 5).

The following chapter will discuss the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in Arab foreign policy.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# **The Nature and Role of the National (Domestic) Arab Press in Arab Foreign Policy**

## **The Main Aim**

## **Introduction**

This chapter describes the various national (domestic) Arab press and their roles in the process of Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. The views presented in the chapter are the result of the collective visions and analyses of 25 prominent Arab officials and 22 prominent Arab journalists interviewed for this study. The interviews took place during the period from 17-6-1996 to 4-10-1997. (see the Appendix for the list of the interviewees). Also, this chapter discusses the problem of differentiating between the official and the journalistic views in the Arab press. Misreading or misinterpreting news and views in the Arab press could lead to confusion and therefore, negative decision-making in Arab foreign policy.

The interview usually began with a very wide and comprehensive question. This strategy was adopted for two reasons: First to test the ground of the interviewee's thinking before going any further. Second, it was useful to start the interview from the very general to the very particular. The first question during the research process was as follows:

- What are the roles of the Arab newspapers in Arab foreign policy?

This question resulted in two responses. First, some officials talked about what part the press should play in Arab foreign policy. What I clearly noticed was that, they were trying to express an idealist thinking. Second, other officials' responses were directed towards how Arab governments use the press in the process of foreign policy. On the other hand, in response to the above question, some officials substituted the word "role" with the word "effect". I tried hard not to allow both officials and journalists to do so but it was difficult. The reasons for my difficulty were based on two important factors. First, the research seeks to explore the roles rather than the effect of the Arab press in the Arab foreign policy. It is an attempt to open the box and see things as they are. Second, due to my sensitivity toward the word "effect", which is very difficult -not say too difficult- to catch or measure.

Meanwhile, in response to the same questions mentioned previously, 3 officials criticised the subject under investigation. Jobran Koriah, the Syrian Presidential Spokesman, criticised me for using a "*sharshaf* (an Arabic word equivalent to sheet) to cover a very wide area, various countries, and different political systems." He also told me "it would have been much better if I had selected two Arab countries and investigated the effect of the press between them." Ambassador Al-Sayed Hussain in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry also criticised the subject by concluding that the thesis is too large. He said, "There was no Arab foreign policy, there was Egyptian, Saudi or Libyan foreign policy." However, Ambassador Hussain thought I should "concentrate on the relationship between the press and Arab diplomacy." Finally, the Saudi Ambassador in London, Dr. Ghazi Al-Qusaiby, said "Generalizing by talking about the Arab press as one entity that had same characteristics in the Arab world would lead to intensive mistakes. There is a need for practical specifications to differentiate between the press in various Arab countries." Dr. Al-Qusaiby outlined three principal different Arab press systems as follows: First, "There are those Arab countries where the press enjoys considerable freedom such as Lebanon, Kuwait, and to some extent Egypt." Second, "There are those Arab countries where the press can talk with limited freedom if they do not cross with the red lines. This can be seen in the Gulf States and some of the northern African countries." Third, "And there are those countries where the press does not enjoy any kind of freedom." Dr. Qusaiby refrained from giving an example under this system.

Before we proceed in presenting the findings of this study, it is important at this stage to respond to the critical points made by those 3 officials: First, Jobran Koriah described this research as general and wide, and that it would be much better if I selected two Arab countries for investigation. In response to Koriah's comments it should be acknowledged that the other officials had accepted the framework of this study and did reveal some of the roles of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy. However, if the criticism of Jobran Koriah is accepted, I should address the following points: This study comprises two levels of investigation; the general level and the

particular level. Under the general level I not only investigated the three aims, but also the relevant topics that follow the main theme. Under the particular level, there are two revealing case studies. The first case study is between Egypt and Saudi Arabia while the second is between Saudi Arabia and the Sudan. Overall, this study is an attempt to explore the roles of the press in the process of foreign policy in a regional context. (see Chapters 1 & 2). Having said that, this study did not try to research the different Arab political systems or the various Arab press systems. If the Arab press system varies, then they differ in terms of style and not in substance. I also told Mr. Koriah that the study of two Arab countries requires access to the archives of some Arab newspapers. And accessing newspaper archives in the Arab world is like trying to enter the intelligence service building. (see Chapter 6). Second, Ambassador Al-Sayed Hussain's critical views were that there was no Arab foreign policy, but there was Egyptian, Saudi or Libyan foreign policy. In response, I asked Ambassador Hussain if it was sufficient to say that the role of the press is in inter-Arab politics. Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics in the final analysis are two faces of one coin. Ambassador Hussain also said it was better to concentrate on the Arab press-diplomacy inter-relationship. In this regard I agreed with Ambassador Hussain, that further research of this topic in the Arab world should begin with the relationship of the Arab press and diplomacy. Having said that, this study reveals that diplomacy is one of the most important roles the Arab press plays in Arab foreign policy. This study hopes it will generate further investigation and research of this unique phenomenon. Third, Ambassador Ghazi Al-Qusaiby said there is a need for practical specifications to differentiate between the press in various Arab countries. In response, regrettably practical specifications do not exist in the Arab world. Moreover, we discussed in Chapter 3 some specifications mapped out by William Rugh which lack accuracy and updated information. Again, the main argument of this study is that, the various Arab press vary in terms of style and not substance. For example, Ambassador Al-Qusaiby outlined three different Arab press systems as mentioned previously. He said, there are those Arab countries where the press enjoys

considerable freedom such as Lebanon, Kuwait, and to some extent Egypt. As far as Egypt is concerned we will leave the discussion until Chapter 6. Meanwhile, the following illuminating story might provide us with some impression. On June 27, 1998 the Lebanese President, Ilias Al-Harrawy, slapped the Secretary of the Journalist Union and editor-in-chief of *Ashoraa* magazine, Hassan Sabra. *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper called this affair "The Presidential Slap." (30-Jun-1998). This story indicates that the Lebanese leader does not tolerate criticism or journalists, and the Lebanese press are indeed under control.

Thusfar, this work or research was possible since the Arab world shares a language, religion, history, and geographical boundaries. I must acknowledge at this point that there are a few Arab countries that allow small marginal spaces of freedom for the press. This freedom was given to the press to provide the people with a space to breathe. None of the Arab countries, however, enjoy freedom of the press as practised in the free or Western countries. In fact the importance of mass media in Arab foreign policy or in the mind of the Arab decision makers convinced them to seek to establish the so-called Arab Information Media Strategy which was never implemented. For example, Jordan enjoyed a relative freedom of press which led to two problems. First, the Iraqi regime through financial aid secured most of the Jordanian newspapers to be the voice of propaganda for Iraq, prior to and after the invasion of Kuwait. This also happened in Lebanon during the 70's by other Arab countries. Second: Ambassador Naif Al-Qadi, the Jordanian Ambassador to Egypt told me "in spite of the freedom of the press which we had, Arab leaders told us 'what is the freedom of the press'?! Hold journalists by their necks and control them so they don't attack us." Meanwhile, some Arab countries use the alleged free press to settle a few scores with other Arab countries (see Chapter 6).

## **The Main Aim**

### **The Interviewees' Views:**

Under this heading we shall present the visions and analyses of both officials and journalists about the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in the process of Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. We will be using in this presentation some statistics and figures to show how many officials or journalists agreed or disagreed about some remarks. However, neither statistics, nor figures are important to this study. Having said that, it might be useful to show some kind of evidence. A number of different responses can be found when looking at the answers of the interviewees to the key question. The key question as mentioned earlier was "What are the roles of the Arab newspapers in Arab foreign policy?" The responses of both Arab officials and Arab journalists interviewed for this study can be classified as follows:

### **The No Role Theory:**

The following points summarise the argument of the 7 officials who supported the no role theory of the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy.

First: These officials concentrated on the effect of the Arab press in changing or influencing foreign policy in the Arab world.

Second: Freedom of the press is crucial according to them, for the press to play an influencing role, and this does not happen in the Arab world.

Third: Foreign policy in the Arab world is a one person decision, while the Arab press is no more than a propaganda "mouthpiece" and political instrument.

For example Basim Al Sab'a, the Lebanese Information Minister told me "I cannot recall an event where the press affected any Arab foreign policy." While in his view "the press plays an effective role internally rather than externally." Therefore, the role

of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy is very limited. At the same time, Jobran Koriah, the Syrian Presidential Spokesman, confirmed that "the Arab press does not play an effective role in the process of Arab foreign policy." He said "We haven't yet reached the level of the Western press and its role in the foreign policy process." Koriah asked me "not to believe that there is any Arab official who reads reports from the Arab press." He asked me: "Do you know of any Arab decision makers doing so?" I replied, Yes, Jamal Abdunaser. Koriah then said, "Because Naser did that, he died." The one thing I could not understand during the off the record interview with Mr. Koriah, was that the Presidential Spokesman received me in his office at ten o'clock at night, and when he sat at his desk I could hardly see him because of the piles of Arab newspapers. I easily noticed several different Arab newspapers including some from the emigré Arab press. Koriah concluded "You and I know how decisions are made in the Arab world. It is an individually made decision." The same concept appeared in the mind of President Ali Naser Mohamed who said "In the Arab world in particular and even in the Third World in general decision makers are not affected by an article or a study. In fact the decision making process in the Arab world depends largely on the mood factor." In a further elaboration, he said, "It is a reactionary policy— if you do this, I do that."

In fact most interviewees acknowledged directly and indirectly the importance of the freedom of the press in order for the press to play a distinguished role in the Arab foreign policy. Mr. Fares Bois, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, expressed his vision about the press function as follows:

"Firstly it should be an expression of the actual political situation and of the political resolution between the people and the ruler through which the ruler can directly read things that he might not hear from his people. Besides the official standing, states should also read in these newspapers the real overall climate. The press is the controlling instigator that records problems and causes and is expected to daily push the ruler to objectively correct his path. The ruler may not listen to incense carriers (*flatterers*); if he does he will not be aware of actual

events taking place in his country. The press has a distinctive role in the outcome of political standings. It bridges the thinking of the state and the ruler with that of the people. Otherwise it would not be easy for the ruler to access his people individually. Therefore, it is a two-way bridge to convey the ruler's message to the people and the people's message to the ruler; to simplify this thinking, commentate on that thinking and make thought comparisons between the ruler and his people. In order for the press to assume these roles it should firstly be free, secondly courageous and thirdly fair. These factors were the diseases of the press," Minister Bois concluded.

Thusfar, my response to the comments of those officials who concluded the no role theory was that, because the Arab press lacks freedom and is controlled by the government, it has an important role as part of the political and diplomatic channels. Only one official provided a meaningful answer. Ambassador Al-Qusaiby said,

"There was a big difference between participation in making a policy, here the press in general played a very limited role, and participation in implementing a foreign policy, then your conclusion is right."

In another words, Ambassador Al-Qusaiby believes that the Arab press plays a very limited role in the making of an Arab foreign policy, contrary to the Western press role. In this regard, the Arab press does not have the power or the freedom to participate in the making of a foreign policy. Meanwhile, Al-Qusaiby also believes that the Arab press participate or play a significant role in implementing a certain Arab foreign policy. This means, practically, that the Arab press are another political and diplomatic tool available to the Arab governments in the foreign policy arena.

On the other hand, as with the officials, the "no role theory" of the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy appeared in the minds of 13 prominent journalists. According to those journalists, there are a few reasons behind the no role theory which can be summarised as follows:

First: The role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy depends largely on the amount of democratic practices in a given Arab country. The press and democracy goes hand-in-hand. Therefore, the press has no effect because it lacks freedom.

Second: The Arab press plays an influential role on national affairs rather than on Arab foreign policy. The reason is not because the Arab press is controlled but because Arab public opinion is more influential in internal affairs rather than external affairs.

Third: The only effect that the Arab press has is on a very popular foreign policy such as the Arab-Israeli struggle.

Fourth: The Arab press has no effect because Arab foreign policy is made by a handful of people if not one person.

For example, the most critical vision of the no role thinking belongs to Talal Salman, the publisher and editor-in-chief of *Al-Safir* (The Diplomat), a Lebanese daily newspaper. He said,

"At the beginning we must acknowledge the fact that the majority of the Arab press are government press. Therefore, they are not genuine press. They are to a great extent government bulletins which express policies drawn up by the 'Sultan' i.e. the ruler. Regretfully the ceiling of the freedom of the press is very low and there are many obstacles. On one level the Arab press did not reach the desired role because it does not reflect the societies or the various thoughts and struggle in a given Arab country. On the other political level it is even worse. Politics is monopolized by the "Sultan" and the press is a "horn" in his hand to advertise his policies. So, the press is a bad direct expression and a propaganda tool for what this "Sultan" wants. It is a fact that the "Sultan" does not give any authority to the journalist except what he believes serves his purpose and what serves his purpose today might change tomorrow. It is scary to know that the Israeli enemy practices a great amount of democracy, and some of its press distribute one million copies a day in a

population of five million, while the most important Arab newspaper does not distribute one million copies in a population of sixty to two hundred million."

Mr. Salman thinks the reasons behind this regrettable problem are two fold: First: "The Arab press does not communicate the needs and desires of the Arab readers. Second, the various Arab press cannot distribute and reach the Arab readers in various Arab countries." Concerning this point, the puzzle remains that if the Arab press is so much controlled by the Arab rulers then how can it influence the decision-making process regarding Arab foreign policies? Solid answers could not be given by both officials and journalists. I told Mr. Salman that it is true, some Arab press does not reach some Arab countries. However, Arab embassies monitor what those press publish. His reply was: "It is routine work for the Arab embassies to send their governments what the press publishes. But you cannot read foreign policy. What you can read however, is the official position of the (Sultan)". Mr. Salman admitted that he received some complaints from various Arab countries via the Lebanese Foreign Ministry.

The rest of the journalists who concluded the no role theory did not differ much from the views of Mr. Talal Salman. It is important to note again here, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that the journalists also emphasized the word "effect" rather than the word "role". It does appear we are all heading in this direction without admitting it or even noticing it. The second problem that I confronted with some officials and journalists is that their thinking was based on what things should be, in a broader sense, rather than the way they are.

### **The Mirror Role:**

There was a consensus among the rest of the officials about the most important role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy, that reflects the decisions, thoughts, and political climate in their countries. The officials acknowledged the fact that any outside observer can read in the press how any given Arab country thinks about a

certain foreign policy. They also think that the official policy of any Arab country can be maintained through official channels. However, the press provides more details and elaboration especially in the Arab countries where the press is fully controlled. And because the majority of the Arab press is controlled it plays an important part in the evaluation process, as we will see. Those officials who contradicted the no role theory confirmed the "integrated" role of the Arab press in the process of Arab foreign policies. The former Lebanese Prime Minister Saleem Al-Hus told me "The controlled press had an essential role in the negotiation process. You could not ignore what this press says, because it reflected the opinions of their countries. This major fact was taken into consideration and it affected the foreign policy decisions.", he added.

On the other hand, directly and indirectly, all journalists admitted that the most important role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy is that it reflects the official position of various Arab countries. Some journalists called the Arab press a "horn" while others called it "the mirror" or a "photographer".

It is worth mentioning here that, under this heading, the comments of the journalists overlap with the no role theory conclusions. Dr. Saber Falhout, the head of the Syrian Journalist Union, said, "The Arab press are the press of the rulers rather than the press of the Arab public opinion. Therefore, the press tries to lead and shape public opinion according to the rulers' wishes and desires." On the other hand, we have the optimistic vision of Mr. Mohamed Khair Al-Wadi, the editor-in-chief of the Syrian *Tashrin* newspaper, about the role of the Arab press. He believes "the press suffers from a big problem in the Arab world. That is the way the Arab politician sees the role of the Arab journalist. It is a one sided look or a one way street. The Arab politician makes the policy while the journalist receives it and markets it." The word "marketing" appeared in the comments of most journalists. The meaning of this, is that the function of the Arab press is not only to reflect foreign policy but also to market it on two levels. The first level is towards other Arab decision makers. The second level is

towards public opinion. A tough description was given by Mrs. Huda Al-Husaini, a journalist and writer of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, about the role of the Arab press in this regard. She said, "The Arab politician believes that the Arab press is a good dog to bark for rather than against". According to her "the Arab government decides the amount of journalistic writing and draws the lines within which the journalist must work and must not cross."

Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Majallah* magazine, believes that "the Arab press is used by rather than has an effect on Arab foreign policy. It is used to achieve purposes that serve a foreign policy. It is exactly like an employee in the Foreign Ministry." Meanwhile, Saleem Nasar, a prominent Lebanese journalist and writer who writes for *Al-Hayat* newspaper, thinks that, "to a great extent, any person can read in the Arab press the real Arab positions." He also believes that "not only the political consideration is used to control the Arab press, but also the pressure of advertising and distribution play an important role. Therefore, the Arab press reflects the regimes that exist in the Arab world." To conclude this argument, the majority of the journalists describe the Arab press as another government bureau in the hands of the Arab rulers. It reflects, follows, expresses, and markets the foreign policy in the Arab world. However, the style might differ from one Arab country to another but the substance is the same.

### **Leaks and Trial Balloon Role:**

The Lebanese Foreign Minister Mr. Fares Bois told me "Leaders in the Arab world used the press to leak some trial balloons on a national and Arabic level." The reason, according to him, for this use, "is to test some policies in the political arena. This use does not obligate the politicians who leaked this information and who wait for the "echo" of this trial balloon to be tested in the political and diplomatic stages." The result, or the "echo" as Minister Bois called it, "helped the leader to proceed in this direction or to change and modify his foreign policy." All officials acknowledged the existence of leak and trial balloons in the Arab press. One official called it "Kite

Flying", while Ambassador Al-Qusaiby has a different view. He said, "I have not noticed a lot of trial balloons in the Arab press. However, this strategy is adopted considerably in the Western press."

On the other hand, all journalists admitted that the Arab governments use the Arab press to leak some information to test the ground of other governments. Sometimes the leak or the trial balloon is used as part of a psychological war. It is worth emphasizing the whole time the fact that the Arab press plays an important psychological role in the Arab world. This happens not only during a major polarisation process in the region, but also between one Arab country and other neighbouring Arab countries. Disputes in this significant region vary from political to border problems. One journalist called the technique of the trial balloon as a "time bomb", while another called it the "smoking bomb". It was noticeable that most journalists interviewed in London acknowledged the use of leaks and trial balloons policy in the Western world more than the Arab world.

The question here that one might ask is that, do journalists mind being used to publish these leaks and trial balloons? Of course, the answer is simple and straightforward. No Arab newspaper can go against the wishes of its government. However, there are some occasions when journalists can freely choose to publish or not to publish some journalistic material produced by other Arab country. While most journalists avoided giving a precise answer, 2 journalists concluded that they do not mind at all if it is relevant to a given subject.

### **As a Source of Information:**

While most officials acknowledged the role of the Arab press in informing -in one way or another- the Arab decision makers, Ambassador Hussain Huraidi, the Director of the press department in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, has much more elaborate views in that regard. According to him, they "rely on newspapers more than any other medium in his department." Ambassador Huraidi thinks "providing information is the most important role of Arab press in Arab foreign policy." He said "The press in

particular, and media in general, informed and shaped Arab public opinion. Second, it informed Arab decision makers." He described the press as "a main source of information." "We must be on top of things," he added. "The way to do this is to observe what is being said in the press and report it to the decision makers." By way of giving an example, Ambassador Huraidi said, "I am working now on a summary about the most important things published in the press about the constitutional election in Algeria to present it to the Foreign Minister." He also says, "We rely on both Arab and Western papers. For example, David Hirst wrote a few articles on the Sudan in the *Guardian* newspaper which was useful to us." Ambassador Huraidi confirms the very essential role of the press in making decisions. In that regard, he revealed that his department

"produces two bulletins a day based on what the Arab press publishes. One bulletin for the Foreign Minister and other high ranking officials, and the other bulletin for the Foreign Minister only. These two bulletins are very important to give a fast 'warning' and 'advisory' role to the different departments of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry."

Meanwhile Ambassador Mohamed Sobaih insisted on this role of the Arab press as being a very important source of information for Foreign Ministers and heads of state in the Arab world. According to him, "90% of information is collected from the media in general and 8% is the work of embassies, while the rest of the percentage is maintained by secret services."

On the other hand, the views of Arab journalists about the Arab press being an important source of information varies for different reasons. It is important to note here that Arab journalists during the interviews concentrated heavily on talking about concepts such as "control" and "freedom". This is a very understandable issue since journalists always seek "freedom" and "control". Only two journalists acknowledged the fact that the Arab press is an important source of information. Bakr Awaidah, an editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, said that "Arab embassies reported a considerable amount of information to their governments from the Arab press." While

Othman Al-Omair, the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper says "An Arab diplomat came to me saying that he used to send reports to his country, but then his Foreign Minister called him, asking him not to send those reports any more because he (the Minister) reads it in the newspapers." Needless to say, the information factor did not appear in the comments of journalists. However, they revealed, as I mentioned in the foregoing, that the information published in the Arab press was in fact government messages. Therefore, I started to ask the journalists an extra question. This question was: What are the obstacles that prevent you from playing a positive role in Arab foreign policy?

9 journalists complained from the lack of information and the access to officials and information sources. Dr. Fayez Al-Sa'iagh, the Director of the Syrian News Agency (SANA), said "He was once asked why wasn't there an Arab journalist like Mohamed Hasanain Heykel." Dr. Al-Sa'iagh's reply was, "Because no Arab journalist has access to information like Heykel used to have with President Naser."

Meanwhile Adel Darwish, an Egyptian journalist who writes for *The Independent* newspaper in Britain, concluded that "the Arab press is not a source of news." For him, "the Arab press is an opinion press rather than a press of news." However, whoever reads the comments of Mr. Darwish must read as well the conclusion of Mr. Anees Mansour, a prominent Egyptian writer, who said "Lack of freedom had forced Arab journalists to write about love and love stories because they could not express their political views."

In fact most journalists complained about the lack of freedom of the press as an urgent and crucial factor in order for them to play a positive role. But what seems positive for journalists, seems negative for officials. 6 journalists who complained about the lack of information accused Arab officials of having a "foreigner syndrome". They said Arab officials talk to foreign reporters more than they do to Arab or national reporters. Not only that, but also Arab officials are more affected by three lines in the *Times* newspaper than one page in any Arab newspaper. The

comments of Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, The editor-in-chief of *Al-Majallah* magazine are an appropriate conclusion under this heading. He revealed that, generally speaking, "all of us, the journalists, regretfully indulge in this 'Watergate' scandal. Each one of us wants a scandal comparable to the overthrow of a president. Nothing less than that," he added. According to him "this desire makes a journalist wants to be policeman, judge and executioner." Mr. Al-Rashed believes that "this is not the duty of a journalist. Information is the main task which we must concentrate upon as journalists."

### **The Press as a Psychological Weapon:**

While most officials acknowledge that the press is considered as a psychological weapon in the hand of the Arab leaders resembling the power of the military force, only 3 officials think this role is one of the important functions of the Arab press. Ambassador Al-Qusaiby thinks "The major use of the Arab press is to complement government directions and to attack countries (the government is) angry at, or praise countries they are satisfied with." According to him, "The reason for the use of the press in this regard, is because this role is not suitable for officials in most Arab governments to fulfil directly." Thus, one should acknowledge the magnitude of this psychological weapon in the polarisation process of inter-Arab politics."

On the other hand, all journalists agreed upon the fact that the Arab press is an important weapon in Arab foreign policy. Its effect does not differ much from a real weapon. Some of the journalists called the use of the press in this regard the "media war" or "psychological war". Perhaps this factor might seem insignificant for Western readers. However, the impact of the word in the Arab world is historically profound (see Chapter 3). For this reason in particular, the trade in buying newspapers and journalists has flourished in the Arab world. For instance, Saddam Hussain, as we said earlier, once explained publicly the reasons behind spending a considerable amount of money on buying Arab press and journalists, by asking: "How many tanks

do we have? What we spend on the press is equivalent to the price of two tanks, which is nothing."

The press problem in this significant region is unique. While the different Arab press speak one language, disputes vary between ideological, political and geographical standpoints.

### **The Press and Diplomacy:**

The role of the Arab press in Arab diplomacy was clearly a very significant function according to officials. During the interview with the Lebanese Foreign Minister he told me some uses of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy—these were stated previously in this chapter. Then I suggested to Minister Bois that what officials perform is formal diplomacy and what the press performs is informal diplomacy. His reply was, "I would rather say Waqi'iah diplomacy." What Minister Bois meant by using the term Waqi'iah diplomacy is that the Arab press in fact is playing the role of "real", or is in the state of being actual diplomacy. In other words, the Arab press practically is another "formal" diplomacy.

During the field work I explored Minister Bois' reply and asked all officials about his statement. In return they too acknowledged the importance of the Arab press in Arab diplomacy. However, only 3 officials agreed with Minister Bois' definition. The Lebanese Foreign Minister added,

"Some rulers because of the role of international diplomacy cannot express fully what they wish to, so they need to rely on unofficial and irresponsible press to express their views. Here the press played an "integrated" part in the nation's policy. This use of the press will protect the official from clashing with some obstacles or facing some responsibilities. As an example, when an Ambassador in Lebanon listened to the Foreign Minister, no matter how clear or how realistic the Minister was, he would tell the Ambassador the official position of the country and leave some points or angles to be selected or picked up from the press."

At the same time the former Lebanese Foreign Minister, Dr. Elly Salem, confirmed what Minister Bois revealed, and added,

"The press says what the official cannot say. The press can be much clearer than officials especially in countries where the press is heavily controlled. Sometimes they signal to you as if they are saying this is another door we should open in the negotiations process."

The former Foreign Minister said that, "In Syria for example, the Syrian negotiator was very precise and short so they took from the Syrian press more beneficial ideas, explanations, and thoughts that had not appeared in the official meeting." In contrast to Minister Bois, Dr. Salem called the role of the press in this regard an informal diplomacy. According to him,

"During the negotiations between Lebanon and Israel on what was called, the " 17 Ayar (the month of May) Agreement" I was in Saudi Arabia when a Saudi prince called me asking my permission to publish in a Saudi newspaper my speech before the Lebanese parliament regarding the same agreement. The information I could collect from the Saudi newspapers enlarged and expanded my knowledge in addition to my diplomatic discussions in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Some Saudi newspapers were with the agreement and one or two were against. These newspapers totally enlightened my thinking," he said.

Meanwhile, Nihad Al-Mashnoug, the press consultant of the Lebanese Prime Minister, who crossed the border of journalism to officialdom said "Arab journalists sometimes play the role of negotiators and mediators in Arab foreign policy." He confirmed to me that he played this role when he used to work as a journalist. "Sometimes I was successful and I failed at other times. However, journalists should not play this role because they cannot master this game, and it is more than likely they would lose their original profession," he added. Mr. Al-Mashnoug confirmed the fact that Arab politicians also use journalists to send some kinds of messages.

Speaking of diplomatic messages, Mai Kahalah, the press consultant of the Lebanese President, said, "Whilst arranging some press interviews with the President we expressed some wishes and needs for our assistance and development to decision makers in the Arab world." Mrs. Kahalah regretted the response of the Arab leaders to such messages. "When we arrange an interview or an article toward a Western country before the official visit of the President, we found this journalistic material on the negotiation table as a starting point," she added. However,

"In the Arab world we often select a newspaper which we think is close to or read by a certain leader in the Arab world to give an interview or arrange for an article to send a message, but the response is usually disappointing in comparison to the West where this becomes a very important item on the negotiations agenda."

Thus, one might ask, why should a government or a leader rely on the press to send messages, in the presence of official channels such as the ministries and embassies? What does this technique add to the diplomatic arena? Mrs. Kahalah outlined three reasons:

First: "The press provides fast and direct channels."

Second: "Through the press you can comprehensively outline all the discussion points in a general sense, while you leave the very specific details to be dealt with through the embassies and various ministries."

Third: "Public opinion is not aware of what is going on through official channels. Once we have this public opinion involved, it is more likely to become an influential presence in the negotiation process."

President Ali Naser Mohamed confirmed the importance of the press as another tool along with the official diplomatic channels. He confirmed his use of the press to write articles without him being responsible. He also said, "When I talk to the press I intend to achieve three goals: First, to explain my policies. Second, to speak to other heads of states. Third, to persuade public opinion."

Uniquely, Jobran Koriah has different views to the rest of the officials. The Syrian Presidential Spokesman asked me why did I give credit to the press in the Arab diplomatic process. He said "The press does not make foreign policy and does not play any role in the diplomatic process because the Arab press is not distributed in the whole Arab world." My response to Mr. Koriah was that the job of an Ambassador is to report all this information to his government. He replied, "You should give the credit to the Ambassador who selected this material to report to his government, and not to the press."

Speaking of Ambassadors and diplomats, almost all Ambassadors interviewed for this research confirmed definitely that one of their most important jobs is to read the national press in the countries to which they are accredited. They also report to their countries what the press report about different issues. For example, Abdul Mohsen Al-Bala'a, the Saudi Ambassador to Syria, said,

"It is very important to read the Syrian national press because it is a very important part of the political environment. I send to my government in the diplomatic portfolio a weekly report of the most important things published in the Syrian press. Sometimes I send this report immediately if it is urgent".

And concerning what he reads in the press, the Saudi Ambassador said, "Two things I report. First, the local Syrian situation. Second, the political situation between Saudi Arabia and Syria."

Meanwhile, Adnan Omran, the Assistant of the Syrian Foreign Minister, told me, "Sometimes people were unjust about the Saudi political position. If these people read what the Saudi press writes they might change their mind. Sometimes the press in Saudi Arabia represents the real political views which the Saudi authorities do not express." Mr. Omran provided an additional explanation of the diplomatic role of the press. He said "If an official in the Arab world said something different to what the press said, then you could conclude that there was another position than that officially

announced. Sometimes some Arab countries ask us to read a certain newspaper to read different views," Mr. Omran added. For him, the reasons behind adopting this strategy was "to give the government room for manoeuvre and not to be held responsible. Also, sometimes, this was a method the government adopted because it had been under external pressure."

Abdulazeem Awad, the press attaché at the Sudanese embassy in Cairo, regarding the press and Arab diplomacy, made a very strong statement. He said,

"If you want to paralyse the work of diplomats or the whole embassy then prevent them from reading the national press in the country they are assigned to. I used to hear about the diplomatic portfolio and when I entered the world of diplomacy I found that its content is actually about newspaper cuttings."

He further said, "As spokesman and press attaché of the Sudanese embassy, at the beginning I thought it was only my job to read the newspapers and report it to my government. Later I discovered that all my colleagues and the other diplomatic attaches' begin their job by reading the national press". But Mr. Awad warns that "it is not just reading the newspapers, it is how you read them." For him, "Reading the press provides you with the first key to help you to pursue your job through different channels. You must not only read the lines but what is between the lines". As an example, Mr. Awad said "When the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz visited Cairo the Egyptian press said the visit was to review the peace process. Of course we did not believe that story and we started to pursue different channels to discover the real story and we found that the visit had a different objective". (see Chapter 6).

On the other hand Ambassador Al-Sayed Hussain insisted that the Arab press was a very important tool in Arab diplomacy. He said, "It provides you with the first key about what is happening in a very speedy way". For him, decision makers talk to the press rather than talking to an Ambassador for the following reasons:

"First, officials like to appear publicly. Second, they also need to sound out public opinion. Third, to send fast messages to other decision makers in the Arab world."

All officials directly and indirectly acknowledged the special role that the Arab press plays in Arab diplomacy. They believe that the press completes the work of diplomacy, while considering the role of the press as a parallel channel to the role of diplomats. Mr. Ismael Al-Shura, the Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, said, "Foreign Ministries are implementation tools and so is the press."

On the other hand, most journalists were asked about the definition of Mr. Fares Bois, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, who defined the role of the Arab press in Arab diplomacy as Waqi'iah diplomacy, that is, real or formal diplomacy. Although the definition of Minister Bois is significant and dangerous, at the same time it has some ambiguity for some others. It is very important here to note that Minister Bois is most likely to be affected by the very controlled Syrian press. Very clearly and straightforwardly, during the interview, Minister Bois meant the entire Arab press. 3 journalists asked me what Waqi'iah diplomacy meant, while 4 others asked me to define diplomacy as a prerequisite. Meanwhile 13 journalists firmly accepted the definition of the Lebanese Foreign Minister. Dr. Saber Falhout, the Head of the Syrian Journalist Union, said, "When you have an issue that you believe in, you start working for it and defend it by different means. One of those means is diplomacy and in recent times the press has surpassed not only diplomacy but also any political and communication work." The role of the press in this regard is huge and comprehensive. Dr. Falhout describes journalists as the "Diplomats of the current time". He explained his vision based on two factors:

First:

"A journalist can reach his goal and communicate his message to the highest level of leadership in a speedy way. He can also meet Kings and Presidents in a matter of a week and talk to them for a long time and exchange talks privately. While a diplomat even if he was an Ambassador, would take a long time to meet the head of a

small department in a Foreign Ministry. This is not to mention meeting the Foreign Minister himself."

Second:

"A journalist can ask annoying and embarrassing questions, while a diplomat cannot do so because of the nature of his mission. I was with a hundred journalists in a meeting with an Arab President when a journalist from another Arab country said to the President: "The president (Dr. Falhout did not name the President) accused you of being crazy". The Arab president replied, "There is no doubt he saw me in a psychiatric hospital, what was he doing there? " So, can a diplomat ask such a question?"

On the other hand Dr. Fayez Al-Sa'aigh believes that "the work of diplomacy is much slower than the work of the press. Once diplomacy is conducted in the open, it is more likely to have the interaction of public opinion," he concluded. Mohamed Khair Al-Wadi, the editor-in-chief of the Syrian *Tashrin* newspaper, insisted that "the relationship between the Arab press and Arab foreign policy is a mutual relationship and not symbiotic." He thinks "the Arab press affect both the Arab public opinion and decision makers." For him "the information that the Arab press provides has an effect on the decision making process in the Arab world. And information is not only found in the news but also in reports on public opinion," he concluded.

Khair Allah Khair Allah, the editor of *Al-Hayat* newspaper, along with many journalists, considers "the Arab press as a parallel channel to diplomacy and part of Arab politics."

Meanwhile Othman Al-Omair, the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, thinks that "because the mechanism of conveying information in the Arab system is so backward and so slow, the Arab press becomes a major factor in this regard."

Al-Omair believes that "there is an urgent need to redefine different concepts such as diplomacy." He asked me if the role of the Ambassador was the same as before. "In the past any communication between two countries took place via diplomatic channels. Nowadays the whole picture has changed," he said.

In his explanation of accepting the definition of Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Majallah* magazine which is issued in London, says,

"The press is more "real" than formal diplomacy because it is more direct and less tied to protocols and formal speeches and meetings. The press has the chance to elaborate on negotiation issues on the second or the third day while diplomats cannot do so once they leave the negotiation room."

Speaking of protocol and obligations, Bakr Awaidah, an editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, believes "the journalist can move freely without being noticed, criticised or accused. The diplomat cannot do this without creating a political crisis."

### **The Press as Postman:**

This role is only acknowledged by the journalists. Although most journalists described this role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy under a different name, which was stated previously, 5 journalists were clear in identifying the Arab press as a post man. This role of carrying political messages between two Arab countries or more, is most significant, especially when a diplomatic relationship does not exist or when a major dispute interrupts the normal relationship. The Arabic "brotherly" relationship in inter-Arab politics has been deeply affected through modern history by various debates and issues. Editorials are used in the Arab press to convey an official opinion or to criticise a political movement by another Arab country. Also, the Arab press is used to express goodwill towards an Arab country or to worsen the bad relationship that already exists.

Before we conclude this chapter and draw some kind of explanation about the nature and role of the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy, it is important to ask the following question. Based on the previous arguments we can reveal some roles of the press in Arab foreign policy. Some interviewees called it informal diplomacy, while others called it formal diplomacy. Therefore, is every single word published in the Arab press considered the official view or news? Is there a danger of differentiating

between the official and the journalistic opinion? For example, I explained in the introduction of this study that, in 1983, Ali Lutf Al-Thoor, the Foreign Minister of Yemen at that time, hinted that we, myself and the newspaper I represented, were forced by the government of Saudi Arabia to use the names of North and South Yemen to enhance the separation between the two countries. Of course, this allegation proved to be false. There are many other examples in this regard to be cited. (see Chapters 6 & 7).

Although the Arab press plays an advertising and informative role, there is a fair amount of personal political discretion exerted by Arab journalists, in the absence of updated information given by officials, where they rely heavily on their own discretion and predictions. Since the Arab journalistic system differs from what used to be known as "*Pravda*", no Arab journalist can adjust his watch exactly according to the watch of a decision maker or an official. A difference must occur from time to time which leads to the problem of differentiating between the journalistic opinion and the official one.

This problem is not an Arabic one, it is a Western problem as well. Through modern history, for instance, many leaders accused the British government of being behind some journalistic items broadcast by the "B.B.C." or published in the "*Times*". The British government denied these accusations but the problem remains the same. To cite an example, it is known in the Arab world that *Al-Ahram*, the first Egyptian daily newspaper, is a semi-official paper; some people call it the voice of the Egyptian government. The Egyptians consider *Al-Ahram* as one of the most important "national newspapers". Therefore, Mohamed Shakir, the Egyptian Ambassador in London, describes the problem under discussion by saying,

"It is a difficult one, for example, one year ago Ibrahim Nafea the editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper wrote an article criticising those people who were spreading rumours about changes in the Egyptian cabinet, asking them to stop from doing so, and stating meanwhile that

there would be no change in the cabinet. Immediately the next day there was a change in the Egyptian cabinet."

According to him "it was very difficult to decide whether this was an official point of view or a journalistic one. Perhaps, not knowing is an essential part of it." In the same way, Minister Fares Bois describes this problem as a very tiring and exhausting one. For him, it is like a "stock market". Meanwhile, Ambassador Naif Al-Qadi says that "it is useful when the official opinion coincides with the journalistic one. However, the real problem is when both opinions do not meet, as this then confuses you and forces you to ask questions and investigate."

Ismael Al-Shura, the Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, thinks "This problem particularly faces the low-ranking officials because Foreign Ministers have their own way of knowing." Although prominent officials acknowledged the existence of this issue, only 9 officials thought otherwise. For them, the problem of differentiating between the official and the journalistic opinion does not exist because it is all the official view. According to Jobran Koriah, the Syrian Presidential Spokesman, "Search for the financier then you will know the real story, no matter how much this financier denies his involvement."

Nihad Al-Mashnoug, the press consultant of the Lebanese Prime Minister, meanwhile believes that "there are no pure journalistic opinions. In the final analysis, the journalist expresses the surrounding environment. The only thing you need to know is the thought from which this opinion stems and its effect," he concluded.

If we acknowledge that there is a problem, then how do we identify a solution or a description to solve it. Ambassador Fou'ad Ayoub agrees that "there is an urgent need not only for one solution but for many descriptions." While Ambassador Ghazi Al-Qusaiby provided his own vision by saying,

"There is no (magical description) that can be applied to all newspapers and to all governments. The (Parties) Press, in countries which are ruled by a party system, do not publish journalistic opinion. All that they publish

reflects the Party's line, which is of course the line of the country. Other than that, we should take and analyse each newspaper individually. For instance, to say that all that Mohamed Heykel wrote expressed President Naser's thought, or all that Anees Mansour wrote expressed President's Sadat's thought, is a wrong conclusion. Both journalists indeed expressed most of the two presidents' thinking and not all. It is impossible to differentiate, in a definite way, between the journalistic and the official opinion without knowing first the full circumstances behind that which a newspaper publishes".

On the other hand, 14 journalists believe that differentiating between the journalistic and the official opinion is a major problem in the Arab world. While 6 journalists think this problem does not exist. In fact some of these 6 journalists did not back their argument by explaining why or how this problem did not exist. However, the basis of their argument was that journalistic views cannot contradict with official ones. And the only thing one might need is to be a good reader to understand the real story.

Dr. Saber Falhout, the Head of the Syrian Journalist Union, expressed the problem well by using a famous (Hadith), the prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) said. He said:

"The Lawful (Halal) is self-evident and the Unlawful (Haram) is self-evident, and between them are suspect matters."

Dr. Falhout believes that "we must avoid suspect matters. However, when you read the first line of a journalistic article, you can smell something. Therefore, you will be able to tell if this writing is a pure journalistic view or affected by officials." Meanwhile, Khair Allah Khair Allah, the editor of *Al-Hayat* newspaper which is considered a Saudi emigré newspaper based in London, reveals that "some mistakes occur currently in the evaluation process. For example, the Algerian government thinks that what *Al-Hayat* publishes about Algeria is influenced by outsiders, and this is absolutely not true."

Finally, Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Majallah* magazine, provided his own analysis of this hazardous dilemma. He says "there is now some kind of "following footsteps" practice by readers of the Arab press for official reasons. Now we have a big problem because in the past it was very easy to evaluate and say: Yes, this is systematic work planned by officials." According to Mr. Al-Rashed, in recent times, the matter became very difficult for the following reasons:

First:

"The number of the Arab mass media has increased."

Second:

"The space for opinion writing has increased and multiplied inside one newspaper, not to mention all. This happens because the Arab newspaper has enlarged or expanded from eight pages to forty pages."

Third:

"Some journalists now enjoy some kind of independence."

To conclude this argument, Mr. Al-Rashed provided as well, his own description of the difference between the journalistic and the official view. He outlines three factors:

First: "To know first if this newspaper has some kind of 'link' or not."

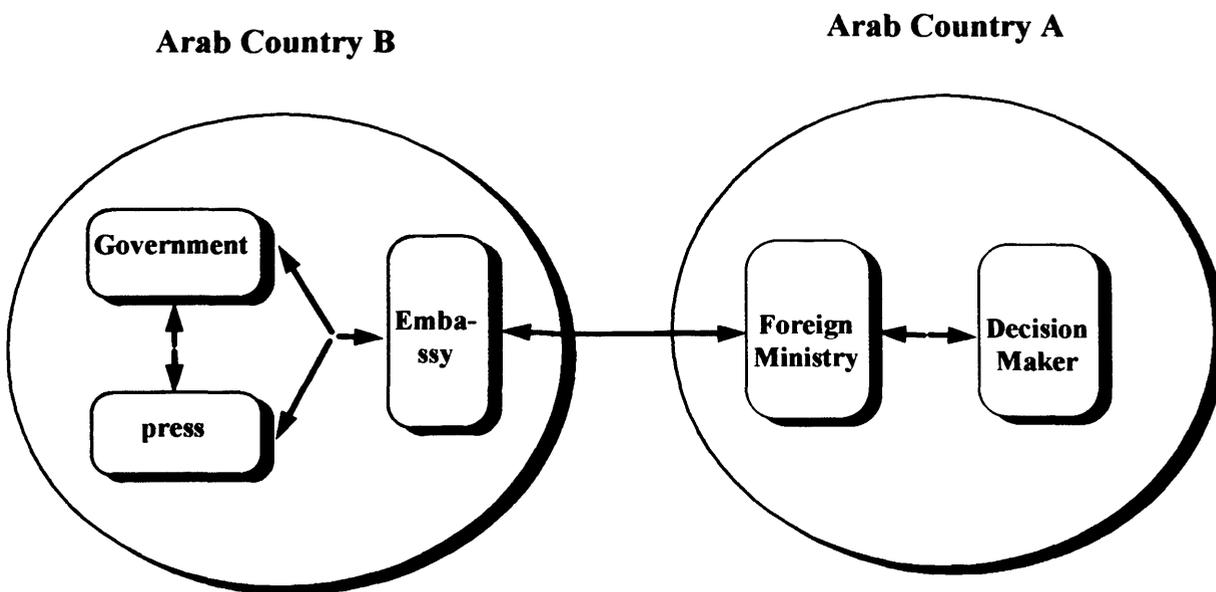
Second: "Does this newspaper have a history of being used before by the government or not? Knowing the general background of any given newspaper is a prerequisite to understanding the meaning of the content. Also, identifying if what was written contains extra or very special information."

Third: "If some views were repeated in different publications in the same day, then you know this is an official campaign and not a journalistic opinion."

**Conclusion:**

During the interviews, I was interested to know the path taken by information from the newspaper to the desk of decision makers. There was only one Arab official who refused to explain this process. The comments of the majority of officials are represented in the figure below which is self-explanatory.

Table 4.1



The figure above does not only explain the path taken by information, but it also describes some of the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. Furthermore, the figure suggests that: An Ambassador of Arab country A is accredited in Arab country B. His duties are to represent his country and collect information. The Ambassador collects the formal

information from the government of Arab country B and its various departments, while collecting complementary information from the press. As the figure suggests, the government of Arab country B has an integral information system with the national (domestic) press in Arab country B. This was clear from the argument presented previously. Then, this information is sent to the Foreign Office of Arab country A by its Ambassador, for analysis by decision makers. It is worth mentioning that no Arab official can read in his own country the hundreds of national Arab newspapers published in 22 Arab countries. It is the duty of various Ambassadors to do that on their behalf.

One more important comment should be made here. Those Arab officials and Arab journalists who concluded the no role theory were committed to the use of the word "effect". It was difficult not to allow words such as "effect" or "effectiveness" appear in the interviews. In the final analysis, this study was more interested in knowing the function, nature, and role of the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy. Another point should be clarified in this conclusion. As we have seen, there is "sometimes" an evaluation problem concerning political views in the national Arab press. This is due to two major factors. First, the national Arab press is the mouthpiece of its government. Second, journalists in the national Arab press always suffer from constant contact with their governments to obtain information which forces them to rely on their political intuition. This sometimes leads to a diplomatic problem. Also, some Arab officials sometimes interpret political views in the national Arab press wrongly. In the Western world, governments usually brief and update journalists about foreign policy developments, while in the Arab world such a thing rarely happens. Instead, Arab journalists receive from time to time political instructions from their Information Ministries.

Finally, we should ask at this point, what is the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in Arab foreign policy? Is the relationship between the national Arab press and their governments a symbiotic one, as described by Bernard Cohen

(1963, reprinted 1983) in the U.S? Or is it a co-evolution as Patrick O'Heffernan concluded (1991: 82)? Both terms or theories imply freedom and independence of the American press, and this is far from what happens in the Arab world. It is true that Bernard Cohen found the American press to be active participants in the foreign policy process (1983: 20). However, the active participation role of the national Arab press in the process of foreign policy is more than evident, but it is a forced role rather than a voluntary one. Also, as Ambassador Al-Qusaiby said previously, the national Arab press does not participate in making a policy. However, it participates in implementing a foreign policy. The national institutional status of the national Arab press in the Arab countries made Arab and foreign officials believe that what is being published are formal political views and news. Sometimes not publishing certain news has some political considerations. Indeed, as Yoel Cohen said, state-controlled media are one additional channel in a government's network of communication with other countries. (Cohen, 1986: 24). Or, they can be considered government bulletins, as Mr. Talal Salman concluded earlier.

At this point, it is important to remind ourselves of the roles of the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy according to both officials and journalists interviewed for this study. These roles are: 1- The no role theory. 2- The mirror role. 3- Leaks and trial balloon role. 4- As a source of information. 5- As a psychological weapon. 6- The press as diplomacy. 7- The press as a post man. Consequently, the totality of these roles leads to the official status of the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy. Evidences collected in this study suggest that the national (domestic) Arab press are an important integral part of the foreign policy establishment. The views of the Arab governments and the national Arab press complement each other. Therefore, the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in Arab foreign policy is an "integrative role."

Thusfar, what can we call the diplomatic role played by the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy? Is it informal diplomacy, as Yoel Cohen described the British

media (1986: 69)? Can we apply Eytan Gilboa's classification on the national Arab press? As a reminder, Gilboa outlined three concepts of media-diplomacy (1998: 58). First, public diplomacy, which refers to education and cultural contacts with people of other nations who might influence their government. Second, media diplomacy, which refers to the use of decision makers of the media to send signals and put pressure on other governments. Third, media-broker diplomacy, which refers to journalists who play the role of diplomats. Consequently, the national Arab press plays two roles and concepts as described by Eytan Gilboa. The national press role in the Arab diplomacy can be seen as a mixture of both media-diplomacy and media-broker diplomacy as described by Gilboa. There is little, if any, doubt that the national (domestic) Arab press is a parallel diplomatic channel to formal diplomacy. Calling it informal, real, or, formal diplomacy makes no difference, it is there and making a big impact. Indeed, it is a Waqi'iah diplomacy.

Finally, where can we place the national Arab press in inter-Arab politics? Earlier, Philip Taylor (1997: 20) outlined four dimensions through which inter-state relations are formed or built. These are: 1- Diplomatic. 2- Economic. 3- Military. 4- Communication which means the media. As a result, can we describe the national Arab press as the fourth dimension? Evidences collected in Chapter 3 and this chapter suggest that the national (domestic) Arab press are an integral part of the first dimension described by Taylor. Indeed, in the Arab world the press comes first. To complete the picture, the next chapter will discuss the nature and role of the international or emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# **The Nature and Role of the Emigré Arab Press in Arab Foreign Policy**

## **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the second aim of this study, which is the nature and role of the international or emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy. The second part of this chapter also discusses the subordinate aim of this study which is the inter-relationship between the Arab press in general and the intelligence service. It is important at the beginning to address a few questions regarding the international or emigré Arab press in order to clarify a few points and issues. Why use two alternative names, such as international or emigré? What are the other names or descriptions of this Arab press phenomenon? What is the historical background of this international or emigré press? What are the differences between the national and the international or emigré Arab press? What does the international or emigré Arab press add to Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics?

During the 70s, the international or emigré Arab press has flourished in the European capitals in general, and in London in particular. This unique phenomenon is not new by any means to both European capitals or to Arab politics. Historically speaking, this phenomenon can be traced back to 1855. (see Abu Zaid, 1985; Ragab, 1993). During the current era of the international or emigré Arab press, Arab intellectuals and journalists argue and dispute even the name of this press, not to mention the need of it. It is more than appropriate to discuss at this stage the name issue before we present some answers to the previous questions. Some various names and definitions have been given to this Arab press, which can be summarised as follows:

### **1. The Pan-Arab Press:**

We discussed in Chapter 3 the invalidity of this name because of its misleading perceptions and understanding. In the absence of one united Arab country, this name seems inaccurate. Meanwhile, each and every newspaper claiming to be a Pan-Arab newspaper is in fact representing and defending one certain Arab country.

## 2. The Emigré Arab Press, or

## 3. The International Arab Press, or

## 4. The Incoming Arab Press (*Al-Wafidah*)

What is the nature of the argument about the name of this Arab press? The name of the emigré Arab press needs no further elaboration and explanation. However, this particular name will be discussed in more depth in the coming few pages. Meanwhile, Hashim Abdu Hashim, the editor-in-chief of *Okaz*, a daily Saudi newspaper, called this press "Al-Wafidah press", that is, the incoming Arab press, and not an emigré one. According to him, "The Gulf and Arab market is the main target of this press. Also, this press is distributed in the Arab countries in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular, more than they are distributed in the country where they are published." This argument was supported indirectly by Othman Al-Omair, the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, published in London, who said, "We would be too idealistic if we consider the target of this press to be the Arab reader in Europe. This has never happened because the Arabs in Europe are so few or they no longer read Arabic." At the same time, some Arab journalists interviewed for this study rejected the name "emigré Arab press" and preferred instead, the pan-Arab press or the Arab international press. Their refusal has justification. For example, at the end of the day, what should we call *The Herald Tribune*? It would not be sensible to describe it as an emigré press. In other words, the Arab press published in London has the advantage of some important factors, such as; London is considered an important communications centre and London provides important technological and geographical factors. This Arab press can reach its readers not only in the Arab world, but also in Europe and the U.S. George Sam'aan, the Deputy editor-in-chief of *Al-Hayat* newspaper said "*Asharq Al-Awsat* did not escape from Saudi Arabia and also *Al-Hayat* did not escape from Lebanon to publish in London. Both papers found in this capital easy communication, position, and an important journalistic centre." According to him, "It is the center of Europe and close to Russia and America. As a

result you can reach the Arab reader inside and outside the Arab world." To summarise this argument, the same geographical, economical, and political factors that have led to the publication of the *Herald Tribune* in Paris, have also influenced the Arab press to publish in London. In order to analyse the issue meaningfully, we will present in the following the historical background of the development of this Arab press phenomenon. Having said that, historically and academically speaking, the Arab library suffers a great deal from a lack of cumulative study, not only about the emigré Arab press, but about mass communication studies in general. One of the most important reasons for this shortage is that media and politics in the Arab world are inseparable. This fact in itself discourages many researchers from carrying out academic research on those topics, and needless to mention also there is the difficulty in accessing information and its cost. To the best of my knowledge, the work of Dr. Farouk Abu Zaid is the only source available in this regard. His book, The Emigré Arab Press 1985, is comprehensive and reasonably analytical. Abu Zaid acknowledges in his book that he was not aware at the beginning of his work that he was entering a dangerous minefield. (1985: 6). He also said, "I discovered in this phenomenon that the press mixes with politics and thought mixes with trade, while struggle is mixed with treason." (1985: 6). Thus I shall rely heavily on Abu Zaid's work to introduce this phenomenon, historically speaking.

### **Historical Background:**

Throughout history the Arab press emigrated in two directions:

First: Emigration outside the Arab world, mainly towards Turkey, Europe, and America.

Second: Internal emigration from one Arab country to another Arab country.

As far as the internal emigration is concerned, the Arab press emigrated mainly from Al-Sham, now known as Syria and Lebanon, towards Egypt. In fact this is the only emigration which took place within the Arab world. The enigma behind this

emigration is that Egypt and Bilad Al-Sham, Al-Sham country, were very important members of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, why was Egypt selected by the emigrating journalists and press? Abu Zaid in his book suggested a few factors, (1985: 39):

First: The geographical factor; because of the geographical proximity of Al-Sham and Egypt.

Second: The economical factor; Egypt at that time was rich in work opportunities and earnings.

Third: The political factor; Egypt at that time was enjoying some kind of independence from the Ottoman Empire, unlike Bilad Al-Sham which was under the direct ruling of the Ottoman Empire.

Fourth: The democracy factor; The availability of a democratic climate in Egypt encouraged journalists to emigrate in this direction. Abu Zaid thinks that this democratic climate was not available in the entire Arab world but only in Egypt. This major fact enabled emigrant journalists to express their opinions freely without restriction.

Farouk Abu Zaid traced back the first wave of emigrant journalists from Al-Sham to Egypt when Lewis Sabongy emigrated from Beirut to Cairo and established in 1871 (*Al-Nahla Al-Hurah*), the Free Bee, Magazine. The first edition of this magazine published in Cairo carried the issue No. 32, which means in essence that it is a continuous publication that appeared first in Beirut, rather than a new one. Also, for instance, Saleem Tagla published in Egypt on 5th of August 1879, *Al-Ahram*, The Pyramid, newspaper. *Al-Ahram* newspaper nowadays is considered the mouthpiece of the Egyptian government.

Thusfar, it is important to emphasize here that the emigré Arab press inside the Arab world was mainly aimed only towards Egypt and over a short period of time. I shall

review with extra detail the development of the emigré Arab press outside the Arab world.

The Arab press and journalists during their emigration process were concentrated throughout history in three directions. The countries that received the emigré Arab press were mainly Turkey, France, and England. As with the internal emigration, journalists from Al-Sham were the pioneers for establishing the emigré Arab press outside the Arab world.

### **Emigration Towards Turkey:**

Al-Istanah city, the capital of the Ottoman Turkish Empire witnessed the establishment of the first emigré Arab press. In 1855 Rizg Allah Hassoun emigrated to the Turkish capital and published his newspaper, *Mar-atu-L Ahwal* (The Mirror of Current Affairs). (Abu Zaid, 1985: 19).

There were, of course, some Arab journalists who followed the path of Rizg Allah Hassoun. At this point another puzzle comes to light in this discussion. Why would journalists, who had come from countries under the ruling of the Turkish Empire, emigrate to the Turkish capital where no freedom of expression would be granted at that time? Abu Zaid in his book outlined six considerations behind this political emigration. (1985: 20).

First: Those journalists who emigrated first to the Turkish capital had a belief that their countries' interest would be accomplished through cooperation with the ruler of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, Rizg Allah Hassoun was one of the strong believers of this policy, and when he tried to criticize the Turks, they closed down his newspaper after one year. In fear Hassoun escaped to Russia.

Second: Some of the journalists who emigrated to Al-Istanah wanted to put their expertise at the service of the Ottoman Empire. This was done either because they believed in the Empire or as a result of their lust to achieve personal ambitions and

ends. One of those journalists was Ahmed Fares Al-Shidyaq who published *Al Gawanib* (Aspects) newspaper. Al-Shidyaq's paper played a distinguished role in Arab politics during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was considered the mouthpiece of the ruler of the Ottoman Empire and its strong defending voice. (Abu Zaid, 1985: 22).

Third: Other journalists thought that by emigrating to the capital of the Ottoman Empire -and establishing a journalistic voice- they could change or alter things from inside the Empire.

Fourth: A large number of journalists emigrated from Al-Sham to the Ottoman Empire's capital through the encouragement of Sultan Abdulhameed II. Of course the Sultan adopted those journalists and their press in order to serve his policies inside the Arab provinces and outside the region.

Fifth: The announcement of the Ottoman constitution in 1908 which granted a reasonable freedom of expression encouraged Arab journalists to emigrate to the Turkish capital.

Sixth: The Turkish capital, Al-Istanah, attracted Arab journalists not only because it was a very significant capital, but also because it was the centre of decision making. This capital was the active centre for various political events in the Arab world. In addition to this there was a good network of postal services with most of the Arab and non-Arab provinces. (Abu Zaid, 1985: 24).

### **Emigration Towards France:**

The first emigré Arab press was established in the French capital, Paris in Europe. On Jan 24th 1858, Rashid Al-Dahdah published his newspaper, *Brgees Paris*. This newspaper expressed the French political positions. Once again Abu Zaid tries to analyse the reasons behind the emigration from Al-Sham to France. For him there are two main reasons. (1985: 26):

1. The French wanted to extend their influence and power in the Arab world. This was implemented particularly in Al-Sham province and Northern Africa. Therefore, the French encouraged Arab journalists in general, and those from Al-Sham in particular, to emigrate to France and to be used later to enhance the French influence in the Arab world. Some of the newspapers established in France were clearly and obviously resisting and attacking the British influence in the Arab world.
2. The second main reason was due to the fact that there was a significant amount of freedom of the press in France. This, in itself, enabled some Arab journalists to establish their newspapers and express their political thoughts and views. Having said that, Paris, later on, became the enemy of those journalists who emigrated there from Al-Sham, for the simple reasons that France, after the First World War, occupied Syria and Lebanon.

### **Emigration Towards England:**

The first emigré Arab press appeared in London in 1868. As we mentioned previously, Rizg Allah Hassoun escaped from Turkey to Russia. Later on he managed to reach London and established the first Arabic newspaper there. He called his newspaper *Rojoom wa Ghisag ela Fares Al-Shidyaq* (Surmises and Scandals for the Defamation of Fares Al-Shidyaq). (Ragab, 1993: 76).

Dr. Mohamed Ragab produced a guide in 1993 called The Arab Press in Britain. In this guide he said the name of this newspaper was derived from and directed against Ahmed Fares Al-Shidyaq. (1993: 76). Al-Shidyaq, as mentioned previously established *Al Ga-wanib* (Aspects) newspaper which was the mouthpiece of the Ottoman Empire. In fact Hassoun published in total four newspapers in London. One of those newspapers was *Mar-atu-l Ahwal* (the Mirror of Current Affairs) which he previously published before in Al-Istanah. All Hassoun's newspapers were mainly

against the Ottoman Empire until his death in 1880. (Abu Zaid, 1985: 33). The following table presents the first ten Arabic newspapers published in Britain:

**Table 5-1 First 10 Arabic Papers Published in Britain**

No.	Title	Date of First Issue
1	<i>Rojoom wa Ghisag ela Fares Al-Shidyaq</i> [Surmises and Scandals for the defamation of Fares Al-Shidyaq]	4 May 1868
2	<i>Al Sam</i>	1872
3	<i>Mar-atu-l Ahwal</i> [The Mirror of Current Affairs]	26 October 1876
4	<i>An-Nahla</i> , The Bee	26 April 1877
5	<i>Hal Al-Masalatain Asharqia wa Al-Masria</i> [Resolving the Eastern and Egyptian Questions]	1879
6	<i>El-Khilafat</i> [The Succession]	3 January 1881
7	<i>Al-Ittehad Al-Arabi</i> [Arab Union]	1881
8	<i>Dia-ul Khafikain</i> , The Light of the Two Hemispheres	1 February 1892
9	<i>Raj Al-Sada</i> , The Re-Echo	15 January 1894
10	<i>El-Khilafat</i> [The Succession] Al-Shidyaq	28 September 1899

Adopted from: (Ragab, 1993: 77)

### **The Current Emigré Arab Press:**

Previously, we discussed the first era of the development of this Arab press. Under this heading we will discuss the current or the second era of the emigré Arab press. It is important to note at this point that the period between the first era and the second era has not been documented to the best of my knowledge.

During the 70s the Lebanese press became an important player in the international and Arab political arena as explained in Chapter 3. The Lebanese press at that time

was influenced not only by the Lebanese political system, but also by the various international and Arab powers that interfered in Lebanese affairs. Lebanon in general, and Beirut in particular, became at that time an important battleground of the Cold War and the struggle of inter-Arab politics. This fact had a significant impact on the Lebanese press which represented various external powers and not the Lebanese interest. In fact, Lebanese and Arab researchers have failed to study meaningfully the role of the Lebanese press in the civil war and also the effect on the foreign policy of the Arab world. With the start of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975, the first wave of emigrating journalists began to move towards different capitals and in different directions. According to Saleem Nasar, a prominent Lebanese journalist and writer, he lives in London and writes for *Al-Hayat* newspaper, who was interviewed for this study, 300 Lebanese journalists have emigrated so far from inside the Arab world. According to Farouk Abu Zaid there were two reasons for this emigration. (1985: 97).

First: The entry of the Syrian forces (deterrent forces) to Lebanon to maintain a balance between the Lebanese fighters.

Second: The Lebanese government issued Legislative Decree Number 1 on Jan 1st 1977 which imposed censorship and control on the press (see Chapter 3).

The emigration of Lebanese journalists played an important role in the re-birth of the emigré Arab press in different European capitals. However, it would be misleading to ignore the role of other Arab journalists who emigrated from all parts of the Arab world. The emigration movement was basically towards Greece, France, and England.

Beyond any doubt, London became the capital of the emigré Arab press. *The Times* newspaper once described London as "Beirut on the Thames". This very expressive name refers to the Arab governments' and journalists' exploitation of London to establish many publications, as they did in Beirut. London now is the new battleground for inter-Arab politics. Ahmed Salhin Al-Houni, a former Libyan Information Minister during King Sanousi's rule, established on the 2nd of June 1977,

the first Arabic daily newspaper in the second emigration era called *Al-Arab* (The Arabs). The table below contains the leading London publications. They are considered the leading publications because of the following factors:

1. For their high distribution, relatively speaking.
2. For the political power they represent.
3. For their good political content.

**Table 5-2 Leading London Publications ( May 1993)**

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1	<i>Al- Ahdath</i> [Events]
2	<i>Al-Ahram International</i> [The Pyramids]
3	<i>Al-Arab</i> [The Arabs]
4	<i>Al-Baheth Al-Arabi</i> , [The Arab Researcher]
5	<i>Al-Hawadeth int.</i> [Events]
6	<i>Al-Hayat</i> [Life]
7	<i>Al-Kalima Al-Mammu'a</i> [The Forbidden Word]
8	<i>Al Majalla</i> [The Magazine]
9	<i>Al-Mustakillah</i> [The Independent]
10	<i>Al O'ula</i> [The First]
11	<i>Al-Quds Al-Arabi</i> [Arab Jerusalem]
12	<i>Al Raai Alakher</i> [Other Opinion]
13	<i>Al-Shark Al-Jadid</i> [The New Levant]
14	<i>Alwasat</i> [The Middle]
15	<i>An-naqid</i> , [The Critic]
16	<i>Arrajol</i> [The Gentleman]
17	<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> [The Middle East]

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Adopted from: (Ragab, 1993: 9)

The content of the majority of the above leading publications is Arab affairs in general, and Arab foreign policy in particular. Mohamed Ragab listed in his guide,

The Arab Press in Britain, 50 publications currently in London, as of May 1993 as follows:

**Table 5-3 Current Publications in London (May 1993)**

No.	Title	Date of First Issue	Frequency
1	<i>Al-Shark Al-Jadid</i> [The New Levant]	January 1973	Monthly
2	<i>The Middle East</i>	November 1974	Monthly
3	<i>Al-Arab</i> [The Arabs]	2 June 1977	Daily
4	<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> [The Middle East]	4 July 1978	Daily
5	<i>Al-Hawadeth Int.</i> [Events]	14 November 1978	Weekly
6	<i>Al Majalla</i> [The Magazine]	16 February 1980	Weekly
7	<i>Sayidaty</i> [My Lady]	30 March 1980	Weekly
8	<i>Sout Al-Iraq</i> [Voice of Iraq]	October 1980	Fortnightly
9	<i>Sout Al-Bahrain</i> [Voice of Bahrain]	1983	Monthly
10	<i>The Palestine Post</i>	1983	Bi-Monthly
11	<i>Al-Aalam</i> [The World]	17 February 1984	Weekly
12	<i>Al-Ahram International</i> [The Pyramids]	30 April 1984	Daily
13	<i>Al-Baheth Al-Arabi</i> , [The Arab Researcher]	August 1984	Periodically
14	<i>Asharq Al-Awsat Magazine</i> [The Middle East Magazine]	3 July 1986	Weekly
15	<i>Khas Jiddan</i> , [Exclusive]	February 1987	10 times a year
16	<i>Al Raai Alakher</i> [Other Opinion]	February 1987	Monthly
17	<i>Banat Hawwa</i> [Daughters of Eve]	October 1987	Monthly
18	<i>Al-Kalima Al-Mammu'a</i> [The Forbidden Word]	March 1988	Monthly
19	<i>Al-Ahdath</i> [Events]	14 March 1988	Daily
20	<i>Mawakif</i> [Attitudes]	Spring 1988	Quarterly

### Current Publications in London (Cont.)

No.	Title	Date of First Issue	Frequency
21	<i>An-naqid</i> , [The Critic]	July 1988	Monthly
22	<i>Gulf Report</i>	July 1988	Monthly
23	<i>Al Hayat</i> [Life]	3 September 1988	Daily
24	<i>Al-Quds Al-Arabi</i> [Arab Jerusalem]	26 April 1989	Daily
25	<i>Al-Ballora</i> [The Crystal Ball]	1st September 1989	Monthly
26	<i>Baghdad</i>	21 December 1990	Weekly
27	<i>Al Azmina Al Arabia</i> [The Arab Times]	January 1991	Monthly
28	<i>Al-Jazira Al-Arabia</i> [Arabian Peninsula]	January 1991	Monthly
29	<i>Minbar Al-Hurria</i> [The Pulpit of Freedom]	11 February 1991	Monthly
30	<i>Al-Iraq Al-Hur</i> [Free Iraq]	5 June 1991	Weekly
31	<i>Palestine Times</i>	July 1991	Monthly
32	<i>El Kouthar Magazine</i> [The Fount of Abundance]	October 1991	Monthly
33	<i>Al-Malaf Al-Iraqi</i> , [Iraqi File]	December 1991	Monthly
34	<i>Darussalam</i> [Abode of Peace]	December 1991	Fortnightly
35	<i>Alyaman Alqobra</i> [Greater Yemen]	15 January 1992	Monthly
36	<i>Alwasat</i> [The Middle]	3 February 1993	Weekly
37	<i>Al-Wifaq</i> [Conciliation]	28 February 1992	Weekly
38	<i>Addamir</i> [Conscience]	1 March 1992	Irregular
39	<i>Al-Kalima</i> [The Word]	March 1992	Monthly
40	<i>Arrajol</i> [The Gentleman]	May 1992	Monthly
41	<i>Al-Democracy</i> [The Democrat]	July 1992	Monthly
42	<i>Al-Muhajir</i> , [The Immigrant]	1 August 1992	Monthly
43	<i>Hia</i> [She]	August 1992	Monthly
44	<i>Al-O'ula</i> [The First]	15 August 1992	Weekly
45	<i>The Arab Review</i>	Summer 1992	Quarterly
46	<i>Al-Mejresha</i> [The Grinder]	October 1992	Monthly

### Current Publications in London (Cont.)

No.	Title	Date of First Issue	Frequency
47	<i>Al-Mustakillah</i> [The Independent]	1 January 1993	Monthly
48	<i>Al fajn</i> [The Dawn]	February 1993	Monthly
49	<i>Al-Bai'ah</i> [Homage]	April 1993	Irregular
50	<i>Aalam Al-Khaleej</i> [The Gulf World]	1 May 1993	Monthly

Adopted from: (Ragab, 1993: 53)

Thusfar, the question that should be asked at this point is: Why did the Arab press and journalists emigrated from inside the Arab world? Although this question was valid sometime ago, it is no longer urgent to research and investigate it. Having said that, Abu Zaid in his book provided some conclusions explaining this phenomenon. (1985: 324).

First: The lack of freedom of the press and freedom of expression forced the Arab press and journalists to emigrate outside the Arab world.

Second: Some of the emigré Arab press play the role of defending some Arab governments' internal and external politics. It is a media weapon used in political battles.

Concerning this point, the conclusions of Abu Zaid seem normal for anyone who has a superficial idea about the Arab press. But there are more important questions which need to be addressed. Could the emigré Arab press work and publish freely in the West in general and in London in particular without being pressured and followed? The answer is simple. For example, the offices of the Saudi newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* when it was first established, were bombed on Fleet Street. A tip from an insider about a terrorist organization in London rescued Mohamed Al-Shibany, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, from an assassination attempt. The British government and Scotland Yard moved Al-Shibany from one hotel to another to save his life. Another example was the assassination of the cartoonist Naji Al-Ali on one of

London's streets. Recently in 1997 *Al-Hayat* newspaper was bombed via a letter bomb. Let us assume a newspaper or a journalist in London, for instance, did not receive a bomb or a bullet, would he or she survive the polarisation of inter-Arab politics. The emigré Arab journalists live outside the Arab world physically but not mentally. They are an important part of Arab politics and its diplomatic channels. Concerning this point, we should ask more important questions. How different are the emigré Arab press than the national press? Since its content is mainly Arab politics, what kind of role does it play in Arab foreign policy? What does it provide in this regard and with what kind of impact? Also what are the needs for such a press? (see Case studies # 1 & 2).

Finally, does this emigré press also play an integrative role in Arab foreign policy or the inter-Arab politics. Is this emigré press an important tool in Arab diplomacy. Can we call its role in the Arab diplomatic arena also as a Waqi'iah diplomacy which means "real" or "formal" diplomacy? Before we provide some analysis and answers, we should present the vision and views of both Arab officials and journalists interviewed for this study.

### **The Interviewee's Views:**

10 officials believe that the phenomenon of the emigré Arab press is the direct result of the lack of press freedom and expression freedom in the Arab world. Dr. Saleem Al-Hus, the former Lebanese Prime Minister, said that the existence of this international Arab press was a reflection of the insufficient freedom of the press. "None of those press would be established if we had free journalistic systems. However, the easy transportation and communication system enables those press to reach the Arab reader inside and outside the Arab world," he added. Dr. Al-Hus believes that the international Arab press have more political freedom than the local press which provides it with more opportunities to express its position. This has an effect on the Arab elite public opinion which affects the Arab decision makers. He also believes the international Arab press is more distinguished than the local

newspapers by providing comprehensive views. According to him, "Inside the Arab world you see the tree but you do not see the jungle. In Lebanon, for instance, you are concerned with what is happening inside Lebanon and this is only one tree in the jungle. But when you are outside you view the Arab world in a comprehensive way. That means you see the whole jungle but you do not get lost among the trees."

Meanwhile, Dr. Elly Salem, the former Lebanese Foreign Minister, thinks the international Arab press is the elite's medium. And the elite here are not only Arabs but foreigners as well. Therefore, "This press has two effects. The first effect is on the Arab decision makers by providing them with information from important capitals. Those press are more powerful than our Ambassadors. The second effect is on the decision makers in Washington, London and Paris. They take from those press some free Arab views because the international Arab press are free on some given issues, news which they express of a high quality," he concluded. Basim Al-Sab'a, the Lebanese Information Minister, expressed his wishes that "the emigré Arab press will return to the Arab world and publish in Beirut." I asked him, do you welcome this press? His reply was, "This issue needs a detailed study." Minister Al-Sab'a agreed with Dr. Elly Salem that those press are the elite's papers. As a result they have an effect on both decision makers and Arab public opinion. However, he thinks this effect is limited.

On the same hand, Jobran Koriah, the Syrian Presidential Spokesman, believes that the emigré Arab press is much better than the local papers in foreign policy matters. "Its ability to speak to the Arabs in different countries gives it a distinguished effect. You can find more depth in its coverage of foreign policy than the local newspapers," he added. Meanwhile, Adnan Omran, Assistant of the Syrian Foreign Minister, has a different view of the emigré Arab press. He thinks "some of those press appeared exactly like a poet who praises some tribes. Each tribe has a poet who defends it and defends its interests. Sometime it may not be a tribe but a person. Those newspapers serve nothing when they adopt this kind of policy."

While Ambassador Mohamed Khader believes that some of those emigré Arab press are used to annoy and bother some Arab rulers because the local press cannot do that. He also describes the emigré Arab press as "higher" than the local newspapers and "lower" than the Western press. "It is in between and a source of income and a living for those Arab journalists in London," he added.

Ambassador Mohamed Shakir strongly rejected the name 'the emigré Arab press' under the claim that those press also publish in the Arab world. But he believes London provided those press with three important things. First, the communication facilities. Second, the environment and freedom. Third, the easy publishing license. He also said publishing and working alongside the eminent British media gives more depth and information to the international Arab press. Ambassador Shakir did not hide his feelings about this press. He told me that part of his job as the Egyptian Ambassador in London was "to read all six international Arab newspapers; now I am about to retire, I do not know how to cope with this and what kind of newspapers I am going to read," he added. Abdulmon'em Khatib, an Iraqi diplomat, refugee in London, also agrees that the international Arab press is much more distinguished than the local press in foreign policy issues. But he said, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." Mr. Khatib asked me, "Tell me which newspaper is independent? All of them take money, therefore, their role is limited," he added. Finally Ambassador Ghazi Al-Qusaiby believes the emigré Arab press provided a substantial service by treating with considerable freedom some issues which are considered in many parts of the Arab world as forbidden or taboo. "However, some individuals of this press have distorted the image of the Arab press when they developed "extortion" into a 'fine art' as regards foreign policy," he concluded. In other words, Ambassador Al-Qusaiby is accusing some Arab journalists in the emigré Arab press of blackmailing some Arab governments in order to generate some cash. For instance, a given Arab journalist takes the opportunity of working on or publishing an emigré Arab press to attack the foreign policy of a given Arab government, in order to pressure this government to

pay some kind of financial aid. This "extortion" policy will be discussed further in this chapter. (pp 142-143).

To summarise the views of the official interviewees in general about the emigré Arab press we can deduce the following:

1. The lack of freedom in the Arab world forced the re-birth of the emigré Arab press.
2. Freedom of expression and the Western environment gives the emigré Arab press considerable distinction in foreign policy matters.
3. The emigré Arab press are the elite's press that affect both decision makers and public opinion.

On the other hand, the journalists have somewhat different views. 8 journalists believe that the emigré Arab press have not played the expected role in Arab foreign policy. While 9 journalists think that the re-birth of the emigré Arab press is a direct result of the lack of press freedom in the Arab world in general and the Lebanese civil war in particular. 2 journalists divided the emigré Arab press into two kinds: First, the emigrant Lebanese press that escaped the war in Lebanon. Second, the emigré Arab press which was established based on commercial reasons and objectives.

The views of the journalists can be summarised in the following points:

1. The emigré Arab press enjoys a bigger margin of freedom in comparison to the local press. Being published on a foreign soil gives it considerable room for manoeuvre. However, this freedom remains limited because its hand and eyes are abroad but it lives in the Arab "nation's womb". It is indeed part of Arab politics.
2. The emigré Arab press discuss bigger Arab matters and issues and does not deal with small details. It looks at the Arab world from a panoramic viewpoint.
3. The emigré Arab press is more distinguished, technically and artistically speaking than the local press, because it is influenced by the very advanced Western press.

4. One of the most important roles of the emigré Arab press is the ability to publish in different capitals and reach Arab readers inside and outside the Arab world.
5. The Arab elite are the readers of the emigré Arab press not only because of its content but also because of its high price.
6. The emigré Arab press is a source of information not only for Arab decision makers, but also for Westerners. In this regard, for instance, Saleem Nasar, a prominent Lebanese journalist and writer, said, "This press is the bridge by which the Arab positions are transferred to the important Western capitals. Maybe we do not have an effect, but our presence in government and parliamentary circles is very useful. They always invite us to their meetings and parties," he concluded.
7. The emigré Arab press completes the formal diplomatic role of some Arab governments. It is a defence and attack line. Some of this press is used to market the foreign policies of some governments.

To conclude the journalists' arguments, two comments made by 2 prominent journalists are very useful to state at this point. The prominent and famous Egyptian writer, Anees Mansour, believes that the emigré Arab press has no role whatsoever. It distorts some Arab governments in order to gain money. Mr. Mansour said, "This press does not have more knowledge than we have here in the region. We receive here the British and French press. In addition, the information and decisions are from here and not from abroad. This press and their success are nothing," he added. Meanwhile, Dr. Fayez Al-Sa'iagh, the Director of the Syrian News Agency (SANA), laid down a very important argument when he said, "Any cutting or a piece of paper that has information serves decision makers, even if this information is false. False information, for instance, has meanings because you start asking Who? Why? When? and What is the goal? and who is behind it?"

It is important at this point to explain some of the differences between the emigré Arab press and the national (domestic) press. However, it should be acknowledged at

the beginning that circulation figures of both presses are not available to add to the following comparison. Having said that, the comparison is intended to give a general idea about both presses. First, the emigré Arab press concerns and publishes extensive views and news about Arab and international foreign policy in comparison with the Arab national press. This fact in itself makes the emigré Arab press as the elite's press or the press for those Arab readers who are deeply concerned about inter-Arab politics and international affairs in general. We do not know how much the Arab elite or the attentive public has a role in the making of Arab foreign policy, since many interviewees think that political decisions in the Arab world are one man decisions. Second, the emigré Arab press enjoys, relatively speaking, more political freedom than the national (domestic) Arab press. This point will be discussed further in the coming few pages. Third, the emigré Arab press does not deal with any local news or views from other Arab countries. Those issues are left for the national Arab press. Fourth, it covers the entire Arab world rather than concentrating on one given Arab country. In comparison with the national Arab press, it has more comprehensive views in this regard. Fifth, in terms of content quality and use of advanced technology, the emigré Arab press is more advanced than the national Arab press. Some emigré Arab press attract the best writers and politicians to participate in writing not only from the Arab world but also from the West. Sixth, some emigré Arab press publish simultaneously in different capitals of the world via satellite while the national Arab press cannot do that because of lack of financial abilities and also because it is too local or national to be read by other Arabs. Seventh, the emigré Arab press are considered more prestigious than the national Arab press because it is published in London or Europe and is read by the elite.

It is important to note here that not all the emigré Arab press enjoy the same high quality of content or use advanced technology. These factors depend on the publisher or the financier. Also expensive journalists and writers deal with the press that pay well and distribute more issues, or are considered important. Here are a few points that we should stress in building our understanding of this press:

## **Extortion:**

It is true that some journalists working in London in particular and Europe in general have developed extortion into a fine art. For example, the following story is widely reported in the Arab world therefore we shall refrain from using names. An Arab journalist emigrated from Beirut to London during the late '70s and published his own magazine. This journalist began to attack one Gulf State and its leader for no apparent reason. The leader thought by paying a large amount of money he could stop the unjustified criticism against him and his country. Indeed the magic of cash played an important role and therefore the journalist and his magazine stopped attacking the Gulf State and its leader. After a while, the leader of the Gulf State wondered why the journalist and his magazine did not write something positive about him and his country after all he paid. Therefore, the leader decided to send a mediator to the journalist in London to ask why he was not writing positively about that Gulf State. The reply of that journalist was very simple, "There is a price to pay for not attacking and there is a price to pay for praising." Finally, that journalist was assassinated in Beirut by a non-Gulf State. So what does this story tell us? It tells us two things: First, some Arab journalists blackmail some Arab governments to generate cash. And since some Arab governments do not like their image distorted therefore they pay. In this regard, some Arab journalists, by being paid as a propaganda voice and a collector of information, develop direct contact with some Arab intelligence services which will be discussed later. As a result, those journalists become an integral part of an Arab political system, serving their foreign policy by becoming a parallel tool to the official diplomacy in the Western and Arab worlds. Sometimes the cooperation between some Arab journalists in London and some Arab governments is not always based on blackmail or extortion. For example, an emigrant journalist reaches a mutual agreement with a given Arab country to serve its national interests and foreign policy, in what becomes mutual exploitation rather than interdependent mutual exploitation as explained by Patrick O'Heffernan (1991: 6). Arab journalists are, and will be, for some time to come, dependent on rather than interdependent with some Arab

governments. Thus, there are two types of emigré Arab press. First, there is the press that was directly established by some Arab governments to serve their own foreign policy and market their views and visions about inter-Arab politics and international affairs. The second type is based on those emigrant journalists who established some publications, and who are paid and financed by some Arab governments to serve their political interests. The only thing one needs to know is who is paying. Indeed, he who pays the piper calls the tune. To the best of my knowledge, *Asharq Al-Awsat* the Saudi newspaper, is the only paper that makes considerable financial profits by publishing in London and distributing around the world. The remaining press rely heavily on some kind of financial backing from one Arab country or another. Another example is *Al-Arab*, (The Arabs) newspaper, which is backed by Libya and whose main task is to market the ideologies and foreign policies of Mu'amar Qadafi. Another important task of this emigré paper is to attack the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia. As we said earlier, the polarisation in inter-Arab politics has been transformed from Beirut to London. Indeed, London now is "Beirut on the Thames".

### **Freedom:**

Most Arab officials and journalists think lack of freedom of the press and freedom of expression in the Arab world led to the establishment of the emigré Arab press in the West. Also, this press being and existing in a democratic free society means they have more freedom to work and write. The question here is that is this an acceptable argument? It is well known that each and every newspaper is financed or paid by some Arab government to serve their foreign policies. Therefore, why does an Arab government control and manage its national (domestic) press while financing or helping to finance an emigré newspaper, granting it considerably more freedom? Moreover, the same government allows this semi-free emigré newspaper to distribute widely on its own soil. This appears contradicting, however, there is some justification for this. For example, an Arab government or a national (domestic) newspaper cannot deny, no matter what is said, the official background of certain

news and views regarding foreign policy published in that newspaper. This is a straightforward point. Even if the journalistic material published in the national press was in error, it is still considered an official view because it is published on the soil of that given government. At the same time, publishing news and views in the emigré Arab press requires a considerable amount of political manoeuvring. Observers of some journal articles published in the emigré Arab press would consider this as "might" and "might". (see Chapter 7). This means that this journalistic material could be considered as the official view of the paper's government, or could not be. This strategy is often adopted in the emigré Arab press as part of the political tactics and manoeuvring.

We must acknowledge that the freedom given to the emigré Arab press is calculated, politically and diplomatically speaking. It serves and facilitates some foreign policy's ends. The emigrant newspapers or journalists present in London or in any part of the world cannot contradict the lines drawn or the principles drawn up of certain foreign policies. The press in London cannot work freely without being affected by the inter-Arab political system. The emigré Arab press lives outside the world physically but not mentally.

### **The Foreign Soil:**

The emigré Arab press enjoys more freedom to manoeuvre because it exists mainly on foreign soil. This fact plays an important role because of diplomatic sensitivities. Being on foreign soil reduces the diplomatic attachment of the national (domestic) press. However, the freedom given to this emigré Arab press remains limited because its hands and eyes are abroad but it lives in the Arab nation's womb. It is indeed part of Arab politics. This press is more powerful than the ambassador, as Dr. Elly Salem, the former Lebanese Foreign Minister, said. Some of these presses also play the role of poet, as Adnan Omran, the Assistant of the Syrian Foreign Minister, concluded. Finally, it is true as Dr. Fayez Al-Sa'iagh, the Director of the Syrian News Agency,

said, "Any cutting or piece of paper that has information serves the decision makers." The emigré Arab press is very rich in terms of Arab foreign policy content.

Therefore, this study considers the nature and role of the emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy as part also of the "integrative role" described in the previous chapter. This press completes the formal Arab diplomacy as a parallel tool or armory to the official diplomats. Therefore, this press will be considered in this study also as a part of the Waqi'iah diplomacy, which means "real" or "formal" diplomacy. Both the national (domestic) and emigré press combine their efforts and writing to serve the foreign policy of one given Arab country or government.

As a final note about the emigré Arab press, both case studies selected in this research are based on *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, one of the leading emigré Arab press published in London. It is considered a Saudi newspaper. In the remaining pages we will be discussing the relationship between Arab journalists and the intelligence services which constitutes the subordinate aim of this study.

## **The Subordinate Aim**

### **The Press and Intelligence Services:**

The relationship between some Arab journalists in general with some intelligence services is widely assumed and talked about in the Arab world. This is felt more about some emigrant Arab journalists living in the Western world. We saw earlier that Dr. Farouk Abu Zaid concluded his investigation of the emigré Arab press by saying, "I discovered that in this phenomenon, the press mixes with politics and thought mixes with trade, while struggle is mixed with treason." (1985: 6). The question here is: What is the purpose of this kind of investigation? How does it help us see the role of the press in the foreign policy process? Three points should be made to clarify the issue. First, information is the common product that diplomats, journalists, and intelligence service personnel are dealing with. Due to their

interaction, we expect an inter-relationship between journalists and the intelligence services working under the cover of journalistic ID to collect and exchange information for the purpose of serving some foreign policy. Second, some Arab journalists deal with the intelligence services based on three grounds:

1. Volunteer work: Those who volunteer to work for their own intelligence services believe in and want to serve their country's foreign policy.
2. Seduction factor: Some Arab governments employ Arab journalists to collect and convey information under the seduction of money or under threat.
3. Lust for money and power: Some journalists play this role to seek power and raise and generate large sums of money. Some of those journalists serve some Arab governments different from their own nationality.

Third, any foreign policy around the world is made based on information collected by diplomats, intelligence services, and published in the press. In the first chapter we argued that there is sufficient evidence that some journalists are playing the role of diplomats in what became known in the literature as the media-broker diplomacy. Therefore, if journalists play the role of diplomats to serve certain foreign policies why not then use journalists in the intelligence services for the same purposes. Does this relationship exist? Where and how do we draw the boundaries in order to understand how using journalists in the intelligence services serves the foreign policy process?

In fact the relationship between journalists and the intelligence services is not an Arabic heritage, it is a Western one. In the not so distant past we have heard and seen a few examples of this suspicious relationship. During late 1980, the Soviet Union arrested an American journalist and accused him of working for the CIA, and we witnessed another example between the United Kingdom and Iraq during 1990. The result of this regrettable incident was the execution of the correspondent of the *Observer* newspaper in Iraq by the dictator Saddam Husain. As a matter of fact, some

Western governments do not deny the use of journalists for the intelligence services. For instance, the CIA has rejected all requests made by the American Congress not to use American journalists for intelligence service purposes. During my study I neither expected the officials to provide me with official documents, to prove the existence of this relationship, nor did I expect the journalists to admit to working for some intelligence services. However, it is useful as a start to know how both Arab officials and journalists view this relationship. I believe the question of whether this relationship exists or not is no longer the real issue or the main quest. It is rather whether or not this relationship is legitimised, justified, or still considered forbidden or taboo, and how does this kind of relationship clash with the principles and moralities of the freedom of the press.

To begin with, the majority of Arab officials and journalists acknowledge the existence of this relationship in the Western world. Both officials and journalists insist that the Americans are the masters of this game. 15 officials admitted the existence of the relationship between some Arab journalists and the intelligence services. While one official said, "I don't know, I am not a specialist." The answers of the rest of the officials were very cautious and diplomatic. I could deduce the answer "Yes" from their arguments and elaboration. Because they were using phrases such as, "We hear like you hear", "We know like you know". Naturally, the word "some" and not "all" journalists was insisted upon and emphasized to explain this relationship.

Fares Bois, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, said, "Some journalists enter some places and certain positions under journalistic cover. Indeed they are sent by some circles." While Dr. Saleem Al-Hus, the former Lebanese Prime Minister, insisted that this relationship must not occur because it contradicts the principles of the freedom of the press, and the journalist who is linked to an intelligence service is not free by any means. "Sometimes intelligence services leak incorrect or exaggerated news. Or they emphasize certain things for political goals," added Dr. Al-Hus. Dr. Elly Salem the former Lebanese Foreign Minister, has a different view. He justified this relationship

and said, "If an Arab journalist is working for the Israeli intelligence service then he is a traitor. However, if a Saudi journalist works for the Saudi intelligence service then this is not abnormal or extraordinary. To work against your country is treason, but if you work for your country then this is noble." Meanwhile, the Lebanese Information Minister Basim Al-Sab'a said they must have "the courage to admit the evidence of the relationship between some Arab journalists and the intelligence services. According to him, the existence of this relationship is an expression of the interaction between the press and politics. "This is normal, sometimes the intelligence services became a source of information and vice versa. The responsibility and duty of the intelligence services is to gain access and enter everywhere including the press," he added.

At the same time, Abdulazeem Awad, the Press Counselor and the Spokesman of the Sudanese Embassy in Cairo, said, "There is a very fine line that separates journalism and the intelligence services. In the final analysis the whole thing is about collecting information." He thinks this relationship is more evident in the work of the news agencies rather than the press. Mohamed Sobaih, the Palestinian Ambassador to the Arab League, justified somewhat this relationship. He said, "Nobody can deny the existence of this relationship between journalism and the intelligence services in our Arab countries. It is the right of the intelligence services to use all means to get whatever it wants. However, I hope this will be done in more 'civilized' and 'chic' ways," he concluded.

Finally, the Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Ismael Al-Shura, called the press the "fifth estate" rather than the fourth estate. Al-Shura did not explain the meaning or the purpose behind his use of this name. However, it could be easily linked to the intelligence services. It does seem that the name Mr. Al-Shura uses stems from the famous name "The Fifth Column".

On the other hand, 15 journalists admitted the existence of the relationship between journalism and the intelligence services. Mistakenly, 3 journalists were not asked

about the subject. The comments of the rest of the journalists were also cautious and difficult to categorise. Anees Mansour, a prominent and famous Egyptian writer and journalist, justified the relationship between journalists and the intelligence services. He says that this relationship "must exist". It is the weapon of information you give and take in an unending war.

"I remember during the end of the '40s a very famous English writer and novelist came to Egypt and I said to him that they say he worked for the British intelligence service. His response was: Yes, I was working with the intelligence service during the Second World War, this is normal. I asked him again, Why is it normal? He said, Assume there was an epidemic disease in a certain area, would your country send a doctor, an attorney or architect?" I said, A doctor. Then he responded, If there are various opinions and different parties your government will send a thinker. My government sent me because it was national work."

Mr. Mansour after revealing this story said, "It must be legitimate for this relationship to occur." Meanwhile, Abdulbari Atwan, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Quds* newspaper believes that there is a mutual benefit between journalism and the intelligence services. "Information does not come from the sky, it must be leaked by an intelligence service. It happens sometimes that a journalist could accomplish some journalistic gains by dealing with the intelligence service. This is a legitimate affair," he concluded. At the same time Othman Al-Omar, the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, said the journalist since his creation, is a mixture of a spy and politician. "He owns different outfits that he can wear, therefore, it is easy to deal with him and use him. To the contrary a politician cannot change his skin easily. For example, you cannot send an Ambassador to a party because he will be recognised, while the journalist can go, mix, and meet with certain personnel without being obligated or formally linked," Al-Omar concluded. Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Majalah* magazine, strongly believes the press is more advanced in its information than the intelligence service. "There is a cooperation between

journalists and the intelligence services," he added. Off the record, one journalist based in London said the intelligence services nowadays had a media role. According to him, in his newspaper all Arab intelligence services were represented by his colleagues. While George Sam'aan, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Wasat* magazine asked, "What is journalism? It is an intelligence service. When you have 300 or 400 journalists working for a journalistic institution and their job is to get facts and information, it means that you have an intelligence service on the ground," he added. Mr. Sam'aan also said,

"In Britain for instance, where a journalist works for his intelligence service he will be respected because he is actually serving the national security of his country. In the Arab world the picture is different. The vision or the look will be a shame because the nature of the work of the intelligence service in the Arab world is to imprison, kill, or kidnap. It resembles exactly the relationship between the police and people. In the democratic world the police serve the people, while in the Arab world the people serve the police."

In spite of this elaboration of Mr. Sam'aan, he believes a journalist must work as a journalist not a spy. Adel Darwish, a journalist who works for different media including the *Independent*, rejected the consideration of this relationship as wrong. He said, "What am I doing with this information, I am publishing it of course. If I take information from the Israeli intelligence service, Yassir Arafat will get it consequently." Mr. Darwish thinks this relationship is needed and it is a part of the journalist's ability to get information. However, any journalist must not take information from the intelligence services and consider it as the Qur'an. Because the intelligence services have an interest to leak some information. Correspondents especially are used under intelligence service cover, Mr. Darwish concluded.

## **Conclusion:**

The struggle of the emigré Arab press in Europe in general, and in London in particular, is not about informing Arabic public opinion. It is concerned with struggle as well as monetary gain. Often the intelligence services also use the press for their own purposes. The emigré Arab press is fertile ground for the different Arab intelligence services. It does seem that the press process in general is inseparable from the political, diplomatic, economic, and security factors. At the end of the day the important thing is how the public understands what is happening. Are they well informed or misinformed? To answer such questions, one needs a full and separate academic study. For the time being it is important to conclude a few points about the emigre Arab press. First, the emigre Arab press has the abilities and technological facilities to reach the Arab reader not only in the Arab world, but also in Europe and the U.S. Second, capitals like London provide the emigré Arab press with easy communication, position, and an important journalistic centre. Third, maintaining or obtaining easy publishing license in London, for instance, is crucial for the controlled Arab journalists and press. Fourth, it is true the emigré Arab press and journalists enjoy more freedom of speech outside the Arab world. However, this is affected and governed by Arab politics and struggles. The freedom given to those press is calculated politically speaking. In the final analysis this press exists outside the Arab world physically and not mentally. And the limited freedom given to this press is used for political and diplomatic manoeuvring. Fifth, the emigré Arab press is the elite's medium and an important part of Arab politics and its diplomatic channels. Sixth, this press cannot work freely without being affected by the inter-Arab political system. The polarisation in inter-Arab politics has been transferred from Beirut to London. Finally, the emigré Arab press being published on foreign soil gives it considerable and significant room for manoeuvre. This is due to the diplomatic sensitivities. Publishing on foreign soil reduces the diplomatic attachment of the national (domestic) press. This factor in itself is very significant in the political games. Thusfar, this study considers the nature and role of the emigré Arab press in Arab

foreign policy as part of the "integrative role" described in the previous chapter. Also, this press is part of the Waqī'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy. Both the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press combined their efforts and writing to serve the foreign policy of one given Arab country or government.

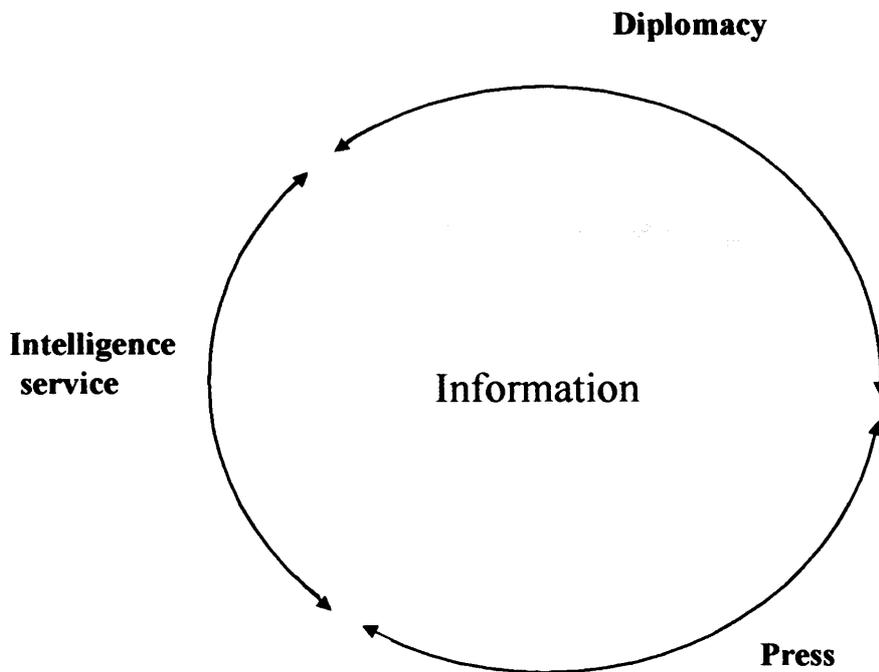
In this concluding note we should ask, where or how the inter-relationship between the press in general and the intelligence services fits into in the integrative and Waqī'iah diplomacy "real" or "formal" diplomacy roles? To answer this question, it is important to remind ourselves about some arguments stated in Chapter 1.

1. Information is a basic element and common product that the press, foreign policy officials and intelligence service personnel deal with.
2. It is known that most foreign policy decisions are based on information gathered by diplomats and the intelligence services.
3. If some of the media roles are seen as media-broker diplomacy, why not then call it media-broker intelligence services?
4. If some journalists are used in diplomatic missions, why should we exclude them from the realm of intelligence services; collecting, exchanging, and providing information?

Both Arab officials and journalists interviewed for this study provided acceptable arguments about the existence of this relationship between the Arab press in general and the emigré Arab press in particular, with the intelligence services. Therefore, this study concludes that this relationship between the press and intelligence services must not be excluded from the integrative and Waqī'iah diplomacy "real" or "formal" diplomacy roles.

The journalistic ID has been used and abused by the foreign policy establishment and the intelligence services. The freedom of movement that a journalist enjoys provides him/her with a great opportunity to collect information for somebody besides his/her newspaper. The game of intelligence service is no longer played behind iron doors or

using secret inks. This game in recent times is more open and obvious. Indeed we need to redefine certain aspects in modern times such as diplomacy, the intelligence services, and of course journalism. Before we present our first case study in the following chapter, it is more than appropriate to present the diagram below which more or less exemplifies the interaction between diplomacy, the intelligence services, and the press.



CHAPTER SIX

**The Green Newspaper**

**Case Study #1**

## Introduction

This chapter is an attempt, through the following case study, to shed light on certain incidents and stories which have occurred in the Arab world and which might help in explaining the nature and role of the national (domestic) or emigré Arab newspapers in the process of the Arab foreign policy. This particular case study involves two major Arab countries, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This case study assesses to some extent, the impact of both the national (domestic) and the emigré press between Egypt and Saudi Arabia for a period extending from 1979 to 1997.

Previously in Chapter 4 we concluded that the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press play an integrative role in the foreign policy establishment in inter-Arab politics. We also concluded that both press systems play an integral role in the formal Arab diplomacy in what has been called in this study so far "The Waqi'iah Diplomacy" which means real or formal diplomacy. The question here is can we verify those conclusions and findings in both case studies, the present and the following one, selected for this research? Will both case studies demonstrate and explain practically those integrative and Waqi'iah roles? This case study is a mixture of the role of national (domestic) and the emigré press. However, heavy reliance and analysis will be given to an emigré Arab press. All the stories or affairs described and explained in this case study demonstrate how seriously Arab leaders treat what the national (domestic) or emigré Arab press publish, to the point where it can damage foreign policy or diplomatic relationships.

In 1979 the former Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat accused the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of establishing the emigré newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat* particularly to attack him and Egypt and he called this newspaper "The Green Newspaper". He also said that one of the evidences of this accusation was that the Saudis attempted to buy or bribe an Egyptian journalist called Ibrahim Se'da. Se'da at that time was an unknown Egyptian journalist who worked for *Akhbar Al-Youm*, a daily Egyptian

newspaper. Based on this story and this major political accusation, this incident was selected as a case study for this thesis.

## **Political Background**

It is difficult to trace back the political and military struggle of the Arabs and Israelis. Both sides have different stories and a different reading of history. However, the official date of the beginning of a long struggle and conflict goes back to the 29th October 1947, when the General Council of the United Nations passed a resolution calling for the division of Palestine into two countries; one for the Arabs and the other for the Jews, with special international arrangements for the holy cities. The Arabs refused the existence of a Jewish state on their land in an area dominated by Arabs and Muslims. Meanwhile, the Jews felt that the land to be given was only a part of the promised land. Each party claimed that it was the first inhabitant of that piece of land. Based on these facts both sides worked vigorously to destroy each other. One time under the claim of self-defence, another time under legitimate rights, and even - sometimes- under the claim of the peace and stability of the region. Eventually, the Arabs and the Israelis clashed with each other in several wars, but neither side could demolish or overcome the other. As was said at the beginning of this chapter, inevitably a basic political background must be mentioned. One of the most significant wars between the Arabs and the Israelis was that of the 5th of June 1967 which not only changed the geographical map of the Middle East, but the political map as well. Indeed, this impact still exists and will persist for sometime to come. This war is known in the Arab world as "The Six Days War", a period in which the Israeli army achieved victory against the Arabs. Another name for this war was *Harb Al-Naksah* "War of Relapse". Prior to this war the Egyptian President Jamal Abdunaser was a powerful and significant figure, not only in Egypt but also in the entire Arab world. His speeches used to move and lift public opinion in the region. He also tried to overthrow the Saudi Monarchy. Naser found in the mass media an important instrument, not only to communicate with public opinion in the Arab

world, but also with Arab and foreign leaders. He built an influential propaganda machine supported by the richness of the Egyptian culture. *Sawt Al-Arab* "The Arab Voice Radio" reached every corner of the Arab world broadcasting his speeches, thoughts and ideas. Naser and his propaganda machine raised the hopes of the Arab public, in a united Arab nationalism, promising a swift victory against Israel and promoting a powerful image for Naser and his army. Suddenly the Israeli Army launched a swift attack towards different Arab fronts. For six days the Israelis occupied the entire Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank of the river of Jordan, and Gaza. As a result, many attempts were made to bring the Arab-Israeli dispute to an end. As an immediate reaction and effort by the international community, the Security Council of the United Nations proclaimed two significant resolutions, 242 and later 338, around which many of the negotiations between the concerned parties have been built, since then and upto the present time.

Basically Resolution No. 338 has not only called for a cease-fire, but also for immediate negotiations between the Arabs and the Israelis in order to implement Resolution 242. The ambiguity of Resolution 242 when it was passed on November 22, 1967, played a very significant role in complicating the negotiating process rather than easing it. Two major elements were included in the Resolution:

First: Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories of the recent conflict.

Second: Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for, and acknowledgment of, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

The Israelis' reading of the Resolution is the withdrawal from some of the territories, not "The", or all territories as the Arabs interpreted it. The efforts of Gaunar Jarring, the UN special representative, and William Rogers, Secretary of State, led to nothing tangible. As a result the "war of attrition" persisted from 1967 to 1970 between the Arabs in general- the Egyptians in particular- and the Israelis. Prior to that, the Arab

leaders decided in a summit held in Khartoum on August 29, 1967, "Not to recognize, negotiate, or make peace with Israel." Those rejections became known in the Arab world as "The Three Nos." In fact these decisions are not completely new to the Arab attitude. In April 1950, the Arab League Council emphasized that no Arab country was allowed to negotiate in order to make an individual agreement or peace, or any political, military or economical agreement with Israel. Any Arab country which does so would be considered expelled from the Arab League in accordance with Article 18 of the Arab League Charter. (Hourani, 1987: 27).

The sudden death of Nasser on September 28, 1970, marked a new era and direction in the Arab-Israeli struggle. The Deputy President, Anwar Sadat became the new Egyptian leader, who inherited immense problems from his predecessor. Not only had he to liberate the occupied land and give life to a sinking economy, but also to fill powerfully the leadership vacuum that Nasser left behind. Sadat out of frustration with Israeli non-compliance with the Security Council's Resolution No. 242, threatened that 1971 was "the year of decision". He wanted to break the status-quo of "No Peace-No War". At this time the relationship between Egypt and Saudi Arabia under the leadership of King Faisal was growing stronger and stronger. King Faisal supplied Sadat not only with political and diplomatic aid, but also with financial and -to some extent- military aid. This co-ordination and co-operation between the two, reached its peak when Sadat started a war on October 6, 1973. The Egyptian army successfully crossed the Suez Canal and destroyed the Barlev Line. Meanwhile, the Saudis imposed an oil embargo against the West for helping Israel with arms in the war. The Arabs saw in this partial military victory a kind of restoration of the dignity they lost in 1967, and also a breakdown of the myth of an undefeated Israeli army. As far as Sadat was concerned, he portrayed himself as "The Hero of Crossing" and "The Hero of War". Not much time had to pass for him to be considered: "The Hero of War and Peace", as we shall see. The 1973 War introduced new elements and facts to the Arab Israeli conflicts, the stability of the region, and the globe. The international community led by the United States acknowledged these facts. Consequently,

Resolution 338 was passed, and Henry Kissinger, the US. Secretary of State at that time, began his famous step-by-step shuttle policy. Eventually Egypt and Israel signed two disengagement agreements called Sinai 1 and Sinai 2 was signed.

Sadat "The Surprises Man", as many Arabs called him, kicked out of Egypt, his former ally the Soviet Union. Then he also lost his closest ally King Faisal who was assassinated in 1975. Suddenly and unexpectedly, Sadat announced, on November 9, 1977, in the Egyptian Parliament, his willingness to go to Jerusalem in order to address the Knesset on the question of peace. The chapter that Sadat had started to write in the drama of the Middle East was regrettably ended with his assassination on the anniversary of the victory he had achieved over Israel.

### **From Jerusalem to Camp David**

In 1978, the United States invited Egypt and Israel to Camp David to reach a so-called just and lasting peace agreement in the Middle East. The Camp David Accord concluded, after 13 days, two agreements. First, a framework for the completion of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Second, a framework for peace in the Middle East. Eventually both parties signed, on March 26, 1979, a treaty, known in the Arab world as "The Separate Treaty". In fact the treaty does not specifically link its implementation to actual progress on the Palestinian issue, which is "the difficult number in the Middle East's equation", as Chairman Yasser Arafat used to say. The impact of Sadat's move from Jerusalem to Camp David on the system of the Arab world was tremendous. He once again brought inter-Arab politics into profound polarisation which resembled the polarisation Saddam Hussain caused when he invaded Kuwait in 1990. The artilleries of the Arab mass media launched attacks on Sadat and his political orientation with no mercy. Words echoing "traitor", "agent" and "seller" were widely used against Sadat by the Arab media which represented the foreign policy of their governments. The former journalist who became President and the hero of war and peace responded personally and through the Egyptian mass media

in a vigorous counter attack. Obviously, it is not known to us the degree of effect that the Arab media had on public opinion by its contribution greatly to the boiling and sizzling political atmosphere in the region. The Arab leaders, in an attempt to prevent Sadat from continuing this policy, met on November 5, 1978 in Baghdad. The summit meeting issued the following statement:

1. It condemned Egypt and the Camp David Accord.
2. It warned Egypt that if she signed a separate peace treaty she would be subject to an economic and political boycott.
3. It transferred the Arab League headquarters from Cairo to Tunis.
4. It set down its peace formula. (Khoury, 1985: 411).

It seems that nothing would stop Sadat from going all the way. In fact any attempt at a u-turn would be more dangerous and costly to him. Immediately after Sadat's signing of the treaty with Israel, known as "The Separate Treaty", on March 26, 1979, the Arab leaders met once again in Baghdad on the 31st of the same month to impose political, diplomatic, and economical sanctions. In spite of the official agreement of the Arab leaders, their foreign policies were divided by different orientations: "The Arabs agreed not to agree". As a result the political map of the entire Arab politics was divided into three groups:

**First:** "Jabhat al-Qubul" (front of support)". Members of this group were: Sudan, Morocco, and Tunisia. (Taylor, 1982: 73).

**Second:** "Jabhat al-Sumud" (front of steadfastness and confrontation). Members of this group were: Syria, South Yemen, Algeria, Libya and the PLO. (Taylor, 1982: 74).

**Third:** "Jabhat al-Samt" (front of silence). Members of this group were: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Gulf States, North Yemen, Somalia, Djibouti and Tunisia. (Taylor, 1982: 75).

## **The Saudi-Egyptian Confrontation:-**

As we said earlier, the closest relationship between the two countries was during King Faisal's era. By the death of King Faisal, Sadat lost his closest ally in the Arab world. In fact, many people would like to believe that if Faisal had been alive Sadat would not have done what he did. The starting point of the decline of the relationship between the two countries can easily be dated back to the Camp David. As a matter of fact the Saudi foreign policy is a conservative one, practices great public restraint, and does not believe in participating in media war unless it is forced to do so. Perhaps one of the most remarkable examples and incidents of recent history was when Saddam Hussain invaded Kuwait. The Saudi media did not report the invasion for almost three days; and when it did, a newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, reported the invasion by saying that the Iraqi army "entered" rather than "invaded" Kuwait. Many people were confused in the beginning since the media represent the official stand of the government. However, one would imagine a historian, researcher, or politician saying that the Saudi Government had practiced public restraint and given a chance for a peaceful settlement until the last moment. The same analysis could be applied to Sadat's political moves -when the Egyptian President went to Jerusalem, the Saudi leaders exercised public restraint while they awaited the results of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. (Khouri, 1985:404).

Throughout history, the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia has been built around 3 key issues as far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned:

1. Cooperation within the Arab League to achieve a peaceful settlement.
2. "Al-Quds" (Jerusalem) is a fundamental and key issue in the Saudi foreign policy.
3. The establishment of the Palestinian state.

Consequently, the Saudis declared that Sadat had placed the Arab world in a "precarious position" and asserted that "any move with regard to a settlement must be within the framework of Arab unity." (Taylor, 1982:73). In spite of the fact that Sadat had failed to achieve anything for the Arabs, the Saudis, immediately after the Camp David period, became the leader of the bloc of Arab countries which sought to prevent the isolation of Egypt. (Taylor, 1982: 76). In fact, the Egyptian politicians and media were much concerned by a press announcement made by Prince Saud Al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister and one of King Faisal's sons, prior to travelling to attend the Arab Foreign Ministers Conference held in Baghdad, in which he confirmed the rejection of any notion to isolate Egypt or separate the Egyptian people from the Arab nation, as Egypt was an integral part of the Arab nation and the affiliation of the Egyptian people to Arabism is deep-rooted and indisputable as a fate of Egypt and the Egyptian people. (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 30-12-1979). The Saudi Foreign Minister made his announcement prior to his attendance at the conference to declare not only his government's political stand, but also to prepare and send a message to other foreign ministers and conference participants about his position around which the talks and negotiations would take place.

In an attempt to explore this case study, a qualitative analysis was conducted of one of the major Saudi newspapers, *Asharq Al-Awsat* which is considered by many people to be the mouthpiece of the Saudi government. The analysis recorded and registered the development of the official tone of Saudi criticism toward Sadat and his foreign policy. There was hardly any announcement or comment by the Saudi government or any Saudi official against Sadat or Egypt published in the newspaper.

The psychological pressure, one would assume, on the Egyptian leader was tremendous. On the one hand, he was facing the hard-liner, Menahim Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister, while on the other his Arab brothers abandoned him, in addition to serious internal problems. Some kinds of gains or successes in this very risky peace mission were absolutely urgent and necessary. Uniquely, perhaps, out of

frustration, Sadat began, in the presence of the Egyptian mass media, attacking personally the Arab leaders for their political positions against him.

It is difficult to pinpoint the genuine reasons and causes that led to the serious confrontation between President Sadat and the Saudi government. It is even more difficult to comprehend what triggered Sadat in his confrontation with a moderate and conservative Arab country such as Saudi Arabia. Based on the material and evidence we have, Saudi Arabia was against the isolation of Egypt from the Arab League. However, it went along with the Arab majority at the Baghdad summit to cut diplomatic ties with Egypt in April, 1979. Promptly, in the next month during the Labor Day of May 1979, Sadat launched an aggressive attack against Saudi Arabia. In this speech he praised King Faisal in particular and his relationship with him, and criticized the Saudi position for leading the policy of cutting the diplomatic relationship between the Arabs and Egypt. Sadat explained the role of the Saudis based on three grounds:

- First:** The Saudis' fear of Ba'athists and Palestinians "to transfer the battle to the bedrooms of Saudi rulers".
- Second:** To protest against the United States because it abandoned the Shah of Iran and there was a possibility of it abandoning them.
- Third:** To show that the leadership was not standing up to its responsibilities in the Arab world. (*Al-Akhbar* newspaper, 2-5-1979).

Sadat in his elaboration about the Arab summit decision said, "Some of the Arabs who cut diplomatic relations, did it as a courtesy to the Saudis, and this faction is the dominant one. The other faction were paid by the Saudis." The Egyptian President attempted during his speech to draw a comparison between Saudi foreign policy towards Egypt in King Faisal's era and the present one.

President Sadat concluded by asking, "For whose benefit and credit are the Saudis doing this? Is it for the Alawites of Syria? Is it for the Takrities in Iraq who are threatening to occupy Kuwait? Is it for the crazy boy of Libya?" Sadat went on to explain the Saudis' moves by saying, "The Saudis want to tell the United States that they are the leaders of the Arab nation. Where is this Saudi power that is to be shown to the United States? What kind of stupidity is this? This is stupid." Interestingly enough, Sadat asked a significant question by saying, "If tomorrow Iraq invades Kuwait what would the Saudi position be? What would the new leader of the Arab nation do?" A dangerous shift was made by Sadat in his speech when he threatened the Saudis by saying, "They have to pay a very expensive price for what they did. Not money according to their way and policy, no." (*Al-Akhbar* newspaper, 2-5-1979). However, suited also to our present concern, he said, "For Faisal we will not join in with a journalistic battle like the obscene filthiness which appeared in Riyadh newspapers. We, by the name of God, do not curse in our newspapers. It is shame. Faisal did not teach this." At the end of his speech he realised that what he had to say about and against Saudi Arabia was more than sufficient so he concluded; "I am satisfied by this, and I ask all mass media to stop. Not to make any more media campaign, curse, or anything else. This speech is enough." Finally, he said:

"Perhaps you know Baghdad established a radio station for Egyptian journalists all of whom are communists. For your knowledge they are cursing Egypt day and night. The Syrians did the same. In Paris and London, journalists are also cursing Egypt. Some of those who are writing escaped and they are communists. Some of them are opportunists who can be communists, Nasserists, backward, and everything in order to take money." (*Al-Akhbar* newspaper, 2-5-1979).

Out of tradition and the experience of countless Arab disputes, Arab leaders do not attack and criticize each other directly or personally. However, President Anwar Sadat broke the tradition in many speeches he made. Usually when an Arab country wants to launch an attack against another "brother" Arab government, they instruct

the media in general, and newspapers in particular, to do the business and the dirty work on their behalf, to the point where Arab newspapers became a significant barometer of the foreign policy trends in any given Arab country. In response to Sadat's speech, the qualitative analysis conducted on the emigré Saudi newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* which specializes in foreign policy, confirmed no official counter-attack by Saudi officials or critical response to his speech, formally speaking. However, other Arab newspapers observed the situation carefully and reported what the national Saudi press had to say on behalf of the Saudi officials. For example, a Lebanese daily newspaper *Al-Anwar* (The Lights) under the headline of "A tough Saudi campaign against Sadat" said "The Saudi newspapers launched a tough campaign against Sadat and quoted that in his last speech he cursed the Arab countries in an obscene way." (*Al-Anwar* newspaper, 3-5-1979). Another example is provided by the Kuwaiti newspaper *Asseyasah* (The Politics) under the following headline: "Saudi Newspapers responded to Sadat's attacks." In the news story the newspaper said, "The Saudi newspapers toughly responded in an unusual way to the intense attack launched by the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat against Saudi Arabia for its resistance to the peace treaty he signed with Israel." (*Asseyasah* newspaper, 3-5-1979).

During the qualitative analysis conducted on *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, it was noted that the intensity of the criticism against Sadat increased. The newspaper published an article on the opinion page whose headline read: "From Faisal to President Mohamed Anwar Sadat, do not shower my brothers with stones." This headline stems from a famous Arabic expression which says, if your house is made of glass do not throw stones on others. The article was signed by "Faisal", as if King Faisal had sent this letter from the grave. The article criticized Sadat on several grounds as follows:

1. For putting words into King Faisal's mouth.
2. For his dispute with King Khaled and the Crown Prince Fahd.

3. King Faisal denied all that Sadat attributed to him.
4. King Faisal did not approve of his going to Jerusalem alone without consulting Prince Fahd.
5. King Faisal expressed his amazement at Sadat's and other Egyptian brothers' questioning of the unsupportive Saudi position to the Accord.

"King Faisal" argued in this article by saying,

"His Excellency the President,

Dear brother,

Maybe you have observed that Khaled and Fahd did not refuse the Camp David Agreement, before you agree to it, but they refused (the agreement) after they reviewed it and studied its consequences, and because it did not secure for the Arabs the least of their demands." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 14-5-1979)

Thusfar, although Saudi Arabia became, as we said earlier, the leader of the bloc of the Arab countries which sought to prevent the isolation of Egypt, Sadat, contrary to the Arab tradition, strongly attacked Saudi Arabia, accusing her of paying for the Arabs to cut diplomatic relationships. We have no idea what triggered Sadat to turn against a moderate country such as Saudi Arabia. It seems that he used the personal and mass media attacks for local or national political consumption. Also to mobilize the Egyptian people to support and approve his political mission by saying that the Saudis were trying to buy their national political decision. During this process we noted earlier some roles of the Egyptian-Saudi national (domestic) and emigré press in the process of foreign policy. For example, the article written by "King Faisal" and published in *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper seems an official rather than a journalistic effort. The question now is: Where does *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, or "The Green Newspaper" as it was called by Sadat, fit into the whole crisis? A few answers will be provided in the coming few pages.

## **The Green Newspaper**

### ***Asharq Al-Awsat (The Middle East)***

Within the political framework explained previously, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper was caught in the middle. Playing on the same political themes, Sadat thought that by attacking *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, he would settle a few internal and external political scores against Saudi Arabia. Sadat accused Saudi Arabia of establishing *Asharq Al-Awsat* only to attack him and attack Egypt. He also said the Saudis were trying to buy the Egyptian journalist Ibrahim Se'da who worked for the Egyptian daily newspaper *Akhbar Al-Youm*. It is notable that Sadat's attack against Saudi Arabia always concentrated on money being paid or someone being bought to damage Egypt and Sadat's policies. As a result, what is the story of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper or The Green Newspaper in this connection.

Just over eight months after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and around three months prior to the start of the Camp David negotiations, the new international daily newspaper of the Arabs, *Asharq Al-Awsat* was established in London. The Saudi publishers of the newspaper confirmed that they were inspired by an American newspaper. Consequently, they wanted to create the *Herald Tribune* of the Arab world. In terms of the appearance of the newspaper, they selected a green colour for the front and back pages. On the other hand, the content of the newspaper was restricted to the foreign policy of the Arab world in particular, and international affairs in general. As a result, Sadat's moves and political activities were of high concern to this newspaper. The Egyptian leader was angered and annoyed by the coverage and comments of the newspaper. So, he decided to open a verbal war against *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper which shocked and stunned the publishers and journalists. President Anwar Sadat, in 1979, accused the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of establishing this newspaper especially and specifically to attack Egypt and to attack him. During the process of studying this

case study, the study faced serious difficulties in obtaining important materials such as the two original texts of Sadat's attack on *Asharq Al-Awsat*.<sup>1</sup>

During a speech in the People's Council (the Egyptian Parliament), President Sadat took hold of a copy of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and attacked it in a very tough way. He made a famous speech in which he attacked *Asharq Al-Awsat* while waving the newspaper calling it "the green paper". He attacked the newspaper because it attacked Egypt and lead the campaign. Then, he asked all Egyptian writers, correspondents, and journalists to boycott and not to write for the newspaper. He asked them to choose -including the two prominent Egyptian journalists, Mustafa Amin and Ahmed Bahaa El-Deen - between Egypt or *Asharq Al-Awsat*".<sup>2</sup>

The second time Sadat attacked *Asharq Al-Awsat* was during a meeting with Egyptian journalists. In this press conference, he attacked "The Green Newspaper", Saudi Arabia, and Prince Fahd in particular. He said that Prince Fahd was trying to organize a coup d'etat against him. The proof of this was their attempt to bribe a good man, the journalist Ibrahim Se'da, who worked for *Akhbar Al-Youm*, the Egyptian newspaper<sup>3</sup>.

### **The Se'da Affair:**

When *Asharq Al-Awsat* was established, the Cairo office was one of the first to be opened. Consequently Mr. Salah El-Deen Hafez, a distinguished Egyptian journalist, was appointed to be the director of this office. Besides the unpleasant political

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<sup>1</sup>For this purpose I went to Egypt from Tuesday, 25th of June to Thursday, 4th of July 1996. The request to have access to the archive of two prominent Egyptian newspapers *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Akhbar* was denied.

<sup>2</sup>Personal interview on 17th June, 1996 with Mr. Erfan Nizamuldeen, the editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat* at that time and currently the consultant of MBC Television in London.

<sup>3</sup>Personal interview on 18th June, 1996 with Mr. Jihad Al-Khazen the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* at that time. Currently he is the editor-in-chief of the other rival newspaper, *Al-Hayatt*.

atmosphere between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the conditions that Sadat imposed on Egyptian journalists in order to work in this newspaper forced Mr. Hafez to resign.<sup>4</sup>

A prominent Egyptian journalist Mustafa Amin who had a strong relationship with the co-publishers of *Asharq Al-Awsat* recommended an unknown Egyptian journalist, Ibrahim Se'da, to fill the vacuum. (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 13-1-1990). Subsequently, Mr. Se'da signed a contract with the newspaper outlining his duties for 2000 Egyptian Pounds as a monthly salary.

During the conference, President Sadat suddenly held up the original contract and began examining the whole affair. In fact, according to the materials obtained, Sadat did not mention the name of the newspaper or Prince Fahd. He talked about a Saudi newspaper sponsored by an Arab Prince and said, "This newspaper was established to libel Egypt. You hardly find an issue of it without a false story, the objective of which is to doubt the strength of the Egyptian people and their steadiness and resistance to all the challenges that they are facing." The Egyptian leader continued by saying "Regretfully, while I do not have a grudge against any body, this newspaper was able to convince two or three of the prominent Egyptian writers to write in it. Because it knows there is no circulation for any newspaper without Egyptian pens. Egypt has always been the greatest in literature, politics, and journalism. Nobody can deny that distinguished figures in all fields were Egyptians such as Taha Hussain, Aqqad, Tawfeeq Al-Hakeem, Om-Kalthoum, and Abdulwahab." Then, President Sadat added, "Of course this newspaper pays very seductive salaries. Therefore, those journalists agreed to write for it in spite of also writing in the Egyptian newspapers and getting their high salaries from those Egyptian newspapers. While doing so, they are enjoying in Egypt law sovereignty, safety and security. No restrictions at all are

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<sup>4</sup>In a personal interview which took place in Cairo on 1st July 1996 with Mr. Salah El Deen Hafez, he rejected the attempt to explore the issue and hear his side of the story. Mr. Hafez said, "This is a well known story, I do not like to get into it because it is 20 years old. It means I would like to keep it to myself. It was under circumstances and pressures from so many directions. It is good -Thank God- I got out of it alive." (He said the last sentence while holding his neck).

imposed on their freedom and constitutional rights." Sadat concluded his conference by revealing Se'da's heroic act when he said,

"In this context, I would like to tell you the story of a young Egyptian journalist who did not exceed 40 years of age. He gave a marvellous example of patriotism and commitment towards the holy sand of this land. I am pleased to present to you this journalist... he is Ibrahim Se'da, the reporter on *Akhbar Al-Youm* (News of Today) newspaper. This journalist rejected the seduction of money and won a triumph for the sand of Egypt. After the establishment of this newspaper, they made a contract with him to send them a number of news and journalistic items for 500 pounds per month. However, after a period which did not exceed a month -he discovered that this newspaper was indeed established to libel Egypt and realised the false rumours. Then, he sent a message to them (his employers) apologizing saying that he did not wish to continue working for this newspaper because of its suspected policies against Egypt. They did not imagine this position from a young Egyptian journalist whose usual salary in his job was less than half of what he was offered. As a result, they thought that by increasing his salary he might be seduced. So, the editor of the newspaper sent him a signed contract with 2000 pounds a month as a salary." (*Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper, 11-12-1979)

Then, President Sadat directed his talk to Se'da who was present, by asking him, "When did they offer you this contract?" Ibrahim Se'da replied "Six months ago". The Egyptian leader continued his story by saying, "But the young Egyptian journalist whose salary in *Akhbar Al-Youm* does not reach one eighth of what he was offered, refused to sign the contract. He insisted on maintaining his position of not working for a newspaper established to libel his country, people and land." Surprisingly, according even to *Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper which reported the story, the President said, "Therefore, I have made the following decision." Then he looked at Musa Sabry, the Chairman of the *Akhbar Al-Youm* Board and told him, "Record this decision, I am appointing Ibrahim Se'da as the editor-in-chief of *Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper in

appreciation of his honourable patriotic behaviour. Because, the pen is the most honourable thing. I am most proud of it after the land." The generosity of President Sadat was extended when he also instructed the newspaper for which Se'da worked saying, "Starting from today, Ibrahim Se'da must receive the salary of editor-in-chief. Besides, he must be given the difference of this present salary and the salary of editor-in-chief starting from the day he refused to sign the contract, which means six months ago." (*Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper, 11-12-1979).

Even before the investigation of this case study and during the process of analysis several questions were raised and imposed, questions such as:

1. Why amongst all the thousands of Arab newspapers, which opposed and criticized even more strongly Sadat's foreign policy, did he choose to attack *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper?
2. What did President Sadat read in the newspaper which triggered and provoked his anger?
3. Related to the second question, how did the newspaper treat the news and progress of the internal and external policies of Sadat. In addition, how did the newspaper cover Egypt generally speaking?
4. Can a newspaper indeed libel a very significant Arab country such as Egypt?
5. How did President Sadat know about this young Egyptian journalist? Besides, how did he know about the contract and the offer?
6. To what extent did the attitude and attack of President Sadat on the newspaper have an effect?
7. After all the evidence and comments made by Sadat against this newspaper, why he did not close down its offices in Cairo?

8. Why did not *Asharq Al-Awsat* publish in its pages the story of Sadat's attack? And therefore, why did the newspaper not respond and launch a counter attack while it had the ability to do so?

The strategy adopted to open up and explore the case study and find answers to some of these questions and others, was based on:

First:

Qualitative analysis on the content of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper from the front page to the last one -the analysis extended from the first issue on Tuesday, 4th July, 1978 to issue number 499 on Monday 18th February, 1980.

Second:

Personal, recorded interviews with prominent Arab journalists who had to deal directly with this particular case study, including Ibrahim Se'da.

Third:

Books and cuttings of other Arab newspapers.

In order to keep the follow up of the case study intact, the above mentioned questions will not necessarily be addressed in the same order, or fully answered.

### **Qualitative Analysis:**

The reasons for extending the period of the qualitative analysis was due to the fact that the tough measures taken by Sadat against the newspaper must have been the result of a build up of anger at the way it treated news concerning him since its establishment. Prior to conducting the qualitative analysis, the study was convinced that significant articles and coverage must have triggered Sadat. Regretfully, nothing of this proves to be completely true. However, it proves something else and may lead in different directions which will be explained in the forthcoming pages. Two journalistic arts and techniques were looked at in this newspaper.

First: The news.

Second: The opinion (editorial page)

Generally speaking, the Cairo office was active, and notably provided the newspaper with positive news about Sadat. The news coverage of Sadat's political activities during the whole period of the qualitative analysis was neutral or normal. The newspaper published Sadat's announcements and what he had to say and do about the negotiations. Usually this is published on the front page. Basically, the news about Sadat in particular and Egypt in general was impartial and perhaps more to his benefit and publicity. Notably, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published on the front page two exclusive interviews responding to Sadat and the Egyptian newspapers' campaign against Saudi Arabia. The first interview was with the Saudi Information Minister Dr. Mohamed Abdu Yamani. Under the headline of "Responding to the Egyptian media campaign" the Saudi Minister said, "Saudi Arabia does not pay attention to disgracing revilement. Credibility entails that we should reject the tense endeavours of those who seek to sow dissension." The Saudi Minister explained the principles of the Saudi information policy as follows:

"Not tackling any matter that diverts the Arab national's attention from the (state) of alertness and struggle against the enemies of his religion, land and heritage." The Minister added,

"But the Egyptian press practice of today is against this nation which is affiliated to a valuable soil, a great rich history, a firmly established unshakable religion and with intact relations whatsoever the dexterity of those who sow indignation. We must work in solidarity to rescue the Arab generation from the endeavours to destroy its ethics and wipe out its history and heritage. We shouldn't turn our dialogue into shallowness and tongue-lashing with insult and raised voices. Further, we should realise the dangers and escalation of all types of revilement." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 9-10-1979).

Three days later, a second interview was published with Prince Fahd the Crown Prince, the present Saudi King. The Saudi Prince responded to the Egyptian press campaign by saying:

"This campaign aims at sowing the seeds of hatred and indignation between the Arab nations but it won't be successful in separating the Egyptian and the Saudi peoples who are linked by centuries of good neighbourhood and unity of religion, language and blood." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 11-10-1979)

On the other hand, the opinion page which might have provoked Sadat's attack, differs sharply from that of the news treatment. The intensity of the criticism of Sadat's foreign policy began to build up gradually from the Camp David Accord, through the "Separate Treaty" until it reached its peak, when the Arabs cut their diplomatic relations with Egypt, and resulted in the response of Sadat's attack against all the Arabs in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular. In fact the strongest critical writings were not devoted only to Sadat but also to the Israeli government led by Menahim Begin for its uncompromising and tough line policy. The cartoons on this page were usually critical of Sadat. Perhaps, one of the strongest articles which appeared on the opinion page was under the following headlines:

A prominent Palestinian journalist Mr. Nasser El-Deen Al Nashashibi, wrote on the 26th of March 1979, "In this dark day, dark peace-making, by dark ink, is dark." Al Nashashibi also wrote on 7th May 1979, "When defective words are talking about....shame."

Another Saudi writer Mr. Mish'al Al Sidiery wrote on the 24th of July 1979, "Sadat the greatest and the most stupid Arabic freedom fighter."

Often, if not all the time, the opinion page was dominated by very prominent journalists and writers from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and -to some extent- Saudi Arabia. Objective might be the wrong word to use to describe this page in this context. However, the editors of this newspaper allowed opinion and articles in

favour of Sadat's policy. In that regard, Mr. Al-Khazen said "The Egyptian writers were supportive of Camp David, and those who were not, tried to find excuses for Sadat, while Palestinian, Lebanese, and Syrian writers were attacking him strongly. We were opening the channels for everybody. I did not have a problem at all." Mr. Al-Khazen admitted in the personal interview, "Sometimes I had to reduce the criticism by omitting some phrases made by Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian writers because it contained some personal offence. The newspaper was available for both parties and never excluded anyone because his policy was with or against Sadat." Meanwhile, Mr. Nizamuldeen said, "There was some kind of balance. Two or three writers supported Camp David, while some articles criticized the Accord powerfully and strongly."

After 11 years the co-publishers of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, Mr. Hisham Ali Hafez and Mohamed Ali Hafez, talked for the first time about Se'da's affair in a long article published on 13-1-1990 in their newspaper. They insisted that "the newspaper was not established especially to attack President Sadat and the proof is, *Asharq Al-Awsat* is the only Arab newspaper which allows its writers who support the going of Sadat to the Camp David Accord to do so. In this regard, we can mention the courageous article written by the famous Islamic thinker Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Jamal, who supported Sadat and his conclusion."<sup>5</sup>

As mentioned previously Mr. Al Nashashibi was a prominent participant in the opinion page. His experience in journalism enabled him to become a prominent journalistic figure during Naser's era. President Naser appointed the Palestinian journalist to become the editor-in-chief of the "*Al-Jumhuriya*" newspaper (The Mouthpiece of the Revolution). In a recent book written by Al Nashashibi he opened fire verbally, in one of the chapters, against another colleague, Mr. Al-Khazen. He explained his suffering during his time with *Asharq Al-Awsat* caused by its editor-in-chief Mr. Al-Khazen, saying "Khazen called me, asking me to reduce my opposition

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<sup>5</sup> Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Jamal is a famous Saudi writer.

to Camp David and write about many different subjects in this world, but I refused. Also, my old friend Hisham Hafez called me, repeating Al-Khazen's request. However, I held my position." Mr. Al Nashashibi continues,

"I sent the newspaper an article from Riyadh titled "This is the way Saudi Arabia thinks". Next day the article was published in half of its original size. Jihad Al-Khazen took it upon himself to omit and change it as a response to a special urgent telephone call he received from Sadat's aide who complained about my articles against the Accord, and who also threatened to prevent *Asharq Al-Awsat* correspondents from getting into the press conference hall in Washington, if this campaign against Camp David continued." (Al Nashashibi, 1996: 171).

Thus, this study neither confirms, nor denies which article or piece of news had a great negative impact on President Sadat. Did President Sadat read *Asharq Al-Awsat*? What led to his campaign against it? Obviously, there is no way to find an answer to these questions. However, what is more puzzling is that it is very well known in the Arab world that President Sadat refused to read newspaper cuttings because of his belief that this "habit" had caused the death of President Jamal Abdalnaser. Naser, who was a diabetic and suffered from hypertension, was severely provoked by reading newspapers. Meanwhile, one might conclude by asking why *Asharq Al-Awsat* was selected by the Egyptian leader? Mr. Al-Khazen in his interview said, "I believe he exploited the issue for internal propaganda. He did not want to harm anybody. The press conference served its purposes at that time." At the same time Mr. Nizamuldeen's comments on this point were,

"It was the most powerful Arabic newspaper. It is based in London, this is a fact, but it was printed and distributed in many countries. It was readable and famous. It was the first Arabic newspaper established abroad and had offices everywhere. It also had political, information, and journalistic weight. We were not against Egypt. We were against a particular line of Arabic politics. To the contrary, we gave Sadat more than he was given by any Egyptian newspaper. He exploited the subject. I believe, Sadat wanted to send a message via *Asharq Al-Awsat* to Saudi

Arabia. You know, it is backed by Saudi capital, so by attacking *Asharq Al-Awsat* he wanted to attack Saudi Arabia. In fact, we were accused by a specific newspaper of being the Camp David newspaper, that we were a propagandist newspaper of Camp David, and we were defending Sadat and his policies."

The co-publishers and the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* believe that Sadat played an important role in increasing the publicity and the distribution of the newspaper. The co-publishers said, "President Sadat provided indirect support and a lot of propaganda for *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper which was in its second year. Subsequently, we were satisfied with what President Sadat did on our behalf. It would cost us a lot if we want to reach the amount of propaganda and effect which was caused by the incident President Sadat exploited in front of the radio microphone, television, and press cameras." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 13-1-1990). By the same token, the editor-in-chief Al Khazen said,

"Nobody heard about us at that time. We did not have any advertising money. Suddenly the President of the biggest Arab country, with all these lights and sights focused on him, said this newspaper could be part of a coup-d'etat attempt against Egypt. The result was that people started to ask about this newspaper. They wanted to see this newspaper. It was publicity and favour from President Sadat. When I did not have money at that time, I used not to go to the office, I pretended that I was ill, because I did not have money to pay the employees. It was good luck that he did attack *Asharq Al-Awsat*. The foreign press started to ask about us. While I had difficulties in getting Arab journalists to write or work because they did not have confidence in this newspaper, after the incident, they became more than willing to talk to us. It did facilitate a few things."

Based on the data collected, two theories lie behind this bizarre affair:

First: The Conspiracy Theory.

Second: The Personal Vendetta Theory

## **The Conspiracy Theory**

Most of the people interviewed, although few of them agreed to tape-recorded interviews, concluded that Mr. Ibrahim Se'da exploited the issue to enhance his journalistic career. To clarify some facts to begin with, two names appeared in the context of Sadat's press conference, Mr. Musa Sabry and Mr. Ibrahim Se'da. The former was at that time the Chairman of the *Akhbar Al-Youm* Board. He was also one of the closest journalists to President Sadat, according to many people. The role of Mr. Sabry in the life of the Egyptian leader was a very well known fact for Arab politicians and journalists. Some would liken this relationship to the time of President Nasser and Heykel. Perhaps one of the strongest evaluations of Mr. Sabry is made by his long time colleague Mr. Nashashibi who said, "He used to love money, power, gossip, betrayals and signals... he was the shadow of Sadat, his speech writer and his selected observer of the press and journalists. Musa Sabry is the one who wrote down Sadat's historical speech before the Israeli Knesset. (Al Nashashibi, 1996: 25)

On the other hand Mr. Se'da was at that time still a young Egyptian journalist who was not known at national or Arabic level. He was also working with Mr. Sabry on the same newspaper, *Akhbar Al-Youm*, as a reporter. Nothing is easier than speculation, therefore, we would assume that Se'da the young unknown journalist found a golden opportunity to enhance his own career. Firstly, access to the President, which is the most important thing, was available through his boss who also had other interests. Secondly, it does not take a great effort to know the themes and issues that concerned President Sadat, such as buying with money the Egyptian dignity. As was said previously, these facts are no more than assumptions and speculations. Speculations are the result of the incapability to collect, or have access to, the full story. In fact, this major dilemma is a common phenomenon in the Arab world but on a wider and more significant scale. Politicians and, of course, journalists alike tend to open the door of speculations widely by suppressing the truth which might result in

unnecessary reaction in the public opinion. In spite of all attempts made to meet and question Mr. Se'da, he refused even to give any response.<sup>6</sup>

Another two important points were raised at the press conference of President Sadat. He claimed that Se'da refused to work on *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper because of its political position against Egypt. As a result, *Asharq Al-Awsat* increased the salary of Mr. Se'da. Both claims made by the Egyptian leader turned out to be false. The truth of the matter is, according to the co-publishers, editor-in-chief and editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, Mr. Se'da worked for some time on the newspaper and his salary was 2000 Egyptian pounds from the start. In this regard Mr. Nizamuldeen said,

"It is not true he refused the cheque or refused to work. When he started working, he came to London, and there is correspondence between me and him in which I asked him to cover subjects, interviews, and articles, and he did respond. He did not refuse to work for the newspaper. In

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<sup>6</sup> Contact with Mr. Se'da started in London on the 15th of June 1996 and ended on the 4th of July 1996, and during the process two to three phone calls were made daily to Se'da's office. I became familiar with all the secretaries in his office such as; Mrs. Soha, Mr. Abdelwahed and Mr. Ibrahim Al-Hareeri. In one of the telephone calls -as usual- I was interrogated by someone who asked why do you need to talk to Mr. Se'da? What is the subject? Whom are you representing? I replied to all questions as usual and asked the other side about his name to add it to the list. He said "I am the courier" When I went to Egypt for the period between the 25th of June to the 4th of July 1996, contact with Mr. Se'da was on two levels. First, via direct contact, second, via friends who know Mr. Se'da and his secretary. Finally he agreed to see me, when Mr. Abdelwahed called on 30th June 1996, asking on behalf of Mr. Se'da for a letter of introduction from the university and another letter requesting an interview. Both letters were sent immediately at 15:16 on the same day. On the second day, Mr. Abdelwahed called to confirm the time of the meeting the morning of 2nd July at 11. When I arrived 15 minutes early, I was taken to another office to answer a few questions. It was Mr. Kamal Abdul Ra'ouf's office, the editor of *Akhbar Al-Youm*. Mr. Abdul Ra'ouf, who came half an hour later, asked three questions. What is the subject of the thesis?, Where is the University?, How far is the university from London? Although the title of the thesis was given to Mr. Abdul Ra'ouf, which is "The nature and role of Arab newspapers in the foreign policy of the Arab world", he did not ask any questions other than the mentioned one. Behind his office there was a prize certificate given to him for the best foreign policy page he edited. Finally he said "Mr. Se'da cannot be interviewed now, it is up to him." I had been reluctant not to give many details about the topics which would be discussed in the interview for obvious reasons. However, a superficial outline was usually given. As far as Mr. Se'da is concerned, when all attempts to meet him seemed unsuccessful, I signed the faxed letter as the previous editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat* office in Washington DC. Besides the title of the thesis, he would have been able to understand some of the purposes of the interview, as he decided not to talk.

fact he received several salary payments and came back to London for two visits. We had meetings while he was doing his job, and we have papers to prove this. Suddenly, President Sadat announced that this honourable journalist refused the Saudi seduction to sell his country, in spite of the fact that there was no selling of a country or anything else of this nature. His work was of a journalistic nature, and he would be the editor of the office. Then Se'da came to the President and told him I refused this cheque for Egypt, and in order to defend Egypt. Because, he refused to choose anything but Egypt and not to work for a newspaper which is against Egypt."

Mr. Al-Khazen confirms this point saying "Se'da told the President about the contract. He exploited the subject." In another version of the story about how the President knew about the contract, the co-publishers of the newspaper said, "Immediately we made sure, based on our confirmed sources, that Ibrahim Se'da had nothing to do with the subject. And he did not exploit the contract he signed with us but was under tremendous pressure which he could not resist." They continued by saying "President Sadat saw the contract for the first time during the meeting in which he explored the issue. Some people who attended this meeting said that Mr. Musa Sabry who was behind this incident took the contract while they were going to the meeting. During the meeting Musa Sabry talked to Fawzy Abdul Hafez, the President's secretary and gave him the contract. In his turn, Abdul Hafez gave it to the President to see the salary." The co-publishers of *Asharq Al-Awsat* have developed a good relationship with Mr. Se'da since then, according to their article, published on 13-1-1990. In spite of that, they did not talk about the whole affair until their recent and last meeting about which they said, "We met recently with Mr. Ibrahim Se'da after he told the truth." So, what is the truth that Mr. Se'da talked about? According to the co-publishers they decided to talk about the affair three weeks later after Se'da was interviewed by a prominent Kuwaiti newspaper *Asseyasah* in which he said,

"I lived dark days because the truth was not hidden from many people. Also, libeling *Asharq Al-Awsat* was unjust for itself or for its owners with whom my friendship

became stronger, and I received from them nothing but love and cordiality. However, I was not able to stand and destroy all that President Sadat was aiming at by this decision. Hisham Ali Hafez and Mohamed Ali Hafez were capable of distorting this libel which attacked their newspaper by publishing the true story. Of course, this is their right. However, they exactly understood the situation. Therefore, their newspaper refused to elaborate on, or explain, this issue; that increased my respect towards them." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 13-1-1990).

Thusfar, two important questions emerged as a result of the above argument. Firstly, if *Asharq Al-Awsat* found good publicity and propaganda in Sadat's attack, why did the newspaper not publish the details of the attack? Secondly, according to the co-publishers they thanked Mr. Se'da for talking about the affair after 11 years by which he restored the newspaper and their "honour". Thus, why did not they defend their honour at that time? The qualitative analysis confirms that no news or story about the attack was published in the newspaper.

On the other hand, the co-publishers in their justification of not defending their honour said,

"There were many reasons which made us not respond to President Sadat and mention the truth to the readers. First of all, the Saudi leadership, since the establisher, King Abdul Aziz till the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, tends by its nature not to get into vituperative acts and gain antagonism. It works to achieve its objectives by ways and styles considered by others strange but it became a principle for us never to divert from them. And the notion, as the saying sums it up: People follow the Religion of their Kings". (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 13-1-1990).

This means in practice that the policy of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper resembles the policy of Saudi Arabia. This is the only reason the co-publishers mentioned among the "many reasons". Other reasons might be found in the forthcoming pages.

## **The Personal Vendetta Theory**

When *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper was established, three men from Saudi Arabia were the publishers. The first two were Mr. Hisham Ali Hafez and his brother Mohamed Ali Hafez. Both come from a very well known journalist family. However, the former was at that time the Press Attaché at the Saudi Embassy in Geneva. The latter was working in the family press company. The third man was Sheikh Kamal Adham, the personal advisor, consultant, and brother-in-law of the former King Faisal. Sheikh Adham was considered also to be the President of the Saudi Intelligence Service at that time. At the beginning of the establishment of the newspaper Sheikh Adham owned more than 50% of *Asharq Al-Awsat* shares. Later on in the 1980s Kamal Adham sold his shares to Prince Salman Ibn Abdul Aziz, one of King Fahd's brothers and the governor of the Riyadh region. Previously, we raised an important question about the reason behind Sadat's selection of this particular newspaper amongst all those Arab newspapers which were attacking him unfavourably by all means. Instead, there are enough reasons to make us believe that the newspaper should have been adopted and treated positively by President Sadat. Because, over many years President Sadat and Sheikh Adham had developed a strong friendship.

### **Sadat-Adham Relationship:**

One important comment must be made at the outset of this line of thought. Some of the data collected for this section is based on the work of Mohamed Heykel. According to Mr. Heykel, he saw President Sadat and Sheikh Adham for the first time soon after the revolution at the house of the famous Egyptian singer Fareed Al-Atrash. Heykel added that Adham became one of the most influential people Sadat knew in his life. It happened that Sheikh Adham was playing an important role in the life of the President especially after he became a consultant to King Faisal and supervisor of the Saudi General Intelligence Service. (Heykel, 1990: 84). Then,

Kamal Adham became a friend of Sadat who in 1955 witnessed the marriage ceremony of Kamal Adham. (Heykel, 1990: 85). In an attempt to prove how strong the relationship was, Heykel said the relationship between the two men was strong to the point where the *Washington Post* published on the front page on 24th of February 1977 that Kamal Adham was, during all the 1960s, providing Sadat with a stable income. The publication of this incident was within a series of secrets leaks after Watergate and the uncovering of CIA documents. (Heykel, 1990: 118). Heykel confirms that Sheikh Adham was one of the people who made regular visits to Sadat after he became President.

In a letter, Sheikh Adham protested to President Sadat about his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ismael Fahmy, over some issues in which he said,

"Perhaps our brother Ismael thinks or believes that my relationship with President Sadat is a working relationship. Maybe he did not know the depth of this relationship. Perhaps he thinks that I am desirous to keep my government position, and he would be able to embarrass me. I would like to confirm to him (I help with what I am helping with) based on my feeling of responsibility towards a friend, I have been proud and boasted of his friendship for 22 years and not for other considerations." (Heykel, 1996: 271)

In another letter sent by the director of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) station in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to the director of the CIA in the United States, part of it said "The Egyptian government and President Sadat personally trust Kamal Adham 100% regardless of what any person may say about him." (Heykel, 1996: 278).

Based on the data collected here, this relationship between President Sadat and Sheikh Kamal Adham persisted even after the establishment of *Asharq Al-Awsat* and during the Camp David Accord. On the other hand, considering the strong relationship President Sadat and Sheikh Adham shared, one would assume that Kamal Adham

must have played an important role in helping his friend Anwar Sadat. According to Mr. Nasser El-Deen Al Nashashibi, Sheikh Adham was playing a positive role in favour of the Egyptian leader. Al Nashashibi, in his book which reveals the reason behind his leaving *Asharq Al-Awsat* at that time, mentioned a few testimonies which are interesting to this study. He confirms that Anwar Sadat put pressure on Kamal Adham to stop the criticism, and over time this pressure increased and intensified. (Al Nashashibi, 1996: 172). During that time, Sadat was complained to his friend Sheikh Adham about the position of the newspaper. In return Adham directed those complaints to "the Hafez boys" who directed those complaints as well to Jihad Al-Khazen, who asked Mr. Al Nashashibi to reduce his critical writing about the Egyptian leader and his foreign policy. Later on, Mr. Saleem Al-Lowzi, the publisher of the Lebanese magazine *Al-Hawadith* (The Events), came to Mr. Al Nashashibi and told him that Kamal Adham, under the orders of Anwar Sadat and via the Hafez boys, would terminate his work contract with *Asharq Al-Awsat* in a week. As a result, Kamal Adham with the Al Hafez boys and Jihad Al-Khazen began to search for a good reason to justify their decision, and end Al Nashashibi's working contract with them. (Al Nashashibi, 1996:172). So, what happened to the strong friendship to the point where a friend wanted to destroy another friend's business? If Sadat knew who the publisher was why did he insert the name of Prince Fahd in the middle? In politics in particular and, regrettably nowadays in most aspects of life in general, interests count, not friendship. That applies to this case study. However, we have two points to speculate on. First, Sadat did not want to be criticized, not even in a low key fashion which might disturb his one man show. In fact he had plenty of problems at hand to deal with. There was the strong Israeli negotiation card and uncompromising front to the point where he threatened to leave Camp David. There was the opposition of the Arab brothers. There were serious and influential internal movements. At least he could silence some voices in his friend's newspaper. It does seem he was asking too much from a friend at that critical time. On the other hand, Sheikh Adham could be caught in an unpleasant political position. Although, he was no longer holding an

official position in the Saudi government, any attempt to please President Sadat 100% would have two consequences. First, Camp David and the Separate Treaty were not simply any foreign policy that could be ignored. It was history in the making. Any attempt to praise it, or even not to publish natural criticism about it would dearly cost the newspaper in terms of Arab public opinion. That is if one wants to assume Sheikh Adham shared the belief of Sadat in Camp David. Besides, who would want a biased newspaper in any direction, not least in a very obvious direction. Second, the position of Sheikh Adham concerning the Saudi rulers in particular, and the other Arab governments in general, was even more sensitive. Knowing his background, nothing would have been easier than accusation in the Arab world. Eventually, he sold his share in the newspaper after the death of President Sadat. As a result of those conflicting views, the newspaper must allow some criticism, regardless of Sadat's wishes and pressures.

Finally, one might add one more theory to this complicated analysis which can be called the money theory. Money or financial capabilities is one of the most important issues that differentiates, separates and divides not only Arab governments and leaders but also Arab public opinion. This subject has been used and abused by Arab leaders since President Naser, through Sadat till President Saddam Hussain. The issue of money was exploited differently as a means to achieve ends. When the Arab leaders decided to cut political, diplomatic, and economic ties with Egypt, Sadat responded by addressing his people on many different occasions, saying the Arabs want to starve you. In fact in the same press conference in which he explored the Se'da affair, Sadat made a comparison between himself and those Egyptian journalists, who were distorting the image of Egypt abroad for money, by saying, "The Arabs offered us five and a half billion pounds every year for a period of ten years for Egypt to sell its decision, but we refused that." (*Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper, 11-12-1979). Saudi Arabia is the richest Arab country, consequently, it received the biggest share of Sadat's attack and offenses. Within this context, the 2000 pounds Se'da received from the Saudi newspaper would fit perfectly the theme Sadat was

playing on for internal purposes and aims, bearing in mind the average salary of an Egyptian citizen, from the revolution till now, would range between 50 to 100 Egyptian pounds per month. Another point can be mentioned in this regard, Sadat by emphasizing this point, wanted to prevent or eliminate other Egyptian journalists from going to the other camp for money.

The co-publishers, in response to Sadat's claim, said, "The salary we offered him - Se'da- was not an attempt to buy him, because it was in the range of 600 Pounds Sterling which means 2000 Egyptian Pounds. This amount in comparison with the salary of *Asharq Al-Awsat's* reporters in London is considered as less than half of the salary of a new reporter." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 13-1-1990). The same conclusion was made by the editor-in-chief of the newspaper who said, "This salary was equivalent to the salary of a young reporter or a courier with *Asharq Al-Awsat*." It is a well known fact that the newspaper had been giving its employees very encouraging salaries. According to Mr. Al Nashashibi he used to receive 600 Pounds Sterling for each article he wrote for the newspaper. (Al Nashashibi, 1996:76). Even if we wanted to accept Sadat's version of the story, we should ask why would the Saudi government or its newspaper buy an unknown reporter?

There is a little doubt that President Sadat was used and fooled by some journalists. In this regard, once again defamation proves it has a significant role in the Arab world. In return, the Egyptian leader did not mind being used since he found in the story a good means to achieve internal and external objectives.

Nonetheless, the Se'da affair did not explain adequately how the Arab press play some kinds of roles in Arab foreign policy. However, it provided some evidence of how politics, press, and intelligence services are mixed together. It also shows that how an Arab journalist can damage or play a negative role, such as in the deterioration of a diplomatic relationship. In the coming pages we will provide more evidence of how an Arab journalist can enhance certain Arab diplomatic relationships. In short, the

Se'da affair is a good example of how sensitive the Arab leaders are about the content of Arab newspapers.

### **Arab News Affair:**

The controversy about *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and its publishing company has persisted since then to the present date. The Egyptian-Saudi relationship regrettably has been negatively affected by some journalistic material. For example, the national (domestic) Saudi English daily newspaper *Arab News*, the sister of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, published a piece of news which provoked the Egyptian government. The news item in question was a report by the Associated Press on a US immigration hearing for an Egyptian fundamentalist leader, Sheikh Omer Abdul Rahman. *Arab News* published the item on January 22, 1993. The end of the item reads as follows:

"In an interview published this month in the *Wall Street Journal*, Abdul Rahman said he is not thinking about leading his country one day. "It is the duty of all good Muslims to rebel against tyrants," he told the newspaper.

"The Egyptian people will not accept being whipped and raped and robbed by the corrupt Mubarak's regime." Asked whether he plans to issue a fatwa, an edict endorsing the killing of Mubarak, Abdul Rahman laughed and told his interviewer, 'On the way'."

According to the Associated Press (AP), "Arab diplomats, who could not be named under their embassy rules, said the quote angered the Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Cairo took up the issue with the Saudi authorities." (AP, 16-2-1993). Consequently, *Arab News* published on February the 10th, 1993 on the front page the following apology:

"*Arab News* offers its apologies to President Husni Mubarak, the government and the Egyptian people for the error in publishing the news item on January 22, 1993. The error was inadvertent and is deeply regretted."

At this point two questions might be asked: First, what was the error *Arab News* was talking about? It does seem the whole quotation of Sheikh Omer Abdul Rahman was very provocative to the Egyptian leader, especially the second part. It sounds too strong to be published in an Arab newspaper and seems to be the error *Arab News* talked about. Second, what was going on in the period between the *Arab News* publishing of the item on January 22, 1993 and the firing of the editor-in-chief on February the 11th, 1993? It seems the Egyptian government had a side dialogue with the Saudi authorities for almost twenty days about this affair. After the apologies published in the *Arab News* on February the 10th, 1993, immediately the next day, *Arab News* published another item on the front page saying:

"The Board of Directors of the Saudi Research and Publishing Company (SRPC) today named Farouq Luqman editor-in-chief of *Arab News* in place of Khaled Al-Maeena."

"The Board thanked Al-Maeena for the services he has rendered to *Arab News* during his ten-year period as editor-in-chief." (*Arab News* newspaper, 11-2-1993).

Therefore, unintentional mistakes do occur from time to time in the journalist business. No editor-in-chief can control every single word published in his/her newspaper. In this particular incident, three important factors must be taken into consideration to assess the firing of the editor-in-chief Mr. Khaled Al-Maeena. First, Saudi Arabia, even according to the AP, is a close ally of Egypt. Second, It is a very well known fact that the Saudis are against some fundamentalists such as Omer Abdul Rahman. In addition, the stability of the Egyptian government is one of the highest concerns of the Saudi government. Third, neither *Arab News* nor its publishing company, nor the Saudi government, has any interest in provoking the Egyptian government. In addition to all the above, the item published is neither the thought nor the work of Mr. Al-Maeena. It is an American story which happened to find a place in the papers, *Arab News*. This story or affair is an important example of the urgent need

to differentiate between the official opinion and the journalistic one, not to mention the normal or human mistake.

### **The Alaa and Jamal Mubarak Affair:**

Alaa and Jamal Mubarak are the sons of the Egyptian President Mohamed Husni Mubarak. Before we embark on explaining this affair, it is very important to explain another affair which occurred before the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak affair. The earlier affair was known as "The Teacher Affair". The link between "the Teacher Affair" and "the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak Affair" is significant, as we shall see in the final part of this chapter.

Around the middle of 1995 and towards the end of 1996, the press again played an important role in bringing the Egyptian-Saudi relationship into a profound diplomatic and political crisis. The story began in a small town in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. An Egyptian doctor, Mohamed Kamel Mohamed Kamel Khalifah, accused a school principal of molesting his young son. (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 13-6-1995), a claim that was never backed up by solid evidence according to the Saudi authorities. This study has no interest in proving or disproving the actual sexual accusation. Indeed, how this affair was exploited by the Egyptian press is fundamentally the core of the following arguments. For some reason or others, the Egyptian press began to mobilize the Egyptian people against the people and government of Saudi Arabia. The campaign lasted for a long time towards the end of 1996. The echo of this Egyptian press campaign was very much felt in Saudi political and social societies. Saudi citizens began to warn each other not to go to Egypt. Rumours or leaked information began to emerge suggesting that Saudi citizens were being kidnapped and beaten by Egyptian people in the streets of Cairo. Perhaps, one of the strongest rumours was that some Egyptian businessmen wrote at the front of their shops "No entry for Saudis". (*Al-Riyadh* Newspaper, 19-6-1995). As far as this study was concerned, it was necessary to delay a trip to Cairo for the implementation of this

case study. The Saudi press on the other hand practiced much public restraint and was not drawn into the press war. There were a few scattered articles appearing from time to time in the Saudi press, but meanwhile, the Saudi government issued a diplomatic protest to stop this regrettable campaign.

The Egyptian authorities declined the Saudi request under the claim that the Egyptian press enjoys freedom of expression. Suddenly, the Egyptian President Husni Mubarak appeared on Egyptian television emphasizing "the good relationship Egypt has with Saudi Arabia. However, the press sometimes complicate things," the President added. It was very obvious that the Egyptian President wanted to help the matters and eventually have a happy ending. Perhaps, one of the best examples to measure the impact of the Egyptian press campaigns was the experience of an Egyptian writer, Osama Anwar Okashah in his interview with one of the Orbit channels in 1996. Okashah was the guest of the Ala-Al Hawa (On Air) programme. Saudi callers began to attack and criticize Okashah for what he wrote against the people and government of Saudi Arabia because of "The Teacher Affair". The host of the programme failed to persuade callers to talk about other issues. At the end of the programme and through his hatred of Saudi Arabia, Okashah responded to a Saudi lady caller by saying "Thank God I am not one of you".

This seems a general affair. However, it has significant linkages to the following affair, which is the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak affair.

Once again the "magic" press played a significant role in causing the political and diplomatic relationship to deteriorate between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This time it happened toward the end of 1997. And *Asharq Al-Awsat*, also once again, was the initiator of this crisis. As an introduction to the subject, the Saudi Research and Marketing Company, the publishers of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, also publishes other daily newspapers and weekly magazines. One of these magazines is *Al-Jadidah* (The New). On Tuesday 27/5/1997 *Asharq Al-Awsat* published in its issue a

regrettable promotional advertisement for its new magazine "*Al-Jadidah*". The headlines of the advertisement reads as follows:

- Bargains and commissions of Alaa and Jamal Mubarak.
- One million pounds against each Airbus plane purchased by Egyptians.
- Mobile Telephone delayed entering Egypt as Alaa wanted to become the sole agent.
- Cairo Mayoralty decorates the city streets with granite tiles from a factory owned by the President's son.
- Alaa Mubarak is the exclusive importer of sugar and apples.

Immediately, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published next day the following news item:

"*Al-Jadidah*" magazine will be issued tomorrow Thursday instead of Wednesday because of publishing a wrong article about the sons of the Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. The subject headlines were extremely sensational and inconsistent with the actual details of the same subject. Therefore, *Al-Jadidah* decided to cancel the issue. It will be issued tomorrow 'Thursday'. We apologise to those who are concerned, towards whom we bear feelings of respect and appreciation and we apologize to our readers for such an error."

Two days later *Asharq Al-Awsat* published a second apology on 30-5-1997, giving an example of how journalistic mistakes happen in the West too. It says:

"*Asharq Al-Awsat*" published in its issue dated 9/5/1997 a five-column news item which said that due to an error "*Newsweek*" had withdrawn its issues from the market. The news implies that faulty information was provided in one line and detected by a reader, prompting the action which is the first of its type in the American press. This publication meets a vast response from the readers and concerned personnel. This was reflected on the magnitude of appreciation for a release that had admitted its mistake and decided to face such a mistake with acknowledgment. At

*Asharq Al-Awsat* we never expected to meet the same situation which *Newsweek* had met in less than a two-week period from then, especially in *Al-Jadidah* magazine which is launched on the market to be fresh in approach, variety and presentation. *Al-Jadidah* is the "newborn" of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, *Al-Majallah* and it is issued with them on Wednesdays in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, and on Saturdays in Britain, then sold separately in the remaining days of the week. The first issues of *Al-Jadidah* were an outstanding success and secured a good distribution for *Asharq Al-Awsat* which reached 17.3% of the total distribution. It is a pleasing figure, but often there are many obstacles on the road to success. One of the ideas which was introduced for publication was an article on the sons of some Arab Presidents and the rumours and unfair campaigns they face because of their positions in power and the roles of their fathers. We started with "Saif Al-Islam" the son of President Mou'ammer Al-Qaddafi, then we shifted to the two sons of President Husni Mubarak who are the target of campaigns against their character headed by -as we said in that subject- some entities. Therefore, it would be difficult to brief the reader with a neutral and actual image, though our fundamental objective was to nullify such campaigns with genuine and proper statements from those who are concerned. We hope to complete this (objective) with the consent of those who are involved. In fact we prepared the issue which was in its entirety an explanation of some realities and a clarification of some misunderstandings with evidence which prove the rumour is not fact, and that it is unreasonable to believe statements without proof of actual events, which we presented and put forth in an attractive journalistic style. The advertisement for the article was even more sensational. Therefore, one of our journalists at *Al-Jadidah* was drawn towards this journalistic game and wanted to swim (in the current) without concerning himself with any danger. He let his imagination rove unrestrained and composed sensational and more than sensational headlines, to solicit marketing and promotion, to the extent that the subject goes beyond the agreeable limits. Therefore, we had to take action, though it was harsh on the Journalist, but it was important since what had happened was a journalistic error, that we should bear a collective responsibility towards. Following the communication we have made inside the company, it

was decided to destroy the said issue provided that a new issue could be released to the market on another day. It took us only one day to print more than 120 thousand copies of the new issue of "*Al-Jadidah*" due to the huge capabilities which are owned by the companies of our Group. Why are we publishing this story now? Because we want to carry to the readers the full story, as we are collectively responsible for this "occupational" error. Sometimes occupational errors resemble a heart failure that is difficult to interpret or to guess its occurrence. We hope to keep our journalistic "strokes" to a minimum."

Suddenly, and without any prior announcement, Prince Abdullah, the Saudi Crown Prince, arrived in Cairo on 3-6-1997. Both the Egyptian and Saudi media attribute the visit to review and push forward the peace process of the Middle East. However, it was notable that the delegation headed by the Saudi Crown Prince did not include any formal Saudi Ministers. The Saudi delegation included some important members of the Royal family. This gave an impression that the whole visit was a family mission. The Saudi Crown Prince while leaving Egypt on 5-6-1997 sent a cable to President Mubarak saying:

"His Excellency Husni Mubarak,  
Peace and blessings of Allah be Upon You

Dear Brother,

While leaving our beloved sister country, Egypt, in our way back to your second home country, Saudi Arabia, we are very delighted to call to mind in appreciation and full respect our great pleasure while we were being with you, leadership and people. This special visit has left on all of us a strong indescribable impact. There is nothing strange about this as our two countries and two peoples are joined with strong fraternal ties." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 6-6-1997)

The visit of the Saudi Crown Prince also resulted in a phone call made by President Mubarak to King Fahd, the Saudi King. According to *Asharq Al-Awsat* on 6-6-1997, during the call the distinctive bilateral relationship between the two countries was

reviewed for the mutual interest of the Saudi and Egyptian peoples. The present developments on the regional, Arab and international arena were also discussed.

Consequently, one should ask: Is the promotional advertisement, that *Asharq Al-Awsat* published, related to the visit of the Saudi Crown Prince, or the phone call President Mubarak made to his brother King Fahd? Having said that, the study was given a golden opportunity not only to investigate empirically its theme, but also to extend and update this particular case study, which was disappointing to some extent. A trip to Cairo at this time would enable us to maintain an in-depth analysis and measure the effect of the material published by *Asharq Al-Awsat*. This time there was no fear of being kidnapped or beaten in the streets of Cairo as a result of the Egyptian press mobilization. The trip to Cairo began on 6-6-1997. It was very notable that the Egyptian press did not explore or explain this issue in any negative way. Having said that, one Egyptian newspaper *Al-Akhbar* (The News) published on 6-6-1997 on the front page three important separate news items without giving any linkage to any of them.

The first news item was under the headline of "President Mubarak reviews with King Fahd the distinctive relationships between the two countries".

The second news item was under the headline of "After leaving Cairo: Prince Abdullah sends a cable of thanks to Mubarak".

The third news item was under the headline of "Following Alaa and Jamal Mubarak suit: *Al-Jadidah* magazine editor and secretary are fired". This particular news item read as follows:

Cairo - AFP

*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper reported yesterday that the two publishers Hisham and Mohamed Ali Hafez have decided to sack both Fouzia Salama the editor of "*Al-Jadidah*" magazine and Jamal Ismael secretary (editing) of the magazine and, instead, appointed Abdul Aziz Khamis (a Saudi) as the editor and Adel Othman (an Egyptian) as the

secretary. These changes in the editorial staff of *Al-Jadidah* magazine followed the complaint which was passed to the Prosecutor General by Alaa & Jamal Mubarak against *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and *Al-Jadidah* magazine for publishing lies and fabrications which are simply accusations and insult."

In Cairo, the technical office of the Prosecutor General, the Consultant Rajaa Al-Arabi, yesterday pursued investigations regarding the suit which was filed by Alaa and Jamal Mubarak. Omer Marwan, the Head of Prosecution at the office, heard the statement of Mahmoud Ashinawi, the director of the *Asharq Al-Awsat* office in Cairo, who confirmed that the Cairo office of *Asharq Al-Awsat* had nothing to do with the article published and that the London office was responsible for that article. He added that the newspaper had afterwards clarified that the headlines which were included in the advertisement, the subject of this complaint, were merely sensational and were not included in the original subject, and that the article was deleted from the magazine while investigations are going on."

Next day, the Saturday edition of *Al-Akhbar* which is called *Akhbar Al-Youm* (News of Today) published an interesting article by Mr. Ahmed Rajab, under the title "Strange". Part of the article says,

"In the press evil is news and good is not newsworthy. The news of a hundred happy homes in the street does not concern anyone, but a single home in which the wife has killed her spouse is an important news." (*Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper, 7-6-1997).

The article concluded by saying, "All this is no longer a strange thing as evil becomes the rule and good is the exception."

Therefore, how did the journalistic and diplomatic environment inside and outside Egypt interpret the whole affair. Almost every single journalist and diplomat who interviewed emphasized two points:

First, the visit of the Saudi Crown Prince was the direct consequence of what *Asharq Al-Awsat* published.

Second, amazement at how the press could damage the Egyptian-Saudi relationship, drawing a comparison between what had happened in 1996 in "The Teacher Affair" and then one year later in 1997. One Egyptian journalist told me that the impact of what *Asharq Al-Awsat* published was so great on the Egyptian President, to the extent that he was furious. Another journalist said, Egyptian people began to fax each other a copy of the promotional advertisement.

Thusfar, what is the magnitude of this political or journalistic crisis between Egypt and Saudi Arabia? In 1996, when the Egyptian press opened its artillery against Saudi Arabia, the Egyptian government refused to interfere by stopping or eliminating that press campaign, claiming that the Egyptian press enjoys the law of press freedom. Therefore, why did the Egyptian press refrain this time from retaliating against Saudi Arabia or at least *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper? Some significant answers are found in an interview for this study with Mr. Anees Mansour, a very prominent Egyptian journalist and writer. Mr. Anees Mansour was considered by many Arabs as the mouthpiece of President Sadat, a claim Mr. Mansour does not deny. In fact, in an interview on November 19, 1997, with one of the Orbit channels, Mr. Mansour described his mediating role between Egypt and Israel during the President Sadat and Mubarak eras, as "the role of any ambassador". In this televised live interview Mr. Mansour revealed, perhaps for the first time, that President Sadat asked him to write a trial balloon news item saying that Egypt is willing to provide Israel with water from the Nile. In response, a member of the Israeli Knesset called Mr. Mansour saying that Israel doesn't need Bilharzia, which is a disease in part of the Nile river. In the following, it is very important to write down some of Mr. Mansour's comments as they occurred.

Q- What is your evaluation of the role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy?

A- "This is a large question. The press, whether Arab or non-Arab, must have a role." Towards the end of Mr. Mansour's response to this question, he said, "One of the strongest matters I read was an article published on the front page of *Asharq Al-Awsat* one month ago by a person named Fou'ad Matar! In the first line! The front page! And a Saudi newspaper! What does he say? He says the Palestinian cause's ruin began with the Camp David Agreement." Mr. Mansour furiously added, "What has this man, who attacks Egypt for destroying the Palestinian Cause, done for his home country which has been occupied by Syria for twenty years? There he has had neither dignity nor freedom. Alright, he may say so, but to say this in *Asharq Al-Awsat*! Strange!"

Q- Did you consider this a Saudi position?

A- "I only considered the editor-in-chief overlooked the matter, otherwise if he was alert he would never have published it."

Q- Now you have touched upon a sensitive issue, do you think there is a dilemma in making a distinction between the journalistic and the official opinion?

A- "There is, there is."

Q- Last year, in 1996, I came to Cairo to investigate a case study which was about a famous story when President Sadat attacked Saudi Arabia and *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper saying that the Saudis were trying to bribe Ibrahim Se'da, an unknown Egyptian journalist at that time.

A- "You made a mistake by selecting this case study."

Q- I discovered that after the implementation of the case study. How could I know that a President such as Sadat would fall into the trap?

A- "At that time I was very involved in the decision-making process. Ibrahim Se'da came to President Sadat and whispered to him all what was said. Se'da did that to become the editor-in-chief of *Al-Akhbar* newspaper."

Q- Anyway, I did not come away empty handed from the analysis of the case study. I proved the role of defamation in the Arab world.

A- "You are correct."

Q- When I came to Cairo last year there was also "the Teacher Affair" which provoked the Saudi decision-makers and you to say that your press is free. Today we have the "Alaa and Jamal Mubarak Affair", do you have a solution to these dilemmas? How could we differentiate between the journalistic and official opinion?

A- "I was responsible, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and embassies did not interfere in the issue. They provided me with an airplane and I went to Saudi Arabia for a 24-hour visit. During my visit I met Prince Abdullah, the Crown Prince, and some other Saudi Princes. We solved it. I admitted to the Saudis that we made a mistake in the teacher's affair. We exploited and enlarged a limited sexual affair to reach in effect and extent the Saudi people, Saudi government and the sons of the King. Now in the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak's affair there are strict orders not to write even a single word about the affair."

Finally, Mr. Mansour asked "Where was Othman Al-Omair the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat*? Anyway the Saudis told me that they will replace Al-Omair by Mr. Abdul Rahman Al-Rashid, the editor-in-chief of a sister magazine *Al-Majallah*."

On the way back to Saudi Arabia, on 12-6-1997, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published, on the day, its third apology. The title of the apology was, "Statement and apology from the Saudi Research and Publishing Company, *Asharq Al-Awsat* and *Al-Jadidah*" The statement and apology reads as follows:

"*Asharq Al-Awsat*" published in its issue of Tuesday 27/5/1997 a promotional advertisement for its new magazine "*Al-Jadidah*" which is being issued along with "*Asharq Al-Awsat*" on the following day. This is a tradition we were accustomed to follow in order to advertise various publications in our sister publications. Although the promotional advertisement included the most important constituents of "*Al-Jadidah*", it sensationally emphasised a false article in "*Al-Jadidah*" about the two brothers Alaa and Jamal Mubarak. The advertisement included false allegations that were not included in the original subject and depended on (rootless) sayings and rumours. None of our 19 daily, weekly and monthly publications have pursued this type of style. The Saudi Research and Publishing Company which is the owner of the two publications had destroyed the said issue of "*Al-Jadidah*" magazine before distribution, and replaced it with another issue, in addition to the clarification and apology for the same in "*Asharq Al-Awsat*" issue of 28/5/1997 which was issued on 30/5/1997. On the basis of rejecting untrue sensations and our constant inclination towards moderateness and following clear policies for our publications not to tackle unjustly public figures and publish rumours and false sayings about them, we promptly investigated the matter and brought to account those in charge. As the incident was an unjustifiable error, therefore, it is our duty to apologise for all those concerned. This is our principal position and commitment, that we must record against ourselves, emanating from the principles of our courage to acknowledge errors and apologise accordingly. We would like to confirm for all, for those who value our position and apology or those who exploited or were willing to exploit the event to set off a trial, that the entire subject was an unintentional error and there were no positions, authorities or entities standing behind it. We have already brought to account those who are responsible for it and once more we confirm our apologies to Mr. Alaa and Mr. Jamal Mubarak. We are quite confident that they are pure and innocent of all baseless and unjustifiable accusations and rumors which revolve around them. Furthermore, we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation, respect and affection toward Mr. Jamal and Mr. Alaa Mubarak."

None of the apologies which *Asharq Al-Awsat* published seemed to please or satisfy the Egyptian government, or at least Alaa and Jamal Mubarak. Therefore, they decided to take the issue to the Egyptian Court to start a legal process. During the trial, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published on its front page the progress of the law suit against it. A senior official inside the Saudi Research and Publishing Company told me that the Egyptian judge was unjust, biased and the guilty verdict was in his pocket even before the trial began.

This doubt or accusation is no stranger to both the Egyptian and Saudi attitudes. During "The Teacher Affair", the Egyptians also doubted and accused the Saudi legal system of being biased and unjust. None of the two sides could back up their accusation by significant evidence.

A few days before the verdict was issued by the Egyptian Judge, the publishing company of *Asharq Al-Awsat* protested against the judge who refused to hear the defense of their many attorneys. Therefore, the company published on September 11, 1997 on the front page of *Asharq Al-Awsat* the following news item:

“The consequences of the case between *Asharq Al-Awsat* and President Mubarak’s sons:

Saudi Research & Marketing (UK) Limited decided to close down Cairo offices.

The Saudi Research & Marketing (UK) Limited, the publisher of “*Asharq Al-Awsat*” newspaper and its magazine “*Al-Jadidah*”, has issued a statement announcing the closure of its Cairo representative and journalistic office as of today. The decision came in protest against the unjust situation its defense committee had faced during the session of last Sunday 7/9/1997 which looked into the lawsuit that has been filed by the two brothers, Alaa and Jamal Mubarak. The statement went on to say, we would only like to protest against the procedure and principle. So, since we did not find the legitimate opportunity, which is (normally) available to the most dangerous criminals and drug traffickers to defend ourselves, challenge the competence or jurisdiction, protest against the processes or object to the

court's unfair procedures for session management, we could only shift to passivity instead of (continuing) positivity as we were from the outset, to the extent that some people accused us of being humble and shallow."

*Asharq Al-Awsat* also published in the same issue the full text of the statement on page 17 signed by "the two publishers Hisham and Mohamed Ali Hafez." On Monday September 15, 1997, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published on the front page the following headline:

- "The two publishers and the editor-in-chief sentenced to one year's imprisonment with work.
- *Asharq Al-Awsat* appeals against the court's verdict and files a dispute suit against the Abdein Court judge."

There is no doubt that the development of the whole affair reached a regrettable journalistic and political conclusion. One obviously would ask what is the impact of the entire story on the political relationship between Egypt and Saudi Arabia? Also we should ask what happened to the successful mediating role that Mr. Anees Mansour played? As mentioned previously, Mr. Mansour said, "We solved it." Was it really solved? We should also agree with Mr. Mansour when he asked where was Othman Al-Omair, the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat*? Indeed why did Al-Omair publish that regrettable promotional advertisement? To clarify the issue, Mr. Al-Omair told me that what had happened was a technical mistake and that technical mistakes could be effective and dangerous. Often it happens beyond your knowledge. Al-Omair also said,

"Two days ago a French T.V channel broadcast a sexual movie to the Arab world which resulted in the boycott of Arabsat to this channel. What I know is that this French channel was making a great effort reach each Arab home. However, it broadcast the sexual movie. So, human mistakes do occur. Our policy was to make *Al-Jadidah* magazine resemble *Hello* magazine. I wanted to make some programmes about Arab Presidents' sons in a socially appealing way. Here the confusion happened."

But the whole affair did not halt brotherly communications between Egyptian and Saudi officials. For instance Prince Salman, the Governor of Riyadh region, the co-publishers and the main share holder of *Asharq Al-Awsat* visited Cairo on October 30, 1997. While being in the Egyptian capital, Prince Salman said his "current visit to Cairo is a special one." He also added saying that:

"President Husni Mubarak was kind enough to receive me in Cairo. Egypt, the peoples of Egypt and the President of Egypt are all dear to us and I am delighted to be among them today. The Saudi people are brothers to the Egyptian people and the Saudis who are residing here feel satisfied with the appreciation they enjoy from their Egyptian brothers."

Also few days later, on 11-11-1997, President Husni Mubarak arrived in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, for a two hour visit. President Mubarak held important talks with King Fahd and the Crown Prince Abdullah. Both leaders discussed the Iraqi crisis with the United Nations and the Doha Economical Conference. The views of the Egyptian and Saudi leaders were united in boycotting the Doha Economical Conference.

Suddenly, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published and brought good news to the Egyptian and Saudi people. It published, on December 3, 1997, a story carrying the following headlines:

- "Reconciliation between Alaa & Jamal Mubarak and *Asharq Al-Awsat*
- An agreement on opening Cairo Office, return of the Egyptian employees and suit relinquishment"

Part of the news story, which was published under a photograph of the meeting with Jamal Mubarak, in the absence of Alaa, said:

"Following a meeting held in Cairo the day before yesterday between Jamal Mubarak 'a son of the Egyptian President' and a delegation from the Saudi Research and Marketing Company, the publisher of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and *Al-Jadidah* magazine, including the two

publishers Hisham and Mohamed Ali Hafez and the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* Othman Al-Omair and the Managing Director of the company in London, Yasser El-Dabbagh, the case between the two sons of President Husni Mubarak and (*Asharq Al-Awsat*) was announced as settled and the two parties reconciled by the relinquishment of all cases before the courts.”

Finally, in an interview for this study Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdulmajeed, the General Secretary of the Arab League, was asked, since Sadat's era, if we set aside of the Naser's era, the press has caused some political crises between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, what is your view or solution if any? Also, do you have a prescription for differentiation between journalistic and official opinion? Dr. Abdulmajeed said, "There is no magic solution that we can use. The issue is not an easy one. However, it is not impossible. Do you remember what happened in 1973? The agreement and the will were available, it was a historical accomplishment, and this is what should happen." Abdulmajeed was referring to the strong alliance between Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the 1973 War against Israel. If the General Secretary of the Arab League has no solution, then, probably, the problem will persist for sometime to come.

## **Conclusion:**

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, this case study was originally built upon the attack of President Sadat on *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and the Se'da affair. A few conclusions can be drawn from this bizarre affair. This affair, and other affairs in particular, prove the role of defamation in inter-Arab politics. All the affairs as presented in this chapter, from the Saudi-Egyptian confrontation section through the Se'da affair up to the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak affair, demonstrate a few important issues and points which overlap.

First, this case study reveals how the political action and re-action occur between Arab leaders towards both the Arab press and towards each other via the press. The press can damage foreign policy relationships and this is the least this case study

could explain. Arab governments use the press against each other and also become affected by it. For example, we saw how, far from tradition, Sadat attacked personally and strongly Saudi Arabia and complained about what the Saudi national (domestic) and emigré press had published against him. Usually, Arab leaders do not attack each other personally. Instead, they instruct the press to do this business on their behalf, because this job is not fitting for the Arab leaders themselves. We also saw that, in response to Sadat's attack, the Saudi officials responded via their national (domestic) and emigré press to the point where other national (domestic) Arab press were monitoring the Saudi press to report the political re-action.

Second, this case study demonstrates how some Arab journalists can damage or enhance certain Arab foreign policy or certain Arab diplomacy. It was evident that Se'da represents a negative side of Arab journalists who helped in damaging the foreign policy relationship between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, Anees Mansour played a key positive diplomatic role in the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak affair. As a journalist or a diplomat, it makes no difference in the Arab world, Mr. Mansour played the role of a mediator between Egypt and Saudi Arabia to solve this significant journalistic problem. Eventually, he succeeded in arranging a visit of apology by the Saudi Crown Prince to Cairo. We have no idea if his diplomatic role was extended until the whole affair was solved.

Third, this case study provided strong evidence of the real difficulty in differentiating between the official and journalistic views in some Arab press. What makes this problem harder is that the Arab relationship is deep rooted in history. However, they lack goodwill towards each other. Earlier in Chapters 4 and 5, we argued that what the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press publish represent official views and news of their governments, to the point where both Arab press systems play an integrative role in the Arab foreign policy establishment, and play the role of Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy. This case study confirms those findings. However, human journalistic mistakes do happen from time to time. This particular

issue was discussed in Chapter 4 (pp 113 - 117). The two affairs as introduced in this case study summarize this dangerous problem. The *Arab News* affair and the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak affair explain the impact of both the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press on an Arab leader. It is important at this stage to conclude a few points. What the *Arab News* published obviously affected the Egyptian President who protested via, perhaps, the Embassy or journalists, to the Saudi Arabia government. In return, and in spite of being a journalistic error, the Saudis forced the publisher of *Arab News* to apologize in their paper and to fire the editor-in-chief.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian government opened a psychological attack against Saudi Arabia in 1996 in what we called in this case study "The Teacher Affair". We have no idea why the Egyptian government began a press attack against their closest allies with no mercy. Was it only because it wanted to defend an Egyptian citizen, or were there some other objectives. One thing we know for sure, Anees Mansour said he admitted to the Saudi officials that the Egyptian government exploited "The Teacher Affair" in the press and made a limited sexual accusation a bigger affair. The Saudis during this press campaign were protesting and the Egyptians were saying that the Egyptian press is free. Contrary to what the Saudis did regarding the *Arab News* affair, the Egyptians refused to take a similar action or at least stop the press campaign. It was obvious that the Egyptian government was standing behind this press campaign. This is another evidence of the role of the press in the foreign policy relationship. When the emigré Saudi newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* published some articles about the sons of the Egyptian President in 1997, it had a tremendous impact on the diplomatic relationship. According to Mr. Anees Mansour, this time the Egyptian government ordered the press not to mention even a word. He went in a secret diplomatic mission to Riyadh to solve the problem with the Saudis which resulted in the visit of apology by the Saudi Crown Prince, Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz. Having said that, the Egyptians kept up the campaign against *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper. It did seem that both the diplomatic mediation by Anees Mansour and the visit of the Saudi Crown Prince did not solve the problem entirely. It was not clear

why the Egyptians didn't halt the issue once the apologies were extended via *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and the Saudi Crown Prince. In the final analysis, the Egyptian government neither apologized nor limited the press campaign against Saudi Arabia in "The Teacher Affair". But, suddenly, the Governor of the Riyadh region Prince Salman, the co-publishers and the main shareholders of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper arrived in Cairo on Oct. 30, 1997. Prince Salman announced that his "current visit is a special one" in which he met with President Mubarak. We have no idea if this visit was also a result of the diplomatic role played by Anees Mansour. It seems that Prince Salman's visit was another visit of apology paid by a notable Saudi official. We also assume that both leaders talked about the unfair "Teacher Affair" press campaign against Saudi Arabia and the journalistic mistake concerning the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak affair. Obviously, we have no idea what the talks covered, however, we have two hints to speculate upon. We said in "The Teacher Affair" that Saudi citizens in Egypt were suffering from the Egyptian press campaign and when Prince Salman arrived in Cairo he said, "The Saudis who reside here (in Cairo) feel satisfied with the appreciation they enjoy from their Egyptian brothers." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 31-10-1997). Of course, Prince Salman made this statement after his meeting with President Mubarak. Eleven days later, on 11-11-1997, President Mubarak arrived in Riyadh for a two-hour visit to meet King Fahd. (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 11-11-1997). Also based on speculation, the Egyptian President's visit might be seen as a result of the talks with Prince Salman. President Mubarak's visit could also be seen as a late visit of apology for what the Egyptian press wrote against the Saudi Arabia government, the people of Saudi Arabia, and the sons of the Saudi King during "The Teacher Affair".

Thusfar, the entire arguments are evidence of how the Arab press and politics are inseparable. Now, is there a prescription of how to differentiate between the journalistic and official views? Based on the evidence collected so far, the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press play an integral role in the foreign policy establishment, and their integral role in Arab diplomacy makes us believe that they

indeed play the role of Waqi'iah diplomacy "real" or "formal" diplomacy. One of the most important findings of this chapter is the diplomatic role played by the Egyptian journalist Mr. Anees Mansour between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it seems the media-broker diplomacy can be modified to be the media-Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy. This modification looks more accurate to express the formal role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy. Earlier in Chapter 4 (p 121) we said that the national (domestic) Arab press play a mixture of roles of both media-diplomacy and media-broker diplomacy as classified by Eytan Gilboa. It is also evident that the emigré Arab press is affected by inter-Arab politics even though it is published outside the Arab world. No matter where the emigré Arab press go or publish it will still be considered a significant part of Arab politics and foreign policy. As we have seen, all the various affairs explained in this chapter proves that both the national (domestic) and emigré press are an integral part of the first dimension which means diplomacy, and not the fourth dimension, as Philip Taylor describes the role of the Western mass media in inter-state relations (1997: 21).

Finally, there are a few points that we can mention to conclude this chapter. No doubt, the happy ending of the Alaa and Jamal Mubarak affair is very pleasing for both genuine Egyptian and Saudi nationals. Having said that, there are those opportunists who were left behind without personal gains. After the assassination of President Sadat, his successor President Husni Mubarak inherited immense problems. The wisdom and political abilities of President Mubarak did not only bring Egypt back to Saudi Arabia, but to the entire Arab world. The success of the Egyptian leader was not limited only to the reconciliation of the political relationship with the entire Arab world, but extended to the significant role he has been playing in the Middle East peace process. Having said that, during President Mubarak's rule the relationship between Egypt and Saudi Arabia has been affected by some journalistic matters. Some journalists would feel more than happy to attend, and weep at, any funeral and rely on defamation to enhance their own careers.

Indeed, as Ahmed Rajab said in his article in *Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper, "In the press evil is news and the good is not newsworthy". Journalists like Al-Omair, Se'da and Okashah must reduce the evil news in their writing and behaviour to close the door which leads to hatred and crisis. Finally, if the press can damage existing Arab diplomatic relationships, it can also play a significant role in enhancing Arab diplomacy. The next case study chapter is another attempt to explore the nature and role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

**Khadhraa Al-Diman  
Newspaper**

**Case Study #2**

## **Introduction**

This second and final case study is another exploration of the inter-relationship between the Arab press and Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. In this chapter there will be more emphasis and concentration on the emigré Arab press unlike in the previous case study, which referred to a combination of both national (domestic) and emigré Arab press. Once again, can we add more evidence in this case study to our theoretical framework of the role of the various Arab press in Arab foreign policy which suggests the integrative and Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy roles of the Arab press in inter-Arab politics. As in the previous case study, we will introduce and present the story as it happened and then draw some conclusions. This case study concerns Saudi Arabia and the Sudan. In 1993 the Sudanese government closed down the offices of an emigré Arab press newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, in Khartoum and arrested its correspondent. The Sudanese government accused *Asharq Al-Awsat's* correspondent of having a relationship with the Saudi Intelligence Services. Before exploring this case study and explaining the reasons for the selection of its name 'Khadhraa Al-Diman', we should introduce an important political background about the Sudan here.

## **Political Background**

This brief look at the political background of the Sudan is necessary to make sense of the overall view and analysis of 'Khadhraa Al-Diman' newspaper's case study.

The history of the Sudan can be divided into four eras: The Turko-Egyptian Conquest 1820-81, the Mahdist Revolution 1881-98, the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium 1899-1955, and the Independence of Sudan in 1956.

Islam has been the pathway for the vehicle of the Sudanese people to advance towards the prosperous future. However, this vehicle has sometimes been driven by honest

leaders and at other times by opportunist and ambitious politicians who found in Islam a good means to achieve their ulterior motives. This Muslim Arab country, led by the present government which claims to be a model of a true Islamic regime, is being targeted by the mass media. Sudan, a member of the Arab League, is experiencing, perhaps for the first time in its entire history, a significant destruction of its image in the Western media as well as in the Arab "brother" media.

Usually Sudanese people are portrayed, in many Egyptian movies, as cooks, servants, and building guards, thus neglecting the intellectuality and culture of the Sudanese people. In fact, looking from a different angle at these jobs, it shows evidence of their kindness, trustworthiness, loyalty and patience. These characteristics of the Sudanese personality explains the reaction of the Sudanese people towards political events and towards some corrupt leaders.

For the Sudanese people, the Mahdist revolution has been seen as the first political development in their way to independence. In March 1881 Mohammad Ahmed told his close friend that he had seen Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) while he was awake. The Prophet told him that he was Al-Mahdi Al-Muntazar (the expected Mahdi). (Dirar, 1968: 114). The expected Mahdi is: "The divine leader chosen by God at the end of the time to fill the earth with justice and equity, even as it had been filled with oppression and wrong." (Holt & Daly, 1988: 86).

From success to success, Al-Mahdi with the support of his followers, whom he called Al-Ansar, started to defeat the Turko-Egyptian Armies. In one of his documented letters he wrote to the Governor of Khartoum, the capital of the Sudan saying:

“From the slave of God, Mohammad Al-Mahdi Bin Abdullah to the Hikimdar in Khartoum. With reference to your letter, be noted that, the matter which needs to be clear cut is like this, my call on people to be faithful to Sunna (Prophet’s deeds) and to take Islam as a shield from life attractions, this is an order from Prophet Mohammad. (Peace be upon him). Further, I am Al-Mahdi AlMuntatar ‘the expected Mahdi’. This is a fact that is

truly informed by Prophet Mohammad, thus, those who obey and become followers will be among the intimate companions and winners and those who disobey will be let down by Allah the Almighty in this life and in the hereafter and will be countered by his argument which is unrefutable by the whole people.” (Dirar, 1968: 116).

In response to the Mahdist revolution, the French government sent Olife Ban, a journalist correspondent, in 1884 to Al Mahdi and offered him aid against the British. (Dirar, 1968: 190). But Al-Mahdi never compromised himself to the superpowers at that time and conquered the capital Khartoum on 26-January 1885. Since then Al-Mahdi became for all Sudanese Abu'l-istiglal “the father of independence”. Also his family, who became known as Al-Mahdi family, has been very influential in Sudanese politics to the present date. Al-Mahdi had ambitions to expand his Islamic state in every direction including towards the present Saudi Arabia. However, his sudden death on 22 June 1885 put an end to his hopes and dreams. By 1899 the Mahdist state was ousted by the British and Egyptian governments. During this era an educated class emerged and started to seek independence. Eventually, in 1952, the British government was forced to agree to a transitional period of self-government which would be followed by Sudanese self-determination. On January 1, 1956 the independent Sudan was established.

Suddenly, although there was no major crisis, the government was overthrown by the Sudanese army under the leadership of General Ibrahim Abboud on 17 November 1958. Through national Sudanese political efforts, Abboud was forced to resign in November 1964. Some political struggles began to emerge among the different Sudanese parties which led Sadiq Al-Mahdi to become the Prime Minister in July 1966. The political struggles continued until Colonel Jaafar Nimeri and his free officers overthrew the government in May 1969. Nimeri had used various ideologies, ranging from communism to capitalism then to Islamization, to stay in power. Finally, General Abdul Rahman Swar al-Dahab overthrew Nimeri in April 1985. Swar al-Dahab promised to hand over power to an elected government in the course

of one-year as a transitional period. Also, during this time an important development occurred in the political arena. Dr. Hassan Turabi, the head of the Muslim Brothers Movement, established his own party, the National Islamic Front (NIF) in April 1985. Stunningly Swar al-Dahab stepped down from the golden seat and once again Sadiq Al-Mahdi became the Prime Minister in April 1986. Al-Mahdi formed a coalition government which broke up twice in 1987. This time the political struggle was out in the open. During this era freedom of expression and freedom of the press flourished. Thus, the media war was at its peak. Finally, a new government was formed in 1988, but this time the NIF was an important part of the new coalition. Its leader Dr. Hassan Turabi became the Attorney General and Minister of Justice. Again, for the third time, the government collapsed in 1989. Soon after, Omer Al-Basheer, an unknown army officer, overthrew the third parliamentary government and arrested all members including Dr. Hassan Turabi on 30 June 1989.

### **The Sudan VS the World:**

Currently, titles in Sudan are meaningless. Although, Omer Al-Basheer is the acting President, Dr. Hassan Turabi is the actual ruler of the country according to observers and leaders both inside and outside Sudan. The accusation of Al-Basheer as a puppet President of the NIF representing the Muslim Brothers Movement has a strong foundation. This Sudanese Islamic Movement is an extension of the parent Muslim Brothers (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimoon) Movement which was established in Egypt in 1928. Jamal ad-Din al Sanhoury, a Sudanese student, joined the Movement of the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo in the early 1940s. (El-Affendi, 1991: 46).

When the time was right a Sudanese branch was established officially in 1954. Turabi joined the Movement, but however, his participation was interrupted when he left home to gain an MA from London and a Ph.D. from the Sorbonne. On his return in 1964, Turabi became a very influential figure within the Movement.

One of the most important strategies adopted by the founder of the Egyptian Movement, Hassan Al-Banna, was: propagation of the idea, mobilization and organization of supporters, and action. (El-Affendi, 1991: 12). It does seem that Turabi was literally guided by this strategy and achieved for the first time in modern history the first Muslim Brotherhood government in Sudan. As part of the game, Turabi ordered his own release from the prison and then directly became the Speaker of the Sudanese parliament, while the other political leaders represented the opposition. The action of Turabi's government jeopardised the internal and external politics and economics of the Sudan.

"Turabi's Revolution", as stated in a recent book by a prominent NIF member, Abdelwahab El-Affendi, the former press attaché at the Sudanese embassy in London, damaged the image of the Sudan in the Arab and international media. According to El-Affendi, in another book which he wrote in Arabic, the Sudanese revolution became suddenly a big international revolution which is threatening to demolish the American constitution, overthrow the regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Eritria and Uganda. It is also, a major threat for the stability of the Gulf states, Israel, and so on and so forth. (El-Affendi, 1995: 17).

The exaggeration of the Sudanese threat on the so-called the 'New International World Order' has been felt and very much understandable. Thus, what is the major accusation that the Sudan currently faces? Regionally and internationally, the Sudan is accused of adopting and welcoming Islamic fundamentalists and extremists and of offering training facilities for them in order to conquer the Muslim World and export the Turabi's Revolution. These ambitions originated also in the thoughts and ideologies of Mohammad Ahmed Al-Mahdi and the Iranian revolution. Since neither Turabi, nor his government have spoken openly of this ambition, the only measurement of the validity of the above accusation would be the Sudanese foreign policy.

In fact, all political moves the Sudan government has adopted to reconcile, and enhance relationships, with the international community have failed. One of the most desperate attempts was drugging their guest Carlos, the Venezuelan international terrorist, and handing him over to the French government. Immediately the Egyptian government broadcast on their television a secret video tape which showed Carlos enjoying himself in a private party in Sudan. Then, the Afghan-Arabs, a name associated with those Arab fundamentalists who fought in Afghanistan against the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), were forced to leave the Sudan.

Osama Bin Ladin, an important Saudi businessman and one of the most prominent Afghan-Arabs was forced to leave the Sudan also. Bin Ladin did not only establish a good business in Sudan, but he also formed another opposition front against Saudi Arabia, since the British government denied him entry to join his colleague, Mohammad Al-Mas'ary.

Turabi is not only aiming to transfer the centre of power of the Muslim Brothers from Cairo to Khartoum, but he also thought that by supporting and helping Saddam to occupy the rich Gulf States, as a first phase, then as a second phase he would assail or pounce upon Saddam and harvest the fruits. Whatever the truth is, the Sudan today is categorised within the bloc of countries— such as Iran, Iraq and Libya, which is accused of supporting terrorism.

Internally speaking, one of the first policies the new revolution adopted was the shut down of all national newspapers. By doing so, the government antagonized not only the national but also the international media. The government also began to put obstacles before foreign correspondents. For instance, the government arrested the correspondent of the *Financial Times* in 1990, and the correspondent of Reuters and the BBC in 1989. (El-Affendi, 1995: 144). By March 1990, 35 journalists had been arrested. (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 1-3-93). Finally, the Sudanese government closed down the offices of a Saudi emigré newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* in 1993 and arrested its correspondent in Khartoum, Mohammad Abdulseed. On 18 May 1996

Hassan Turabi called *Asharq Al-Awsat* "Khadhraa Al-Diman". (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 18-5-1996).

So, what does "Khadhraa Al-Diman" mean? The term Khadhraa Al-Diman is borrowed from a Hadith (Prophet's sayings). Literally, Khadhraa Al-Diman means a green plant grown in a filthy soil. Figuratively, it means a beautiful lady brought up in evil surroundings. It is worth noting that Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) warned Muslims of Khadhraa Al-Diman. Knowing that the *Asharq Al-Awsat* covering page is green, the hint of "Khadhraa Al-Diman" needs no further explanation. However, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper being a Saudi paper which emigrated to live in a Western environment, has some implications as far as the nickname is concerned. Further explanations will be provided in the forthcoming pages.

### **Reporting Vs Spying**

Around the 28th of January 1993, the Sudanese government closed down the offices of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper in Khartoum and arrested its correspondent, Mohammad Abdulseed. The news about the closure and the arrest was not revealed or published by *Asharq Al-Awsat* until Tuesday 2-February-1993. No justification was given by the newspaper for this significant delay. However, the way the news item was written might explain some of the reasons. As a headline on the front page, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper wrote:

"A decision by Sudanese security and information authorities in collaboration with Al-Shaheed (Martyred) Organization; the correspondent of *Asharq Al-Awsat* in Khartoum was arrested and the newspaper's office closed" (2-2-1993).

The newspaper said in the detail of the news: "Last Thursday security men stormed the paper's office and roughly inspected the premises before guiding the correspondent, Mohammad Abdulseed, to security buildings where he is still under detention." Meanwhile, according to the newspaper, "Yesterday morning" the director

of their office received a letter from Al-Mahboub Abdoul Salam Al-Mahboub, the director of the Sudanese Foreign Information Department, notifying him that "the concerned authorities had decided upon the closure of *Asharq Al-Awsat* office, cancellation of all facilities given to the office by the government including telex, fax and telephone lines and banning the use of the office equipment." The letter also indicated that the newspaper's office must hand in all press cards given to their staff by the Foreign Information Department. The tough comments of Al-Mahboub in this letter were included in the published news as well:

"You are well aware of the government's great tolerance towards the publications issued by this company throughout the past three years, during which the paper has gone beyond the limit of the usual practices of journalism and slipped into regrettable depths of excessiveness, fabrication and hostile propaganda against the great renaissance project in which all sincere Sudanese people are participating in building."

The letter added that "the continuity of work at the paper's office in Khartoum will mean that the Sudan itself, is naively participating in the unfair siege against itself." The letter also bitterly attacked the publications issued by the Saudi Research and Marketing Co. which it described as: "Tools to distort the new values by which Sudan is hopeful to overcome the ordeal of the past." Al-Mahboub stated in his letter that, "the Sudanese government would not allow the use of those Sudanese journalists to work for, or be affiliated to, a leadership which was misguided by sick intentions in Jeddah, London and Riyadh." The newspaper concluded the news by saying:

"While *Asharq Al-Awsat*, feels regretful for this aggressive atmosphere against journalists, it affirms that it will continue carrying out its duty and defend its stances, regardless the policy of impetuous news and suppression which are always characteristic of the rule of such a dictatorial government."

Thus, having a copy of the original letter, I would include one more piece of information which was not published in the news. Al-Mahboub confirms in his two-

page letter that, "the Foreign Information Department does not take or accuse any person who works for this office without evidence." He also concluded that both "his department and the newspaper possess tremendous evidence of wrong-doing." Having said that, Al-Mahboub did not pinpoint or outline any of these evidences in his short letter. The next day *Asharq Al-Awsat* responded to the closure and the arrest of its correspondent by an article published on the front page titled: "A word from *Asharq Al-Awsat*", it reads:

"Some regimes get confused when dealing with news. They don't know how to deal with it. Ironically, they find no way but to arrest this news. But how could news be arrested.? It is like air, at the peoples' hands, inside their mouths, noses and ears. This has typically happened in Khartoum, when a group of security men stormed the office of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, arrested the paper's correspondent and confiscated his papers and news. The charges directed against him were common and familiar accusations, usually retained by any intelligence in the world. Also, the news swiftly flew to London where it has become a common property. News is a dangerous creature, it is like air, wind and stars; never accepting to be arrested or confiscated. We expected that brothers in Khartoum would punish the opposition abroad, chase them and do whatever they like with them. But surprisingly they decided to choose an office which has no guards, a journalist without immunity and papers without secrets, to show their muscles and courage. Some of us were bidding that the brothers in Khartoum would do it, while others who have a relationship with them expected the contrary. Moreover, they considered the company's office still being open in Khartoum as an evidence of the brother's tolerance in Khartoum. Now, tolerance obviously no longer becomes affordable, as usually tested in such dictatorial regimes which suffer from a mental asthma..." (3-2-1993)

Based on this exchange of words between the Sudanese government and *Asharq Al-Awsat*, a few questions become imperative. What was the policy of *Asharq Al-Awsat* towards the Sudan? Was it related to the Saudi foreign policy? What kind of material did the newspaper publish that provoked the Sudanese government? What was the

evidence of the Sudanese government against *Asharq Al-Awsat* and its correspondents?

During the empirical investigative process to explore and answer the above questions and others, three methodological tools were adopted. First: books and newspapers' cuttings. Second: Qualitative analysis of the content of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper. This analysis extended from Monday 1-June 1992, to 30 April 1993, a period of almost one year. The analysis was also applied to most pages of the newspaper with special emphasis on the front and editorial pages. Third: Recorded, personal interviews. The interviewees were mainly journalists who work with *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and one prominent Sudanese diplomat at the Sudanese Embassy in London.

Before we embark on analysing the content of the qualitative analysis in detail, it is important to view a few points:

*Asharq Al-Awsat* published on the front page on Monday 15 February 1993, the charges of the Sudanese government against Abdulseed. The newspaper said that it obtained this news from news agencies, such as the French news press (AFP), and the Qatary News Agency (QNA). Since most of the content of those charges were the same in these three sources, I will rely on the original text of the AFP.

According to the AFP, the Sudanese News Agency (SUNA) reported that Abdulseed would be taken to court, according to an official. The prominent high ranking official told the Sudanese News Agency that the Saudi correspondent was accused of keeping letters against the government, and of having regular communications with the Sudanese opposition and foreign circles as well. The Sudanese News Agency confirmed that "security forces had watched his movements and upon searching the offices of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, they found secret official documents alongside printed matter against the government." In an elaboration on these charges and developments, the AFP said that "It was known that the Saudi-Sudanese relationships had

deteriorated since President Omer Al-Basheer seized power in June 1989." (14-2-1993).

Thus neither *Asharq Al-Awsat* nor the QNA used the description of the Sudanese official of Abdulseed as "the Saudi correspondent" because he is a Sudanese. Calling him the Saudi correspondent has some political implications. Also, they did not link in their reporting the arrest of the Sudanese journalist, Abdulseed, with the Saudi-Sudanese relationships as did the AFP.

One more piece of information must be added to this context. The firing of most -if not all of- the journalists who used to work for the Sudanese News Agency, was one of the first decisions to be made by the 89' revolution. One of the most prominent Sudanese journalists to be fired was Mohammad Abdulseed. Hence, two assertions must be considered. First, among other factors, the firing of Abdulseed from the Sudanese News Agency might have provoked and antagonized his political attitude towards the new government. Second, the comment of the Sudanese official to the Sudan News Agency using the description "Saudi correspondent" and "foreign circles" suggest the following:

- 1- Spying was the main accusation of the Sudanese government against Abdulseed. In other words, Abdulseed was an intelligence service agent who worked for the Saudi government.
- 2- Abdulseed was also an important link between the opposition leaders in Khartoum and the opposition leaders based in London.
- 3- It is evident, therefore, to conclude that this entire affair is only part of the deteriorated relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Sudan.

The other side of the story is the closure of *Asharq Al-Awsat's* offices in Khartoum. If the offices were closed down because Abdulseed published his news items and views in the newspaper, then why was he considered an agent? What we know about the

closure are the causes raised in Al-Mahboub's letter. Therefore, a qualitative analysis of the newspaper's content is essential to uncover part of the truth.

### **The Qualitative Analysis:**

June 1992, the first month of the qualitative analysis was very revealing in terms of Saudi- Sudanese foreign policy. The front page of Wednesday 10 June 1992 consisted of two important news items concerning the Sudan.

The first news item was written in London without a specific name. It says: "Sadiq Al-Mahdi condemned violations of freedom of faith because he was banned from giving his regular Khutba, religious speech, during the celebration of Eid Al-Adhaa (Greater Bairam) in Omdurman." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 10-6-1992). As a reminder, Omdurman (the twin-city of Khartoum) was the capital of Al-Mahdi, the founder, and the base of Mahdism and Ansar. The speech was supposed to take place in the Quba Mosque where the body of Al-Mahdi the founder was buried. The second news item was also published on the front page. The source of the news was The Saudi News Agency (WAS). The headline of the news was:

"A Saudi source; we left judgment for the Sudanese people. Kenya denies Al-Basheer, and denies knowledge of Saudi arms shipments".

The content of the piece of news reads as follows:

"The source says, The Saudi Charge' d'affaires in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi met the Director of Political Affairs at the Kenyan Foreign Ministry and informed him of the Sudanese allegations on the presence of vessels loaded with Saudi arms in the Kenyan ports. The Kenyan official answered him that his country categorically denied the allegation which came in the Sudanese statement and that there were no vessels in the Kenyan ports loaded with Saudi arms. He described the allegations as baseless. Isn't it another slap on the face of the Sudanese President Omer Al-Basheer and through him to his clients, Radio Omdurman and some desperate newspapers which were

caught by the trap of the ruler of the Sudan. We believe that we do not need to respond to the daily hallucination of the Sudanese information which is considered as "the death rattle", we just leave the Sudanese people inside and outside the Sudan to judge the notorious stance of their rulers." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 10-6-1992).

The newspaper, quoting other news agencies which it failed to identify, said, "An official spokesman of the Kenyan Foreign Ministry, James Simani had denied having any information about this allegation."

Again another news item written in London with no specific name on the front page, said: "*Asharq Al-Awsat* published a lecture: Sadiq Al-Mahdi calls Muslims to interact with the 'New International World Order'." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 11-6-1992).

On the front page of Monday 13 June 1992, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper published a piece of news also written in London without a specific name, about the suffering of Sadiq Al-Mahdi, it says: "After he was interrogated by the Sudanese security forces; Al-Mahdi warns of pushing the opposition toward violence." According to the newspaper, on Wednesday morning Al-Mahdi was questioned and interrogated because he received and met an Egyptian journalist. Although the news seems exclusive for the newspaper, it did not acknowledge that directly. Al-Mahdi said in this news that he "was not told or warned of receiving journalists." Then he was asked by security personnel if he had known whether that lady journalist was a spy or not, Al-Mahdi replied: "I did not give this journalist a visa, therefore, I'm not the person to be asked." As far as the journalist is concerned, she was extradited to Egypt. The information about this story was obtained by sources from the Umma party in London, according to the newspaper. On Saturday 29 August 1992, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper published a news item on the front page under the headline: "Cairo does not deny or confirm a military movement at the border of the Sudan." The newspaper said: "The extension of the Egyptian authority to Halaib, a disputed area between the two countries, coincided with a strong article published in *Al-Ahram* newspaper by its

editor-in-chief Ibrahim Nafi who warned the Sudan of touching the internal security of Egypt and her international borders." In response to this article Abdelwahab El-Affendi, the press consultant in the Sudanese Embassy in London criticized *Al-Ahram's* article and described it "as interference in the Sudanese internal affairs and considered it unacceptable to the government," according to the newspaper. (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 29-8-1992).

*Asharq Al-Awsat* announced on the front page on Friday 2 October 1992 that Sadiq Al-Mahdi would start writing for the newspaper monthly starting that day. Meanwhile, the newspaper published, on Tuesday 20 October 1992, on the front page, a letter by Al-Mahdi to Al-Basheer. The title of the headline says, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published a leaked letter in which Al-Mahdi speaks to Al-Basheer: "You have the power and we have the legitimacy". Concerning negotiation of the peace settlement of the war in the south, *Asharq Al-Awsat* exclusively published three important initiatives. The first was published on 28 October 1992 in the form of a letter from Sadiq Al-Mahdi to John Garang. The second was published on 11 November 1992 in which the newspaper insisted that it was publishing "the full text of the Sudanese government peace initiative." The newspaper described this initiative as the government base for its negotiation strategy. The third was published on 15 November 1992 which represented the initiative of John Garang to the negotiation in Abuja. Finally, *Asharq Al-Awsat* published on the front page of 30 December 1992 an important article by Sadiq Al-Mahdi. The full text was published on page 6, while a summary was published on the front page referring to London as the only source. The headline says: "Al-Mahdi raises the slogan of 'civilian Jihad for change'." Since the word (Jihad) in Islam means holy war, Al-Mahdi modified the concept and applied the word with (civilian) connotation, in reference to civilian struggle such as strikes and demonstrations.

Probably the foregoing qualitative analysis is the most important news about the Sudan which was published on the front page of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper. During

the analyses of the same page, I was not able to find the news, views or responses of the Sudanese government at least regarding the argument published. Two reasons could have been behind this major failure. The first was that the Sudanese government did not bother at all. The second was that the newspaper was biased and refused to publish what the Sudanese government had to say. Some justification will be provided in the coming pages. Generally speaking, the news published on the front page was mainly the opposition's.

It was more than evident that not only the news of Sadiq Al-Mahdi, but also his articles, were dominating *Asharq Al-Awsat*. Here, I selected what I thought and believed to be the most important. There are many other news, articles, and comments of Al-Mahdi published in the newspaper during this qualitative analysis period, to the point where it would be understandable if the newspaper was accused of being Al-Mahdi's newspaper. Whenever Al-Mahdi was imprisoned or detained by the security forces, the newspaper provided specific details such as, the time of the incident, the hours of interrogations, and who was with him when he was confronted with those forces, etc.

On the other hand, while there was nothing striking on the other pages, the opinion page or the editorial they were mostly anti-Sudanese government. The articles published concerning the Sudan were mainly dominated by opposition writers and journalists such as Othman Mirghni, Sir Said Ahmed and Mohammad Al-Hassan Ahmed. Their criticism extended from the Sudanese government to Turabi.

As a concluding note, we know so far that the Sudanese government hinted that Mohammad Abdulseed was an agent who worked for the Saudi government. We know also that the Sudanese government claimed, while it exercised tolerance towards the newspaper for three years, that it held evidence to accuse the paper of going beyond the limits of the usual practice of journalism. Thus, basic questions must be addressed. First, what are those journalistic items that provoked the Sudanese

government? Second, and most important, what are those evidences the Sudanese government said it held against Abdulseed and *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper?

In order to open up the case study, the views of the interviewees would explain some parts of the puzzle. However, before we proceed, one important piece of information and indication must be cited. Just a little over two months after the arrest of Abdulseed, Sadiq Al-Mahdi was imprisoned as well. According to *Asharq Al-Awsat* in a front page news item, "security forces arrested Sadiq Al-Mahdi without telling him the reason or the charges." This piece of news was written by Othman Mirghani, the Managing Editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat* from London, in which he says, "sources told *Asharq Al-Awsat* that authorities in Khartoum felt upset by criticisms launched against the government by Al-Mahdi in his articles published in *Asharq Al-Awsat*." (*Asharq Al-Awsat*, 3-3-1993).

In the issue of the following day, the newspaper announced that Al-Mahdi was released. According to this piece of news, the interrogation of Al-Mahdi was extremely tough and lasted for twenty five hours. It said "One of the most important points raised during the interrogation was Al-Mahdi's articles published in *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper." (*Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 4-3-1993). Referring back to what has been cited, we can assume that two things might have provoked the Sudanese government. First, the publishing of the official Sudanese initiative of the peace negotiation in Abuja.

Its publication could damage the Sudanese negotiation strategy by revealing their cards in advance to their opponent and in this case the Sudanese would feel furious for this action. Or, it could mean the Sudanese government leaked this initiative as others did as part of the negotiations strategy. In the case of both assumptions, media in general and the press in particular are playing a significant part as informal or formal diplomatic channel. Be it positive or negative, it is there and needs more empirical investigations. Second, the article of Al-Mahdi about "the civilian Jihad for change" seems powerful and effective. In fact this new concept which Al-Mahdi

introduced resulted in a debate which has lasted till the present date, not only by his followers but also by other opposition leaders.

If we read again the letter Al-Mahboub sent to *Asharq Al-Awsat*, in addition to the announcement of the Sudanese official to the Sudan News Agency, many questions would be raised. Among those questions, the following ones seem to be more urgent.

First, why was Abdulseed arrested? Second, why did the Sudanese government exercise tolerance towards *Asharq Al-Awsat* for three years? Third, the tolerance policy of most Arab governments towards any Arab media is unusual and if what Al-Mahboub said was correct, then that would be an Arabic accomplishment. However, it cannot be considered this way until we explore and reveal those mistakes. What are they? Fourth, did the Sudanese government notify the newspaper directly or indirectly about its condemnation prior to the closure? Fifth, what are those evidences the Sudanese government held against both Abdulseed and his paper?

One of the basic rules of conducting interviews is not to reveal detail of questions to an interviewee. However, I did not follow this rule in my interview with the prominent Sudanese diplomat. During the telephone conversation, the diplomat insisted on receiving the questions prior to the interview. He said he needed to know the questions in advance in order to prepare the material required for the interview. As a result, this claim greatly whetted my appetite and I faxed him nine questions including the first four questions mentioned previously, which he did not answer fully.

During the recorded interview the diplomat insisted to make the following statement:

"In the following tape recorded interview I express my personal view as a Sudanese civil servant and diplomat. My personal views may not necessarily coincide with the views of the Sudanese government. These views are an expression of my thoughts and the thoughts of many people who have dealt with this issue."

The Sudanese diplomat took the initiative during the interview to explain what had happened. He emphasized the important points as he sees them. He said, "There was no direct relationship between the arrest of Abdulseed and the closure of the offices of *Asharq Al-Awsat*." Elaborating on this point, the diplomat explained that "Abdulseed was not arrested because he worked for *Asharq Al-Awsat* or because he represented it. Also, his arrest was not an indirect revenge on *Asharq Al-Awsat*; he was arrested for reasons which had nothing to do with journalism." The diplomat added, "Abdulseed had other political activities and had been exploiting the facilities of the office of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, using it as his base. The officials inside the newspaper did not necessarily know or agree with his activities." During this interview with the Sudanese diplomat, two important points were very obvious. First, he was not interested in giving details about Abdulseed's affair. Second he was more interested in talking about their problems with *Asharq Al-Awsat*, and emphasized the improvement of the newspaper's treatment of the Sudanese affairs as compared to the period prior to 1993. Before analysing Abdulseed's affair we should explain the problem between the Sudanese government and *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.

### **The Closure**

According to the Sudanese diplomat as mentioned previously, there was no link between the closure of *Asharq Al-Awsat* office and the arrest of Abdulseed. There are two indisputable points. First, it is a fact that Abdulseed was accused of being a spy, or of providing information to Saudi Arabia through their embassy in Khartoum. Second, *Asharq Al-Awsat* is considered by the international community a Saudi newspaper and the mouthpiece of the government. So, in addition to what was mentioned previously regarding the content and policy of the newspaper, the Sudanese diplomat told me that *Asharq Al-Awsat* at the time had adopted a policy based on the following facts:

First, publishing false news. Second, not giving them the opportunity to respond to this news. Third, it insisted on distorting the image of the Sudan. Fourth, it was biased toward the other opinion. Fifth, Lacking balance and objectivity.

The immediate question which came to mind was why would *Asharq Al-Awsat* commit all of that? The diplomat requested a longer time before giving an answer to this "big question" as he described it.

In an important analysis, the Sudanese diplomat outlined seven factors as the main cause of *Asharq Al-Awsat* policy towards the Sudan. In fact those factors can also explain the reasons behind the bad image of the Sudan based on the diplomat's view. These factors, as the Sudanese diplomat explained to me, were:

### **1-The Distribution Factor:**

"Traditionally speaking, the Sudanese people are devoted readers. Therefore, Pan-Arab newspapers or the emigré newspaper such as *Asharq Al-Awsat* rely heavily on the Sudanese readers. The population of the Sudanese expatriates in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States is very high. I was told by some (affiliates) of the newspaper that if, for example, the headline was about the Sudan, especially sensational articles, the distribution of the newspaper would increase tremendously. As a result, Sudanese news encourages the newspaper to satisfy Sudanese readers outside and not inside the Sudan."

To explain this factor further, some points should be mentioned. To begin with, we must note that *Asharq Al-Awsat* circulation and distribution inside the Sudan is not significant by any standard. This is due to the low income of the Sudanese people and the high price of the newspaper. In addition, the distribution of the paper inside the Sudan does not generate cash for the newspaper because of the unwise restriction imposed by the Sudanese government on media to transfer income into hard currency before transferring abroad. This devaluation policy does not encourage any media to expand or work for the increase of circulation. It becomes a burden rather than a

profit. Added to all that, the distribution companies in the Sudan do not pay income to the newspaper on time.

Therefore, it is not surprising when Jihad al-Khazin, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Hayat*, told me that, if he was banned from selling his paper in the Sudan, it would save him money. Al-Khazin in a further elaboration on this point, provided me with an economical comparison between Saudi Arabia and the Sudan. He said, "If I was banned twice in Saudi Arabia and twenty times in the Sudan, it did not mean the censorship in Sudan was worse than the Saudi." To be frank, he said, "It means I was more careful with Saudi Arabia than with the Sudan." "Numbers would not reveal the truth." He said, "I thought a hundred times before publishing something against Saudi Arabia where the advertisers were. It was not in my interest to damage or lose tens of thousands of dollars worth of advertisements for the sake of news." Meanwhile, he continued, "I have full freedom to deal with the Sudanese news, whether about Al-Basheer or Turabi. Whatever I find, it is published and if they ban us we will save money."

Hence, if *Asharq Al-Awsat* does not have a strong presence in the Sudan, why does it give all this attention to Sudanese affairs? Why would the Sudanese government be so worried about a very limited number of issues of *Asharq Al-Awsat*? The answer is very simple. *Asharq Al-Awsat* addresses the Sudanese outside Sudan, most of whom live in Saudi Arabia in particular, and in the Gulf States in general. What is published or broadcasted by any medium outside must filter back inside as well. Speaking of the policy of his newspaper, Al-Omair said, "Our policy regarding the Sudan stems from our feeling towards the Sudanese readers. They considered *Asharq Al-Awsat* as their newspaper. That was why we have a sort of 'warm' relationship with the Sudanese readers." He also added that, "what we published regarding the Sudan was not because we were with or against the government. It was because we were with the Sudanese readers."

But, what does Al-Omair mean when he talked about this "warm" relationship? Is this "warmth", "economical" or "emotional"? Al-Omair replied that, "One could not separate emotions from money, you knew that they were buying your paper. In response we meet them with a warm hand, to strengthen the relationship." He concluded, "The relationship started on the basis of interest. The Sudanese readers consumed the paper, as a result I have to satisfy them."

## **2. Sensationalism as a Factor:**

"The more sensational the news is, the higher the selling and distribution of the newspaper will be. The news of opposition views sells more. In other words, out of rotten news you will smell the opposition to which it belongs. A negative news is more sensational than a positive news or, at least, this is what the newspaper believes. *Asharq Al-Awsat* continued to search for sensational news about the Sudan. And to be sensational it has to be negative as a rule."

A few more examples will be cited to explain this factor. To a greater degree, the role of sensationalism relates to the economic or distribution factor. The more sensational the news is, the more likely the sale of the newspaper to increase. But, what does sensationalism mean? What are its economic and political implications in the Arab world? To begin with, the intensity of sensational policy in the Arab media is very new. The issues or subjects that are sensationalized, for the sake of generating good income, range from the exploitation of women to politics. This short term policy must be analysed within the trends toward materialism in the Arab world.

There is no doubt this shift toward materialism has a great effect on traditions, morals, and religion. To the point where you hear the slogan: "business is business" in the region more than in the West. It does seem that advertisers in the foreseeable future will have their influence on the content of the Arab media, and this is the last thing the Arab media needs. This is not platonic thought but an alarming idea. Prior to 2nd August, 1990, a prominent Arab publisher was complaining about the still and

stagnant distribution of his newspaper and hoped frankly for something dramatic to happen. According to him, "so things got moving". Fortuitously, the Iraqi crisis happened and a wave of sensationalism began to emerge. Thus, we should ask, is media an economic enterprise only or is it also political and cultural? How could a medium serve politics and culture if it is starving? Media must not starve, nor simply struggle for money.

Thus, what does sensationalism mean in practical terms? To answer this question, one example will be given as an illustration. On Wednesday 25 September 1996, *Asharq Al-Awsat* carried the following headline:

"Western reports about the disappearance of Osama Bin Ladin"

The news story was published on the front page the entire width of the newspaper. I counted around 750 words in the content of the news story. The share of words for Osama Bin Ladin and the story of his disappearance in the news story was only 24 words. They are as follows: "These reports (the Western reports) noted that Osama Bin Ladin who left the Sudan last spring to live in Afghanistan, left his base in Conar province in a company of his family and bodyguards."

Reading this news story is more than evident as it has nothing to do directly or specifically with Bin Ladin and the sensational headline. The rest of the news story was about the Afghan-Arab in general, and not in particular about Bin Ladin, who is very active against the Saudi government. In other words, the newspaper wanted to attract Saudi readers by sensationalizing the name of Osama Bin Ladin, while the news is not about him specifically. Furthermore, the sensational headline was not backed by any rich or meaningful news content to justify the chosen headline. Eventually, Osama Bin Ladin had to leave Sudan under the political and psychological pressure of the Saudis.

The publishing of this news story under a major headline 'might be' acceptable in other times but indeed not on that particular day. That day, 25 September, 1996 the dominating news item in most Arab and Muslim media was the opening by the Israeli government of the tunnel in Al-Aqsa Mosque. *Al-Hayat*, the rival newspaper, wrote the following as a headline on the front page:

"Israeli Tunnel underneath Al-Aqsa lights a new 'Intifada'."

In fact *Asharq Al-Awsat* published the tunnel news on the third page as an ordinary news item. While it had the opportunity to publish it on the front page as a second or third major news item, on the same front page there were non-political and insignificant news items compared to the news of the tunnel, such as the "artificial hearts" news and the "Biggest Television Alliance in the Middle East" regarding the contract between Orbit and Rupert Murdoch the Australian media tycoon. Having said that, *Asharq Al-Awsat* gave great attention and sensationalism to the tunnel news in the following days. The newspaper created in the second and third page a logo which lasted for more than two weeks. The logo was for Al-Aqsa Mosque and underneath it wrote "The Tunnel War".

Now, the questions are, why did *Asharq Al-Awsat* do that? What are the political, economical and journalistic implications? First, sensationalizing the Osama Bin Ladin news was only done to increase the sale of the issue inside Saudi Arabia. However, the sale might increase that day but in the long run readers would realise that the sensational headlines were not backed by any substance, and as a result, the newspaper would lose its credibility and sales would go down. More important, the newspaper, being an elite paper and specializing in foreign policy, does not need to exaggerate.

The publishing of the Bin Ladin news and the neglect of the Tunnel news had its political cost which is the main reason behind using this example. The adoption of

this policy damages three important principles which might mislead any reader of *Asharq Al-Awsat*.

First, One of the most important elements in the Saudi foreign policy is the question of Al-Aqsa Mosque. The violation by *Asharq Al-Awsat* of this major principle is strong evidence that the paper does not express every single view of the Saudi government. Or, at least, it has its own "distinguished" but not "independent" way as Al-Omair explained to me, and will be discussed further in the coming pages.

Second, *Asharq Al-Awsat* introduces itself to the Arab readers on the front page as the International Daily Newspaper of the Arabs. If Al-Aqsa and the Arab-Israeli conflicts are not a major concern of all Arabs, then the Saudi Bin Ladin affair is not either.

Third, Journalistically speaking, if the "Tunnel war" as described by the paper is not a major news, then, we must redefine the news.

Finally, It is needless to say that the policy adopted was not based on an Islamic appeal. However, it can be analysed in terms of the struggle between secularism and fundamentalism. Fighting fanaticism is a must, but it should not be at the expense of truth and objectivity. As an important background of this issue as well, fundamentalists accuse Al-Omair of being secular. Secularism and fundamentalism are loosely defined in the Arab Muslim world. For the time being, it means in the minds of many fundamentalists, the person who does not believe in God or his Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him). In response, Al-Omair accused fundamentalists of being communists. Al-Omair sees Bin Ladin, and Turabi as coming from the same environment. There is some evidence to support his conclusion.

### **3-The Political Factor**

"The Second Gulf War created a trial or affliction in the Arab world. Two camps emerged as a result. One was pro-allies and the other was anti-allies. The Sudanese position

was introduced to the world by others without giving them the chance to introduce their position by themselves. The Sudan was then categorized within the pro-Iraq camp by some decision-makers and journalists. At the same time they did not have a loud voice to communicate their points of view. This political mobilization and polarisation had its effect on the emigré Arab newspapers. Subsequently, those newspapers were classified, based on their stances."

#### **4-The Environmental Factor**

"The existence of *Asharq Al-Awsat* and other newspapers overseas in capitals such as London or Cairo had its effect on the content of the newspaper. The capitals mentioned exercised anti-Sudanese activities. Those activities for instance were via the Sudanese opposition, international lobby groups, Christian organizations and human rights organizations. Added to all that, the Western mass media had its own agenda and special interests in the Sudan. Therefore, this environment created an antagonistic atmosphere to a greater degree, to the point when even the objective writer from London or Cairo was influenced."

#### **5-The Insider's opposition**

"There was a group of Sudanese journalists inside the newspaper who were affiliated with the Sudanese opposition. There were a few Sudanese journalists who had a direct link with the opposition and their activities against the government. They exploited all the points I have mentioned so far and angled the news coverage of the Sudan to a negative one. There was one reporter inside the newspaper, [but he did not name whom he was,] the mouthpiece of Mubarak Al-Fadel Al-Mahdi, the Secretary General of the Sudanese United Opposition. This journalist echoed what Al-Fadel Al-Mahdi said, be it worthwhile or not."

Although the diplomat did not name the journalist, he was referring to Othman Mirghani, the editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat*. In a comparison between *Asharq Al-Awsat* and other newspapers concerning the publishing of the Sudanese response to some news, the diplomat said that "We suffered a great deal at that period of time."

He explained that, "when *Al-Hayat* newspaper, for instance, published something and they responded to it by fax, they did not have to follow up. Also, *Al-Quds* newspaper was the same." "*The Times*," he added "called to inform them that their response had been received and they had to shorten it." Usually they reached an agreement because they understood the limitations of space. The diplomat also said "The *Economist* was another respectable publication. They called to thank us for sending the response and for our care." According to him, "*Asharq Al-Awsat* was far from this attitude." Often, when they sent *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper a response, they had to wait and call to ask about the publication of their response. Then they would be asked whether the information was true or not.

As a result, this developed into an argument. "It was not their concern," he added, "if the information was true or false because that was our view in response to what they had published. Let the readers decide for themselves." By the time the response was published it lost its substance. As far as the opinion page was concerned, the diplomat compared *Al-Hayat* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspapers whilst not forgetting to mention that *Al-Hayat* was not the ideal. He said, "But *Al-Hayat* published for various opinion writers, while the *Asharq Al-Awsat* opinion page was monopolized by one name or two."

Meanwhile, the diplomat criticized the style of news writing in *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper. He explained by saying that, "If you went back to the day before and looked at the news published in *Al-Hayat* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* what you would find is this: *Al-Hayat* wrote 'opposition sources' said what happened in the Sudan." He added, "As an official, I respected this newspaper because it referred to the source as the opposition. The same news was written differently by *Asharq Al-Awsat*. It was written in a very definite way by saying, 'It happened' in the Sudan, or, 'knowledgeable Sudanese sources said,' or 'people coming from Sudan confirm.'" "All these attempts," he added, "were made in order to give credibility to the news."

The Sudanese diplomat also told me indirectly that the newspaper at that time was the paper of Al-Mahdi or his Umma party. According to him, the newspaper published Al-Mahdi news, articles, speeches, and letters.

Thusfar, the comments of the Sudanese diplomat introduced a new element in the analytical process of this case study. Internal forces inside the newspaper also play an important role. Different Sudanese journalists inside the newspaper have different political views. Subsequently, the question which should be asked is how do these different political views of the Sudanese journalists affect the content of *Asharq Al-Awsat*?

Othman Mirghani, the editor, has different views to the diplomat. He said "This newspaper had never ignored publishing official responses, in fact it was concerned and sought their responses. It never monopolized news or views. The paper was available for both the opposition and the government."

According to Mirghani, "The government directed its anger against Abdulseed and the office because they could not reach the journalist outside." Mirghani confirmed, that "the entire pages of the paper were open to the Sudanese officials." The problem was very simple in the mind of Mirghani; the government could not tolerate criticism. Mirghani denied strongly any claim of his role or any other Sudanese journalist in what was published. He said, "*Asharq Al-Awsat* employs different Arab nationalities, among whom are Sudanese of different beliefs. Those who are pro-government can write their news and opinions and publish them." Mirghani said, "We should not be blamed for the increased amount of negative news."

As far as Sadiq Al-Mahdi was concerned, Mirghani said "He was an important political and religious figure in the political arena. It is natural that we seek his opinion just like any other Arab leader." In response to a question of whether the newspaper adopts Al-Mahdi's thought or the overthrown legitimate government's, Mirghani said they "valued their relationship with Al-Mahdi because he had a strong

feeling toward *Asharq Al-Awsat* and devoted his writings to them. In return, they could not reject his articles, because of their journalistic value."

Meanwhile, Al-Omair, the editor-in-chief acknowledged some unfairness. He said, "We have to admit that we opposed the Sudanese government more than any other Arab nationality." Based on his personal initiative, Al-Omair said that "I realise in time there had been more discrimination against Sudan in spite of my disagreement with, and rejection of its policies and ideologies." He added that during a meeting with the journalists, he asked them "to stop any discrimination because they had no interest in being aggressive towards the Sudan or any other country." Al-Omair also explained that what happened was not based on orientation to any country or as a result of any pressure. It was his own feeling and he thought it was unfair. He concluded, "In the final analysis, it was some Sudanese journalists and not *Asharq Al-Awsat* who started this discrimination."

To sum up the argument, it is more evident that Othman Mirghani played an important role in causing the relationship between the Sudanese government and *Asharq Al-Awsat* to deteriorate. In the final analyses Abdulseed is a close friend and an extension to Othman Mirghani. It does seem that both have provided a link between Sudanese opposition leaders in Khartoum and those in London.

## **6-The Persuasion and Deterrence Factor**

"Sudan generally speaking is a weak country in terms of resources and its role on the regional and international level is thus limited by many factors. The persuasion and deterring policies were implemented by the government on some newspapers. We knew these methods but we did not like them nor could we afford them. There were those journalists who could be won as a result of this stick and carrot policy."

## 7- The reaction Factor

"Added to all that, some policies adopted by the Sudanese government brought antagonistic reactions from the super powers such as the United States and others."

This is what the Sudanese diplomat had to say about the suffering of his country. I must acknowledge that the diplomat was very diplomatic in his interview.

Thusfar, before we explain whether or not the foregoing argument is part of the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia against the Sudan, or in other words, if the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia against the Sudan has influenced the content of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper in this regard, we should explain the circumstances of the arrest of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper's correspondent Abdulseed and the accusation against him of having a suspicious relationship with the Saudi Intelligence Service or the Saudi Embassy in Khartoum.

### **Abdulseed Affair:**

In order to explain the Abdulseed affair we would divide the issue into three major points as follows:

1. During the qualitative analysis, I was very interested in finding news and views about Abdulseed published in the newspaper. Regretfully, I found nothing. Instead, most of the news items and Al-Mahdi's articles referred to London as their source. Of course, this puzzled the Sudanese government as the newspaper was expected to protect its correspondent by not revealing his role in the gathering of those articles. Having said that, this is not a sufficient justification to accuse a journalist of being a spy or agent. However, the truth became evident when Abdulseed was arrested. Immediately after his release, Abdulseed faxed a letter to his editor-in-chief explaining what happened. The letter, which I was able to read, via an insider, contained the following points: First, Abdulseed explained his suffering inside the prison and the uncomfortable environment in addition to the long

interrogation hours. Second, he was accused of being a link between the opposition leaders in Khartoum and London. Third, he was accused of being an agent to the government of Saudi Arabia because of his regular contact with the Saudi Embassy in Khartoum. According to Abdulseed, he was faced with a security officer who confronted him with news and articles of Sadiq Al-Mahdi which were found in the office and asked, if he did not call this treason? Abdulseed replied by wondering, how it could be called treason as it had been published in the newspaper.

Before we explain the treason accusation any further, we should introduce here an important point to understand the issue meaningfully.

2. It is obvious that Abdulseed is not a popular figure with the present Sudanese government which sacked him from the Sudan News Agency. This sacking of Abdulseed was confirmed to me by Imam Imam, a Sudanese journalist who works for *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper. Somehow, Abdulseed managed to work for a prominent Arab newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*. So far we do not have specific information about the relationship between Abdulseed and the opposition, nor do we have sufficient knowledge about the reservations of the government towards him. But we know that he opposes the present government.

Once Abdulseed started working with *Asharq Al-Awsat*, the government was unhappy about this development and asked *Asharq Al-Awsat* to sack him. The newspaper refused to do that. Furthermore, Imam said, "The problem between the Sudanese government and *Asharq Al-Awsat* was because of Abdulseed. The government requested his sacking but the newspaper refused to do so. The result was the closure of their office."

Now what is the validity of the accusation of the Sudanese government against Abdulseed as having some kind of relationship with "foreign circles" or the Saudi embassy? This will be discussed in the following point.

3. So far, Abdulseed according to the statement made by a prominent Sudanese official to the Sudanese News Agency (SUNA) was accused of being a spy for Saudi Arabia. Usually execution is the normal consequence of treason. Also, there was tremendous evidence against Abdulseed who was watched closely by the security forces. Also, Abdulseed, as planned, would be subject to trial, according to the Sudanese authorities. Suddenly Abdulseed was released on Tuesday 23 March 1993. Hence, why was Abdulseed freed in spite of all the foregoing accusations? In response to this question, Othman Mirghani said, "That was sufficient evidence for the lack by the Sudanese government of any material proof against Abdulseed or *Asharq Al-Awsat*." "Abdulseed," he added, "was not the only journalist accused of treason, it is part of the psychological and media war against journalists and media personnel launched by the government." Mirghani concluded: "We would welcome taking Abdulseed to trial and present those alleged evidences, but simply, they didn't have any legal justification."

Imam provided me with a unique and interesting justification as to why Abdulseed was not subject to trial. He said, "This issue resulted in a big dispute within the Sudanese government. Some officials were calling for the trial of Abdulseed. Probably, the trial might have created some 'clouds' in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Sudan." Therefore, "other officials saw it was better to deal with this trial issue with 'patience' and 'wisdom' and not to let the whole affair goes beyond its framework." Imam also said, "They 'studied' the issue and found that it was better to release him and close the trial chapter." Here, I feel reluctant to reject all the claims made by Imam. Regarding the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Sudan it must be said that this relationship was not only cloudy but almost gloomy and tense. Whether Abdulseed was subject to trial or not, it would not add much to the already deteriorated foreign policy. Having said that, what was published could not have been tolerated by the majority of Arab governments, not even for a few days. However, this patience should have lasted once it existed. It would be much wiser not to arrest, close down the office, or launch a media war.

The clouds had already been formed by the impatient and uncalculated political moves. No wonder then, the Sudan suffered a bad image in the international mass media. Meanwhile, how could it be that someone can be accused of being a spy, then be freed in a couple of months? This does not happen even in the most democratic countries. Indeed, releasing a journalist who had sold his country and nation, according to their evidence, was not wise at all. Thus how long will Arab governments keep accusing journalists of being agents or spies? What is the possible solution in order not to influence the role of journalism? How could we also ask Arab governments to change their attitude while there are journalists who have the readiness to be recruited as spies under the claim of earning their bread and butter? Studying and analysing the relationship between reporting and spying has become an important request not only in the Arab world but also at the international level. This issue is investigated and introduced in Chapter 5 as part of the subordinate third aim of this study. For the time being, how does this relationship between spying and reporting begin and on what bases?

According to Othman Al-Omair, the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and Imam, there is a very fine line that separates the two different professions. Imam said, "This relationship is very well known in history. It is known in the world of intelligence services that journalists are the best people to hunt for information, while the latter publishes it. Within this framework, there is a fine line; hence confusion occurs."

On the other hand, Othman Mirghani acknowledged this relationship and said, "In some events this was true but not in their case. Even in the West security men were disguised as journalists. This method had been adopted since the years of the Cold War." Recently, Mirghani said, "The American Congress conducted a debate against the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for using and exploiting journalists." Meanwhile, Al-Omair reiterated what Imam told me and emphasised this "fine line". However, according to Al-Omair's belief, "There is a demand to change the concept

of spying." He says, "There are so many international concepts which need to be reconsidered. For instance, is the role of the Ambassador the same as it used to be in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries? Spying and reporting, in the final analyses, are basically informational." According to him also, "some embassies' reports to their governments are published in the newspapers." Al-Omair concluded that "there was nothing easier than accusing a person of being a spy."

Thusfar, after discussing and explaining the reasons and causes of the closure of *Asharq Al-Awsat's* office and the arrest of its correspondent Abdulseed, we must ask at this point the crucial question which is: Was all the foregoing argument part of the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia? This question is the main concern of this chapter which will be discussed in the coming pages.

To begin with, a few points should be made at this stage. *Asharq Al-Awsat* is the representative of the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia. Any attempt to deny this fact is foolish and misleading. Therefore, how does this fact affect the content of the newspaper? How do other observers especially officials view and analyse this relationship? Finally, what was the effect of the unfriendly relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Sudan on *Asharq Al-Awsat* and vice versa? Meanwhile, it is important to remember the seven factors mentioned by the Sudanese diplomat earlier.

To begin with, it is important to know the policy of *Asharq Al-Awsat* towards the Sudan. So far, we know of two influential factors: Othman Mirghani, the editor of the paper, and Othman Al-Omair, the editor-in-chief, who opposed and rejected the policies and ideologies of the Sudanese government. Mirghani said about the paper's policy "It would be astonishing to many Sudanese officials, if they know that the paper has no fixed policy regarding the Sudan. It had never happened at any time." He also said, "We neither held an editorial meeting to define a policy toward Sudan, nor did we tell the editors to open fire on the Sudan."

Another Sudanese journalist inside the newspaper who refused to be named or taped explained this policy to me differently. He said, "*Asharq Al-Awsat* introduced itself to Arab readers as the international daily newspaper of the Arabs. Therefore, it would be difficult to find anyone inside the paper who would tell whether they represented the policy of Saudi Arabia or not. No doubt, the newspaper tried hard to reflect the political vision of Saudi Arabia." This Sudanese journalist concluded by saying, "If the Saudi-Sudanese relationship was friendly, this would be reflected on the way the newspaper handled the Sudanese news." Regarding whether the newspaper reflects the views of Saudi Arabia or not, the Sudanese diplomat told me, "You know the answer better than me." He said he was not an expert in Saudi affairs. He also said, "There was a conviction that if there was something against the Saudi policy, or which touched the interests of Saudi Arabia, or its principles, the Saudi newspaper would not permit its publishing. It was known that the newspaper is fundamentally Saudi and the publishers are Saudis."

It is appropriate to remind ourselves at this stage of what the diplomat said previously in his seven factors which influenced the policy of *Asharq Al-Awsat* at that time. In the third factor, he explained that the Second Gulf War tried the Arab world. Therefore, the political mobilization and polarisation had its effect on the emigré Arab newspaper. Hence, we can make two points from the diplomatic answers of the Sudanese diplomat. First, the government of Saudi Arabia has a direct effect on the content of *Asharq Al-Awsat*. Second, internal editors and reporters also play an important role in influencing the content of the paper.

On the other hand, the editor-in-chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* rejected the claim that his paper expressed the official views of the government of Saudi Arabia. He said, "That was not true at all. However, the *Herald Tribune* did not express the views of each American spokesman, but it did preserve and maintain the American interest." Equally, he added, "*Asharq Al-Awsat* preserves and maintains the interest of Saudi Arabia. In fact not only Saudi Arabia, but also other Arab countries." Al-Omair

asked, "Why did they not say that *Asharq Al-Awsat* expressed the views of the government of Syria in their struggle against Israel, or the views of the Moroccan government regarding the issue of the Sahara (desert)?" Al-Omair added that "talk was only for consumption, as Saudi Arabia itself was not pleased with every single item we published and they had their own views about it. But the Saudi government knew that *Asharq Al-Awsat* should have its own distinguished policy and method," "distinguished and not independent." Al-Omair repeated.

To conclude the argument about the influence of the government of Saudi Arabia on the content of the paper, Othman Mirghani said: "I would be a liar if I said that *Asharq Al-Awsat* could divert from the general guidelines of the Saudi policy." "However, we did not receive daily instructions from the Saudi Ministry of Information about all issues in this world." He also added, that "every smart person would realize the general guidelines and worked within their framework."

As a conclusive note, there are two points that stem from the argument pertaining to the influence of the government of Saudi Arabia on the content of the paper. First, there are those who believe in the Saudi influence on what was published. Second, there are those who acknowledge the effect of the Saudi policy, but not on everything published. Therefore, this is another evidence of the importance of differentiating between the journalistic and official views.

It became clear that internal and external forces played a large part in this confusing affair. Here, it is more than useful to discuss what might be the final reason behind the closure and the arrest. As mentioned before, the newspaper published on 30 December 1992 a strong article by Sadiq Al-Mahdi in which he called for civilian Jihad for change in the Sudan. I suspect this article and the attitude in the Arab world has made a big difference. Why did *Asharq Al-Awsat* publish it? As we read previously, El-Affendi, the former Sudanese press attaché, considered an article published in *Al-Ahram* newspaper as an interference in the Sudanese affairs. Therefore, was this article another interference by *Asharq Al-Awsat*? Concerning this

point Imam Imam said "The interpretation of the Sudanese government of this particular article as an interference had a great deal of truth in it, because many Sudanese officials noticed that Al-Mahdi was given special treatment, unlike other opposition leaders in the Arab world."

On the other hand, Othman Mirghani defended the publication of this article by denying that it was an interference. He said, "We act as a newspaper, not as the Ministry of Defence of Saudi Arabia." After defending the idea and the peaceful ideas of Al-Mahdi, Mirghani said, "They adopted a peacemaking slogan which is far from carrying arms and terrorism." In conclusion he believed, "The adoption by *Asharq Al-Awsat* of this slogan, should be looked at positively." On the other hand, Al-Omair said, "The word interference became an old word which was demolished by communication. It should be considered interference if Al-Mahdi's slogan was announced via Riyadh, Cairo, or Beirut's radios."

Immediately after the Second Gulf War around 1991, Al-Omair met Turabi in the presence of Imam Imam. In this private meeting, which lasted for three hours, the argument was intense between them to the point where the word "intense" is a very mild description. Al-Omair refused to permit me to use the strong discussion in this thesis. However, he described the attitude of Turabi during the meeting as being "rigid". According to Al-Omair, Turabi told him that "the fall of the Saudis' regime is inevitable." Al-Omair's response was that he was very pleased "because Sheikh Turabi's statement was luckily directed to them." When Turabi asked why?, Al-Omair answered that "Sheikh Turabi, you do not know the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its sociopolitical nature, which meant they would be very safe."

To sum up the argument, whether or not there was an interference by *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper in the Sudanese political affairs, Abdulseed was imprisoned and the offices of the newspaper were closed, within a month of the publication of Al-Mahdi's article about the civilian Jihad.

## Conclusion:

In 1996 the Saudi-Sudanese foreign policy started to improve. An important development in the reconciliation process resulted in a religious and political visit by the Sudanese President Omer Al-Basheer to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in mid 1996. After performing Haj (pilgrimage), Al-Basheer confirmed in a press conference that in his meeting with the King and the Crown Prince they were able to overcome the misunderstanding between the two countries.

During the conference, the correspondent of *Asharq Al-Awsat* in Jeddah asked him if the presence of "some personnel" in Sudan who actively oppose the Saudi government would affect the reconciliation process. (*Asharq Al-Awsat*, 5-5-1996). The President replied, "By talking about the presence of Osama Bin Ladin I emphasised the fact that we would not allow any activities against any country by those who stay in the Sudan." After this press conference, Bin Ladin together with many Afghan-Arabs left the Sudan to go back to Afghanistan where they disappeared. The openness policy adopted by the Sudanese government lately is directed towards Arabs and the international community. Meanwhile, *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper has adopted a less aggressive policy toward the Sudan. It publishes less news, views and leaked articles for Sadiq Al-Mahdi.

As we read previously, Al-Mahboub accused the leadership of the company which publishes *Asharq Al-Awsat* of being "misguided" by "sickness" and "intention" in Jeddah, Riyadh and London. Obviously, Al-Mahboub did not select those three cities for nothing. While, it is difficult to know his intentions, a little information might solve the puzzle. London is the main headquarters of the newspaper and the office of Al-Omair; Jeddah is the second headquarters where Hisham and Mohammed Ali Hafez, the co-publishers live and work; Riyadh is the base of Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz the Governor of Riyadh region, the co-publisher of *Asharq Al-Awsat*, and the biggest share-holder of the newspaper.

There is no doubt that the official foreign policy of Saudi Arabia provides the solid ground on which *Asharq Al-Awsat* stands. However, the newspaper and its editors have sufficient space for movement and manoeuvring. But sometimes playing on this spacious ground is badly calculated and even damaging. There is a need to differentiate between the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and "Pravda", the Arab world and "Asharq Al-Awsat" newspaper. The real point of significance is how could any Arab official differentiate between the official and the journalistic views and news? This important question does not apply to *Asharq Al-Awsat* only but also to the Arab and international media. For example, in the past, two British ambassadors to Germany and Egypt could convince neither Hitler nor Naser that *The Times* did not represent the official views of the British government. (Colin Seymour -Ure 1974 & Yoel Cohen 1986). There is no solution for this dilemma. The only advice that should be given to any official is to understand first the environment and circumstances in which a media works. Failure to do so would result in a disastrous decision-making. The Sudanese officials such as Al-Mahboub could neither understand this fact nor comprehend the meaning of foreign policy. It is evident that the editors of the newspaper made an optimum exploitation of the bad relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Sudan. They were being biased in their dealing with the Sudanese affairs. The Sudanese diplomat said in an elaboration about the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, "It was a quiet policy and even if it had some reservations it did not express them severely as *Asharq Al-Awsat* did. Saudi Arabia even during the period of worst relationship with the Sudan after the Second Gulf War, did not adopt the Sudanese opposition." Obviously, the word "biased" and "objectivity" became important words to many Sudanese officials including this prominent diplomat.

Once again, the policy of *Asharq Al-Awsat* toward the Sudan would be described as follows: The negative Saudi-Sudanese foreign policy provided the solid ground for *Asharq Al-Awsat* to settle a few matters with the Sudan. However, the intensity of criticism was determined by Al-Omair and Mirghani. Indeed, the Sudanese officials could no longer tolerate such a strong campaign. Therefore, they responded toughly.

It seems that the imprisonment of Abdulseed came as a revenge on him and his newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*. The closure of the office of the newspaper was a revenge on Saudi Arabia. The closure, the imprisonment and the name of Khadhraa Al-Diman suggest the following:

Saudi Arabia was behind the whole campaign against the Sudan. The evidence revealed that the responsibility of the Saudi government was much less than half. The environment in which Khadhraa Al-Diman lives represents the major share of this campaign, according to some interviewees.

Al-Omair and Mirghani represented another environment. The former was considered a representative of secularism, and the latter was considered the mouthpiece of the Sudanese opposition in London. Thus, I would conclude the most important factor behind this campaign is the foreign policy of the Sudanese government itself. However, the intensity of criticism is unjustifiable but understandable. The present Sudanese government is, wrongly or rightly, considered the first Muslim Brothers' government. This Movement, first established in Egypt, failed to reach office in Cairo, though it used all means. The success of the Movement's Sudanese branch led by the influential leader, Dr. Hassan Turabi alarmed the entire world.

Thusfar, there are a few points to conclude in this chapter. This case study does not apply to all Arab newspapers, especially the national (domestic) papers. But it provides a general view of the nature and role of Arab newspapers in the foreign policy of the Arab world. Also, this case study explains how some Arab governments use the press in the foreign policy process while the other Arab side is affected by it. Furthermore, both the Saudi and the Sudanese governments used different means to achieve some political objectives against each other. As we said earlier the present Sudanese government is considered the first Muslim Brothers' government which is led and influenced by Dr. Hassan Turabi. The Turabi's aim is to spread his revolution to the entire Arab and Muslim worlds. In this regard the Sudan adopted on its soil most of the fundamentalist movements including the Saudi Osama Bin Ladin who

was active in his opposition to the Saudi government, exploiting the facilities provided by the Sudanese. During this process the Saudis carried out a heavy campaign against the Sudanese to stop interference in their internal affairs. Therefore, if *Asharq Al-Awsat* adopted Sadiq Al-Mahdi who called in 1992 on Muslims to interact with the New World Order and called for the "Civilian Jihad for change", in Sudan, the Sudanese government adopted Osama Bin Ladin who also called for "Jihad" in 1991. There is a big and significant political difference between 'Jihad' and 'Civilian Jihad'. The former calls for the use of arms and force; the latter calls for political opposition and demonstrations. Finally, this chapter is another evidence of the integrative and Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy roles of the Arab press in general in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics.

CHAPTER EIGHT

**THE ARAB INFORMATION STRATEGY**

## **Introduction**

This chapter is an additional and complimentary chapter. However, two questions could be raised regarding this chapter. First, why do we need to know about it? Second, how does it fit in with the Arab press and foreign policy? Regarding the first question, the Arab Information Strategy in itself is strong evidence of the importance of mass media in inter-Arab politics. This strategy not only concerns consolidated and united Arab media messages, but is also aimed at winning Arab public opinion. Reading the strategy itself explains the problems that exist for the Arab people and what they really need from the mass media. In the final analysis this research or study is about the Arab press in the Arab foreign policy process. Therefore, knowing how some Arabs think about the effectiveness of the mass media is a very useful background.

Meanwhile, the relevance and connection of this Arab Information Strategy to the theme of this study is provided by the many Arab media or press wars in the system of inter-Arab politics. For example, we read in Chapter 3 how the various Arab governments imposed pressure on the Lebanese government to control the Lebanese press, which led, to the control of this press in the famous Legislative Decree Number 1 on Jan 1st 1977. (see Chapter 3. p 86). We also read in the same chapter how King Hussain of Jordan rejected and could not tolerate the press to damaging his country's relations with sisterly countries. (see Chapter 3. p 82). In fact the Arab Information Strategy demonstrates four important points. First, to reach an agreement to stop the mass media war amongst the Arabs in order to put an end to all media disputes. Second, to build a joint Arab Information Strategy towards both decision makers and public opinion in the Western world. Third, to win back Arab public opinion and try to create a united one. Fourth, the strategy itself is more evidence of the inability of the Arabs to be united upon any agreement. In fact this strategy does seem too ambitious.

## **Brief Political Background**

When the Ottoman Empire became the sick man of Europe and its entire system was malfunctioning, the European super powers at that time began to inherit the Empire's treasures. One of those important treasures was the Arab provinces. Great Britain and France concluded an agreement between them about the Arab provinces. This Anglo-French agreement was signed in May 1916 and called the Sykes Picott Agreement. In practical terms, this agreement divided the area into zones of permanent influence.

Even before this major political development, the call for Arab nationalism began to emerge in the thinking of many Arab intellectuals. This call was very understandable and natural, since the Arabs share with each other significant elements which are profound and deeply planted in their history. Those significant elements are, language, religion, history, blood ties, geography, and culture.

Having said that, there is a little doubt that some political factors were the major reasons for this call of Arab nationalism to surface and emerge. The political factors can be summarised as follows:

First: The Ottoman Empire was run and governed from the Turkish capital. Toward the end of the Empire's age Turkish nationalists began their political activities to establish their own nation which led eventually to the creation of modern Turkey.

Many Arabs had bitterly accused the Turks of weakening not only the Arab political position, but also the position of the entire Muslim world. As a reaction to this political development, the Arabs felt the need to maintain their heritage and secure their future.

Second: It is more than natural for the Arabs to call for Arab unity or Arab nationalism as a result of being British and French colonies.

Third: A significant political development took place in the Arab world when a British document in 1917 stated that the British government promised to establish a new Jewish home in Palestine. This document is known in the Arab world as

Balfour's Declaration. This new threat to the Arabs made the call for Arab unity or Arab nationalism stronger than ever. Practically speaking, the state of Israel was formally established and born in 1948, while the Arabs have continued to call for unity.

Before the middle of the 1950s when most Arab countries became formally independent, the Arabs established, in 1945, a new institution or organization called the Arab League. During the 1950s and to the middle of the 1960s, the call for Arab unity and Arab nationalism became stronger than ever. Two reasons were behind this development.

First: The emergence of a charismatic Arab leadership such as the Egyptian President Jamal Abdunaser who campaigned vigorously to establish the Arab nation under his leadership.

Second: The availability of radio which was used to shape the Arab public opinion by the speeches of President Abdunaser and his media personnel.

In reality the Arab countries at that time were divided by two political systems:

1. The socialist countries who claim to be the Arab nationalists.
2. The conservative countries who had to defend their nations against the expansion policy of the so-called nationalists. (see Chapter 3).

Having said that, up to date the Arabs are still searching and seeking some kind of unity or at least some kind of cooperation. Through the Arab League, the Arab leaders established the Common Arab Defense, and the Common Arab Market or the Arab Economical Strategy, etc. However none of the above agreements was implemented. One of the most important agreements that the Arabs are trying to establish is the Arab Information Strategy or the Common Arab Information Strategy. Since 1959, the Arab League has been trying to come up with a strategy that will be accepted by all the Arabs. But what is the Common or Joint Arab Information Strategy?

## **The Arab Information Strategy**

The Arab Information Strategy takes its elements from the Arab Information Covenant of Honour which was approved by the Council of the Arab League in its resolution No. 3767 in the 70th session of 14 September 1978. In fact, the Arab Information Covenant of Honour is an implementation of the Arab Solidarity Covenant which was issued by the Summit Conference in Casablanca, Morocco in 1965. (Al-Jammal, 1991:68).

Four articles of the Arab Information Covenant of Honour will be explained as follows:

1. The fifth article of the Information Covenant of Honour stated:

"The Arab media shall comply with the Arab solidarity principles in all presentations for the public opinion inside and abroad. The media shall significantly contribute with all capabilities to boost mutual understanding and cooperation among the Arab countries. They must avoid the publication of all materials to the detriment of the Arab solidarity and abstain from taking part in personally motivated campaigns." (Al-Jammal, 1991: 69).

2. The sixth article stated:

"The media will be very cautious in rejecting the principles of racial discrimination, religious fanaticism and all kinds of partiality while they (the media) are striving forth in the way of fair principles and the people's right of self-determination, in addition to the individuals' right of freedom and honour. The Arab media shall also struggle against all forms of colonialism and all kinds of aggression. They shall support the developing nations and the non-alignment countries and coordinate with the Arab supporters of media people in order to have an effect on the influential powers of public opinion worldwide for the advantage of the Arabs and their supporters." (Al-Jammal, 1991: 69).

3. The ninth article stated:

"The Arab media people shall safeguard the soundness of the Arabic language and its eloquence from the pitfalls of slang languages and incorrectness. They bear the responsibility for the dissemination of this language to replace the slang languages in support of mutual understanding among them (the Arabs)." (Al-Jammal, 1991: 69).

4. The tenth article stated:

"The Arab media must give considerable weight to Arabic news and information materials in general, and to the news and information materials which are furnished by the Arab and friendly news agencies in particular." (Al-Jammal, 1991: 69).

After 1959 the Arab League established within its organization the Permanent Committee of Arab Information. The responsibilities of this committee are to observe the work of the General Administration of Information and its entire offices. In addition, to draw the general plans of the Arab information policy and coordinate the efforts of the members of the Arab League in this regard. Also, to prepare and organize the annual budget for Arab information. (Al-Jammal, 1986: 38).

The figure on page 256 explains the process of information decision making inside the Arab League.

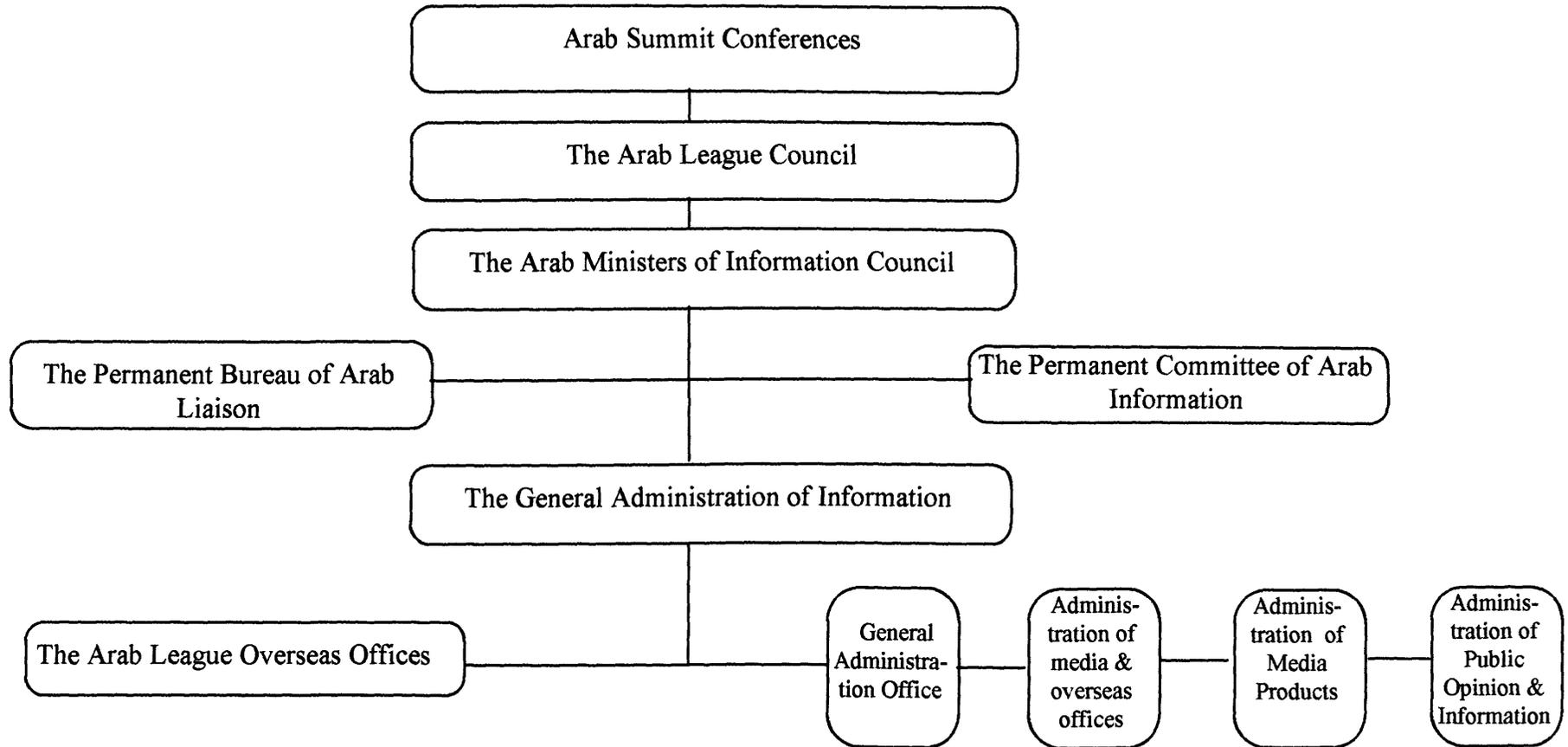
For many years the Arab Information Ministries have been trying to produce an Arab information strategy to be agreed upon by all Arab countries and to be approved by the Arab leaders at one of their summits. Recently, the Arab League, in 1995, drew up and produced the features of the Arab Information Strategy.<sup>1</sup>

However this strategy is still under discussion and has not yet been approved. To begin with, the cover page of this strategy's report stated clearly that it is for facing the challenges of the 21st century. Consequently, we should ask what these challenges are. They are five challenges as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> See the Appendix for the full report of the features of the Arab Information Strategy.

**Table 8-1 The Process of Information Decision Making**



Adopted from: (Al-Owiny, 1979: 20)

## **Present Challenges:**

1. The information revolution.
2. The fast moving and changing technological revolution.
3. The extensive information and communication revolution in the era of satellite.

This challenge has become stronger with the GATT agreement which has opened up borders for various commodities and products including cultural and information products.

4. The cultural and scientific revolution.
5. Emergence of large entities and regional blocs.

Meanwhile, the report of the Arab Information Strategy outlined eleven objectives as follows:

1. Exposition, presentation, development, and maintenance of the Arab culture and the conveyance of its actual image to the international public opinion.
2. To assure and support the firm values of the Arab nation. For example, national unity and the unification of interest and destiny; in addition to the avoidance of disputes and struggles.
3. Enrichment of the Arab personality in a state of equilibrium between the deep-rooted heritage and values and current advancements.
4. Consolidation of integral joint Arab information works for the better realization of intimate fraternal co-operation among Arab countries for the easy flow of information.
5. Narrowing the information and communication gap, between Arab information and the developed countries that acquire communication techniques.

6. Being accurate, objective, and honest while dealing with Arab nationals, with full respect to the freedom of expression in an atmosphere of mutual fruitful discussions and active wide involvement.
7. To provide the Arab information alternative in the space era to be the basic feed for the Arabs either through Arab information media on the ground or Arab satellite. This alternative is needed to confront the cultural invasion, foreign domination endeavours and the different challenges that are currently facing the Arab nation.

The report also stated that, in order for this Arab alternative to assume a full role, the following should be provided:

- Abundant T.V information products, enough to satisfy the immediate and increasing needs of the Arab T.V screens on the ground and the Arab satellite channels.
  - The ability to compete with foreign T.V channels in terms of high quality technical standards.
8. Ensuring that the Arab media shall continue the maintenance of its basic mission to serve Arab society in the areas of education and development.
  9. Giving special consideration to the flowing and eloquent classic Arabic language.
  10. The Launching of a specialised joint Arab T.V channel. (Fada'iah).
  11. Consolidation of the Arab information message directed to the world to guarantee the presentation of a positive picture of the Arabs, their deep-rooted history and culture, to affirm communication and interaction with other civilizations. (see the Appendix for the full report of the features of the Arab Information Strategy which was obtained from the Arab League headquarters in Cairo).

Can the Arabs really consolidate their information messages?

The Arabs need years to come to repair, for instance, the damage that Saddam Hussain has caused. In fact the Arabs are using and abusing their mass media to attack and demolish each other. Having said that, the same report stated and acknowledged the following fact:

"We should not be exaggerators over the ability to make the Arab information Strategy depending on mere suggestions and recommendations. The political resolution is important and the determination for execution is even more important."

The frustration and depression of many Arabs about the so-called Arab unity or Arab various strategies are very much felt in the Arab world. There exists a fear concerning the denial of all Arab-related matters. For example, an Arab poet Haroun Hashim Rashid wrote some years ago an aggressive poem criticizing the Arab Information Ministers. This poem is titled "This is the question!". It was published in *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper around 1989 and directed to the Arab Information Ministers at the end of their meeting.

The translation of the poem looks like this:

(1)

Not a word for you to say.  
Pick up your writings, cease controversy, and  
Set your work schedules to the minimum.  
As what to argue about save the battle field, where  
a (real) question emerges:  
What is your preparation in anticipation?

(2)

A reaction to every action,  
It is the wisdom that is off your vocabulary, even  
Off the parables and proverbs.  
Your skies are free and ownerless!!  
Your land is perished...  
Its sacred chastity is battered,  
And desecrated by the hosts of occupation!

When you are (swinging) between summits,  
From one council to another one,  
And from this committee to that one.  
With nothing you are following the battle  
but the words.  
Then, when a dawn breathes, and  
The sun comes into sight, you are tight! suffocating!  
And crammed with cough are the halls.

(3)

Once you echo a loud shout in the security council;  
One (more) cry in the misleading assembly,  
While the aggressor perpetuates his villainous aggression,  
and (inflicts brutal) killing of women and children.  
Heedless of your speech and media,  
Indeed intention is (reliant) on deeds.  
Clamorous heroism through the (meeting) hall loud speakers,  
Clamorous but in no courage of bold men.

Sirs,  
The media will convey but not your voice,  
Whatsoever the funds you've allocated.  
In this life, what do people follow?  
The action and reaction,  
They observe not the passion.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Views of the Interviewees:**

During the process of this research I found the opportunity to ask both officials and journalists about the Arab Information Strategy.

As far as the officials are concerned, there were 2 officials who had nothing to say about the Strategy. Another 2 officials criticized this strategy along with many other common Arab works. Meanwhile, the rest of the officials acknowledged the necessity for the existence of the Arab Information Strategy. However, some of these officials provided their own analysis for a strategy like the one under discussion to succeed. For instance, Fares Bois, the Lebanese Foreign Minister said, "Despite all

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<sup>2</sup> See the Appendix for a copy of the original Arabic poem by Haroun Hashim Rashid.

controversies and variations in the position of these countries, they, and the Arab people, must retain a bottom level of mutual agreement. The Arab press and information strategy are the substantial expression of this agreement and of the (countries) constants." "Therefore," he added, "to talk about the possibility of consolidating all views and perspectives, would be very difficult and unrealistic." Bois said:

"I believe there are some (private matters) that we should keep aside, but there is a certain standard for specific common constants that we should agree upon and hold. So, the problem is not on the part of the press, it is the political decision which must come from within the Arab League. Eventually the political problem would dissolve prior to solving the press or information problem."

In the same context the former Lebanese Prime Minister Dr. Saleem Al-Hus provided another vision in order to make this Arab information strategy succeed. He said "Truly that strategy is very important and its most important basics are freedom and democracy. Without both freedom and democracy it is impossible to draw an active Arab information strategy." However, Al-Hus concluded "Mass media must not be invested to open fire and attack various Arab countries. Objective criticisms are acceptable but not to the point where we trigger major disputes between the Arab countries."

At the same time, Dr. Elly Salem, the former Lebanese Foreign Minister, insisted that it is important for the Arabs to have an Arab information strategy. "This strategy you cannot separate from the present challenges between the Arabs on one side and the Israeli-American on the other."

Meanwhile, the Lebanese Information Minister, Basim Al Saba'a said he didn't want to drown himself with big slogans. He said: "However, the existence of the Arab Information Strategy is an important affair. We want Arab information performance or some kind of common participation. We also want Arab information twinning and

integration. Regretfully, the information practice varies from one Arab country to another," he added.

Shafiq Al-Wasan, the former Lebanese Prime Minister, has a more critical view. He said: "The Arab Information Strategy resembles the call of Arab unity. It is very difficult to reach either of them in this present generation." Al-Wasan asked, "What could the Arab League do?" He also added, "One day somebody told me that a group of zeros equals zero." On the same hand, Mai Kahalah, the press consultant of the Lebanese President argues that "It is important to have an Arab information strategy at least to shape Arab public opinion in foreign matters."

Adnan Omran, the Assistant of the Syrian Foreign Minister, also acknowledged the importance of the Arab Information Strategy. He said "Regretfully, that strategy was not approved yet. However, we have the economic strategy which was approved and never implemented. All strategies do exist but they are not active because the Arab land is filled with many external and internal mines," he concluded. Meanwhile Ambassador Mohamed Sobaih, the Palestinian Ambassador to the Arab League, said,

"The Arab information strategy is a necessity, however, until now regretfully it has been only a slogan. We must coordinate among and between each other; otherwise you will see overwhelming anarchy. For instance why should you listen to one song in ten different Arab T.V channels at the same time. If we do not coordinate and the Arab Information Ministers meet and discuss, the Arab public opinion will turn to other mass media," added Mr. Sobaih.

Finally, Dr. Ghazi Al-Qusaiby the Saudi Ambassador to London said, "There is no group of countries that has comprehensive strategies, as do the Arab countries, in terms of: Common Arab Market, Joint Defense Covenant, and Economic Agreement, etc. The problem of these strategies is that they are far too unrealistic and much too ambitious. Therefore, based on my immediate long experience with some Arab strategies, I expect no success for any new information strategy."

On the other hand, 2 journalists thought that the existence of the Arab Information Strategy was a necessity and a natural goal on both Arab and international levels. Meanwhile 15 journalists described the Arab Information Strategy as slogans, illusions, and dreams. The rest of the journalists refrained from giving their opinion since they have read nothing about this unapproved strategy.

4 journalists echoed each other by emphasising the fact that the Arabs in the era of various blocs could not agree upon anything or unite around any major issues. For instance, where is the Arab Common Market in the existing era of economic blocs? How can we make an Arab information system in the era of unity? Dr. Fayez Al-Sa'iagh, the Director of the Syrian News Agency (SANA) said: "In the first conference of the Arab News Agencies Union we agreed to establish a Common Arab News Agency which is financed by the Arabs and serves all Arab countries. So far, this agreement has not been implemented, how can we then speak of the Arab Information Strategy? In my opinion this strategy is slogans, slogans," he added. At the same time, Anees Mansour, the prominent Egyptian writer, said that we had

"a Saudi writer who once said that Arabs are a speech phenomenon like sneezing and coughing. He said: One land, one language, one religion, and one history, however, different hearts. Look at the civilized Europeans, they speak nine different languages, chase different religious sects and in spite of that they accomplished the Common European Market and the European Parliament. While we, the Arabs, agreed upon nothing."

Abdulbari Atwan, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Quds* newspaper, has a different vision. He says "The Arab Information Strategy is a reflection of Arab politics or any politics." He asked: "Is there a united Arab politics in order for us to have an Arab information strategy?" Then he answered, "Of course not, the whole thing is about a bankrupt Information Minister who has no genuine work." Having said that, Abdulbari concluded by saying "This strategy itself is a censorship and control over the press, can those Ministers implement this strategy on me in London?" Khair Allah Khair

Allah, the editor of *Al-Hayat* newspaper made a long story short by asking me not to waste their time discussing this Arab information strategy. It was very obvious and clear that the majority of the journalists were drawing a comparison between the will of the European countries to conclude and agree upon various agreements and unities, while the Arabs through their modern history could not agree upon anything. For one reason or another I found this fact hard to believe, because the Arabs have agreed once upon one important thing. That is, "The Arabs agreed not to agree."

Before we conclude the chapter about the Arab Information Strategy, it seems appropriate to introduce a note about Arab public opinion. As we have seen, the Arab Information Strategy is aimed at shaping Arab public opinion in Arab and international foreign matters. This is more than evident in the suggestion of the Arab League to establish an Arab T.V Satellite (Fada'iah). Perhaps the strategy of the Arab League is to think that a single Fada'iah will unite the Arab people. However, the establishment of this Fada'iah remains another Arab dream which does not seem to be accomplished yet. Having said that, the following note about Arab public opinion is not meant to be an elaborate analysis. At this stage it is important to stress the fact that it is only a note to give a general idea about Arab public opinion.

### **A Note About Arab Public Opinion:**

It is extremely difficult to elaborate and discuss Arab public opinion in the absence of accumulative academic knowledge in the Arab world. In this regard there is no tradition of survey or opinion polls research in the Arab world. In my opinion, the main reason behind these shortages is not the inability of the Arab researchers to carry this out, but due to government factors. Most Arab countries require formal government permission to conduct a research project.

Thusfar, we should ask at this point is there such a thing as Arabic public opinion? There is no doubt that Arabic public opinion is very much felt when it comes to the Arab-Israeli dilemma. In this regard the Arab mass media play an important role in

the shaping of Arab public opinion. In fact, even in the absence of Arab mass media, the shaping of Arab public opinion can be felt and achieved naturally by the action of Israel policies. It does seem that an academic work or a research on the nature and role of the mass media in the Arab-Israeli struggle could be beneficial as part of the peace process.

Recently, a new and powerful medium has been introduced into Arab air, that is Fada'ih, satellite T.V. The Fada'iat will not unite Arab public opinion. However, they play an important role in providing a better understanding of the existing various private Arab cultures. When I attended the conference of the Arab Information Ministers in Cairo in 1996 two important subjects were under discussion:

First, They discussed the Arab Information Strategy which has not yet been approved. Second, they also argued about the suggestion and request of the Arab League to establish an Arab Fada'iah in order to form and shape a united Arab public opinion, which also has not yet been approved. Regarding the second issue, I asked an ambassador inside the Arab League about the Arab Fada'iah, who laughed and told me off-record, saying: "I have water in my mouth." The meaning of this Arabic expression is that, he is an insider who opposes this idea entirely. The Ambassador also said "This is a very big ambition" for the following reasons:

"First: The big financial deficit is governing us. Some countries are not paying their shares because they do not have the capital. Others do not pay because they are waiting for the others to pay. As a result, establishing an Arab Fada'iah is very costly. Second: The second major obstacle is the political position of various Arab countries. Since the Gulf War we (the Arabs) have not been able to hold the Arab summit for obvious reasons. Establishing an Arab Fada'iah depends largely on the political situation among the Arabs. We really need Fada'iah and a newspaper, but how could we do that considering the above factors. I think the least we can do is to organize and produce T.V programmes and distribute them to various Arab televisions to be broadcast once a week or twice a month, this is the least," he concluded.

The dilemma and crises of unity or pan-Arabism remains a difficult puzzle to solve. Some Arabs must learn from Westerners how to be pragmatic and practical. For the time being they must aim at the bottom line, not the peak.

"Those who have read much about the Arab world already know that the concept of Arab unity and cooperation is largely a myth. Even many staunch advocates of Arab unity experienced an eye-opening experience on August 2, 1990 - the day Iraq invaded Kuwait." (Boyd, 1993: 325).

The question that must be asked, thusfar is, what is the alternative to pan-Arabism? Meanwhile, we shall review in the following the views of both officials and journalists about Arabic public opinion.

Initially I think it is inappropriate to ask whether the various Arab press can shape and form Arab public opinion or not. Instead we should ask first, does Arab public opinion in general trust the Arab press or not? Does this press reflect truly the trends of Arab public opinion? The Lebanese, Egyptian, and Syrian officials interviewed for this study believe that their own people have some confidence in their press. Also, those officials acknowledge indirectly that Arab public opinion in other Arab countries do not trust their press because those press, in turn, do not reflect the genuine trends of their respective peoples. If this is the case how could we measure the trends of Arab public opinion? The Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bois and the former Lebanese Foreign Minister Elly Salem in response to this question described the matter as "truly very difficult." Minister Bois believes that, "in the absence of free press it is very difficult to measure the national desires or decisions in each country. Therefore, we are forced to take this information from the foreign press or maintain the required information via political means," he concluded. Meanwhile Minister Salem said that,

"It is very difficult to measure Arab public opinion in the absence of both a free press and objective polls studies. In general Arab public opinion does not trust the Arab mass media because the people know that the Arab regimes are

authoritarian. In addition there is an excess of information which is fed to Arab people who are bored with what they read and listen to. There is a kind of anesthesia."

At the same time Dr. Saleem Al-Hus, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, said that "Arab public opinion did not have confidence in its press. However, this public opinion was affected by this press in one way or another." In the same hand, 11 officials directly acknowledged that Arab public opinion does not trust its press, therefore, it diverted to the foreign mass media such as, the B.B.C and Monte Carlo radios, etc. Having said that, those officials have no idea of how to measure the trends of Arab public opinion. Only Abdulmon'em Khatib provided his own prescription. He said that "Explosions were the prescription to measure Arabic public opinion. The Arab press insult my cleverness by its lies. Those press have no credibility," he concluded.

On the other hand, the views of the journalists do not vary a great deal. One journalist believes that Arab public opinion has a limited confidence in its press, while 2 journalists think that generalization is misleading since some Arab press is trusted. The rest of the journalists concluded that Arab public opinion did not trust the Arab press. For instance, George Sam'aan, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Wasat* magazine asked: "Why should Arab public opinion trust its mass media in general?"

Dr. Saber Falhout, the head of the Syrian Journalist Union said: "One of our biggest mistakes is that we forced Arab public opinion to acquire its information about the Arab world from the foreign mass media. We must change this custom and give credibility to the Arab newspaper. However, this needs the efforts of many generations, rather than one," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Mohamed Khair Al-Wadi, the editor-in-chief of *Tishreen*, the Syrian daily newspaper said: "Arab public opinion needs great efforts from our side to win it back. There is a historical heritage of demagogic information practices which affected the respect of the Arab public opinion for the written word. The involvement of the

Arab press in existing Arab disputes has led to some doubt about the Arab mass media," he concluded. The prominent Egyptian writer, Anees Mansour believes that, "Arab public opinion does not trust its government, therefore it does not trust its Arab press. The Arab governments have no credibility, therefore anything that has a relationship with the government is not believed. That is why Arab public opinion has diverted to other channels rather than its press," he added. On the same point, Abdulbari Atwan, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Quds* said that "Arab public opinion had suffered from the controlled and directed Arab press." He thinks, as a result, "the Arab people prefer to listen to London and Israeli radios. Although, it is true the latter is their enemy, but they know that most of this radio's news is credible."

Finally Adel Darwish, a journalist who works for different media including the *Independent*, believes that there are too many taboos and too many red lines that nobody can cross.

## **Conclusion:**

To conclude this additional and complimentary chapter, it is important to emphasise a few points about the Arab press in general and the Arab Information Strategy. We have argued throughout this study that inter-Arab politics are inseparable from the Arab press. Trying to unite the messages of the Arab press is an easy suggestion. However, it needs a strong and significant political backing. And Arab politics is deeply affected by countless disputes. Indeed the Arab Information Strategy in itself is strong evidence of the significance of mass media in general and the press in particular in inter-Arab politics. As we have seen, this strategy is trying to reach an agreement to stop the mass media war amongst Arabs, in order to put an end to media disputes. The strategy clearly calls for national unity and the unification of interest and destiny, in addition to avoidance of disputes and struggles. Also, the strategy calls for full respect for the freedom of expression. Thusfar, we will not discuss all the elements of the Arab Information Strategy but we should comment on the previous points. First, in order to implement the previous points the Arabs need political

resolution and the determination for implementation. So far, the Arabs lack both these important elements because of the deep mistrust among them. Indeed, as Faris Bois, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, said. "The political problem would dissolve prior to solving the press or information problem." Second, instead of trying to cover everything, the Arab Information Strategy should have concentrated more on and suggested in a practical way how to stop the press disputes in inter-Arab politics. Third, we have explained in this study that the press play an important role in the polarisation processes in inter-Arab politics. However, the Arab press or media is no more than another political tool available to each individual Arab country. Fourth, we explained in this study that the Arab press in general play integrative and Waqii'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy roles in Arab foreign policy. Therefore, which Arab government is willing to abandon these significant armories or political tools? The political role of the press or media in the entire world is evident, so why should the Arab world be exempt. If the Arabs could resolve the press problems this would mean that they had taken their first practical step towards political unity. This seems to us, a myth. For us also as readers, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, the Arab press will remain, for some time to come, as a significant thermometer of Arab foreign policy or Arab-inter political trends. Fifth, the Arab Information Strategy calls for freedom of expression, yet it expects Arab leaders to obey and implement this dream immediately. If one day Arab leaders did grant freedom of expression, then this would also mean that democracy would be practiced and granted. Finally, the Arab Information Strategy stated the following fact "we should not be exaggerators over the ability to make the Arab Information Strategy depend merely on suggestions and recommendations". The previous quote seems an appropriate conclusion.

The depression and anguish of most officials and journalists interviewed for this study about the function of the Arab League expresses somehow what the Arab public opinion view is of any work towards Arab unity. If we conducted a quick political survey we would find that each Arab country shares a major dispute with another neighbouring Arab country and the national (domestic) or emigré Arab press plays an

important integral part of this process. In fact the Arab League itself has been damaged by various reasons:

First, some Arab leaders during modern history sought not only to control the Arab League but also the entire Arab political system. Second, when President Anwar Al-Sadat concluded with Israel the agreement of Camp David, the Arab leaders transferred the headquarters of the Arab League from Cairo to Tunisia. The following story might be more enlightening. In Cairo there is the Arab League building and also there is a street called the Arab League Street. On the 12th of June 1997, I was on my way to interview Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdulmajeed, the General Secretary of the Arab League for the purpose of this study. I told the taxi driver to drive the Arab League please. Suddenly, he drove in a different direction. So I asked him where are you going? The driver replied to the Street of the Arab League. Then, I said did I mention the word "street"?, I want to go the building of the Arab League. Then, he responded, "They" 'the Arab leaders' transferred the Arab League to Tunisia and later "they" returned it to Cairo. Therefore, we forgot all about it. I told this story to the General Secretary of the Arab League who laughed and said: "This is only a taxi driver; transferring the Arab League to Tunisia was a very big mistake." So, what does this story mean? It means in practical terms, the taxi driver no longer believes in the Arab League or Arab unity.

The following two stories also happened inside the building of the Arab League. Both stories demonstrate how different the Arabs are and how some officials inside the Arab League misjudge other Arab countries. If this happens inside the Arab League building, then what happens outside it.

By coincidence, I was also in Cairo in the same month of June 1996 to investigate "The Green Newspaper Case Study". I arrived in the evening of Tuesday 25th. As usual I turned the T.V on searching for the latest news. It was very sad and regrettable to hear about a major explosion that occurred in Al-Khobar city, one of the Saudi Eastern cities. The bomb which was planted by a terrorist group to kill Americans

injured many Saudi citizens and their children also. Next day, I went to the Arab League building to attend the Arab Information Conference. While the conference was in session I preferred to stay in the press room to observe things as they are. One journalist called his newspaper to report the latest about the conference saying, the Ministers are opening "a talk show". While another journalist said, "The Ministers are making a movie". While I was sitting, one journalist asked me "Are you an official?" I said No, I am a researcher from Saudi Arabia. Immediately another journalist started to provoke me and shouted in front of my face saying, "The Hijaz and Najd guerrillas have revolted". Hijaz and Najd are two main provinces in Saudi Arabia. Of course, he was referring to the last night's bomb. He also started to pray to his God for more bombs against the Americans. Myself, I preferred to stay calm and not exchange remarks with him, otherwise both of us would have been forced to leave the building.

On the same day, after the Arab Information Ministers had discussed the suggestion of the Arab League to establish an Arab Fada'iah -a Satellite T.V channel- and argued the Arab Information Strategy and then concluded their conference, I was meeting Tal'at Hamed, the Spokesman of the Arab League and Deputy Director of The General Secretary's office and his press secretary. Once I sat down, Mr. Hamed asked me "Did you read the *Herald Tribune*?" I said no. Then he gave me the newspaper to read. There was a full page written by a Saudi Prince called Sa'ad Al-Faisal titled "The era of the great resurgence". In this article Prince Sa'ad Al-Faisal calls for the establishment of the "Muslim Country". After I finished my quick reading Mr. Hamed said that was not the whole story; he gave me a newspaper cutting and said read it. It was a piece from a Saudi newspaper, *Okaz*, which reports the death of a Saudi Prince called Faisal Bin Sa'ad. Then Mr. Hamed said you see how things are. I immediately responded to him saying, first of all Saudi Arabia throughout its entire history never adopted the policy of physical eradication. Second, the name of the first Saudi Prince who wrote the *Herald Tribune* article is Sa'ad Al-Faisal, while the name of the second Saudi Prince who died is Faisal Bin Sa'ad so what is the relation here or the connection? Tal'at Hamed then asked, there is no connection? I said definitely not.

Basically Tal'at Hamed, the Spokesman of the Arab League and Deputy Director of the General Secretary's office and his press secretary, confused himself by thinking that the Saudi government assassinated Prince Sa'ad Al Faisal for the article he wrote in the *Herald Tribune*. It is certain the Saudis do not adopt this kind of policy. Meanwhile, the name of the Prince who died is different from the name of the Prince who wrote the article. I left the Arab League building saying to myself if this happens inside the House of all the Arabs, what could happen outside it then? It seems not only important to differentiate between the official opinion and the journalistic one; but also some Arab officials need to differentiate between similar names as well.

To conclude this additional and complementary chapter, a few points should be addressed. It is more than evident that the Arabs vary to the point where any Arab joint agreement seems a myth. Doubts and conspiracy theories are deep-rooted elements in the mentality of some Arabs. I doubt very much the Arab ability to produce an acceptable Arab Information Strategy. And if it is approved it is highly unlikely to be implemented. The national (domestic) and emigré Arab press will still play, and for a long time to come, an integral role in the disputes of inter-Arab politics. Perhaps nobody has any idea of how using the Arab mass media in general and the Arab press in particular in the countless Arab disputes affected Arab public opinion in a negative way. In order to win back Arab public opinion the Arab world is in need of much political efforts other than establishing a single Arab Fada'iah. It is important at this stage to ask, Is Arab public opinion well informed or misinformed? How much does the Arab public opinion believe in Arab unity? As explained previously, the Arab League has been damaged politically and financially during the years by some Arab leaders. There is no doubt the dictator Saddam Hussain played the most influential role in this regard. Therefore, do Arabs need another new form, establishment, or political framework to replace the existing but malfunctioning Arab League?

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CHAPTER NINE

**Conclusion and Summary**

Investigating the relationship of the mass media in general and the press in particular in the foreign policy process is a difficult task by all means. What makes the issue more complicated is the fact that the cumulative knowledge at hand regarding this subject is so little; to the point where a researcher or student can hardly start his/her work with a fixed or defined framework of this phenomenon. We need a more systematic exploration of the relationship of the mass media in general and the press in particular, and foreign policy. The need for drawing the boundaries of the field of mass media and foreign policy has recently become greater than ever before for the simple reason of the growing, complex roles of mass media. In recent years more attention has been devoted to this area of study. Meanwhile, studying the mass media in the Western world is completely different from the Arab world. Both worlds vary a great deal in terms of political systems, analyses, and dimensions. Additionally, mass communication studies in general in the Arab world are so few and superficial. Arab students and researchers usually avoid investigating media and politics in the Arab world in general or in a given Arab country in particular. It is not surprising that the sub-field of public relations attracts most Arab students and researchers. Although, in recent times, public relations has begun to include some politics, this has not yet reached Arab universities to the best of my knowledge. The main reason behind this problem is not the inability of the Arab researchers to carry out work of a political nature but because of the sensitivity of the issues and the obstacles which Arab governments place before this kind of research. I consider myself fortunate in investigating this study in the Arab world. However, it was not an easy work in terms of conducting, analysing and financing.

In this conclusion and summary chapter it is important to stress some points. This study is constructed around three key elements and points as follows:

### **A. The external level of analysis:**

Most of the contributions at hand are the result of the study of the interrelations of mass media, government and politics. I described those works as being internal in their level of analysis. Works such as, Bernard Cohen (1963, reprinted 1983), Nicolas Berry (1990), Patrich O'Heffernan (1991), and Yoel Cohen (1986) were criticized for being internal research rather than external. Contrary to those studies, the aim here is not to investigate the internal process of the making of foreign policy in any given country, but rather to expand beyond the internal framework and explore systematically the issue in a regional context. Furthermore, those above studies investigated the interaction of the press or media in a given Western country such as the United States or Britain. Indeed, these are very useful researches. However, what we need, as we have said, is to go beyond the internal framework in investigating the media or the press in foreign policy. For example, we need to know how the media or the press play a role in affecting or impacting decision makers in another sovereign country. Foreign policy is made at home to influence another government abroad. It is extremely useful to know how the press participate in the making of certain foreign policy. But what is more useful to know is how the media or the press participate in this process towards another sovereign country. Therefore, the external level of analysis was one of the main concerns of this study. In this regard I investigated the nature and role of the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy in a regional context.

### **B. Government-to-Government Communication:**

Related to the above point concerning the external level of analysis, this study concentrates on how various Arab governments use the press to communicate and influence each other. For example, Jarol Manheim (1994) in his study investigated the communication efforts directed towards the USA by other countries. This strategy has become known as public diplomacy or propaganda. Obviously, this

line of thought implies the heavy attention of the broadcasting media such as T.V and radio. As we said previously, the more we focus on T.V or radio, the more we will discuss propaganda or public diplomacy and vice versa. It is useful to measure public opinion in foreign policy matters, but again we need more information and investigation to measure decision-making in another foreign country. What do foreign policy officials find in the foreign press? And how much does it have a role or impact on their decisions? This study, by interviewing various Arab officials and journalists in four sovereign Arab countries, tried to reveal some answers.

### **C. The Press:**

Most scholars and researchers acknowledge that the press (newspapers) are the medium most heavily used in the foreign policy process or communications. Therefore, this study investigated the nature and role of the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. Bernard Cohen, for example, explained a few reasons behind his selection of print media which is valid and acceptable for this study. According to Bernard Cohen the printed word is for "persons on higher educational and professional levels" (Cohen B, 1983: 8). Also "The higher one goes in the formal and informal structures of foreign policy-making in the United States, the more time and attention one finds being paid to the newspaper rather than to radio and television as the important source of foreign affairs news and comment" (Cohen B, 1983: 7). Also, "The products of the newspaper press are not as ephemeral as those of radio and television." (Cohen B, 1983: 8). In addition, the coverage of foreign affairs in newspaper are more extensive and thorough. The number of words that newspapers can carry and publish is greater than those of television and radio. (Cohen B, 1983: 8).

Thusfar, based on the previous elements and points, this study was constructed and investigated. Consequently, three aims were designed to research the subject under

discussion. Under the main aim of this research, this study investigated the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in Arab foreign policy. In Chapter 4 both prominent Arab officials and journalists interviewed for this study revealed 7 roles the national (domestic) Arab press play in Arab foreign policy. They are as follows:

1. The no role theory: This theory exists, according to the interviewees, because the Arab national press does not enjoy freedom. Therefore, it has no role in Arab foreign policy.
2. The mirror role: This means that the national Arab press reflects the decisions, thoughts, and the political climate in their respective countries.
3. Leaks and trial balloon role: The Arab leaders through their national Arab press leak some trial balloons on the Arabic level to test some policies in the political arena.
4. As a source of information: In this regard the national Arab press are rich in information for officials in other Arab countries.
5. The press as a psychological weapon: Arab leaders use the national press to put psychological pressure on other Arab leaders and officials.
6. The press and diplomacy: The diplomatic role of the national Arab press is one of the most important findings of this research. Previously, it was argued in this thesis that the national Arab press plays a parallel role to formal diplomacy. In fact the role of the national Arab press in Arab diplomacy is a complementary angle or role to the formal diplomacy. This particular role will be discussed further in the coming pages.
7. The press as postman: In this role the national Arab press carry political messages between two Arab countries or more especially when a diplomatic relationship does not exist or when a major dispute interrupts the normal relationship.

Reading those roles in greater details in Chapter 4 makes us believe that almost all the roles the national Arab press plays in Arab foreign policies are formal. For example, Bernard Cohen and Patrick O'Heffernan respectively believe that the American press and media play "symbiotic" and "co-evolution" roles in American foreign policy (see Chapter 1). This does not happen in the Arab world because the media or the national press in the Arab region is controlled or managed by the Arab governments. Based on our evidences the national (domestic) Arab press are a significant integral part of the Arab foreign policy establishments. Therefore, the nature and role of the national (domestic) Arab press in Arab foreign policy is an integrative role rather than symbiotic or co-evolution.

Also, under the second aim of this research, this study investigated the nature and role of the emigré Arab press in Arab foreign policy. The investigation of this subject in Chapter 5 explained how this press enjoys limited freedom to the point where this freedom is given in order to serve a foreign policy tactically speaking. Under this second aim the investigation provided more evidence of the integrative role of the various Arab press in Arab foreign policy. Both the national (domestic) and emigré Arab press serve the foreign policy of one given Arab country or government.

At the same time the second part of Chapter 5 discusses the subordinate aim of this research which is about the interrelationship between the press and intelligence service. The basic assumption of this study concerning this issue is that information is the common product that diplomats, journalists, and intelligence service personnel deal with. And since we have some evidence of the involvement of journalists in diplomacy, why should we rule out journalists from the intelligence service arena. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 proved the urgent need to draw the boundaries between diplomacy, journalism, and the intelligence services. In the final analysis, foreign policy is always made based on information collected from those three professions.

As we said earlier, the role of the various Arab press in Arab diplomacy has become more than evident. To the point where the Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bois

described the role of the national Arab press in Arab foreign policy as playing a Waqi'iah diplomacy role which means real or formal diplomacy. This description is quite understandable since the various Arab press are in fact another branch of the government or are considered government bulletins. The national or emigré Arab press might differ in style but indeed not in substance. Furthermore, we noticed exclusively in Chapter 6, The Green Newspaper, that an Arab journalist played the role of a diplomat. Anees Mansour successfully mediated and halted a political crisis between Egypt and Saudi Arabia over an article published in a Saudi newspaper. Another example is provided by the admission of another prominent Arab journalist Ahmed Al Gar Allah, who said that he played the role of a mediator or diplomatic broker between many Arab countries in which he could prevent conflicts (*Al-Jadidah* magazine, 25-6-1997). Indeed if the press can facilitate relations among nations, it can also hinder policies or relations. Diplomacy in modern times goes hand-in-hand with the press to serve a certain foreign policy. The two professions in the Arab world are complementary to each other. They complete one another and cannot be separated especially in countries where the press is heavily controlled. The Arab press is used as an integral tool available to the foreign policy to communicate, pressure, bargain, negotiate, and influence. However, the formal diplomacy is restricted by political and diplomatic obligations; while the Arab press can play tactically a useful diplomatic role. This tactical role is more evident in the emigré Arab press. Unlike Western countries, the various Arab press do not participate in making a foreign policy in any given Arab country. However, they participate heavily in implementing a foreign policy. As we argued in Chapter 4 Eytan Gilboa (1998: 58) classified media-diplomacy as follows: First, public diplomacy, which refers to education and cultural contacts with people of other nations who could influence their governments. Second, media diplomacy, which refers to the use of decision-makers from the media to send signals to and put pressure on other governments. Third, media-broker diplomacy, which refers to journalists who play the role of diplomats. Since the Arab press lack freedom and their participation in foreign policy or diplomatic process is managed

and controlled heavily by their own governments, this study modified the media-broker diplomacy to be the media-Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy. Meanwhile, the various Arab press play a mixture of both media-diplomacy and media-broker diplomacy as described by Gilboa. This mixture is the direct result of evidence collected in this study. Therefore, the various Arab press play Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy role in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. Also, Philip Taylor outlined four dimensions through which inter-state relations are formed or built. Those dimensions according to Taylor are:

1. Diplomatic
2. Economic
3. Military
4. Communication, which refers to the mass media. (1997: 20)

Taylor also provided a further dimension which he called "the hidden dimension" which refers to the intelligence activity. Taylor subsumes this activity into the fourth dimension. Therefore, this study, also based on the evidence collected, will include the various Arab press in the first dimension, which is diplomacy rather than the fourth dimension as described by Taylor; because the various Arab press play a complementary or integrative role to the foreign policy establishments in inter-Arab politics. Both the integrative and Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy roles of the various Arab press in Arab foreign policy are no exaggeration, by any means.

As we have seen in this study so far, and in the other studies discussed in the literature review chapter, mass media in general and the press in particular, have an exceptional relationship with diplomacy. Indeed, both professions are important tools for the foreign policy establishment in any country. Perhaps it is useful at this stage to draw up in this conclusion and summary chapter some similarities and differences between journalists and diplomats since they are the ones who implement a certain foreign

policy. Before we present Yoel Cohen's vision in this regard, it is important to note that his work is about the British mass media and British diplomacy.

1. Diplomats and journalists "deal with relations between states gathering information and influencing public opinion about international affairs. There is an interdependence between the diplomat and the journalist in each of these functions." (Cohen Y, 1986: 8).
2. Diplomats and journalists "have sources of information in a foreign country which the other may not have; for example, in some countries while a journalist can keep in touch with opposition groups, for a foreign diplomat to do so might be considered an interference in local politics." (Cohen Y, 1986: 8).
3. "Diplomats are privy to confidential information about international diplomacy from which the media are excluded." (Cohen Y, 1986: 8).
4. "As a moulder of opinion, a journalist has a wider public audience than a diplomat can hope for." (Cohen Y, 1986: 8).
5. A journalist, "can also freely criticize his own, or other, governments." (Cohen Y, 1986: 8).
6. Both the diplomat and journalist "believe they are contributing to society's well-being; the diplomat by defending the national interest and negotiating on his country's behalf, and the journalist by playing the critical role of watch-dog on government and the rest of the society." (Cohen Y, 1986: 8).
7. The journalists and diplomats "are engaged in non-routine work." (Cohen Y, 1986: 8).
8. "In terms of background, diplomats are university graduates while journalists in many cases are not. However, the journalists are professionally trained while in diplomacy the generalist is still preferred." (Cohen Y, 1986: 9).

Thusfar, it does seem that we need to pay more attention to the interrelationship between diplomacy and the press in our investigation of media and foreign policy.

Before concluding this chapter we should elaborate on a few points: First, both case studies, The Green Newspaper and Khadhraa Al-Diman Newspaper, in this research, provided sufficient evidence which backed the integrative and Waqi'iah "real" or "formal" diplomacy roles of the various Arab press in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics. It was more than evident that the emigré Arab press is affected by inter-Arab politics even if it publishes outside the Arab world. In fact no matter wherever those press publish they will indeed be part of Arab politics. Some influential Arab countries began in the past few years to encourage or establish some emigré or international Arab media in the West in general, and in London in particular. Recently Saudi Arabia came under heavy attack for monopolizing the Arab media and having the most influential mass media in the Arab world. For example, *TIME* international magazine wrote an article under the title "The New Saudi Press Barons: They are taking over the international Arab media – to the dismay of the region's independent journalists." *TIME* magazine concluded the article by saying:

"The growing concentration of Arab media in Saudi hands seems a clear reflection of the King's belief in the value of the media as a purveyor of the message. That is precisely what seems a danger to others. Says a Lebanese writer who reluctantly joined Prince Khalid's daily *Al-Hayat* after a year's unemployment: "It gives a false impression of what that Arab intelligentsia thinks. Many Arab journalists are against the blockade on Iraq and oppose the Middle East Peace Conference. But they dare not write what they think..." (*TIME* magazine, 22-6-1992)

Another example was provided by *THE GUARDIAN* newspaper which wrote under the following headline "The petro-dollar press" and says "The Saudis have bought up, or are trying to buy up, every single journalist, author and independent thinker in the Arab world. Most Arab journalists are not paid well, and the Saudis offer high salaries..." (*THE GUARDIAN* newspaper, 30-11-1992).

Having said that, if we insist on using the word buying, should we blame a nation serving its national interest and the national interest of many Arab countries peacefully? Or should we blame those Arab journalists who agreed to be bought under the claim of earning their bread and butter. Finally, this campaign against Saudi Arabia is a part of the polarisation in inter-Arab politics. The Arab world consists of 22 countries, a third of which have the financial ability to establish many media and press, in London in particular. Air and water are available for every one in London and it takes only one step, which is to register in the British Post Office. The previous argument is certainly a defence of the Saudis. This defence stems from the fact that so many Arab journalists have attacked Saudi Arabia in the past in order to raise money. Regretfully, the Saudis used to pay because they did not want their image to be distorted. When the Saudis stopped paying and began to have their own media, the attack took another direction. If the Saudi international or emigré media or press damage the Arab cause or are considered a danger to others, then we need a more logical, analytical, and systematic study to prove or disprove those claims. For the time being, we will consider it as another struggle in inter-Arab politics.

As we said at the beginning of this chapter, studying the press system in the Western world is sharply different to studying it in the Arab world. In the West, democracy and freedom of the press are practised in very competitive and complicated ways. While in the Arab world neither democracy nor freedom of the press are practised genuinely and truly. Even those Arab countries who claim to be republican or democratic are far from the meaning of those words. For example, all republican Arab countries, as they are called, are in fact ruled by the military establishment. Regarding democracy and freedom of speech, the Arab people have developed through the years an expression saying that, "an Arab citizen can not open his mouth except at the dentist's". In other words, the dentist's is the only safe place where an Arab can open his/her mouth without fearing security personnel or the intelligence services. On the other hand, many Arabs see the Western people and press as having

no limits on their expression and freedom. This has become more evident after the President Clinton-Lewinsky affair.

Some Arab officials and journalists, interviewed for this study, insisted on freedom of the press as a major prerequisite for the Arab press to play an active role in Arab foreign policy. Indeed there is some press freedom in some Arab countries; however, the press is not free. No Arab press enjoys freedom as practised in the Western world. Furthermore, the press system or laws in the Arab world are very old and backward and need to be updated to face the new era of communication. In this connection there are some questions to be asked:

- Can the Arab press be free without practising democracy?
- Can both democracy and freedom of the press be implemented and practised in the Arab world?
- Most importantly, are the Western democracy and freedom of the press models suitable for the special Arab political system and culture?
- Is there a need for educated Arab and intellectuals to study and produce a press system or law that is suitable for the unique Arab culture?
- Is it not the time for the Arabs in general to realize that this is the era of communication and information, and therefore, deal with the press or media issues in a more practical way?

Before we conclude this chapter, it might be useful to outline a few future areas of research under the concern of media or press-foreign policy in the Middle East in general, and the Arab world in particular.

First, as we discussed in Chapter 3 William Rugh (1987) wasted a golden opportunity to explain for us the effect or role of the Arab press in Arab foreign policy or inter-Arab politics, because he holds significant qualifications as a researcher and diplomat

in different Arab capitals including Beirut. The role of Lebanon or Beirut in the polarisation process of inter-Arab politics during the 1970s is most significant especially in terms of media or press wars. In fact studying the media or press roles in this era can explain not only the press's relationship with foreign policy of the Arab world, but also its roles in the Cold War which was taking place between the USA and the former USSR. Indeed, the Arab press in Lebanon during the 70s is a very important case study which involves both Arab and non-Arab powers.

Second, during the last few decades, the Arabs and Israelis have confronted each other in deep and profound political and military struggles. This, of course, took place in the absence of political and diplomatic relationships. Therefore, we would assume that both parties were relying heavily on each other's media or press to observe news and various views. This area is another important study to uncover how the media or the press facilitate or hinder peace.

Third, After the Second Gulf War, Arab Fadai'iat, satellite televisions, have flourished in a revolutionary manner. This is a third significant area which researchers should investigate in the immediate future.

Fourth, as we have explained in this study some evidence started to emerge about the special relationship between media and diplomacy. Therefore, researchers should start with this important phenomenon in future researches in order to explain the wider framework of media and foreign policy.

We have seen through this thesis that Arab journalists are in fact no angels and some of them help make Arab journalism one of the most corrupt professions. However, Arab governments control the press in a very illogical way while Arab journalists are trying to maintain freedom and power for themselves. Therefore, the struggle will continue and the puzzle will remain as stated by Jay Blumler:

"Media is not supposed to be shared: That's an infringement of editorial autonomy. It is not supposed to be controlled: That's censorship. It is not even supposed to be influenced: That's news management! But why should media personnel be exempt from Lord Acton's dictum that all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely? And if they are not exempt, who exactly is best fitted to guard the press guardians, as it were?" (Graber, 1993: 8)

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## **Appendix**

## The List of the Interviewees

### ◇ The Officials:

#### Lebanon

- |    |                              |  |                                     |
|----|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1- | <b>Mr. Fares Bois</b>        | The Lebanese Foreign Minister.                   | Tape recorded interview on 20/3/97. |
| 2- | <b>Dr. Saleem Al-Hus</b>     | Former Lebanese Prime Minister.                  | Tape recorded interview on 12/3/97. |
| 3- | <b>Dr. Elly Salem</b>        | Former Lebanese Foreign Minister.                | Tape recorded interview on 14/3/97. |
| 4- | <b>Mr. Shafiq Al-Wasan</b>   | Former Lebanese Prime Minister.                  | Tape recorded interview on 12/3/97. |
| 5- | <b>Mr. Nihad Al-Mashnoug</b> | Press Consultant of the Lebanese Prime Minister. | Unrecorded interview on 17/3/97.    |
| 6- | <b>Mr. Basim Al-Sab'a</b>    | The Lebanese Information Minister.               | Tape recorded interview on 21/3/97. |
| 7- | <b>Mrs. Mai Kahalah</b>      | Press Consultant of the Lebanese President.      | Tape recorded interview on 13/3/97. |

## Syria

- 8- **Mr. Jobran Koriah**      The Syrian Presidential Spokesman.      Unrecorded interview on 14/5/97 in presence of Salwa Al-Ostwani, the correspondent of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper and B.B.C. radio in the Syrian capital.
- 9- **Mr. Adnan Omran**      Assistant of the Syrian Foreign Minister.      Tape recorded interview on 14/5/97.
- 10- **President Ali Naser Mohamed**      Former President of South Yemen before the unification.      Unrecorded interview on 13/5/97 in presence of Salwa Al-Ostwani.
- 11- **Mr. Abdul Mohsen Al-Bala'a**      The Saudi Ambassador to Syria.      Unrecorded interview on 15/5/97.

## Egypt

- 12- **Ambassador Hussain Huraidi**      Director of the Press and Information Department, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry.      Tape recorded interview on 8/6/97.
- 13- **Ambassador Al-Sayed Hussain**      Director of the Office of the Egyptian Deputy Foreign Minister.      Unrecorded interview on 9/6/97.

**Egypt - Officials (cont.)**

- |     |  |   |  |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 14- | <b>Dr. Ahmed Esmat<br/>Abdulmajeed</b> | General Secretary of<br>the Arab League.                                      | Unrecorded interview<br>on 12/6/97 in presence<br>of his Press Consultant<br>Mr. Tal'at Hamed. |
| 15- | <b>Mr. Naif Al-Qadi</b>                | The Jordanian<br>Ambassador to Egypt.   | Tape recorded interview<br>on 11/6/97.   |
| 16- | <b>Mr. Mohamed Sobaih</b>              | The Palestinian<br>Ambassador to the<br>Arab League.                          | Tape recorded interview<br>on 8/6/97.  |
| 17- | <b>Mrs. Su'ad Bashir</b>               | Information attaché of<br>the Libyan Embassy in<br>Cairo.                     | Unrecorded interview<br>on 7/6/97.   |
| 18- | <b>Mr. Abdulazeem Awad</b>             | Press attaché and<br>Spokesman of the<br>Sudanese embassy in<br>Cairo.        | Unrecorded interview<br>on 8/6/97.   |
| 19- | <b>Dr. Mahmoud Abdulaziz</b>           | Director of the Press<br>and Information<br>Department of the Arab<br>League. | Unrecorded interview<br>on 9/6/97.   |

### London

- 20- **Mr. Mohamed Khader** The Syrian Ambassador Unrecorded interview  
to London. on 28/7/97.
- 21- **Mr. Fou'ad Ayoub** The Jordanian Unrecorded interview  
Ambassador to London. on 18/7/97.
- 22- **Dr. Mohamed Shakir** The Egyptian Tape recorded interview  
Ambassador to London. on 5/8/97.
- 23- **Mr. Abdulmon'em Khatib** An Iraqi diplomat, Tape recorded interview  
refugee in Britain. on 22/8/97.
- 24- **Dr. Ghazi Al-Qusaiby** The Saudi Ambassador Written interview on  
to Britain. 26/9/97.

### Saudi Arabia

- 25- **Ambassador Ismael Al-Shura** Saudi Deputy Foreign Unrecorded interview  
Minister for Political on 1/10/97.  
Affairs.

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#### ◇ **The Journalists:**

### Lebanon

- 1- **Mr. Talal Salman** Editor-in-Chief of the Tape recorded interview  
Lebanese *Al-Safir* (The on 11/3/97.  
Diplomat) newspaper.

### Syria

- 2- **Dr. Saber Falhout** The head of the Syrian Journalist Union. Tape recorded interview on 13/5/97.
- 3- **Dr. Fayez Al-Sa'iagh** Director of the Syrian News Agency (SANA). Tape recorded interview on 15/5/97.
- 4- **Mr. Mohamed Khair Al-Wadi** Editor-in-Chief of the Syrian *Tashrin* newspaper. Tape recorded interview on 16/5/97.

### Egypt

- 5- **Mr. Anees Mansour** Prominent Egyptian writer. Tape recorded interview on 10/6/97.
- 6- **Mr. Ibrahim Nafea** Editor-in-Chief of the Egyptian *Al-Ahram* (The Pyramid) newspaper. Tape recorded interview on 12/6/97.

### London

- 7- **Mr. Khair Allah Khair Allah** The Editor of *Al-Hayat* newspaper (issued in London). Tape recorded interview on 17/7/97.
- 8- **Mr. Abdulbari Atwan** Editor-in-Chief of *Al-Quds* newspaper (issued in London). Tape recorded interview on 20/7/97.

**Journalists in London (cont.)**

- |     |                                  |   |                                     |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 9-  | <b>Mr. Othman Al-Omair</b>       | Editor-in-Chief of <i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper (issued in London). | Tape recorded interview on 24/7/97. |
| 10- | <b>Mr. Amin Al-Seba'i</b>        | Director of the Middle East Publishing and Media Ltd.                   | Tape recorded interview on 2/9/97.  |
| 11- | <b>Mr. Adel Malik</b>            | Prominent Lebanese journalist living in London.                         | Tape recorded interview on 3/9/97.  |
| 12- | <b>Mrs. Bare'a Alumuddin</b>     | Lebanese journalist living in London.                                   | Tape recorded interview on 2/9/97.  |
| 13- | <b>Mrs. Nura Fakhori</b>         | The Editor of <i>Al-Majallah</i> magazine (issued in London).           | Tape recorded interview on 2/9/97.  |
| 14- | <b>Mrs. Huda Al-Husaini</b>      | Journalist and writer of <i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper.              | Tape recorded interview on 25/8/97. |
| 15- | <b>Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Rashed</b> | Editor-in-Chief of <i>Al-Majallah</i> magazine (issued in London).      | Tape recorded interview on 3/9/97.  |

### Journalists in London (cont.)

- |     |                                 |  |                                     |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 16- | <b>Mr. Saleem Nasar</b>         | Prominent Lebanese journalist and writer. He is living in London and writing for <i>Al-Hayat</i> newspaper.  | Tape recorded interview on 28/7/97. |
| 17- | <b>Mr. Abdulwahab Badr Khan</b> | Editing Manager of <i>Al-Hayat</i> newspaper.  | Tape recorded interview on 15/7/97. |
| 18- | <b>Mr. George Sam'aan</b>       | At the time of the interview he was the Editor-in-chief of <i>Al-Wasat</i> magazine. At present he is the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of <i>Al-Hayat</i> newspaper. | Tape recorded interview on 15/8/97. |
| 19- | <b>Mr. Eyad Abu Shagra'</b>     | The Editor of <i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper.  | Tape recorded interview on 22/8/97. |
| 20- | <b>Mr. Bakr Awaidah</b>         | The Editor of <i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper.  | Tape recorded interview on 27/8/97. |
| 21- | <b>Mr. Adel Darwish</b>         | Egyptian journalist living in London. He writes for <i>The Independent</i> newspaper (Britain).  | Tape recorded interview on 27/8/97. |

### **Saudi Arabia**

- 22- **Dr.Hashim Abdu Hashim** Editor-in-Chief of *Okaz* Tape recorded interview  
newspaper and member on 4/10/97.  
of the Saudi  
Consultative Council.

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## **Case Studies' Interviewees:**

### **The Green Newspaper Case Study:**

1. **Jihad Al-Khazen**, the former Editor-in-Chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Jun-18-1996).
2. **Erfan Nizamuddin**, the former Editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Jun-17-1996).
3. **Othman Al-Omair**, the Editor-in-Chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Jul-24-1997).
4. **Anees Mansour**, A prominent Egyptian writer and journalist.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Jun-10-1997).
5. **Esmat Abdulmajeed**, the General Secretary of the Arab League.  
(Off-record interview on Jun-12-1997).

### **Khadraa Al-Diman Case Study:**

1. **Othman Al-Omair**, the Editor-in-Chief of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Sep- 9-1996).
2. **Othman Al-Mirghani**, the Editor of *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Aug-17-1996).
3. **Imam Imam**, a journalist works for *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Sep- 3-1996).
4. **A Prominent Sudanese Diplomat** in the Sudanese embassy in London.  
(Tape-recorded interview on Aug-20-1996).

*Translation\**

*The Expert Committee's  
Report on the Features of the  
Arab Information Strategy for  
Facing the Challenges of the  
21st Century*

*2-4 May 1995*

Cairo

\*. *This strategy was obtained from the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo. It is an informal translation.*

**The Expert Committee's Report  
on the Features of the Arab Information  
Strategy for Facing the Challenges of  
the 21st Century  
(2-4 May 1995)**

**Cairo**

**Introduction:**

Based on the decision of the Arab Ministers of Information Council in its 27th session of 24 July 1994 the delegation of the Great Socialist Arab People's Republic of Libya was assigned to prepare an overview of Common Arab Informational Strategy to face the challenges of the 21st century. This is prior to the presentation of the same to the Permanent Committee of Arab Information in its 25th meeting in January 1995 for perusal and further presentation to the Arab Ministers of Information Council.

And based on the decision of the Permanent Committee of Arab Information to form an Expert Committee headed by the President of the Permanent Committee including: Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Sultanate of Oman, Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt and Yemen as members, in order to study the paper that Libya submitted to the Committee in the said meeting.

The Expert Committee constituted as above held a meeting in the period 2-4/5/1995 and reviewed the Libyan paper and two other papers on the same subject presented by Syria and the President of the Permanent Committee of Arab Information.

The Committee has based its work on the "new look" of Arab information as perceived and agreed on by the Arab Ministers of Information Council in its 25th session in the period 19-20 September 1992 and on the bases, concepts, objectives and practical proposals for implementation of this "new look". The Council stressed the importance of these constituents and that new research should take place within its

framework, but should concentrate as a priority on the features of the strategy concerning the challenges that Arab information must efficiently face as a result of the consequent changes on both Arab and international levels, especially those relating to the information domain in the satellite era while steadily approaching the gates of the 21st century.

After serious and elaborate discussions on the various aspects of this subject, the Committee concluded the following:

### **First: Present Challenges**

1. Eruption of the information revolution which evolved from the accumulation of human knowledge and expertise in the second half of the 20th century, coinciding with astonishing developments in the world of computers. As a result information banks have become very common phenomena for the world to deal with, in each and every walk of life.

The Arab world has an essential need to cope with this revolution in order to narrow the gap which separates it from the developed countries of the world and secure a better position from which to draw the benefits resulting from information exchange within the Arab world and with information banks worldwide.

2. The fast moving and changing technological revolution has had a strong impact worldwide in terms of new and unprecedented working methods and relationships that humankind had never experienced before. This revolution is referred to as “the modern technological revolution”. This is another revolution, and it is incumbent on the Arab world to cope with change and to modernize its capabilities and establish technology in its countries prior to participating fully in the technological field at a latter stage.

This matter is directly linked to that of information either through upgrading existing technological approaches and invention of new styles, or through the importance of establishing advanced technological industry needed for information works which at present depends heavily on import.

3. The phenomenal information and communication revolution in the era of satellite. This revolution has converted the entire world into a single village of information, in which borders and distances have all combined and space has become full of international channels with their subsequent information and cultural effects.

This challenge has become stronger with the GATT agreement which opened up borders for various commodities and products including cultural and information products; an event that has an immediate effect on the cultural identity of each nation. Many countries, including developed ones, have perceived the danger of this agreement in connection with this item in particular. Therefore, they were hesitant to give their approval and decided to place it on "for further discussion" agenda as they are very careful to maintain their own cultural identity.

Accordingly Arab information experts are aware of their great responsibility to ensure the maintenance and satisfactory preservation of Arab cultural identity in the current satellite era.

4. The cultural and scientific revolution which is witnessed today must mobilize the potential of the Arab nation to face this challenge with a cultural product that is directly connected to Arab civilization and its contemporary causes and values, and which depends on advanced approaches in both form and content to secure an Arab cultural presence beside other cultures in the satellite era, and to interact with them equally and efficiently.

5. The emergence of large entities and regional blocs has become a conspicuous feature of the 20th century making it essential for the Arab nation become one of these large bodies or clusters - provided that it (the Arab nation) possesses the necessary requirements to reach this end. Therefore, Arab information has to shoulder the burden and responsibility of highlighting the significance of the solidarity of the Arab nation and the crystallization of joint Arab standpoints, to determine the priorities of the Arab nation in the various political, economical, cultural, and social fields, and the importance of the co-operative works in the light of this perception.

## **Second: The Objectives:**

1. The exposition, presentation, development, and maintenance of Arab culture and the conveyance of its actual image to international public opinion, highlighting Arab history and culture, and the continuous efforts towards development and progress in order to communicate with other civilizations in such a way that the world powers shall bear in mind the weight, interest and causes of the Arab nation.
2. To assure and support the firm values of Arab nations, for example, national unity and the unification of interest and destiny, in addition to avoidance of disputes and struggles, and the protection of the nations with Arab spiritual, scientific, artistic and civilized values and heritage.
3. The enrichment of the Arab personality in a state of equilibrium between deep rooted heritage & values and current advancements. This is a major question in the open world of today's "satellite age." To this effect, Arab information shall, alongside other concerned organizations and establishments, play an important role in helping Arabs adhere to their spiritual values, history, civilization, current causes, ambitions and aspirations for a better tomorrow. It is required as an awareness tool for self-protection to enhance the preservation of their identity while opening up minds to the wider world and accepting whatever is good and beneficial and rejecting whatever is bad or has a negative consequence depending on sound discretion.
4. The consolidation of integral joint Arab information work for the better realization of intimate fraternal co-operation among the Arab countries for the easy flow of information.
5. The narrowing of the information and communication gap, between Arab information and the developed countries that continually acquire communication techniques. This can be achieved regularly by the transference, settlement and development of the latest technology, and by drawing the benefits from tomorrow's technological development and fully assimilating the essence of the 21st century. In the meantime, nor to overlook another important element which is

the formation and development of qualified Arab information personnel who understand the challenges of the era and the objectives of the Arab information message. These personnel have to be very well acquainted with handling the latest technology and translate it into innovations via well-developed Arab information products with a good competitive edge, in comparison with rival products worldwide.

6. Being accurate, objective, and honest when dealing with Arab nationals, with full respect to freedom of expression in an atmosphere of mutual fruitful discussions and active wide involvement. This is an important step to create and maintain credibility and trust in Arab information. In this way despite the wide range of free selection that is currently made available by satellites via printed, audio or video sources, Arab nationals will readily choose Arab information.
7. To provide an Arab information alternative in the space era to be the basic source-material for Arabs, either through Arab information media on the ground or the Arab satellite channels. This alternative is needed to confront the cultural invasion, foreign domination endeavours and the different challenges that currently face Arab nations.

**In order for this Arab information alternative to assume a full role, the following should be provided:**

- Abundant T.V information products, enough to satisfy the swift-paced and increasing needs of Arab T.V screens on the ground and Arab satellite channels.
  - Should be able to compete with foreign T.V channels in terms of unprecedented and fascinating high quality technical standards.
8. Ensuring that the Arab media continue the maintenance of its basic mission to serve Arab society in areas of education and awareness, and to serve Arab development in general, always in the light of prospective increases in recreational areas in private, local and international channels.

9. Giving special consideration to the flowing and eloquent classical Arabic language. This language is a natural criterion in the Arab nation and the fundamental means of communication for various Arab innovations and for the circulation of innovations among all parts of the Arab world.
10. The launching of specialized joint Arab T.V channels to provide services and face common problems, like illiteracy, which can be dealt with effectively and efficiently through an Arab space channel, that would enable this problem to be eradicated at one stroke through satellite. In the meantime encouraging the formation of public and private national Arabic channels in each Arab country on the ground and in space as this could reflect a comprehensive image of the richness of the Arab nation and the diversification of innovation.
11. Consolidation of the Arab information message directed to the world to guarantee the presentation of a positive picture of Arabs, their deep-rooted history and culture to affirm communication and interaction with other civilizations.

### **Third: The national information projects:**

The implementation of the proposed strategy primarily depends on the seriousness of the individual Arab information media in taking up these objectives and commitments and translating them into information realities.

Therefore, it is vitally necessary to establish common Arab information projects including, for example, the following:

1. Originate a national company or companies to be specialized in industrial information products, so that information will no longer depend on imports to satisfy its needs. It is also equally important that Arab ministers of economy and industry must incorporate this type of industry in their development plans.
2. Establish a common Arab corporation for national information products like the “Arab Civilization Series” and “Animation for Arab Children”. These two projects have already been adopted by Arab ministers of information, in addition to other projects which help Arabs adhere to their deep-rooted history, heritage and

values. In this light, animation products for Arab children should also be related to their Arab world history and values; in this way animated characters would resemble their culture and heritage; and Arab media should avoid depending on foreign products in this highly sensitive and attractive field which has a profound emotional effect in the years of childhood.

3. Establish a pan-Arab computer network to link Arab countries among themselves on one side, and with other parts of the world on the other side, to make use of the current information revolution.
4. Establish a national Arab research centre to supply individual Arab information media and stations with instantaneous data and information to cope with the latest technological developments without delays, in order to assist these Arab information media to draw up their future plans on sound and scientific bases.
5. Establish a national Arab information centre to oversee the continuous flow of information and communication in arts and sciences at the international level and provide the various Arab media with the required studies and researches to satisfy their needs in this field.
6. Set up a national human resources development project for the information field including the mobilization of expertise and potential of the Arab nation to develop the Arab media personnel's culture and skills up to a level fitting for this age and in order to handle its instrumentation more competently.
7. Establish a national city for information products to set Arab information on the correct path towards the coming century. This city is to be an Arabian "Hollywood" and an edifice of Arab information products as an Arab alternative in space. This is needed to help existing and future satellite channels find abundant information products to preserve Arab cultural identity, in order not to become, under pressing needs, mirror images of each other, repeating the same story of inadequate T.V, cinema and theatre products. Otherwise, it becomes imperative to assign large screen areas to foreign products.

In this context the Committee would like to commend the Egyptian national initiative in building a city for information products in the 6th of October zone in Cairo as a national city for Arab information products. The Committee also urges all concerned Arab authorities to combine efforts and capabilities to invest in this magnificent productive edifice to satisfy the Arab need for quality information products. It will be one of the important information pillars of the Arab nation in the ensuing century.

#### **Fourth: Conclusion and general recommendations:**

Emanating from its keen interest in translating the strategy features into actual work programmes, the Committee recommends the following:

1. Forming specialized committees to conduct detailed studies pertinent to each item along the broad lines of the strategy.
2. Provide sufficient and regular financing for the proposed national information projects beyond the normal budgetary items of the Secretariat General and The Arab Call Fund, by establishing a specialized national bank to finance these projects which will secure good returns. The Arab Ministers of Information shall contribute to the proposed bank proportional to their individual shares in the Arab League budgets. As for the two projects, the Arab Civilization Series and the Animation Project for Arab Children, which have already been approved by Their Excellencies, the Ministers of Information, the Committee recommends allocating a special budget in the Arab Call Fund to them to secure their prompt implementation.
3. Review and revision of the existing laws and regulations enacted in each individual Arab country to help the realization of the proposed strategy, and guarantee easy flow of information materials in the Arab world.
4. Inviting all organizations that are operating under the umbrella of the Arab League to contribute significantly to the realization of the strategic objectives. These organizations shall also carry out the necessary coordination among themselves for integration and better role-playing for the accomplishment of common objectives.

*The Great Socialist Arab People's Republic of  
Libya*

*The General Public Committee for Culture and  
Information*

Perspective on

Arab Information Strategy Features

for Facing the Challenges of the Coming Century

*Presented to*

*The Permanent Committee of Arab Information  
in its 55th Session, Cairo*

## **Introduction**

In execution of the decision of the Arab Ministers of Information Council, in its 27th session held in Cairo in the period 13 through 14 July 1994 (Item No. 21), regarding its request from the delegation of the Great Socialist Arab People's Republic of Libya to present a perspective on determining "Arab information strategy to face the challenges of the coming century" to the Permanent Committee of Arab Information in its 55th session for further study then presenting the same to the Arab Ministers of Information Council in its 28th session.

The perspective as annexed herein has been prepared as a draft for the crystallization and setting up of Arab information strategy features in the future to face the challenges of the coming century. The strategy is required to depict the extent of Arab information ambitions in the era of satellite transmission and communication revolution.

The contents of this paper which translates a priceless national dream, may be realised by combining Arab political powers, a worthy national objective in the interest of the Arab nation while continuing steadfast civilization progress. This paper will transform into clear thought the Arab cultural identity which is jeopardized by the coming century.

It is a prospective draft, yet there are many areas to be enriched with further discussions, as the matter is reflexively governed by urgent necessities and social circumstances. Needless to say that the right approach, in-depth studies, objective and constructive debates can all contribute to fruitful results, as it is a civilization-induced national objective directed to all influential Arab individuals in their capacities as decision makers, information policy makers, intellectuals and mass communication specialists.

Nevertheless, this paper needs further broadening and deepening through the formation of specialized work groups and the organization of courses, seminars and meetings on all subjects contained in the perspective: the concept, handling and objective discussions. Accordingly intellectuals, information personnel and

technicians are expected to contribute significantly based on their mental commitment, national affiliation, humanitarian polarisation and inclination, and civilized discretion and viewpoints in order to produce a comprehensive Arab information belief, strong and capable of facing the challenges of the coming century.

### **Why the Arab Information Strategy?**

While approaching the 21st century, the world is being saturated with a flood of crucial changes that represent a serious cultural and information revolution. This revolution poses a number of communication and technological challenges for all nations of the earth. Indeed this threat is especially real to ancient nations of firm civilization and cultural heritage, such as Arab nations.

The future society of the next century is full of changes and challenges based on fundamental features. The most important ones are:

- A. The swift-paced knowledge explosion has brought to the world an increasing richness plus a great amount of continuous enlightenment rich in variety, both quantitatively and qualitatively. It is not difficult to imagine how embarrassed Arabs would be if they are not geared up fully to assimilate this type of explosion and track its consequences.
- B. The ever-renewing technological revolution has injected into the world unprecedented styles, relationships and work approaches. This revolution has superseded old techniques and caused a very wide gap to occur between modern technological achievements and the capabilities of Arab information.
- C. The communication revolution has built up around excessive speed, wide and intricate information, and demolished all borders and frontiers. Therefore, there is no doubt that it has put the future and the next century into the hands of communication means proprietors.

This has exposed Arab information to severe and dangerous challenges. Thus strategic reasoning entails that we should be able to deal with these challenges in “co-existence” away from any sort of information or cultural domination.

No doubt if the matter is left to circumstance alone without the real crystallization of an Arab information strategy for the future, our own Arab culture would be at risk, and Arab civilization, culture and security would also be jeopardized. As a result, developing societies, including Arab society would turn into mouthpieces of consuming rather than productive mentality and would be reactive instead of active.

Nowadays the entire world tends to form large identifiable entities and regional assemblies. Therefore, Arab information has to exert intensive consolidated strategic efforts in the fields of information and communication to protect itself from redundancy or from being a follower of others' information and intellectual products. This has to be considered a priority in future horizons.

In their 27th session the Arab Ministers of Information stressed the necessity of being self-critical in the assessment of the past 30 years of their meetings in order to recognize the privileges and pitfalls of the satellite transmission era.

On this base, the proposal of the crystallization of a common Arab information insight to face the commitments for the next century, has evolved. This is especially required because future societies will be full of increasing knowledge, advanced technological challenges and struggles with the cultures which acquire this powerful technology or an effective magnitude of knowledge.

All in all, Arab information has to determine its stance and strategy which should be flexible enough to cope with all challenges and probabilities, and it should also be able to choose the suitable alternatives from the various circumstances and variables.

## **The Strategic Objectives**

Strategy means the process of selecting the best media and means to reach particular objectives for any society at the national level. Therefore, it is impossible to set up a sound strategy for indefinite or ambiguous strategy.

From the outset we need to emphasize that the drawing of any strategy in a logical manner must bear in mind intricate relationships and reciprocal impacts both on each

other and on the overall process. There are, for example, reciprocal relationships between ends and means. The selection of a certain objective could mean a bias for a certain set of means, and the adoption and use of certain means could dictate certain objectives in the future. So the determination of the objectives implies the selection of means that affects the selection of objectives later on in a continual process. In this way the means at a certain level could be regarded as ends on another level.

Each strategy is based on a set of theoretical and intellectual propositions which are linked to the objectives it seeks to accomplish, on the prevailing circumstances and the means that is suggested for use. Therefore, Arab information strategy for the future shall determine explicit, integrated, cohesive and consistent objectives. That is the most important condition.

The selection of the most important approach in the realization of the required objectives entails setting up actual objectives which could be met even at the various stages.

In this light, the objectives of the Arab strategy to face the challenges of the coming century in the field of information and communication emanate from these foundations and feed the result back into it. So whatever the various forms it takes, it is strongly bonded and integrated with a common factor- the objectives that resemble the future image of the critical causes which occupy Arab society and determine its destiny. These objectives are as follows:

First: Expose the identity of Arab civilization for public familiarization and support, develop and maintain this identity and reject any form of foreign cultural domination.

Second: Enrich Arab nationals with increased in-depth awareness of their belief, identity and national causes, in addition to the ability to keep pace and participating effectively in humanitarian developments presently and in the future.

Third: Ensure that Arab information work is integrated as a single woven unit demonstrating the ties of brotherhood among the countries of the Arab world, to guarantee the flow of information without barriers.

Fourth: Encourage in-depth negotiations between the Arab culture and other cultures of the world on a give-and-take basis; and develop cultural innovations at the national and humanitarian levels considering information as a message for innovation and a means for communication.

Fifth: Consolidate the Arab information message which is directed to the world, to present a positive picture of the Arabs, their history and culture, in order to maintain and affirm communication with other civilizations.

Sixth: Narrow the technological gap which increases day by day in breadth and depth in the field of information and communication, between Arab information and the developed countries which acquire communication know-how. Also, to exert all possible efforts to avoid or limit such a gap by technological acquisition or transference.

Seventh: Establish the content and means of Arab information whether audio, video or written, free from being dependent or from showing any type of information subordination or distortion without neglecting the impact or meaning of the communication media revolution.

Eighth: Face the intellectual and information invasion by providing Arabic alternative products to affirm Arab cultural identity and protect its elements, in addition to the realization of the Arab national culture and information which is facing fierce and intensive attacks from modern communication means which jeopardize and subject our Arab culture, both in daily habits, behaviour and practices to values, concepts and ultimately displacement.

Ninth: Form a consolidated Arab information system which is capable of withstanding the challenges and of taking a reasonable place in the coming century in terms of innovation and contribution.

Tenth: Upgrade Arab information tools and means to make proper use of tomorrow's technologies for the presentation of the deep-rooted Arab civilization identity, and the understanding of the essence of the coming century on innovative, not traditional, bases.

## **Information and Cultural Content of the Strategy**

As the matter is directly related to a proposed Arab information strategy, the determination of general foundation and standards render, when actually adopted and respected, the content of Arab information capable not only of facing the challenges of the coming century but also of securing an eminent position and independence of character.

First: The foundations which should be taken into consideration for any cultural and information content are as follows:

1. It is impossible to restrict or confine Arab nationals as they listen to, see and read from, various uncontrollable sources.
2. Arab nationals are critics; they have the mentality and ability to differentiate and judge, to accept or refuse. Therefore, it is very important to respect this mentality, otherwise the information will find itself in a deadlock of contradiction with the educational outcome.
3. Whatever the type of political regime and social system, Arab nationals will always be able to tune the radio or change the channel.
4. Information is a sort of culture, and in turn culture is information to a greater extent. Therefore, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between what is culture and what is information. Culture is broader than information but in most parts is information. On the other hand, information is not just sets, antennae, satellites and printers. A significant part of the information content is cultural while the pure news content is very small. Cultural matters are always mixed with information, so no information without culture and no culture without information. Any drawbacks or pitfalls in one of them immediately affects the other.

## **General Rules:**

The technological advancement and provision of instrumentation, including satellites, is not enough in itself to accomplish the required objective without real progress in the content for which such media are utilized. Information itself has become an urgent necessity. If it is not satisfied, people will resort to other means of securing it. In order that the information be capable of fulfilling the necessity it should comply with the following rules:

### **(01) Freedom:**

It should not be perceived that freedom of information is in contrast with, or synonymous to, the public sector. It is situated at a different level because the private projects are of no less danger to the freedom of information than the public sector. Perhaps the latter is more tolerant in connection with freedom of information. The problem is not that information is a public sector, but that it is an official medium for the state to express itself and its opinions and policies, while people on the other hand are unable to find a channel in which to express themselves. The state chooses for the people the material they have to listen to, or to be acquainted with, but this may not match the people's desires.

Freedom here does not mean selling the public sector, but it has to be truly a public sector, and affirm that people have the right to use and obtain information before going through the state's official "censors". In order to become unofficial, the public sector must reserve the right of freedom to differ with the state and others' opinions.

No doubt the state has right to use the information but it needs to be balanced with the right of nationals to use it for obtaining information and as a means to express their viewpoints, even those contrary to the state's opinion or policies.

### **(02) Objectivity:**

Objectivity means the information leads to a certain policy and is not a political tool in particular. The problem of Arab information is that it presents one opinion to express the public interest. How will a citizen be able to follow the state's policy?

How can he assess this policy in the absence of other opinions? How can he influence the state's policy if he is unable to express this assessment?

It is difficult to realize the objectivity as required but the chances for expression and discrepancy and the various sources of viewpoints reduce the information subjectivity.

### **(03) Credibility and Fact Finding:**

Truthfulness is the most effective, long lasting and convincing means. If people are treated as immature or their reasoning undermined, they will eventually seek out those who respect them in a more mature way.

It is not easy to sharply define the borders of truism, thus information will remain a collection of opinions. But the numerous sources and various views will help greatly to uncover the truth. Truism and fact finding shall always remain the pillars of information credibility.

### **(04) Precious values:**

Precious values and principles shall constitute the platform for information to launch opinions and control aspects. Information personnel are the most dangerous class of society. In addition to technical qualifications, they need to be well qualified morally and culturally. They have to be very professional and capable of sacrificing their narrow personal interests for the sake of the wider public interest.

### **(05) Avoidance of Pure Commercial Motivation:**

Information objectives should depart from any type of commercial motivations. If 'officialism' is fatal to the content of information, commercial motivations change it into an unethical merchandise. We need to be cautious because the financing of information by commercial interests poses the threat of seizing and directing information to serve commercial interest instead of public interest.

### **(06) Limitation of the use of slang because:**

(A) The use of slang limits the publication of information at the Arab level.

(B) The use of slang affects Arab culture and identity and leads to the weakening of Arab culture before other cultures.

### **(07) Information as a School for Guidance and Education:**

Due to the social situation in the Arab world in general, information has to play a key role not just as a recreational means, but also as an effective tool for public awareness, culture and guidance. In the Arab world information should become an open school without doors or classes. We need to distinguish between the cases of Europe and the Arab world. In Europe society has reached a good public awareness and cultural level, so information may concentrate on recreation, even though that does not happen all the time. That is why information has to compensate for the shortcomings of the Arab world's lagging behind. We have to bear this cost as a social obligation.

### **(08) Towards Arab Production:**

The information content has to deal with general Arab matters and the causes of pan-Arab countries. This is essential in creating an Arab and not a country-wide oriented culture, in order to secure a prominent position for the Arab culture worldwide and face other cultures efficiently and professionally. The product which concentrates on local matters and causes for each individual country does not attract the attention of Arabs in other countries. Furthermore, no individual country will be able to confront the other existing cultures. Therefore, due to its lower level, Arab culture can not be identified as an international culture. We can never attain this goal while culture is dispersed among different countries.

The problem still emerges whether in terms of Arabic products, Arabic books, etc. It a problem of high cost for good programmes, books, top T.V series, and good quality cassettes.

First: If the Arab countries continue to be totally isolated with information and cultural boundaries, for example, they subject information and cultural products to censorship then decide to release, reject or confiscate the product; no Arab country will be able individually to produce the best of information and cultural qualities. As

a result none of the Arabic works, cassettes, series, books, etc. will be able to face the competition. Other countries do not simply surpass the Arab countries because they have better authors, intellectuals or producers, but because at this point in particular, they launch their products in a very large market. Therefore, they can afford to incur high costs, expecting valuable returns. In contrast, the Arab men of letters, authors and producers write or air their works sometimes to a very small market. This in turn affects the value of the information and cultural work and reflects on the author or the men of letters.

The reason for the scarcity of Arabic products is not always attributable to humanitarian inefficiency. It is rather attributable to the fact that the authors practice their job as a hobby. Given that, taking the case of an author for example, whatever books he has written would not be enough to provide him with satisfactory living so that he can depend on and devote himself to cultural and information works. In most cases, he is an employee, a matter that impairs his products, especially the political contribution.

For these reasons, Arab culture sometimes does not exert any influence beyond the borders of each individual country. The enforcement of Arab culture at the international level is purely a collective effort. None of the Arab countries can achieve this individually and this supports the need for common information work. In this way the Arab author who emerges in the "cultural market" among the two hundred million Arabs will be able to enforce himself worldwide. The same story repeats itself in the cases of cassettes, series, etc. If matters are allowed to continue in the current stream of events, an Arab intellectual or information specialist will never be able to secure an eminent position at an international level. Through this "production to large markets" the West has been able to impose its culture. Language variations and geographic boundaries did not constitute any barriers, and through cultural publications it has successfully established information superiority and domination. Why is the same not happening in one Arab nation with one -Arabic-language?

These information and cultural boundaries suppress any substantial and successful confrontation, such as borders which:

1. Threaten the Arab culture more severely than the forthcoming encounter does.
2. Stunt Arab information and cultural products and impede the good products.
3. Create a sort of national culture that corroborates the state of dependence on foreigners at the expense of Arabic commitments and devitalizes the Arab culture in any confrontation.

**Freedom here does mean:**

1. Free and easy flow of Arab cultural and information products beyond the political borders.
2. Political and intellectual freedom and freedom of expression at the Arabic level.

This does not mean that the Arabs have to lock the doors on themselves and keep the “strangers’ products” from passing into Arab territory. Naturally, it is very difficult to do this in view of the magnificent technological advancement and this guardianship would not produce effective Arab individuals. We suggest making the Arab national capable of differentiating between what is good and what is bad; what is useful and what is useless. Moreover the information content has to match the national’s ambitions and satisfy his cultural and information needs so that he ceases to search for such needs through others.

**Arab Media Encounter  
the Challenges of the Ensuing Century**

The future image of Arab information is depicted in effective national schemes. In this context the main recommendation, in order to make Arab information strategy for the future a success, is to put a special emphasis on Arab media and equipment, in addition to the establishment of national companies and organizations to deliver powerful information messages that are capable of living up to the challenges of the coming century.

This does not imply that Arab information development work is the exclusive duty of the Arab Ministers of Information Council, the Permanent Committee of Arab Information or the existing information corporations. The door is, and should be, open for official initiatives that are presented by an individual Arab country to implement any of the public cultural schemes. The other countries must encourage and participate significantly to make these schemes a success. The role-playing has to be centred on a distribution (among the Arab countries) that guarantee speedy achievement of objectives.

The participation of Arab national sectors in information work is extremely important whatever the source of the national initiative; be it a company or establishment in a certain Arab country or joint-venture Arabian companies, or the taking over of any projects that serve Arab information.

Whether the national information project initiatives come from the government or the private sector, the partners have to encourage each other to participate and contribute in project financing and the provision of the best possible conditions for its success.

### **National Information Projects:**

There are several national information projects which can play a major role in the success of the Arab Information Strategy to encounter the challenges of the coming century. The Arab political will is capable of executing some of these projects in a short time span, but some of them are phantasmal or mere expressions of wishes and aspirations. All these project types represent the major aspects of Arab information unity, and are a clear example for the comprehensive information plan at the national level. The execution and support of this move represents a crucial step, for the makers of the Arab present and future, in understanding culture values and identity. The support and expansion of these national projects should be an integral part of the comprehensive plan and a crystallization of its activities.

It is self-evident that the projects at the national level do not allow the repetition of the same work in different countries without some justification. These projects allow trends unification, reduce the cost, allow an exchange of expertise among the Arabs to

draw the maximum benefits, and most important, it exemplifies the unification of the Arab nation intellectually and emotionally and in terms of heritage and needs' integration.

There are numerous Arab information projects that could be established in the Arab world to strengthen its relationships, affirm its unity, expose and reinforce cultural identity, and speed up the processes of information development. In this connection, the following projects are suggested:

### **First: Establishment of an Arab News Agency**

News agencies are news manufacturers worldwide. This does not mean they are just media to convey the news. Instead these agencies are complete organizations and significant international monopolies. They are used by the great powers of the world to implement their policies in publications on defence, attack and intelligence's activities. It is the fourth weapon beside land, sea and air weaponry. This is very clear in the world's news system where news collection, publication and distribution reveal that the majority of the world's news is being compiled and distributed through three main news agencies; one is American, the second is British and the third is French.

Furthermore, the majority of the international news on the Arabs, their interior events and foreign affairs is prepared, publicized and distributed through these three agencies after it passes through special "censors" to make a selection and put the necessary political touches to the news, for presentation in the form and content which conform with their interests and political stances without contradicting their strategies and views.

To face this invisible distortion, which is absorbed and swallowed like a poisonous bait, and reproduce it on the Arab information media, it is incumbent on the Arab world to think collectively in establishing an Arab National News Agency to produce Arabic news and edit it, free from any subordination. This agency has to be on a level with western agencies, which seem not to be satisfied with technological superiority, but endeavour to swallow and contain the national news agencies in the Arab countries via:

- A. Negotiating with the national agencies, trying to control them by each and every means.
- B. Selling us their news at very costly prices, while Arab agencies distribute their news free of charge.
- C. Contribute in worsening the general frustration and injecting their thoughts into the Arab mentality as a part of cultural invasion campaigns.
- D. Release ill, distorted or incomplete information about the Arab world.

Therefore, we suggest preparing an integrated project for “Establishing an Arab News Agency”. The present news agencies in each Arab country would become subsidiaries of the proposed national news agency which will be supported by the latest techniques of the news industry to secure popularity and presence for Arab news, which is imperatively required in the coming century.

### **Second: A National Radiobroadcasting Service:**

Although information media have increased in number and developed in technology, nonetheless, “radio” retains its unique mission, as radio messages and programmes have had profound mental and emotional effects on its audience.

Each of the Arab countries maintains a private radiobroadcasting service to both address the people and send them information messages, as radio is an important influential instrument.

Within the framework of improving and boosting national radio addresses, the Radio “Voice of the Arabs” has been playing an effective role since its inception in Cairo in the 1950s; calling for one Arab nation and a brilliant future for the Arabs. We can still see the contribution of this effect in developing public awareness of the Arab nation.

From this angle the need has become importunate to think very seriously about establishing a consolidated Arab radio station to help the realization of the Arab information strategy for the coming century, without violating the mission of the individual radio station in each Arab country.

Here the proposal is to set up a technologically integrated and programmed project to establish a national radiobroadcasting station that reaches Arabs in their home countries and abroad. This station would devote itself to a united Arab address and avail the national broadcasting library at the disposal of each individual Arab country for programme exchange.

### **Third: A Common Arab T.V Satellite Channel:**

Arabs must think collectively to have a significant persistent presence and information roles in the satellite period. This is urgently needed in order to set up an Arabic information system taking, at full flow, those benefits of the satellite era which will be the most conspicuous criterion for all nations on the earth in the coming century and which will enter each and every Arabian home, whether desired or not.

So, it is logical to set up plans in preparation for the ensuing century by seeking to establish many Arab satellites. This is needed to maintain communication and cultural interaction between the Arabs and the world on one side, and to maximize and utilise the benefits drawn from Arab satellite in order to maintain the security and certainty of the Arab national culture on the other.

Already, within the last few years, some Arab countries have established a number of satellite channels to affirm the Arab identity and prove the existence of Arab information in space.

Therefore, common Arab information efforts in future, necessitate taking advantage of Egypt's experience when it took the initiative and established a rich and illuminating Egyptian satellite channel. Arabs need to think of the possibility of developing this experience by establishing a consolidated satellite channel to secure and maintain the Arab cultural identity.

In order to make this national project a success and launch it in objective technical conditions in an appropriate healthy environment, we suggest expediting the preparation process for this proposal in detail and in its entirety along with the determination of integral comprehensive objectives.

#### **Fourth: Connecting Arab Countries with the Remote Printer Network:**

The challenges of the printing era where newspapers and magazines are printed in colour and pictures appear simultaneously in more than one place, is the most substantial task which faces Arab information at present.

Despite the fact that some Arab countries are about to overcome this challenge, the distribution of Arab newspapers, magazines, and printed matters is still very limited inside the cities and countries of the Arab world and abroad. Distribution is characterized by very slow service as it depends on a traditional delivery network and is slowed down by administrative complications in each Arab country.

Remote printing has become an integral part of satellite communication. It can overcome many problems in connection with printed matter distribution services in terms of air, sea and land transportation, or other administrative procedures. This technological challenge is expected to witness many improvements and additions in the coming century. Arabs must begin, without delay, the execution of a national network project to link areas where Arab newspapers are printed inside the countries of the Arab world with the remote printer system, in order to overcome the difficulties and bottlenecks which are currently facing the distribution of newspapers, magazines, and printed matter in general. We suggest speeding up joint national efforts to prepare comprehensive and integral projects for linking all Arab countries with the remote printer network using the latest products of printing technology.

#### **Fifth: The Establishment of a National City for Information Products:**

One of the most important projects which would take Arab information conscientiously ahead into the coming century is the construction of an Arabian "Hollywood" city as an Arab information product edifice that would present an Arabic alternative through satellites, so that existing and future Arab satellite channels become an effective contribution to affirm, maintain and nurture Arab cultural identity.

Therefore, to avoid Arab T.V satellite channels being repeat copies of each other presenting T.V, cinema and theatre products for more than once, and within the

framework of exerting common Arab efforts to have information products with a competitive edge, we suggest drawing the benefit from the 6th of October city in Cairo by converting it into a national city for information products. This proposed city would put special emphasis on Arab information strategy to face the challenges of the next century, and provide Arabic alternative products through satellite.

### **Sixth: The Establishment of a National Company for Printed Matter Distribution:**

Arab information strategy for the future will base itself inevitably on the dismantling of cultural borders, the demolition of barriers that restrict Arab printed matter and on the acceptance of co-existence with this reality that cannot be rejected or overcome. The priority in national information work and projects, which should be thought of without delay, as a national information necessity, is the establishment of a national company or corporation to distribute Arabic printed matter inside and outside Arab countries. This company or corporation would have subsidiaries in each Arab country and in different areas of the world. The company which would be formed with a joint Arab capital would exhibit an effective role in the marketing and distribution of Arab printed matter: newspapers, magazines, books, periodicals and other information material, such as video and audio materials and various compilations.

This company must enjoy the privilege of custom duty exemption within the Arab world. It has to be given priority in transportation while carrying out its activities inside and among the Arab countries.

We suggest serious planning be undertaken to prepare an integral project for a national printed matter distribution company.

### **Seventh: An Information Industries National Project:**

This national project seems to fall under the category of “wishes and aspirations”. In order to achieve balanced and independent information development, Arab information will be in need of this type of project in future.

The wide utilization of technologies of communication, computer and video, audio

and written information media has brought about the pressing need to acquire information industries which are not of lesser weight and value than the development and focusing of the information address. The banks of information on the Arab world will not stay abroad for ever, otherwise the importation of various information industries will continue and this corroborates the state of information subordination to the West.

These industries include a lengthy list of products such as different types of paper and ink, printing equipment, radio and T.V sets, video, photographic equipment, art materials, information audiovisual instruments and materials and communication techniques via satellites.

Arabs must face, and adapt themselves to, the coming century, which will witness highly developed information industries, through integral Arab efforts to support the information industries inside the Arab world, instead of depending on importation and consumption of these industries; and make full technology transfers to the Arab world.

In this connection we suggest calling for the organization of a planning conference to prepare a national project for the information industries in the Arab world, to face the challenges and difficulties of the ensuing century.

### **Eighth: A National project to Narrow the Information Technology Gap :**

1. There are three essential gaps that challenge Arab efforts in the information field in the coming century, and also challenge their swift efforts to keep pace with modern civilization. Mainly, these gaps are: scientific, technological, and information systems. All of them represent conclusive and decisive cultural challenges before Arabs in an era which is, in turn, conclusive and decisive

The problem is that these three gaps are interrelated because the humanitarian society has been transformed into an information society for the last three decades or more, due to the contemporary electronic revolution.

2. There is a technological gap which can be managed to some degree under the caption: 'Technology Transfer'. For the last four decades the computer -as an electronic device- has developed significantly causing a terrific qualitative shift in mankind's progress, stressing the decisive role of technology as a driving force for social changes and scientific capability.

The use of a consecutive series of computer generations during the last years has led to incredible periods of growth that have exceeded by all standards any technological progress ever before experienced by humanity throughout history.

3. This was accompanied by another revolution in the field of communication technology which has a wide range of transmission using satellites. Optical fibres also have increased the capacity of communication and diversified the scope of its usage.

The report of the Arabian committee for studying the information and communication systems in the Arab world titled "Towards a New Arab Information System (1990)" indicated the following:

- The discoveries related to T.V transmission and computer are expected to rise sharply and may exceed 50% in the year 2000, in comparison to what has already been discovered up to now.
- The wide spread of upgraded three-dimensional T.V sets with high resolution images, natural sound echoes and a compact size. In addition, the possibility of transmitting a single cassette in numerous languages.
- Facilitate the organization of a number of "remote" international seminars using small communication devices at reasonable cost and the wide spread of advanced telephone sets of combined "voice and picture".
- Satellite transmission of radio programmes with excellent sound clarity and purity.
- Using computers for conveying and converting written newspapers into spoken newspapers, and conveying and converting spoken newspapers into written texts.

- The possibility of live transmission using micro-cameras to remote areas via satellites.

As a new century approaches, a national project is needed to reduce the information technology gap that separates Arab countries from technologically advanced countries. This is required as a step along the road leading to the next century so that they are fully equipped with technological expertise.

### **Ninth: The Construction of a National Information Research Centre:**

In order to face the information challenges of the coming century and better cope with its technological advancement, all stages of preparation, implementation and progress of Arab information strategy must be followed to cover any gaps that may arise at any time. Therefore, the need is urgent to propose the establishment of a national information research centre, or to upgrade all existing Arab information and research centres, to seek Arab and international public opinion (polls), to prepare viewers, listeners and reader research centres in Arab countries, and to focus attention on consolidated and objective Arab information strategy.

The construction of the national information research centre on pure Arab methodological foundations would generate beneficial outcomes which would affect the movement and future progress of Arab information. The Third World in general and the Arab world in particular are heavily dependent on information researches based on theories and methods mainly originating in the United States of America and Europe. Therefore, any attempt to apply the same theories on information aspects with different causes, solutions, and historical roots and social background would definitely yield two results:

- First: Arab society would not draw any real benefit from these studies.
- Second: Corroboration of the state of methodological subordination in handling information issues and problems in the Arab world.

In order to form a new Arab information and communication research approach to serve the objectives of common Arab information policies, we suggest setting up a

project for the construction of an information centre. The professors of information colleges and institutes at the Arab universities would play a major role in this project.

## **General Recommendations**

Many recommendations can be made within the framework of general ideas and broad outlines which would contribute to the leverage of Arab information strategy in the future. We can summarize these recommendations in the following points:

1. Forming specialized Arab committees or work groups to set up the details of national projects one by one, and to control the mechanism of project operation and financing.
2. Working for the establishment of an Arab bank to finance Arab information strategic projects in order to face the challenges of the coming century, and inviting all Arab countries to take part in capital sharing.
3. We should not exaggerate the ability to create Arab information strategy based merely on suggestions and recommendations. Political resolution is important and the determination for its execution is even more important.
4. The establishment of information borders and barriers is unacceptable and impossible. None of the development projects can be formed assuming full protection for its own experience. The matter is serious and we need to be cautious about the formation of defence or control facilities alike.
5. As a first step, the information and cultural organizations have to be independent, then they have to be intellectually reconstructed on firm foundations of national credence.
6. We must disrupt the monopoly of the influential organizations, and their expertise and technology ownership in order to bar the western culture from enjoying a collective domination.

7. Information personnel and intellectuals have to be engaged in actual and fundamental issues. Some false marginal struggles are raised intentionally or unintentionally to allow the more important ones to be overlooked.

8. Culture and technological machines are complementary. You need to acquire the latter to render the former independent.

9. Languages are the foundation of self-governed cultural formation. Therefore, we must support the Arabic language which is currently suffering corrosion and abrasion.

10. Some coordination among individual Arab intellectual standings needs to be encouraged. This does not mean the abolition of these standings or making a compromise. What is needed is a minimal level of mutual agreement. It is possible to meet at this level within the Arab information convention and within the following boundaries:

- Recognizing the others; the severing of relations has never been a constructive process, and extremism is fatal from wherever it comes.
- Embark on mutual negotiations without defamation.
- Extract and keep aside the agreeable elements above any kind of discrepancy.

11. The combat of intellectual invasion has to take a subtle form by highlighting and assuring the following concepts:

- The concept of cultural devotion.
- The concept of independence versus subordination
- The concept of national culture security and certainty in the public awareness.
- Democracy of information as a right for a broad base of people.

12. Setting up, and focusing on, a national plan for translation. Translation control means the control of one of the sources of the information and intellectual invasion.
13. Creating a common national conviction to respect the written, viewed and spoken word and the respect of other opinion.
14. Preparation of an Arab convention of honour for the Arab satellite transmission stations and the formation of a coordinating council for satellite transmission.
15. Setting up national information and communication legislation to review the existing enacted laws in order to grant it increased flexibility.
16. Invitation to convene meetings between Arab ministers of information on one side and ministers who are in charge of culture, education and transportation on the other. The purpose of these meetings would be to establish and coordinate policies and plans, bearing in mind that information activity depends to a greater degree on the infrastructure that is normally secured by the transportation sector, and that information content is strongly bonded with cultural and educational activities at the national level of each individual country.
17. Proper distribution of role playing (assignment) between the various organizations which are operating within the framework of the Arab League, and the alliances operating in the domain of information and communication at the Arab national level. The task package includes the preparation of regulations for preventing duplication and the unnecessary repetition of activities, and continuous performance evaluation.

**Names of the Members of the  
Committee which Prepared the Concept of  
Arab Information Strategy for  
Facing the Challenges of the Coming Century**

1- Dr. Rajab Meftah Bodabos	Secretary
2- Dr. Mohamed Faraj Al-Malhof	Member
3- Dr. Khalifa Esa Al-Azabi	Member
4- Dr. Suliman Salem Al-Showeb	Member
5- Dr. Mohamed Al-Mabrok Younus	Member
6- Dr. Saeed Ali Al-Aswad	Member
7- Abdullatif Khelifa Bokr	Reporter

ولاحت الشمس ،  
أضيقتمو  
وَصَجَّبت القاعات بالسُّعال

(٣)

فَمَرَّةٌ فِي مَجْلِسِ الْأَمْنِ  
صَرَخَكُمْ يَغْلُو ،  
وَمَرَّةٌ فِي هَيْئَةِ الضَّلَالِ  
وَالْمُعْتَدِي يُوَاصِلُ اعْتِدَاءَهُ  
الذَّنْبِيَّ ،  
يَقْتُلُ النِّسَاءَ وَالْأَطْفَالَ  
وَلَا يُشِيرُ فِيهِ شُعْرَةٌ ،  
إِعْلَامَكُمْ ، وَلَا كَلَامَكُمْ ،  
لَأَنَّا ، النَّيِّبَةُ بِالْأَعْمَالِ ،  
فَالْعَنْتَرِيَّاتُ الَّتِي تَضِيحُ  
فِي مُكْرَمَاتِ الصُّوْتِ ،  
فِي قَاعَاتِكُمْ ،  
تُعَوَّنُهَا بِتَحَايُ الرِّجَالِ  
بِأَسَانِي  
لَنْ يَكْمَلَ الإِعْلَامُ صَوْتَكُمْ ،  
مَهْمَا بَدَأْتُمْ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَقْوَالِ  
فَالنَّاسُ فِي الدُّنْيَا ،  
يُتَابِعُونَ الْفِعْلَ ،  
رَبُّ الْفِعْلِ  
لَا يُتَابِعُونَ إِلَّا الْفِعْلَ

# هذا هو السؤال !

شعر:  
هارون  
هاسشم  
رشيد

(في ختام اجتماع  
وزراء الاعلام العرب)

(١)

لَمْ يَبْقَ مَا يُقَالُ  
وَلَقِيلُوا أَوْرَاقَكُمْ ،  
وَأَوْقُوا الْجَدَانَ  
وَأَخْضِرُوا جَدَاوِلَ الْأَعْمَانِ  
فَلَمْ يَغْدِ أَمَاكُمْ لِلْبَحْثِ ،  
غَيْرَ سِاحَةِ الْقَتَانِ  
فَمَا النَّاسُ اعْتَدَتْمو لَهَا ؟  
هَذَا هُوَ السُّؤَالُ !

(٢)

لكل فعل ، ربُّ فعل ،  
هذه الحكمة لم يُغْدِ  
يَعْرِفُهَا قَامُونَكُمْ ،  
وَلَمْ يَغْدِ بِعَرُوفِهَا الْأَطْفَالَ  
وَأَلْصَقَكُمْ بِعُقَاةِهَا  
بِأَرْوَاقِهَا الْقَتَانِيَّ  
جِنْدِ الْإِحْتِلَالِ  
وَأَنْتُمْ مِنْ قَعَّةٍ ، لِقَعَّةٍ  
مِنْ مَجْلِسٍ ، لِمَجْلِسٍ ،  
مِنْ لَجْنَةٍ لِلْبَحْثِ  
تُتَابِعُونَ الْحَرْبَ بِالْأَقْوَالِ ،  
وَكَلَّمَا تَنْفَسَ الْفَجْرُ ،

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## Newspapers and Magazines

<i>Akhbar Al-Youm</i> newspaper	7-6-1997
<i>Akhbar Al-Youm</i> newspaper	11-12-1979
<i>Al-Akhbar</i> newspaper	2-5-1979
<i>Al-Akhbar</i> newspaper	6-6-1997
<i>Al-Anwar</i> newspaper	3-5-1979
<i>Al-Hayat</i> newspaper	25-9-1996
<i>Al-Hayat</i> newspaper	6-6-1997
<i>Al-Jadidah</i> Magazine	25-6-1997
<i>Al-Riyadh</i> newspaper	19-6-1995
<i>Arab News</i> newspaper	22-1-1993
<i>Arab News</i> newspaper	10-2-1993
<i>Arab News</i> newspaper	11-2-1993
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	14-5-1979
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	11-10-1979
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	30-12-1979
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	13-1-1990
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	3-3-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	4-3-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	10-6-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	11-6-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	13-6-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	29-8-1992

<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	2-10-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	20-10-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	28-10-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	11-11-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	15-11-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	30-12-1992
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	2-2-1993
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	3-2-1993
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	15-2-1993
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	1-3-1993
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	30-8-1993
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	13-6-1995
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	20-10-1995
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	5-11-1995
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	5-5-1996
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	18-5-1996
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	25-9-1996
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	20-5-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	22-5-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	27-5-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	28-5-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	30-5-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	6-6-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	12-6-1997

<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	11-9-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	15-9-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	29-9-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	31-10-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	11-11-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	3-12-1997
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i> newspaper	30-6-1998
<i>Asseyasah</i> newspaper	3-5-1979
<i>The Guardian</i> newspaper	30-11-1992
<i>The Guardian</i> newspaper	10-9-1993
<i>TIME</i> Magazine	22-6-1992

