

# The Death of the “Arab World”

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One might ask, what do we mean by the concept of the “Arab World?” How it came about, and what is its future? To answer these questions, let me look at it from three perspectives: geographically, demographically, and politically.

## **(1) Geographically**

It straddles two continents, Asia and Africa. It consists of five distinct sub-regions: al-Maghreb (or Northern Africa). al-Neel (or the Nile River), al-Mashreq (or the Levant), al-Khaleej (or the Gulf), and Al-Janoob (or the Horn and East of Africa). Within these five sub-regions there are twenty-two states as follows:

**(1) Al-Maghreb** states include Libya, Tunis, Alegria, Morocco, and Mauritania.

**(2) Al-Neel** states include Egypt and Sudan.

**(3) Al-Mashreq** states include Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine.

**(4) Al-Khaleej** states include Suadi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahran.

**(5) Al-Janoob** states include Djibouti, Somalia, and Comoros.

This huge region stretches across more than 13,000,000 square kilometers (or 5,000,000 square miles), it contains numerous raw materials needed for economic growth and development, and has more than one-fourth of the gas and oil reserves in the World.

## **(2) Demographically**

It is a region of many people with extraordinary histories and cultures. Most of its inhabitants are Muslims and Arabs. The word Arab, here, is applied to all people in the region - Muslims, Christians and Jews who speak the Arabic language and identify themselves with the ways of life in the region. Some of the inhabitants are descendants of linguistic and ethnic groups that pre-date the arrival of the Arabs to the region. The Amazigh in North Africa, for instance, constitute roughly speaking between 15 and 30 million of the population of the region<sup>i</sup>. They represent a significant portion of the populations of Algeria and Morocco, the vast majority of them are Muslims who prefer to speak their own language, preserve their own culture, and do not want to be called Arabs; The ethnic and linguistic diversity of Sudan is also represented by more than 40 non-Arab ethnic groups and only about 60 percent of the Sudan population consider the Arabic language as its native tongue; The vast majority of Kurds, in Iraq and Syria, are Muslims but not Arabs: In Iraq, they represent about 15%-20% of the population<sup>ii</sup>, and in Syria, the population of the Kurds represents about 3 to 5%<sup>iii</sup>.

In addition, there are other non-Arab groups in the region, such as, Turkmen and Assyrians (in Iraq and Syria); Armenians and Greeks (in Lebanon); Egyptians and Nubians (in Egypt); Circassian (in Jordan); blacks and Beja (in Sudan); Maur/black and Maur (in Mauritania); and others<sup>iv</sup>; Sharks, Turks, Tawariq, Tabou, and Greeks (in Libya).

### **(3) Politically**

The concept of the Arab World was the main slogan used by the Arab nationalist movements in the second half of the 19th century to liberate the Arab people from the Ottoman Empire which was ruling the region at that time.

One might argue that this concept is an idea that was “**born dead**”, and from the get go, it was not intended by those who introduced it to be successful. It was just a “**strategic designation**” developed during the heyday of the British empire, to be used to kick out the Ottoman rule from the region. It was a “**misconceived idea**” that never existed historically in the context that we know it nowadays. In other words, I would say that it was introduced to the Arab people, as a “feel good politics”.

Yes, throughout the region history, there have been Arab People all over the region, but they never constituted one united nation -- from the Gulf states in the east to Morocco’s Atlantic coast in the west. For instance, during the Ottoman rule which last for centuries, roughly from the 13th century until the World War I and the end of the Ottoman empire in 1924, the Kurdish area enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy and the Kurdish princes had allied themselves with the Ottoman Sultan.

This political concept became popular during the heyday of the of the concept of the “Arab Nationalism”, which was a mere “**Hypothetical intellectual concept**”. It was a product of the colonization era and a resentment against Western occupation. It went on to dominate the Arab politics from the First World War to the Arab defeat at the hands of Israel in 1967. As a result of this unexpected humiliating defeat, Arab Nationalism lost its attractiveness in the Arab streets and became a mere political tool for the Arab dictators to legitimize their regimes, especially, the

soldiers who came to power through coup de ta.

## **Some Facts and Incidents**

One could argue that the war on Gaza has approved a numerous ugly and sad facts, and shown clear incidents that reinforce the real American and European intent toward the Arab people. The following are some of these facts and incidents:

**First:** The Palestinian people are, unfortunately, facing a barbaric and brutal Israeli aggression by themselves, while the vast majority of the Arabs people have failed miserably to support them, and more sadly, they have found that the Arab regimes secretly supporting and encouraging the Israeli to get rid of the freedom fighters. The following are quotes are just some of the reactions of the Arab Rulers to October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as they were recalled by Bob Woodwrđ, an American investigative journalist, in his book “**War**”, he stated that:

(1) When Blinken, Secretary of State of America, visited Jordanian King Abdullah II in Amman, on October 13, 2023, the king told him: “We told Israel not to do this, we told them not to trust Hamas, Hamas is the Muslim Brotherhood, Israel must defeat Hamas. We will not say this publicly, but we support the defeat of Hamas...”.

(2) When Blinken, visited Abu Dhabi and met with Mohammed bin Zayed, on October 14, 2023, he told him: “Hamas must be eliminated, we have repeatedly warned Israel that Hamas is the Muslim Brotherhood, we can give Israel time to eliminate Hamas, but it must first help us calm our citizens from the images of violence and destruction in Gaza, by bringing in aid, establishing safe zones, and controlling the violence of the settlers in the West Bank. Let it help us with our citizens and we will give it space, to eliminate Hamas”.

(3) When Blinken visited Riyadh and met first with Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, on October 14, 2023, he told him: "Israel should not have trusted Hamas, and Netanyahu warned us repeatedly, Hamas is the Muslim Brotherhood". ... Then he continued by

saying: "Terrorist groups are not only trying to eliminate Israel, but they want to overthrow other Arab leaders. ..., and what comes after Hamas may be worse, ..., and we will not pay a single dollar to rebuild Gaza after the chaos that Netanyahu created."

(4) When Blinken met the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, On October 15, 2023, he told him: "I want the problems caused by October 7<sup>th</sup>. to disappear. A Palestinian state must be established before normalization with Israel. I do not want that, but I need it to justify normalization ...with Israel" (Woodward, 2024).

So?! What the Arab people might expect from those rulers who control their future? Do we really expected them to work toward achieving the Arab unity and eventually making the dream of the Arab World a reality?!

**Secondly:** The War on Gaza has revealed to all freedom loving people that the Palestinian Cause is a cause of freedom, justice and human rights, more than an issue of race, region, or religion. In other words, it is a cause of fighting for their dignity, equality, and the right of self-determination.

**Thirdly:** The Palestian war against the aggressors and occupiers, has shown that all what the Arab rulers care about it, shamelessly, is to stay in power as long as they can at any cost, and they are willing to ally themselves even with the devil to achieve that goal.

**Fourthly:** This War on Gaza should be considered the official end to the era of what had been known as the Arab World, and also it should be considered a new starting point in the region history.

**Fifthly:** As result of this brutal war on Gaza, the vast majority of the people in the region and all over the Globe, have been convinced that the U.S. and European foreign policies have been so out of sync toward the Palestinian Cause and also the concerns and interests of the Arab people in general. And all the

slogans declared by the American and European politicians, such as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice for all, are nothing but disguise to legitimize the state of Israel and defend its reckless actions, and secure the flow of the cheap Arab gas and oil, and to continue their hegemony of the region for many years to come.

## **Some Tools and Policies**

There are numerous tools and policies have that been used, by the U.S. and European politicians, to obstruct the concept of the Arab world of being implemented successfully, and eventually led to its death. The following are just some of them.

**1.** They used “**symbolisms and historical memories**” to disrespect the people and their leaders in the region, for instance:

**(a)** When the U.S. and European soldiers rolling their tanks into the center of Baghdad, on April 9th, 2003, and hoisting the American flag on a statue of Saddam in Firdos Square, made the people in the region watched their television sets with disbelief and despair, and that moment reminded them with the defeat of the Byzantines in 1071, which was the impetus for the Crusades. It also reminded them with the defeat of the Ottoman empire at the gates of Vienna in 1683, which marked the beginning of the Western colonization of the Islamic countries.

**(b)** Another symbolism used by the Americans was on December 15, 2003, when the U.S. soldiers captured Saddam Hussein, his pictures deliberately beamed around the world, having his hair examined for lice, looking at his teeth, and a saliva DNA swab taken from his mouth were intended. All of these were intended by the Americans to destroy Saddam mystique and all fear surrounding him in Iraq and the rest of the Arab World.

(c) These humiliating and degrading treatments, in the eyes of the majority of the people in the region, even those Iraqis and others who hated Saddam and were happy for getting rid of him felt so sad and wished that his end was different than the way he was captured, some of them went even further by wishing that he had killed himself instead of giving up this way without a fight, the vast majority of the people in the region thought that way he surrendered humiliated all Arabs Muslims and non-Muslims in the region.

2. Another policy used by the American and the European politicians is what I will call “**the right to use all means necessary to destroy your opponent.**” For example, when the Israeli, on October 7th, 2023, flied their airplanes and rolled their tanks and marched their soldiers into the Gaza Strip, started destroying everything came their way and killing every human being they found regardless of his or her age or religion! their responses have been, Israel has “the right for self-defense” and they vowed to stand by her all the time and gave her all the weapons it needed to accomplish its goals.

3. Another tool used by the American and the European politicians is the “**politics of fear**”. It has been used to scare and threaten any potential regional power (s) that might pose threat to Israel or their interests in the region. For instance, in 2003, when the US and the European states attacked Iraq, it drew an angry response in the Arab streets and in the whole region, and their first reaction was: “today is Iraq, tomorrow it will be the rest of the Arab countries.” The response by the American and the European politicians was using “**more fear**” as a political tool to accomplish their objectives.

This political tool (meaning the politics of fear) has been advocated by many thinkers in the United States, and especially by the Neo-conservatives during president Bush administration. Patrick J. Buchanan, an American conservative author and a formal political commentator and politician, in one of his articles entitled: “**No End to War**: the Frum-Perle prescription would ensnare America in endless conflict,” stated this way: “The neo-cons do not want to narrow our list of enemies, they do not want to confine America’s war to those who attacked us, they want to expand our list of enemies to include Israel’s enemies. They want to escalate and widen what Chris Matthews calls ‘the Firemen’s War’ into a war for hegemony in the Middle East. They had hoped to exploit 9/11 to erect an empire, and as they see the vision vanish, their desperation knows no bounds” (Buchanan, 2004).

In other words, the fear of everything will become American, has been advocated by many American pundits and politicians. For instance, Michael Wolff, a media columnist for New York magazine argued that: “It's part of this enormous faith, this unquestioned faith, that when the people in the Middle East are introduced to American values and style, and look and feel, they will fall for it, ... And it's virtually unchallenged. It's almost missionary-like" (Burkeman, 2003).

**4.** The US and the European politicians have also used the “**Politics of Double-Standard**” when it comes to the Palestian cause. For instance, the American and European politicians give direct and unconditioned support to Israel for self-defense and allow her to do whatever it pleases against the Palestinian people, whereas, they reject the right of the Palestinians for self-defense and standing against giving them their own independent state, and they consider every Palestinian freedom fighter as a terrorist and they believe that he must be killed.



(5) **Establishing “Token Institutions”** to give a false impression and feeling that these something could be call “Arab World”?!!! One of these institutions is “The League of the Arab States”, which was established in Cairo on March 22, 1945. Since then, and for more than seventh-eight (78) years has accomplished nothing toward Arab unity, sadly, it is on the reverse, it has legitimized the major plans and policies of the “Great Powers”, and helping them to continue their hegemony in the region. In short, it is a meaningless institution, which has cost the Arab people billions of US Dollar, on employees who have nothing and meaningless activities, and conducted numerous meetings resulting in "talk too much and say nothing.”

## **The Alternative**

I would argue that the Israeli war on Gaza should be considered an obvious evidence to declare the death of the Arab World, and therefore, it is time for all intellectuals and politicians in the region to start looking for new alternative to this dead idea. This new alternative should be simple and practical instrument to unite all peoples in the region on the bases of common denominators.

I believe that one simple and practical political umbrella that might unite the peoples in the region is what I would call “**The Confederate States of the Middle East.**” This new model will allow the five different and distinct sub-regions (namely, al-Maghreb, al-Neel, al-Mashreq, al-Khaleej, and Al-Janub) to cooperate closely and to give chance to all peoples to achieve their ultimate shared goal, which is “**to be united in one nation.**” And in order for this ultimate shared goal to be achieved, it has to be accomplished **gradually and subsequent** in two main and necessary stages as follows:

## **The First Stage**

The first step in this process is to encourage the individual states within the five different and distinct Sub-regions to work closely together to establish a strong and prosperous “**Five Confederate of Sub-regions.**” The following map illustrates these five sub-regions:

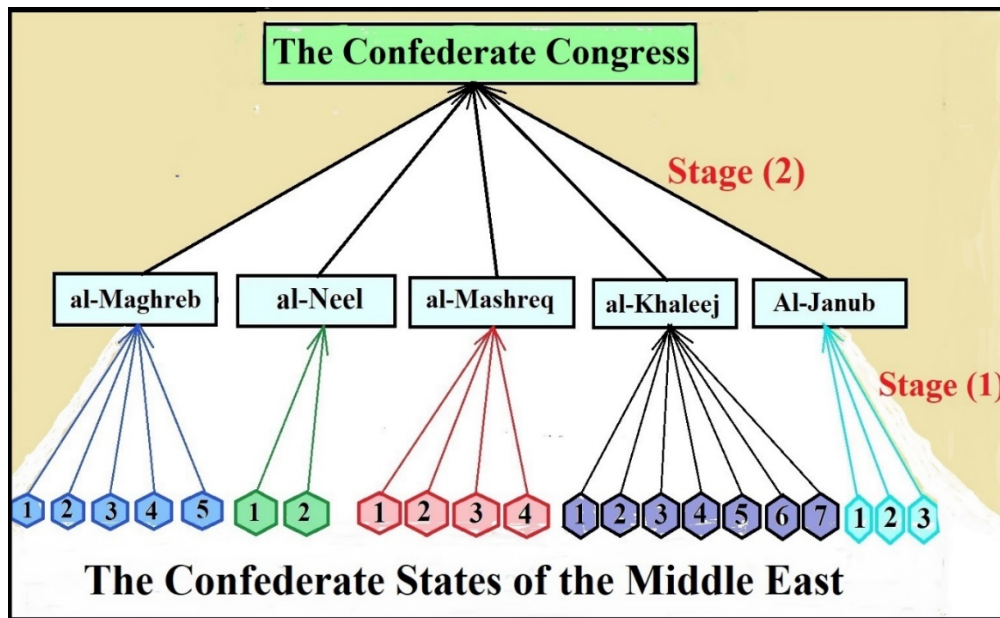


## The Second Stage

Once the first stage has been successfully accomplished, and the states within the five sub-regions are working and cooperating closely with each other, and are able to establish a strong and prosperous “**Five Confederate of Sub-Regions.**” Then, and only then, the five sub-regions can start working together to accomplish the second stage on the bases of common denominators to achieve their next common goal, which is to establish a strong and successful **Confederacy.**

By confederacy, here, I mean to establish an **alliance** between all five sub-regions in order to achieve unity, that will allow each member state to govern itself and at the same time to cooperate with others for achieving common objectives they could not achieve individually. In other words, confederacy is a union of sovereign states, rather than a strong central government. The following figure illustrate this

type of confederacy.



## Conclusion

To conclude this article let me recap and re-emphasize some of the main points I have mentioned above, as follows:

**First:** The saddest thing is that the false **hypothetical Intellectual Concept** of the Arab World has made the vast majority of Arabs, especially the youth, during the past generations to live an unattainable dream, and it has finally turned into a tool to obstruct any serious attempt at rapprochement and cooperation between the different peoples of the region.

**Second:** The saddest thing is that the brutal and barbaric war on Gaza has shown, that there is no such thing call “**the Arab World.**” It has been approving that it is nothing but an empty slogan and a major obstacle to achieve a real unity among the states in the region. Therefore, it is time to get rid of it and work hard to replace it with another simple and practical concept for uniting all peoples in the

region.

**Third:** The saddest thing is that the Palestinian people, unfortunately, found themselves facing a barbaric and brutal Israeli aggression by themselves, and the vast majority (except a tiny few) of the Arab people have failed miserably to support them.

**Fourth:** The saddest thing is that the brutal and barbaric war on Gaza has shown the hypocrisy of the Arab rulers and all what they care about is, shamelessly, to stay in power as long as they can at any cost, and to achieve their goals, and they are willing to ally themselves with anybody even the devil. More than that, they are secretly supporting and encouraging the Israelis to get rid of the freedom fighters in Gaza.

**Fifth:** The brutal and barbaric Israeli war on Gaza has shown plainly that an American, a European, and an Israeli human being, in the eyes of the American and European leaders, worthies more than an Arab or a Muslim human being.

**Sixth:** The saddest thing is that the brutal and barbaric Israeli war on Gaza has shown to all freedom loving people all over the Globe, that the Palestinian people, for more than seventy-five years, are being oppressed and evicted from their own land, by the Israelis and that is why they will not give up seeking their freedom and working toward their independence regardless of how long it takes or how much it cost.

**Seventh:** I believe, it is time for all patriot people in the region to cooperate to establish new political Umbrella, that might be called "**the Confederate states in the Middle East.**" This new political system would enable each state to be sovereign and govern itself independently, and at the same time, it would be able

to work with other individual states on the issues that they could not be able to achieve individually.

**Eighth:** The war on Gaza has proven beyond doubt that there is no such thing as a "comprehensive Arab identity"! Thus, we can conclude that the activists of the "Arab homeland project" have failed miserably in their attempt, which lasted for more than one hundred and fifty (150) years, to achieve this goal. In other words, they have failed to define "who they are" and what are the most important commonalities and issues that unite them! Even the "Palestinian cause", which was the main slogan (and one of the most important goals) of every political change in the Arab countries since 1948, has become an issue that does not concern them! In other words, one might say, the war on Gaza has dropped, what so called, the "fig leaf" that was covering their shame! Worst of all, with regard to the commonality that was supposed to define the meaning of the "comprehensive Arab identity" – the Arabic Language, we find that the Arab elites and rulers are the ones who have disregarded their language the most! Even after the United Nations recognized – in the seventies of the last century – that the Arabic language is the sixth official language on the international level (out of more than six thousand languages and dialects in the world), you find the Arab rulers and officials are ashamed to speak their own language, and they prefer to speak in other foreign languages, especially English, even when most of them do not speak it well!

**Nineth and Finally,** let me end this article by expressing my deepest condolences to all patriotic and sincere Arabists for this lost, and who fought so hard to achieve their national dream< which is "the Arab Unity", during the previous decades, and I hope that they will not give up, and continue their struggle for achieving the unity of all peoples in region.

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## References

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.iridis.com/glivar/Berber>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mr.html>

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<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mr.html>