

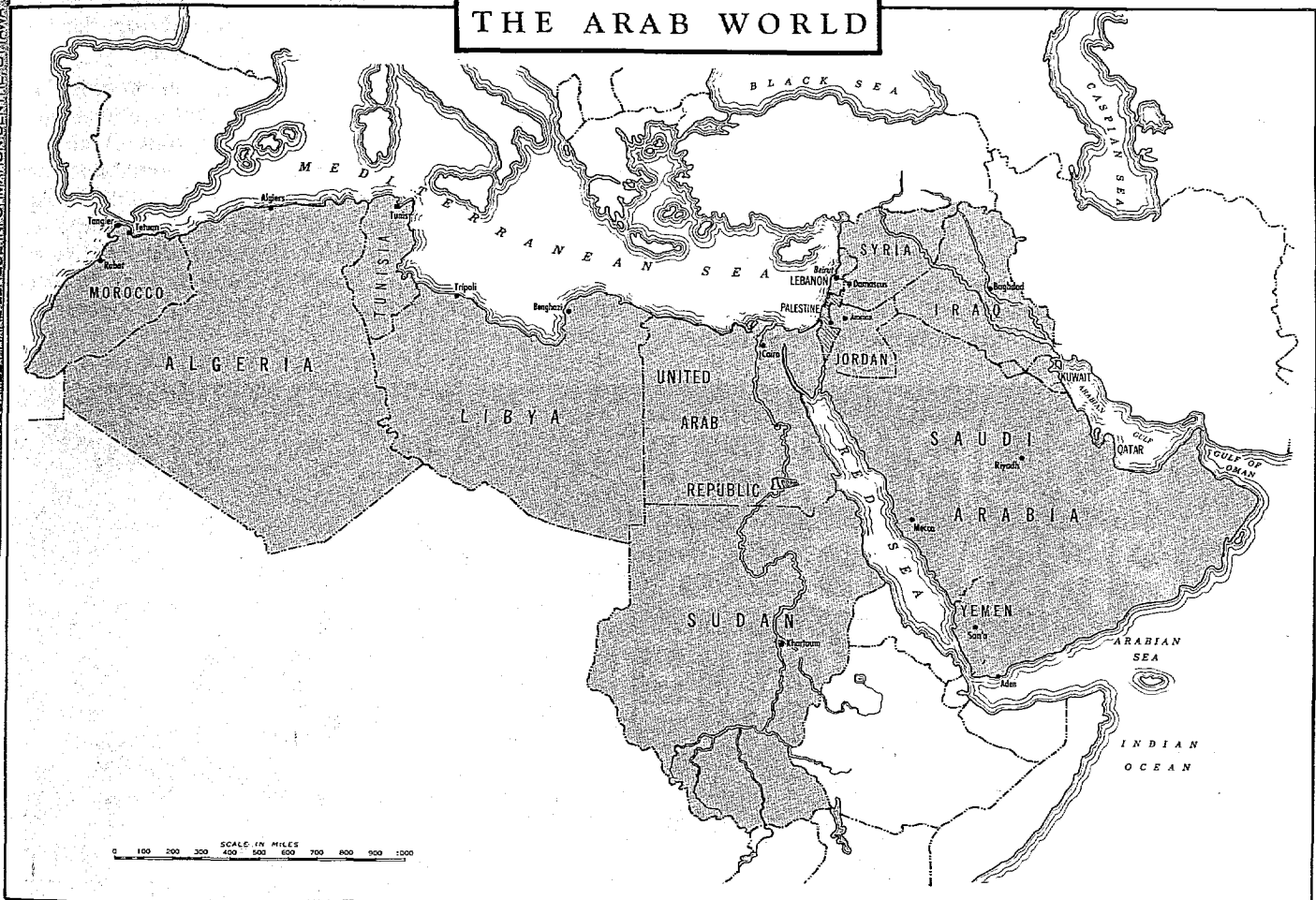
Arab cooperative system in this period in direct competition with the United States. Soviet and American competition to influence the Arab cooperative system through bilateral relations with member states in effect nullified each other. It was in this period that the United States intensified bilateral arrangements with Saudi Arabia and Jordan, along the same lines, but not the same scale, as with Iran. Any influence on the Arab cooperative system that may have been effected through these client states, however, was offset by American support for Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The drift of the Arab cooperative system toward reducing the role of external influence in the Arab world was in fact enhanced by Soviet-American competition, and the American role in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

One of the most profound changes in the Middle East during the sixties was in the size and scope of the Arab cooperative system. Not only did the number of Arab

had existed in the fifties, there were the following new elements:

1. The PLO, created by the first summit conference of Arab heads of state in January 1964 as the official representative of the Palestinians. By 1969, the PLO had become the umbrella organization of the Palestine resistance movement, a force which became powerful in the Arab world in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.
2. Arab unity experiments, initiated with the formation of the UAR in 1958, were an important manifestation of cooperative system interaction in the sixties. The tripartite federal union of Egypt, Iraq and Syria in 1963 and the Iraq-Egypt union of 1964 reflected the ideological commitment to unity and a level of interaction that constituted a significant systemic feature.
3. Heads-of-State summit conferences were initi-

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states increase by 50 percent, but also the number of Arab League agencies. The political parties and groupings that made up the system had also changed. The focus of these movements had become the Palestine resistance struggle. Reflecting this, between 1961 and 1963 about forty Arab Palestinian organizations appeared. These were closely aligned and often directly associated with the pan-Arab parties and groups. Furthermore, a pan-Arab party (Ba'ath) was in control of Syria and Iraq.

Changes of the sixties

In addition to these two components of the system that

ated in January 1964 and convened three more times in the decade—September 1964, September 1965 and August 1967. They reflect the regional approach to major issues. The major issue, of course, was the Arab-Israeli conflict. Except for the September 1965 meeting which was convened over the Yemen civil war, all the meetings were focussed on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

4. The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, organized in 1968.

What the growth of the Arab cooperative system indicates is that linkages have developed among the Arab