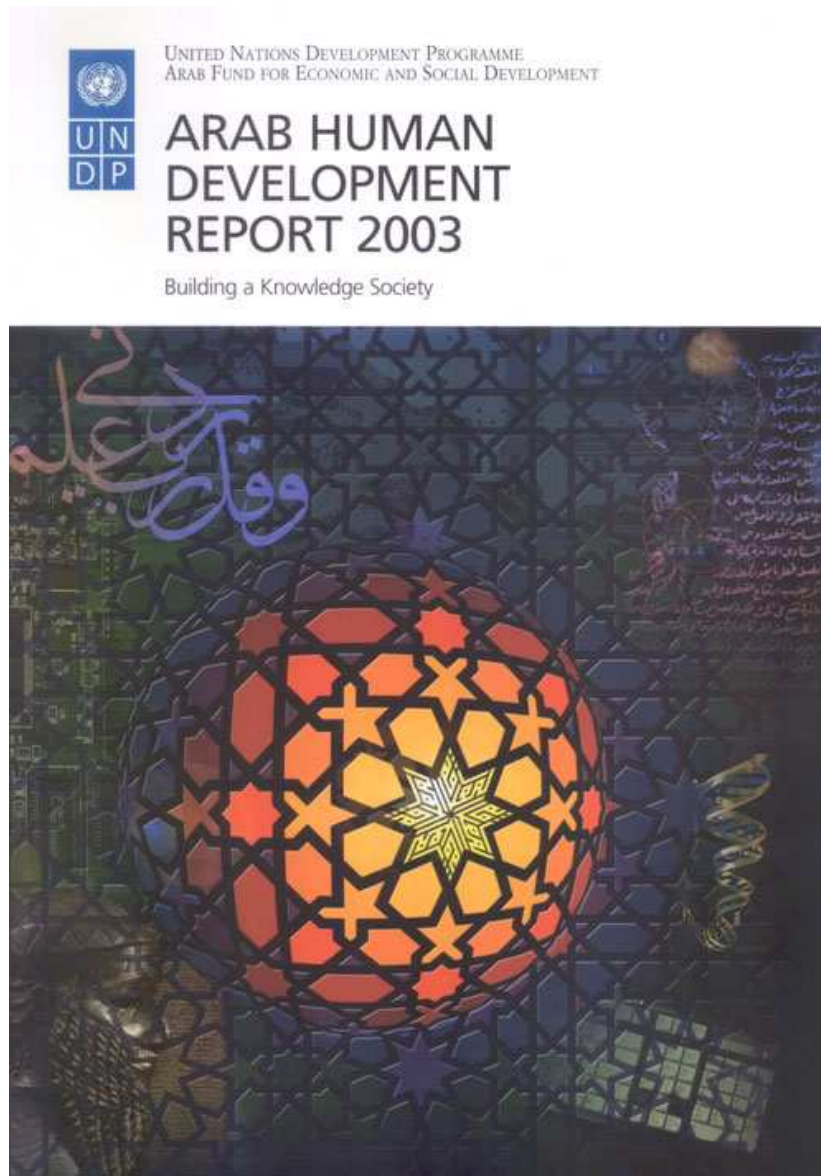


Israel and the Surrounding Region





THE REGIONAL CONTEXT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

PROLONGED TRANSITIONAL
PERIOD AND MULTI -
DIMENSIONAL CRISES

December 13, 2006

The New Historical Challenge

- ❑ The Middle East in the eye of the storm.
- ❑ American military presence and revolutionary vision - *the new “paradigm of change”* at the expense of stability.
- ❑ Domestic causes of backwardness
- ❑ Global and local recognition of major shortfalls.



The New Historical Challenge (Con't)

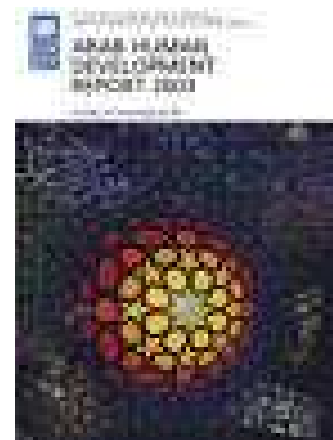
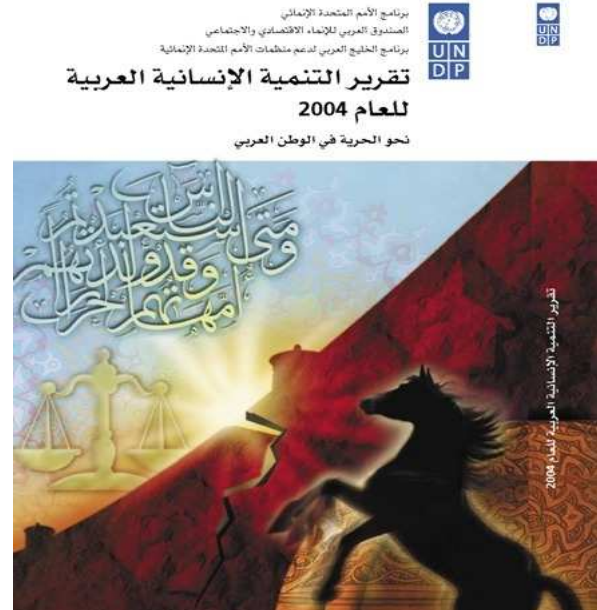
- ❑ Center versus Periphery: *Arab-Sunni* dominance challenged by the emergence of *Shi'ite* and non- Arab elements (Turkey, Iran).
- ❑ The emergence of a self conscious transnational Arab community.
- ❑ Emboldened and empowered oppositions.



Multi dimensional, unprecedented
crisis

Reforms (con't.)

- **Reforms in practice**
 - The lively debate is only partially reflected in the actual changes introduced by Arab states.
 - Political reforms – according to national, regional pace.
 - Each country to select its own model for reforms.
 - “Top down” Reforms.
- **The balance sheet**
 - More debate than actual democratizing change.
 - Incumbent regimes take control of the reform agenda, but encounter growing pressures and make unplanned concessions.
 - Concern of “down the slippery slop” process.
 - **The genie is out of the bottle**



Introduction, The Arab strategic report 2003-2004,
Alaharam center for political & strategic studies,
Hasan Abu Taleb:

***“The issue of change and reform in
the Arab region has transformed
into first priority international
question...”***

Reforms and the Peace Process

Arab Policies of Reform and Change, *Al Hayat* 24/8/2004

Mustafa al Fiqi,

Chairman, foreign relations committee, Egyptian parliament

***“The Arab-Israeli conflict, or the
Palestinian-Israeli confrontation, must
not be considered as an excuse to
postpone working with mechanisms of
reform and change...”***



Israel's Narrow Waistline



Middle East

