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Nation, State, and Regional Conflict -- II. The Politics of Escalation- From the "Arab Cold War" to the June 1967 War -- III. The Politics of Reappraisal and Adaptation -- IV. The Politics of the Peace Process -- V. The Decade of Fragmentation and Disarray -- VI. The Dialectic of Force and Diplomacy -- Conclusion -- Appendices -- Notes -- Selected Bibliography -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

Addresses the inter-Arab dimension of Middle East politics and its impact on the Palestinian conflict. This historical study of international Middle East politics in regional perspective presents a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between inter-Arab politics and the conflict with Israel-the two key issues which have shaped the Middle East contemporary history (and made it simultaneously tumultuous and a focus of international affairs). The Decline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict addresses the changing political behavior of the regional Arab system in the Palestine conflict, from total enmity to negotiated peace with Israel. This change is explained as a reflection of state formation process and constant thrust of ruling elites to disengage from compelling supra-state commitments stemming from Pan-Arab nationalist ideology and Islamic political culture. The book scrutinizes the role of Arab summit conferences which, since 1964, became the main collective Arab institution for decision making on common core issues-foremost of which was the conflict with Israel. The summits' main role was to legitimize incremental departure from the overburdening Palestine conflict whose powerful collective symbolism threatened states' autonomy. Summits' consensus sanctioned shifts from hitherto established collective Arab norms toward Israel as well as on inter-Arab relations, in accordance with core actors' interests. The summits offer a view to the Arab regional system's evolution as a negotiated inter-state order based on mutual recognition of sovereign states as opposed to compulsive collectivism in the name of Pan-Arabism. They were, in fact, a manipulation of the regional Arab system by primary participants' coalitions through employment of financial, ideological, and political trade-offs to resolve inter-Arab differences and reach a consensus on redefined collective goals.
