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THE LIMITS OF POLITICAL LEVERAGE IN A PATRON-CLIENT
RELATIONSHIP: THE CASE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL, 1967-
1984

City University of New York

PH.D. 1986

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RELATIONSHIP : THE CASE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO ISRAEL, 1967 - 1984

by

NITZA NACHMIAS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
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ABSTRACT

THE LIMITS OF POLITICAL LEVERAGE IN A PATRON-CLIENT
RELATIONSHIP: THE CASE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL
1967-1984

PY

NITZA NACHMIAS

Adviser: Professor Seymour M. Finger

The transfer of arms has become a crucial dimension of U.S. foreign policy and a major instrument for achieving its goals. This research examines the strategies, tactics, and consequences of U.S. arms transfers to Israel since 1967, using the model of patron-client relationship. It examines the purpose and efficacy of military aid as a means to achieve political leverage, and assumes that the withholding or delivery of aid does not necessarily result in political leverage. The thrust of the study is to determine (a) whether or not correlations between military aid and political leverage exist, (b) what are the causes for the existence or absence of such correlations.

We assumed U.S.-Israeli arms relationship to be an excellent case study because since 1967 the U.S. has been the sole external supplier of arms to Israel. Israel is also dependent on the U.S. for credits to buy the arms it vitally needs for its security. Such a situation might be expected to yield a high level of leverage. In this case, however, it

clearly did not. We have found no correlation between the variable "dependence" and the variable "aid." Indeed, Israel was very successful in resisting American pressures to conform its foreign policy to U.S. desires.

In order to reach conclusions and generalizations as to the causes of these unexpected results, we examined U.S.-Israeli relations in times of conflict and in the framework of the international and the regional environments. We identified four regional and global dilemmas and found clear correlations between them and the absence of American leverage. These dilemmas are an integral part of the international system and they result from its bipolar structure as well as the power competition between the U.S. and the USSR. Consequently, the client-state can pursue an independent foreign policy and often even enjoys leverage over its patron-state. As long as these dilemmas exist, U.S. leverage will be, at best, very limited.

FOR

MY SON YARON AND MY DAUGHTER LIMOR
MY JOY, MY PRIDE, MY INSPIRATION

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, transfer of arms has become a crucial dimension of U.S. foreign policy and a major instrument for achieving its goals. In his letter to Congress, Secretary of State Shultz explains the foreign assistance request for FY 1985 saying: "The Program presented here constitutes the predominant portion of what is, in effect, the foreign policy budget of the United States."¹ Arms transfers have been expected to promote peace and stability, and to enhance U.S. power position in the world. Arms transfers "are much more than an economic occurrence, a military relationship or an arms control challenge--arms sales are foreign policy writ large."² The foreign assistance bill for 1985 amounted to \$15 billion, and just like foreign assistance bills in previous years, it was mainly a means to attain foreign policy goals.

It is that portion of the total Federal budget which directly protects and furthers U.S. national interests abroad...we contribute to the military capabilities of a friendly or allied country against a common threat...Some of the most effective means we have to promote stability are the varied programs of foreign assistance we have developed, ranging from direct military aid to...economic stabilization support, to long-term development assistance.³

The role of military aid as a foreign policy instrument has risen sharply. While in the late 50's arms transfers averaged less than \$1 billion per year, it reached \$12 billion in the late 1970s, and it exceeded \$21 billion in 1982. Following World War II, all Administrations have perceived military assistance

to be crucial to America's national interest. "Arms sales are the hard currency of foreign affairs. They replace the security pacts of the 1950s." ⁴ Arms transfers are expected to yield leverage and influence and the U.S. is prepared to pay a very high price in its pursuit of influence over regions vital to its interests. Indeed, the U.S. manipulates arms transfers in order to achieve political leverage, which is vital to U.S.'s power competition with the USSR. Once political leverage is gained, the U.S. expects its client-states to comply with U.S. foreign policy. The increased use of arms transfers as a foreign policy instrument resulted in a sharp increase in the scale of these transactions. In all, the U.S. sold between 1971 and 1980 almost \$100 billion worth of arms under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, approximately eight times the amount for the preceding twenty years. ⁵

The large transfers of arms were explained mainly in terms of leverage and were considered legitimate instruments for achieving strategic and political goals.

The most important political benefit of arms transfers may be leverage over other countries' foreign policy decisions. In the Arab-Israeli conflict, the offer of arms has been used to make difficult political and territorial decisions more acceptable. ⁶

Military aid programs began with the enactment of Public Law 75, providing military aid to Greece and Turkey. ⁷ From World War II until the mid 60s, arms transfers were noncontroversial components of U.S. national security policy. It was generally accepted that weapon export not only was helpful

to the recipient states but helped the U.S. as well. Providing weapons and strengthening U.S. allies was perceived to be an important component in America's containment policy. However, since the late 60s the situation began to change and growing doubts as to the purpose and efficacy of transfer of arms have persisted "among members of Congress, government officials, and some segments of the general public." 8

In the politics and process of arms sales the President has always played the major role. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 gave the President vast powers over the sale and grant military aid.

The President is authorized to furnish military assistance on such terms and conditions as he may determine, to any friendly country or international organization, the assisting of which the President finds will strengthen the security of the U.S. and promote world peace. 9

Until 1970, most of the arms supplied through the FMS program were sold to the NATO powers and to industrialized nations such as Australia and Japan. Since then, however, the bulk of the FMS sales, has been to non-NATO countries with three-fifths of the total delivered to the Middle East. Moreover, the U.S. was no longer depleting its surplus stockpiles of World War II weapons. The weapons delivered now were modern and sophisticated. Indeed, arms transfers became an important business. "Another important trend in foreign assistance is the shift from grants aid to loans. Under the Marshall Plan almost 90 percent of aid to Europe was in the form of grants...(later) loans became the principal form of

assistance." ¹⁰ In FY 1961 military assistance programs were twice as large as military sales. By 1966 the military sales figures doubled those for military aid (not including Vietnam). As a result, as Senator Hubert Humphrey said in 1975, 'America has become a kind of arms supermarket into which any customer can walk and pick up whatever he wants.' ¹¹

The increase in quantity and quality of arms transfers and the fact that Washington was manipulating military aid to third world countries as a means of achieving strategic and political goals, had many people in Congress and the general public worried. While in the early 50's and 60's American people exhibited strong support for military aid, since the late 60s a shift has occurred in the public mood to a more cautious and critical view of the nature and merits of arms transfers. The doubts concerned mainly the existing ritualized assumptions of the purpose and the practices of military aid and its efficacy in terms of leverage yielded. Important questions were raised as to the validity of the argument that high levels of aid are justified for the defense of the free world, regional balance or stability, and critical diplomatic efforts. ¹² The view that the executive branch had allowed the arms transfers to develop a momentum of their own and to almost get out of hand, resulted in Congressional action to put checks on the President's power to transfer arms. With the enactment in 1968 of the Foreign Military Sales Act, the 1961 Act was amended to require the Administration to state clearly its foreign policy

considerations in its arms sales policies. The act limited the President's power to sell arms to countries engaged in human rights violations or impeding social progress.¹³ The most important of these measures was The Arms Export Control Act approved by Congress on June 30, 1976. However, as our research shows, none of these measures affected the transfer of arms to the Middle East, which continues to be the number one recipient of American military aid. Since 1968 the U.S. has replaced France and England and has become Israel's sole supplier of arms.

The research shows that in the politics of arms transfers to Israel the role of Congress on the one hand, and American public opinion, on the other hand was very limited. Moreover, the tactics of withholding and delivery of arms i.e., the tactics of coercion and inducement, are usually controlled by the executive branch which is using them to establish leverage over Israel and influence its foreign policies.

In my dissertation I challenge the existing ritualized assumption that transfer of arms is an important instrument in achieving leverage and influence.¹⁴ What emerges according to our research is that in the patron-client relationship the donor state is many times a captive of the recipient state and not vice-versa. The analysis of arms transfers to Israel between 1968 and 1984 demonstrates that the U.S. has gained very little, if any, leverage over Israel's policies and politics.

I have thoroughly examined U.S.-Israeli arms relationships

and found them to be based on misperceptions and wrong assumptions. My research questioned the common, conventional argument that Israel's complete dependence on U.S.'s military aid provides the U.S. with leverage over Israel, or in other words, gives the U.S. the key to peace in the Middle East. 15 Through the juxtaposition of arms transfers and events we show how and when U.S. leverage was sought but could not be attained. Because leverage or lack thereof is hard to prove, espacially in a relationship of cooperation, we have based our assessment on Israel's actual compliance or defiance of U.S. expressed desires.

In order to understand and explain the paradox of high level of military aid and low level of political leverage I have conceptualized leverage in terms of patron-client relationships. I looked at the efforts made by the patron (the U.S.) to influence and control its client s (Israel) politics and policies. I have developed a set of hypotheses explaining U.S. goals and the means it chose to attain them in the context of transfer of arms to Israel. In my analysis I examined the existing theories concerning the lack of U.S. leverage over Israel, and found them to be unsatisfactory. The existing theories pay little attention to the international environment, and the regional dilemmas, while they emphasize domestic and national variables that, on analysis, prove to be of little relevance to the question of political leverage in a patron-client relationship.

My argument is that the international and regional environments are the necessary and sufficient causes that determine the existence or the absence of American leverage. The conceptual framework that I have established explains clearly the purposes, practices and consequences of military aid, i.e., how, when and why it failed to bring a settlement to the Middle East.

HYPOTHESES

1. The Middle East has long been of significance in American foreign policy. It has been particularly important to the U.S. national interest since the end of World War II with the development of the Cold War and growing Western dependence on oil from the region. The important position of the region in the context of U.S. national interests leads the U.S. to seek leverage and influence over Israel and the friendly Arab states. Leverage serves a few major U.S. foreign policy goals: On the global level, leverage reinforces containment and enhances the U.S. position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. On the regional level, leverage enables the U.S. to enjoy the friendship of both Israel and the Arab states. This status allows the U.S. to promote peace and stability in the region, which are essential for the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East to the West.
2. In its pursuit of leverage, the U.S. manipulates transfers of arms through coercion (withholding) or inducement (deliveries). Since the first major U.S.-Israeli arms deal of 1968, this has been a common practice by all U.S. Administrations. "Interested in encouraging a settlement in the Middle East, the U.S. has used its control over aircraft supplies as leverage in pressing the Israeli government to make concessions."¹⁶ However, the leverage resulting from these tactics has proved to be more myth than reality.

3. The common assumption attributes the lack of leverage to domestic factors, i.e., Congress and public opinion support of Israel inhibit U.S. government from coercing Israel to comply with its policies.¹⁷ This approach underestimates the fact (which is elaborated in the research of the case studies), that acts of withholding (coercion) or delivery (inducement) of arms are initiated and implemented by the Executive branch, while Congress usually approves and follows the President's leadership. Congress is active in the appropriation process, not in the setting and implementing of foreign policy goals. An analysis of the events according to time sequences shows that, although domestic factors have some influence over policies of arms transfers, they do not serve as major constraints on the initiation and implementation of foreign policy.
4. In this research I have used an alternative approach which assumes that the existence or absence of leverage is a consequence of the international system, namely, its structure and function. The international setting and the particularities of the Middle East have created two regional and two global built-in systemic dilemmas, which explain the lack of U.S. leverage. A thorough examination of these dilemmas is necessary in order to understand why U.S. is lacking leverage over its client, Israel.

THE EFFECTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM ON U.S.
LEVERAGE: FOUR REGIONAL AND GLOBAL DILEMMAS

The three case studies analysed in this research show that, despite a basically cooperative relationship, a major conflict of interest exists between the U.S. and Israel. The conflict derives from differences in the two nations' definition of their respective national interest. Thus, during times of conflict the U.S. needs leverage to bring Israel to accept American doctrines and strategies. According to one approach, ideological-conceptual differences divide the two allies, while according to a second theory the differences are mainly strategic-tactical and not ideological.

The advocates of the first approach times of conflict the U.S. needs leverage to bring Israel to accept American doctrines and strategies. According to one approach, ideological-conceptual differences divide the two allies, while according to a second theory the differences are mainly strategic-tactical and not ideological.

The advocates of the first approach argue that Washington and Jerusalem adhere to conflicting political doctrines because their vital interests are in conflict.¹⁸ The U.S. has a vital interest in establishing peace in the region, since peace secures the flow of oil while war threatens it. Peace serves another major American interest: the desire to maintain friendly relations with both Israel and the Arab states. War imposes upon the U.S. the need to "choose" between the support of one side or the other. Last but not least, peace helps to curb Soviet

influence. The USSR has been exploiting the Israeli-Arab conflict by playing the "Arabs against the Jews", and has gained influence through the transfer of arms and defense technology. Peace would terminate this practice; thus, Soviet power and influence will be contained.

From an Israeli perspective, however, the picture looks different. Israel's most vital interest is to protect its security by controlling strategic positions in the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Israel prefers a situation of "no peace no war" while exercising control over these territories, to a withdrawal from all or most territories. (Israel claims that it does not trust the Palestinians' commitment to peace after an Israeli withdrawal.)¹⁹ The conflict is therefore, between two principles: "peace in exchange for territories", which is America's first priority, and "no peace but territories and security", which is Israel's first priority.

The second approach is based on a different assumption. It argues that both nations rank peace as their highest priority.²⁰ Moreover, Israel is more interested in peace than the U.S., since peace serves Israel's most vital strategic, economic, and political interests. Strategically, peace would relieve Israel of the permanent threat to its existence. Economically, peace would enable Israel to devote its scarce resources to a desperately needed economic recovery. (Israel's annual inflation rate is reaching 400 percent, and it spends 30 percent of its GNP on defense.) Politically, peace would gain Israel

much-awaited Arab recognition. As a technologically advanced country, Israel's economy would gain tremendously if Arab and African markets opened up for Israeli goods and services. With peace attained, Israel could become a center for democracy, technology, and culture in the Middle East. Hence, the conflict between the U.S. and Israel is, according to this approach, not conceptual, but strategic-tactical. The main disagreement between the two allies concern the strategies and the tactics which would best serve the cause of peace, i.e., how, when, and in exchange for what should Israel withdraw?

Both approaches can be convincingly argued. The supporters of the first approach, usually those who are critical of Israel's policies, argue that Israel's rejection of the Reagan peace plan is the ultimate proof that Israel rejects the principle "territories for peace".²¹ The supporters of the second approach use the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty to show that Israel adheres to the "exchange of territories for peace" principle.²² It has been acknowledged, however, by both approaches that America and Israel do not see eye to eye on many issues, and the invasion of Lebanon of 1982 is a case in point. As a result of this conflict of interests, it has been a key objective of the U.S. to exert leverage over Israel whenever the U.S. wished its policies to prevail. But American leverage when sought, has been at best very limited. It is interesting to note in this context that the Soviet Union, for the same reasons, finds it difficult to exert leverage over its client-states in

the region. ²³ This frustrating lack of leverage is exhibited in all the three case studies and is caused by two regional and two global dilemmas which control Middle Eastern policies.

REGIONAL DILEMMAS

On the regional level, the U.S. confronts two dilemmas; both are concerned with and result from conflicting American interests in the region.

The first dilemma concerns the American desire to pursue an "evenhanded" policy in the Middle East. The central feature of this policy is support for both Israel and the moderate Arab states. Neither domestic upheavals nor inter-regional conflicts which plague the area have changed this long-term American policy. In the implementation process the U.S. has exhibited: (a) a commitment to the security of Israel and its right to recognition and peace, and (b) a commitment to a just solution to the Palestinian problem, and to an "exchange of territories for peace" principle.²⁴ Ultimately, the U.S. aspires to create in the Middle East a "mini-NATO" or a "strategic consensus" which would include the "Gang of Four", i.e., Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Israel--all states friendly to the U.S. The concept relies heavily on military rather than political aspects of the possible alliance; thus, military aid and strategic cooperation agreements are considered the most important features of this concept.²⁵ In developing the "strategic consensus" plan, the U.S. appears to have ignored or underestimated the incompatibilities which exist

between Israel and the moderate Arab states. Hence, the "strategic consensus" has never materialized.²⁶

The Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation between the U.S. and Israel which was signed on November 30, 1981, did not materialize either. It was cancelled by the U.S. government only three weeks after it was signed in response to Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights. Tensions between the potential "Gang of Four" then mounted, and the Arab states made it clear that their friendship and cooperation was conditioned by the U.S.'s ability to influence Israel to make territorial concessions. After the energy crises of 1973 and 1978, this friendship became a vital U.S. interest. The U.S. was faced with the need to be able to "deliver Israel", and leverage was sought to achieve this. However, Israel made it clear that it was not yet ready to consider territorial concessions, and demanded that its strategic superiority be established, and its security be satisfied before it would consider territorial concessions. Consequently, the U.S. has been supplying Israel with the quality and quantity of arms necessary to bring about Israeli concessions which would satisfy the Arab states' demands. This situation creates a basic dilemma. Arming Israel is a prerequisite for any Israeli withdrawal. However, arming Israel undermines American leverage, helps Israel to resist American pressures more successfully, and makes an Israeli withdrawal less likely. This, in turn, alienates the Arab states, whose cooperation and friendship are essential for U.S. economic and

strategic interests.

The second regional dilemma concerns the American-Israeli relationship. The U.S. has traditionally supported Israel for ideological, humanitarian, and strategic reasons. The U.S. and Israel share the same cultural, social and political values. They are both capitalistic, liberal, democracies. Thus, ideologically, the U.S. supports Israel as a champion of Western civilization and culture in the Middle East.

On the humanitarian level, the U.S. feels an obligation to protect Israel and to make sure that another Holocaust never occurs.

Most important, however, is the strategic consideration. Israel is located at the heart of the Middle East, where vital American economic and strategic interests are constantly at stake. Recent events in the Persian Gulf, the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and the horn of Africa, and the Iran-Iraq war, make the situation all the more dangerous. It is essential for the U.S. to have a strong and reliable ally in the region. Israel answers both requirements. It is militarily strong and is a reliable American ally. Thus, strategic cooperation with Israel and support of Israel's military strength have become vital American interests.²⁷ This situation, however, creates the second regional dilemma. It is a vital American interest to strengthen Israel and to help maintain its position as the most important regional military power, just as it is a vital U.S. interest to strengthen all its other allies. However, a strong

Israel is less vulnerable to U.S. pressures. Paradoxically, American leverage is undermined by American support of Israel.

GLOBAL DILEMMAS

On the global level, the U.S. confronts two dilemmas which derive from, and result in, conflicting global interests.

The first global dilemma results from the U.S.-USSR power competition in the Middle East. U.S. Middle East policy has always been guided by global considerations, since both superpowers consider influence in the region to be a vital national interest. One of America's major concerns has been the Soviet reaction to either an increase or decrease in American support for Israel. Two conflicting theories argue for and against the value of increased American support of Israel. The first theory argues against increased aid to Israel because such aid is believed to encourage Soviet aid to extremists Arab states. This "aid competition" intensifies both the hostility among the regional rivals and tension between the two superpowers. / One-sided support for Israel, the theory argues, helps the Soviet Union to penetrate deeper into the region, and works against containment. In addition, it enhances Israel's power to resist substantial moves toward peace, while alienating the friendly Arab states. A better way to achieve containment, and at the same time avoid the danger of a major confrontation between the superpowers, is to limit support for Israel and if needed even to pressure Israel "to behave."²⁸

The second theory argues that the opposite is true. The

U.S. should support and strengthen its allies in order to "create a half a world - a free half - without blowing the whole to pieces in the process."²⁹ Henry Kissinger, who influenced American policy in the Middle East perhaps more than any other politician, argued that containment is best served through the support for Israel. It was Kissinger's belief that Israel's military strength directly affects containment. The theory proved itself in all major Israeli-Arab conflicts. Limiting support for Israel never enhanced containment. The American expectation that diminished support for Israel would be reciprocated by reduced Soviet support for its client-states never materialized.³⁰ In reality, the opposite occurred. Whenever the U.S. pursued an "evenhanded" policy of reduced support of Israel, the USSR was induced to adopt a more daring and dangerous policy. American restraint was interpreted by the USSR as a sign of weakness, and instigated Soviet adventurism.³¹

Despite upheavals and political changes in the region, the USSR's vital interests in the Middle East have not changed. First, the Soviet Union, although proclaiming self-sufficiency in oil today, may become dependent on Middle Eastern oil in the future.³² In addition, gaining control over the West's energy sources is an irresistible temptation for the USSR. Second, the U.S. has perhaps underestimated or ignored the strategic importance of the Middle East to the Soviets' own security. This region is considered a Soviet "back yard" and American

improvements in carrier-borne aircraft, combined with improved nuclear submarines, pose a new threat to the Soviets. The USSR considers this region to be part of its defensive perimeter and has a strong drive to turn it into a sphere of influence.³³

Strategically, though, the Soviets' interests in the region have changed drastically. In the 50's their interests were primarily defensive, i.e., they tried to weaken the military network of interlocking alliances that the West was creating around them. By the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of favorable circumstances, the USSR has displayed more ambitious and expansionist trends. The USSR, from Krushchev to Gorbachev, and especially after their expulsion from Egypt in 1972, proved to be in tune with regional dynamics. It responded to specific needs and situations by introducing new weapon systems, and adopting a business-like policy by providing specific "aid packages" to individual Middle Eastern States.³⁴

The American answer to the aggressive Soviet policy has been increased support for Israel and the friendly Arab states. More than any other country in the region (especially after the demise of the Shah), Israel has been considered an arm of U.S. foreign policy helping to counter dangerous Soviet maneuvers. The arms race, which was introduced to the region in 1955 with the first major Soviet-Egyptian arms deal, has continued into the 1980s with each superpower supplying its clients with increasingly sophisticated weapons and missile systems. (The U.S. was responsible for thirty nine percent of all arms

exported in the world in 1977, the USSR twenty nine percent, West Germany and England five percent each, and France seven percent).³⁵

U.S. policy in the Middle East must, therefore, be assessed in the context of the power competition between the U.S. and the USSR. The situation has been aggravated in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afganistan, the revolution in Iran, and the Iran-Iraq war. As long as the Soviet Union is perceived as pursuing an aggressive policy in the Middle East the U.S. must strengthen its allies in the region, especially Israel. Support for Israel, however, creates a major global dilemma, because it undermines American leverage and gives Israel an edge over the U.S. The U.S. has to refrain from exerting leverage or pressuring Israel through a decrease or a suspension of military aid, lest such acts undermine America's own power position in the region. Israel, aware of the U.S.'s dilemma, can take advantage of this and manipulate American aid to serve its political purposes, as will be shown in the analysis of the three case studies.

The second global dilemma also results from systemic causes, namely, the distribution of power and power competition between the U.S. and the USSR. In its pursuit of spheres of influence, the U.S. has to maintain its credibility as a patron-state with present and future client-states throughout the world. The U.S. could not and would not abandon a client-state in a time of crisis since the Soviet Union could

exploit such an act to attract prospective client-states and to change the global status-quo in its favor. President Sadat's decision to break away from the Soviet Union and renew his ties with the United States was influenced mainly by his belief that the U.S. was a much more reliable and credible patron-state than the USSR. Heavy American pressure on Israel and the use of coercive leverage could undermine or even destroy America's reputation as a patron-state. This could enhance the Soviet credibility in the eyes of prospective client-states.³⁶

It has been argued by all administrations, but was best expressed by former Secretary of State Kissinger, that any decrease in American support for Israel encourages Soviet mischief and intensifies tensions in the region. In the long-run, strengthening Israel and curbing Soviet influence would enhance detente because any reduction in tension between the regional rivals would have a spill-over effect and would reduce tensions among the two superpowers.

It is clear, however, that as long as these regional and global dilemmas exist, Israel will continue to enjoy a high level of independence in its foreign policy decisions. U.S. power to coerce Israel to adjust its policies and to conform to American desires will be at best limited. The prediction that the U.S. will continue its massive military and economic aid to Israel regardless of significant differences in opinions, policies, and interests is very realistic. The three case studies thoroughly examined in this research fully confirm these

hypotheses.

METHODOLOGY

The growing number of approaches to foreign policy have created neither clarity nor standard methods for analyzing leverage and influence.³⁷ A study of the use of arms transfers for the purpose of gaining political leverage must begin with working definitions of the concepts: "influence" and "leverage," which lie at the very heart of our study. Since the existing approaches do not offer clear distinctions between the concepts of "leverage" and "influence", I have established my own definitions based on the assumption that leverage exists in the context of patron-client relationships, and results from relationships of dependence between the patron-state and the client-state.

For my research I have used the case-study approach, since it offers an indispensable tool for the study of foreign policy. Through an in-depth analysis of three major events in U.S.-Israeli relations particular instances of influence in operation can be identified and analyzed. The actual leverage gained by major transfers of arms can be evaluated clearly. The method follows the inductive form and the theory results from the establishment of generalization which are concluded from the research. The three cases chosen for the research are:

- (a) The Rogers Peace Plan of 1969
- (b) The Disengagement Agreements of 1974-1975
- (c) The Lebanese Crisis of 1982-1984

These three cases were chosen because they have been researched far less than most other major Middle Eastern events (e.g. The Camp David Accords). In addition, all three cases involve intense American peace initiatives which followed the major Arab-Israeli wars (1967, 1973, 1982). U.S. foreign policy goals are clear, documented, easily traced and analyzed. The means and processes of implementation, which are the major concern of this research, are much more vague, inconsistent, and controversial. In all three cases important conflicts of interest created tensions between the U.S. and Israel which resulted in the U.S. trying to use its leverage to prevail, but with little success. Interestingly, in each case the U.S. used a different tactic designed to achieve an Israeli compliance.

In the first case, the tactic used was coercion (threats and punishments) through the withholding of arms. The tactic failed and the Rogers Plan was quietly buried.

In the second case, the U.S. used both coercion (threats) and inducement (generous aid packages) and achieved a partial success, namely, the signing of the three Disengagement Agreements.

In the third case the U.S. again used coercion (threats and punishment) through the withholding of arms, a tactic which led to another failure. During the Lebanese crisis U.S. foreign policy suffered a succession of setbacks which resulted from lack of leverage and complete inability to influence the policies of either its friends or its foes. This lack of

leverage, which is the subject of our research, is best explained, analyzed and examined through the case study approach.

The question we had to resolve was how can leverage and influence best be identified, explained and predicted? The existing literature offers only limited guidance for this task. "It is only lately that sustained attention to more peaceful forms of pressure has begun."³⁸ Quantitative analysis can hardly provide an insight into processes of bargaining and compromises, which are the essence of international politics. Moreover, the instances of influence are too few, in any particular international relationship, to permit a valid quantitative analysis of statistical significance. The case-study approach overcomes these methodological difficulties.

This research draws on the approaches of both the nation-state and the systemic-level studies, in an attempt to avoid the "level-of-analysis" problem apparent in works which have neglected one level in using another.³⁹ The nation-state level is given full attention by the analysis of the decision-making processes of the governments involved. We assigned the individual decision-making-level a secondary role. The focus of our study is, however, on the international system and the role of the global environment in the nation-state's foreign policy making.

This approach is especially helpful in explaining the

structural features of the international system (bipolar, balance of power, spheres of influence, etc.), and how they affect the interaction among the participating nation-states. This integrated approach serves as a theoretical framework and provides a tool for examining questions pertaining both to the nation-state level and the international setting where nation-states interact. The study defines the various nations interests, identifies foreign policy goals, examines implementation processes, and explains the role of domestic variables in foreign policy making. The three case-studies are, therefore, examined in the context of the international environment, while the variables and concepts relevant to the nation-state level are integrated in the analysis.

DEFINITIONS

LEVERAGE: DEFINITION AND APPLICATION

In the study of the arms relationships between the U.S. and Israel and the political leverage which has been expected to follow from the vast transfers of American arms, our working definition of leverage is:

Leverage is defined as manipulation of the arms transfer relationship in order to coerce or induce a recipient-state to conform its policy or actions to the desires of the supplier-state. Coercion involves the denial of ongoing or future aid while inducement depends upon the promise of increased aid.⁴⁰

In the conceptualization of leverage, a distinction should be made among power, influence, and leverage. Leverage is always defined in terms of power i.e., coercion or inducement, and is expected to result in power. However, unlike power, leverage excludes the application of brute force and assumes two cooperating actors in a relationship of dependency. Power requires neither cooperation nor dependency relationships. A more powerful state can invade or take over a weaker state and the sheer use of force yields compliance. Hence, when leverage is attained, the use of force becomes unnecessary. Unlike power and leverage, influence can be noncoercive and may enrich rather than limit the weaker actor's choices. Moreover, influence can result in mutual benefits for both the patron and the client states.⁴¹

By contrast, leverage is achieved through the manipulation of aid by the patron-state, is always coercive and it limits the policy choices of the client-state. Unlike leverage, influence

depends neither on a patron-client relationship, nor requires a dependence relationship. Influence may or may not be coercive, while leverage is always coercive. Leverage is measured by the level of compliance achieved, and is considered successful when the level of compliance is high.

The common analysis of leverage is based on the study of two primary tactics used by the influencer to achieve compliance: (a) coercion (a threat or an actual punishment); and (b) inducement (a promise or an actual reward). The theory argues that the manipulation of these two tactics is responsible for the existence or absence of leverage. Therefore, leverage is achieved when and if actor A, which seeks to modify the behavior of actor B, can actually impose such a change upon actor B without using force.⁴² A prerequisite of leverage is the perception on the part of B that A can either punish or reward it by a denial or delivery of much needed aid.⁴³ There are, however, a few major difficulties concerning this theory. First, since all leverage attempts are future-oriented, when Actor A plans coercion, it has to predict actor B's behavior under pressure. This is almost impossible to do, given the complexity of the international system and the decision-making processes. Second, pressure can be counter-productive and may result in adverse consequences, i.e., B may harden its position or turn to another supplier.⁴⁴ Third, it is difficult to distinguish between the two tactics (coercion and inducement), and usually both tactics are practiced by the patron-state simultaneously.

In practice, the distinction between coercion and inducement is often blurred. Whereas coercion measures may be used without accompanying inducements, rarely are inducements offered without being preceded or accompanied by coercive measures. Such leverage combines pressures and assurances e.g. withholding some aid while promising future increase contingent upon specific behavior of the recipient.⁴⁵

For these reasons, the common theory of leverage is lacking both explanatory and predictive capabilities. Misguided by this theory, the U.S. has been trying to establish leverage by manipulating military aid (withholding or delivery) to its client-states, only to realize to its chagrin, that even nations heavily dependent on the U.S. for economic and military aid can successfully resist American pressures. Especially striking has been the gap between the high level of Israel's dependence (the highest level in the world of aid per capita), and the low level of Israel's compliance (e.g. Israel's policy of settlements, rejection of Reagan's peace plan, and the invasion of Lebanon).

Another common theory explains the constraints on U.S. leverage over Israel as voluntary, i.e., the U.S. can pressure Israel but it prefers not to. The U.S., the theory argues, is reluctant to pressure Israel because this would antagonize the many supporters of Israel in Congress and in the general public.⁴⁶

Analysts who are generally critical of Israel tend to single out American domestic politics as the sole reason why influence through arms supplies has been so severely constrained.⁴⁷

This theory further argues that bureaucratic politics, namely conflicts between the Departments of State and Defense,

undermine U.S. leverage, create lack of consensus, and make the shaping of foreign policy difficult. The analysis of U.S. leverage, or lack thereof, during the three case studies invalidates these common theories. Domestic determinants, which undoubtedly affect U.S. foreign policy, are not sufficient causes and cannot be responsible for the curtailed U.S. leverage. Congress, the major domestic variable, did not play an important role in the shaping of U.S. policy during any of the cases. Congress played its traditional limited role, namely, legislating aid appropriations. In the case of Lebanon, for example, Congress approved both in 1982 and 1983, high levels of aid appropriations to Israel, as were requested by the President.⁴⁸ Between 1968 and 1984, individual Congressmen expressed both support for and opposition to Israel's policies, and there was no clear ideological division along party lines. All Presidents exhibited clear control over the decision-making process while, for example, in the case of Lebanon, both the Jewish and the Arab lobbies maintained a relatively low profile.⁴⁹ American Presidents make their final decisions in consultation with the national security adviser and the Secretaries of State and Defense. Their major considerations are: (a) strategic-global (preventing a confrontation with the Soviet Union); regional (avoiding the alienation of either Israel or the Arab states); and economic (securing the flow of oil.)⁵⁰

In view of the inadequacy of the common theories to explain

or predict leverage, I have established an alternative approach, one based on an important assumption which to date has received minimal attention yet is fundamental to the analysis of leverage. The theory explains leverage in terms of the international system, its structure and function. All interactions among nations are conditioned by the distribution of power among the various nations and by the bipolar character of the system.⁵¹ Formal and informal processes constrain national actors from freely pursuing their national goals. The anarchic nature of the international system, combined with the asymmetry in capabilities, does not necessarily result in leverage of the strong over the weak. Other features --power competition among the two super powers, the need to gain and maintain spheres of influence, access to oil, as well as strategic needs-- affect the patron-state's leverage over its client-state.⁵²

The international environment has created in the Middle East a series of systemic dilemmas which are necessary and sufficient causes of curtailed U.S. leverage in the region. These dilemmas have enabled the client-state, in this case Israel, to manipulate the transfer of arms and to engage the U.S. in acts of support which provided Israel with leverage over the U.S. Andrew Pierre mentioned this phenomenon and said that "The transfer of arms can go so far as to make the supplier hostage to the recipient." ⁵³ This is especially applicable when through arms transfers the U.S. becomes committed to the

security of the recipient-state, as has been the case with Israel.⁵⁴

MILITARY AID FOR ISRAEL: CONCEPT AND APPLICATION

In the conceptualization of arms transfers, a definition of the process is required to explain and understand the goals and applications of military aid to Israel. Since 1968, the U.S. has been supplying arms for Israel and this practice was always defined in terms of both countries' national interest. The transfer of arms is therefore defined as a "political support for an ally...which is considered by the U.S. to be a strategic asset in the Eastern Mediterranean against a Soviet threat."⁵⁵ Second, it has been an accepted wisdom that arms for Israel would make the peace process easier because Israel's leaders would be sufficiently secure to feel able to make territorial concessions in peace negotiations. Hence, arms transfers for Israel were expected to promote global as well as regional peace. An examination of the three case studies supports the first assumption while the second assumption remains questionable.

Moreover, the manipulation of the arms transfers to Israel did not usually yield the expected political leverage. The arms race in the Middle East, which has reached new and ominous levels in 1985, is not likely to produce the long-awaited peace in the near future.⁵⁶ The Middle East continues to be the major recipient of arms transfers. In 1983, its share of the world total reached almost 43%, more than NATO and the Warsaw Pact

combined! Leading arms importers in the Middle East in 1983 were: Iraq, with massive acquisitions of over \$5 billions in arms; Saudi Arabia with \$3.3 billion; Libya with \$1.9 billion; and Egypt and Syria with \$1.7 billion each. Israel, the major American ally in the region, spent only \$1.48 billion on arms imports in 1983.⁵⁷ (Iraq, Israel, Oman, Libya and Saudi Arabia spent over 30 percent of their GNP on their military establishments.) The escalating arms race in the Middle East is in striking contrast to the global trend of a drop in arms transfers. The annual all time high of \$38 billion reached in 1982 has declined at an average of 8.3 percent per year, and the trend is most likely to continue, because totals of arms transfers agreements reached during those years dropped by 25 percent from the 1982 peak.⁵⁸

Until 1967 the U.S. did not provide any grant military aid to Israel and the total military sales for the period 1950-1967 was \$124.1 million. (Actual deliveries amounted to less than 100 million). Much of the total was spent for HAWK air defense systems, and it followed shortly after the Soviet Union concluded a massive military assistance deal with Egypt which included the sale of advanced MIG jet fighters. While the U.S. was reluctant to supply Israel with arms it was involved with massive arms transfers to Saudi Arabia and Iran. In addition to the construction of the Daharan airfield, which for many years was considered to be one of the most important American strategic installations in the area, the U.S. provided Saudi

Arabia with weapons with a total value of \$779.1 million for the period 1966-1969. Iran was not far behind with total military sales of \$656.8 million for the same period.⁵⁹ Another recipient of American military aid was Iraq, which until the coup in 1958 received large amounts of weapons as a member of the Baghdad Pact.⁶⁰

Hence, on the eve of the Six Day War Israel experienced a definite inferiority in weapons vis-a-vis its Arab adversaries, who were being provided with both Soviet and American arms. The Six Day War was, however, a turning point in U.S.-Israeli arms relationships. On the other hand massive surpluses of petrodollars, caused by the sharp rise in oil prices, created a large Arab demand for arms which accelerated the arms race in the Middle East. A short review of the transfer of American arms to the Middle East between 1955 and 1982 proves this point:

Between 1955 and 1969 the top recipients of U.S. arms were:

1. Saudi Arabia \$779.1 million
2. Iran \$656.8 million
3. Israel \$534.8 million

Total U.S. military sales agreements to the Middle East for that period was: \$2.230 billion

Between 1970 and 1979 the top recipients of U.S. Arms were:

1. Saudi Arabia \$30.011 billion
2. Iran \$14.015 billion
3. Israel \$ 8.540 billion

Total U.S. military sales agreements to the Middle East for that period was: \$57.440 billion

Between 1980 and 1982 the top recipients of U.S. arms were:

1. Saudi Arabia \$14.152 billion
2. Egypt \$ 4.732 billion

3. Israel \$ 3.8 billion

Total U.S. military sales agreements to the Middle East for that period was: \$24.463 billion

Total arms sales to the top recipients for the period 1955-1982:

<u>Saudi Arabia</u>	\$44.943 billion
<u>Iran</u>	\$14.672 billion
<u>Israel</u>	\$10.437 billion ⁶¹

U.S.-Israeli arms relationships, which began with a very low key prologue, continued to grow and became a major component of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. (Its significance has increased lately with the commitment to provide arms not only to Israel but also to Egypt and Jordan). Moreover, the transfer of arms was used by the U.S. as the main instrument of American leverage, although this study shows that the manipulation of arms transfers never yielded the expected results. We believe that, despite significant movement toward peace achieved by the Disengagement Treaties and the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, discussion of American leverage, and the use of arms transfers to achieve it, is essential, given the formidable tasks that lie ahead in continuing and concluding the framework for peace in the Middle East as it was established in the Camp David Accords and the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.⁶²

NOTES

1. George Shultz's letter to Congress "International Security and Development Cooperation Program," Department of State Special Report, (April 1984) No 116, p. 1

2. Andrew Pierre, The Global Politics of Arms Sales. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.3

3. Shultz, p. 1

4. Defense Security Assistance Agency, (DSAA) Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Facts, 1983 and earlier editions.

5. Ibid.

6. Pierre, p. 15

7. Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM) The Management of Security Assistance (Write-Patterson, Ohio: Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, 1981). p. 1-22

8. Roger P. Labrie, John G. Hutchins and Edwin W.A. Peura, U.S. Arms Sales Policy (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1982), p. 1

9. Public Law 87-195, Legislation on Foreign Relations, September 4, 1961, Chapter 2, Sec. 503, 1982. Vol. 1, p. 455

10. The Marshall Plan included no military aid. The numbers apply to economic aid only. See DSAA, Foreign Military Sales, 1965 edition, p. 5

11. Senator Humphrey's speech, The New York Times, October 19, 1975, quoted in Michael I. Klare, American Arms Supermarket (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984). p.2

12. For a thorough discussion see Labrie et al., U.S. Arms Sales Policy.

13. Congressional Research Service, Changing Perspectives on U.S. Arms Transfer Policy. Report to the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, September 25, 1981, p.5

14. This view is expressed by Sheehan, Ball, Hillman, among others

15. For an example of this view see Shultz' letter to

Congress, Department of State Special Report, No. 116, (April 1984).

16. Klaus Knorr, The Power of Nations (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 195

17. See for example the discussion in Seth P. Tillman, The United States in the Middle East, Interests and Obstacles (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) pp. 233-234, in which he elaborates on the assumption that a strong coalition between "Congress, Jewish leaders, and other influential individuals" practically controls U.S. Middle East policy.

18. Ibid., Chapter Six, pp. 230-274

19. For a very interesting discussion see Steven Rosen and Mara Moustafin, "Does Washington Have the Means to Impose a Settlement on Israel?" Commentary, October 1977. pp. 25-32

20. For a detailed analysis of this view see Abba Eban, An Autobiography, (New York: Random House, 1977), and Yitzhak Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979)

21. This view is discussed and explained in detail by Sean MacBride, Israel in Lebanon, (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), pp. 1-9; see also interview with King Hussein, The New York Times, March 14, 1984

22. In summer of 1970, the Israeli government accepted and affirmed Security Council resolution 242 which had stated that territories conquered during wars would be exchanged with the arrival of peace. The Likud party, then a member of the Cabinet, left the coalition as a protest, and the government was then dissolved.

23. For an excellent discussion see Knorr, pp. 180-206

24. Both President Reagan and Secretary Shultz reiterated this principle of an "evenhanded" policy in many public addresses during this period. See Shultz's news conference of August 20, 1982, the President's peace plan of September 1, 1982, Shultz's address before the UJA on September 12, 1982, Shultz's statements before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee on September 10, 1982, among others.

25. For a detailed analysis of the strategic consensus concept see Amos Perlmutter, "Reagan's Middle East Policy: A Year One Assessment," Orbis, Spring 1984, p. 27

26. Ibid., pp. 26-29

27. See article by Shoshana Bryen, "Advancing U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation," Middle East Review, (February 1984), and Steven Spiegel, "Israel as a Strategic Asset," Commentary (June 1983) pp. 51-55

28. Opponents of Israel's policies usually advocate this theory. For example, see Path to Peace Revisited (New York: Seven Springs Center, 1982); also George Ball, "How to Save Israel in spite of Herself," Foreign Affairs, (summer 1977)

29. Secretary of State Alexander Haig in an address before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington D.C., April 27, 1982, Department of State Bulletin (June 1982), pp. 40-44

30. For example, during 1969-1970, Nixon followed the recommendations of Secretary of State Rogers and suspended arms shipments to coerce Israel to accept the Rogers peace plan and to agree to a ceasefire along the Canal. The USSR immediately intensified its activities in Egypt, and sent thousands of Soviet personnel--including pilots--to Egypt. The same situation reoccurred during Ford's "reassessment" policy of 1974-1975. The USSR used this period to strengthen its power position in the region.

31. Thomas Wheelock, "Arms for Israel: The Limits of Leverage," International Security (Fall 1978), p. 125

32. Drew Middleton, "Russian Presence and Economic Interests in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean," in Seymour M. Finger (ed.) The New World Balance in the Middle East: Reality or Mirage? (Teaneck: Farleigh Dickinson Press, 1975) pp. 43-49; also John C. Campbell, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East," Current History (January 1981), pp. 1-4; 42-45

33. Alvin Rubinstein, "The Soviet Presence in the Arab World," Current History, (October 1981) pp. 313-316; 338-339

34. Ibid., p. 313

35. Pierre, p. 8

36. Secretary Shultz' statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 24, 1983, quoted in Department of State, Current Policy No. 520

37. See for example, Dahl, 1957; George, 1974; Knorr, 1975; Morgenthau, 1978; Pierre, 1982; Schelling, 1976; Singer, 1969, among others

38. David Pollock, The Politics of Pressure (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), p.7

39. See discussion in Marvin Feuerwerker, Congress and Israel, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 11

40. Wheelock, p. 123

41. For an indepth assessment of influence and patron-client relations see David Singer, "Inter-nation Influence: A Formal Model," in James Rosenau (ed.), International Politics and Foreign Policy (New York: The Free Press, 1969), pp. 380-391

42. For a classical statement on these concepts, see Jack H. Nagel, The Descriptive Analysis of Power, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) pp. 29-30. One of the best analyses of power is found in Robert Dahl, "Power," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, (New York: MacMillan Press, 1968), pp. 412-313. See also Blechman and Kaplan, Force Without War, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1979)

43. See Dahl, 1957; Singer, 1969; Knorr, 1975; Schelling, 1976; Wheelock, 1978; Pierre, 1982

44. See Knorr, pp. 166-206; Schelling, pp. 70-91

45. Wheelock, p. 124

46. See Tillman, 1982; Eveland, 1980; also interview with King Hussein, The New York Times, March 14, 1984

47. Pollock, p.4

48. When the Foreign Assistance Bill for 1983 was before Congress, the relationship between the U.S. and Israel was at one of its lowest points. However, this did not affect Congress's decision to approve the same level of aid as was requested before the invasion and this amounted to \$785 million in economic aid and \$1.7 billion in military aid, and was signed into law on December 21, 1982

49. This statement is based on personal interviews with AIPAC officials at the AIPAC Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., April 1984

50. With a total budget of only \$3.5 million, (the number applies to 1984), and a small staff of lobbyists, AIPAC pursues its goals in a low-key manner, especially after AIPAC'S major failure to block the Administrations's plan to sell AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia. See The New York Times, March 24, 1984

51. Kenneth Waltz, Theories of International Politics, (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979), pp. 79-128

52. Knorr, pp. 176-201

53. Pierre, p. 18

54. A 1976 report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee noted that large-scale arms sales to Iran invariably involved a commitment to provide support for the weapons. The absence of such a commitment could have provoked a major crisis in American-Iranian relations, and could have severely affected the supply of oil. If Iran had become involved in a war, the twenty-four thousand American personnel who were in Iran at that time could have become hostages. The report concluded that because of the close supplier-client arms relationship, "it" was not clear who really has influence over whom in times of an ambiguous crisis "situation." Quoted in Pierre, p. 18

55. Report by the Comptroller General of the United States, U.S. Assistance to the State of Israel, The General Accounting Office, June 24, 1983, p. 1

56. Iraq, Israel, Oman, Libya, and Saudi Arabia spent over thirty percent their GNP on Defense. Information from: World Military Expenditures and Arms Sales, United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1985

57. Ibid., pp. 3-11

58. Ibid., p. 7

59. Klare, p. 130

60. In the year 1957 alone Iraq received \$13.2 million worth of arms. DSAA, Foreign Military Sales, edition 1981

61. Ibid., editions 1976, 1981, 1982

62. Arms Sales to Israel during 1972-1983:

1972	\$300 million
1973	\$307 million
1974	\$2.05 billion (including emergency aid during and after the 1973 war)
1975	\$344 million
1976	\$1.7 billion (including special aid for security needs following the conclusion of the three disengagement agreements)
1977	\$1 billion
1978	\$1 billion
1979	\$3.3 billion (including special aid for security needs following the conclusion of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty)
1980	\$1 billion

1981	\$1.4 billion
1982	\$1.4 billion
1983	\$1.48 billion

CHAPTER I

THE ROGERS COMPREHENSIVE PEACE INITIATIVE

Background and Consequences

The Six Day War of 1967 was a turning point in the history of the Middle East. It changed the nature of the Israeli-Arab conflict as well as the context of U.S.-Israeli relationship. The countries in the region and their respective patron-states were faced with new realities which they could neither predict nor control. Israel's sweeping victory directly effected the regional and the global balance of power. On the global level, Israel's strengthened position enhanced the U.S. power position and counterbalanced Soviet political gains in Egypt and Syria. Israel's unchallenged military superiority established Israel as America's most important regional ally. Israel was no longer viewed by the U.S. as a client-state and a burden. It became a strategic asset.¹ On the regional level, the new realities coerced the Arab states to reassess and change their attitudes toward Israel. Instead of thinking in terms of destroying Israel, they had to start thinking in terms of a peaceful coexistence (see for example, Sadat's peace initiative of February 1971).

Other changes, however, were less encouraging. In the late 50s and 60s, Libya, South Yemen and Iraq underwent anti-Western

revolutions, the latter shattering the Baghdad Pact alliance. The Hashemite rule of Hussein was in jeopardy, while Egypt moved closer to the Soviet bloc. Syria's Baath regime was extremely pro-Soviet and began in 1959 a unification process with Egypt, marking a beginning of a new Pan-Arabist era. The decline of the European powers created a political vacuum which invited an American-Soviet rivalry over power and influence in the region, and the U.S. more often than not was less aggressive than the USSR in this competition.

The Truman Doctrine of 1947 put West Europe and the Middle East at the heart of U.S. - Soviet rivalry. New economic and strategic realities turned the region into a vital U.S. interest. The struggle for spheres of influences --namely, the fight for control over the region's resources--became extremely dangerous as the stakes grew higher. The regional and global dilemmas which control the region's politics created confusion and uncertainty concerning policy choices. Both patron-states found it difficult, if not impossible, to control their client-states' behavior. The escalation of violence after 1967 spilled over and created dangerous tensions in U.S.-USSR relation. Hence, President Johnson, and with more vigor, Nixon, found it important to settle the Israeli-Arab conflict.

The period between January 1969 and August 1970, which is analyzed in this chapter, was an important phase in U.S. policy in the Middle East. The Rogers Plan for a comprehensive settlement, made public in December 1969, was a major American

effort to settle the Israeli-Arab conflict. In order to draw conclusions from the events which took place during that period it is necessary to understand (a) the timing, i.e., why the U.S. chose that particular moment in history to initiate a settlement? (b) the nature of the proposed settlement, i.e., what was the substance of the proposal and what did it offer to Israel and the Arab states in terms of peace, security, and withdrawal of troops? (c) why did it fail? It is also important to analyze the procedures which the U.S. followed in its efforts to implement the plan and which contributed to the plan's failure.

Two major features characterized American policy during that period. On the one hand, the U.S. followed unambiguous and consistent set of long-term goals, namely, to secure the use of the region's sea and air routes, to protect American global, strategic interests vis-a-vis the USSR, and to secure American access to the oil fields of the Middle East.

These goals were reiterated by every American president since the end of World War II.

Of my own personal involvement for much of that period, I am struck by the unanimity and the consistency in American preception of both its national interests, and its policy objectives.²

On the other hand, the U.S. was always sharply divided on the issue of the political strategies and tactics that should be employed to attain these goals. In contrast to the consistent, clear long-term foreign policy, U.S.'s short-term policy was ambiguous and ambivalent. Issues and implementation processes

were vigorously debated. The controversy involved mainly the bureaucracy, i.e., the State Department and the White House.

Debate and differences of opinion about U.S. Middle East policy have been an almost continuous feature of the American political scene for over three decades, as American in and out of the government faced a constantly changing, and at times bewildering, Middle East.³

Washington was sharply divided on the interpretation of UN resolution 242, which became the basis of all Middle East peace initiatives, and on implementation processes, namely, a comprehensive peace plan versus step-by-step diplomacy. The Soviet Union's role in the peace process was another important area of disagreement. A detailed analysis of the events which occurred between 1968 and 1970 proves that at that time, the comprehensive approach advocated by the Department of State prevailed. The Department's approach, however, was based on several misperceptions, among them the assumption that the U.S. enjoyed leverage over Israel and the friendly Arab states. This was the basic premise of the Rogers Plan. Another misperception concerned the State Department's belief that the U.S. and the Soviet Union had a mutual interest in stabilizing the Middle East. In reality, all efforts to bring an American-Soviet cooperation not only failed, but proved to be detrimental to American interests. The State Department also ignored the dilemma that any settlement favored by Israel would be unacceptable to the Arab states (especially to the radical Arab states), and vice versa.

The following analysis demonstrates that:

(1) U.S. foreign policy during that period was based on misperceptions

(2) these misperceptions exacerbated the conflict and diminished the chances of a settlement

(3) U.S. policy benefited the Soviet Union at America's expense because it helped the USSR to penetrate deeper into the region.

THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION PEACE EFFORTS

Any analysis of the Rogers Peace Plan must begin with the Johnson administration peace efforts. Two documents, one American and one a U.N. resolution, preceded the Rogers Peace Plan and served as its theoretical framework. On June 19, 1967, President Johnson announced his "Five Principles for Peace." Later that year the UN adopted resolution 242, which also called for peace among the fighting sides. An examination of these two documents is therefore necessary in order to understand the Rogers peace initiative and view it in perspective.

The incentive for Johnson's political initiative was the Six Day War (in which Israel took over the West Bank from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt) which seemed to provide the United States with an unexpected opportunity to try and achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Of the two documents, President Johnson's "Five Principles for Peace," of June 19, 1967, is the lesser known. The second, UN

resolution 242, of November 22, 1967, received much attention and has been mentioned in all discussions concerning peace in the Middle East.

Johnson's Five Principles were:

(1) Every nation in the area has a fundamental right to live and to have this right respected by its neighbors.

(2) Justice for the refugees is a human requirement.

(3) Maritime rights must be respected.

(4) The wasteful and futile arms race in the Middle East must be contained through a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and the USSR. (Johnson called upon the members of the UN to report shipments of arms into the area to the U.N. and to keep those shipments on file for all the people of the world to observe.)

(5) The political independence and territorial integrity of all the states in the area must be respected.⁴

President Johnson was a long-time friend of Israel and was the first American President to sign a major arms deal with Israel. The most important item on the deal was the sale of 50 advanced Phantom F-4 fighter-jets to be delivered in September 1969. However, bothered by the escalation of the Middle East arms race, Johnson suspended all arms shipments to Israel after the Six Day War, hoping to reach an accord with the Soviet Union on suspension of all Soviet arms shipment to the Middle East. This hope, which was based on the misperception that the Soviet Union and the U.S. had a shared interest in peace in the region,

guided American foreign policy during 1969-1970.

After the Six Day War, the United States suspended the delivery of arms to Israel, including spare parts and ammunition...In addition to turning down new orders, the American delayed shipment of orders that had already been approved and signed. The reason for violating these signed contracts was the vain hope that the Soviet Union would reciprocate by cutting down arms shipments to the Arab states...But the Soviet Union, interpreting the suspension of arms deliveries as an act of weakness, speeded up their arms deliveries to Egypt and Syria.⁵

President Johnson's efforts to reach an understanding with the Soviet Union on limiting the arms race in the Middle East failed, as did Secretary Roger's efforts a few years later. Israel at that time accepted the Johnson peace initiative as the first step in a long march toward the desired peace, and not as a final document. The countries of the region as well as the superpowers were slowly moving away from any dialogue, each believing that time was to their advantage. The most substantial gains were those of the Soviet Union which skillfully manipulated the ill-conceived American policy during that period to expand its role and to penetrate deeper into the region. Naively, the U.S. neither comprehended the Soviet policy nor tried to contain it.

The Soviet Union, which in the late Forties had written off the Middle East as beyond its capacity to influence, (Andrei Zhdanov in a report to the conference of Communist Parties, September 1947, essentially treated the Middle East as in transition from the British to the American sphere of influence), had leaped in ten years later by a sale of arms and twenty years later by the dispatch of thousands of military advisers to Egypt. The Soviet presence constituted a major geopolitical change since World War II. For fifteen years it helped exacerbate the conflict.⁶

The State Department underestimated the growing Soviet aggressive involvement in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Sudan, Libya, and South Yemen. The State Department continued to hold the misperception that the Soviet Union, just as the U.S., had a vital interest in settling the Israeli-Arab conflict, because it too wished to avoid a superpowers confrontation. (This point is elaborated later in the chapter). This incorrect assumption inevitably led the U.S. to conflicts with Israel, because Israel considered American trust of the USSR peace maneuvers to be naive. Israel argued that the Soviet policy was opportunistic, and was no more than political maneuvers.

After its victory, and still surprised by its own show of force, Israel developed political goals which did not coincide with those of the U.S., i.e.. Israel's most vital interests were securing its existence, territorial integrity, and economic well-being, all of which were threatened by its hostile neighbors. Israel insisted on direct negotiations with the Arab states, and a contractual peace, before any withdrawal took place. The U.S., on the other hand, was ready to compromise on an Israeli withdrawal in exchange for less than a contractual peace, and did not consider Israel's demand for a face-to-face negotiations to be essential. The U.S. was ready to accept the Arab demand for indirect negotiations mediated by a third party, a condition which Israel considered humiliating and unacceptable.

By 1969, Israel had existed for twenty years unrecognized by its neighbors, harassed by guerrillas, assaulted in international forums, and squeezed by Arab economic boycott. Its very shape expressed the tenuous quality of its statehood; it was only nine miles wide at the narrowest point between the Mediterranean coast and the Jordan border; the main road between divided Jerusalem and Tel Aviv at some places was located less than a hundred yards from Arab outposts. With implacable adversaries on all its frontiers, Israel's foreign policy had become indistinguishable from its defense policy; its cardinal and ultimate objective was what for most other nations is the starting point of foreign policy - acceptance by its neighbors of its right to exist.⁷

The Israeli victory of 1967 created big hopes in Washington and Jerusalem. This was perceived to be an opportunity to reach a settlement in the long and painful Israeli-Arab conflict. A settlement of the conflict would solve the American regional dilemma that U.S. support of Israel antagonize Arab governments and facilitated Soviet policy in the region. The United States aspired to gain and maintain friendly relations with the Arab countries. Hence, Washington believed that under the circumstances the best strategy would be (a) to enlist Soviet interest in a comprehensive settlement, and (b) once an American-Soviet accord would be reached, both superpowers would pressure their respective client-states to accept the agreed upon settlement. As U.S. Ambassador to the UN Arthur Goldberg stated "(t)he Middle East is a region in which detente between the Soviet Union and ourselves is essential."⁸

Only one week after the war had ended, Ambassador Goldberg expressed great hopes that the General Armistice Agreements would be replaced "at the very least, by a termination of any

state of war and of any claims to the exercise of belligerent rights."⁹ Israel shared the American hope that its decisive victory would bring about a genuine and lasting peace. Based on the history of wars, Israel's assumption that the war situation would be replaced by a contractual peace was a rational premise. Israel's mistake was that, like the U.S., it ignored the global and regional dilemmas which rendered this desired outcome impossible.

The Israelis first believed their victory to have brought peace very near or at least to have put war very far. These expectations were based on the fact that Israel and its neighbors had this time fought a war without outside interference which Israel had won decisively, but they did not take into account the possibility that the interested outside forces that had been forced by the pace of events to remain passive during the war might reassert themselves after its end to inhibit its consequences.¹⁰

Former Prime Minister Rabin, who at that time served as Israel's Ambassador to Washington, recalled in his memoirs that just a few days after the Six Day War had ended, on June 19, 1967, (the same day that President Johnson delivered his "Five Point Middle East Peace Plan,") the Israeli government in Jerusalem reached a major decision.

The Israeli National Unity Cabinet adopted a dramatic resolution that was to be communicated solely to the government of the United States. It stated that in exchange for a peace treaty...Israel is prepared to withdraw to the international border with Egypt. In addition, the Sinai peninsula was to be demilitarized, and appropriate measures would be taken to guarantee Israel's security and freedom of navigation in the straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. On the same terms, Israel was prepared to withdraw to the international border with Syria, with the Golan Heights to be demilitarized and proper security arrangements made in the area. The future of the West

Bank and the Gaza Strip would be considered separately, as well as the problem of the Palestinian refugees. On June 22, 1967, Foreign Minister Eban notified Secretary of State Dean Rusk of this decision.¹¹

However, the Israeli hope of a possible settlement of the conflict did not coincide with the desires of the Arab states. The conceptual division between Israel and the Arab states was manifested in the Khartoum resolution adopted on September 1, 1967, in an Arab nations summit meeting. The resolution reaffirmed the three classical "noes" : No peace, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel.

The Arab Heads of State have agreed on the need to consolidate all efforts to eliminate...the effects of the aggression and to ensure the withdrawal of the aggressive Israeli forces from the Arab lands which have been occupied since the aggression of 5 June. This will be done within the framework of the main principles by which all Arab states abide, namely, no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it.¹²

The Khartoum resolution created a political deadlock. Israel adamantly adhered to its three principles: direct negotiations, contractual peace, and territorial adjustments, while the Arab states, which rejected these demands, insisted on their "three principles." The only hope for any dialogue between both the regional and the global actors involved in the conflict lay with UN resolution 242, which was adopted on November 22, 1967. The resolution was accepted by both superpowers as well as by Israel and the Arab states, although each nation interpreted the resolution according to its respective conflicting political goals. The resolution evaded the conceptual differences which

existed among the various actors by adopting in ambiguous language a calling for "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories" - not "the" territories - "occupied in the recent conflict." It did not call for a withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from "all" territories, leaving the option of territorial adjustments open to negotiations. Ambassador Goldberg explained:

Boundaries must be accepted and other arrangements made, superseding temporary and often-violated Armistice lines...Historically, there have never been any secure or recognized boundaries in the area. Neither the Armistice lines of 1949 nor the cease-fire lines of 1967 have answered this description.¹³

The Soviet Union, however, expressed a different interpretation of the resolution. Reflecting the Arab position, the USSR said that the resolution called for a total and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces to positions that they had held before June 5, 1967. The controversy vastly exceeded a conflict over the meaning of the ambiguous clause calling for withdrawal "from territories" occupied during the Six Day War. The procedures envisaged by the Resolution for working toward a settlement were, likewise, stubbornly disputed. Israel regarded the resolution "as a statement of principles in the light of which the parties should negotiate peace."¹⁴ The Arabs, however, "considered that the resolution provided a plan for settlement of the Middle East dispute, to be implemented by the parties according to modalities to be established by the Special Representative."¹⁵ Israel's demand for direct

negotiations was rejected by the Arab states, while their demand for an indirect negotiations was rejected by Israel.

Other questions concerned the nature of the assurances which the U.S. offered Israel in exchange for a withdrawal and whether the Resolution implied an obligation on the part of Israel to make a commitment in advance of negotiations of its willingness to withdraw from any of the occupied territories and, if so, on what conditions. At the heart of the dispute over Resolution 242 was Israel's right - enjoyed by all sovereign nations - to recognition of its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, within secure and recognized borders.

The concept of a "bargain" of troop withdrawal in exchange for recognition and "the right to live," is invalid and illusory. "It is juridically invalid, because the right is fundamental and inalienable, hence, - by definition - not subject to negotiation."¹⁶ Israel believed that a withdrawal in exchange for recognition of its right to exist was not only morally wrong but was a violation of Israel's natural right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The U.S., on the other hand, saw nothing wrong with the concept of negotiating Israel's right to live in peace within secured borders in exchange for territories.

The disagreement between Israel and the U.S. on the interpretation of resolution 242 resulted from differences in the two nations vital interests. Israel's insistence on direct

negotiations was not a technical demand. Direct negotiations would constitute a de-facto Arab recognition of Israel's sovereignty and right to exist as an equal member of the Middle East nations. The U.S., however, eager to reach a settlement, viewed this demand as excessive and pressured Israel to accept indirect negotiations under the auspices of UN Special Representative Gunnar Jarring (Swedish Ambassador to Moscow). The trouble with direct negotiations, Secretary Rusk said in July 1967, was that "there is some question as to whether any of the governments in the area can, in fact, do that and survive."¹⁷

The U.S., therefore, viewed favorably negotiations through a third party, a suggestion that Israel had rejected for a long time. The second conflict of interest between the U.S. and Israel concerned the resolution's emphasis on the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war," which Israel refused to accept verbatim. Israel demanded border adjustments necessary to answer its security needs, while the U.S. adhered to the principle that the border adjustments must be minor.

In December 1967, six months after Israel had expressed strong objections to the principle of indirect negotiations, Jarring was received officially in Jerusalem and was presented with an Israeli agenda for discussions, later supplemented by more Israeli negotiating terms. In early 1968, the Israeli government publicly announced its acceptance of the Rhodes

formula for indirect negotiations through the good offices of Ambassador Ralph Bunche, which had produced the Armistice Agreements of 1949. (In the Rhodes talks some form of face-to-face negotiations did take place.) Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin explained the reasons for the softening of the Israeli position. A Soviet peace initiative, which completely excluded a contractual peace between Israel and the Arab states, was being negotiated between the two superpowers. In addition, Secretary Rusk initiated a "Seven Points Plan," which suggested an Israeli withdrawal in exchange for a formal termination of hostilities; a solution to the refugee problem based on giving each refugee the option to return to the home he had occupied before the establishment of the state of Israel; and the signing of some as yet unspecified document by Egypt and Israel.¹⁸ Rabin mentioned an important additional issue which was on Israel's agenda when it considered accepting U.S.'s demand for indirect negotiations.

The other issue...was the well publicized problem of the Phantoms...In something of a pre-election gambit, on October 9, (1968) President Johnson had announced the administration's decision to sell the 50 planes to Israel. Yet when Foreign Minister Eban arrived in the United States and met with Dean Rusk on October 22, it was clear that the Americans were in no hurry to fulfill that promise...Clearly...the administration was resorting to delaying tactics...(Assistant Defense Secretary Paul Warnke) asked me to specify in writing why Israel needed the Phantoms...As its condition for selling the Phantoms, the U.S. wanted Israel to sign an unprecedented document to consent to a U.S. presence in and supervision of every Israeli arms-manufacturing installation and every defense institution engaged in research, development or manufacture¹⁹ - including civilian research institutions.

The year 1968, however, did not end with a sad note for Israel after all. The Phantoms deal was finally signed, and the U.S. reaction to the Soviet peace initiative was favorable from Israel's viewpoint. Five days before the end of the Johnson presidential term, Rusk handed the Soviets a letter stating that "peace can only be achieved by a process of negotiations between the sides in the Middle East...The parties must sign a contractual agreement that binds each side vis-a-vis the other."²⁰ Additionally, Egypt rejected Rusk's "Seven Points" on the ground that they were too generous to Israel, thus relieving Israel of the need to reject it on the ground that it was too generous to Egypt.

With regard to arms shipments, Washington reached a series of important decisions favorable to Israel, including the commitment to sell Israel 50 Phantom F-4 jets and three squadrons of A-4 Skyhawks (75 airplanes). In July of 1968, the first major sale of a new expanded Hawk air defense missile was announced, while shipment of the Phantoms was scheduled to begin in late 1969.²¹ Hence, as the year 1968 was nearing its end, Israel, the Arab states, and the USSR, were waiting to see what stand the new administration would take concerning the settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S VAIN PURSUIT
OF A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT

In 1969, both Washington and Jerusalem experienced a change in government. The new administrations were confronted with the urgent need to develop foreign policies that would cope with changing environments and situations. In addition, "(w)hen a new Administration comes into office it is taken for granted that it will 'tackle' the important world issues; new Presidents always chide their predecessors for leaving issues not yet conclusively 'solved.'"²² Nixon and his new Secretary of State were ready for a vigorous, innovative Middle East policy, a policy that would settle the Israeli-Arab conflict. However, the new Administration soon realized that it was facing several long-standing dilemmas.

The first dilemma was the U.S.'s need to gain and maintain friendly relations with both Israel and the moderate Arab states. Part of that dilemma was how to militarily strengthen Israel --which after the collapse of the Baghdad Pact, and the Soviet move into Egypt became U.S.'s major strategic ally in the region-- without antagonizing the Arab states. The Arab states perceived a strong Israel to be a direct threat to their security, and the arming of Israel by the U.S. was considered an American act of hostility against the Arabs. The question of Egypt and its association with the USSR presented another problem. Egypt's radical policies were detrimental to the

interests of both Israel and the United State. On a regional level, Egypt, the largest Arab nation in the Middle East, (population: about 40 million), posed the greatest threat to Israel's security. On the global level, Egypt was the first nation to open its doors to the Soviet Union; it was through Egypt that the USSR first penetrated and gained power positions in the Middle East. The U.S. feared that regional tensions would spill-over to create tension between the two superpowers which were both deeply involved in the politics of the Middle East.

Hence, the Israeli-Arab conflict created for the U.S. both regional and global dilemmas, which the new Administration hoped to solve through the settlement of the conflict itself. During 1969 through 1970, the State Department, under the leadership of Secretary Rogers and Assistant Secretary Joseph Sisco, decided to develop a new American approach, vigorous and comprehensive, to settle the Israel-Arab conflict. After a year and a half in office, in December 1969, Rogers publicly announced his new initiative, which became known as the Rogers Peace Plan. However, because the peace plan was based on misperceptions, its life was not only short, but plagued with difficulties from its inception. It is surprising, however, that such embarrassing failure was never completely shelved. Indeed, the plan came to life, wearing a different title but carrying the same message, when on September 1, 1982, President Reagan announced his new Peace Plan. It was almost an identical copy of the Rogers Plan of 1969. Needless to say, the fate of Reagan's initiative was

not unlike that of the Rogers' plan. It was quietly buried only a few weeks after its birth.

Because the aborted Rogers Plan has since served as the guideline for American search for peace in the Middle East, it is important to understand what were the causes and the effects of the Plan. Other crucial factors which need to be analyzed are its historical background, the perceptions and misperceptions of its architects, how did it promote or undermine American interests in the Middle East, and was the cause of peace advanced by it.

The first year of Nixon's presidency was marked by both continuity and change. The U.S.'s long-term goals in the Middle East were based on the principles articulated in President Johnson's "Five Points." Following Johnson's footsteps, Nixon stated that his administration would adhere to, and would try to implement UN resolution 242. He suggested that the time had come to translate these abstract proposals into concrete policies, and said that his bureaucracy would develop a new and effective policy which would once and for all settle the Israel-Arab conflict. In his initial press conference, on January 27, 1969, Nixon stressed both the importance of the Middle East to U.S.'s national interest, and the danger to world peace the unresolved Israeli-Arab conflict posed.

I believe we need new initiative and new leadership on the part of the United States in order to cool off the situation in the Middle East. I consider it a powder keg, very explosive. It needs to be defused.²³

Following Johnson's principles, Nixon defined his

"new initiative" to mean that the U.S. would continue to support the Jarring mission, to carry on bilateral and four-power talks in the United Nations, to maintain discussions with Israel and the Arab states, and to offer regional economic assistance. The State Department, however, departed from Johnson's principles and developed a concept based on the principle of "evenhandedness," which basically meant restraining the political support of Israel as well as the delivery of arms.

The State Department had long advocated an even-handed approach...With respect to arms deliveries to Israel, the even-handed approach urged restraint, and on territorial withdrawal, it favored a clear statement opposing Israeli acquisition of territory from the 1967 war. As to the quality of the peace agreement, the standards to be applied to Arab commitments were not overtly rigorous. From the Israeli perspective, an even-handed American policy was tantamount to being pro-Arab.²⁴

The State Department believed that a new approach was needed since The foreign policy strategists of the new Nixon administration felt that their predecessors had missed opportunities to achieve more substantial progress toward a stabilizing settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.²⁵

However, when Nixon assumed office in January 1969, The Middle East was not his first priority. Nixon's first priority was the Vietnam war, which he had promised during his election campaign to bring to an end. His second priority was U.S.-USSR relations, how to secure global stability. Ranked third on Nixon's priority list was relations with China. In an article Nixon published in 1967, he wrote: "Any American policy toward Asia must come urgently to grips with the reality of China."²⁶

The Middle East ranked fourth on Nixon's foreign policy priority list. He decided to engage himself and his newly appointed National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, in the global issues of the East-West relationship and the resolution of the Vietnam War, leaving the regional problems of the Middle East to the Department of State headed by his old friend, William Rogers. Kissinger mentioned additional factors which influenced Nixon's decision to leave the Middle East in the hands of the State Department bureaucracy. First, in early 1969 Nixon underestimated the seriousness of the Soviet involvement in the region. Second, he believed that any solution should be worked out through international diplomacy and in cooperation with France, England, and the Soviet Union. He assumed that the State Department bureaucracy was best equipped for such diplomatic activity. But perhaps the most important factor was Nixon's skepticism of the State Department's hope that a resolution of the conflict was within reach.

The areas he did not mind consigning were those where success seemed elusive...or those where risks of domestic reaction were high. The Middle East met both of Nixon's criteria. He calculated that almost any active policy would fail; in addition it would almost certainly incur the wrath of Israel's supporters. So he found it useful to get the White House as much out of the direct line of fire as possible.²⁷

Following the "blank check" which the Department of State had received from Nixon to develop a new Middle East policy, it embarked on, and became intensely involved with, a comprehensive peace initiative. This was in complete contrast to Kissinger's

approach. At a National Security Council meeting on February 1, 1969 dedicated to exploring possible Middle East policies, three proposals were discussed:

(a) Leave the search for a settlement...to the parties and to Ambassador Jarring.

(b) Pursue a more active United States policy, involving U.S.-USSR talks.

(c) Assume that no settlement is possible and concentrate efforts on objectives short of a settlement.²⁸

The second alternative was decided on, with the third, which was Kissinger's preference, remaining available as a fall-back possibility if the comprehensive approach failed. In adopting this policy the State Department wrongly assumed that the Soviet Union would cooperate with the United States even at a cost of straining its relations with Nasser. This premise was based on the misperception that the USSR would trade off regional interests for global interests. In other words, Rogers assumed that the Soviets would sacrifice their interests in the Middle East for the sake of improving their relations with the U.S. Kissinger and others in the NSC did not share this view.

The Soviet Union had worked hard to build a position of influence in the Middle East...its position is dependent chiefly on providing arms to key clients; and if peace were established, these arms would no longer be needed in large quantities. The Soviets therefore had an interest in preventing a real peace agreement, preferring instead a state of "controlled tension."²⁹

A similar difference of opinion concerned the State Department's belief that both superpowers had the leverage and

the will to coerce their respective clients to accept a comprehensive settlement. By mobilizing France and England, Rogers and Sisco hoped to achieve a universal consensus, followed by a universal determination to use all tactics available (mainly the withholding of arms) to coerce Israel and the Arab states to reach a settlement.

The Department of State seemed to have ignored or at best underestimated the regional and global dilemmas which controlled the Middle East political scene. As a result, Rogers showed willingness to weaken Israel by withholding arms shipments, while disregarding the fact that by doing so he was actually weakening the U.S. power position. (See footnotes #39, 49, 66). In addition Rogers wrongly believed that a settlement was in the USSR's interest, while in effect the USSR's interest was to prolong "controlled tension." In the short-run the State Department could overlook its conflict of interest with the USSR, and could pressure Israel even at the risk of dangerously weakening an important ally. In the long-run, however, the U.S. had to face the "facts of life" and move away from policies that were detrimental to Israel and ultimately to the U.S., namely end the tactic of withholding arms as leverage.

The new American approach had an immediate effect on the delivery of arms to Israel. The first issue was the delivery of the promised F-4 Phantoms. The administration had to decide whether it was going to honor Johnson's commitment to supply Israel with 50 Phantoms. Since the actual delivery of the

airplanes was scheduled for late 1969, Nixon chose to uphold the deal. However, the administration decided to withhold all Israeli requests for new weapons as a bargaining chip with the Soviets, assuming that the Soviets would reciprocate by withholding deliveries of arms to their clients. In reality the opposite occurred.

The "evenhanded" policy and the intensive search by the State Department for a U.S.-Soviet accord was correctly perceived in Israel as an erosion in American support. Israel became very anxious and suspicious of American policy, and refused to change its position on the withdrawal issue. The Arab states and the Soviet Union were encouraged by this development, viewing it as a sign of an American weakness. (For example, the deployment of advanced SA missiles along the Canal). Their political expectations had naturally risen. These developments were not comprehended by the State Department, which continued to believe that the "Big Four" talks would sooner or later yield a settlement proposal which would ultimately bring the conflict to a happy ending.

The premise behind this misperception was expressed by Charles Yost, U.S. representative to the United Nations, who said in the General Assembly on November 18, 1971, that because the issues are "inextricably linked, it follows that their ultimate resolution will come only as part of an over-all settlement."³⁰

The question was, however, whether the deeply rooted

conflict which involved several nations with conflicting needs and interests, could realistically be expected to find a resolution in a comprehensive-all-encompassing settlement. The hostility between the Jews and the Arabs involved more than territorial disputes. It was rooted in the internal life of the two nationalisms.

Both Arab nationalists and Jewish nationalists, for a generation or more preceding the creation of Israel, have exhibited a common tendency to view themselves in a very special historical light...a sense of one own s destiny has tended to be particularly self-occupied conviction in which people see themselves as playing divinely ordained roles in human history. Both in the Arab and the Jewish case there is a good deal of religious background and revivalism involved in the process, but there is also something assertively secular in them, involving a sharp break with the past.³¹

Other crucial factors ignored by the architects of the comprehensive settlement concerned the nature of the "package""deal" which they were creating. The advocates of the comprehensive approach wrongly assumed that by creating a "package deal" which would be universally approved, in other words, by the "Big Four" and the regional actors, the conflict would be resolved. Rogers and Sisco ignored the fact that each actor's interests were in conflict with those of the other actors. This naive, underestimating of the inherent conflicts was more than surprising because the writing was clearly on the wall:

(a) The role and interest of the Soviet Union in the Israeli-Arab conflict was to exacerbate and manipulate the tensions, not help alleviate them.

(b) The regional and global dilemmas drastically curtailed U.S. s leverage over Israel, and made it impossible for the U.S. to "deliver Israel." Since this condition was a prerequisite for any Israeli concession, the resolution of the conflict became unattainable.

(c) The gap between the Israeli demands and interpretation of resolution 242, and the Arab states demands and interpretation of the same resolution could not be bridged at that time (see the Khartum resolution).

(d) The conflicting national interests of the U.S. and the USSR in the Middle East made an accord between them impossible to achieve (this became very clear after the Soviets intensified their military involvement in Egypt and Syria while negotiations between the U.S. and the USSR were in progress.)

Another conceptual mistake of the Rogers bureaucracy was its insistence upon a comprehensive settlement, and the rejection of Kissinger's suggestion to move in small steps, i.e., to follow a step-by-step diplomacy. The comprehensive approach as a political concept was based on the misperception that only a comprehensive settlement would solve each single issue, since no single issue is soluble unless all are. Moreover, each issue in dispute was viewed as merely one aspect of the overall dispute which had, therefore, to be resolved in its entirety.

The Rogers approach suffered from an additional flaw. It prescribed solutions before negotiations between the parties to

the conflict began. Israel felt that any suggested peace plan approved by the "Big Four" would be an imposed settlement, thus making the process of peace negotiations meaningless.

Analyzing the political context, namely, the international environment and the regional situations, it is clear that the Rogers initiative was an inevitable political failure. It is surprising that Nixon did not realize it before late 1970.

Henry Kissinger recalls in his memoirs that he was against the comprehensive approach from its inception. Unlike the State Department bureaucracy which looked for an American-Soviet rapprochement, he was alarmed by the Soviet military build-up in the region and did not accept the "linkage theory" which argued that the USSR would trade off interests in the Middle East in exchange for American concessions in Vietnam.

Part of the problem was Rogers' and Sisco's background. "William P. Rogers, a lawyer by profession, who had served as Attorney General in Eisenhower's cabinet, was not particularly experienced in foreign policy, nor was he a strong, assertive personality."³² Joseph Sisco, who became one of the major actors in the Rogers comprehensive settlement plan was "not a conventional Foreign Service Officer. He had never served overseas; only the insistence of Dean Rusk had earned him promotion to the highest rank of service."³³

Indeed, the State Department underestimated two major

changes which took place in the Middle East during that time and which ultimately resulted in the collapse of the American peace initiative:

(a) the Soviet aggressive penetration into the region through Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and South Yemen.

(b) the increased militancy of President Nasser.

In early February 1969 Israeli sources reported that 1,288 incidents of sabotage and terrorism had taken place in the year and a half from the Six Day War to the end of 1968...Israeli losses for the same period were reported as 234 dead and 765 wounded among military personnel and 47 dead and 330 wounded among civilians - a staggering total, equivalent to over 20,000 dead and 100,000 wounded for a nation the size of America.³⁴

The Egyptian aggressiveness was nurtured by increased Soviet aid, especially by the massive transfer of quality and quantity of arms. By providing Egypt and Syria with large quantities of the most advanced arms (among them some new weapons never before seen outside the Soviet Union), the Soviets were enhancing their military and strategic positions in the region. By late 1968 Egyptian and Syrian inventories included new Soviet shipments of at least 150 MIG-21 fighter jets, and 50 Su-7 later-model jet fighters. The Egyptian ground forces were enhanced by the arrivals of T-54/55 tanks which were gradually replacing older models supplied right after the Six Day War. Syrian forces also seemed to improve in both quantity and quality of arms.³⁵

State Department officials underestimated these significant developments and continued to "voice impatience

with the stalemate (blamed by them on Israel's refusal to make major territorial concessions before the peace issue was settled), and the threat it posed to American interests in the Arab world, and urging the American government to impose a settlement or at least press the Israelis for "concessions."³⁶ Governor William Scranton, Nixon's special envoy to the Middle East, declared after a nine day visit to the region that "it is important that U.S. policy become more even-handed...The U.S. should deal with all countries in the area and not necessarily espouse one."³⁷

Scranton expressed the prevailing State Department approach which was advocated mainly by the critics of Israel. The alternative approach, however, argued that the Big Four Forum would fail to bring about a settlement because "The number of parties and other interested actors who had to be satisfied, and the number of issues that had to be resolved rendered this objective too complex and too difficult"³⁸ The U.S. learned the hard way that it should have negotiated with Egypt directly rather than through the Big Four forum. Kissinger also opposed the prevailing State Department approach saying:

I did not particularly like the negotiating forums offered to us...a Four-Power forum...was likely to produce a lineup against the U.S....More serious than the choice of forum was the constant and fundamental premise - stated explicitly by one of the State Department representatives at the February 1, 1969, NSC meeting - that the U.S. would have to deliver Israeli agreement. It meant that we were being asked to pressure an ally on behalf of countries which...pursued policies generally hostile to us, and were clients of Moscow. I therefore doubted the advisability of American pressure for a general

settlement until we could see more clearly what concessions the Arabs would make and until those who would benefit from it would be America's friends, not Soviet clients.³⁹

In several memoranda that Kissinger had sent Nixon he argued that the U.S. would better pursue attainable goals: (a) a partial settlement such as one with Jordan which had a long and honorable record of friendship with the U.S. (b) conduct "exploratory talks" with both the Soviet Union and the Arab states, before launching a peace initiative of substance, i.e., before initiating a proposal which included detailed peace terms, (c) be patient and wait until Egypt would finally come to realize that the only hope for a settlement lay with some form of alignment with the U.S.⁴⁰

Rogers did not accept Kissinger's view and continued his efforts to reach a universally agreed upon comprehensive settlement. The American initiative alarmed Israel, even though it was still informal and not conclusive. The timing was also not promising. Prime Minister Estkol died of a heart attack on February 22, 1969. Golda Meir headed the government until the elections which were held in November that year. When Secretary Rogers made his plan public Israel was in the process of building a ruling coalition. Hence, at that time Israel was coping with economic problems, rivalries between the prospective partners of a government of National Unity, and new threats to its security resulting from the massive rearming of its defeated adversaries. In addition, the Khartoum resolution buried Israel's early hopes of reaching individual settlements with Egypt and

Syria. Bewildered and anxious, Israel was now hardening its position, modifying its decision to withdraw to the former international borders with Egypt, and uncertain about the American position.⁴¹

The possibility was real that the level of American support of Israel would decrease, if and when Israel refused to make concessions demanded by the State Department. Israel, however, rightly gambled on the regional and global dilemmas, assuming that their threatening existence would deter the U.S. from substantially weakening Israel by withholding promised arms. The developments which occurred in Egypt during 1969-70 proved that Israel gambled correctly.

During February and March 1969, the State Department was accelerating its negotiations with the Soviet Union. In its zeal to reach a swift, substantive, comprehensive settlement State initiated a succession of proposals, which was exactly what Israel hoped would not happen. The State Department wished to settle the conflict because "it feared that a deteriorating situation would increase Soviet influence." Kissinger believed that the opposite was true. A settlement accepted by the USSR would show the radical Arab states that the U.S. was vulnerable to Soviet pressures. Kissinger believed that the U.S. should demonstrate that a settlement "could not be extorted from us by Soviet pressure."⁴²

While the State Department was pursuing unrealistic agreements, Nasser embarked upon a new campaign against Israel.

"It was again President Nasser who lit the fuse."⁴³ In April 1968 Nasser proclaimed a three-stage war against Israel: (a) reconstruction of the Egyptian army (b) active defense, and (c) the liberation of the Israel-held territories. As early as September 8, 1968, Nasser tested his strategy by launching a massive artillery barrage along the Canal, attacks which continued through October. Only a strong Israeli retaliation convinced Nasser that the Egyptian army was not yet ready for stages two and three of his strategy. In February 1969, however, on his return from Moscow, and on the occasion of visiting troops along the Canal, Nasser proclaimed the beginning of the second phase in the war against Israel: constant military activity. This declaration began the war of attrition which continued until August 1970.⁴⁴

In March 1969, Nasser declared the cease-fire null and void and initiated the war of attrition with massive artillery barrages. In the initial phase that lasted four months the two sides dealt each other heavy blows but the outcome was indecisive...the Egyptians executed many raids...but failed to capture a single stronghold...On the other hand Israel suffered heavy casualties; and although the Egyptians suffered more, they showed no sign of exhaustion and were seemingly prepared to go on with the fighting indefinitely.⁴⁵

With the Soviet Union increasing its penetration into the area, and Nasser intensifying the hostilities along the Canal, Israel decided to mobilize American support to counter these developments. Israel assumed that the regional and global dilemmas created an overlap of interests between the two allies. Both nations wished to achieve peace, both nations shared the need to curb Soviet influence and Arab radicalism, and both

nations wished to see the Middle East stabilized.

Hence, when Ambassador Rabin met with Kissinger on March 4, 1969, the goal was to mobilize American support, especially to have the U.S. accelerate the delivery of arms requested by Israel. Another important question on Rabin's mind was the U.S. view on borders. Rabin made it clear that Israel, which then held some important cards in its hand, would not withdraw in return for nebulous arrangements about the future. Kissinger, according to Rabin accepted Israel's position and said :

The objective is peace - that s our position. Resolution 242 is one package; the demand for an Israeli withdrawal cannot be separated from political quid pro quo of the Arabs. There is no substitute for a contractual agreement between the sides in the Middle East, and peace negotiations must lead to a specific, binding agreement.⁴⁶

In a meeting between Secretary Rogers and Foreign Minister Eban, which took place a few weeks later, Rogers reiterated the same theme. However, the clouds of the U.S.-USSR talks which were conducted between March and July, 1969, were hovering over the Middle East. The talks caused anxiety in Israel because Israel was not part of these negotiations. Israel was afraid that Soviet pressure eroded the American position to Israel's disadvantage. Although Rogers assured Eban that there would be no imposed settlement,⁴⁷ there were signs that the U.S. contemplated just that, while expecting the Soviet Union to reciprocate by exerting leverage over Egypt. On March 5, 1969, Kissinger, who was aware of the State Department's plan, wrote a memorandum to President Nixon explaining the dilemmas

which curtail both patron-states' leverage over their client states.

Everyone points out that we will be expected to deliver Israel in any negotiations. The Arabs assume - wrongly but irrevocably - that we can make Israel do what we wish. The French and British assume we could do more than we have. Perhaps the Soviets - who know the limits of their own influence in Cairo and Damascus - realistically understand the limits of our influence in Jerusalem...

A settlement this year is unlikely...because Israeli post-Eshkol and election year politics will strictly limit Israel's ability to compromise...trying too hard could make matters worse...a settlement could actually strengthen the Palestinian and weaken the Arab governments that accepted it.⁴⁸

Quandt accepted this theory saying:

(T)he bureaucracy's error, according to Kissinger, was its underestimation of Israel's will and ability to resist American pressure...Nixon...found it misguided and possibly dangerous for the U.S. to try to improve its relations with adversaries--the Soviet Union and Egypt--by pressuring one's own friend, Israel.⁴⁹

While the White House and the State Department were at odds over U.S. policy, the war of attrition was escalating along the Canal. Moreover, both Israel and Egypt hardened their positions. The Soviet Union exacerbated the confrontation by intensifying the military build-up of Egypt and Syria. Secretary Rogers, yet unwilling to face the regional and global dilemmas which rendered his peace efforts futile, completely ignored these developments and continued to pursue his unrealistic peace initiative. On March 10, 1969, Rogers presented Nixon with his latest proposal, entitled "General Principles" or the "Nine Points" proposal. This was the rough draft of his famous peace plan which he made public on December 9, that year.

It asserted that the object of negotiations was binding contractual agreement, though not necessarily a peace treaty. Face-to-face negotiations were 'not essential'...but would probably have to occur 'at some point.' The principles allowed minimal changes from preexisting borders, but such changes 'should not reflect the weight of conquest.' (...A State Department euphemism for insisting on near-total Israeli withdrawal.)...The clear assumption was...(that) the effort could work only if the United States exercised its full leverage over Israel.⁵⁰

The Rogers Nine Points proposal included major concessions to answer Soviet demands (a) the demand for direct negotiations was considered not essential, (b) border adjustments should be minimal and should not reflect the weight of conquest, and (c) Israel should be coerced to accept the proposal. Nixon approved the State Department's proposal although he was very skeptical about the plan's chance of success. He gave Rogers the green light mainly because "he (Nixon) said it would give State something to do, while we (Nixon and Kissinger), handled Vietnam, SALT, Europe, and China in the White House. (It is not to be excluded that he gave Rogers an opposite explanation.)"⁵¹

After receiving Nixon's approval, Rogers and Sisco went ahead with full steam. Between March 18 and April 22, Assistant Secretary Sisco met for substantive talks with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin on nine occasions.⁵² At the same time, the situation in the Middle East, especially along the Canal, deteriorated significantly since Nasser had announced the abrogation of the 1967 cease-fire. Nasser's move was instigated by the massive Soviet military aid which made Nasser believe that Egypt had

gained military superiority. The State Department ignored the concerted Soviet-Egyptian activity and continued to act on the misperception that, just as the U.S., the Soviet Union was genuinely interested in a peace settlement.

Between May 6 and May 12, Sisco conveyed a "Nine Point" proposal to Dobrynin, following previous documents which were rejected by the Soviet Union for being too generous to Israel. Each American proposal included additional concession in the language of the document to comply with Soviet demands. Former Ambassador Rabin recalled:

In Mid-October (1969), Eban relayed to me Sisco's notification that the United States intended to modify one of the principle points in the "paper" Sisco had submitted to Moscow that Summer...Instead of suggesting that Israel would not "exclude" the international boundary as a secure and recognized border between Egypt and Israel, the U.S. was now prepared to concede to the Soviets that the international boundary would be the final line, negotiations notwithstanding.⁵³

Israel had its own view about the Soviet's "double standard" behavior (negotiating a peace settlement with Washington while supporting Egypt's War of Attrition along the Canal). Israel assumed that the Soviet strategy, which escaped the comprehension of the State Department, was to link the escalation of the War of Attrition along the Canal with their diplomatic activities in the two, and the "Four Powers" talks. The scheme was simple. Fear of escalating military activities along the Canal would soften the American position and would result in more U.S. concessions.

During May and June of 1969, the war of attrition being waged by the Egyptian along the Suez Canal...was having a direct impact on the Soviet-American talks. The obvious aim of the war was to weaken and inflict damage on Israel. Yet the fact that the fighting was based on coordination between Egypt and the Soviet Union left me convinced that its more subtle and far-reaching aim was to undermine America's position and influence in the Arab world. The Russians were exploiting the fighting to wear down American resistance to their demands. After all the stakes were high: the PLO was gaining ground in Jordan and posing threat to King Hussein; King Idris's regime in Libya was collapsing; extremist elements were expected to take control of...the Saudi monarchy...the implied Soviet threat was that the Arab world - and its oil resources - would slip out of Western hands and right into Russian lap.⁵⁴

Israel's view, however, was not shared by the State Department which saw the status of the U.S. in the Middle East losing ground as a consequence of the war of attrition. Unlike Israel, the State Department was ready to make concessions which neither were reciprocated by the Soviet Union nor promised a termination of the war of attrition. The U.S.'s latest proposal, which was submitted to the Soviets in summer 1969, was little to Israel's liking. Israel felt that the Soviet Union was serving as the Arab states' advocate and was pressuring the U.S. to "deliver Israel," using intimidation tactics, namely, the escalation of the war of attrition along the Canal.

Dobrynin suggested (to Kissinger on April 14, 1969), that if the U.S. came up with a more specific position on each of the principles, the Soviets would then sell them to the Arabs. Since Dobrynin in effect was asking us to accept the Arab program, it was not clear what he proposed to "sell" to them. To me it seemed that he was looking to obtain credit in the Arab world for what would amount to a peace imposed by us on Israel.⁵⁵

Secretary Rogers did not share Kissinger's view and

argued that a detailed American peace plan was necessary and would enhance U.S.'s position in the Arab world even if it were rejected. "There was, according to him, simply no way of knowing whether a settlement was possible without testing Egyptian, Soviet, and Israeli views."⁵⁶ Rogers argued that the Big Four ultimately would work out an agreed upon peace formula. Israel, on the other hand, maintained that the great-powers' search for peace was ineffective and counterproductive. The U.S.'s attempts to "deliver Israel," only raised Arab and Soviet expectations, which in turn induced Nasser to intensify the hostilities in the region, namely to escalate the war of attrition. The American willingness to make concessions could not save the ill-conceived talks, and the Big Four talks which begun in April, were by June put on an intermittent basis.

The Egyptian press readily admitted that hostilities were being manipulated by Cairo to raise the diplomatic stakes.⁵⁷

During 1969-70, Nasser was more militant and non-compromising than the USSR. When a Soviet delegation arrived in Cairo with a compromise formula in July 1969, Nasser - who was just then inflicting heavy casualties on the Israelis - refused to go long.⁵⁸

After several months of U.S.-USSR negotiations during which the U.S. initiated several proposals for a settlement, the Soviet Union made a formal counterproposal which was presented to Sisco by Ambassador Dobrynin, on June 17, 1969. In this

proposal the Soviet Union made a few concessions. It (a) rescinded its demand for an early Israeli withdrawal (b) accepted the American demand for a "package deal," i.e., a simultaneous implementation of all provisions of the settlement, and (c) agreed to the Rhodes Formula which included some form of face-to-face negotiations. On the substantive issues, however, the Soviets adhered to their traditional approach. They (a) objected to direct negotiations (b) objected to any, even minor, border adjustments (c) demanded a unilateral Israeli withdrawal (d) objected to demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula (e) were ambiguous about the right of free navigation through international waterways and "hedged their position by references to the Constantinople Convention of 1888, and last but not least (f) objected to a contractual, binding peace treaty."⁵⁹

Secretary Rogers, however, evaluated the Soviet position from the vantage point of a "half full bottle" and believed that the Soviet reply showed an encouraging forward movement. Rogers and Sisco were optimistic about their chances to trade off an American concession on borders, i.e., an explicit commitment to the prewar borders, with Soviet concessions on the issues of contractual peace and direct negotiations. In late summer 1969, Rogers believed that the Soviet Union was more than ready to negotiate a settlement. In reality, however, the negotiations were deadlocked because the Soviets never accepted the trade off proposal. Moreover, the USSR used this time to arm

Egypt which probably helped to escalate the war of attrition along the Canal. Encouraged by the success of the Soviet diplomatic maneuvers and their massive military aid, Nasser announced on July 23 that Egypt was "now passing into the stage of liberation" in its war with Israel. At the same time he condemned the United States and Britain for supporting Israel.⁶⁰

Rogers ignored these developments and continued his diplomatic efforts. His primary goals were (a) to reach an accord with the USSR, and (b) to choose the proper tactics to impose it upon Israel. The best possible leverage was the withholding of military aid, because after 1967 the U.S. became Israel's sole supplier of arms. American military aid was so crucial to Israel's security, especially because the war of attrition was escalating, that Rogers did not doubt the success of withholding military aid as leverage.

The tactic was first tested when Prime Minister Golda Meir visited Washington on September 23, 1969.

Her themes with Nixon were simple. The United States should not let Nasser avoid the responsibility for making peace by getting others to settle the terms; the Soviet Union had to know that the United States would not permit Israel to be destroyed; the Arabs had to understand that Israel was not weak. Only this would bring peace.⁶¹

Prime Minister Meir reiterated Israel's demands: (a) direct negotiations (b) contractual peace (c) withdrawal to defensible borders only after a peace treaty was signed. The basis for any settlement was a strong Israel, insisted Prime

Minister Meir who asked for additional 25 F-4 Phantoms and 100 A-4 Skyhawks (the two most advanced fighter-bombers at that time). Israel requested \$750 million in economic aid for the following five years.⁶² Israel's request for additional weapons was the opportunity that Secretary Rogers was looking for, and he suggested to Nixon to use it as leverage in order to coerce Israel to make concessions. With the policy recommendations of his Secretary of State before him, Nixon developed a new formula - to trade with Israel "hardware for software."

This meant that he (Nixon, N.N.) would be responsive to Israeli requests for armament if Israel gave us some latitude in negotiations...The "hardware for software" formula the President proposed was leaked to the press - in a way which implied that arms aid would therefore be conditional on Israeli flexibility in negotiations.⁶³

To say that Prime Minister Meir did not accept Nixon's formula would be an understatement. "Golda was furious. Summoning me, (Ambassador Rabin, N.N.), she asked to speak to Kissinger."⁶⁴ Prime Minister Meir's outraged protests were targeted (probably correctly) on the State Department.⁶⁵ Prime Minister Meir fiercely stressed the regional and global dilemmas which made the weakening of an ally (Israel) through the suspension of arms irrational, especially in view of the USSR massive arming of their allies, Egypt and Syria. The show of American weakness vis-a-vis Soviet political pressures would further erode American status in the Arab world. The cause of peace would not be served either, and the war of attrition waged by Nasser was a case in point. The U.S. had to understand,

argued Israel, that only the combination of a militarily strong Israel with a politically strong America, would curb Soviet adventurism and would stop Arab attacks on Israel. Peace would not be possible before these two conditions were fulfilled.

Unfortunately, Prime Minister Meir's analysis of the situation was rejected by the State Department, which continued to pursue its policies regardless of the fact that no progress was made during Fall 1969 in the negotiations between the U.S. and the USSR. Rogers' position exacerbated the conflict between the U.S. and Israel. At a time when Israel was fighting a long and frustrating war along the Canal, it was only natural for Israel to become very anxious about not receiving the much needed American aid, especially military aid. The American-Israeli conflict was expressed in a press conference which took place on December 23, 1969.

Q: Mr. Secretary, how do you reply to the Israeli criticism...that it should not be the American function to suggest specific proposals which the Israelis feel prejudice their case?

A: Well, we just don't agree to that...I can understand why Israel is concerned, and why they don't necessarily agree with everything we do. But we have to conduct our foreign policy in a way that we think is best for our national interest.⁶⁶

Although Rogers denied "any linkage between the pending request for additional aid and Israel's attitude toward the American peace proposals,"⁶⁷ nevertheless, the U.S. was doing just that. Israel's request for additional 25 Phantom-jets was put on hold as a tactic to achieve leverage. The irony of U.S. policy was that it antagonized both Israel and the Arab states.

The delivery of the 50 F-4 Phantom-jets, promised by President Johnson in 1968, began on September 1969 as an incentive to bring about Israeli concessions. But it was frustrated by the denial of new arms requests. The Arab states, on the other hand, viewed the delivery of the F-4 jets as an act of aggression against them because the F-4 fighter-bombers enabled Israel to launch deep-penetration air raids against Egypt.

Secretary Rogers' adherence to his Middle East policy was surprising because by then it was clear that neither the Soviets nor Egypt were planning to make the concessions needed to reach a settlement. However, caught in misperceptions, Rogers believed that there was never a better time to reach a settlement. He continued to hold the position that the U.S. had to reaffirm its policies on the issues of (a) borders (a firm American commitment to the pre 1967 borders) (b) negotiations (American acceptance of indirect negotiations through Gunnar Jarring) (c) a contractual agreement between the fighting sides short of a peace treaty. Rogers was sure that U.S. policy would be reciprocated by the Soviets who would be willing to "deliver Nasser." Israel, Rogers incorrectly believed, would pose no problem since his proposal included clauses very attractive to Israel.

It included provisions on peace and security arrangements that State, without definite proof, gambled would be attractive enough to persuade Israel to withdraw and to convince the Soviets to press Egypt. Both hopes were to be disappointed. ⁶⁸

The State Department assumed that if Israel would not be

induced to accept the American proposal, it could be coerced to accept it through the withholding of arms. The government of Israel, on the other hand, was hoping that the Rogers plan in its October form (which included the concessions mentioned earlier), would never become the official American policy. Kissinger understood that Israel could not possibly accept the Rogers proposal. He repeated his objection to Nixon saying "(I)t cannot produce a solution without massive pressure on Israel."⁶⁹

However, the State Department in its eagerness to reach a settlement ignored the regional and global dilemmas which made U.S. leverage over Israel questionable.

On the global level, Soviet aggressive policy threatened vital American interests in the Middle East. Containment of the USSR required a strong and reliable ally there, and Israel answered both requirements. Withholding arms meant weakening Israel which at that time was against American interests. On the regional level, the State Department underestimated Nasser's militancy and his Pan-Arabist aspirations. Both were enhanced and promoted by Nasser's war against Israel. A premature Israeli withdrawal was against the interests of both Israel and the U.S. However, caught in his misperceptions, Rogers did not accept the argument, which later proved to be correct, that Israel's strategic superiority was an American interest because it served containment and curbed Arab radicalism (Israel's intervention in the 1970 Syrian-Jordanian conflict is a case in point). Rogers,

on the other hand, was ready to "deliver Israel" as a necessary step toward peace even at the cost of weakening an important ally and changing the balance of power in the region. This was the political context of the Middle East when Secretary Rogers made his peace initiative public. The speech shattered Israel's hopes that the Rogers Plan would never become an official American policy.

Rogers' speech further complicated Israel's already difficult political situation. Israel was engaged in a real war with Egypt, (the war of attrition along the Canal), a proxy war with the USSR (which resupplied and trained the Egyptian and Syrian armies), and was now faced with a political war with the U.S. (which began pressuring Israel to accept a proposal that threatened its security). This was the political context of the Middle East when Secretary Rogers, on December 9, 1969, in a public address, made his peace plan public.

THE ROGERS PEACE PLAN: A WRONG IDEA PRESENTED

AT THE WRONG TIME TO THE WRONG ACTORS

On the evening of December 9, 1969, in an address delivered to the Galaxy Conference on Adult Education, Secretary Rogers announced his peace plan. Only a few weeks earlier, Israel had completed a national election in which the winning Labor party called for retention of Israel's control over Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and for a territorial link to Sharm-al-Sheik. Without informing or coordinating his proposal with Israel, Rogers came out with this surprising bombshell. "The timing and sudden manner of its revelation created a sense of crisis within the government (in Israel,) provoked a predicated diplomatic backlash...and contributed to the formation of new 'national unity' coalition, in which Begin and other Israeli 'hawks' retained a role."⁷⁰

The speech, which became known as the "Rogers Plan," did not differ much from Rogers' March proposal, which he submitted to the Soviets and the other three powers. Rogers entitled his proposal : "A Lasting Peace in the Middle East: An American View," and it suggested solutions to the problems of "peace, security, withdrawal, and territory." Rogers' proposal, which followed the comprehensive approach, suggested solutions to all problems in a definitive "over-all-settlement," although each issue was discussed individually.

On the first issue, peace, Rogers avoided the Israeli demand for a contractual peace. He talked about navigation

rights, universal respect for sovereignty, and the importance of specificity in the parties' obligations to each other.

On the second issue, security, Rogers said very vaguely that "there should be demilitarized zones and related security arrangements more reliable than those which existed in the ...past." However, Rogers completely avoided the Israeli demand for demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula and the West Bank. Shunning the issue of direct negotiations, Rogers suggested that "the parties themselves, with Ambassador Jarring's help...(would) work out the...details of such security arrangements."

On the third issue, withdrawal and territory, Rogers referred to resolution 242, and called for an Israeli withdrawal "from territories occupied in the 1967 war...(and) the nonacquisition of territory by war...(A)ny changes in the preexisting lines...should be confined to insubstantial alterations required for mutual security." Rogers position on borders was that Israel should withdraw to the international border between Israel and Egypt, and that all other border arrangements should be based on the armistice agreements. "We do not support expansionism," declared Rogers. He insisted that both sides had to make concessions, although the concessions that he demanded of the Arab states were trivial as compared to the substantial concessions which Israel was asked to make.

Secretary Rogers, for reasons known only to him, chose to join together the two most controversial issues: "Issues of

Refugees and Jerusalem." On the issue of the refugees, Rogers said: "There can be no lasting peace without a just settlement of the problem of those Palestinians whom the wars of 1948 and 1967 have made homeless...the U.S. has contributed about \$500 million for the...Palestinian refugees...We are prepared to contribute generously along with others to solve this problem...its just settlement must take into account the desires and aspirations of the refugees."

On the question of Jerusalem, the Secretary suggested that the city should not be divided. "Jerusalem should be a unified city...Arrangements for the administration of the unified city should take into account the interests of all its inhabitants...and there should be roles for both Israel and Jordan in the civic, economic, and religious life of the city." Rogers avoided Israel's claim that Jerusalem was not only a holy city, but was the civil capital of Israel and the Jewish people for two thousand years. Rogers' Plan did not address Israel's claim that just as Rome has been the capital of Italy, Jerusalem has been the capital of Israel. Secretary Rogers ended his speech with praise for the comprehensive settlement approach, saying that "these questions of refugees and Jerusalem, as well as other aspects of the conflict, can be resolved as part of the overall settlement."⁷¹ Israel felt it could not accept the Rogers Plan although this might result in a conflict with the U.S.

Indeed, Rogers' expectation of reaching an over-all

settlement was not based on the realities of the Middle East. There was nothing in the history of the Israeli-Arab conflict that could confirm such a theory. The issue of the Arab people who lived in Palestine and were dislocated because of the wars had nothing in common with the border dispute between Israel and Egypt; as much as the Syrian hostility to the very existence of Israel had nothing in common with the problem of united Jerusalem. The different problems involved different actors with different political aspirations and different national interests. There was nothing to indicate that a comprehensive settlement was the right approach. To the contrary, the history and nature of the Israeli-Arab conflict demonstrated the need for a non-ambitious, "step-by-step" approach of low-keyed expectations pursued with patience and careful diplomacy. The tactic used should have been to separate as much as possible the issues and the actors in order to cope with each situation individually (as was the case with the Disengagement Agreements of 1974-75).

The Rogers Plan was a very ambitious proposal which was supposed to offer each actor a dole that would induce it to accept the plan. Rogers succumbed to the Arab states' demand not to negotiate directly with Israel, and he suggested indirect negotiations headed by the special U.N. mediator, Gunnar Jarring. The question of direct or indirect negotiations was not considered by Israel to be a technical question. The U.S. suggestion of indirect negotiations was interpreted by Israel as

a legitimization of the Arab non-recognition of Israel. To impose this condition on Israel before the negotiations began was not a very promising start. It also put in question the "good faith" of the Arab states in the negotiations. If the Arab States were ready to make peace with Israel why wouldn't they talk to the Israelis? The adamant Arab refusal to negotiate directly with Israel was consistent with the Khartoum resolution which was never denounced. To expect Israel to withdraw under these circumstances was at best, very naive.

It did not take more than a few hours for a universal attack on the Rogers plan. It was rejected by Israel ("too generous to the Arab countries") and by the Arab states ("too generous to Israel").

The Arab press, mainly Egyptian, treated the speech as an American trick to pretend to Arabs that the United States was impartial, as well as to undermine Soviet-Egyptian relations.⁷²

The Soviet Union was probably caught by surprise, and issued an initial positive response saying that "the Rogers speech was long overdue."⁷³ Later, however, the USSR shifted its position to be in line with the Egyptian position. "The Soviets, in the wake of high-level visit to Cairo in December 1969, had reversed their conditional acceptance of the compromise Rogers proposal."⁷⁴

The strongest reaction came from Israel, because Israel saw in Rogers' proposal a direct threat to its security. The American proposal convinced the Likud party to join the newly elected government in order to create a unified front against

possible American efforts to impose the proposal on Israel. The part in the Rogers plan which surprised Israel the most was Rogers' suggestion about the future of the West Bank and Jerusalem. Israel's first reaction was an official cabinet announcement dated December 10, rejecting the plan in all its parts. "Mrs. Meir was 'bitterly disappointed' and 'heartbroken' and thought the situation 'a scandal' and 'calamitous.'"⁷⁵

On December 22, the Israeli government issued a statement saying:

Israel will reject any attempt to impose a forced solution upon her...The proposal submitted by the U.S. cannot but be construed by the aggressive Arab rulers as an attempt to appease them at Israel's expense.⁷⁶

Israel's second step was dispatching Foreign Minister Eban, on December 16, to Washington to meet with Secretary Rogers.

The atmosphere of their talk was far from cordial, for the American insisted that the U.S. had not changed its policy; it was Israel that had done so by retreating from her decision of June 19, 1967, to restore the whole of the Sinai to Egypt. "Israel can't expect to decide on changes and have the U.S. conform to her policy," Sisco chided us (the Israeli delegation)⁷⁷

Israel argued in vain that any retreat, i.e., any hardening in the Israeli position was in response to Arab intransigence, and that no settlement was possible as long as the Arab states adhered to the Khartum resolution. The State Department did not share Israel's view that the key to a settlement was Arab concessions, namely, a recognition of Israel's sovereignty over its territory. In a National Security

Council meeting of December 10, the State Department expanded its peace plan, and presented a new proposal "to put forward a plan on Jordan comparable to that on Egypt."⁷⁷ It is difficult to comprehend Rogers' motivation to expand his peace initiative despite rejection by all the actors involved. Moreover, in his meeting with Foreign Minister Eban, Rogers was informed that Israel was conducting direct negotiations with King Hussein and any American interference might be counterproductive.

Eban informed him that we were holding contacts with Jordan and preferred to continue them without U.S. interference. 'We are talking with the Jordanians about territorial changes, principally in the Jordan valley,' he (Eban) told Rogers... 'if the U.S. publicizes its view that Israel must withdraw from all the territories - including those on the Jordanian border - that will put an end to the contacts.'⁷⁸

This was, however, exactly what Rogers had done. His reasons, as Kissinger had put it, were inexplicable.

What possessed the Department to preserve when all the evidence indicated certain failure must be left to students of administrative psychology. Perhaps when enough bureaucratic prestige has been invested in a policy it is easier to see it fail than to abandon it.⁸⁰

The new Rogers proposal included 11 points, among them a demand for an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, an option to the Palestinian refugees to return to Palestine, and a suggestion of a joint Jordanian-Israeli administrative body that would run a unified Jerusalem. The proposal was presented by Charles Yost to the representatives of the Big Four in the U.N. on December 18, 1969. The plan, which resembled the first Rogers

Plan was modified to fit the special circumstances on the Jordanian front. For example, "The permanent border would approximate the armistice demarcation line existing before the 1967 war, but would allow for modifications based on administrative or economic convenience."⁸¹

The State Department made two puzzling decisions (a) when Rogers met with Eban he knew that Yost had been instructed to submit the proposal only a few hours later and yet Rogers did not mention it to Eban, and (b) the proposal was introduced only three days before the Arab summit meeting at Rabat and was bound to create unnecessary pressure on the moderate Arab states to reject it.

Sisco, who was the architect of the Jordanian plan, claimed that the disclosure of the proposal before the Rabat meeting was intended to shatter the Arab unity and to strengthen the moderate Arab states by providing them a plan that actually meant the "delivery of Israel". In the short-term, Sisco was right. The Rabat meeting ended unresolved, and Nasser left Rabat frustrated and vowing that "I will fight alone."⁸²

In the long-run, however, things did not improve. To the contrary, the situation, especially on the Israeli-Egyptian front, only got worse. The American concessions induced neither the Soviet Union nor Egypt to reciprocate by softening their position. In effect the Soviet Union, in an official note, rejected the new American proposal in its entirety.⁸³ Kissinger was not surprised. "I believed that a steady stream of American

concessions would increase Soviet temptations to act as the the lawyer for the Arab radicals."⁸⁴ At the National Security Council meeting on December 10, 1969, Kissinger suggested that the U.S. would stop the flow of settlement proposals and should stop pressuring Israel to accept them. Only a stalemate in the situation would convince the Arab radicals that their only hope for a settlement was the U.S. "The longer the stalemate continued the more obvious it would become that the Soviet Union had failed to deliver what the Arabs wanted."⁸⁵ This strategy, however, was not adopted before 1970, or as Kissinger said, "over the corpses of various State Department peace plans".⁸⁶

When the Jordanian-plan was proposed by Yost, Israel was more than surprised, it was outraged. Israel found itself in an unprecedented situation. The U.S. was initiating settlement proposals which would weaken Israel both along its eastern and southern borders. In the south the U.S. was pressuring Israel to withdraw while a war of attrition, waged by Egypt and supported by the USSR, was going on. Now, the U.S. demanded Israeli concessions to Jordan while it was clear that Jordan could not reciprocate (see the Khartoum resolution). Rabin, who was the Israeli Ambassador to Washington, suggested an Israeli counter measure. Following the principle that "offense is the best defense," he suggested that Israel should escalate the war of attrition and carry the war into the Egyptian heartland. As early as September 1969, Rabin suggested deep-penetration air

raids into Egypt's heartland.

The National Security Council is considering the impact of Israeli military operations against Egypt and the Americans are giving careful consideration to their possible effect on the stability of Nasser's regime...Continuation of Israeli military operations, including air attacks, is likely to lead to far-reaching results. Nasser's standing could be undermined, and that would in turn weaken the Soviet position in the region. Some sources have informed me that our military operations are the most encouraging breath of fresh⁸⁷ air the American administration has enjoyed recently.

The idea of the deep-penetration bombing attacks was born. Its architect, Rabin, was sure that the U.S. would support it, if not openly, at least tacitly.

A man would have to be blind, deaf, and dumb not to sense how much the administration favors our military operations, and there is a growing likelihood that the U.S. would be interested in an escalation of our military activity with the aim of undermining Nasser's standing...Thus the willingness to supply us with additional arms depends more on stepping up our military activity against Egypt than on reducing it.⁸⁸

The deep-penetration air attacks on Egypt's heartland could result in either U.S. approval, as Rabin predicted, or in U.S. disapproval. The reason for opposing the air raids was that escalation of the war would most definitely put an end to American peace initiatives. On the other hand, the Rogers peace plan was already dead, once Israel and the Soviet Union rejected it. Hence, a strong Israeli blow to Nasser's prestige could enhance Israel's power position in the region, which in turn could buttress the U.S. power position.

The Israeli and Soviet rejection of the Rogers Plan put a sudden end to the first Middle East initiative of the Nixon Administration. With it died the hope that "linkage" diplomacy (between Vietnam and the

Middle East), would help provide the key to peace in the Middle East.⁸⁹

With the Rogers Plan dead, it was only logical for Israel to assume that the U.S. would be interested in the escalation of the war of attrition. Any decline in Nasser's prestige would undermine the Soviet position in the region. It was clear that Israel hoped that a humiliating bombing of the suburbs of Cairo might even result in the overthrow of Nasser's regime. Israel learned later, to its chagrin, that it could not have been more wrong.

The second issue that Israel had to consider before approving the deep-penetration air raids was the possible Soviet reaction.

The National Unity government never conceptually determined what was the Soviet role in the situation, and it could not decide 'who was the horse and who was the carriage' in the Arab-Soviet pursuit of escalating the war of attrition. In 1969 the majority of the cabinet members believed that the Soviet Union was more moderate than Nasser. As a result Israel hoped that...the bombing would instigate a Soviet reaction to restrain Nasser's radical policies...The assumption was that the USSR would "go along" with the Israeli air raids...Even Moshe Dayan, who was skeptical about the possibility that the air raids might undermine Nasser's rule, believed that if Nasser's rule would suddenly collapse, it would be best; but even if Nasser would only suffer a major blow - it was worth it. Concerning the Soviet reaction, Defense Minister Dayan believed that the Soviet Union would definitely intervene to save Nasser's rule from collapsing.⁹⁰

Hence, the Israeli government did not reach a consensus concerning the issue of a possible Soviet reaction. The majority argued that the Soviets would maintain a "low profile" and would not get too involved. At one extreme was a minority which

argued that the Soviets would serve as a moderate, restraining factor, while at the other extreme were those (members of the leftist Mapam party), who argued that escalating the war of attrition would not serve Israel's cause. The question of the deep-penetration raids was resolved by the majority of the Israeli cabinet. On January 7, 1970, Israeli F-4 Phantom jets crossed the cease-fire lines and bombed the heartland of Egypt. Only 10 days earlier, on December 28, a group of Israeli paratroopers landed beyond the Egyptian border and captured a new, sophisticated Soviet anti-aircraft radar installation (the radar was transferred to Israel by helicopters). The sky was clear and Israel bombed targets as close as 15 miles from Cairo and the Nile Delta. The goal of the deep-penetration bombing was to demonstrate to the Arab people Nasser's impotence and to force him to end the war of attrition. Israel, however, learned later that the bombings were counterproductive, that the Soviet Union did not keep a "low profile," and that Israel was faced with grave, unintended consequences. The USSR did not play the role of a moderating, restraining factor. To the contrary, the USSR seized the opportunity to step-up its own involvement in the region, involvement which was detrimental to both Israel and U.S. interests.

At the end of January, Nasser suddenly paid a secret visit to Moscow. Thereafter, the problems of the Middle East began increasingly to merge with the relations of the superpowers.⁹¹

Egypt and the Soviet Union were coordinating their reaction to the new Israeli strategy, which took them by

surprise. The first Soviet move was to deliver a strong protest letter, dated January 31, 1970, from Premier Kosygin to the leaders of the Big Four, warning them that if Israel's attacks continued "the Soviet Union will be forced to see to it that the Arab states have means at their disposal with the help of which a due rebuff to the arrogant aggressor could be made." The Soviet letter ended with the demand for a complete and speedy withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied Arab territories.⁹²

The other developments were the introduction of Soviet SAM-3 surface-to-air missiles in Egypt, and the dispatch of ten-thousand or more Soviet advisers, including Soviet combat pilots flying air cover missions over the Egyptian heartland. As a result of these developments the Nixon administration was faced with two urgent problems. The first problem was to develop a short-term policy to reduce the dangerous tension between Israel and Egypt before it spilled over and created a superpower confrontation. The second problem was to develop a long-term policy which would address the issue of peace after the failure of the Rogers Plan. In addition, Nixon had to assess the impact of the Israeli deep-penetration air raids in both global and regional terms. On the global level, Nixon had to assess the impact of the escalation of the Egyptian-Israeli war on U.S.-Soviet rivalry in the Middle East. On the regional level, Nixon had to assess the effect of the massive shipments of weapons and Soviet military personnel to Egypt on the region's

strategic balance. Nixon had to decide whether the deep-penetration air raids were "good for America" or whether they worked against U.S. interests. The U.S. "evenhanded" approach had to be reassessed. Should the U.S. pressure Israel to make concessions hoping that this would be reciprocated by the Soviets? Would the Soviets stop, or at least limit, the arms race in the Middle East if the U.S. would stop arms shipments to Israel?

Before the administration was Israel's request for additional 25 F-4 Phantoms and 100 A-4 Skyhawks. Nixon was pressured from both sides. On the one hand, domestic pressures called for a policy to abandon the Rogers Plan, to move away from the "evenhanded" approach which catered in vain to the radical Arab states and the Soviet Union, and to step up the military aid to Israel. On the other hand, the State Department wanted to suspend all arms shipments to Israel until it stopped the deep-penetration bombing, accepted a cease-fire, and made concessions toward a comprehensive settlement.

The American response combined both approaches. On February 4, Nixon sent his reply to the Soviet protest letter. Nixon's reply was firm and unequivocal. It rejected the Soviet allegations that the Rogers Plan was a cover for Israel's deep penetration air raids. It pointed out that both sides had violated the cease-fire. It stressed the point that it had been Egypt that had initiated the war of attrition, and that it was Egypt that was deliberately escalating the hostilities.

"Nixon's reply warned that the Soviet threat to expand arms shipments, if carried out, could draw the major powers more deeply into the conflict: 'The U.S...will not hesitate to provide arms to friendly states as the need arises.'"⁹³

On the other hand, Nixon withheld Israel's request for additional arms. On January 30, Nixon announced that he would make a decision about Israel's request for arms within thirty days. The reason for the delay was twofold. First, the Nixon administration was eager to stop the flow of Soviet arms to Egypt and Syria. Nixon's 30 day reassessment period was an "either or" message to the Soviet Union, stating that either the USSR reciprocated and both superpowers stopped their arms shipments, or the U.S. would waive all restrictions and answer all Israeli arms requests. Second, Nixon delayed his decision on arms sales to Israel because his administration's position on the question of exerting leverage on Israel was ambiguous. Conflicting statements were issued by the State Department and the White House saying "the time has passed in which great nations can dictate to small nations their future where their vital interests are involved."⁹⁴ On the other hand, Nixon, in his "hardware for software" policy did communicate to Israel that arms sales would be used to soften Israel's position on the peace issue: "new aid commitments were periodically announced simply to soften the blow of unattractive political proposals,"⁹⁵ and "some new arms agreements were delayed as a form of pressure, despite Rogers's earlier disavowal."⁹⁶ Hence,

by withholding arms shipments to Israel Nixon wished to achieve two goals: (a) bring the Soviets to reciprocate and suspend all arms shipments to Egypt (b) coerce Israel to stop the bombing and accept a cease-fire. Neither goal was achieved. Although Israel accepted a cease-fire almost a year later, the following discussion will show that this acceptance was not a result of American pressures.

Nixon's announcement created anger and frustration in Jerusalem. "Arms sales became the symbol of U.S.-Israeli relations."⁹⁷ Israel hoped that the delay was an ultimatum to the Soviets and the Arab states, and not a measure of coercion against Israel. Jerusalem did not understand that the ultimatum was twofold, aimed at both Israel and its rivals.

This temporizing stance was an attempt to exercise influence on more than one target nation at a time...Decisions about arms transfers to Israel were made with an eye not only on Israel and the Arabs, but also - on the Soviet Union.⁹⁸

While the Soviet Union was stepping-up its arms shipments to Egypt, providing it with advanced SAM missiles, latest models of MIG airplanes, and other sophisticated weapons, Israel's request for arms to counter the Soviet military aid to Egypt was not answered.

During Spring 1970 the Israeli-Egyptian war of attrition intensified. Israel expanded its bombing raids on the Egyptian interior, and the Soviets reacted by accelerating their military build-up in Egypt. In March, Israel reported that 16,000 Soviet military personnel were deployed in Egypt, including fighter pilots, some of whom were engaged in air battles with Israeli pilots. The thirty days referred to by Nixon on January 31 had passed, and there was still no official response to the Israeli request for 25 F-4 Phantoms and 100 A-4 Skyhawks. Nixon and the State Department continued to hope that the withholding of arms shipments to Israel would yield (a) a similar decision by the USSR to withhold shipments of arms to Egypt (b) an Israeli acceptance of the Rogers Plan (c) an Egyptian acceptance of the Rogers Plan and, (d) perhaps even a Jordanian agreement to join the peace process. All these aspirations were soon frustrated by the actors' refusal to play the roles expected of them by Nixon's administration.

During February and March, Washington and Moscow held talks aimed at ending or at least containing the hostilities between Israel and Egypt. These talks, however, did not bear any results. In the meantime, the Soviet Union continued to step-up its arms shipments to Egypt, providing it with advanced offensive weapons, and deploying SAM-3 anti-aircraft missiles in the zone adjoining the Canal. "This (the SAM-3 missiles) had never before been given to a foreign country, not even to North Vietnam...the missiles were accompanied by 1,500 Soviet military

personnel...Never before had they (the Soviets) put their own military forces in jeopardy for a non-Communist country."⁹⁹

The U.S. reaction was more than surprising. On March 23, a few weeks after the promised decision on arms to Israel was due, Secretary Rogers said that "the President has decided to hold in abeyance for now a decision with respect to Israel's request for additional aircraft."¹⁰⁰ As mentioned earlier the suspension of arms was a signal both to Israel (to stop the deep-penetration air raids) and to the Soviet Union (to halt arms shipments to Egypt and reduce its military involvement). As for the threat to Israel's security which resulted from the change in the balance of power, Rogers said "in our judgment, Israel's air capacity is sufficient to meet its needs for the time being." ¹⁰¹

Rogers expressed great concern with Israel's policy of deep-penetration air raids mainly because he was not yet ready to admit the failure of his peace initiative. Kissinger, however, criticized this approach.

Most in the government blamed the impasse on Israeli intransigence. All (except myself) were convinced that new large-scale aid to Israel would, at that juncture, "blow the place apart"...Unable to reach Nixon, I warned Haldeman that the President's action had increased the chance of a Middle East explosion; to cut off Israel would head us into a simultaneous confrontation with the Soviets and the Israelis...the Soviets were planning some unspecified military move; this was not the time...to issue an order to cut off military aid to Israel, against which this imminent Soviet move was directed.¹⁰²

Ambassador Rabin, the architect of the deep penetration air raids, incorrectly assumed that there was no link between

the American withholding of arms and Israel's bombing. The F-4 Phantoms, he claimed, were "a pawn in the interpower chess match."¹⁰³ Rabin, therefore, wrongly advised his government not to stop the bombings, believing that the bombing hurt the Soviet standing in the Arab world. In effect, the bombing provided the USSR with a golden opportunity to enhance their influence through the increased transfer of arms and military personnel. However, Rabin was partially right concerning Egypt. As a result of the Israeli air raids Egypt suffered heavy blows which threatened Nasser's prestige. Nasser urged Moscow to stop the Israeli bombing through an agreement with the U.S. which would later be imposed on Israel. He also asked for additional military aid.¹⁰⁴

In answer to Nasser's request, Dobrynin presented to the White House, on March 10, a proposal for tension reduction measures which included several Soviet concessions: (a) if Israel stopped the bombing, Egypt would restrain its military activities, i.e., Egypt offered a de facto cease fire along the Canal (b) the USSR would review the Rogers Plan and would agree that a Mideast settlement would not simply end the state of war but would establish a state of peace (c) Arab governments would undertake to control the operations of guerrilla forces from their territory.¹⁰⁵

The State Department was elated. "(O)ur policy of relative firmness has paid off on all contested issues."¹⁰⁶ State Department efforts to "mend fences" with Egypt gained new

momentum. Between April 10 and 14, Sisco was in Egypt and essentially invited Nasser to try dealing with the U.S. as an honest broker. Nasser's reply to Rogers came in his May speech in which he said:

The U.S., in taking one more step on the path to securing military superiority for Israel, will impose on the Arab nations an irrevocable course...This will effect the relations of the U.S. and the Arab nations for decades, and, maybe, for hundreds of years...There will be either rupture forever, or there will be another serious and defined beginning.¹⁰⁷

Nasser's ultimatum reinforced the State Department's desire to withhold all arms shipments to Israel as leverage to coerce Israel to accept a cease-fire. In its eagerness to reach a settlement Washington embraced Egypt's position without realizing that Nasser did not offer anything in return for Israeli and American concessions. Nor did the hailed Soviet proposal address the crucial questions of the future of the shipment of large quantities of advanced Soviet weapons to Egypt at a time when the U.S. was exhibiting restraint; the problem of the shift in the strategic balance of power as a result of the Soviet arms transfers; and the future of the 16,000 Soviet military personnel deployed in Egypt, manning missile batteries and flying Egyptian jets on combat missions, all these questions were completely ignored by Washington. This was a time of euphoria which, alas, did not last long.

Israel and the U.S. could not have been more divided on the issue of a cease-fire. The U.S. believed that a cease-fire was a vital American interest because it would stabilize the

region, reduce the tension between the U.S. and the USSR, and most important, it could perhaps, bring Nasser "back home", to the West. Israel, however, believed that a cease-fire as requested by Egypt would only save Nasser's neck, help restore his prestige, and strengthen the Soviet position in the region; all of which were against the American and the Israeli interests. Moreover, the American policy of withholding arms shipments to Israel was not reciprocated by the USSR, which instead, accelerated its arms shipments to Egypt. The USSR also intensified the involvement of Soviet military personnel in Egypt's war with Israel.

The fact that each rung in the escalating ladder of Soviet involvement followed so closely on the heels of successive American delays in announcing a new arms commitment to Israel gave grounds for concern.¹⁰⁸

These concerns materialized in April.

On April 29, the Israeli daily "Ha'aretz" published, in a special edition, that Soviet pilots participated in the defense of Egypt. The Israeli government, said Ha'aretz, viewed this activity as a dangerous development in the Middle East.¹⁰⁹

However, on the basis of historical experience Israel assumed that the Soviet Union would refrain from engaging Soviet pilots in air battles with Israeli pilots. Israel also assumed that the Soviets would refrain from engaging Soviet military personnel in operating the SAM missile. Both assumptions proved to be wishful thinking and not a realistic political analysis. After Israel had learned that its prediction that the Soviets would keep a "low profile" in Egypt was erroneous, Israel turned to the U.S. for more military aid and especially to receive the

suspended F-4 Phantoms and the A-4 Skyhawks. Although the U.S. labeled the reports of Soviet pilots "serious", "ominous," and "potentially dangerous", the State Department was not prepared to change its policy and make major arms sale commitments to Israel to counter Soviet involvement in the war of attrition.

The reasoning behind the continued delay was twofold. There was, on the one hand, satisfaction that it had apparently contributed to Israeli military restraint, and might yet elicit some long-awaited political concessions as well. On the other hand, there was still hope in Washington that, if American arms supplies could be kept within modest limits, the Soviets might be comparably restrained. Conversely, there was fear - encouraged by warnings from Nasser - that...A new American-Israeli arms deal...would only provoke the Soviets into violating the tolerable...limits on the...scope of their military activity in Egypt.¹¹⁰

Nixon's policy, however, did not bear any results. Israel continued its deep-penetration air raids and Egypt continued its war of attrition. Washington's first priority was to reach a cease-fire. As mentioned earlier, Israel opposed a cease-fire at that juncture because it would have established a status quo in which Egypt enjoyed the upper hand. After a few months of intense arms shipments to Egypt and a suspension of arms to Israel, the strategic balance was clearly tilted to Egypt's side. Israel rightly feared that such a condition would invite another major Arab attack on Israel.

(Nixon), realizing that we could not approach Israel with the cease-fire proposal while rejecting its military requests...approved my suggestion to replace Israeli aircraft losses with up to eight Phantoms and twenty Skyhawks in 1970.¹¹¹

Ambassador Rabin had a different account of the proposal.

In his memoirs, Rabin talks about a March 18 meeting between President Nixon, National Security Adviser Kissinger, and Ambassador Rabin, in which Nixon suggested a formula which later became an official American policy.

(Nixon:) We will replace any of your planes put out of action...That is a long and intricate process I (Rabin), objected...Your people will start bargaining with us. I know the technique...Kissinger now broke in with a proposal..."Why don't we reach prior agreement on the numbers going out of action?"...(Nixon:) No, not fixed numbers...But it's possible that you'll receive more planes by this method than you did before...I (Rabin) reported to Israel that I did not believe we had any chance of getting additional planes even if we...agreed to a cease-fire. "if we want planes, we will have to conform to the new rules of the game." 112

Hence, by April 1970, both the U.S. and Israel had to review and adjust their policies to the new realities. Rabin advised the Israeli government to stop the deep-penetration air raids which, after the deployment of the SAM-3 missiles, resulted in heavy losses to Israel's air force. Moreover, Israel did not want to take the risk of engaging Soviet pilots and missile crews in air combats with Israeli forces. Israel realized that the deep penetration air raids did not promote Israel's political or strategic goals. Nasser's regime was not undermined, the Soviet Union's position was as strong and getting stronger, and the U.S. was "punishing" Israel by withholding arms shipments. Clearly, the policy had to be revised.

In Washington, the picture did not look better. America's "evenhanded" policy did not enhance American standing in the

Arab world. To the contrary, the Soviets were improving their power position, gaining influence in more countries in the Middle East and Africa than ever before. In addition to Egypt and Syria, Libya, Iraq, and South Yemen were under Soviet influence. The PLO, another radical organization, was gaining power in Jordan, threatening Hussein's regime. Israel, the only strong and reliable American ally in the region was weaker and its military superiority eroding as a result of U.S.'s "evenhanded" policy. It seemed as if the U.S. was deliberately weakening its allies and strengthening its enemies. The common sense was just not there.

At last the U.S. government bestirred itself. The White House announced an "immediate and full" review of the situation. Nixon authorized me to tell Rabin on April 30 (the same day he announced the Cambodian operation) that we would provide more planes despite his earlier decision.¹¹³

This commitment was reiterated by Nixon when he met with

Foreign Minister Eban on May 21.

"You provide us with the weapons, we'll do the work," said Eban. "Then, said Nixon, "you will receive the weapons."...The shipments would not be made public and the quantities would not be made public, but Israel could expect 4 airplanes per month.¹¹⁴

Simultaneously, Israel stopped the deep-penetration air raids, and the door to a cease-fire opened. The State Department started to work on a cease-fire proposal, which was ready in mid-June.

In mid-June, after some positive signals from both Egypt and Israel...a formal diplomatic initiative was presented directly to the parties. The situation was judged to be sufficiently serious and at the same time sufficiently promising to warrant this dramatic American departure from the Big-Four format.¹¹⁵

On June 19, 1970, Rogers publically announced his new initiative, proposing that Egypt, Jordan, and Israel would "stop shooting and start talking," for at least ninety days.¹¹⁶ Rogers also suggested that the parties "inform Jarring through identically worded letters of their readiness to do so."¹¹⁷ Rogers wished to achieve not only a cease-fire but a resumption of the Jarring talks. The U.S. hoped that "reducing Egyptian-Israeli conflict would weaken Soviet influence and strengthen the American position in Egypt and other Arab states."¹¹⁸

Although Washington did not inform or consult with Israel about this new initiative, the U.S. was waiting for Israel to accept the formula of "software for hardware," a ceasefire in exchange for the Phantoms. This was a far cry from the American demand a year earlier for an Israeli acceptance of the Rogers plan in exchange for "hardware." The change in the American approach resulted from the global and regional dilemmas which were ignored or at best underestimated by Rogers when he initiated his comprehensive settlement. First, the State Department's assumption that the U.S. and the USSR had a shared interest in settling the Israeli-Arab conflict proved to be incorrect. As could be expected under the circumstances the Soviet Union exhibited rivalry and not cooperation. Second,

Nasser's aspirations to become the leading force of the Arab world, to lead the Arab states to a new era of radicalism, and to use the war with Israel as a means to achieve this goal, were completely misperceived by the State Department. The State Department believed that an American "evenhanded" policy, i.e., a policy of restrained support of Israel, would induce Nasser to "come back home", i.e., to join the Western bloc again. Third, the State Department hoped that the "evenhanded" policy would contain the Soviet influence and enhance American standing in the Arab world. Once it became clear that the "evenhanded" policy did not yield these expected results, it had to be abandoned. The support of Israel once again proved to be the best measure of containment of both Arab radicalism and Soviet appetite for additional political and strategic gains.

Hence, when Israel accepted the cease-fire proposal on August 1970, it was not, as Rogers expected, a result of U.S. leverage, which as shown earlier, was very limited by the aforementioned dilemmas. Nixon's decision of January 1970, to suspend the transfer of arms to Israel had very limited effect on Israel's decisions to stop the deep-penetration air raids, and later to accept the cease-fire proposal. Israel gambled throughout 1969-1970 that the U.S. would ultimately have to lift the arms ban and abandon the "evenhanded" policy because of the regional and global dilemmas.

On May 26, Prime Minister Meir discussed in the Israeli Knesset, in great length, the regional and global dilemmas which

dominated the Middle Eastern political scene but which were ignored by Rogers. She blamed the escalation of the Israeli-Arab conflict on the Soviet Union, and chided the U.S. for withholding shipments of arms to Israel, an act which only exacerbated the situation. Mrs. Meir stressed the need for direct negotiations, and argued that a premature Israeli withdrawal would not advance the peace process. On the major issue, the controversial UN resolution 242 on which the Rogers plan was based, Mrs Meir announced that Israel had accepted the resolution and said so through its UN Ambassador on May 1, 1968.¹¹⁹ The last statement meant that Israel was ready to make territorial concessions in exchange for peace, which was promising. However, Mrs. Meir did not mention in her speech the American proposal for a cease-fire. This issue was still debatable in Israel.

The Rogers cease-fire proposal, made public on June 19, created a political upheaval in Israel. The proposal not only demanded that both sides cease fire; it also demanded that both sides pledge their commitment to UN resolution 242, and that they nominate representatives to a negotiating forum, who would negotiate indirectly, through Gunnar Jarring, the implementation procedures of that resolution. "When Golda Meir read the new Rogers' document, she almost hit the ceiling. She said that this initiative is worse than the original Rogers Plan."¹²⁰

Throughout most of July the Administration tried to induce Israel to accept the cease-fire proposal, stressing that acceptance of the proposal would result in substantial benefits to Israel, Nixon, as well as

Secretary of Defense Laird, stated unequivocally that in the negotiations of a peace agreement the U.S. would support Israel's claim to "defensible borders." Other benefits mentioned were: (a) increased military aid (b) American assurances to maintain Israel's strategic superiority (c) a promise that the Rogers plan would not necessarily be the basis for future peace negotiations, i.e., the Administration informed Israel that the Rogers plan was practically abandoned.¹²¹

Israel, however, was not yet convinced for reasons which seemed logical to Kissinger, who on June 16, sent a memorandum to Nixon:

The new proposal to "stop shooting and start talking" had to be judged against the backdrop of our compulsive peace initiatives of the previous year: they emboldened the Arabs, who stepped up their border pressures...(and) allowed a massive influx of Soviet personnel and influence. The new proposal seemed to me to involve the same dangers...The State approach would have us force the Israelis back to pre-war borders...They would be asked to give up their territorial buffers...Nasser would seriously doubt that we would...press Israel to withdraw on the basis of six aircraft and perhaps others later on...To the Soviets, the proposal would be a weak gesture in the face of their continued expansion of influence.¹²²

The most important issue to the U.S., stressed Kissinger, was missing from the second Rogers initiative. This was the issue of the Soviet combat presence in Egypt. For a while, the second Rogers initiative seemed to be following in the footsteps of his first peace initiative. Israel, Egypt, and the Soviet Union rejected it on the grounds that it was "too generous to the other side." Dobrynin professed to be outraged when he told Kissinger that the proposal was "a unilateral American attempt to take over Middle East diplomacy...the Soviet Union saw nothing new in it and it had all the failings of previous

efforts."¹²³

Kissinger was pessimistic and said that any agreement that would not include the pullout of the Soviet military personnel from the Middle East should not be approved by the U.S. Kissinger claimed that "we were experiencing for the first time...the Soviet technique of using military presence to enhance geopolitical influence."¹²⁴

The question was how to achieve an Israeli acceptance of the cease-fire which would be accepted by Nasser and the Soviet Union. Israel feared that Egypt would take advantage of the cease-fire in order to deploy SAM-2 and SAM-3 missiles along the Canal zone, a long time Egyptian desire which Israeli air strikes had so far managed to prevent. Hence, Israel demanded American assurances that the cease-fire agreement would include an Egyptian commitment not to change the strategic status quo during the ninety days of the cease-fire. In addition Israel asked for the delivery of the requested Phantoms and Skyhawks (under the replacement formula). Israel was especially interested in combat airplanes equipped with new electronic counter measures (ECM) that could meet the challenge of Egypt's new Soviet-manned air defense missile batteries.¹²⁵ In addition to the American "carrot" of stepped up weapon deliveries, Israel was faced with mounting casualties in the war of attrition and substantial losses of sophisticated combat airplanes shot down by the Soviet SAM missiles. The American "carrot" diplomacy, combined with Israel's domestic problems, made Israel almost

ready to accept the cease-fire.

The second question was how to induce Nasser to accept a cease-fire which included the above conditions. Not surprisingly, Nasser was induced to accept the cease-fire by the U.S. threat to provide Israel with the most sophisticated offensive and defensive weapons. The American proposal which, for Israel was the "carrot," was in the case of Egypt the "stick." There were also rumors about Israel's nuclear capability which might also have contributed to Nasser's nervousness. Last but not least, Nasser intended to exploit the cease-fire to enhance his strategic positions along the Canal, which he actually did later, gravely violating the cease-fire agreement that he himself had signed. Hence, preceding Israel, Nasser unexpectedly announced, on July 22, his acceptance of the American-sponsored cease-fire. Israel was not surprised by Nasser's move, Mrs. Meir had long argued that a cease-fire would be very useful to Nasser, who could use a quiet period to construct more missile sites closer to the Canal zone (which Nasser indeed did). However, Washington did not see shadows, only lights.

The Administration was elated. Rogers claimed credit for having thought up the initiative - a claim privately disputed by Sisco, who insisted that he had fathered the idea. Nixon was convinced that his tough statement on July 1 had done the trick. Humility not being my strong suit, I was not loath to ascribe some of the "success" to my...conversations with Dobrynin. Probably we were all somewhat right.¹²⁶

At this point, Nixon decided to demand Israeli compliance. On July 24, Ambassador Barbour hand delivered, to

Prime Minister Meir, a personal message from Nixon. In it were:

(C)ertain clarifications regarding arrangements for the cease-fire: its extension to cover a military standstill and paramilitary activities, and guarantees lest those provisions be violated... Nixon referred in a general way to American commitment to Israeli security and a Middle Eastern balance of power.¹²⁶

On July 25, 1970, in a meeting with her "kitchen cabinet" (an informal group of close advisers), Prime Minister Meir decided in principle to accept the American proposal. After a week of intensive but futile efforts to obtain a unanimous decision, the Israeli Cabinet approved the American proposal. This led the Gahal party, headed by Begin, to walk out of the coalition, and the government of National Unity had dissolved. The common theory would argue that the tactics of coercion, i.e., withholding of arms, combined with inducement, i.e., increased aid, were the main reasons behind Israel's decision. The fact was that the need for the jet-fighter planes, which were due to be supplied a year or more later, was not sufficient to coerce Israel to accept a proposal which Israel had perceived to be against its vital interests. Israel was aware of the global and regional dilemmas and gambled that the U.S. would have to supply Israel with the sophisticated weapons lest the USSR would achieve more gains in the Middle East. Moreover, Israel knew that sooner than later, the U.S. would abandon its "evenhanded" policy that weakened Israel and strengthened the Soviet-client states.

Hence, the withholding of arms which began in January 1970, was not a major factor in Israel's decision to accept the

cease-fire. Israel evaluated its vital interests, the high toll of the war of attrition, the fact that Nixon promised not to impose the Rogers plan on Israel and to support Israel's claim for "defensible borders," and the strong domestic pressures led by Cabinet member Yigal Allon, who called for the acceptance of the cease-fire. After considering all the facts Israel decided to accept the American sponsored cease-fire.

On July 30, in a press conference, Nixon announced that Israel would enter negotiations on a cease-fire and on the resumption of the Jarring mission. On August 6, Israel officially informed the U.S. of its acceptance of the cease-fire. The cease-fire went into effect on August 7. The Rogers peace initiative of December 9, 1969, was not mentioned anymore. It was officially considered dead.

OVERVIEW

When Nixon assumed office in January 1969 the situation in the Middle East included both problems and opportunities. The pressing problems which the new Administration had to cope with were increased Soviet political involvement, massive transfers of Soviet arms to Egypt and Syria, and a renewed armed struggle between Israel and Egypt. The administration feared that, if not prevented, an all out Israeli-Arab war was around the corner. Moreover, the explosive situation could deteriorate to a confrontation between the two superpowers, which were committed to protect the interests of their client-states. The new Administration decided that the best way to reduce the regional and global tensions was by settling the Israeli Arab conflict. The Six Day War seemed to provide Washington with the opportunity to settle the conflict because for the first time since its creation, Israel could trade off territories for peace without endangering its security. Secretary Rogers began preparing a peace plan which was designed to be comprehensive, effective, and attractive to all the actors involved in the conflict. Rogers even brought in the Big Four whose participation, he believed, was crucial to the success of his Plan.

Israel was the linchpin of Rogers' Plan. Stronger than ever, Israel was now viewed as the most important American ally in the region. The Six Day War changed Israel's status from a client-state that couldn't offer much in return for American

aid, to an important strategic asset.

Israel came to play a central role in the conception of American Middle East interests...Israel's role as a check on forces and potential developments detrimental to American Middle East interests reached a high point in the 1967 crisis...A military victory for Nasser would...have put him in a position to establish his hegemony in the Middle East and sweep it clean of any...American positions...to the benefit of the Soviet Union.¹²⁸

Israel's clear and swift victory relieved the U.S. and Israel of the threat that pro-Soviet, Arab radicalism would prevail in the Middle East. Moreover, it turned the tables on the Soviets and their clients. However, Israel's victory resulted in several unintended consequences which were detrimental to the interests of the U.S. and Israel. First, the Arab defeat helped the Soviets to penetrate deeper into the region through massive arms supply programs. Second, the weapon arsenals of Egypt and Syria were greatly improved by the massive supply of sophisticated weapons of higher quality in large quantities. But worst of all, the war raised the stakes in the superpowers' rivalry, and intensified the global tensions. The period between 1968 and 1970 was marked by frequent threats of war (especially Egyptian threats), limited warfare (guerrilla attacks on Israel), and a short Israeli-Egyptian war (the war of attrition). All this, coupled with the mounting global tensions, led the Nixon administration to try and reach a comprehensive settlement in the Israeli-Arab conflict. During Nixon's first term, the architect of American Middle East policy was Rogers, while during Nixon's second term Kissinger controlled the

political scene, serving as both Secretary of State and National Security Adviser.

Rogers, an inexperienced Secretary of State, developed the concept of a comprehensive settlement, believing that the time was ripe for an ambitious peace initiative. His theory was based on three premises: (a) Israel's victory had established Israel's strategic superiority, which in turn raised Israel's sense of security. Israel, secured and confident in its strategic superiority, would be willing to make territorial concessions needed for a settlement (b) The Arab states, having suffered a humiliating defeat for the third time in two decades (1948, 1956, 1967), would be willing to make peace because they would not wish to risk another humiliating defeat (c) The Soviet Union would support a Middle East settlement because, just like the U.S., the USSR had a vital interest in reducing global tensions and enhancing U.S.-USSR relations. Assuming that all the parties involved, for different reasons, had an interest in a comprehensive settlement, Rogers believed that his initiative had an excellent chance to succeed. Not so, said Kissinger, who doubted (a) the timing of the peace initiative (b) the procedures established by Rogers (b) the nature of the initiative and (c) the basic hypotheses which guided the Rogers Plan.

Concerning the timing, Kissinger argued that the U.S. should never have initiated, nor pressed for a settlement at that time. Kissinger's argument was based on the following

premises: (a) Since the Arab states were anxious to regain control of their lost lands, the U.S. and Israel should have waited for the Arab states to initiate a settlement based on the concessions they were ready to make in order to get their lands back. Neither Israel nor the U.S. should have courted the USSR and the Arab states, bombarding them with peace plans and offering them an Israeli withdrawal. Kissinger's correct assumption was that, although the Arab states were anxious to get their lands back, they were not ready to exchange peace for territories. The Arab leaders believed that the lands could be regained without yielding to Israel's demands. However, the Arab states could not achieve this goal without outside help. Being Soviet clients, Egypt and Syria turned to the Soviet Union for help, expecting the USSR to bring about an Israeli withdrawal. The Soviet Union, which did not enjoy leverage over Israel, had to manipulate the U.S. to coerce Israel to withdraw, or else the USSR would have had to admit to their clients that they had no influence in the region, an outcome they could not afford. Kissinger argued that Rogers was manipulated by the USSR, his peace initiative enhanced the USSR standing with the Arab states, and it served the USSR's goals. If the Rogers plan had never been initiated, the Arab states would have had to turn to the U.S. for help because the U.S. was the only actor that could "deliver Israel", thus enabling the Arab states to achieve their goal.

(M)y conviction (was) that the time was not ripe for an active negotiations...I thought delay was on the

whole in our interest because it enabled us to demonstrate even to radical Arabs that we were indispensable to ANY progress and that it could not be extorted from us by Soviet pressure...A continuing deadlock...would persuade Egypt to face the reality that Soviet tutelage and a radical foreign policy were obstacles to progress and that only the United States could bring about a settlement; it would demonstrate Soviet impotence and in time might impel a fundamental reconstruction of Arab, especially of Egyptian foreign policies.¹²⁹

Not only the timing was poor; the procedure was also ill-conceived. Nixon entered into office with a program linking the Middle East to other, global issues, namely, U.S.-USSR relations. Hence, Nixon believed that a Middle East settlement should be pursued in coordination with the Soviet Union. As it turned out, this policy backfired.

By the end of 1970...linkage between the global and regional contests was now perceived in the White House thus: American attempts to reach accommodations with the Soviets in the region, at the expense of Israel's territorial conquests and aircraft inventories, had emboldened the Soviets to step in...and (instigated) the Syrian invasion of Jordan in September...by signaling to the Soviets and Arabs alike that they could engage in such "adventurism" with impunity.¹³⁰

With regard to the issue of choosing between a comprehensive settlement or a non-ambitious, careful, step-by-step policy, Rogers obviously did not make the right choice. The subject created a major controversy between Kissinger and the State Department's bureaucracy. Secretary Rogers believed that, since all the issues were closely linked, only the resolution of all would settle the conflict. Not so, said Kissinger. The variety of conflicting interests combined with the number of actors involved, made it impossible to

achieve a comprehensive settlement. "I had serious doubts about rushing into negotiations whose objectives we had not defined and for whose outcome we would be held responsible...It seemed to me unlikely that we would find common ground between the parties."¹³¹

The State Department's assumption that the U.S. and the Soviet Union had a shared interest in settling the Israeli-Arab conflict was another misperception. The Soviet Union was manipulating the Israeli-Arab rivalry to enhance its power position and to increase its influence in the region. Soviet transfers of arms were the major instrument of USSR's foreign policy. The Soviets knew that military aid would become less crucial once the conflict was resolved, hence, this outcome was against Soviet interests. Rogers' futile efforts to reach a settlement through the Big Four and the Big Two talks were doomed to fail even before they had began.

Rogers was sure that his proposal contained appealing suggestions for everybody. In reality, this proved to be a misperception, since all the parties rejected the proposal claiming that it was too generous to their adversaries. Israel rejected the proposal because it advocated indirect negotiations and an almost complete Israeli withdrawal in exchange for a document short of a contractual peace treaty. The Arabs rejected the proposal because it insisted on an Arab recognition of the State of Israel, a written agreement in which they would commit themselves to the security of the State of Israel, and an

unsatisfactory solution to the problem of the refugees. The Soviet Union rejected the proposal because any Israeli-Arab agreement was against their interests (see the Soviet harsh objection to the Camp David Accords and the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.) The Palestinians rejected the proposal because it did not answer their demands. It seemed that the only one who liked the Rogers Plan was Secretary Rogers himself.

Last but not least was the question of American leverage over Israel. Rogers assumed leverage because of the patron-client relationship which existed between the U.S. and Israel. The premise was that Israel was so dependent on the U.S. that any reduction or even a threat to reduce aid would yield Israeli compliance. Believing that the most efficient tactic was the suspension of military aid, Rogers convinced Nixon to deny all Israeli new arms requests until Israel accepted his peace plan. Nixon made this decision public on January 31, 1970.

However, as discussed earlier, in adopting this tactic, which Washington titled "an evenhanded policy approach," Rogers and the State Department bureaucracy ignored the regional and global dilemmas which determined the success or failure of the Rogers Plan. The regional power structure which resulted from asymmetries in the economic, political and military power of the individual Arab states could not be changed by an "evenhanded" policy. Arab radicalism nurtured by extensive Soviet propaganda and aid could also not be changed by "delivering Israel." The fact of the matter was that exerting pressure on Israel only

made things worse because it raised Arab and Soviet expectations for more concessions.

On the global level, American hypothesis that linkage could be established between a Middle East settlement and the broader issue of U.S.-USSR relations proved to be no more than a wishful thinking.

The connection between arms transfers to Israel and the broader context of American foreign policy, as perceived at the highest level, had thus turned about almost completely in the short span of Nixon's first two years in office. Through 1969 and into the following year, restraining arms sales in order to influence Israeli policy was expected to support a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union. By the end of 1970, however, restrictions on arms transfers were perceived to be incompatible with that American foreign policy objective - in whose name, indeed, massive military aid to Israel was now justified.¹³²

In late 1970, the U.S. lifted the constraints on arms shipments to Israel because this policy did not induce the radical Arab states to change their attitudes toward the U.S. Second, the policy did not reduce the regional or the global tensions. Third, the policy did not yield Israeli or Arab concessions. Fourth, Soviet arms shipments to the region were not reduced. It was clear that Rogers' new approach of withholding military aid to Israel backfired. Moreover, the assumption that Israel was strong enough militarily to deter Arab attacks, yet sufficiently dependent on American arms supplies so that leverage could be effectively applied without endangering the security of Israel, was another wrong assumption. U.S. withholding of arms proved to have yielded no

Israeli concessions. Israel gambled correctly that the global dilemma created by Soviet adventurism, would bring the U.S. to end the "evenhanded" policy which strengthened the Soviet clients while weakening American clients. In 1970, the U.S. realized that the Soviet Union had no intention to reduce the level of its involvement in the Middle East. To the contrary, while the U.S. was pursuing a policy of restraint they stepped-up their arms shipments. With the high stakes involved, the U.S. could no longer afford to weaken Israel by denying Israel's arms requests. Hence, by the end of 1970, Rogers' policy of restraining the support of Israel had collapsed along with his peace initiative.

The analysis of American search for peace during 1969-1970 demonstrated that although Israel's swift victory of 1967 had changed the political map of the Middle East it did not necessarily make a comprehensive peace settlement possible. The regional and global dilemmas ultimately coerced the U.S. to abandon the ambitious Rogers plan and to initiate a more modest policy, based on "step-by-step" diplomacy. The "step-by-step" approach, advocated by Kissinger, later yielded important results (which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter).

The Rogers peace initiative failed mainly because it pursued unrealistic, ambitious expectations, based on misperceptions and wishful thinking. Rogers did not explore, talk, or investigate the feasibility of his plan according to the historical experience of the Middle East. Lacking experience in Middle East politics, Rogers learned the hard way, that the policy of "evenhandedness" neither induced reciprocity from the Soviet Union, nor created an American-Egyptian rapprochement. Rogers also learned that U.S. leverage over its client-state Israel was at best, very limited. By the end of 1970, Rogers' approach was not only abandoned, but was completely reversed. "A militarily strong Israel was...viewed by the President as an asset for U.S. policy objectives in the Middle East, especially after the successful American-Israeli cooperation during the Syrian invasion of Jordan."¹³³ Hence, Nixon had to admit that the complex political reality of the Middle East rendered a comprehensive settlement impossible.

NOTES

1. This change was best exemplified in the U.S. appeal to Israel to intervene in the Syrian-Jordanian conflict of September 1970.

2. Alfred L. Atherton, Jr. "Arabs, Israeli-and Americans: A Reconsideration," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 62, No. 5, (Summer 1984), p. 1194

3. Ibid., p. 1194

4. Fraser, T.G. The Middle East, 1914-1979 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), p. 114

5. Yitzhak Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 132

6. Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 346

7. Ibid., p. 343

8. See Ambassador Arthur Goldberg's statement on May 24, 1968, in Department of State Bulletin, (July 1968) No. 59, p. 27

9. Ambassador Goldberg's statement in the UN Security Council on July 9, 1967, quoted in David Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 20

10. Nadav Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 261

11. Rabin, p. 135

12. Resolution adopted at the Khartum Conference, September 1, 1967. Quoted in Fraser, pp. 115-116

13. Statement in the U.N. General Assembly and the UN Security Council, September 21 and November 15, 1969. Quoted in Pollock, p. 23

14. Report of the Secretary General; S/10070, January 4, 1971, pp. 18-19. Quoted by Ernest A. Gross, "The Arab-Israeli Dispute, A Study for Discussion," 1976, (Unpublished paper), p. 28

15. Ibid., p. 28

16. Ibid., p. 30

17. Secretary Dean Rusk's news conference, July 19, 1967, Department of State Current Documents on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1967 pp. 505-506

18. Rabin, p. 140

19. The U.S. consistently denied any attempt to pressure Israel through the suspension of arms deliveries. Rabin, however, argues that this was a well established tactic. See Rabin, pp. 141-142

20. Ibid., p. 141

21. A Chronology and Selected Background Documents Relating to the Middle East, December 27, 1968

22. Kissinger, p. 349

23. Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S.: Richard Nixon, 1969, p. 18. See also Bernard Reich, "United States Policy in the Middle East," Current History (January 1971) No. 60, p. 3

24. William Quandt, Decade of Decisions (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 81

25. Pollock, p. 57

26. Richard Nixon, "Asia After Vietnam," Foreign Affairs, (October 1967) No. 46, pp. 115-125. Quoted by Quandt, p. 77

27. Kissinger, p. 348

28. Quandt, p. 82

29. Ibid., p. 87

30. See discussion by Gross, p. 37

31. Malcolm H. Kerr, "The Arabs and Israelis: Perceptual Dimensions of their Dilemma," in William A. Beling, (ed.) The Middle East, Quest for an American Policy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973), p. 5

32. Quandt, p. 74

33. Kissinger, p. 348

34. Ibid., p. 349

35. Sources include IISS Survey, edition 1967; IISS The

Military Balance, edition 1968-1969, pp. 45-46; SIPRI Year Book, edition 1968-1969, p. 63

36. Charles Yost, "Israel and the Arabs," The Atlantic Monthly (January 1969), quoted in Pollock, p. 31

37. The New York Times, December 12, 1968

38. Saadia Touval, The Peace Brokers (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1982), p. 167

39. Kissinger, p. 351

40. Ibid., pp. 352-355

41. Rabin, p. 145

42. Kissinger, p. 354

43. Rabin, p. 143

44. Ibid., p. 143

45. Safran, p. 264

46. Rabin, p. 146

47. Ibid., p. 147

48. Kissinger, p. 356

49. See Quandt's discussion, pp. 92-94

50. Kissinger, p. 356

51. Ibid., p. 357

52. Quandt, p. 84

53. Rabin, p. 156

54. Ibid., p. 148

55. Kissinger, p. 363

56. Ibid., p. 364

57. Articles in Al-Ahram and Al-Akhbar as reported in The New York Times, April 11, and April 17, 1969

58. Gromyko's visit to Cairo was discussed in The New York Times, June 12, 14, 18, and 21, of 1969

59. See discussion by Quandt, pp. 86-88; also Rabin, pp. 145-150; and Kissinger, pp. 363-369

60. Kissinger, pp. 365-366

61. Ibid., 370

62. Dan Margalit, A Communication from the White House (Tel Aviv: Otpaz Press, 1971, in Hebrew, Translation N.N.), p. 20

63. Kissinger, p. 371

64. Rabin, 155

65. Kissinger, p. 371

66. Secretary Rogers' news conference, December 23, 1969, Department of State Bulletin, (January 9, 1970), No. 62, pp. 21-25

67. Ibid., p. 23

68. Kissinger, p. 373

69. Ibid., p. 374

70. Pollock, p. 65

71. Excerpts from Department of State Bulletin (January 4, 1970)

72. Kissinger, p. 375

73. Ibid., p. 375

74. Pollock, p. 68

75. Kissinger, p. 377

76. Ibid., p. 375

77. Rabin, p. 159

78. Kissinger, p. 345

79. Rabin, p. 159

80. Kissinger, p. 345

81. Excerpts from Quandt, p. 91

82. Margalit, p. 30
83. See reports in The New York Times, January 13, 1970
84. Kissinger, p. 376
85. Ibid., p. 376
86. Ibid., p. 376
87. Rabin, p. 151
88. Ibid., pp. 151-152
89. Ouandt, p. 92
90. Margalit, pp. 41-43 (from Hebrew, N.N.)
91. Kissinger, p. 558
92. Ibid., p. 560
93. Ibid., p. 561
94. Nixon's news conference, March 4, 1969, Department of State Bulletin, (March 1969), p. 240
95. Kissinger, p. 377
96. Pollock, p. 67
97. Margalit, p. 69
98. Pollock, p. 68
99. Kissinger, p. 569
100. Secretary Rogers' news conference, March 23, 1970, Department of State Bulletin, No. 62 (April 1970), pp. 477-480
101. Ibid., pp. 477-480
102. Kissinger, pp. 564-566
103. Rabin, p. 167
104. Nasser talked about his secret visit to Moscow in his speech to Egypt's National Assembly, on July 24, 1979, quoted by Pollock, p. 69
105. Kissinger, p. 567

106. Ibid., p. 568
107. Part from the text was published in Arab Report and Record, May 1-15, 1970, p. 276. Quoted by Quandt, p. 98
108. Pollock, p. 70
109. Margalit, p. 106
110. Nasser's statement on June 25, 1970, as reported in The New York Times, June 26, 1970. See also Pollock, p. 72
111. Kissinger, p. 568
112. Rabin, p. 173
113. Kissinger, p. 572
114. Margalit, p. 115
115. See Department of State Bulletin, No. 63 (August 1970) pp. 178-179
116. Secretary Rogers' news conference, June 25, 1970, published in The New York Times, June 27, 1970
117. Tuval, p. 166
118. Ibid., p. 166
119. Margalit, pp. 116-118
120. Ibid., p. 128
121. The New York Times, July 2, 10, 24-28
122. Kissinger, p. 578
123. Ibid., p. 579
124. Ibid., p. 581
125. Information disclosed by Israeli Air Force officials in private interviews during my visits in Israel in 1981, 1982, 1985
126. Kissinger, p. 582
127. Pollock, p. 76
128. Safran, "American -Israeli Relations: An Overview,"

Middle East Review (Winter 1977-1978), pp. 30-34

129. Kissinger, pp. 354-368

130. Pollock, p. 88

131. Kissinger, pp. 350-351

132. Pollock, p. 86

133. Thomas Wheelock, "Arms for Israel: The Limits of Leverage," p. 125

CHAPTER II

The Disengagement Agreements: A Framework for Peace

No discussion of the three Disengagement agreements of 1974-1975 can ignore the major events which led to these historical agreements and made them possible. Following the quiet but official burial of the Rogers Peace Plan, in 1971, two conflicting trends were shaping up in the Middle East. One was President Sadat's determination to end the status quo which gave Israel control of the Sinai and kept the Suez Canal closed for six years; the other was the Israeli and American willingness to maintain the status quo. Hence, during 1971-1973 the two main actors in the Israeli-Arab conflict, Israel and Egypt, were locked in opposing positions. The PLO had not yet gained political or military strength, while neither Jordan nor Syria were strong enough to challenge Israel on their own. Hence, Egypt became the key to any development in the region. Israel moved more and more toward defining its interests not in terms of peace but in terms of territorial security, an attitude which made military confrontation inevitable. UN resolution 242 which gained almost universal recognition was the symbol of the political deadlock. While speaking of "just and lasting peace within secured boundaries," it was vague enough to be interpreted by each party to suit its policies. Egypt became more and more impatient, but neither the U.S. nor Israel was perceptive enough to read the writing on the wall.

In view of the developments in the region the

Egyptian-Syrian attack of October 1973 should not have come as a surprise. However, Former Prime Minister Rabin recalls that even when his son Yuval, who was on a weekend leave from his Navy Training Center, received orders to return to his base immediately, he never suspected war.¹ On October 4, just two days before the Arab attack, Kissinger and former Israeli Foreign Minister Eban met in New York and Eban recalls that Kissinger was "jocular" and "relaxed." Kissinger believed that a prolonged stalemate in the Middle East was the best policy because "it would move the Arabs toward moderation and the Soviets to the fringes of the Middle East."² Sadat's anxiousness to break the stalemate which he manifested when he expelled in July 1972 thousands of Soviet military personnel, was not perceived by Israel or by the U.S. as an opportunity to start a peace dialogue between Israel, Egypt and the U.S. At that time, both Israel and the U.S. assumed that the best way to proceed was to exercise "extreme caution," i.e., to try and do as little as possible. Washington believed that because (a) too many regional conflicting interests were involved and (b) a direct U.S. involvement would result in a direct USSR involvement; thus, the "wait and see attitude" was perceived to be the best strategy. The failure of the Rogers Plan reinforced this attitude (it happened again in 1984 after the failure of the Reagan Plan). New American peace initiative was viewed as unnecessary and futile. Abba Eban recalled:

We had spoken of the need to replace the diplomatic vacuum by 'some form of negotiations.'...(B)ut there

was no panic or urgency in his (Henry Kissinger's), mood.³

On July 6, 1972, in a very dramatic way, Sadat ordered all Soviet personnel and all Soviet owned equipment to be pulled out of Egypt within a week.

(N)o war could be fought while Soviet experts worked in Egypt. The Soviet Union, the West, and Israel misinterpreted my decision to expel the military experts and reached an erroneous conclusion which in fact served my strategy.⁴

This was a very clear sign to the U.S. to assume a meaningful role in Middle East politics. However, Washington failed to understand Sadat's extraordinary move. Sadat expected Nixon to give the Middle East a higher priority. However, part of the problem was Kissinger's perception that resolution 242 created a deadlock which could not be resolved. He believed that the key demands of both parties were phrased in totally incompatible terms. Kissinger, now assuming a greater role in Middle East politics, defined the situation as being a conflict between the Israeli demand for security and recognition, and the Arabs demands for territories and a resolution of the Palestinian problem. Kissinger believed that if all would wait patiently the Arabs would moderate their position and would recognize Israel, while the Israelis then would moderate their position and agree to make territorial concessions. During February of 1973 Kissinger and Nixon met with all major Middle East leaders. King Hussein arrived in Washington on February 6, 1973, proposing to establish a United Arab Kingdom of both East and West Banks of the Jordan, subject to approval in a

referendum among the Palestinians.⁵

The next visitor was Sadat's national security adviser, Hafiz Ismail, who visited Washington on February 23, 1973. Ismail proposed an exchange of an Israeli withdrawal for security arrangements and a possible Egyptian recognition which might eventually come at a later, unspecified date in the far future. Three days later, on February 28, Golda Meir, the Israeli Premier, arrived in Washington. Her main objective was to receive a new arms package for Israel, while a new American peace initiative was looked upon with great suspicion. Hence, Egypt's goal, to establish a negotiating framework between the U.S., Israel and Egypt never really took off. Meanwhile, the clouds of the Watergate affair began to accumulate. On April 30, 1973, Nixon accepted the resignation of Haldeman and Ehrlichman. Kissinger's role in U.S.'s foreign policy was growing rapidly, and the official approach now was "step-by-step" but with no rush or urgency. Another reason why Kissinger wished to maintain a "low profile" on the Middle Eastern front was his desire to promote the detente with the USSR. Kissinger visited Moscow in May 1973, and informed Brezhnev on his talks with the Middle Eastern leaders. In June, Brezhnev arrived for his first visit to the U.S. and the talks focused on the Middle East.

Brezhnev warned that the Egyptian and Syrians were intent upon going to war and that the Soviet Union could not stop them. Only a new American initiative and, in particular, pressure on Israel to withdraw, could prevent war.⁶

But a negotiation agenda did not develop. The Arab states

could not reconcile their ideological rejection of the state of Israel and their pragmatic need to come to terms with Israel in order to regain the land they have lost in 1967. Israel, on the other hand was caught in a similar dilemma. On the one hand, Israel did not see any logic in giving up territories and changing its borders from one unacceptable line to another. On the other hand, Israel was aware of the fact that it would have to make territorial concessions in order to gain secured borders. The issue of the Palestinians was also deadlocked. The Arabs, radicals and non-radicals alike, demanded the West Bank be returned to a Palestinian political entity. Israel's perception of its security needs included a complete or partial control of the West Bank. Syria refused to negotiate with Israel under any conditions, because Syria objected to Israel's very existence.

(W)hen I flew from Tel-Aviv to visit Damascus for the first time, the controlled Syrian press reported that the American Secretary of State had arrived from "occupied territory" ⁷

The PLO in all its factions added to the irreconcilable atmosphere by a series of dramatic terrorist attacks, one in May 1972, the bloody attack on civilians at the Lod airport, and the second, the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in September 1972.

Hence, between 1971 and 1973 all the involved actors were caught in their respective dilemmas. The Arab states were pushed into a more extreme anti-Israeli position as a result of the frustrating status quo. However, they knew that the only way to

regain their territories was by negotiating with Israel. Israel's dilemma was that although it had enjoyed the utmost secure borders, this was, at best, a short-term advantage. Long-term security ultimately required giving up the territorial advantage for a permanent peace. The U.S. was caught in its traditional dilemma of the need to support the irreconcilable demands of both sides. The USSR was caught in its dilemma of supporting and promoting the Arab cause but not being able to help them to achieve their goal. The USSR was aware of the frustrating fact that Washington was holding the key to any settlement.

It is therefore not surprising that war was imminent. In October 1972, Sadat decided to launch an all out attack on the status quo, and the 1973 war was, more than anything else, an attack on the status quo.⁸ In January 1973, the war plans were completed.

He (Sadat) declared that the time has come for a shock, and that war was now inevitable.⁹

How the clear "writing on the wall" escaped Washington and Jerusalem is a matter for another study.

The 1973 War: a Prelude to a Settlement

The concerted Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel was launched on Saturday, October 6th, Yom Kippur, the Jewish holiest day. The war caught Kissinger and Eban, the two Secretaries of State, in New York, where they were attending the UN annual General Assembly meeting. At 6:15 A.M., only ninety minutes before the war broke out, Kissinger was awakened by Joseph Sisco, his energetic assistant, who delivered him a message from Golda Meir informing Kissinger that the war would begin within a few hours. From that moment on and until he completed his term as Secretary of State, Kissinger was engaged almost exclusively in Middle East politics.

The war resulted in two surprising consequences: (a) Israel realized that its strategic superiority and its most preferred borders (the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights) did not provide security against a surprise attack¹⁰ (b) Egypt and Syria realized that even under the best conditions defeating Israel was impossible. These facts brought Israel, Egypt and Syria to think that disengagement agreements would benefit all actors involved.

For several years the expectation had been that if war broke out at all, it would be swiftly ended by the superiority of Israeli arms. The idea that Israel would not be able to deal the Arabs a fatal blow with its existing weaponry had not entered anybody's head.¹¹

Sadat did not share these beliefs that were common not only in Jerusalem, but in Washington and Moscow as well. After Hafis Ismail's meeting with Kissinger failed to produce any

results, Sadat decided to go to war. He knew that defeating Israel was an impossible mission. However, a military victory was not Sadat's goal. Sadat fought a political war, and his military objectives were very limited.

In drawing up the general strategic plan for the battle, I took many things into account...if we could recapture even 4 inches of Sinai territory (by which I meant a foothold), and establish ourselves there so firmly that no power on earth could dislodge us, then the whole situation would change - east, west, all over. First to go would be the humiliation we had endured since 1967.¹²

Hence, the 1973 war was an attack on the status quo. Israel and the U.S. shared the misperception that an all-out Arab attack on Israel was a military suicide, therefore very unlikely. Much to its surprise, Israel was attacked and suffered major setbacks. Israel needed urgent American military aid in order to regain its military superiority and ultimately to win the war.

Kissinger began to plan the cease-fire agreement while Israel was fighting desperately to stop the advancing Egyptian army. He planned a step-by-step policy, starting with a cease-fire and moving toward a long-term settlement. This had led many people in Israel to believe that Kissinger was actually responsible for Israel's strategic difficulties. After all it was at Washington's request that Israel did not launch an air strike two hours before the invasion, as was proposed by Israel's Chief of Staff, General "Dado" Elazar.¹³ Many Israelis believe that a preemptive air strike would have terminated the surprise effect and could have stopped the Egyptian invasion and

would have changed dramatically the course of events.

In fact, the American position was so well known that the Israelis did not even consider a preemptive strike...last minute messages from Kissinger to the Israeli charge' d'affaires in Washington, to Eban in New York, and (through American Ambassador Keating) to Meir in Jerusalem warned against preemption.¹⁴

On the morning of June 6th Prime Minister Meir rejected General Elazar's request for a preemptive air strike. Moreover, according to the Israeli Commission of Inquiry, Minister of Defense Dayan even opposed a large-scale mobilization because he thought that it could be interpreted as an act of provocation which might instigate a hostile Arab reaction. On this issue Meir decided against Dayan's opinion. Meir ordered a partial mobilization just a few hours before the attack. It proved, however, to be too little too late. Moreover, during the fierce battles of the first week Israel's pleas for replacement of lost weapons were deliberately delayed. Kissinger blamed the Pentagon, but Israel blamed Kissinger. The U.S. delayed the weapon airlift because of the regional and global dilemmas which were exacerbated by the situation.

On the global level, America's vital interest was to contain the growing Soviet influence in the Middle East, without undermining the process of detente. Washington realized that Soviet influence gained momentum by the massive transfer of arms to Egypt and Syria during and after the 1973 war. However, Washington wanted to continue the spirit of detente which required the U.S. to pursue its Middle East policy with great caution and diplomatic wisdom. On the other hand, Washington's

first priority was to protect its economic and strategic interests in the Middle East with assertion and determination, while hoping that the damage to detente would be minimal.

A more concrete and immediate problem ensued from the first. Nixon's decision to become intensely involved in Middle East politics and support Israel politically, economically and strategically, clashed with the Soviet policy of massive support of the Arab states. The fact that both superpowers directly and vigorously supported their respective clients led to an inevitable conflict between them. It culminated when, on October 25, 1973, the USSR threatened with a unilateral military intervention to save the Egyptian Third Army, and the U.S., for the first and only time in history, reacted with a nuclear alert. However, throughout the crisis, even after the nuclear alert, the U.S. tried to avoid a confrontation with the USSR. The U.S. tried to cope with the dilemma by adopting the tactic of formal cooperation with the Soviet (i.e., the Geneva process), while excluding them from all meaningful peace negotiations.

On the regional level, the U.S. also faced several dilemmas. In 1972, Sadat, in a daring move to break away from the Soviet bloc, expelled about 15 thousand Soviet advisers and military personnel. The U.S. missed this important opportunity to regain the influence it had lost in 1956 after the Suez Campaign, although cooperation with Egypt was of extreme importance to the U.S. A pro-Western Egypt could buttress and

strengthen the moderate Arab states and would enhance U.S. influence in the region. Only after the first oil embargo of 1973 did the U.S. realize the vital importance of American-Arab cooperation. On the other hand, the support of Israel, especially the massive rearming of Israel during and after the 1973 war, made U.S.-Arab cooperation very difficult. Sadat's willingness to cooperate with the U.S. and to seek U.S. mediation before and after the war, was very helpful in this difficult situation.¹⁵ Sadat's attitude of 1971, did not change after the war. In his address of October 16, 1973, Sadat reiterated his request that the U.S. would assume the role of a "peace broker."¹⁶

Another regional dilemma was how to balance the need to help Israel win the war with the need to avoid a humiliating Arab defeat. Kissinger believed that a prerequisite to negotiation process was to have "both sides win." Only a military victory over Israel would restore the Arab countries national pride.

First to go would be the humiliation we had endured since the 1967 defeat; for to cross into Sinai and hold on to any territory recaptured would restore our self-confidence.¹⁷

For Israel a victory would mean a reassertion of its strategic superiority, which was questioned after the successful Egyptian invasion. Hence, the U.S. had to manipulate between a partial Egyptian victory and a decisive Israeli victory, so that both sides would be able to claim victory. The U.S. chose to manipulate the transfer of arms to Israel especially during the first days of the war in order to allow "both sides to win."

Arms Sales Politics During the 1973 War

In FY 1972 and 1973, U.S. FMS (Foreign Military Sales) to Israel totaled \$300 million annually, while between 1973 and 1974 FMS to Israel totaled about \$1.4 billion.¹⁸ Hence, the 1973 war was a turning point in U.S.-Israeli arms relationship. In September, during a visit to Washington, Prime Minister Meir realized that for the first time arms supplies were openly linked to political concessions: "Hardware for Software" became the new policy.¹⁹ Since the war Israel has been the recipient of more FMS assistance than any other country. "Assistance levels appear to be related to political events...which portrays the interplay of events and increases in Israel's levels of FMS assistance."²⁰

By manipulating arms deliveries the U.S. wished to bring the war and perhaps the Israeli-Arab conflict to a "happy ending", i.e., neither side would achieve a clear-cut military victory, thus creating what Kissinger termed as a "bargaining situation," to be brokered by the U.S. Israel, however, had a different view. Israel strove to achieve a clear-cut military victory, especially in face of the mounting domestic anger against the government, which had decided against a preemptive air strike at the request of the U.S. Thus, Israel needed (a) more time, to complete its siege of the Egyptian Third Army (b) more arms to accomplish its military goals.

The U.S. tried to deny Israel both by (a) demanding a cease-fire "in place" as early as October 12, and (b)

withholding arms crucial for Israel's victory. Israel pleaded for arms immediately after the fighting started. The U.S., guided by its policy to deny Israel a decisive victory, delayed arms deliveries.

American objectives were, at first, to maintain a low profile, and later to obtain a cease-fire short of decisive victory for either side. The first objective was served by secrecy, delay, and restraint in supplying arms to Israel; the second, by making those arms conditional upon Israel's agreement to cease fire, thereby preserving some Arab military gains.²¹

The "Kissinger conspiracy" theory was elaborated in great detail by M. Golan who argues that Kissinger manipulated the Israeli Ambassador S. Dinitz to believe and report to Jerusalem that the delays in arms deliveries were imposed upon Kissinger by the President and the Pentagon. This was inconsistent with Nixon's decision of Tuesday, October 9, that arms supplies to Israel would be accelerated. It was not until a group of Jewish leaders met with the President on October 13, and after Prime Minister Meir threatened to come to Washington in person, that Kissinger caved in and allowed the arms airlift to take off.

Prime Minister Meir was prepared to come to U.S. personally for an hour to plead with President Nixon for urgent arms aid. It could be a secret visit. I rejected the visit out of hand and without checking with Nixon.²²

A. Eban, Israel's former Foreign Minister, however, did not accept the "Kissinger conspiracy" theory.

An extensive literature had grown up on the responsibility for "delaying the American airlift...In my judgement and knowledge, there was no prolonged delay" in the airlift at all.²³

Kissinger's role in delaying the airlift is unclear. However, he used Israel's weakness to impose upon Israel a cease-fire "in place," as early as three days after the war started, and while Israel's forces were at their worst positions. In a meeting with Kissinger on October 9, Nixon instructed him to provide Israel with all weapons necessary to win the war: "The Israelis must not be allowed to lose."²⁴ However, Nixon was preoccupied with White House scandals, namely, the resignation of Vice President Agnew, and Kissinger was now in charge of U.S. policy in the Middle East. Despite Israel's desperate appeals, the airlift was delayed as late as October 13, while Soviet AN-22 military cargo airplanes were supplying the Arab countries with billions of dollars worth of weapons. Only after Kissinger himself feared an Israeli defeat, and following mounting pressures from Jerusalem, American leaders in Congress and the Jewish community, American arms began to flow to Israel in large quantities and without delay.

In just two weeks, over 20,000 tons of armor, ammunition, and other equipment were flown to Israel, half in American and half in Israeli planes. In addition, over forty "replacement" F-4 Phantoms and somewhat fewer A-4 Skyhawk fighters were flown directly to Israeli bases, often by American pilots.²⁵

To Israel's relief, Sadat rejected Kissinger's cease-fire proposal of October 13, which would have ended the war before the Israeli forces crossed the Canal, and at a time when Syria was still holding a few positions in the Golan Heights. By October 17, Israel's victory was almost secured. On October 15

the Israeli troops successfully crossed the Canal, the Egyptian Third Army was almost completely cut off, and in the north, Israeli forces advanced as far as 25 miles from Damascus. Israel needed only a few more days to consolidate its victory and complete its siege of the Third Army. This was not compatible with Kissinger's plan.

On October 17th, when it became evident that Israel's victory was imminent, both Sadat and the Soviets began pressuring the U.S. to bring Israel to accept a cease-fire "in place." The Soviets knew that unless a ceasefire was reached immediately, Egypt would suffer even a more humiliating defeat than in 1967. "All of a sudden the Soviets were ready to deal seriously."²⁶ After Kosygin concluded a secret visit to Cairo on October 16, Soviet anxieties increased. Moscow sent an urgent message to Washington asking Kissinger to come to Moscow to negotiate a cease-fire. Kissinger accepted the invitation because at that time he considered cooperation with the USSR necessary for a settlement. (Kissinger changed his mind later and excluded the Soviets completely from the negotiation process.) During his stay in Moscow Kissinger and Brezhnev agreed on a cease-fire proposal which both the U.S. and the USSR believed was to their best interest. Israel, however, was not yet ready for a cease-fire. Enraged and frustrated by the Egyptian-Syrian successful surprise attack, Israel wished to inflict upon Sadat a disastrous defeat which, Israel believed, he rightly deserved since he initiated the war. Kissinger,

however, because of global and regional considerations, wished the war to end with neither side gaining a decisive victory. A cease-fire along the October 22nd lines which would save the Egyptian Third Army became the preferred U.S. solution. But, the U.S. found it very difficult to impose a cease-fire on Israel, as the following discussion shows.

The situation became more complicated when on October 21st, Saudi Arabia announced a total embargo on oil shipments to the United States. Although in its pursuit of a settlement the U.S. did not mention directly the oil embargo, it was hovering over the negotiations and the negotiators.

The embargo was officially lifted on March 18, 1974, but only after it had precipitated profound changes on the world economy and energy situation, and only after it had set the United States on an alerted course as mediator between Israel and its enemies.²⁶

During the last days of the war the U.S. and Israel were experiencing a conflict of interests. Washington wanted the war to end short of a decisive Israeli victory, while Israel planned to gain a clear-cut victory. The question whether the U.S. had the leverage needed to impose upon Israel a cease-fire along the October 22nd lines is a key question to the understanding of U.S. political leverage.

The common theory argues that the threats to cut American arms supplies and credit to buy them were used successfully as leverage.²⁸ Israel asked for \$2.2 billion in military aid credits of which about half would pay for the urgent arms deliveries from mid-October through mid-November, while the

remaining amount to be used to help Israel pay off old arms debts and to finance some future arms deals. On October 19, five days before the cease-fire ended the 1973 war, Nixon asked Congress to provide Israel with \$2.2 billion in emergency security assistance to replace Israel's losses in the war. Evidently, Nixon at that time did not use withholding of aid or suspension of credit as leverage.

It is a fact that Israel reluctantly accepted the American-Soviet proposal for a cease-fire "in-place," thus securing the survival of the Egyptian Third Army. Israel's compliance with the American demand could imply that U.S. leverage over Israel was effective and that the tactics of withholding of weapons or credits to buy them did yield the desired political results. However, a closer and a thorough analysis of the events shows that the facts are quite different. When Kissinger arrived in Israel on October 22nd, he was determined to coerce Israel to accept the American-Soviet proposal. Hence, when he submitted the proposal to the Israeli government, it looked more like an "ultimatum" than a proposal. Israel, which had agreed to a cease-fire a week earlier when its strategic position did not look good, (a proposal that was rejected by Sadat), now refused to accept a cease-fire because it believed they could win a decisive victory. Washington was faced with a dilemma. U.S.-USSR cooperation to rescue the Egyptian third army would greatly enhanced Soviet prestige in the Arab world, while America's interest was to reduce Soviet

influence in the region. As Kissinger observed, "Moscow would receive credit with the Arabs for having forced us into a course we had heretofore avoided."²⁹ Israel, aware of the American dilemma, decided to stall the cease-fire negotiations until it completed the encircling of the Third Army. Its success in pursuing that goal showed that the global dilemmas severely limited U.S. leverage over Israel.

For various reasons, none of which resulted from American leverage, Israel decided to formally accept the cease-fire proposal while informally continue the fighting until the Third Army would be completely cut-off. The real reasons were: (a) Sadat had agreed to hold direct negotiations with Israel, a policy which all Arab states adamantly rejected for 25 years.³⁰ (b) Israel knew that an outright rejection of the cease-fire proposal would embarrass Washington vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, and Israel wished to avoid any unnecessary conflicts with Washington.³¹ (c) The proposal included a major Soviet-Arab concession, namely, an Arab agreement to accept an indefinite cease-fire which was a de-facto recognition of the right of Israel to exist in peace. These concessions were extremely important for Israel which, following the traumatic effects of the war, needed to feel that it had achieved not only militarily victories, but political ones as well. However, Israel was now faced with a dilemma. For domestic purposes, Israel could not cease-fire short of a decisive victory. For that Israel needed two more fighting days. Hence, as mentioned earlier, Israel

chose a very predictable course of action. Formally, it accepted the ceasefire, but informally it continued to advance until the Third Army was completely cut-off. After receiving Israel's agreement to a ceasefire along the October 22nd line, and unaware of Israel's tactics, Kissinger left for Washington exhausted but elated. He believed that his problems were over, only to learn later that "(T)he Middle East never fails to teach one the limits of human foresight." Explained Kissinger:

Just as the war seemed to be winding down under the aegis of the superpowers...the confrontation we had managed to avoid for seventeen days suddenly burst upon us.³²

When, on October 24, the Soviets and the Egyptian realized that Israel never actually ceased its fire, and that 20,000 Egyptian soldiers were captives of the Israeli army, the situation turned into a full-fledged crisis. Kissinger was sure that this would destroy any chance for a renewed American Egyptian relationship. "Gone would be all hopes for a new relationship with Egypt," he said.³³ Moreover, a confrontation with the Soviets seemed inevitable. Kissinger was very concerned with the future of U.S.-USSR cooperation, which he believed to be a prerequisite for a settlement. A decisive Israeli victory conflicted with Washington, Cairo, and Moscow interests. Sadat, desperate to stop Israel's advance, called upon the U.S. and the USSR to send in troops to save his Third Army. The U.S. feared that the USSR would seize this opportunity to despatch thousands of Soviet troops to the region, a development which Washington could not accept. The Soviets intensified the crisis by

announcing that they accepted Sadat's invitation and by stepping up their forces in the region. Seven airborne Soviet divisions stationed in East Europe were put on alert. The CIA reported that the number of Soviet ships in the Mediterranean had grown to more than 100, an all time high, and a flotilla of 12 Soviet ships including two amphibious vessels were heading for Alexandria.³⁴

Washington and Jerusalem were faced with the question: were the Soviets bluffing, or were they determined to engage their forces in the war? Washington decided to "call the bluff, if that was what it was, or face the reality if it was serious."³⁵ Washington responded by putting the 82nd Airborne Division on alert for possible movement, and moving the aircraft carrier FDR from Italy to join the carrier Independence in the eastern mediterranean. The carrier JFK and its accompanying task force was also ordered to move at full speed from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.³⁶ The height of the crisis came on October 25 when Nixon declared a nuclear alert and sent a strong message to Brezhnev saying "We could in no event accept unilateral action."³⁷ The Soviet reaction was swift, although indirect. In an urgent message from Sadat to Nixon, he substituted his request for a U.S-USSR force with an international force to be send to the war zone by the Security Council. Such a force would exclude troops from the five permanent members of the Security Council, i.e., no American or Soviet troops could be deployed. The U.S. prevailed in the

crisis but allowed the Soviet Union to save face. Security Council resolution 340, of October 25, decided "to set up immediately under its authority a U.N. Emergency Force to be composed of personnel drawn from states members of the U.N. except permanent members of the Security Council." UNEF II was established on October 27, and served as an important tool in all the Disengagement Agreements.³⁸ (According to an informal agreement, 36 Soviet and 36 U.S. observers from UNISO were attached to the UNEF II force).

The ceasefire line included all the territories conquered by Israel until October 25, in other words it incorporated the Israeli siege of the Egyptian Third Army.

Our analysis of the cease-fire agreement proves that the assumption that the U.S. coerced Israel to accept the U.S.-Soviet cease-fire proposal (along the October 22 line), is not congruent with the facts. Although heavily dependent on the U.S., Israel successfully resisted American pressures and pursued its policies regardless of threats to withhold future military and economic aid. The ineffectiveness of U.S. leverage was the result of global and regional dilemmas, which also limited U.S.'s leverage during the negotiation of the disengagement agreements.

A Framework for Peace: The 1974-75 Disengagement Agreements

On November 11, 1973, at the Kilometer 101, Israel and Egypt signed the first limited disengagement agreement. This Six

Point Agreement was concluded in direct negotiations (the first since 1949), between General Aharon Yariv and General Mohamed Abdel Ghany el-Gamasy, the military representatives of Israel and Egypt. The Six Point Agreement was followed by three important disengagement agreements: Sinai I, signed on January 18, 1974, at the Kilometer 101, by both countries' chiefs of staff; the Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement, signed in Geneva on May 31, 1974; and Sinai II, signed in Geneva on September 4, 1975. With the November 11th agreement Israeli-Egyptian relationships entered a new era. During the direct negotiations, which signified a de-facto recognition of Israel, the representatives not only negotiated issues relevant to the implementation of the cease-fire, they also exchanged ideas informally about broader and more far reaching disengagement agreements.

The text of the six-point agreement for disengagement appears in retrospect to be technical and even subsidiary, but it had great importance at the time. It reversed the cycle of conflict and set up a process of negotiations.³⁹

Even before the Six-Point Agreement was signed, both Egypt and Israel began to explore the possibility of reaching a substantial disengagement agreement. They preferred direct, bilateral negotiations with American mediation to the Geneva multilateral negotiating framework. The first indication of this attitude was Ismail Fahmy's visit to Washington on October 28. It was not a coincidence that Prime Minister Meir decided to visit Washington at exactly the same time.

The presence of both Fahmy and Meir in Washington provided an opportunity for intensive negotiations, with Kissinger talking separately with each side.⁴⁰

During his visit, Fahmi revealed the new Egyptian policy:

We have no interest in putting Israel into the sea or invading Israel, irrespective of the Palestinian situations.⁴¹

In other words, Fahmi said that Egypt was ready to reach a bilateral agreement with Israel, irrespective of the Palestinian situation. This was a major shift from the traditional Egyptian policy. It was now Israel's turn to reciprocate. Although Prime Minister Meir declared publicly that during her visit to Washington she would discuss only U.S.-Israeli relations, namely, arms supplies, when she arrived on the 31 of October, her talks with Nixon and Kissinger centered around the peace process. Nixon told Meir that Israel had to make territorial concessions or U.S. generous arms supplies would be discontinued.⁴² Nixon also told Meir that Sadat was ready to reach a settlement, and that Kissinger was charged with the responsibility to mediate a settlement. Prime Minister Meir's visit to Washington was a relatively long visit (she left on November 5), and it was interpreted in more than one way. According to some Israeli sources Kissinger exerted great pressure on Meir to accept the Six-Point Agreement.⁴³ Meir, old, sick, and exhausted, made the concessions under this heavy American pressure.

Other sources, however, argue that the U.S. exerted very little pressure on Meir. She herself said: "I assured them"

(reporters in a news conferece on October 31, in Washington) that there had been no pressure."⁴⁴ The major problem was Egypt's demand for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal, which was strongly rejected by Israel. However, because both Israel and Egypt believed that the agreement benefited them, the agreement was reached within a few days.⁴⁵ The negotiations were concluded in a relatively short time, and were conducted in a very friendly atmosphere. Sadat made two major concessions. He agreed to (a) continue the direct negotiations, and (b) to sign a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli agreement. Israel made territorial concessions and agreed to assure the survival of the Third Army. The U.S. became directly involved in the agreement by signing the first MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Israel promising to secure the free passage of Israeli ships in Bab el-Mandeb, and reassuring Israel that UN forces would not be withdrawn on a request of one side. Intense U.S. involvement in mediating the agreement was rewarding. On November 7, during a visit to Cairo, Kissinger and Sadat announced to surprised reporters that Egypt and the U.S. had decided to renew their dipomatic relations which were severed in 1967. Exchange of ambassadors was due in two weeks. Joseph Sisco and Harold Saunders were dispatched immediately to Israel to help step-up the negotiations.⁴⁶

It was clear that all three parties were moving fast toward a settlement. However, the next step was more complicated. After the conclusion of the November 11 agreement,

which was signed at the Kilometer 101, Kissinger wanted to convene the Geneva Peace Conference (which was part of the October 19 U.S.-Soviet agreement). Kissinger believed that Soviet-American cooperation would relax the tension created during the last week of October. Moreover, he believed that without a Soviet blessing Syria, Egypt's ally in the war, would not accept any American-Israeli proposal for disengagement. Kissinger learned later that he was wrong on all accounts.

The idea of an international peace conference appealed to the Soviets and to Kissinger, but to none of the Middle Eastern parties. Israel perceived the forum to be hostile and biased because of the oil embargo and Europe's dependence on Arab oil. The Soviet co-chairmanship did not appeal to Israel either; it saw in the Soviet Union a representative of its adversaries. Egypt did not favor the idea because Sadat feared that it would open the door for a new aggressive Soviet involvement in the Middle East. Syria rejected the proposal because it did not agree to conduct direct negotiations with Israel. Hussein had a personal problem with the representation of the Palestinian people. Following the events of September 1970, he wished to avoid any direct confrontation with the PLO. The PLO also did not like the idea of a Geneva conference because it was not recognized as a member with an equal status. Hence, apart from Moscow and Washington, no one considered the Geneva Peace Conference a good idea.

During his visit to Washington Israeli Defense Minister

Dayan presented Israel's formal position and his own private position, both indicating that an Israeli-Egyptian agreement was within reach with no need to go to Geneva.

Dayan met Kissinger on December 7, 1973, and presented to him the official Israeli government position on disengagement, based on return to the pre-1973 lines. However, the defense minister also added his own "personal" views, which he thought might eventually win acceptance on the part of the government. These envisaged an Israeli withdrawal to a line ten Kilometers west of the Mitla and Gidi passes - some thirty kilometers east of the canal - in return for Egyptian agreement to substantial demilitarization of the forward areas, obligation to reopen the Suez Canal and rebuild the Canal cities.⁴⁷

Dayan's visit to Washington established the basis for the Sinai I agreement reached a few weeks later. The Geneva Conference was neither necessary nor helpful. This was not, however, Kissinger's opinion at the time. He urged Israel not to propose too substantial, far-reaching concessions at Kilometer 101, because he wanted the final accord to be reached in Geneva.

On November 29, Israel caused the talks to be adjourned sine die, reportedly at Kissinger's behest...Kissinger wanted the disengagement talks transferred from Kilometer 101 to the Geneva Conference.⁴⁸

Quandt also supports this view:

Negotiations continued (at the Kilometer 101) with Israel offering (on November 26) deeper withdrawals in return for a substantial reduction of Egyptian armored strength...Kissinger had been charged with responsibility for aborting this promising experiment in direct Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. (Golan, pp. 120-121). Kissinger felt that the talks were proceeding too rapidly. He was beginning to think of the Syrian front, and feared that if Egypt and Israel reached a disengagement agreement before Geneva, Asad would insist on the same...Kissinger therefore advised

the Israeli to slow down at Kilometer 101 and to reserve⁴⁹ their position on disengagement until Geneva.

The U.S. was faced with a dilemma. It wanted a settlement but it feared that without the participation of Syria and the USSR no meaningful Israeli-Egyptian agreement could be reached. Kissinger wrongly assumed that the Soviets were essential for any negotiations with Syria. Hence, although the Geneva conference was doomed, it nonetheless opened with great fanfare on December 21, 1973, at the Palais des Nations under the chairmanship of Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the UN. While the parties in the Geneva conference were arguing over trivial, procedural matters, meaningful negotiations were taking place in Cairo and Jerusalem between Sadat, Kissinger, and Meir.

Kissinger's insistence on Geneva derived from two reasons: (a) he believed that the multinational forum would relax the U.S.-Soviet tension that was building up after the October 25th nuclear alert (b) the oil embargo developed into a troubling energy crisis which Kissinger hoped to resolve in Geneva.

The oil embargo was continuing, and equally important, OPEC⁵⁰ had decided to double oil prices on December 23.

The Geneva Conference opened on December 21, right after the general elections in Israel. The three Middle East participants were Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. Syria's place remained unoccupied. In addition to its refusal to participate in the peace conference Syria reinforced its troops in the Golan

Heights and put them on a high alert. Syria's message was clear - either an Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement was reached, regardless of Geneva, or Syria would resume the fighting.

A few days before (at the beginning of December, N.N.) Sadat had met with Syria's President Assad and the two had agreed to go to Geneva, but only after the conclusion of disengagement agreements.⁵¹

Kissinger missed the Syrian message: Assad wanted bilateral Israeli-Syrian negotiations, and he wished to keep the Soviets out of the political process. This was one of the main reasons why Assad refused to join the Geneva talks. Hence, Israel, Egypt, and Syria, were all, for different reasons, eager to reach disengagement agreements with American mediation. Only after Israel and Egypt almost concluded the Sinai I agreement through direct negotiations at the Kilometer 101, did Kissinger realize that Geneva was a meaningless political forum.

The question of whether in the negotiation of the Sinai I agreement American leverage was used to pressure Israel through withholding of arms to make territorial concessions, is highly debatable. The common theory is that the U.S. exerted heavy pressure on Israel throughout the negotiation process.⁵²

Throughout the October War, American arms leverage greatly influenced Israeli strategy... On the eve of the Sinai I shuttle, Defense Secretary Schlesinger privately intimated, according to Dayan, that the United States would provide Israel with some new arms, but that more would come only if diplomatic progress were achieved.⁵³

Quandt also argues that only after Nixon and Kissinger "began to exert heavy pressure on Israel," was Israel willing to go to Geneva and to consider serious concessions needed to

reach an agreement.⁵⁴ The facts, however, support the opposing view which argues that very little pressure, if at all, was needed to bring about the Sinai I agreement because the two parties were eager to reach a settlement. For Israel the October War was a traumatic experience. The prevailing strategic theory that the 1967 borders could not be crossed, and that the Sinai desert was a buffer zone that provided Israel with enough warning time to mobilize its reserves in case of an Egyptian attack, proved to be a myth. In effect Israel was more vulnerable strategically in 1973 than it was in 1967.

The perfection of surprise, the seizure of initiative, and the early success of a complex amphibious operation all proved--that there had been effective preparation by Egypt...The Israeli deterrent had simply not deterred, and the Israeli intelligence had not detected. The idea of driving Egypt to a polarized option between accepting the status quo or changing it by negotiation had proved baseless.⁵⁵

After the October War Israel was bewildered, confused, frustrated, angry, but most of all short of breath. It needed time to think things over; to analyze and understand what had happened, why, and how. The disengagement agreement provided Israel with exactly that. A "time out" to reflect on the past and prepare for the future. The disengagement agreement also promised Israel a period of peace, with secure borders, which Israel needed for replenishing its depleted weapon arsenal, and train its troops with the new and sophisticated weapon systems received from the U.S.

Egypt, too, had a strong interest in an agreement. Sadat knew that even under the most favorable circumstances, namely, a

successful surprise attack, Egypt could not defeat Israel or even coerce it to withdraw from the Sinai. When the war ended, Israeli troops were stationed only 65 miles from Cairo! Sadat realized that the only way to achieve an Israeli withdrawal was political, i.e., through negotiations. He was ready to conduct direct negotiations. Hence, American pressure was not necessary because the sides were moving toward an agreement much faster than the American mediators even imagined.

Both Egypt and Israel had a strong interest in disengagement. The cease-fire had caught their forces intertwined, and both sides were vulnerable to surprise attacks from the other...Israel increasingly felt the pressure, both economic and psychological, that the continued mobilization of the reserves imposed upon it...In addition, both Egypt and Israel hoped to derive from disengagement some political-strategic advantages...Sadat hoped that disengagement would set in motion a process that would produce further Israeli withdrawal.⁵⁶

The Israeli-Egyptian negotiations began with Dayan's visit to Washington, on January 4, 1974, during which he outlined a disengagement proposal that was presented to Sadat during Kissinger's visit to Cairo on January 12.

Without belittling Kissinger's contribution to the conclusion of this agreement it should be noted that it was Moshe Dayan who first formulated the disengagement concept in 1970-71, and that the agreement concluded in 1974 resembled in many respects the formula he had proposed then.⁵⁷

Although Kissinger wished to move the negotiations to Geneva and to conclude them there, Sadat asked Kissinger to stay in the region and to help reach a settlement right then and there. Indeed, the final agreement was reached in only four days!

Hence, the common theory that U.S. leverage was needed and used in the negotiation process of the Sinai I agreement is not consistent with the facts. Moreover, Kissinger's mediation was necessary but not sufficient to bring about the agreement which was signed on January 16, 1974.

The Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement

On May 31, 1974, only four months after the completion of the Sinai I agreement, Syria and Israel signed a disengagement agreement. The Golan Height agreement was the most impressive achievement in Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, who succeeded in bringing together Israel and its fiercest enemy, Syria. Kissinger's success of May 1974 was not repeated since, and it is difficult to predict when or even whether an Israeli-Syrian agreement will be reached in the near future. The Syrian-Israeli agreement came as a surprise to all because the common wisdom suggested that the next peace settlement would be between Israel and Jordan. Kissinger tried to use the momentum of the Sinai I agreement and to translate it into an Israeli-Jordanian agreement. Thus from Aswan he left for talks with King Hussein and only later he met with President Assad. The difficulty with reaching an agreement between Israel and either Jordan or Syria was that Israel had no strong incentives to make far reaching territorial concessions to either Jordan or Syria in exchange for a settlement short of a peace treaty. Jordan did not take part in the October War and therefore the status of the West

Bank did not change. Jordan had no role to offer Israel. Moreover, Arab League resolutions prohibited Jordan from negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians.

An agreement between Israel and Syria seemed even less likely. Until 1973 Syria had refused any talks of peace. Syria claimed that it was dedicated to Israel's destruction and therefore did not care where Israel's borders were located. However, the October War changed the situation. Unlike Jordan, Syria did participate in the October war, a result of which Israel enhanced its strategic positions and moved its forces even closer to Damascus. Syria, however, did have two bargaining chips which it was using: (a) Syria was holding Israeli prisoners of war, and (b) Syria threatened to renew the fightings if an agreement would not be reached, and it actually began to conduct a war of attrition along the Israeli-Syrian border, which could develop into a full-scale war.

Hence, unlikely as it seemed an Israeli-Syrian agreement was made possible because both sides realized that an agreement would best serve their respective interests. An Israeli-Jordanian agreement, on the other hand, was not reached, regardless of the King's "personal positive attitude", because no mutual interests that could instigate such a settlement existed on either side. American mediation was crucial to the Israeli-Syrian agreement which would not have been worked out without it. Moreover, Kissinger played an indispensable personal role as a mediator, a catalyst, a "go between", an imaginative

and resourceful diplomat, who did not "take no for an answer" from either side.

At this point the outstanding personality in the Middle East became not President Sadat, or President Assad, or King Feisal or even Mrs. Meir. It was the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, whose efforts on behalf of peace in the area can only be termed superhuman.⁵⁸

Meir continued:

On one of his trips he came back to Jerusalem (from Damascus), at about 1:30 a.m. and sent a message from his plane to say that he wanted us to meet that night, at 2:30 in the morning. He turned up as fresh as though he had spent the past month in a summer resort although everyone around him was wilting.⁵⁹

The common theory argues that the U.S. had to use its leverage and to pressure Israel to accept the disengagement agreement with Syria.⁶⁰ The facts, however, show that very little pressure if all, was exerted by the U.S. to bring Israel and Syria to the bargaining table. In fact, throughout the negotiations, i.e., during the first four months of 1974, the U.S. did not use any tactic of withholding of weapons to Israel, even when the negotiations reached dead ends and although the process entailed "some of the bluntest exchanges with the Israeli leadership ever to take place."⁶¹ Before any settlement was reached, President Nixon approved Israel's request for \$2.2 billion in emergency assistance to purchase replacement for military equipment lost in the war, and he waived repayment of as much as \$1.5 billion of it, without linking the military aid or the financial grant to any political concessions by Israel.⁶² Hence, Nixon's policy during his last

months in office show that he considered a political success in the Middle East absolutely vital to his political future. Believing in Kissinger's diplomatic skills, Nixon trusted him with a free hand to follow his own political beliefs and strategies, in order to make Syria and Israel stop the fighting and start talking.

Against the background of intensified fighting on the Syrian Israeli front, Syrian Brigadier General Hikmat Shihabi flew to Washington for talks with Kissinger on April 13.⁶³

Israel's Minister of Defense, Dayan, also visited Washington.⁶⁴ Kissinger realized that both nations were eager to reach an agreement; however, their positions were too far apart to even establish a negotiation framework. Assad initial offer demanded an Israeli withdrawal south of the 1967 ceasefire line. Assad also opposed the lifting of the oil embargo. Kissinger knew that Israel would never agree to make such far reaching concessions for anything short of a peace treaty. Israel at that point did not specify what territories it was ready to give back, but insisted on maintaining control over the city of Kuneitra (the "capital" of the Golan Heights), which Syria demanded be returned.

Asad's opening position now was that in the name of disengagement Israel give up all of its gains from the October war plus half of the Golan Heights taken in 1967. I mused about the fireworks that would come when Golda heard this proposition.⁶⁵

Syria's leverage was that it was holding about sixty Israeli prisoners of war. Assad knew that Israel's first demand in any negotiations was the safe return of their POW's. It was

not surprising that Meir announced: "There could be no negotiation until there was some sign that Israeli prisoners of war held in Syria would be returned." ⁶⁶ The negotiations between Israel and Syria were constraint in both countries. The leaderships, in Damascus and in Jerusalem, confronted strong domestic oppositions. The shaky coalition in Israel limited the power of the Prime Minister to make unpopular decisions.

The freedom of action of the Israeli government had also become much more limited than in the previous round of negotiations with Egypt. On April 11, just before Kissinger's shuttle began, Golda Meir resigned from the premiership under the pressure of criticism of her government's responsibility for Israel's unpreparedness at the time of the Egyptian and the Syrian attack on October 6. ⁶⁷

Conditions in Damascus were much similar. Israel's military victory made it vital for Assad to gain a quick, and decisive political victory. Of the two nations, a disengagement agreement was far more important for Assad than for Meir. Hence, Assad initiated the trilateral talks in January, while Israel, Egypt and the U.S. were still negotiating the Sinai I agreement. As was the case with the Sinai I agreement, the negotiations between Israel and Syria did not take place in Geneva, although substantive meetings began there on January 7, 1974, between the representatives of Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. (The talks were held in "continuing working groups.") But the real Israeli-Syrian drama was taking place in Jerusalem and Damascus, with Kissinger playing the role of a mediator. Washington recognized Israel's dilemma. Israel wished desperately to free its prisoners of war which Syria was holding. Syria refused not

only to let the Red Cross visit the POWs, but it refused to provide Israel, the U.S. or the Red Cross with a list of the prisoners names. In other words, Syria could torture or even kill the prisoners (which was a real fear in Israel), without taking any risks of being exposed. Another source of anxiety in Israel was the fightings along the Syrian border. Syria not only threatened to renew the fighting if a settlement on a partial Israeli withdrawal was not reached soon, and indeed in the course of the first two months of 1974, the negotiations were accompanied by heavy shelling and numerous Israeli casualties on the Syrian front.⁶⁸

During January and February Kissinger worked out an agreement that Syria would provide Washington (not Israel) with the list of names of the POWs, in exchange for a concrete Israeli proposal on disengagement. Once Kissinger found a solution to the problem of Israel's POWs, the Israeli-Syrian settlement was becoming a reality.

The rapid pace of the negotiations caught the Soviets by surprise. When Moscow realized that it had been excluded from the negotiations it made its displeasure known. During a meeting with Nixon, on February 4, Gromyko threatened to obstruct the negotiations and to use the USSR's capacity to line up other Arab states against the settlement.⁶⁹ Following his belief that the Soviets were a crucial party to any settlement, ("we did not want a blowup with the Soviet Union,")⁷⁰ Kissinger visited Moscow on March 24, and on March 26 he held a three and

one-half hour meeting with Brezhnev. The meeting did not resolve the Soviet-American dispute. Brezhnev claimed that Washington was reneging on its commitment to hold the peace talks in Geneva under joint U.S.-USSR auspices. Kissinger, on the other hand, accused Brezhnev of obstructing his efforts at disengagement on the Syrian-Israeli front. Brezhnev answered by accusing Kissinger of keeping the Soviets out of the negotiations, to which Kissinger answered that he was only following the parties request.

(Assad) argued that any Geneva meeting of Syrian and Israeli officers should take place after an agreement in principle had been reached. In other words, Asad clearly wanted me to handle the principle negotiations as I had done with Egypt...Nor did he want the Soviets to be part of it, as he made clear by telling me proudly and in great detail how he had prevented Gromyko from visiting Damascus while I was there...hardly glorious treatment for Syria's principle weapon supplier.⁷¹

Although Kissinger enjoyed unprecedented cooperation from Assad, several major questions remained unanswered. Could the U.S. coerce Israel to make the necessary concessions? Could Syria be brought to a more workable position? Could Sadat and other Arab leaders play a role? What about the Soviets, would they cooperate or try to obstruct the negotiations? What about Watergate and the political situation at home? Nixon's closest aides had just been indicted on March 1 for perjury, obstruction of justice and illegal payments to suppress evidence.

Kissinger was very much on his own, trying to identify both countries interests and using these interests as incentives for a settlement. Stopping terrorist activities was a

vital Israeli interest which could be achieved only through an agreement with Assad.⁷² On the other hand, the fierce battles along the Syrian border and the memory of the war created strong opposition in Israel to any settlement with Syria. The government knew that any withdrawal in the Golan Heights must be matched by substantial, meaningful Syrian concessions. Israel was not sure whether Assad was strong enough to commit Syria to such concessions. Israel demanded in addition to return of the POWs, a signed treaty committing Syria to non belligerence and containment of terrorist activities. Israel knew that Assad needed to turn his military defeat into a political victory, which Israel was willing to grant Assad in exchange for recognition. However, Assad was faced with a dilemma. Assad needed a disengagement agreement, which was for him a matter of national pride as well as personal esteem. Assad's government was a tyranny of the minority (Alawites) over the majority (Sunnis). Assad assumed power in 1970, in a country which suffered the most coups and upheavals not only in the Middle East, but in the world. He could not afford to have Israeli guns 25 miles from his capital Damascus. He needed an Israeli withdrawal, or else, his days as a ruler might be numbered. Assad also wished to reduce Syria's military expenditures and consequently decrease its dependence on the Soviet Union. Assad, a hard-headed, ruthless politician, knew that a settlement with Israel would also provide him with a chance to enhance his relations with the U.S, which were severed in 1967. The

prospects of being able to play "east against west" again, appealed to Assad. But most importantly, Assad was defeated in a war which he initiated and which he promised his people would crush Israel and bring the Golan Heights back to Syrian rule. The humiliating defeat could only be overcome by an Israeli withdrawal. Assad planned to use an Israeli withdrawal as a show of force which would reinforce his personal power. Although Syria was aligned with the Soviet Union, Assad knew that only the U.S. could help him save his neck. The U.S. was Israel's patron-state, and he assumed that American pressure on Israel would coerce it to give up at least part of the Golan Heights. Assad was specifically interested in resuming control over the city of Kuneitra, which was the Syrian capital of the Golan Heights before 1967. The city of Kuneitra, and the hills controlling it, became the center of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. In her memoirs, Prime Minister Meir told how Kissinger learned about Kuneitra.

He told me that two years ago he had never heard of a place called Kuneitra. But when he became involved in negotiating the disengagement of the Syrian and the Israeli forces on the Golan Heights, there wasn't a road, a house or even a tree there about which he did not know everything there was to know.⁷³

Although both Israel and Syria believed that a settlement would be in their best interest, each had in mind a different settlement. After the successful resolution of the prisoners of war issue the major difficulty that faced Kissinger was to bring Israel to make a reasonable offer that would lure Assad toward an agreement. On March 15 and 19, Kissinger met with Israeli

Foreign Minister Eban, trying to explain to him that the best settlement Israel could get was to give up the city of Kuneitra, to withdraw to the October 6 lines if not further, but to maintain all the settlements on the Golan Heights.

When I saw Kissinger in Washington in early March...he was convinced that unless Syria obtained the salient that we had taken in 1973 as well as a symbolic foothold beyond the old cease-fire line at Kuneitra, she would not be able to sign an accord. Militant Syria could not appear more flexible than Egypt, which had gained from the disengagement agreement more than her armies had won in the field.⁷⁴

The disengagement talks between Israel and Syria began formally on March 18, and on that day the oil embargo was suspended. This was a strong statement that the Arab states believed that a settlement is feasible. However, the maps which Defense Minister Dayan brought with him to Washington, on his visit on March 29, and the maps which the Syrian Brigadier General Hikmat Shihabi brought with him to Washington on his visit on April 13, were still too far apart.

Dayan brought...an Israeli proposal for a disengagement line that would run east of the October 6 line. Israeli forces would emphatically remain in Kuneitra...The plan's only value (in Kissinger's view, N.N.) was the concept of a buffer zone flanked by two limited-forces zones to the east and west.

Syria's answer to that was:

(A) revised map showing a disengagement line running west of Kuneitra.

Kissinger told Shihabi that he would try to persuade Israel to withdraw to the October 6 line and leave Kuneitra. He stressed the point that "that would be the most that Syria could hope for at this stage."⁷⁵

It was difficult to bring Israel to make concessions

because the feeling in Israel was that "we shall get absolutely nothing in return."⁷⁶ Kissinger, in his classical "step-by-step" diplomacy tried to convince the Israeli government that any settlement with Syria would be a major political achievement for Israel.

What Israel gets out of the Syrian negotiations is to have a radical Arab state sign a document with Israel. It is to remove the pressure on Egypt...And finally...the frantic Soviet effort to get itself involved will be thwarted.⁷⁷

Kissinger embarked on a mediation campaign unparalleled in diplomatic history. Meir defined his efforts as "superhuman." He learned every detail of the topography so that he be prepared for the negotiations. She said:

With the exception of the former generals who were now members of the Israeli Cabinet, I don't think we have a single minister who knows as much about Kuneitra as Kissinger.⁷⁸

Kissinger was a very good listener and he was prepared to spend days upon days persuading Assad and Meir that on such and such points they have to give way. Kissinger's determination to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion was supported ironically by Nixon's difficulties at home. Nixon believed that a foreign policy success would help him rebuild his image as a strong, decisive, powerful, president. Hence, when Kissinger was faced with difficulties he believed to be unsurmountable, Nixon was pressuring him to continue.

Occasional messages from the President served to prod Kissinger to continue even when he was close to despair, or when he thought that it was undignified for the American secretary of state to haggle over minor details as he was required to do.⁷⁹

The main issues were: (a) the extent of the Israeli withdrawal (b) demilitarization of the areas evacuated by Israel (c) Syria's commitment to control terrorist activities across the cease-fire line and, (d) the role of the UN observer force.

Fundamentally, the basic plan was similar to the plan or the model of the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement. The scheme was simple. A UN buffer zone of a few kilometers' width, on each side of which would be a force limitation zone ten kilometers wide (demilitarized zones); a twenty-kilometer belt free of artillery; and a thirty-to-forty-kilometer belt free of surface to air missiles. In total, seven different zones would be established, in an area at most twenty-five kilometers deep and extending to well beyond Damascus!⁸⁰

The stumbling block was, as predicted, the final line to which the Israeli forces would withdraw. Syria was prepared to make a strong commitment to deter terrorist attacks along its border with Israel, and the nature, size and function of the UN force did not present any difficulty either. The precedent set by the Sinai I agreement, in which Egypt regained some territory it lost in 1967, hardened Syria's attitude. Hence, during the first week of May, instead of progress Kissinger faced a deadlock.

For both Israel and Syria the negotiation was an anguishing experience. Israel felt that it was expected to withdraw unilaterally in order to enable Assad to proclaim a

victory "not a compelling goal for a victim of surprise attack."⁸¹ Syria, on the other hand, experienced its anguishes. For Syria to sign an agreement with Israel which draws a line on the Golan Heights was an acknowledgment that Israel had a right to be there! "Doubt, frustration, and at times impotent fury assailed both sides."⁸² And yet, both sides needed a settlement, hence, Kissinger began his famous shuttle, which he named "the flying State Department", on April 27. It ended a month later with the signing of the agreement, on May 31, 1974.

The breakthrough came on May 8, when Assad began to talk seriously about a line close to that proposed by Israel.⁸³ The major problem remained the city of Kuneitra and the hills surrounding it.

On May 16, Israel agreed to make major concessions which were important gains for Syria. Israel agreed to withdraw west of the 1967 line, although the withdrawal was only a short distance. The main Syrian gain, which had important symbolic value, was Israel's agreement to pull out of Kuneitra. However, Israel demanded to maintain its control over the three hills surrounding Kuneitra, which became known as the "Himalayas of General Gur." After Israel agreed to pull back to the base of the hills, Kissinger flew to Damascus, on May 18, to convince Assad to drop his demand on controlling the hills. Assad agreed under the condition that Israel would not place on these hills guns that were capable of shelling Kuneitra. On May 19 Kissinger obtained Israel's assent to Syria's demand. On May 20,

Kissinger could fly to Damascus with a map of the agreed line.

The two remaining questions concerned the nature of the force limitations, i.e., how the Golan Heights would be demilitarized, and the size and functions of the U.N. force. Syria wanted only a small U.N. force in the buffer zone, while Israel preferred at least two to three thousand UN troops.⁸⁴ Kissinger began to lose patience. On May 22 he drafted a departure statement and planned to leave the area the next day. Assad, afraid of losing the important Israeli concessions, announced on May 23 that he would accept a large UN force and a wider buffer zone of ten kilometers and a limited-force zone of fifteen kilometers. On May 24 Kissinger returned to Israel where he faced Israel's demands for a Syrian commitment to stop terrorist attacks from his side of the border. Israel had two final demands: a U.S. promise to support politically Israeli reaction against any guerrilla action against Israel originating from Syrian territory, and a commitment to place the supply of arms to Israel on a long-term instead of a year-to-year basis.⁸⁵

Although on May 27 Assad rescinded his consent to commit Syria to the deterrence of terrorists, the settlement was reached. Kissinger convinced Assad to give an oral commitment that he would not allow the Syrian border to harbor terrorists.

With that concession in hand, Kissinger flew to Israel, and on May 29 the announcement was made that Syria and Israel had reached agreement...Two days later Syrian and Israeli military representatives signed the necessary documents in Geneva.⁸⁶

Kissinger summed up his shuttle diplomacy saying:

Between May 20 and May 25 alone, I logged some twenty hours in conversations with the Israelis; some thirty hours in talks with the Syrians. There was no night when I retired before 3:00 A.M. And my associates worked even longer hours.⁸⁷

Arms and Leverage: The role of military aid

The Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement was signed after four months of intense and difficult negotiations, which required a full month of Kissinger's diplomatic shuttle. Israel was asked to make far reaching concessions in exchange for a settlement which was not much different from a cease-fire agreement. General Gur, expressing the view of many in Israel, argued that "withdrawal was a sacrifice of permanent security needs to temporary diplomatic convenience...General Sharon predicted catastrophic results for our security if we gave up Kuneitra."⁸⁸ In addition to differences of opinion concerning Israel's security needs the country was experiencing a major confidence crisis which resulted in Prime Minister Meir's resignation. General elections were held in Israel in March. Throughout all these weeks Israel was tormented by an Inquiry Commission which was probing the conduct of the October War.

The publication of the Agranat Commission's report in April was like a cloudburst, bringing the heavy, hot tension to the breaking point. It told a tragic story of deficiencies, neglect, false appraisals and inadequate reaction in the terrible days that followed the Egyptian and the Syrian attacks.⁸⁹

The time was not right for a far reaching Israeli concessions to an enemy that hardly offered anything substantial in return. The question of how much pressure, if at all, was

needed to coerce Israel to reach an agreement was never clearly resolved. The common view is that Israel was "indisposed toward concessions to its bitter Syrian opponent" and would have never signed the agreement had it not been pressured by the U.S.⁹⁰ The facts, however, show that although Israel fought for the best bargain it could get, it nonetheless was not coerced into signing the agreement. Moreover, transfer of arms played very little role in the American diplomatic campaign.

Some observers argues that out of the three parties to the agreement (Israel, Syria and the U.S.) Israel was the least interested in an agreement. "Kissinger and Nixon were as anxious for agreement as the Israelis were reserved."⁹¹ An Israeli-Syrian agreement served several vital American interests. Domestically, Nixon believed that a foreign policy achievement would gain him the public support he needed to offset the Watergate affair. The agreement would bring an end to the oil embargo, and would buttress the Israeli-Egyptian accord. Assad believed that only Israeli territorial concessions on the Golan Heights could make up for his humiliating military defeat. As for Israel, the common theory argues, there were no major gains, only more frustrating capitulations. Therefore, only a strong and assertive American pressure, which was exerted through Kissinger's diplomacy, brought about the Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement.⁹²

Nevertheless, this argument is not congruent with the facts. During the first three weeks of intense combat in

October, and in light of the tactical applications and the weapons gap revealed in battle, the U.S. airlifted to Israel large quantities of arms, some of them very sophisticated and of the most advanced technology. But Israel's inventories were not yet replenished, and it felt the need to ensure its future strategic superiority in case of another protracted war. For example, to counter the surprising success of Arab anti-tank and antiaircraft missiles, Israel's shopping list included large quantities of armored personnel carriers (for better and more protected infantry deployment), and mobile, long-range heavy artillery, for destroying missile sites. Before the war, Israel was not supplied with a new generation of hand-held or vehicle-mounted personnel anti-tank missiles- which the Arab had and used very successfully on the Egyptian front. These weapons were delivered to Israel on the last week of the war, which Israel felt was too little and too late. Israel included in its shopping list long-range standoff airborne weapons, less vulnerable to intensive ground fire. Israel also wanted to upgrade its relatively small navy, which proved to be effective in coastal operations during the war.⁹³

The most valuable additions in countering...Arab antiaircraft missile fire were Maverick television-guided bombs, advanced electro-optical target consoles, and assorted new ECM pods and decoy chaff missiles. For the infantry, there were 3000 new TOW antitank missiles. These matched the Soviet Sagger...heretofore missing from Israel's inventory, but in urgent demand.⁹⁴

Israel's dependence on the U.S. grew with each arms deal. By the end of the decade almost half of Israel's annual military

aid credit was used to pay off its existing military debt. The contradiction between Israel's dependence on U.S. aid and Israel's independence in pursuing its foreign policy goals becomes even more striking. Half way through the war, on October 19, 1973, Nixon presented to Congress an aid package to Israel of \$2.2 billion. Just about half would cover the October airlift, and the remaining billion dollars would be used to pay off Israel's old arms debt and possibly some future weapon purchases. The credit/grant offer and the terms of payment were not specified, a fact which in the long-run enhanced Israel's bargainign position and decreased U.S.'s leverage. "Since 1974, almost alf of Israel's military assistance has been in the form of grants...U.S. military assistance to Israel exceeds assistance to any other country and continues to rise."⁹⁵ Nixon's decision to provide Israel with weapons and the credit to buy them without linking it to political concessions resulted from American need to maintain the balance of power in the region. As long as the Soviet Union was providing its clients in the region with sophisticated arms, the U.S. had to ensure that Israel's strategic superiority would not erode. However, this resulted in (a) escalating costs for arms transfers and, (b) deteriorating relationships with the moderate Arab countries.

The U.S. had a compelling need to achieve if not peace, at least stability between the two arch-rivals, Israel and Syria. However, during the five months of tough negotiations, and while experiencing dramatic diplomatic and personal confrontations,

the U.S. could not and did not use transfer of arms as leverage to achieve Israeli concessions. Between January--when the Golan Disengagement Agreement talks began-- and May 31, Israel was receiving almost all the military hardware it had on its shopping list. More significant than the hardware was the credit to pay for it. Once Nixon waived repayment on \$1 billion--and he did it on the eve of Kissinger's Damascus shuttle--the U.S.'s leverage became completely ineffective. On March, 1974, during the toughest period of the negotiations, Defense Minister Dayan visited Washington and presented Nixon with a "shopping list" conditioning Israel's concessions on American weapons. Thus, Israel was calling the shots, telling Washington what could be exchanged for what. Later, during the shuttle itself, the Israelis tried to link their concessions with long-term American commitments on arms supplies.⁹⁶

The Sinai II Disengagement Agreement:

Was Reassessment Successful?

The Sinai II Disengagement Agreement which paved the way for the Camp David Accords, has long been perceived as the living example of successful American leverage used correctly and yielding the desired results. Events, as described by the supporters of this view, were as follows: The U.S., in its desire to consolidate and buttress the existing Disengagement Agreements between Israel, Egypt and Syria, pressured Israel to sign the Sinai II Agreement, committing Israel to far reaching territorial concessions while committing Egypt to nonbelligerence. President Ford, exercising his famous

"reassessment" tactics, showed assertiveness and decisiveness in defying strong Congressional opposition as expressed in a petition to the President signed by 76 Senators. In the debate over the effectiveness of American economic and military sanctions against Israel the Sinai II Agreement allegedly stands out as the living example of U.S. leverage. This view is based on the premise that both the Israeli and the Arab governments are relatively impotent and could "never by themselves be able to devise a compromise solution."⁹⁷ Hence, the U.S. should use its leverage and pressure the sides, especially Israel, to compromise. This common theory⁹⁸ argues that the U.S. cannot afford to induce Israel to make concessions, "military and financial aid, as Secretary Kissinger did in the case of the Sinai Agreement, would exceed even our financial possibilities."⁹⁹ The best tactic to achieve Israeli cooperation and compliance is through leverage, i.e., the withholding of all aid (or the threat of it) as demonstrated in the success of Ford's reassessment policy. However, an in depth analysis of the events that preceded the signing of the Sinai II Agreement reveals a completely different picture.

After the Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement was successfully completed in May 1974, major changes took place both in Jerusalem and in Washington. For completely unrelated and different reasons both countries' leaderships stepped down almost at the same time. Following general elections, new leadership assumed power in Israel; Golda Meir resigned and

Rabin became the new Prime Minister.¹⁰⁰ In Washington the change of leadership was more painful. During the summer of 1974, Nixon was fighting for his political survival but to no avail. On June 19, he completed a 5-day tour to the Middle East, which he believed would help reinstate his image as a statesman and an indispensable President. On June 25, a day after the Judiciary Committee completed its hearings and issued four more subpoenas to Nixon, he left for Moscow.¹⁰¹ On June 24 the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Nixon must turn over the 64 subpoenaed tapes, and on June 27 the House Judiciary Committee began voting the first of three articles of impeachment. Although Nixon was determined to fight to the last moment to save his presidency and his reputation, he succumbed on August 8, and on August 9, Richard Nixon ceased to be the President.¹⁰²

Gerald Ford, although not a newcomer to American politics, was a novice in U.S. foreign policy. To make up for his lack of experience he continued to employ Kissinger as the Secretary of State, with the Middle East first on his foreign policy agenda. American Middle East policy was assured continuity regardless of the major changes which took place in Washington and Jerusalem. However, another problem developed. The U.S. had clear and consistent goals, but no clear and consistent peace plan. The only American peace plan was the Rogers plan and it was buried in 1971. Hence, Kissinger had a strategy, his famous "step-by-step" diplomacy, but he was not sure where his

step-by-step diplomacy was heading. The most natural road was the "West Bank Highway," in other words, to try to reach an Israeli-Jordanian accord now that Israel had reached agreements with both Egypt and Syria. Kissinger explained why he felt that way:

The comprehensive approach was in our view still premature...it would raise a whole host of issues where no solution was even vaguely perceived...The real choice was between taking another step in the Sinai and pursuing a disengagement with Jordan. Sadat had urged us to give priority to the Egyptian front...My own view was that we should make the next move with Jordan.

Kissinger said to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

The sensible next step would be Jordan... First because it is the most moderate of the Arab governments...And secondly, because the best way to deal with the Palestinian question would be to draw the Jordanians into the West Bank and thereby turn the debate...into one between the Jordanians and the Palestinians rather than between the Palestinians and Israelis.¹⁰³

However, this road proved to lead down a blind alley. The parties' stands on the issues of the West Bank, the Palestinian question, security and recognition of Israel, and the future of Jerusalem, were irreconcilable. The U.S. had to think of a different road to peace. William Quandt argued that the Jordanian option failed not because of substantive or conceptual problems, but because of the Watergate affair and the crisis of authority in Washington. In his discussion, Quandt speculated that the Watergate affair and the presidential crisis "killed" the peace prospects in the Middle East.

With strong presidential leadership, it might have

been possible to transcend step-by-step diplomacy and move on to a more comprehensive negotiation, including the Palestinians. Instead the U.S. was involved in an unprecedented crisis of authority, and Nixon's successor was unlikely to convey a clear sense of purpose in foreign policy.¹⁰⁴

Quandt's misperception of the Jordanian option and the role of the president in a Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli peace initiative was evident as time went by. Each American president since Truman tried to bring Israel and Jordan to the negotiating table and all efforts failed. Even the momentum gained by the Camp David Accords did not change King Hussein or the PLO's positions vis-a-vis peace with Israel. The only possible movement toward peace was again between Israel and Egypt, where the issues were less complicated and an agenda for an agreement could be established.

The year 1975 saw a new leadership both in Jerusalem and Washington but the change was mainly a change in style, not a change in their basic stands on the issues. Ford's style as a president was very different from that of Nixon. "Gerald Ford was an unlikely president," said Quandt,¹⁰⁵ expressing many people's opinion. Ford was a long-time Congressman and his ambition had been to become Speaker of the House, not a Chief Executive. However, once appointed to be Vice President in October of 1973, he made a quick shift in style as well as in his state of mind.

If our foreign policy is to be successful, I said, we cannot rigidly restrict in legislation the ability of the President to act...Legislative restrictions, intended for the best motives and purposes, can have the opposite results.¹⁰⁶

This statement, coming from a twenty year veteran of the House, showed a radical change of perception. Ford decided to be an assertive Chief Executive, especially in the realm of foreign affairs, although foreign policy was not his field of expertise. Ford decided to launch a Middle East peace initiative within days of becoming president. His attitude made Kissinger's Middle East diplomacy easier and more difficult at the same time. During Nixon's tenure in office Kissinger enjoyed a special relationship with the President which derived from a sense of mutual respect and understanding. Such relationships never developed between Ford and Kissinger.

The futility of the Jordanian option became evident at the Rabat Arab Summit, when on October 28, 1974, the PLO was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Hussein was stripped of his traditional role as the guardian of the Palestinians, while Arafat gained additional international fame and prestige when he addressed the UN General Assembly on November 13, 1974.¹⁰⁷ The only alternative left was a second partial Israeli-Egyptian agreement. Washington understood the importance of a continuous motion and a movement toward peace under American leadership. Not surprisingly, Kissinger turned again to his best friend in the Middle East, Sadat. Kissinger knew that a second agreement could be very appealing to Sadat. The Egyptian leader was anxious to regain control of the oil fields and to remove the Israeli forces from the Gidi and Mitla passes, which were the

gateway to the Sinai. Moreover, his personal prestige was deteriorating. He was accused of making major concessions in exchange for minor returns.

He had been severely criticized...for allowing himself to be persuaded by it (the U.S., N.N.) to trade off the assets gained by the Arabs in the October War for some minor returns. He needed another substantial Israeli withdrawal...in order to rebut his critics and vindicate his policy.¹⁰⁸

Israel had an opposing view. Israel felt Sadat was expecting too much but was unwilling to reciprocate with substantial Egyptian concessions. However, Israel told Kissinger that it was interested in a second agreement in the Sinai. Upon his return from Washington, on September 1974, after concluding a series of meetings with the new American president, the newly elected Prime Minister Rabin began to plan for an interim agreement with Egypt. Ford asked Kissinger to visit the Middle East in October, hoping that the previous successes would be repeated. One pressing issue was the oil price, which was not resolved after the embargo was lifted. Middle East oil approximated \$10 a barrel, as compared with less than \$2 a barrel in 1973. The price of oil was an even heavier drain on Europe and Japan. Washington began to worry about the repercussions of the high price of oil on the sluggish Western economies. High rates of inflation combined with high unemployment and economic recession began to take their toll. The transfer of world wealth to the Middle East was another source of worry. The U.S. was faced with a dilemma: how to continue its support of Israel and at the same time increase its

trade and influence with the oil producing countries in order to recycle the petrodollars. A second disengagement agreement, and ultimately peace in the Middle East, might alleviate the problem. Hence, all three parties, Egypt, Israel, and the U.S. were interested in an agreement. However, major conflicts of interests posed severe problems and the negotiations were lengthy and difficult. At one point, on March 1976, the negotiations broke down and the feeling was that an agreement could not be reached.

The negotiations encountered difficulties and frustrations right from the beginning. Kissinger's trip to the Middle East in early October 1974 proved to be a total failure, but he was not discouraged. He visited Sadat in November to explore Sadat's position and intentions after the Rabat Summit of October. Kissinger discovered that Sadat was willing to reach an agreement in spite of the Rabat resolution. In Jerusalem, Rabin was advocating an agreement and in early December Foreign Minister Allon visited Washington and presented to Secretary Kissinger and President Ford Israel's position.

Sadat insisted on two points: he wanted the Israelis to evacuate the Sinai passes and hand over to him the Abu Rodeis oil fields...and he wanted the agreement to have a purely military character, at least in appearance, involving no overt political concessions to Israel.

Israel demands were outlined in Allon's message:

(A) public commitment by Egypt to end the state of belligerency, demilitarization of the areas to be evacuated by Israel, and other specific terms, the effect of which would be to take Egypt out of the war legally and practically.¹⁰⁹

The two nations were anxious to reach an agreement but each expected the other to make concessions perceived to be unacceptable. Sadat would not make political concessions and could not openly commit Egypt to nonbelligerence. Israel, on the other hand, felt that Sadat showed "very little inclination to offer much in return" for far reaching Israeli concessions.¹¹⁰ According to the Allon proposal of December, Israel was willing to withdraw thirty to fifty kilometers along various parts of the Sinai but without giving up the passes and the oil fields. However, unofficially, Rabin said on December 1974, that the demand for nonbelligerence was not essential to the agreement. In an interview to the Israeli daily Haaretz, on December 3, 1974, Rabin said that Israel's political isolation as a result of the energy crisis and European dependence on Arab oil put Israel in a very unfavorable position. Israel has to survive, said Rabin for about a decade, until Western dependence on Arab oil would be reduced. It is important, therefore, to gain time, and emerge "safe and sound, from these seven lean years." Rabin explained that an agreement with Egypt was important as a strategy, and he was willing to pay the price for the conclusion of a limited agreement.

In the existing circumstances a number of instrumental aims, including cooperation with the U.S. in a step-by-step approach, trying to weaken the Egyptian-Syrian military link, and preventing Egypt's return to the Soviet sphere of influence.¹¹¹

As Israel and Egypt were trying to work out their differences other actors became involved. Syria would not accept

a second Israeli-Egyptian agreement which could leave Syria alone to confront a militarily superior Israel. To make his point, Assad began to step up his military build-up along the border with Israel. The Soviet Union understood that the new American initiative would further weaken their influence in the region, especially in Egypt. In the meeting between Ford and Brezhnev, which took place in Vladivostok on November 1974, the Soviet leader insisted on continuation of the Geneva process.¹¹²

Ford decided to dispatch Kissinger again to the region, mainly to try to bring Israel to make a more acceptable offer. Kissinger knew that Israel's demand for nonbelligerence was unrealistic. However, Rabin's statement in his interview with Haaretz, and his statement to former Mayor of New York John Lindsay, in which he said that "in exchange for an Egyptian commitment not to go to war, not to depend on threats of use of force, and an effort to reach true peace, the Egyptian could get even the passess and the oil fields,"¹¹³ left Kissinger cautiously optimistic. Kissinger's shuttle to the Middle was scheduled for late February and early March of 1975. Ford was disturbed and worried over the situation in the region and expected Kissinger to make substantial progress.

No foreign policy challenges occupied more of my time in the early months of 1975 than the deteriorating situation in both the Middle East and Indochina. Negotiations between Israel and Egypt about the return of the Sinai had reached a dangerous stalemate...I gave an interview to Time magazine and NEC-TV. Every day that passes without a new accord in the Middle East becomes more dangerous.¹¹⁴

During the February visit Kissinger realized that his optimism was premature. Although Rabin was advocating flexibility, the gap between Israel and Egypt had not narrowed. Moreover, the negotiations brought to the fore problems Kissinger had not anticipated. Egypt demanded an Israeli withdrawal from the passes, which Israel considered unacceptable, while Israel demanded an Egyptian commitment to nonbelligerence, which Egypt considered unacceptable. Kissinger spent five days in the Middle East, visiting Israel, Egypt, Israel again, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The negotiations were fruitless. The only progress came from a meeting between Kissinger and the Shah in Zurich, on February 18, where the Shah promised to sell oil to Israel if it gave up the Abu Rodeis oil fields. Kissinger was committed to come back in March, hoping that both sides would give up their intransigent positions.

When Israel reviewed its position it realized the dilemma it was facing. Stagnation was no option. Stagnation would lead to the resumption of the Geneva conference, which could strain Israel's relations with the U.S. and enhance Soviet position in the region. However, Israel could not accept the Egyptian territorial demands as long as Egypt refused to declare an end to the state of war against Israel.

Kissinger began his March shuttle with a trip to Egypt on March 8, 1975, in which he tried to obtain Egyptian political concessions. Sadat was prepared to say that the Israeli-Egyptian conflict would not be solved by military means; that Egypt would

not resort to the use of force; the cease-fire would be observed; no military or paramilitary forces would be allowed to operate against Israel from Egyptian territory; the hostile propaganda against Israel would be reduced, and the economic boycott would be selectively eased.¹¹⁵ Kissinger came to Israel on March 9, submitting the Egyptian proposal and receiving the Israeli proposal.

We continued to press for certain elements of nonbelligerency (reducing the propaganda war, moderation of the economic boycott, and permitting the passage of Israeli merchandise and Israeli-manned vessels under foreign flags through the Suez Canal). But we could not reach agreement on the depth of Israel's withdrawal in return for these concessions.¹¹⁶

Another Israeli demand was to create a real buffer zone between the forces. Two major problems blocked any progress in the negotiations. The first was a conceptual problem, namely, Israel wanted to reach a political agreement while Egypt wanted the agreement to be a military agreement. The second problem was technical and concerned both sides irreconcilable positions on the depth of Israel's withdrawal, control of the passes, and demilitarization zones. The oil fields were the easiest issue to solve. Kissinger's schedule consisted of abnormal hours; he would arrive at eccentric times, ignore the differences between day and night, and often conduct marathon talks.¹¹⁷ By March 20, Egypt presented two proposals. Under the first, both countries would hold the passes: Israel would control the eastern part while Egypt would control the western part. The two armies would be separated by a ten to twenty kilometer buffer

zone patrolled by U.N. forces. The second proposal was that both Egypt and Israel would take positions outside of the passes, at an equal distance, while the zone between them would be controlled by UN forces.

For Israel the proposals meant that it would have to remove its early warning system from Um Hashiva, and that the Israeli forces would withdraw some fifty to seventy kilometers while the Egyptian forces would advance some twenty to thirty kilometers.

Kissinger came and went, but the gap did not narrow on three main issues: The depth of the Israeli withdrawal and the extent of the Egyptian advance; the Israeli early warning installations in Um Hashiva; and the duration of the agreement.¹¹⁸

In addition Israel insisted on an Egyptian renunciation of belligerency in an appropriate legal wording.¹¹⁹ On March 19 Kissinger submitted to Israel what he believed to be the best package he could get. It included an exchange of the passes and the oil fields for a formula of "nonuse of force," that would be documented and would assert that the conflict between Israel and Egypt could not be solved by military means but only by diplomacy. The other Egyptian concessions included the duration of the agreement (the agreement would remain in effect until superceded by another agreement) and U.N. forces and not Egyptian forces would control the passes. The Egyptian troops would move a few miles east of the passes. Egypt would also relax the economic boycott against Israel. Israel rejected the Egyptian proposal for "nonuse of force" and suggested a much

more limited withdrawal. Kissinger was dismayed that Israel rejected Sadat's proposal to declare "nonuse of force" and insisted on nonbelligerency. As time passed, Kissinger grew more and more impatient while Ford became more and more angry. On March 21, Ford sent Rabin a very tough message in which he warned the Prime Minister that if Kissinger's mission failed because of Israel's intransigence he would "reassess" U.S. policy toward Israel, i.e., the U.S. would withhold military aid if Israel remains intransigent. Ford believed that the U.S. was very generous with Israel, providing it with ample supply of economic and military aid.

Israel should feel strong and confident, more flexible and more willing to discuss a lasting peace...I wanted Israel to recognize that there had to be some quid pro quo. If we were going to build up their military capabilities, we in turn had to see some flexibility to achieve a fair, secure and permanent peace.¹²⁰

Ford's message boomeranged. When the Israeli cabinet assembled the next day for an emergency meeting on a Sabbath, it adopted a much harsher tone, refusing to consider giving up any part of the passes in the absence of nonbelligerency.¹²¹ Kissinger did not even bother to take the Israeli proposal to Egypt. He communicated them to Sadat by telephone and received his flat rejection, as expected. Kissinger concluded that he was unable to bring the parties to an agreement and on March 23, he departed for Washington. Reassessment was now officially declared.

When President Ford issued the statement that Washington would reassess its relationship with Israel he explained it in terms of "cost - effectiveness", i.e., "we gave Israel ample supply of economic aid and weapons, so that Israel would feel strong and confident, (and would be) more flexible and willing to discuss a lasting peace."¹²² Ford argued that the U.S. supplied Israel with weapons to help it maintain its strategic superiority and feel confident and secure enough to make territorial concessions. Like many others in Washington, Ford expected the military aid to give the U.S. leverage over Israel. When this did not happen, and when Israel defied Washington's dictate, Ford was angry and frustrated. He could not understand why "the" Israelis were stronger militarily than all their Arab neighbors combined, yet peace was no closer than it had ever "been."¹²³ Ford was unaware and unfamiliar with the basic dilemmas at work in the region, i.e., only a strong and confident Israel could make territorial concessions; however, a strong and confident Israel would be strong enough to defy American pressures and maintain its own independent policy. Disregarding the complex realities of the Middle East, Ford continued to insist on a quid pro quo. "If we were going to build up their military capabilities, we in turn had to see some flexibility."¹²⁴

The reassessment policy was used as an example by both the advocates and the opponents of the theory that manipulation of arms deliveries yields compliance. Ford, although a long time

supporter of Israel in Congress, felt that in a conflict of interests "we have to judge what is in our national interest above any and all other considerations." Ford shared the view that Washington holds "99 percent of the cards in this game,"¹²⁵ and could force Israel to make concessions that it was not otherwise prepared to make.¹²⁶ The supporters of this approach believed that Israel's intransigence did not derive from real security needs or any inherently unsolvable problems; but from an unreasoning distrust and false sense of insecurity which could be overcome by devising security arrangements. Therefore, coercing Israel to comply was in Israel's best interest.¹²⁷

This approach, which was adopted by Ford and exercised by him during his "reassessment" policy, was highly debatable on many grounds. (a) The way in which Israel's security needs were dismissed (b) the difficulty in devising effective security arrangements was underestimated (c) the level of American leverage was greatly exaggerated.¹²⁸

Indeed, an analysis of U.S reassessment policy of 1975 shows that a negative relationship existed between the transfer of arms and political leverage. The more arms were delivered, the lower the level of leverage and the more successful Israel was in resisting American pressures. "The ability of the United States to exert coercive leverage on Israel has diminished since 1970."¹²⁹ During his reassessment policy Ford had ignored the fact that Israel would adamantly resist attempts to establish a

border believed by Israel to be dangerous to its vital interests. This view was confirmed by the Department of State in a 1969 survey by the bureau of Intelligence and Research, which concluded that "attempts by the U.S. and other countries to use arms embargoes as a policy tool, can have some influence in marginal policy areas, but aid does not provide enough leverage to force a recipient to take any actions contrary to its vital interests, and more often than not, embargoes aimed at vital interests fail completely, and have detrimental effects on the long-term relations between the supplying nation and the recipient."¹³⁰ In the specific case of the reassessment policy, the global and regional dilemmas further reduced U.S. leverage. A complete arms embargo was inconceivable because it would have increased the probability of an Arab attack on Israel. On the other hand, a partial withholding of arms (which the reassessment was actually imposing) was not threatening enough to coerce Israel to comply with Washington's policy.

It should be remembered that since the war the U.S. has supplied Israel with unprecedented quantities of arms, replenishing stockpiles of weapons, building up inventories of lost weapons as well as supplying new and more technologically advanced weapons including such items as precision-guided munitions ("smart bombs", missiles etc.). Advanced jet-fighters were also supplied as well as electronic-warfare systems. Israel's defense industry was growing and developing the Kfir G-2 aircraft, tanks, precision guided missiles (Gabriel,

sea-to-sea missile; Shafrir, air-to-air missile; Luz. air to-surface missile), in addition to boats, artillery, and a variety of military products.¹³¹ Hence, although American policy hurt Israel's security, the danger was not enough to make Israel yield to Ford's demands. Israel's position was expressed by Foreign Minister Allon in the final meeting with Kissinger before he left for Washington after his March shuttle had collapsed.

We'd still like to negotiate an interim or overall agreement, but not on the basis of an ultimatum from the other side.¹³²

Before and after his return to Washington Kissinger and Ford threatened Israel using political, economic and strategic aid as leverage. Kissinger threatened not to resume his mission, saying "Things are not going to be the same again. The Arabs won't trust us as they have in the past...I don't see how there can be another American initiative in the near future". Another favorite and long-term threat was Geneva. Said Kissinger "We may have to go to Geneva for a multilateral effort with the Soviets"¹³³ One theory argues that neither Kissinger's threats of March 1975, nor Ford's threats of reassessment intimidated Israel. America lacked the leverage to coerce Israel to comply. Another theory, however, argues that the second disengagement agreement was a direct result of the reassessment policy and of Ford's strong and assertive position. Israel softened its tone and became more flexible only after reassessment was exercised, argued this theory. The facts, however, show that the first

theory is correct. Israel was not intimidated by the reassessment policy exactly for the same reasons that it adamantly refused to accept Kissinger's proposal of March 1975. Israel felt that it should not and could not make important economic and strategic sacrifices in return for token Egyptian concessions. Why was that considered by Ford and Kissinger to be unreasonable or inflexible? Thus, Kissinger's threats proved to be counterproductive. Rabin reminded Kissinger about Massada, hinting that the Israelis would not surrender to pressure.¹³⁴ Kissinger's response was that he was misled by Rabin to believe that Israel was ready to make territorial concessions before he began his March shuttle.¹³⁵ Rabin argued otherwise.

We have put aside our demand for termination of belligerency...we have agreed to the term "non-use of force"...we are prepared to hand the oil fields over to the Egyptians and pull back as far as the eastern part of the passes, with all the risks that entails. We are prepared to allow the Egyptian army to advance from its present positions and occupy the present buffer zone, as well as set up two forward positions at the western entrances to the passes...Under the circumstances, to accuse Israel of fostering expectations and then failing to live up to them, instead of laying the blame on Egypt's intransigence, is a distortion of the facts.¹³⁶

Ford and Kissinger rejected Rabin's argument and continued to blame Israel for the failure of Kissinger's mission. The reassessment policy continued for about six months, during which Cambodia fell under the Pol Pot regime, Saigon surrendered to the Communists, a civil war erupted in Lebanon, and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia was assassinated. The reassessment policy was carried out in a period of uncertainty and anxiety. The need for

an agreement became more urgent than ever. In Israel, Prime Minister Rabin began to worry about a resumption of the war and the withering prospects to receive the much awaited F-15 jet fighters, the latest in American aircraft technology. In practice, reassessment meant withholding of all new arms deals, although the U.S. honored contracts signed before April 1975.

Israel's arms pipeline was not cut off; contracted deliveries, among them hundreds of tanks, continued to arrive on time. Even training of Israeli F-15 crews continued, as did production of special order, conventional explosive Lance warheads destined for the Jewish state.¹³⁷

With its immediate needs met, Israel could withstand the pressure for new arms agreements. Interestingly enough, the withholding of arms became a domestic political issue. In May, when reassessment became public, 76 Senators, three quarters of the Senate signed an open letter to Ford urging "responsiveness" to Israel's arms requests.

On May 21, I received a letter signed by seventy-six Senators urging me to "be responsive" to Israel's request for \$2.59 billion in military and economic aid. Although I said publicly that I welcomed the letter...in truth it really bugged me...We have given vast amounts of military and economic assistance to Israel over the years, and we had never asked for anything in return...Quite apart from that, the letter--especially its tone--jeopardized any chance for peace in the Middle East.¹³⁸

The extent of Congressional influence on aid to Israel has been addressed by numerous works.¹³⁹ The prevalent view has been that the Jewish lobby has almost complete control over the American Congress¹⁴⁰

(T)he new foreign policy lobbies, skilled in the methods of modern "communications" and the plenty of

money to make good use of them, have flourished, none more so than the pro-Israel lobby. The operating arms of the Israel lobby include such organizations as the American Israel Public Affair Committee (AIPAC) which, with an annual budget as of 1978 of \$750,000, closely monitors legislation in Congress...A critical role in advancing Israel's interests is played by well-placed congressional-aides...Among the Israel lobby's many victory trophies from the legislative arena, one of the most conspicuous and consequential was the "letter of seventy-six" addressed to President Ford by that number of Senators on May 21, 1975... The "letter of seventy six" put an effective end to the Ford-Kissinger "reassessment."¹⁴¹

Tillman's view was not universally accepted. The opposing view argues that the Jewish lobby never enjoyed the influence attributed to it by Tillman. Indeed, the argument was that during the 70's the Arab countries gained substantial influence in Washington which was manifested mainly in large deliveries of arms. Andrew Pierre argues that Israel was surprised and dismayed at the large transfers of American arms to Arab countries which included arms packages to Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. West European arms were delivered to Iraq, and Libya, while Soviet arms piled up in Syria.

Political perceptions are now in the process of change. There is a growing public understanding of the Arab point of view in the Middle East conflict. The dependence of the West upon Arab oil, with all its implications for energy supplies and the visibility of Western economies, has also had its impact on American policy...Willingness to sell arms to the Arabs in greater quantities and at higher levels of sophistication is the military dimension of the re-equilibration of the American stance in the Middle East...¹⁴²

The U.S. arms transfers to the Arab countries which gained new dimensions in the 70's culminated with the 1981 sale of the AWACS systems to Saudi Arabia, in spite of fierce Jewish

lobbying against it. Hence, the argument that the "letter of Seventy Six" was so powerful that it buried the reassessment policy is only a myth which the facts do not support much less prove.

Although President Ford was furious with the "letter of seventy six" and felt that Israel tried to show him "who's boss,"¹⁴³ Israel did not harden its position as a result of the letter. Israel maintained the same position it had adopted before Kissinger's mission collapsed in March, i.e., it was not yet ready to make additional concessions. Israel felt that it was Sadat's turn to make concessions. A review of the facts shows that during Kissinger early 1975 shuttle Israel was asked to withdraw from the Mitla and the Gidi passes, and to return the Abu Rudeis oil fields, in exchange for an Egyptian commitment to maintain the cease-fire. Kissinger's mission collapsed over three issues: the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the passes, the presence of Israel's early warning posts, and Egypt's refusal to declare an end to belligerence. Israel's position before and after the reassessment policy was announced was that "The Middle Eastern crisis persisted not because of an Israeli refusal to evacuate territories, but because of an Arab refusal to make peace."¹⁴⁴ Hence, Ford expected Israel to make far reaching concessions in exchange for token Egyptian concessions. Israel did not accept it in March, and it did not change its position in May. Thus, the argument that the reassessment policy failed because of the "letter of Seventy

Six" is not consistent with the facts. The deadlock ended when all parties decided to move away from their adamant, antagonistic, positions. Ford and Kissinger realized that a continued pressure on Israel, namely, a withholding of arms, was counterproductive. "The only viable strategy was to resume step-by-step diplomacy."¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Ford decided to take an active part in the negotiation process and to personally explore the prospects for an agreement with Rabin and Sadat. On June 1st and 2nd Ford and Sadat met in Salzburg three times. During these meetings Ford told Sadat that he had no new ideas because "the Israelis said they had none." Sadat's surprising answer was: "We are willing to go as far as you think we should go. We trust you, and we trust the United States."¹⁴⁶ After Sadat made the first step, Israel reciprocated. Constructive ideas began to develop. Sadat suggested: "Why couldn't there be a buffer zone around the Gidi and Mitla passes, in which U.S. could keep a limited number of nonmilitary personnel? These individuals, he went on, would be responsible for surveillance. They would monitor troop movements...Henry and I agreed that this idea made sense."¹⁴⁷

In return for Sadat's concessions Ford promised to ask Congress to approve substantial military and economic aid to Egypt. The two leaders agreed to present Sadat's proposal to station civilian technicians in a Sinai buffer zone as an American proposal, fearing that Israel would reject it out of hand if it learned that it was an Egyptian proposal.

On June 11 Prime Minister Rabin arrived in Washington. Now that reassessment was abandoned, Israel was more willing to cooperate. American failure to coerce Israel through the reassessment policy is explained by Wheelock.

He explains that U.S. pressure was counter productive because Israel felt it was being pressured by the U.S. only because it was a reliable American ally. "The U.S. was pressuring the only party over which it had influence--Israel. Moreover, Israel did not want Arab states to rely upon U.S. coercion to obtain goals for which they would otherwise have to yield concessions."¹⁴⁸ While the U.S. continued its efforts to exert long-term pressure by denying Israel long-term arms commitments, Israel proved to be strong enough militarily and economically to resist U.S. pressures, at least in the short run. Hence, when President Ford suspended the promised \$2.2 billion of U.S. assistance requested by Israel in January 1975, Israel did not capitulate. Militarily, Israel was not in a position of short-term dependence upon U.S. arms, spare parts or munition deliveries. Israeli forces were reported to have enough supplies on hand to survive an American withholding of arms.¹⁴⁹ It is clear that the reassessment policy which threatened to deny Israel arms and credit did not bear the expected results. Israel did change its position, however, after the U.S. and Egypt moved away from their former positions and agreed to make some political concessions.

My desire to achieve an interim agreement with Egypt rested upon my perception of Israel's needs, rather than on any wish to placate the U.S. Evidently President Sadat held similar views, for...in

Austria...he expressed Egypt's interest in renewing the attempts to reach an agreement...Sadat was displaying a measure of flexibility regarding the duration of the agreement and the timing of Israel's withdrawal.¹⁵⁰

Hence, in the middle of June, Sinai II began to evolve. Israel, according to Rabin, was interested in an agreement for various reasons; the least among them was Ford's tactic of withholding of arms. President Ford did not yet abandon his coercion tactics and talked with Rabin about the damaging consequences which might ensue if the renewed American peace initiative should fail. Ford mentioned Geneva, which Israel saw as a hostile forum, as well as the increased role that the USSR would play in the Middle East.

Your insistence on holding on to the eastern parts of the passes (said Kissinger to Rabin on June 12, N.N.), prevents any continuation of the diplomatic process. As a result, the Geneva Conference will become inevitable, and I don't know what position the U.S. will adopt there!¹⁵¹

It seems that Ford suspected that Israel could and might successfully resist his withholding of arms sales tactics, and he added a diplomatic coercion to his pressures.

On June 13, although tempers rose high. "We will not bow to Egypt's demands! And please don't threaten me with the Geneva Conference," said Rabin to Kissinger. But Maps were unfolded and the negotiations began to progress. Ford told Rabin that he was thinking about stationing civilian technicians in a Sinai buffer zone if Congress would agree. "Rabin seemed intrigued. He said he'd take the idea back to Israel and let me know his government's response."¹⁵² Israel's reaction to Sadat's

proposal was positive. "So positive, in fact, that Henry thought he should return to the area soon. I gave him my okay, and on August 20, he left for Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia."¹⁵³

Israel's desire to resume negotiations was largely determined by economic considerations and its desire to secure its southern border. "(N)o change occurred in the internal or external military context that would have made Israel's leaders more susceptible to pressure of the Ford Administration."¹⁵⁴ But Israel decided that the U.S. would be more responsive to Israel's economic and strategic needs, and Sadat, at that particular moment, would be more flexible concerning the technical and the military aspects of the agreement. Sadat showed flexibility by agreeing to three annual renewals of the mandate of the UN forces, and to the continued Israeli use of their intelligence facility provided Egypt was given one facing the Israeli lines. Sadat also accepted the principle of easing the Arab boycott of companies dealing with Israel, and promised to tone down anti-Israeli propaganda. Finally, he was willing to have most of the terms of the agreement published, which was a de-facto recognition of the state of Israel.

It remained for the U.S. and Israel to work out their own understanding. Israel demanded two concessions from the U.S.: the first was a written Memorandum of Understanding that before the U.S. moved in any direction affecting the future of the region the U.S. would notify Israel. "I had no problem agreeing

to that," said Ford.¹⁵⁵ The second request was more troublesome. Israel demanded a military aid package of \$2 billion and a clear American commitment that the U.S. would prevent any Soviet military intervention in the Middle East.¹⁵⁶

Initially, we had agreed to provide them \$1.5 billion worth of arms. They would have to pay us back half that amount; the rest would be a loan with an understood forgiveness feature. The Israelis, however, wanted more. Their shopping list included sophisticated weaponry that even our forces hadn't yet received.¹⁵⁷

The U.S. decided to provide Israel with most, not all of its arms requests. In addition the U.S. agreed to promise to meet Israel's long-term weapon needs. This included the Pershing I missile which Israel asked for to match the Arab SCUDs, and the F-16 jet fighters which were not yet available for export. (The Pershing request was later withdrawn because of Congressional objection. The Pershing has nuclear capabilities). Israel was promised M-60 tanks plus assorted heavy artillery, Lance missiles, 25 F-15 jets, improved TOW and DRAGON missiles, and MAVRICK TV-guided bombs. Israel also asked and received an assortment of advanced electronic warfare technology including E-2C Hawkeye and CH-53 helicopter airborne intelligence platforms, plus late model ECM, weapon guidance systems, and data processing modules for Israel's combat airplanes.¹⁵⁸ Israel's request for satellite technology as well as COBRA helicopter gunships were denied.

After ten days of extensive shuttle diplomacy, between August 21 and August 31, the three parties were ready to

conclude the agreement. Sinai II was modeled after Sinai I, with a UN buffer zone separating the two parties and a limited armament zones drawn on both sides. Israel dropped its demand for a formal statement ending the state of belligerence, and the two sides agreed to resolve any conflict between them by peaceful means. Egypt agreed to commit itself publicly to permitting the transit of non-military cargoes to and from Israel to pass through the Suez Canal. Israel made concessions concerning the line of withdrawal. Israel agreed to withdraw from the passes and the oil fields, while Egypt agreed that Israel would continue to operate its electronic early warning station at Um Hashiba. Israel promised not to attack Syria, and Egypt promised not to join Syria if and when it attacked Israel. The U.S. promised to make every effort to be fully responsive to Israel's military, economic, and energy needs. The U.S. promised to supply Israel with oil in the event that Israel would be unable to meet its energy needs. Finally, Israel received American assurances about future U.S. political and diplomatic activities.¹⁵⁹

The conclusive discussion on the bilateral (U.S.-Israeli) issues was held on the night of August 31, and lasted until 6:00 A.M. As the hours wore on, participants on both sides dropped out of the discussion, so that by the end it had become a dialogue between Kissinger and me (Rabin) against a chorus of snores all around.¹⁶⁰

The agreement was approved by the Israeli government on September 1st, and it was formally signed in Geneva on September 4, 1975. There is no doubt that the Sinai II Disengagement

agreement paved the way to Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem on November 19, 1977, and it served as the political framework for the Camp David Accords.

The interesting question is: why did the negotiations break down in March, and why were they successful in June? Were the withholding of arms and the reassessment policy responsible for that?

American and Israeli analysts differ sharply on this question. Most Americans tend to attribute more leverage to the Israeli government and they depict the reassessment policy as a case of "the limits of leverage."¹⁶¹ From this vantage point Israel is perceived to possess "a remarkable capacity to resist American pressures and then to extract a high price for eventual compliance."¹⁶² Moreover, Israel enjoys a high level of support from American public opinion and it gains political leverage from domestic politics, which play a significant role in all of these assessments.

Israeli observers, on the other hand, tend to take a different approach. In a detailed account of the negotiations, Golan argues that Israel could not resist U.S. pressure for more than a few months, and it had to cave in to American demands.¹⁶³ At first glance, the fact that Israel did change its position and became more flexible in its demands could be interpreted as a text book case of leverage through the withholding of arms. However, a closer look at the events shows that among the reasons causing Israel to be more responsive, the arms supply

was the least important.

First, during Kissinger's shuttle in March, he made the same threats that Ford made later in May. However, the March threats fell on deaf ears. Israel was adamant in its refusal to make unilateral concessions. The U.S. threats to withhold arms was not effective because Israel was in no immediate need for arms. Moreover, the American "accepted wisdom that arms for Israel would make its leaders sufficiently secure so as to feel able to make territorial concessions" proved to be wrong.¹⁶⁴ Israel felt both secure and adequately supplied with arms, a combination which rendered American leverage completely ineffective.

American military assistance to Israel rose sharply after the 1973 war and during the two Sinai and Golan Heights disengagement agreements. U.S. arms shipments to Israel increased from \$189.9 million in 1973 to \$977.9 million in 1974, dropped to \$655.6 in 1975 (as a result of the reassessment) but rose to \$728.7 the following year.¹⁶⁵

The foregoing discussion shows that, although arms transfers were central to the process of negotiations, they can explain neither the failure of the March negotiations, nor the success of the August negotiations. Moreover, the change in Israel's position, from rejection to acceptance, was directly linked to changes in the positions of Egypt and the U.S.

There was a change from March to September in the terms offered not just by Kissinger, but by Sadat as well. Israeli sources emphasized, for example, that Egypt compromised further on the exact location of the new lines and duration of Sinai II. Another unmistakably new factor was Egypt's acceptance of American technicians in Sinai to monitor the accord. Thus, the outcome, typically, was a compromise in

which other factors besides arms and other actors besides the United States were also involved.¹⁶⁶

Because the American and the Egyptian political concessions were combined with a policy of reassessment, it was common to attribute the success of the August shuttle to the withholdings of arms. In effect, Israel could continue to resist U.S. pressures, and could survive and protect itself without the F-15 fighter jets which were promised and then withheld. Three factors made the agreement possible:

(1) Sadat changed his position and agreed to make concessions concerning the major issues that bothered Israel; for example, the early warning stations, "Sadat agreed that they be manned by Israeli and Egyptians, with U.S. flag flying over them and American sentries guarding their entrance",¹⁶⁷ Sadat also agreed to wider buffer zones, among other concessions.

(2) Israel agreed to give up its demand for a statement of nonbelligerence, and was satisfied with an American-Israeli Memorandum of Understanding promising Israel an American protection. Israel was more flexible concerning the depth of its withdrawal. "My military view was that the width of the buffer zone was of far greater importance than a few hundred meters more or less of the IDF's withdrawal."¹⁶⁸ Israel thought that a demilitarized Sinai would provide Israel with adequate security and would leave Israel room for maneuver "and would allow Israel to take advantage of her superiority in mobile warfare beyond the zone of Egypt's ground-to-air missile

umbrella."¹⁶⁹

(3) the U.S. agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Israel which included far reaching commitments to support and protect Israel militarily, economically and politically. The U.S. had hitherto refused to promise long-term arms supplies to Israel, and aid was negotiated on an annual basis. This practice had changed in 1975, with the U.S. agreeing to commit itself to long-term Israeli arms needs. Interestingly enough, in the Memorandum of Understanding the U.S. promised Israel Pershing I missiles and F-16 jets. The F-16's were not yet available for export, and three years later only about half of the promised number were finally released, and only in a package with Saudi and Egyptian planes.¹⁷⁰ The Pershing request was withdrawn because of Pentagon opposition. (The Pershing, like the Lance, was configured for nuclear warheads but with a longer range).

Hence, the good will of the three parties involved, combined with mutual concessions that satisfied the security and the political needs of all the actors, yielded the much awaited agreement. Since none of those conditions could be duplicated on the West Bank, an agreement would not be possible there. An agreement could or would be reached not as a result of the use of arms withholding tactics, but as a result of the existence of the necessary conditions.

NOTES

1. Yitzhak Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 235
2. Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), p. 196.
3. Abba Eban, An Autobiography (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 497
4. Anwar el-Sadat, In Search of Identity (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), p. 230
5. William Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 154
6. Ibid., p. 160
7. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 197
8. See Sadat's thorough discussion in: In Search of Identity, pp. 235-236.
9. Interview with Arnaud de Borchgrave. Newsweek, April 9, 1973, pp. 44-46
10. For an excellent discussion see Colonel Merrill A. McPeak "Israel: Borders and Security," Foreign Affairs, (April 1976) Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 426-443.
11. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 512
12. Sadat, In Search of Identity, p. 244
13. See an interesting discussion by Matti Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger: Step by Step Diplomacy in the Middle East. Translated by Ruth Geyra and Sol Stern. (New York: Bantam, 1976).
14. Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger (Hebrew text) pp. 40-44. Also Insight Team of the Sunday Times, The Yom Kippur War (London: Deutsch, 1974), pp. 124-129.
15. Elaborated in Sadat's speech to the Egyptian National Assembly, February 4, 1971, published in an interview with Newsweek, February 22, 1971.
16. See Sadat's address of October 16, 1973, in which he reiterated his request of 1971, that the U.S. would assume the role of a "peace broker"; Discussed in Saadia Touval, The Peace Brokers, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 230.
17. Sadat, In Search of Identity, p. 244

18. Report by the Comptroller General of the United States, U.S. Assistance to Israel, p. 8

19. When President Nixon and Prime Minister Meir met in Washington, in September 1969, Nixon asked Meir for a quid-pro-quo, i.e., "hardware for software." Meir, surprised and angry rejected the proposal outright. For a complete account of the meeting see Rabin, p. 155.

20. Report by the Comptroller General of the United States, U.S. Assistance to Israel, p. 7

21. David Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 172

22. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 493

23. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 517

24. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 495

25. Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 174

26. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 539

27. Seth P. Tillman, The United States in the Middle East, p. 75

28. Nadav Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 51

29. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 551

30. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 508

31. Nixon had sent Prime Minister Meir a personal letter urging her to accept the U.S.-Soviet cease-fire proposal.

32. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 568

33. Ibid., p. 576

34. See discussion by Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger (Hebrew text), pp. 85-86; also Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 584

35. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 585

36. Ibid., p. 589

37. Ibid., p. 591

38. Seymour M. Finger, "The Maintenance of Peace" in

National Security and Nuclear Strategy, by Robert H. Connery and Demetrios Caraley (eds.) (New York: Academy of Political Science, 1983), pp. 27-37

39. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 540
40. Tuval, The Peace Brokers, p. 233
41. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 618
42. Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger (Hebrew), p. 101
43. Ibid., pp. 103-108; also Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 510
44. Golda Meir, My Life (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), p. 447; also Pollock The Politics of Pressure, pp. 159-160; Tuval The Peace Brokers, pp. 241-243.
45. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 538; Tuval, The Peace Brokers, pp. 236-237. These views were confirmed by high ranking Israeli officials in personal interviews.
46. The New York Times, Nov. 8. Also Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger, p. 108; also interview with H. Saunders.
47. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 515
48. Tuval, The Peace Brokers, p. 242
49. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 219-220
50. Ibid., p. 224
51. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 516
52. See a thorough discussion in Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger (Hebrew), pp. 109-118
53. Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 180
54. Quandt argues that the heavy U.S. pressure was successful, see Decade of Decisions, pp. 220-223. However, he failed to support his argument with facts.
55. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 503
56. Tuval, The Peace Brokers, p. 242
57. Ibid., p. 241

58. Meir, My Life, p. 442
59. Ibid., p. 444
60. See Golan, Safran, Quandt, among others.
61. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 239
62. Ibid., p. 237
63. Ibid., p. 237
64. On March 29, Dayan visited Washington and held talks with Kissinger.
65. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 850
66. Ibid., p. 939
67. Tuval, The Peace Brokers, p. 249
68. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 234
69. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 941
70. Ibid., p. 941
71. Ibid., p. 956
72. Interviews with Israeli military officials
73. Meir, My Life, p. 443
74. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 567
75. Discussion by Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 236-238
76. During a meeting with Kissinger, in Jerusalem, on Feb. 27, Dayan told Kissinger that the Syrian proposal offered nothing in return for Israel's concessions. See Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 963
77. In his meetings with Israeli officials in Jerusalem, during his February visit, Kissinger tried to convince them that Syria was willing to make concessions. See discussion in Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 963-964
78. Meir, My Life, p. 443
79. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 239

80. A thorough discussion in Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 963-965

81. Ibid., p. 1046

82. Ibid., p. 1046

83. The New York Times, May 9, 1974; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 240-243; Tuval, The Peace Brokers, pp. 250-255; Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger p. 196

84. The New York Times, May 23, 1974

85. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 531; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 243

86. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 244

87. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 1093

88. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 574

89. Ibid., p. 568

90. See discussion in Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, pp. 160-208

91. Ibid., p. 161

92. See for example, Golan, Pollock, Rabin, among others.

93. For a thorough discussion see Louis Williams, (ed.) Military Aspects of the Israeli-Arab Conflict, (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Publishing Projects, 1975), p. 168.

94. Information from Aviation Week, October 29, 1973; also Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 536-539; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 185.

95. The Comptroller General of the U.S., U.S. Assistance to Israel, p.1

96. Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger, (Hebrew), p. 210

97. George Ball, "How To Save Israel In Spite of Herself," p. 456

98. See for example Ball, Tillman, Bryson, among others.

99. Ball, "How To Save Israel In Spite of Herself," p. 458

100. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 242
101. The New York Times, June 26, 1974
102. The New York Times, August 9, 10, 11, 1974.
103. Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 1138-1139
104. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 252
105. Ibid., p. 253
106. Gerald Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 233
107. The New York Times, November 14, 1974
108. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 539
109. Ibid., p. 541
110. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 248
111. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 540
112. See joint communique issued on November 24, saying that the search for peace in the Middle East should be based on UN resolution 338. The New York Times, November 25, 1975.
113. Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger, (Hebrew) p. 232; also Quandt Decade of Decisions, p. 263
114. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 245
115. The Jerusalem Post, May 13, 1975
116. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 253; also Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 264-265
117. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 254
118. Ibid., p. 255
119. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 265
120. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 245
121. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 545
122. See Ford's interview with the Hearst newspaper chain,

March 27, 1975, as discussed in Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, pp. 245-246; also The New York Times, March 28; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 268-269

123. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 245

124. Ibid., p. 245

125. Ibid., p. 245

126. See for example Ball, Sheehan, Tillman, among others.

127. Ball makes this argument in his article "How to Save Israel In Spite of Herself."

128. See Steven J. Rosen and Mara Moustafine, "Does Washington Have the Means to Impose a Settlement on Israel?" pp. 25-32

129. Wheelock, "Arms for Israel: The Limits of Leverage," p. 124

130. Rosen and Moustafine, "Does Washington Have the Means to Impose a Settlement on Israel?" p. 25; see also Klaus Knorr, The Power of Nations, and Andrew Pierre, The Global Politics of Arms Sales.

131. Interviews with high ranking Israeli military officials.

132. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 545

133. Ibid., p. 546

134. Safran, Israel the Embattled Ally, p. 547; Golan The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger, (Hebrew) pp. 234-241; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 266

135. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 268

136. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 257

137. Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 197; The New York Times, August 6, 1975

138. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 287

139. For an excellent discussion of this issue see Marvin C. Feuerwerger, Congress and Israel.

140. See for example, Ford, Tillman, Wilbor, Sheehan, Ball, among others.

141. Tillman, The United States in the Middle East, pp. 65-67

142. Andrew Pierre, "Beyond the 'Plane Package': Arms and Politics in the Middle East, " International Security (Summer 1978), p. 148

143. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, pp. 287-288

144. Eban, An Autobiography, p. 584

145. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 270

146. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 290

147. Ibid., pp. 290-291

148. Wheelock, "Arms for Israel: The Limits of Leverage," p. 130

149. The New York Times, April 25, 1975

150. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, pp. 262-263

151. Ibid., p. 264

152. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 292

153. Ibid., p. 308

154. Wheelock, "Arms for Israel: The Limits of Leverage," p. 132

155. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 308

156. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 273

157. Ford, A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford, p. 308

158. Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 191; also interviews with Israeli officials

159. Tuval, The Peace Brokers, pp. 265-267

160. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 274
161. See Wheelock, Pierre, Sicherman, Rosen, Quandt, among others.
162. Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 192
163. Golan, The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger, (Hebrew) pp. 242, 246, 251; also interviews with Israeli officials.
164. Pierre, "Beyond the 'Plane Package': Arms and Politics in the Middle East," p. 149.
165. Ibid., p. 149
166. Pollock, The Politics of Pressure, p. 193
167. Rabin, The Rabin Memoirs, p. 270
168. Ibid., p. 272
169. Ibid., p. 272.
170. Interviews with Israeli military officials.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LEBANESE CRISIS:
JUNE 1982 - FEBRUARY 1984

In the annals of the Reagan Administration, the Lebanese crisis will not be recorded as a success story. Following the Israeli invasion of June 1982, the U.S. became intensely involved in the crisis and within three months sent 1800 marines and a 33 ship armada to Lebanon. From that time and until the marines were pulled out in February of 1984, U.S. foreign policy suffered a succession of frustrations and failures. The most frustrating feature was the U.S.'s lack of leverage and total inability to influence the policies of either its friends or its foes. At a time when leverage was most needed, it was nonexistent. This lack of leverage ultimately caused the U.S. to withdraw from the Lebanese scene. The Lebanese crisis should, therefore, be analyzed in terms of the global and regional dilemmas which had rendered American leverage ineffective.

In the case study of the Lebanese crisis I will (a) analyze the situation in the Middle East from the perspectives of the U.S. and Israel (b) review the chronology of events before, during and after the Israeli invasion (c) analyze the American-Israeli relationship in terms of delivery or suspension of military aid and the level of leverage yielded by it (d) establish correlations between the various actors' behavior, the international and regional environments, and the consequences, (e) establish causal relationships between the regional and

global dilemmas and the lack of American leverage (f) suggest a different foreign policy approach that had it been applied to the Lebanese crisis, would have affected the outcome of the events to the advantage of the U.S.

The Lebanese crisis was preceded by certain major events which drastically changed the political map of the region, challenged the American power position, and threatened the stability and the status quo of the Middle East. The energy crises of 1973 and 1978, the demise of the Shah, the Soviet invasion of Afganistan, and the Iran-Iraq war were new realities which demanded an assertive American reaction. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was an additional complication to the already chaotic situation. Reagan followed the Truman and Eisenhower doctrines and declared that the Middle East is a region of vital importance to the U.S. and that, if needed, American force would be used to protect it. The U.S. was willing even to dispense with the use of surrogates and to act directly in the region.¹

Under the new circumstances it was essential for the U.S. to gain and maintain leverage over both Israel and the friendly Arab states. Leverage enables the U.S. to protect and promote its two most vital interests: to reinforce containment and counter the Soviet appetite for more influence in the region, and to control upheavals which threaten the flow of oil. In order to gain leverage the U.S. used the common tactics of delivery or suspension of arms. All friendly nations of the

Middle East enjoyed large transfers of arms, and the withholding tactic was used to express displeasure with the client-state's behavior.² The regional and global dilemmas, however, exacerbate the region's political complexities and often render American leverage ineffective despite the use of disciplinary measures. Even a client-state like Israel which is most dependent on the U.S. for economic, military and political aid, can pursue policies which conflict with American policies with impunity, as will be shown in the Lebanese crisis.

Even before the fragile status quo was shattered by the Israeli invasion there was an urgent need to resolve or at least control the instabilities in the Middle East. The U.S. has always maintained that the road to stability was via revitalizing the stalemated peace process between Israel and Egypt, inducing King Hussein to join the peace talks, and finding a just solution to the Palestinian problem. Syria, being a Soviet client, has always been a difficult issue. The U.S. hoped that Saudi Arabia, as Syria's main provider of aid, would have leverage over Syria, when the time would come. Former Secretary Haig, suggested a policy for the Middle East which he titled the "Strategic Consensus". Haig aspired to create a "mini - NATO" in the Middle East, a "collective security" alliance which was supposed to include the "Gang of Four", i.e., Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, all states friendly to the U.S. The alliance was expected to serve as an arm of the U.S. and protect U.S.'s interests in the region. The

"Strategic Consensus" concept was basically a military rather than a political concept and it led the U.S. to (a) military cooperation with Egypt (b) large arms sales to Saudi Arabia, including the sale of 60 F-15's and 5 AWACS planes, (c) strategic cooperation with Jordan, including a plan to establish a Jordanian "Rapid Deployment Force", armed and trained by the U.S. at a total cost of \$220 million. (This force was expected to counter revolutions or upheavals in the Persian Gulf countries, mainly Saudi Arabia), and (d) strategic cooperation with Israel. The "Strategic Consensus" never materialized, although it was never completely shelved, because it either ignored or underestimated the strong antagonisms which exist among the prospective members of the alliance.³ Another policy option which the U.S. has been pursuing was establishing bilateral relationship with each of the four countries, with a special emphasis on the Saudi Arabia's role as a power broker among the various Arab states. To America's chagrin, however, this option did not yield the expected results either. Saudi Arabia's influence over the other Arab states proved to be no more than a myth.

In fact, U.S. policy in the Middle East before the Israeli invasion was very ambiguous.⁴ Former Secretary Haig made a number of statements indicating that the U.S. wished the PLO and Syrian power to diminish.⁵ On the other hand the U.S. negotiated on July 1981, a cease-fire agreement between the PLO and Israel which froze the status quo to the advantage of the

PLO. The Syrians and the Palestinians were given the responsibility for controlling the northern border area with Israel, which was to Israel's dislike.⁶ In addition, Israel was angered by the U.S. acceptance of the Fahd peace plan of August 1981, which Israel rejected because it suggested the establishment of a Palestinian state. On the other hand, the U.S. continued to assist and enhance the military and the economic capabilities of Israel. The U.S. was clearly caught in a dilemma which resulted from the U.S.'s need to support and maintain friendly relations with both Israel and the Arab states. The Reagan administration continued to provide the Saudis with quality and quantity of weapons despite Israeli protests. Washington courted King Hussein and offered him generous arms deals in order to induce him to join the bargaining table. The U.S. even tried not to alienate Syria and leave the door open for a Syrian return to the Western camp, while simultaneously, the U.S. was supporting Israel, promising to protect Israel's territorial integrity and Israel's demand for peace and security.

The U.S.'s support of Israel derives from ideological, humanitarian, and strategic reasons. The U.S. and Israel, both Western societies, are capitalistic, liberal democracies and share the same cultural, political, and social values. The U.S. supports Israel since it views Israel as the champion of Western democracy in the Middle East. On the humanitarian level, the U.S. feels a moral obligation to protect Israel, the land of the

survivors of the Holocaust, and assure that such a tragedy will never reoccur. But, the most important is , however, the strategic consideration. Israel is located at the heart of the Middle East, where vital American economic and strategic interests are constantly at stake. Recent events in the Persian Gulf, especially the Iran-Iraq war, make the situation all the more dangerous. It is essential for the U.S. to have a strong and reliable ally in the region. Israel answers both requirements. It is strong militarily, and it is reliable politically. Thus, Israel has become the most valuable American ally in the region.

The Egyptian-Israeli treaty, the Iranian revolution and the subsequent Gulf war, and United States assistance have greatly enhanced the political and military capabilities of Israel, making it at once a far more valuable ally and a far more obstreperous partner of the United States in the Middle East.

U.S.-Israeli political cooperation has been based on overlapping, long-term foreign policy goals: (a) to curb Soviet appetite for more power and influence in the region, (b) to protect American economic and strategic interests, especially to secure American access to the petroleum riches of the region, (c) and to maintain peace and stability in the Middle East. These shared goals cemented the cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem.

However, after the Begin government took office in 1977, this political cooperation was being threatened by conceptual divisions and a growing friction resulting from substantive differences in policy orientations and attitudes. These

conceptual differences created misunderstandings, suspicions, and misperceptions which culminated in the Lebanese crisis of 1982. During the Lebanese crisis both nations experienced a major conflict concerning the definition of their respective "national interest". The nature of the conflict has been defined by two theories. Israel's foes argue that the conflict stems from a conceptual division, while Israel's friends argue that no conceptual-ideological division exists between Washington and Jerusalem. The conflict, they argue, concerns only pragmatic matters such as political strategies and tactics.

The advocates of the first approach argue that Washington and Jerusalem adhere to conflicting political doctrines because their vital interests are in conflict.⁸ The U.S. has a vital interest in establishing peace in the region, because peace secures the flow of oil while war threatens it. Peace serves another major American interest; the interest to maintain friendly relations with both Israel and the Arab states. War obliges the U.S. to "choose" between the support of one side or the other. Last but not least, peace helps to curb Soviet influence. The USSR has been exploiting the Israeli-Arab conflict by playing the Arabs against the Jews, and gaining influence through the transfer of arms and defense technology. Peace will terminate this practice; thus, Soviet power and influence will be contained.

According to this approach the picture looks different from an

Israeli perspective. Israel's most vital interest is protecting its security by controlling strategic positions in the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Israel prefers a situation of "no peace no war" while controlling these territories, to a withdrawal from all or most territories, because Israel claims that it can not trust the Palestinians' commitment to peace after an Israeli withdrawal. The conflict is, therefore, between two principles: "peace in exchange for territories", which is America's first priority, and "no peace but territories and security", which is Israel's first priority.

The second approach is based on a different assumption. It argues that both nations rank peace as their highest priority.⁹ More than the U.S., Israel is interested in peace because peace serves Israel's most vital strategic, economic, and political interests. Strategically, peace will relieve Israel of the permanent threat to its existence. Economically, peace will enable Israel to devote its scarce resources to desperately needed economic recovery.¹⁰ Politically, peace will gain Israel a much awaited Arab recognition. As a technologically advanced country, Israel's economy will gain tremendously when Arab and African markets open up for Israel's goods and services. With peace attained, Israel can become a center for democracy, technology, and culture in the Middle East. Hence, the conflict between Washington and Jerusalem is, according to this approach, not conceptual, but strategic-tactical. The main disagreement between the two allies

concerns the strategies and tactics which would best serve the cause of peace i.e., how, when, and in exchange for what should Israel withdraw.

Both sides present valid arguments which support their theories. The advocates of the first approach, (usually those who are critical of Israel's policies) argue that Israel's rejection of the Reagan peace plan proves that Israel rejects the principle "territories for peace".¹¹

The advocates of the second approach use the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty to show that Israel adheres to the "exchange of territories for peace" principle. Moreover, in 1970, the Israeli government announced that it accepts UN resolution 242, which established the principle of "territories for peace."¹² No one theory concerning the nature of the unresolved American-Israeli conflict can be definitively proven. However, during the Lebanese crisis it became clear to both the U.S. and Israel that major policy disagreements existed between the two allies.

The U.S., therefore, needed leverage to either deter Israel from pursuing policies which were detrimental to U.S. interests, or coerce Israel to comply with desired American policies. American leverage, alas, when sought, has been at best very limited.¹³ It is interesting to note in this context that the Soviet Union, for the same reasons, has found it difficult to exert leverage over its client-state, Syria, especially during the latter periods of the crisis.¹⁴ It was not the first

time that the Soviet Union experienced lack of leverage in the Middle East. In 1972, President Sadat unilaterally terminated fifteen years of Soviet-Egyptian cooperation, after the Soviets had extended large economic and military aid programs to Egypt.

Hence, on the eve of the Israeli invasion the U.S. experienced a growing friction with Israel concerning long-term policies, which was aggravated by serious disagreements on short-term policies. The two allies sharply disagreed on the issues of Lebanon and the West Bank settlements. For the U.S. it was crucial to avoid a war and upheavals. Washington believed that both the Lebanese civil war and the growing tensions between Israel, Syria, and the PLO could be resolved by (a) Saudi Arabia mediation, and (b) Philip Habib's diplomatic efforts. However, neither Saudi Arabian mediation nor Philip Habib's diplomatic efforts could change Syria's obdurate position not to pull out its SA missiles from the Beq'aa valley. Israel saw no other way but to destroy the missiles during an invasion. Hence, the Lebanese crisis and the events which followed were a direct consequence of the failure of the diplomatic efforts to resolve the severe conflicts among Israel, Syria and the PLO.

THE ISRAELI INVASION OF LEBANON

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was launched on June 6, 1982, but was planned and coordinated with the leaders of the Lebanese Christian Phalangist movement a few years earlier. According to the Israeli writers Schiff and Ya'ari, the first plans to invade Lebanon were conceived as early as April 1981,

as a response to the deployment of SA-6 missiles in the Bequ'a valley by Syria, and the growing military strength of the PLO in Lebanon.¹⁵ Begin believed that the U.S. would support such an act following remarks by the then Secretary of State Haig, who visited Israel in 1981, and expressed concerns about the same issues. A Syrian attack in 1981, on the Christian city Zahla led the Phalangists to contact Israel and ask for help against Syrian attacks. The ties between the Lebanese Christians and Israel were beginning to take the form of a military alliance.

In its planning stages as well as its early days, the invasion was presented as a limited, local affair aimed at destroying PLO bases in southern Lebanon. When the Israeli forces crossed Israel's northern border on Sunday, June 6, 1982, Prime Minister Begin said:

The Israeli army had been ordered to push the PLO forces northward to a distance of 25 miles from the Israeli border to place their artillery beyond the range of Israeli territory.¹⁶

Israel explained the need for the invasion, which was named "Peace for Galilee", in terms of the political changes which took place in Lebanon during 1981-1982, especially the establishment of a PLO, terrorist state within a state, which threatened the security of the Israeli civilian population living in range of PLO guns. Both the PLO and Syrian forces in Lebanon upgraded their military capabilities. Syria, which entered Lebanon in 1976 as a "pecekeeping force" was in 1981 fighting alongside the PLO and other extreme Muslim groups against the Christian militias. Israel perceived this situation

to be a major threat to the very existence of the Christian community in Lebanon with whom Israel had had strong relations for many years. The cooperation between the Christian Phalangists and Israel began on March 12, 1976, when a high ranking Phalangist officer came to Israel by boat from Beirut and established direct communication between the Phalangists and the Israeli government. From that time on and until the invasion was launched 6 years later, strong, regular ties existed between the Phalangists and Israel.¹⁷

The Phalangists appealed in desperation to Israel for help, maintaining that the Lebanese Christian community without protection from air attacks faced slaughter and possible annihilation. Prime Minister Begin ordered the Israeli Air Force to lend support to the Christians, maintaining that the Christian community faced the danger of a holocaust.¹⁸

Although Israel was concerned with the erosion of the Christians power position and influence in Lebanon, Israel's primary goal in the invasion was to destroy the political, military, and spiritual bases of the PLO in Lebanon. Moreover, Israel was particularly concerned that Lebanon might become a privileged sanctuary from which the PLO could launch even more effective attacks with impunity. The armed truce on Israel's northern border might be transformed into dreaded war of attrition or might simply weaken Israel's bargaining power over the West Bank.

The U.S. was aware of Israel's anxiety over the militarization of the PLO in Lebanon. Philip Habib, the U.S.'s special envoy successfully completed, on July 24, 1981, a

cease-fire agreement between Israel and the PLO with Saudi Arabia serving as a mediator. But Israel's security problems were not over as long as Syria continued to refuse to pull out its Soviet-made SA missile batteries from the Bequa'a valley. These missiles hampered the routine reconnaissance flights which Israel was conducting over Lebanese territory. The missiles were deployed in spring 1981, during the battle of the Christian city Zahla, which was provoked by Bashir Gemayel. A Phalangists' control of the city which is located near the Bequa'a valley and almost on the Beirut-Damascus highway, would have threatened the Syrian positions. Using the excuse of self-defense, Syria deployed the missiles and scored a major political and strategic victory over the Phalangists and Israel. Assad needed this victory to improve his political situation at home. (Until that time these flights were tacitly tolerated by Syria). Mark Heller and Dov Tamarí explain the Syrian motivation for deploying the missiles saying that any localized clash which could have erupted as a result of the deployment, provided that it would not develop into a full-scale war, was politically beneficial for Syria since it could have reduced Syria's isolation in the Arab world (Syria sides with Iran against all Arab states), and it might have derailed the normalization of the Egyptian-Israeli relations, a long-standing Syrian objective. Hence, Syria scored a much needed, substantial political victory.¹⁹

The American diplomacy headed off the impending confrontation but not for long. Habib's shuttle between

Damascus, Jerusalem, Beirut and Riyadh created a new *modus vivendi*. The Syrians retained their missiles, and thus claimed a political victory, while refraining from launching them against manned Israeli aircrafts, thus permitting the IAF (Israel Air Force) to continue its reconnaissance flights and ground attacks against PLO military objectives. Israel, however, never accepted this situation and considered it necessary to enhance the protection of its northern border from guerrilla attacks. In addition to security considerations, Israel believed that the destruction of the PLO bases in Lebanon would help to reduce tensions in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip which had become a severe domestic problem. As a democratic society, Israel's government was subject to opposition criticism which demanded a change in Israel's foreign policy, especially a change in the attitude toward the Palestinian question. In addition, the Likud government was facing severe economic problems and needed a reduction in the domestic pressures that were building up.

Hence, the invasion came in answer to certain, very pressing security and political problems which the Begin government had found difficult to cope with. Defense Minister Sharon initiated the invasion, arguing that it was the best way to end the stalemated status quo which he believed was to Israel's disadvantage. Sharon wished to change the political map of the Middle East completely so that it would serve Israel's interests.²⁰ Sharon's supporters included Prime Minister Begin himself, who saw in Arafat a follower of Hitler; the then

Minister of Foreign Affairs Itzhak Shamir, who became Begin's successor; and Israel's Chief of Staff, Refael Eitan.²¹ Begin, Shamir and Eitan were probably the only high officials who were fully informed of Sharon's real invasion plan and backed him up completely.

Before approving the plan, which was basically a "Sharon Plan", Israel had to consider a few major issues. The first was a global issue and concerned U.S.-Israeli relations. Israel decided not to inform the U.S. about the actual plan to attack on June 6, because Israel was aware of the regional and global dilemmas and knew that the U.S. would oppose a large scale military action since (a) it could lead to a conflict with America's Arab friends (b) any Israeli confrontation with Syria might develop into an American-Soviet confrontation. Israel had to plan the invasion in the context of East-West relationship, and especially in view of the fact that Syria was a Soviet client and the USSR could have assumed a strong anti-Israeli-anti-American position. Israel did not want to create any global crisis which could instigate a strong Soviet reaction that could lead to a crisis in U.S.-Israeli relations. On the other hand Israel assumed that because of the first global dilemma, the U.S. was unlikely to use substantial disciplinary tactics even when Israel's policies did not coincide with America's policy preferences. Israel believed that it was possible to carry out a large scale invasion and avoid American punitive action, although the U.S. opposed the act.

Israel gambled that the U.S.'s leverage would at best be minimal; hence, Israel would be able to accomplish its goals with impunity.

When planning the invasion Israel had to consider important regional factors, especially a possible strong reaction from Syria who was expected to resist fiercely any act which might diminish its power position in Lebanon. Moreover, Syria had an interest to continue its hostile relationships with both Israel and the United States, mainly for domestic reasons. Syria had aspirations not only to become the major Arab power in the Middle East in fighting Israel, but to become the leader of the Pan-Arabism movement, which was without a leader since the death in 1970, of the Egyptian ruler Nasser.

Mr. Assad's position on Lebanon is clear: he wants complete domination over any Lebanese government; short of that he will keep his 50,000 troops occupying half of the country. There are no reasonable concessions that American or Lebanese could offer the Syrian President Assad. Mr. Assad, Washington officials argue, does not want the Golan Heights back from Israel, for example -- he wants to stay in power. The best way for him to do that is to maintain a state of confrontation with the Israelis and the Americans and thus justify the militarization of the Syrian society he needs to protect his regime from a coup attempt. Washington believes that the way to get concessions from Mr. Assad is not by offering him things but by threatening his power base.²²

The Egyptian reaction to an Israeli invasion was another issue which Israel had to consider. A large scale invasion could threaten the very fragile peace treaty between the two nations. Egypt, which was condemned by every Arab state for signing a peace treaty with the Jewish state before the Palestinian issue

was resolved, was expected to take a firm stand against the invasion, and there was a strong possibility that President Mubarak might decide to suspend or even terminate the peace treaty. The only regional support that Israel could count on was that of the Lebanese Christian militia, with whom Israel had coordinated the invasion.²³ Israel as a client-state of the U.S. had to assume how its patron-state would react to a military operation which was perceived by the patron-state to be against its interests. Israel's gamble was that the existence of the regional and the global dilemmas would make it difficult for the U.S. to resort to disciplinary measures in order to impose compliance upon Israel. However, Israel remembered that on previous occasions American reaction was rather harsh. In June 1981, after Israel had bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor, Reagan immediately suspended the shipment of F-15 jet planes to Israel, as well as shipments of other weapons. Later that year, after Israel announced the annexation of the Golan Heights, Washington angrily announced the cancellation of the Memorandum of Understanding, a strategic agreement signed with Israel only two weeks earlier. The Memorandum was of special importance to Israel because it counterbalanced the sale of 5 AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia which created anxiety in Israel. President Reagan also suspended \$300 million in potential economic benefits to Israel by cancelling import contracts with the Israeli defense industry.²⁴

Although Israel assumed that the invasion of Lebanon would

find a better understanding in Washington, it wished to know more about the possible U.S. reaction before it crossed the Lebanese border. In his memoirs, former Secretary Haig recalls the first time he heard about the invasion. It was on October 1981, the day after Sadat's funeral, when Haig met with Prime Minister Begin at the Hyatt Prince Hotel in Nasser City. At the meeting Begin told Haig that Israel had begun planning a move into Lebanon that would not draw Syria into the conflict.

This was the first time he or any other Israeli had been quite so specific. "If you move, you move alone," I said. "Unless there is a major international recognized provocation, the United States will not support such an action". Begin answered that Israel's goal was only to push the PLO back from the border area and then go to the UN and ask for a guarantee that the PLO would not be back. "Does that make sense to you, Al?" Begin asked. I repeated that while it might make sense from the Israeli point of view, Israel will be alone if it carries out such a plan.²⁵

Two months later, on December 5, 1981, former Defense Minister Sharon met in Jerusalem with special envoy Philip Habib and Bill Brown, Deputy U.S. Ambassador in Tel-Aviv. Sharon briefed them about Israel's plan to invade southern Lebanon.

"If the terrorists will continue to violate the cease-fire agreement, we will have no other choice but to destroy completely the PLO bases in Lebanon," said Sharon... "We will act fiercely and decisively. We will destroy the PLO in Lebanon." Philip Habib said "General Sharon, this is the 20th century, you cannot just invade a sovereign country, besides you will instigate a war with Syria and the whole Middle East will go up in flames"... Sharon answered, "the Syrian army can keep out of it. We can free Lebanon of the presence of the PLO without any confrontation with Syria... We assume that Assad will keep out of this." Sharon went on and introduced a detailed map of southern Lebanon in which PLO bases were marked as the targets for a possible invasion. Habib and Brown

informed Washington of the meeting. This was the first time that Israel presented a detailed invasion plan to Washington.²⁶

Israel's plan to invade Lebanon did not encounter strong American opposition, although Haig in his memoirs tries to depict his reaction as being unequivocally harsh. According to Israeli writers Schiff and Ya'ari, U.S. reaction to the Sharon-Habib meeting was rather mild because State Department officials believed that the "Sharon plan" would never gain the cabinet support needed to approve such an act.²⁷ Encouraged by the American inaction, Israel decided to test once more the American attitude toward a large scale invasion. On February 3, 1982, Begin sent General Yehoshua Saguy, the director of Israel's military intelligence, to Washington to meet with Haig. General Saguy had formally informed Haig that Israel had made the decision to move into Lebanon if the PLO continued to attack Israel's northern border. During the six months that the cease-fire with the PLO was in effect, 17 Israelis were killed and 288 wounded in PLO violations of the cease-fire. Israel would attack, Saguy said, if these incidents continued. He explained: "A large scale force would advance from the Israeli border to the southern suburbs of Beirut. Its target would be the PLO infrastructure; the Syrians would be avoided if possible."²⁸ General Saguy stressed the limited nature of the planned invasion and assured former Secretary Haig that its aim was not Syria but the PLO.

The U.S. had more information about the 1982 invasion of

Lebanon than of any previous event in the Middle East. In addition to information communicated by Israel, a flow of information came from the Christian Phalangists with whom the invasion was coordinated. On April 8, 1982, John Chancellor of NBC-T.V. presented detailed maps of the complete Israeli military operation. He told his viewers that the Israelis would move in three forces: one would move along the coastal road into the refugee camps of Sydon and Tahir, the second would bypass the UNIFIL forces in the direction of Damour, and the third force would advance toward the Bequ'a valley in an effort to reach the Beirut-Damascus highway. Chancellor told the viewers that as many as 1200 Israeli tanks would take part in this large scale military operation, and that the Israelis were even considering an attack on Beirut.²⁹ This was basically the Israeli plan, which was leaked to Chancellor from Phalangist sources. It is hard to believe that what was known to John Chancellor was unknown to the CIA. However, Washington did not consider these "rumors" to be of real concern to the U.S. and the assumption was that strong warnings communicated to Israel on several occasions would be enough to deter Israel from carrying out its invasion plan.

In a classical case of misperception, Israel believed that it had made its concerns and interests very clear. For some years Israel had expressed anxiety over the growing military power of the PLO and Syria in Lebanon. Israel repeatedly stated that it would not hesitate to use force against the PLO, if

needed. The U.S. position, however, even after General Saguy's visit to Washington, was anything but clear.³⁰ Encouraged by this inaction and influenced by former Defense Minister Sharon's conviction that Haig would support the invasion, Begin decided to go ahead with the plan. Ready to invade, Begin decided to test the American attitude for the last time. Late in May 1982, former Defense Minister Sharon was dispatched to Washington to present to former Secretary Haig and high ranking State Department officials two contingency plans of the invasion. The first contingency plan was limited to only pacifying southern Lebanon. The second plan was more daring and was aimed at reaching Beirut and changing the political map of the region. Sharon presented detailed maps of the planned invasion, and arrows were drawn to show the forces movements. One arrow was missing from the maps: the arrow in the direction of the Bequ a valley. No arrow reached Beirut.³¹ The attentive people in the audience were more than surprised; Haig said that they were shocked. His reaction was a strong and clear warning: the U.S. would never approve of such an action unless it was in reaction to an internationally recognized PLO or Syrian provocation. Following the meeting, Haig sent a letter to Begin saying:

I hoped there was no ambiguity on the extent of our concern about possible future Israeli military action in Lebanon. The President and I wanted to make it very clear that we sincerely hoped that Israel would continue to exercise complete restraint and refrain from any action which would further damage the understanding underlying the cessation of hostilities. Israeli military actions, regardless of size, could have consequences none of us could foresee.³²

To General Sharon Haig said: (U)nless there was an internationally recognized provocation, and unless Israeli retaliation was proportionate to any such provocation, an attack by Israel into Lebanon would have a devastating effect in the United States. Sharon replied: No one has the right to tell Israel what decision it should take in defense of its people.³³

Haig's message was evaluated in Israel in view of other speeches made by him. In these speeches Haig expressed completely different opinions, attacking the Soviet Union and its surrogates, Syria and the PLO, and saying that their power and influence ought to be diminished. Israel misperceived these messages to be a U.S. approval of the argument that PLO guerrilla activities were a legitimate *casus belli*. For example, on April 1982, Haig said:

The USSR has emerged as a global military power increasingly bold in the use of its power and might to promote violence in areas with significant strategic importance to the West...The USSR uses satellite states as instruments of Soviet purpose...There is a rivalry. There is a power competition...Our enduring challenge is to develop and sustain a relationship with the USSR which recognizes that the competition will proceed but constrains the use or threat of force.³⁴

Israel believed that Haig implied to Syria, a Soviet satellite, which was considered the "Cuba of the Middle East", spreading anti-American feelings and trying to destabilize the region. In this context, Israel assumed that an invasion which would destroy a pro-Soviet terrorist organization (the PLO), and would diminish the power of Syria, would be welcomed by the U.S.

President Reagan was unaware of the political dynamics of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and completely misperceived Israel's

behavior during 1981 and 1982. Moreover, while considering the Middle East a vital U.S. interest, Reagan failed to give it a top priority. During the Carter Administration, peace in the Middle East was given a top priority and Carter maintained that a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict was a prerequisite for stability in the region. President Reagan, although following his predecessor's basic guidelines and orientation, greatly differed from Carter on the implementation process and did not consider the Middle East a top priority. Israel misperceived U.S.'s lack of interest in the Middle East to be support of Israel's legitimate security anxieties. However, Israel assumed that, because of the regional and global dilemmas, the U.S. would not help Israel alleviate this security threat. On the regional level, such a support would alienate the U.S.'s Arab friends, while on the global level, it might instigate an aggressive Soviet reaction.

Hence, Israel decided that (a) an Israeli military operation was inevitable, (b) the U.S. would accept it after the fact as a necessary measure. Former Secretary Haig, who claims to be the only one in the Reagan administration to be alarmed by Israel's plans, attempted in vain to communicate his concerns to the President and his national security adviser, William Clark.

War seemed near. Our duty to attempt prevent it was obvious; our ability to do so, questionable. After informing the President (of the meeting with Saguy), I sent Ambassador Lewis to Begin...to tell him that an Israeli operation...would have far-reaching consequences for our relationship...We would not tolerate such an operation in current circumstances.³⁵

The President ignored Haig's warnings of the approaching catastrophe and rejected his appeals to give the situation a higher priority. According to Haig, he suggested to the President to internationalize the Lebanese conflict and to call an emergency conference which would be composed of the European countries participating in the U.N. forces in Lebanon (France, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Norway), Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, as the Gulf states representatives, Syria, and the U.S. The USSR and Israel would not be invited.³⁶ Reagan did not accept the idea and instead, invited Prime Minister Begin to come to Washington on an official visit on June 21, 1982, to discuss U.S.-Israeli relations. Encouraged by this inaction and influenced by former Defense Minister Sharon's strong arguments that Israel would enjoy Haig's support, Begin decided to go ahead with the invasion plans. The Israeli army was ordered to start preparing a large scale invasion.³⁷

U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East inevitably led to unplanned growing American involvement in the region's politics. Unwillingly, the U.S. was becoming increasingly involved in the crisis until at the height of it the U.S. completely dispensed with the use of surrogates and acted directly in the crisis. However, U.S. policy failed to head off the impending catastrophe because it was guided by misperceptions. American policy was neither clear nor consistent. For example, Haig made conflicting statements, calling on the one hand, upon Israel to show restraint and maintain the status quo, while on the other

hand, stressing the need to curtail the power of the PLO and Syria in Lebanon and reinstate Lebanese sovereignty over its territory.

While Israel was planning the invasion misperceiving the U.S.'s position, Reagan was caught in his own misperceptions assuming that Israel would never carry out its plan. Reagan wrongly assumed that he had the situation under control by (a) warning Israel against any excessive military acts in Lebanon, (b) establishing a ceasefire between Israel and the PLO through Philip Habib in July of 1981, and (c) supporting the Saudi peace initiative of August 1981 (the Fahd Plan). Washington expected of Saudi Arabia to play a major role in the peace process, since it was providing Syria with massive economic aid. The U.S. asked of Saudi Arabia to influence Syria to pull out its SA-6 missiles from the Bequ'a valley since these missiles were a source of extreme anxiety in Israel. To America's chagrin, the Saudi leverage proved to be no more than a myth (see our earlier discussion).

Israel, frustrated by the U.S.'s inability to produce meaningful results in Lebanon and believing that the invasion would serve overlapping American-Israeli interests, was ready to invade. The Phalangists had a major role in the military operation. They were supposed to take over territories cleared by the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) of PLO and Syrian forces and reinstate their control over Lebanon. Chief of Staff, Rafael Eitan, was the major supporter of this cooperation while many

other Israeli military officials opposed it claiming that (a) the Phalangist militia is unreliable (b) the Phalangists use Israel as a tool to achieve their parochial goals and, (c) Israel's involvement in the ethnic politics of Lebanon was detrimental to Israel's pursuit of peace.³⁸ These arguments which proved later to be true, did not, however, influence or change the minds of Begin, Sharon, and Eitan. The decision was made and the invasion goals were clear: to destroy the Syrian and PLO bases in Lebanon, after which a Christian controlled government, with whom Israel could reach a peace treaty, would be established.

Israel however, could not carry out its plan before April 1982, the date set for the completion of the evacuation of the Sinai. Israel planned the invasion so that it would anger the U.S. the least. Hence, Israel had to wait until the evacuation of the Sinai was completed. It was clear that any move before that date would be disastrous to U.S.-Israeli relations, since it would endanger the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt which was of vital importance to the U.S. Israel decided to move as soon as possible after April, using even a minor provocation as an excuse. This was provided when the Israeli Ambassador to London was attacked and seriously wounded by PLO guerrillas.

Haig claims that he, unlike Reagan and Clark, was perceptive of Israel's intentions, and in his April 27, 1982 foreign policy address he stressed the need for an urgent diplomatic action to end the civil war in Lebanon and prevent an

Israeli invasion, however, to no avail.³⁹

The issue of the invasion was discussed in the Israeli Cabinet a few times. Not once did Sharon mention the fact that the plan included Beirut or the takeover of the Beirut-Damascus highway. These acts could instigate a war with Syria, which many Cabinet members were opposed to. In the briefings Sharon portrayed U.S.'s attitude as "supportive." In March 1982 the invasion plans were completed, and in April Begin revealed the plans to the leaders of the opposition party, The Labor Alignment, presenting the invasion as a limited military operation. Two former Generals, Chaim Barlev and Itzhak Rabin, and a former Minister of defense, Shimon Peres, participated in the meeting and expressed opposition to the invasion. General Saguy was also against the plan. A few other Cabinet members among them former General Chaim Tzipori claimed that a war with Syria would be inevitable. The criticism did not deter either Begin or Sharon, who ignored all warnings that the invasion might be counter-productive and might result in adverse consequences. On May 13, when the invasion plans were completed, and only the date was not yet set, the Israeli Chiefs of Staffs held a meeting, in which General Saguy expressed strong opinions against the invasion. He predicted a war with Syria, claiming that the goal of the invasion was really political and not military, and questioned the reliability of the Phalangists as strategic allies and political friends. Saguy's most important criticism, however, concerned the U.S. and the USSR's

reactions.

The U.S.'s most vital interest is peace and stability in the region. Hence, the U.S. would not support the invasion...The USSR would keep a low profile since it too has no interest in upheavals in the region...After the war, the issue would be reestablishing Lebanese sovereignty, and this would become the major problem with which Israel would not be capable of dealing.⁴⁰

Begin and Sharon did not share Saguy's opinion. Moreover, Sharon's visit to Washington in late May 1982, in which he introduced the invasion plans, convinced Begin that the invasion would enjoy the U.S.'s support. One of the possible scenarios was that if the invasion would lead to an encounter with Syria the Soviet Union would intervene in support of their client-state Syria, a result of which the U.S. would have to intervene in support of their client-state, Israel. It was very unlikely, and Israel was aware of it, that the U.S. could develop a policy that would simultaneously (a) support Israel, (b) not alienate friendly Arab states, (c) promote stability, (d) not invite a major confrontation with the Soviet Union, and (e) sustain American prestige and power position in the region. Israel knew that the U.S. would have to rank its priorities and Israel assumed that in doing so the U.S. would choose the first policy option, i.e., (a) which would yield (c) and (e). Caught in its misperceptions, Israel not only ignored the major conflict of interest between the U.S. and Israel but misperceived overlapping interests. This misperception derived from shared long-term interests which Israel assumed to prevail over all other interests, namely, containment, and protection of

the U.S.'s power position in the region. The major conflicts, however, especially U.S.'s desire to maintain the status quo and avoid any possible upheaval that might threaten the flow of oil, was completely ignored by Israel. The conditions were set for the large-scale invasion to begin.

OPERATION PEACE FOR GALILEE:

A REVERSED CASE OF PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

On June 3, 1982, Shlomo Argov, the Israeli Ambassador to England was shot and critically wounded by terrorists. A Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem the next day, approved an extended air raid on PLO bases in and around Beirut. Saturday evening, June 5, Begin summoned the Cabinet at his home, asking the members to approve a limited invasion of Lebanon aimed at destroying PLO bases within 25 miles zone and titled "Peace for Galilee". The then Defense Minister Sharon said that the Syrian forces would be avoided if possible. While the Israeli Cabinet was debating the issue, the Israeli forces were already at their posts, ready to move.

In his military campaign, Sharon was acting on his own, often without Israeli Cabinet approval and sometimes even without the knowledge of the prime minister.⁴¹

After a Cabinet approval of a limited military operation which would last no more than a few days, the Navy, Army and Airforce crossed the Lebanese border in a coordinated effort not only to destroy PLO bases in southern Lebanon, but to destroy the Syrian SA missile batteries, to reach the Beirut-Damascus

highway, to cut off the Syrian forces in Beirut from their bases in the Bequ'a valley, and to trap about 10.000 PLO members in Beirut. Sharon never intended to limit the operation to a 25 mile zone. Three forces advanced simultaneously in three spearheads, while landing boats landed paratroopers behind enemy lines north of Sidon, as support forces to tanks division and army forces which were advancing from the south. A major strategic and political decision, not presented to the Cabinet, was to advance toward the Bequ'a valley and cut off the Beirut-Damascus highway. Sharon hoped that the I.D.F (Israel defense Forces) movemenet would be swift. Syria, according to Sharon's assumption, would face one of two possibilities: (a) to fight and suffer a humiliating defeat, or (b) to order a forces retreat to Damascus. Since a humiliating defeat might cause an upheaval or even a coup in Syria, Sharon assumed that Assad would choose to pull out all Syrian forces from the Bequ'a valley, which would give Israel a victory without fighting a war.⁴² Sharon's hypothesis proved to be a wishful thinking. Assad neither ordered a retreat nor pulled out. Syria's power position in Lebanon remained as strong as ever, in spite of the military defeate. While Israel clearly won the battle, Syria won the war.

The invasion was conducted in phases: (a) June 6 to June 11, the major battles, (b) June 11, a first cease-fire (c) June 12 to June 24 a slow movement (the "salami tactic") of Israeli forces toward Beirut and the Beirut-Damascus highway. (d) June

25, a second cease-fire.⁴³ In early July, after all the fighting sides accepted the cease fire, the U.S. launched a diplomatic campaign to achieve a PLO and Syrian evacuation from Beirut. Israel used the last weeks of July and the first week of August for a slow advance of I.D.F forces into the suburbs of west Beirut. By the end of August, Beirut was a city under Israeli siege. Israel used its strategic advantage and shelled West Beirut heavily and regularly, in order to coerce the Syrians and the PLO to evacuate the city.⁴⁴

Israel's siege of the city combined with the daily heavy shellings was successful. In late August, the PLO and Syrian forces evacuated Beirut under the supervision of 800 American marines, who returned home by the end of August, after their mission was completed. Reagan, believing that all was going well, made public, on September 1, his comprehensive peace plan. At the same week, Bashir Gemayel, the pro-American, Christian leader, was elected President of Lebanon. However, on September 14, Bashir Gemayel was assassinated, and on September 15, Israel moved into West Beirut. On September 16, to avenge the death of their leader, the Phalangists took over two refugee camps--Sabra and Shatila--and for two days massacred hundreds of Palestinian refugees. On September 26, under heavy domestic and American pressure, the Israeli forces evacuated West Beirut. A multinational force consisting of 1800 American marines, British, French and Italian forces, takes positions in West Beirut.⁴⁵ Very soon the American peacemaking mission changed to

an active involvement in the hostilities. The U.S. came very close to a dangerous military confrontation with the Soviet-client, Syria, and experienced major conflicts with its own client-state Israel. U.S.'s leverage over either its allies or its foes was practically nonexistent as the following analysis clearly shows.

When Israel crossed the Lebanese border on Sunday, June 6. Reagan was attending a seven nation summit meeting in France. He was completely taken by surprise when he was informed of the invasion. From Reagan's point of view, the timing could not have been worse. Reagan's European tour was a succession of embarrassments. The allies rejected his proposal to put sanctions on the trans-Siberian pipeline, conflicts developed over U.S.'s economic policies, the situation in Poland was troubling, and the U.S. was unable to negotiate a settlement in the Falklands war. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was the last mishap in Reagan's frustrating tour which was supposed to build up his position as a world leader. The invasion shattered the fragile status quo which existed in Lebanon and terminated the awkward modus vivendi among Israel, Syria and the PLO. The U.S. was forced to honor its commitment to protect peace and stability in the region by force, if necessary, which the U.S. was indeed trying to do. However, Washington has found it difficult, if not impossible, to pursue its traditional foreign policy goals, i.e., to prevent an Israeli-Arab war, avoid a superpower confrontation, and negotiate a comprehensive peace

plan which would provide Israel with security and the Palestinians with a return to their territories.

President Reagan, who refused to give the Middle East a top priority during 1981 and until the invasion, was faced with the urgent need to develop both long-term and short-term policies concerning the crisis. On an immediate level Reagan had to initiate a policy that would keep the crisis controlled and confined to a regional purview. The most urgent need was to avoid any superpower confrontation that could have resulted from an Israeli-Syrian war. Reagan's peace initiative of September 1, 1982, was the U.S.'s intended long-term policy. The short term policy was a harsh condemnation of the invasion and demands for (a) an immediate cease-fire, (b) a withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon. Reagan joined with six other summit leaders, who interrupted their economic meeting, and warned Israel of the "disastrous consequences" of continued violence in the Middle East.

Reagan broke away from the meeting and conferred with Philip Habib who arrived from London earlier that day. Secretary Haig, who was with Reagan in Versailles, said that the President was following the developments in Lebanon "moment by moment", and was extremely concerned that the violence would broaden to a possible war between Israel and Syria.⁴⁶ At the UN, the Security Council reached a unanimous resolution demanding that Israel pull out its invading forces. At the demand of the U.S., however, the resolution called upon both Israel and the PLO to

halt all military actions "within Lebanon and across the Lebanese-Israeli border."⁴⁷ Israel was not surprised at Reagan's initial harsh response. Aware of the American regional and global dilemmas, Israel knew that the U.S. would oppose a large scale military action since (a) it could lead to a conflict with its friendly Arab states and (b) any Israeli confrontation with Syria might lead to American confrontation with the Soviet Union. Israel, therefore, assured Washington that the invasion would be limited and would not involve or develop into a war with Syria unless the Syrians engaged the Israelis. A decision to that effect was reached at an Israeli Cabinet meeting which was held on June 6, and was submitted to Reagan on that day. (In his memoirs Haig confirms receiving the message.)⁴⁸ The Syrian issue was a controversial one in Israel and while the invasion was in progress high ranking military officials were arguing for and against a limited war with Syria. Former Defense Minister Sharon advocated a confrontation with Syria believing that this would be to Israel's advantage. However, most high ranking Israeli military officials did not share this view.⁴⁹

During the first stage of the invasion i.e., between June 6 and June 11, (when the first cease-fire took effect), the U.S. strongly opposed the invasion and tried to confine it to its original 25 mile zone. The U.S. feared that an Israeli advance beyond that line would inevitably lead to a war with Syria. Washington feared that a new wave of hostilities added to the

ongoing Iran-Iraq war could put the whole Middle East in flames. While still in Europe, former Secretary Haig told reporters:

We did not want them to go in in the first place. We have been very very clear about it for an extended period.⁵⁰

This statement referred to Haig's talks with General Saguy and former Defense Minister Sharon, in which he stressed his objection to a large scale invasion without proper provocation. Israel, however, misperceiving American interests, assumed U.S. support based on the second regional dilemma and the two global dilemmas. Israel gambled that the U.S. would not use punishment tactics, namely withholding of aid, since this would dangerously weaken Israel. Weakening Israel would be against U.S. interests since Israel is America's most important ally in the region.⁵¹ Moreover, as long as the USSR was supporting and strengthening its ally Syria, the U.S. could not stop strengthening its ally, Israel. U.S. leverage was, therefore, severely limited in terms of using withholding of arms. Israel also assumed that as long as the Middle East remains a vital U.S. interest, and as long as the regional and global dilemmas exist, Israel could pursue its policies with immunity. Hence, Israel did not stop when it reached the original target of a 25 mile zone into Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the Israelis...continued to drive northward. Syria moved an additional 16,000 troops into Lebanon, bringing her total forces to nearly 40,000. The Israelis continued to send messages that they did not wish to engage the Syrians, but at the same time their columns continued to advance up the coast toward Beirut in a way that might well develop into a link-up with the Phalange that would cut the main body of Syrian off from their contingent in the capital.⁵²

On June 9, while Reagan was in England trying to cope with the Falklands war, the situation in Poland, the Siberian gas pipeline, and economic disagreements with his European allies, he was notified that the Israelis had moved closer to a war with Syria by destroying the SA-6 missile sites and downing 23 Syrian MIGs. At the same time I.D.F. forces were advancing rapidly toward the Beirut-Damascus highway.

The main strategic key to the operation must be establishing a presence on the Beirut-Damascus highway. This was Syria's first strategic aim when its forces entered Lebanon in 1976. The isolation of Beirut from Damascus was considered essential.⁵³

When evaluating the situation the U.S. had realized that it was facing a major conflict of interest with Israel. Israel was very concerned and anxious over the growing power of the PLO in Lebanon. However, this was not a major U.S. concern. Second, Israel believed that the status quo benefited the PLO and Syria and should therefore be changed. The U.S. feared that such a change could lead to a major U.S.-Soviet confrontation.⁵⁴ Third, Israel was striving for a political change in Lebanon, namely, a separate peace treaty with a Christian controlled government. This was against the American interest in a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict. The role of Jordan was another area of disagreement. The U.S. wanted Jordan to join the peace process and to become an important component of it. Israel preferred to keep Jordan out, since it assumed that a Jordanian participation in the peace process would ultimately lead to an Israeli withdrawal from all, or major parts of the West Bank.

Caught in its misperceptions, Israel not only ignored these conflicts, but misperceived an overlap of interests between the U.S. and Israel based on overlapping long-term interests: the need to curb Soviet influence, the need to establish American hegemony in the region, and the need to secure the flow of oil. Israel's misperception was that the invasion was promoting these goals, while the U.S. believed that the invasion endangered and threatened these interests.⁵⁵

Faced with the regional and global dilemmas the U.S. could not discipline Israel without severely weakening it. On the other hand the U.S. had to stop Israel advancement toward Beirut and the Beqaa valley lest a major war that could develop into a superpowers confrontation would erupt. The Reagan administration's immediate goal was a cease-fire. After a few days of heavy fighting Israel realized that the Sharon plan of an easy Israeli victory over Syria did not materialize. Syria was strongly supported by the USSR, which immediately resupplied it with all the weapons destroyed or captured by the Israeli forces. Fighting fiercely, Syria refused to retreat, and moved 16,000 more fighters from the Golan Heights and Syria into Lebanon.

Israel finally accepted the U.S. demand for a cease-fire, repeating the famous tactic used by Israel during the October 1973 war, i.e., Israel accepted the cease-fire formally, while continuing its military campaign informally. In order to impose upon Israel the cease-fire the U.S. used its traditional measure

of coercion, namely, the withholding of 75 F-16 jets, which were promised to Israel after the complete evacuation of the Sinai, which was only two weeks before the Lebanese invasion was launched. The formal procedure of military aid required the President, after concluding the deal with Israel, to send Congress a 30 day notification, explaining the proposed arms sale, and asking for Congressional approval. Following the invasion, the President suspended immediately the notification to Congress. The correlation between the suspension of the F-16 and Israel's acceptance of the cease-fire is, however, doubtful. Israel accepted formally the cease-fire on June 11 because it was in Israel's own interest and not because of the coercive measures used. In fact, two previous suspensions of arms (carried out in 1981), were ineffective and did not change Israel's policies concerning the Golan Heights and the settlements in the West Bank. Moreover, the continued withholding of arms during 1982-1983, did not result in Israel's compliance with American policies either. In all the mentioned cases Israel continued to pursue its policies regardless of U.S.'s withholding of arms tactics.

Israeli military experts argue that the cease-fire of June 11, was a grave mistake because Israel ceased fire short of reaching both the Beirut-Damascus highway, and the Beqaa valley. The argument was that had Israel been able to attain these strategic goals then, (Israel reached the Beirut-Damascus highway later,) the Lebanese crisis would have taken a

completely different course.⁵⁶ According to this theory, the U.S.'s misperception was that a bilateral cease-fire agreement between Israel and Syria achieved through U.S.'s mediation would shortly lead to a broader agreement on a mutual withdrawal of all Israeli and Syrian forces from Lebanon. In reality, however, the cease-fire enabled Syria to regain its military strength and reconstruct its political influence, while Israel's strategic and political positions were severely deteriorating.

During the Lebanese crisis the regional and global dilemmas became more dominant than ever, creating political difficulties which the U.S. could neither predict nor cope with. The U.S. found itself constantly surprised and unprepared, and its policies, therefore, were a succession of ad-hoc, inconsistent reactions to the changing environment. American policy lurched from opposition to support of the invasion. Between June 1982 and February 1984, four major policy changes took place. (a) During the first two weeks, the U.S. strongly opposed the invasion, considering it an "excessive use of force", and demanding an immediate ceasefire followed by an Israeli withdrawal. (b) After the PLO and Syrian defeat, which led to their evacuation from Beirut, a complete change of attitude took place. Now supportive of the invasion, Washington adopted an optimistic view that an era of new opportunities for peace in the Middle East had begun. (c) Disillusioned by the Israeli battle and takeover of West Beirut and frustrated by Israel's rejection of the Reagan peace plan, Washington changed

its attitude again. Now Israel was perceived as the major obstacle to peace and the resolution of the Lebanese crisis. This new attitude however, did not last long either. (d) The May 17 agreement signed between Israel and Lebanon followed by Syria's obnoxious behavior and blatant refusal to cooperate in any way, resulted in a new rapprochement between Israel and the U.S. which culminated in the signing of the Strategic Cooperation Agreement of November 1983.

The initial American reaction to the invasion was, as Israel had expected, a combination of sharp open criticism and very little action. The only substantial action was the withholding of the notification of the sale of 75 F-16s, which had no immediate effect on Israel's military power or its strategic position in the region. It is interesting to compare U.S.'s reaction to previous Israeli military actions, for example the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, in June 1981, which was much more significant, but nonetheless did not affect the continued Israeli defiance of American foreign policy. Moreover, Haig, in his early statements, admonished the PLO and called upon them to "stop using Lebanon as a launching pad for attacks."⁵⁷ The U.S.'s mild reaction angered many people, especially Israel's opponents in Congress, who expected the administration not only to demand a ceasefire and a pullout, but also to use its leverage by suspending all shipments of arms to Israel. Especially critical were Congressmen Oaker (D-OH), Miller (R-OH), and Roth (R-VI).⁵⁸ When asked about the

possibility of withholding arms shipments to Israel. Haig said that the question needed further exploration implying that he did not favor such an act.

The issue of continuing arms shipment was under review, but the immediate emphasis was on containing the conflict, and that arms cutoff now may not serve that purpose.⁵⁹

Moreover, on June 10, the U.S. vetoed a UN Security Council resolution, which condemned Israel's failure to withdraw from Lebanon and called for an end to hostilities in six hours. It was clear that after the initial surprise effect faded, Washington began to view the invasion as a positive change. The Administration naively believed that the invasion was the beginning of a new era, a time of new opportunities. This was not, however, the opinion of Israel's foes, as expressed by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak in their column of June 9, 1982, published in the Washington Post.

WILL REAGAN CURE ISRAEL?

Embarrassed and undercut by Israel's invasion of Lebanon as the last mishap ruining his European grand tour, President Reagan has been advised to respond toughly or risk further labeling his administration as irrelevant in world affairs...The weapon in Reagan's hand is a law forbidding Israel to employ U.S. arms except in "legitimate" self-defense. Yet considering past reluctance nobody is betting that the President will use this weapon - as the maligned Jimmy Carter did in 1978, (during the Litani Campaign, when Israeli troops crossed the Lebanese border and destroyed PLO bases in southern Lebanon)...Begin is weaker today...But will Reagan take the next step and send a letter to Congress suspending all shipment of American weapons? Nobody can be sure.⁶⁰

But Reagan, caught, in the regional and global dilemmas, could not coerce Israel to comply and adjust its policies to

those of the U.S. (actually not until Israel began the battle of West Beirut did the U.S. try to exert leverage over Israel, which when sought, proved to be very limited.)

The second phase of U.S. policy in Lebanon had begun after the first cease-fire was achieved. Washington assumed that with the destruction of the PLO, the strengthening of the Lebanese Christians, and the Syrian defeat, an era of new opportunities had opened up in the Middle East. The invasion was now perceived as a means to achieve a constructive change in the region.⁶¹ This, however, was a misperception which led the U.S. to assume that the invasion would promote major American foreign policy goals: (a) establish the U.S. as an exclusive "powerbroker" friendly to both Israel and the Arab states. (b) reinstate a sovereign government in Lebanon free of pro-Soviet, Syrian influence, and (c) with the role of the PLO diminished, Hussein would be willing to join the peace process. Reagan visualized the early termination of the Israeli-Arab conflict, under U.S. leadership. On an immediate level, the U.S. and Israel shared the misperception that after its defeat, Syria would be willing to accept a withdrawal agreement which would include Israel, Syria and the PLO.

Israel, which accepted the cease-fire of June 11 with mixed feelings, realized after a few days that the cease-fire was benefiting Syria at Israel's expense. Unhappy and disillusioned with Syria's fast recovery, Israel began the second phase of its involvement in Lebanon. Israel decided to

pressure Syria by: (a) using the "salami tactic" , i.e., advancing very carefully toward the Beirut-Damascus highway, and cutting off Syrian and PLO forces in Beirut from their bases in the Bequa valley and in Damascus, (b) threatening the Syrian capital by taking positions 25 miles from Damascus, (c) shelling Beirut systematically in preparation for a takeover of the city with the aid of the Phalangists militia.⁶² These strategic moves were assumed to yield those political advantages which the original invasion failed to yield. The Israeli forces reached the Beirut-Damascus highway on June 23, and took positions only 25 miles from Damascus. The PLO and Syrian forces in Beirut were trapped while the city itself came under Israeli siege and was heavily bombed. Israel's strategy was successful.⁶³ The trapped PLO and Syrian forces in Beirut were willing to evacuate the city. Israel, however, wanted more than that. Israel wanted a complete pullout of all PLO and Syrian forces from Lebanon, and a peace treaty with a Christian controlled Lebanese government. The U.S. fiercely opposed Israel's policies. Israel's actions angered Washington. For the first time Reagan seriously considered sanctions against Israel. It is interesting and important to follow U.S-Israeli relations during these days of confrontation and realize how limited was U.S. leverage over Israel.

When it became clear to Reagan that Israel's invasion was not limited to the declared 25 miles, an announcement was made that the President was considering canceling his meeting with Prime

Minister Begin which was planned for June 21. In addition, sources in Washington mentioned the possibility of suspending the deal of the 75 F-16 fighter jets.⁶⁴ Reagan feared that any additional pressure on Syria, which had already lost billions in military equipment and was being resupplied and supported by the Soviet Union, might create a superpower confrontation. Washington demanded an unequivocal Israeli commitment to: (a) stop all military activities, (b) not enter West Beirut, (c) cooperate with the U.S. on an all out withdrawal agreement. On June 17, and after Begin assured Reagan that Israel would not enter West Beirut, Washington announced that the Prime Minister's visit would take place as planned.

Israel, however, never gave up its plans to take over West Beirut. The Begin government, influenced by Sharon's misperceptions, believed that only a final blow to the PLO and Syrian forces in Beirut would enable Israel to achieve its ultimate goal, i.e., to change the political map of the region. Israel gambled that the global dilemmas would prevent the U.S. from "punishing" Israel for violating its promises. Israel also believed that Washington would ultimately understand that the heavy shelling of Beirut combined with the siege of the city were the necessary means to bring Syria to the bargaining table.⁶⁵ In late August 1982, Washington found itself in the awkward position of having to accept Israel's policy as a fait-accomplis, since it lacked the leverage needed to change it. While Beirut was under siege and heavily bombed by Israel,

Shultz said in a press conference that the relationship between the two nations was as strong as ever.

The Israeli-American relationship remains a strong one. We are completely committed to the support of the security of Israel...(U)nderneath it all (the conflicts), the relationship between the U.S. and Israel remain a strong one.⁶⁶

In a clear case of reverse patron-client relationship, the U.S. adopted Israel's view that the heavy shelling and the siege of Beirut were necessary measures under the circumstances. Beirut suffered intense air raids and a painful siege for almost six weeks, at the end of which an agreement was negotiated for the evacuation of PLO and Syrian forces from Beirut, under the supervision of a multinational force including 800 U.S. marines, and 350 French troops. The French troops arrived in Beirut on August 21, while the 800 marines arrived on August 25. The marines completed their mission and returned to their bases on September 10, 1982, only to come back a few days later to cope with a much worse situation.

THE REAGAN PEACE PLAN

The end of August and the first two weeks in September were times of great hopes both in Washington and in Jerusalem. Reagan believed that with the PLO crushed, and Syrian war machine destroyed, Hussein would gladly join the peace process to get his share of the bargain. Reagan decided to embark upon an ambitious peace plan believing that there never was a better time for such an initiative.

The Lebanese war, tragic as it was, has left us with a new opportunity for Middle East peace. We must seize

it now and bring peace to this troubled area to vital to world stability...So tonight I am calling for a fresh start. This is the moment for all those directly concerned to get involved - or lend their support - to a workable basis for peace.⁶⁷

Reagan's big hopes were strengthened by the "low profile" that the Soviet Union had kept throughout the crisis. Reagan assumed that, since Syria was the main Soviet stronghold in the region, the USSR would support an agreement that would prevent any additional humiliation for Syria. The Soviet Union also wished to avoid any unnecessary adventure that might draw the superpowers into a direct confrontation. Reagan hoped that both Assad and Hussein would now join the bargaining table which, until then, they had refused to do. Secretary of Defense Weinberger later stated that at that time the U.S. received assurances from Israel, Syria and the PLO, that they were ready to negotiate a complete force withdrawal as a first step toward a broader agreement.

We would like to see the forces that are in Lebanon do exactly what their governments have said. All of the syrian statements have always been that they wanted to withdraw. the Israeli statements have been that they wanted to withdraw, PLO when it was still a force said that...the important thing is to pursue those objectives.⁶⁸

Hence, after Reagan had neglected the peace process for a year and a half while aspiring to create an impossible Arab-Israeli strategic consensus against the Soviet Union, and after ignoring the approaching disaster in Lebanon, Reagan embarked upon a more precise and detailed plan to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict. Jordan and Saudi Arabia were the major

components of the plan. Jordan and the Palestinians were expected to work out a plan for the West Bank and the Gaza strip that would give the Palestinian self-government in association with Jordan. No independent Palestinian state would be established. Israel must freeze the settlements and renounce any claim to permanent control over these territories. Hence, King Hussein became the linchpin of Reagan's peace initiative.

The first blow to Reagan's plan came when it was brusquely rejected by Israel. Begin's main objection was the proposed Jordanian role. He maintained his refusal to negotiate the future of the West Bank or to freeze the settlements. The U.S.'s lack of leverage over Israel alienated King Hussein, who was initially open and willing to accept the Reagan's peace plan.

Hussein seemed ready. After giving the Reagan Plan a qualified endorsement, Hussein met with Arafat and began what seemed to be promising, if tentative, effort to work out a common approach to negotiations about the West Bank. In effect, such an approach would have reversed the Arab world's Rabat decision in 1974, which gave the PLO the exclusive right to represent the Palestinians in any peace negotiations.⁶⁹

Reagan promised Hussein when they met in Washington at the end of December 1982, that he would revive the autonomy talks that died after the completion of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Reagan also promised to coerce Israel to halt settlements on the West Bank if Hussein openly offered to join the peace talks. Reagan "secretly pledged to try to halt Israeli settlements on the West Bank and Gaza if Jordan simply offered to join the peace talks."⁷⁰ Most of all, Reagan promised Hussein a generous arms deal including F-16 jets, and

the establishment of a Jordanian Rapid Deployment Force financed and trained by American military personnel.

Reagan and Hussein hopes faded quickly with the adamant rejectionist position of Israel. Syria's shadow was also clouding the future of Reagan's peace plan. By that time the Soviet Union was rebuilding Syria's devastated military arsenal and had supplied Assad with \$2.5 billion worth of equipment, roughly double what was lost during the war. The bill, as usual, was picked up by Saudi Arabia. No development in the Lebanese crisis was so dramatic and so unpredictable as Syria's resurgence as a political and military force in Lebanon. Unaware of Syria's recovery, Reagan wrongly assumed that Syria was not only defeated but isolated in the Arab world; hence, Syria was ignored in Reagan's peace initiative. In fact, Syria became the linchpin in the Lebanese political scene and as its military capability grew, it actually gained a veto power over the situation in Lebanon. In January 1983, Syria announced that no agreement could be carried out without its consent.⁷¹

Saudi Arabia, which was expected to play a major role in the peace process mainly because it was financing Syria's vast military defense budget, and was, therefore, supposed to have leverage over Syria, proved to be another major disappointment.

First, in the winter of 1983, the Saudis were absolutely unable to influence the PLO to join with King Hussein in picking up the Reagan peace plan. Nor have the Saudis been able to realize their wish to see the Syrians out of Lebanon. Saudi leverage with Damascus is almost nonexistent, and both Syria and Lebanon manipulatively claim that the Saudis are on their side...Syria's decision to withdraw will not

depend on Saudi pressure but rather on Syria's interpretation of her interests...Moreover, Syria is angry that the Saudis did not prevent Lebanon from signing the agreement with Israel. The Lebanese are upset that the Saudis do not pressure Assad to withdraw, Iraq blames Saudi Arabia for not forcing Syria to reopen a pipeline that would enable Iraq to export enough oil to fund its war with Iran. The Reagan administration is disappointed that the Saudis did not press the PLO to approve Hussein's entrance into the peace process. Nor can Washington understand why Riyadh does not use its leverage to obtain a Syrian withdrawal. Above all the entire Arab world is frustrated that the Saudis cannot deliver the U.S. - cannot force it to recognize the PLO and press Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.⁷²

However, the major blow to Reagan's peace plan was the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, the Lebanese President elect, on September 14, 1982. With Bashir Gemayel, the charismatic Christian leader dead, Reagan's peace plan evaporated into mirages, and everything that could have gone wrong actually did go wrong. Only a few hours after the assassination all hell broke loose in Lebanon.

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE WITHHOLDING OF ARMS, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL DILEMMAS, AND THE LACK OF LEVERAGE

The death of Bashir Gemayel, who was Israel's closest friend in Lebanon, destroyed six years of preparations and planning for achieving peace between Israel and its northern neighbor. Israel, shocked and frustrated, decided to seize the opportunity and carry out its old plan to move into West Beirut. Only a few hours after the assassination, Israeli forces moved in and took over West Beirut, violating all previous promises to the contrary. The U.S. was furious, but lacked the leverage needed to deter Israel from implementing its old plan. Israel

knew that because of the regional and global dilemmas no substantial withholding of arms would be used by the U.S. The temporary delay in the delivery of the F-16 jets did not bother Israel which did not expect the jets before 1986 any way. This frustrating situation was described very perceptively in two British newspapers, the Daily Telegraph, and the Guardian, of September 3, 1982.

The Reagan Administration is in a cleft stick. It is not in a real sense, able to control Israel since the only measure it could take to do so effectively would have to be so drastic that it would imperil Israel's existence. (A comprehensive suspension of all weapons to Israel). Cuts here and there in arms or aid make no difference.⁷³

The Guardian expressed the same thoughts: Mr. Begin has no world strategy to carry out, no foreign rulers to appease, no rival superpowers to outflank...With the Arab world at its customary sixes and sevens, with the PLO fighting machine defeated, with the Soviet Union disinclined to get involved, and with a staunch electoral behind him, he has aces to Mr. Reagan's nines.⁷⁴

According to Israeli sources, the takeover of West Beirut was planned for mid-June, in accordance with the late Lebanese President Bashir Gemayel.⁷⁵ Begin's original plan was only to provide support to Bashir Gemayel's forces that were expected to take over West Beirut after the evacuation of PLO and Syrian forces. The plan was changed when it became clear to both Gemayel and Begin that the Phalangists were unable to carry out the mission. Defense Minister Sharon suggested to Begin that Israel continue with the plan on its own. The majority of the Israeli Cabinet rejected the Sharon plan. Sharon, however, never really abandoned his plan and he executed it at the first possible occasion, which was the power vacuum created by the

death of Bashir Gemayel. The U.S. and Israel were entering the third phase of the Lebanese crisis, the phase of fiction and conflict. It is important to mention in this context that the resignation of Secretary of state Haig only a few weeks after the invasion was launched⁷⁶ was undoubtedly to Israel's disadvantage. Haig was one of the staunchest supporters of Israel in general, and of the invasion (although after the fact), in particular.

In September of 1982, and with Shultz serving only a short time as Secretary of State, Washington wrongly believed that Syria would be willing to negotiate an all out force withdrawal if Israel would reciprocate. Washington's hope was based on the Syrian pullout from Beirut two weeks earlier, and on Syrian statements. Washington greatly underestimated Syria's gains resulting from its stay in Lebanon, and ignored Syria's potential losses resulting from pulling out. Although Syria's political and strategic reasons for not withdrawing from Lebanon were very clear, Washington lacked the insight to perceive them.

Mr. Assad's position on Lebanon is clear: he wants complete domination over any Lebanese government; short of that he will keep his 50,000 troops occupying half of the country. There are no reasonable concessions that American or Lebanese could offer the Syrian President Assad. Mr. Assad, Washington officials argue, does not want the Golan Heights back from Israel, for example -- he wants to stay in power. The best way for him to do that is to maintain a state of confrontation with the Israelis and the Americans and thus justify the militarization of the Syrian society he needs to protect his regime from a coup attempt. Washington believes that the way to get concessions from Mr. Assad is not by offering him

things but by threatening his power base.⁷⁷

Washington wrongly believed that ironing out the differences with Israel would resolve the Lebanese crisis, and perceived Israel's hard-line position to be the main obstacle to the resolution of the Lebanese crisis. Moreover, Washington expected Syria to cooperate in a "step-by-step" withdrawal with no further difficulties, while Israel did not accept this theory, and insisted on taking special measures to ensure such a pullout. The tension between Washington and Jerusalem was mounting and it was escalating to a full-scale crisis. Israel believed that only joint American and Israeli pressure would bring Syria to make concessions. The U.S., however, underestimated the importance of Lebanon to Syrian politics, and believed that Syria would accept a diminished role in Lebanon, and would perhaps be glad to have a way out of the prologed, unresolved civil war. U.S. actions suggest that it did not realize until much later, that a strong Lebanese government was against Syria's national interest, especially if this government was Christian and pro-Israeli.

At the time of the invasion, Syria had 25,000 men in Lebanon, stationed there as a "peacekeeping force," (The Arab Deterrent Force.) In addition Syria had along the Syrian-Lebanese frontier a defense force of one brigade (about 10,000 men) and seven to eleven commando units. The major Syrian force of four armored divisions and two mechanized infantry divisions were stationed in the Golan Heights. Israel claims

that these divisions are the best armed and the best led Arab forces in the Middle East. The Syrian army, is equipped with the most sophisticated Soviet arms and includes T-72 tanks, SA-5 and SA-6 missiles, and the most advanced SS-21 missiles which can carry nuclear warheads (Syria is the first known country to receive these missiles outside of the USSR).⁷⁸ Israel argued that the U.S. was very naive to believe that Syria would be willing to withdraw its forces from Lebanon and lose its control over Lebanon's politics. Hence, Israel considered Syria to be the major obstacle to any agreement, while the U.S. considered Israel to be the hindering factor. The growing conflict between the two allies gained headlines in September 1982. The New York Times revealed that the Israeli government, angered by the U.S. position and the withholding of the sale of 75 F-16 jets, decided to use its leverage by refusing to share military intelligence information with the U.S.

Israel will not share military intelligence from the war in Lebanon with the U.S. until the Reagan Administration removes a variety of sanctions against Israel...Sharon, made that position known in a conversation with...Weinberger in Washington...One of the sanctions cited by Mr. Sharon was Reagan's decision to hold up Congressional action on the sale of 75 F-16s long promised to Israel...American military officers and C.I.A. officials have attached great importance to Israel's sharing of military intelligence...At the same time, the Israeli place considerable importance on...the delivery schedule of the F-16's to maintain air superiority over increasing capable Arab air forces...The bargaining process over intelligence sharing and F-16 deliveries serves as a backdrop to the larger dispute that Israeli and American officials say they expect over Mr. Reagan's new Middle East peace plan...Administration officials insisted that there was no connection between the continued delay in F-16 shipment and the efforts to

gain Israeli cooperation with the President's negotiating plan. They said no one in the Administration was questioning the commitment to provide the aircrafts and that approval was 'only a matter of timing'. However, they did not deny that the F-16's could become part of bargaining over sharing intelligence information.⁷⁹

Israel's rejection of the Reagan peace plan was a major source of conflict between Washington and Jerusalem. Israel explained the rejection by saying that the plan would ultimately result in the establishment of a Palestinian state which would pose a serious danger to Israel's security. It was clear that without coercion, Israel would continue to defy the U.S. peace initiative. However, the withholding of the sale of 75 F-16 jet fighters was a very questionable coercion measure. Washington decided to openly discuss its differences with Israel, in order to (a) embarrass Israel and, (b) show its Arab allies that Washington exerted pressure on Israel to withdraw from Lebanon and accept Reagan's peace initiative. As mentioned earlier Reagan's peace plan was accepted (although with some reservations) by Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and even the PLO. In answer to reporters questions Secretary Shultz explained the American position and concept of leverage in terms of the use of delivery or withholding of arms to Israel as leverage.

Q: The Israeli Cabinet has today announced that it will formally reject the President's proposals (of September 1)...It seems to me that puts President Reagan in a difficult position now...What is he going to do? Is he going to put pressure on the Israelis?

Q: Is there any chance that the State Department, the President, will try to use American aid to pressure them, specifically the sending eventually of the F-16 fighters? And secondly, are the Israelis trying to

bargain with you over that by withholding military intelligence information in exchange for F-16s?

A: Our emphasis will be on the importance of peace...I think this is a tremendous pressure. 'Pressure' isn't the right word.

Q: Are you saying that you wouldn't deny that you might use the withholding of aid?

A: We do not have any plans to try to maneuver people in a peace negotiations by talking about aid.

Q: So you are ruling it out, the use of --

A: I am saying that the objective of peace is so important that when this is fully realized - and of course, I think it will make a critical difference whether or not King Hussein and other Arabs respond favorably to the President's initiative - then the prospects of peace with neighbors becomes much more real.⁸⁰

The conflict between Washington and Jerusalem became more intense after the Israeli takeover of West Beirut (although Israel's control lasted only a few days). Strong American pressure but mainly the tragic massacre at the refugee camps which shocked the Israeli society and threatened the future of the Begin government convinced Begin to pull out of Beirut on September 26, 1982. On September 28, President Reagan held a news conference in which he answered questions about The U.S.-Israeli conflict of interest, and how it was handled to serve America's best interests.

Q: Shortly before the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Administration informally notified Congress that it was planning to send more F-16s to Israel. There's been no formal notification since then. Is the delay linked to difficulties in relations with Israel? When do you think formal notification will go up and under what conditions?

A: They're still on tap, and we haven't sent the formal notification up. And, very frankly, it was

simply because in the climate of things that were going on, we did not think it was the time to do it. However, there has been no interruption of those things that are in the pipeline.⁸¹

Because the withholding of arms excluded weapons already in the pipeline, Israel continued to reject the Reagan peace plan and insisted on achieving all its political goals in Lebanon before considering any concessions. Israel's major political goals were (a) a separate peace treaty with Lebanon (b) negotiations to take place alternately in Beirut and Jerusalem, thus, giving Jerusalem political standing (c) refusal to negotiate the future of the West Bank with the PLO (d) not to freeze the settlements (e) a simultaneous withdrawal of all Syrian, PLO, and Israeli forces from all of Lebanon, and (f) security arrangements along the Israeli-Lebanese border that would include Israeli patrol forces. These demands were vital interests to Israel; however, they were considered 'excessive' and not necessarily vital U.S. interests. The Israelis were prepared to resist American pressure if and when it would be exerted, and they were not intimidated by the tactic of withholding of arms. Israel was prepared to survive a "long, cold winter" on the Lebanese political front.

ON THE LEBANESE FRONT AND WITH WINTER NEAR
THE ISRAELIS SETTLE IN

American diplomacy is trying to bring about a withdrawal of Syrian and Israeli forces that face each other in the Bequa'a, a valley 75 miles long that runs northeast through Lebanon. But there are no signs that either force intends to retire soon.⁸²

Reagan acknowledged the fact that U.S.-Israeli relations were strained and that the U.S. was using, although with very limited success, tactic of withholding of arms. The New York Times reported about U.S.'s futile efforts to discipline Israel:

FAILURE TO REACH ACCORD IN LEBANON WORRIES
U.S. AIDES. TIES WITH ISRAEL STRAINED

Senior Reagan Administration officials said today that they were becoming increasingly concerned over the U.S. failure to initiate negotiations for the withdrawal of Israeli, Syrian, and Palestinian forces from Lebanon...American relations with Israel, which have been severely strained in recent months, have worsened in recent days because of the Administration's futile effort to persuade the Senate Appropriations Committee to reject an amendment that would significantly increase the amount of foreign aid to Israel. In Jerusalem, the Israeli Cabinet issued a statement today saying it found the Administration's position on aid 'a bit astonishing'.⁸³

A few days later The New York Times reported:

Washington became more and more frustrated with the status quo and feared that the historical opportunity for a new beginning was slowly fading away...This is because the Administration is holding Israel primarily responsible for the lack of progress by Mr. Habib and Mr. Draper.⁸⁴

Washington became frustrated by the deadlock in the Lebanon. Israel and Syria refused to make any concessions and maintained that until their demands were fully satisfied they would not negotiate a withdrawal agreement. Israel insisted on a separate peace treaty with the Amin Gemayel government, and completely excluded Syria from the negotiations or the treaty itself. Syria on the other hand, refused to give up its power position and influence in Lebanon and demanded that any

agreement with the Lebanese government would include Syria and be approved by Damascus. Washington apparently overlooked the fact that the regional and global dilemmas provided both Israel and Syria with leverage over their patron-states. Hence, Washington wrongly assumed that Saudi Arabia could influence Syria using its economic power, and Washington wrongly assumed that Israel's military superiority would threaten Syria. Neither happened. Both Saudi Arabia and Israel failed to induce or coerce Syria to be more flexible. Reagan was very disappointed and frustrated to see his comprehensive peace plan fading away. In an effort to pressure its client-state Israel to give up its demand for a separate peace treaty, Reagan asked Congress to reduce aid appropriations to Israel for 1983. But apparently, neither Reagan nor Congress considered these threats to be realistic. Congress did not consider the issue and the President did not pursue it.

Throughout the crisis Congress was neither instrumental nor influential in initiating or implementing U.S. policy in Lebanon. During 1982-1983, Congress sent Reagan conflicting messages concerning U.S. policy toward Israel. As mentioned earlier, many members of Congress expressed strong objections to the invasion and loudly demanded a clear-cut, unequivocal, strong American reaction. On the other hand, many other legislators expressed support for Israel's policies. For example:

Congressman Charles Schumer (D-NY):

It is important to understand Israel's motives for entering Lebanon. Continued violence and terrorist activities against Israeli citizens, massive PLO military build-up in southern Lebanon...The PLO became increasingly well-supplied by the Soviet Union and its allies...Israeli measures against the PLO are taken out of self-defense.⁸⁵

Congressman Jack Kemp, (R-N.Y.) said that the Israeli invasion was of great importance to the U.S. because it enhanced containment and increased the chances of peace.

It has brought an opportunity to the West to restore sovereignty in Lebanon and to assure security of our vital ally Israel. An Israeli withdrawal should be contingent first upon the effective reassertion of Lebanese central government control over the south and Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon...this will be a great achievement to the stability and peace of the region..The Soviet Union will have suffered a major setback in its quest to expand its influence and control through its Syrian surrogate and through its clandestine exploitation of the PLO...Camp David will be given new vigor with the prospects of...Lebanon and perhaps other Arab nations lending support to the peace process.....The PLO...the Cubans of the Middle East,...are a threat to free people worldwide...Syria occupies nearly 2/3 of Lebanon's territory ...with Soviet backing, Syria's historical aspirations of a greater Syria have found expression in Syrian domination both militarily and politically...Clearly the status quo ante in Lebanon was intolerable from the standpoint of Israelis who lived in the range of PLO artillery, intolerable for Lebanese who have been denied their country, and intolerable for the U.S. and the Western world who seek stability and freedom from terrorism and the curtailment of Soviet influence in the strategically vital Middle East...

In a cable to Reagan Congressman Kemp said:

Israel has given us the opportunity to set back Soviet/Syrian advances in the Middle East, to destroy international terrorism's most fertile base of operations, to restore sovereignty rights of the Lebanese and reinvigorate the Camp David peace process.⁸⁶

Congress had sent President Reagan conflicting messages throughout 1982-1983. There was no consensus on Capitol Hill either for or against the invasion, and there was no consensus to "punish" Israel by withholding shipments of arms. The division among Israel's supporters and those who vehemently condemned Israel's actions was not along party lines. This situation made it very difficult, if not impossible, for Congress and the President to coordinate their policies. Congress, as a poorly organized political institution, was too divided to play a major role in formulating or even influencing American Middle East policy. Moreover, Reagan was not consistent in his policy during the crisis and no coherent plan that Congress could approve of, or object to, existed. Congress dealt mainly with aid appropriations to Israel, and throughout 1982-1983, fulfilled the President's aid requests. When the 1983 aid appropriation bill was under consideration, Washington experienced its worst conflict with Israel. This, however, did not affect the level of the aid appropriations.

When the Foreign Assistance Bill for 1983 was before Congress the relationship between the U.S. and Israel was in one of its lowest points. This did not affect Congress, which approved the same level of aid as was requested before the invasion: \$785 million in economic aid and \$1.7 billion in military aid. The total aid approved for 1983 was \$2.485 billion, signed into law by President Reagan on December 21, 1982.

The U.S. position concerning the May 17 agreement is not clear. During the winter of 1983, the U.S. vehemently objected to a separate peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon, while Israel absolutely refused to give up its demand. Unlike Israel, the U.S. maintained that the treaty would create additional, unnecessary difficulties with Syria. Washington's second concern was that the fragile government of Amin Gemayel would not survive such an act, and chaos would again reign in Lebanon.⁸⁷ Because of its lack of leverage, Washington had to capitulate again to Israel, and give its after-the-fact blessing to the May 17 agreement which was signed after much Israeli pressure. America's concerns, however, did materialize. The treaty, which never took effect, was soon abrogated under heavy Syrian pressure.

The May 17 agreement marked the beginning of the fourth phase of U.S. policy in Lebanon and the renewal of the cooperation between Israel and the U.S., which culminated with the signing in November 1983. of the Agreement on Strategic Cooperation. The new approach was outlined in a highly classified White House paper, "National Security Decision Directive 111", signed by the President on October 29, 1983. The document, which was the result of a two week debate within the National Security Council, had set forth priority goals for the entire Middle East. Its most important section dealt with the need to improve relations and repair the strained ties with Israel. Two days after N.S.D.D. 111 was signed by the President,

Lawrence S. Eagleburger, the then State Department's Under Secretary for Political Affairs, was sent to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with Prime Minister Shamir. The agreement on strategic cooperation between Jerusalem and Washington which was announced during Shamir's visit to the U.S., on November 29, 1983, was probably the result of this new approach.

The U.S. and Israel, both burned by the war in Lebanon, badly need each other. There remain underlying tensions about how to reconcile the two countries' interests in the Middle East. But the only real point of contention this week (the last week of November, 1983, N.N.) is likely to be over how many new concessions the U.S. will offer Israel as part of a revived "strategic cooperation" agreement.⁸⁸

On October 24, 1983, a day after the brutal bomb attack, Shultz explained the need for U.S.-Israeli cooperation:

The U.S. is involved in the quest for peace in the Middle East because it is a region of vital strategic and economic importance for the free world, because it is an arena of competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, because we have a deep commitment to Israel and in strengthening the trends of moderation in the Arab world, and because our role of leadership in the Middle East is a reflection of America's responsibility as a world leader.⁸⁹

The new approach arose from the realization that Syria had emerged as the most important power on the Lebanese scene. This was detrimental to U.S. policy, which had assumed a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon soon after its humiliating military defeat. The American support of the May 17 agreement angered Syria and increased the tensions between the two nations, which deteriorated even more with the new rapprochement between the U.S. and Israel.

During 1983 U.S. involvement in Lebanon intensified.

Between October 23 and December 31, 1983, the U.S. had an armada of 33 ships, including battleships and aircraft carriers, off the Lebanese coast, and marines, actually engaged in exchange of fire with Syrian forces in Lebanon. The battleship New Jersey used its 5-inch and 16-inch guns a few times during that period, to shell Syrian positions that were firing at U.S. positions. Two Tomcat jets were shot down on December 4, 1983; one aviator was killed, the other, Lt. Robert Goodman, was taken prisoner by the Syrians.

Reagan knew that a failure in Lebanon would be a great liability on his reelection campaign. Reagan needed a quick, major breakthrough in Lebanon. The thrust now was to achieve a political progress at any cost. The new approach held Syria responsible for the deadlock, and the thrust was to find ways to coerce Syria to soften its tone and to start negotiating a bilateral troop withdrawal agreement with Israel. The U.S. planned to implement the new approach using the "stick and the carrot" tactic. The "stick" was the Strategic Cooperation Agreement with Israel. The unwritten pact was expected to threaten Syria's security by exhibiting a strong U.S. commitment to protect Israel in case of a war with Syria. Washington assumed that the security threat would influence Syria to reconsider its intransigent position and come to the bargaining table. The "carrot" was Saudi Arabia's economic aid to Syria. Saudi Arabia was expected to induce Syria by offering Syria generous aid package in exchange for political concessions. In

1983, Saudi Arabia gave Syria a whopping \$2 billion to replace the SAM-6 Soviet-made anti-aircraft missiles which were destroyed by Israel during the invasion. Another \$4 billion were provided by the oil-rich kingdom to help construct the Soviet-made SS-21 missile batteries in Syria. In addition, an estimated \$500 million was given to Syria by the Saudis to make-up for the damaged military equipment.⁹⁰

Israel's expected role as a "stick" was very correctly described by Flora Lewis:

An important shift has developed in United States-Israeli relations in the last few months. It is bringing a virtual reversal of the roles that could have long-term implications for both countries...The United States is now trying to engage Israel as the active protector of what are seen as America's interests...Last year Washington was pressing for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and trying to promote Jordanian-Palestinian talks with Israel under the Reagan initiative. Now the United States wants Israel to take the lead in "checkmating" Syria's President Hafez-al-Assad.⁹¹

The Strategic Cooperation Agreement which was announced during the visit of Prime Minister Shamir to Washington, on November 1983, conferred upon Israel many benefits. First, the agreement created a joint political-military planning team, which was scheduled to meet for the first time in January 1984 and to set guidelines for the future cooperation between the two nations. Second, as a result of the global dilemmas the U.S. capitulated to Israel's pressure and declared Israel the most important U.S. strategic ally in the Middle East. Reagan did not mention his previous demands for an Israeli withdrawal, an Israeli acceptance of his peace plan, or his demand for a freeze

of settlements in the West Bank. Moreover, Reagan expressed deep understanding of Israel's hard-line, saying that Israel could not be expected to pull out its forces as long as Syria refuses to reciprocate. In addition to the joint planning committee, the agreement included a variety of measures to aid Israel economically as well as militarily.⁹² Reagan also announced the lifting of the ban he had put on shipment of cluster bombs, which has been in effect since summer 1982. Another major American concession to Israel was Washington's approval of the use of U.S. aid funds to finance weapons procurement in Israel. For years Israel had requested the U.S. Administration's permission to use aid funds for the development and production of the Israeli fighter-jet the Lavie, as well as other major Israeli-made weapon systems. This was the first time in 34 years that such permission was granted.

Not everyone was happy with the new American-Israeli rapprochement. For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Adviser to President Carter, expressed a very critical view of the Administration's policy.

Our Middle Eastern policy is in a shambles. Reacting to events tactically, the United States has been reduced to playing a subordinate role. Militarily, America is acting as an auxiliary to the Lebanese Army and, politically, as a proxy of Israeli foreign policy. Most tragically, perhaps for the first time ever, uniformed Americans have been dying neither in defense of American national interest nor on behalf of any genuine American policy objectives...Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon quite deliberately sought to preoccupy the United States with Lebanon. Diverting United States diplomatic efforts into Lebanon and involving the United States in a protracted diversionary crisis was the most effective way of

derailing the Reagan Plan for a Jordanian-West Bank confederation.⁹³

But Brzezinski's analysis of policy is not valid, since the invasion took place three months before Reagan launched his Peace Plan. Hence, chronologically, the invasion came first, and only later, as a result of the destruction of the PLO, Reagan did decide to propose a Jordanian-Palestinian peace coalition which would have been impossible before the invasion.

The renewed cooperation between the U.S. and Israel on the executive level was received with great reservations on Capitol Hill. More and more Congressmen became unhappy with the situation in Lebanon and demanded a disentanglement from Lebanon. Until the end of 1983 Congress did not play an active role in the Lebanese crisis. Even when it invoked the War Powers Act, in September 1983, it provided the President with as much time as he wanted to keep the marines there. But now on Capitol Hill a consensus was building up for a pullout from Lebanon. This was primarily the result of the Legislators' concern with the coming 1984 elections. "Concern over Lebanon has grown in my district," said Bill Richardson (D-N.M.) "I sense that the President is losing support."⁹⁴ Other Representatives, among them previous supporters of Reagan's policy like Les Aspin (D-WI) and Lee Hamilton (D-IN), warned that Americans were unlikely to support a continued marine presence in Lebanon in the absence of progress toward peace. House Minority leader Robert Michel said:

Should we not consider removing American marines from Lebanon, keeping our fleet offshore and leaving it to Israel, our strategic partner, to work out in ways it might choose, a solution to the Lebanese problem?⁹⁵

A major factor in the critical view which many Legislators had adopted by the end of 1983 was the Defense Department Committee Report which was presented to the President on December 1983. Admiral Long's report criticized not only the security arrangements and the increased peril to the U.S. marines, but also the political aspects of the U.S. role in Lebanon. The Commission expressed a critical opinion concerning the role of the marines as a "peacemaking force" and the expectation that the marines would help bring about a lebanese national reconciliation. More and more people adopted the view that Israel and Syria, the two rivals, should be left alone to resolve the Lebanese conflict between themselves. The public became more and more frustrated with the situation, and the death of the 241 marines raised the fears of a "new Vietnam." Reagan and his aides were aware of and worried by the shift in the public mood.⁹⁶

Reagan began to realize that the combination of Saudi inducement and Israeli coercion (promises and threats), in which he put great hopes, did not yield the desired results which were so critical to Reagan's public image in an election year. The Strategic Cooperation Agreement indeed angered Syria, but it resulted in adverse consequences, making negotiations with Syria even more difficult. Moreover, it frustrated many Arab states among them Saudi Arabia. The Strategic Cooperation Agreement failed to threaten Syria since Syria enjoyed a unique position. On the one hand, Syria was protected by the Soviet Union, which

provided Syria with sophisticated weapons in the billions. On the other hand, Syria was supported by the Saudis who were picking up the bill. As a result of this unique situation, Syria became militarily stronger, and politically, more influential. The Jesse Jackson-Syrian affair showed that Syria was very sophisticated and shrewd in conducting its political affairs.

On the Israeli front, the U.S. did not have much success either. Israel refused to make any concessions in Lebanon, or even freeze the settlements, which angered Hussein. Reagan began to realize that America's leverage over Israel, its client-state, or Syria, the Soviet Union's client-State, was nonexistent. The U.S.'s was facing a political dead end, realizing that the only way out was actually a pullout.

In evaluating the situation in Lebanon Washington realized, to its chagrin, that from September 1982, when 1800 marines were deployed in Lebanon and until February 1984, when the marines were pulled out of Lebanon, the U.S.'s heavy involvement resulted in neither the resolution of the conflict nor the amelioration of its consequences. After Amin Gemayel took his brother's place as President of Lebanon, the U.S. found itself heavily involved and highly committed not only to the support of Israel, but also to the support of the fragile Gemayel government. However, the year and a half of intense military and political involvement had cost the U.S. more than two hundred and sixty lives, while the situation was only getting worse.

With the November elections at the door, Reagan decided to pull out the marines and to look for a scapegoat who could be blamed for the failure in Lebanon. There was not much more that he could do.

OVERVIEW

In the analysis of U.S. foreign policy the study of leverage as a political tool is especially challenging. Both superpowers strive to gain leverage over their client-states because achieving compliance through leverage is preferable to achieving compliance through the use of brute force. This is especially applicable to the Middle East, a region vital to the interests of both superpowers, which aggressively compete to gain power and influence there.

The Middle Eastern political scene is both complex and dangerous. For decades, intense unresolved conflicts among different religious and ethnic groups including the Israeli-Arab conflict, have plagued the region. The complex reality of the Middle East has made analysis based on traditional concepts of patron-client relationship dubious, since the theories have left out or ignored the crucial systemic variables, and have underestimated the regional variables. (see Quandt, 1977; Fall, 1977; Tillman, 1982; Safran, 1978; Pollock, 1982; Eveland, 1980; Fabian, 1984; among others).

An alternative approach, based on the global environment and the regional situation is necessary to explain and predict

the politics of the Middle East. Analysis in terms of the regional and global dilemmas provides answers which correspond with reality and not with its misperception. In the case of Lebanon, the regional and global dilemmas which dominate the politics of the Middle East were the major causes for the lack of U.S. leverage over either the actors or the events. The traditional analysis, however, misperceives this lack of leverage to be the result of (a) tactics used by the patron-state to attain leverage, i.e., coercion or inducement of the client-state (b) domestic variables, i.e., Congress and lobby pressures. These misperceptions result in wrong foreign policy decisions, and Lebanon is a case in point. The U.S. became intensely involved in Lebanon because the Middle East is a region of vital importance to American interests. The U.S. declared that it was ready to directly protect peace and stability in the region if and when they are threatened. However, captive of his misperceptions, the President did not give the situation in the Middle East a high enough priority and did not try to reduce tensions in the region before Israel invaded Lebanon. On the other hand, once the invasion was launched, the U.S., unlike the Soviet Union, chose to become directly involved in the crisis. Moreover, at some point Washington believed that the Lebanese crisis, unfortunate as it might be, could help promote U.S. long-term policy goals: (a) promote a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict, (b) reestablish the Lebanese government's sovereignty over its territory, (c) reduce

the power and influence of the Soviet Union and its surrogates, Syria and the PLO, (d) establish the American power position and hegemony in the region by being the "power broker" and the dominant political force in the Middle East. However, reviewing the chronology of events it is clear that the U.S. did not achieve any of these goals. Moreover, the pullout of the marines ordered in February 1984 came after many political embarrassments both in the international scene and at home. The Reagan peace plan which was announced with much fanfare on September 1, 1982, was quietly buried only a short time later, after all the involved actors rejected it as unacceptable to them.

The U.S. experienced conflicts with its allies as well as with its foes. Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia pursued independent foreign policies which many times conflicted with U.S. policies. Syria was especially noncooperative, refusing at times even to talk to American officials. The U.S. was faced with the embarrassing fact that it had no leverage over any of the nations involved in the crisis. This frustrating situation was caused by the regional and global dilemmas which Washington either ignored or underestimated. Israel and Syria were able to manipulate the global and regional environments to their advantage and pursue their respective political goals with impunity. No serious coercive measures were taken by Washington during the crisis, and even the suspension of the F-16s was eventually lifted. Faced with a fait-accompli, the U.S., albeit

reluctantly, accepted most of Israel's military actions. Israel correctly gambled that the U.S. would not substantially cut off arms transfers and risk weakening Israel especially as long as the USSR was supplying Syria with quality and quantity of arms (first global dilemma). Israel also knew that American second global dilemma, i.e., U.S.'s need to maintain its credibility as a patron-state, would render American leverage ineffective. Washington's leverage was also hampered at crucial times by the failure of the Reagan Administration to make timely policy decisions and convey them to Israel clearly, firmly, and unambiguously.

Hence, the U.S. faced in Lebanon a "no win" situation. Leverage was non-existent, and with no leverage, Washington could not pursue its goals or have any influence over the course of events. With no influence, Washington could only stand still and wait for progress to happen as a result of the local actors' interaction. Unfortunately, the situation went from bad to worse. The Soviet Union, faced with the same problem of lack of leverage, wisely decided at the early stages of the crisis, to keep a low profile and let the local actors fight out their differences in their own way. Captive of the traditional concept of leverage, Washington's misperception was that asymmetry in capabilities and the existence of a patron-client relationship by definition yields leverage. Washington wrongly assumed leverage over Israel because of the heavy Israeli dependence on the U.S. It was not surprising, therefore, that Washington

underestimated Israel's leverage over its patron-state.

Basically, there was not much that the U.S. could do to help resolve the Lebanese crisis. As a matter of fact, Washington should have done less, i.e., adopt a low profile and try to promote its foreign policy goals in a more subtle manner. Reagan should have avoided both the intense military involvement, and the political fanfare which accompanied all his political initiatives. An understanding of the regional and global dilemmas would have helped Washington to better calculate its policies concerning Israel and the Arab states. Washington should have assumed a lack of leverage, and should have constructed its policies accordingly. Wishful thinking and assumed leverage should not become the guidelines of foreign policy. Realistically, only major changes in the international and the regional environments can restore American leverage in the Middle East.

NOTES

1. Leonard Binder, "U.S. Policy in the Middle East: Exploiting New Opportunities," Current History, (January 1983) pp. 1-4; 37-40.

2. For example, after Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor, on June 8, 1981, the U.S. suspended immediately all arms deliveries to Israel and imposed an embargo on the supply of enriched uranium to power Israel's small American-made research reactor at Nachal-Sorek. For more details see Steve Weissman and Herbert Krosney, The Islamic Bomb, (New York: New York Times Book Co. Inc.) 1981.

3. For a detailed analysis of the "strategic consensus" concept see Amos Perlmutter, "Reagan's Middle East Policy: A Year One Assessment," p. 26

4. See discussion in Alfred L. Atherton, Jr. "Arabs, Israelis-and Americans: A Reconsideration," Foreign Affairs, pp. 1194-1209.

5. See former Secretary Haig's Washington Address of April 27, 1982, before the U.S.'s Chamber of Commerce, quoting Dean Acheson, Department of State Bulletin (June 1982) pp. 40-44.

6. Israel opposed this agreement because it created a status quo along the Israeli northern border which made the shelling of cities and villages in northern Israel easier for the PLO. General Sharon (res.) explained it on AEC-TV "Nightline", June 7, 1982.

7. See for example discussions by Binder: also Shoshana Bryen "Advancing U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation," and Steven Spiegel, "Israel as a Strategic Asset," pp. 51-55.

8. Seth Tillman makes this argument in The United States in the Middle East.

9. See for example discussions by Abba Eban and Yitzhak Rabin.

10. At that time Israel's annual inflation rate was exceeding 400 per cent and it was spending over 30 per cent of its GNP on defense.

11. See a thorough discussion of this theory in Sean MacBride, Israel in Lebanon, pp. 1-19; also interview with King Hussein, The New York Times, March 14, 1984

12. As a result of this decision the Likud party, which was a member of the coalition of national unity and which did

not accept UN resolution 242, left the Cabinet, and the Israeli government dissolved.

13. See for example the two acts of withholding arms transfers in 1981. The first after the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, and the second after the annexation of the Golan Heights.

14. See for example Klaus Knorr's discussion in The Power of Nations, pp. 185-189, in which he discusses Soviet aid and its ineffectiveness.

15. Zeev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, War of Deception, (Tel-Aviv: Schocken Publishing House, 1984, in Hebrew), pp. 36-40

16. The New York Times, June 7, 1982

17. Schiff and Ya'ari, War of Deception, p. 40

18. Chaim Herzog, The Arab-Israeli Wars (New York: Random House, 1982) p. 339

19. Mark Heller, The Middle East Military Balance 1983, p. 8

20. Schiff and Ya'ari argue that Sharon began to prepare the invasion immediately after he became Minister of Defense on August 1981.

21. Ibid., p. 33

22. U.S. News and World Report, January 9, 1984

23. Schiff and Ya'ari provide an indepth analysis of Israeli-Phalangists relations. See pp. 40-76

24. Alexander M. Haig Jr. Caveat (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1984) p. 328

25. Ibid., p. 326

26. Schiff and Ya'ari, War of Deception, p. 81

27. Ibid., p. 82; the information was confirmed in interviews with high ranking Israeli military officials.

28. Haig, Caveat p. 332

29. John Chancellor, ABC-TV evening news, April 8, 1982

30. Atherton, "Arabs, Israelis-and Americans:", p.

31. Sharon deliberately omitted the map of his planned operation "Large Cedar," which included the take over of Beirut in cooperation with the Phalangists. For details see Schiff and Ya'ari, pp. 121-122

32. Haig, p. 330; also Schiff and Ya'ari, pp. 87-90

33. Haig, Caveat , p. 335

34. Haig, Address before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington D.C., April 27, 1982.

35. Haig, Caveat, p. 333

36. Ibid., p. 334

37. Schiff and Ya'ari, War of Deception, p. 124

38. Ibid., p. 99

39. Haig's view on the situation in the Middle East was elaborated in Department of State Bulletin, October 1982, p.11

40. Schiff and Ya'ari, War of Deception, pp. 120-122. Saguy's criticism was shared by other high ranking Israeli military officials, expressed in private interviews.

41. Steven L. Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 415

42. Information from interviews with high ranking Israeli military officials

43. Information collected from Israel Defense Forces Spokesman Publications during 1982-1984.

44. The Soviet Union kept a relatively low profile of involvement. However, its opposition to the invasion was made public many times. See for example Soviets threats of July 26, 27, 28, 1982. Reagan addressed the Soviet threats in his news conference of July 28, 1982, when he demanded the withdrawal of PLO and Syrian troops from Beirut. "We want the exodus of the armed PLO out of Beirut and out of Lebanon...we want the foreign forces-- Israeli and Syrian-- both out of Lebanon." The New York Times, July 29, 1982.

45. The New York Times, September 27, 1982

46. The New York Times, June 7, 1982

47. Ibid., June 8, 1982

48. Haig, Caveat, p. 337

49. Interviews with high ranking Israeli military officials.

50. The New York Times, June 7, 1982

51. On June 13, 1982 King Khalid of Saudi Arabia, the ruler of the country since 1975, died of a heart attack at age 69. His unexpected death threatened the stability of the Kingdom. However, he was succeeded by Crown Prince Fahd who maintained law and order without serious difficulties.

52. Haig, Caveat, p. 338

53. Herzog, The Arab-Israeli Wars, p. 345

54. On various occasions during June, July and August of 1982, the Administration expressed concern over a possible confrontation with the Soviet Union. See for example Haig's meeting with Gromyko on June 18, 1982; also remarks by Washington officials expressing "concern about Soviet role...Israeli military moves might encourage the Russians to send forces to the area in reponse," The New York Times, June 21, 1982; also remarks by Reagan in news conference on July 1, and July 29, 1982.

55. This was the reason for U.S.'s initial harsh reaction to the invasion. See for example Reagan's strong message to Begin of June 6, in which he urged him to stop the invasion and pull out immediately. Reagan also threatened to cancel Begin's visit to Washington, and ordered the immediate withholding of the promised 75 F-16 jets. Only later did Reagan change his attitude in favor of the invasion.

56. Interviews with high ranking Israeli military officials.

57. The New York times, June 8, 1982

58. An excellent example of Congress's anti-Israeli reaction, Congressional Records, Vol. 128, June 1982.

59. The New York Times, June 8, 1982

60. Evans and Novak, The Washington Post, June 9, 1982

61. See for example Secretary Shulz's news conference of July 12, 1982; also Reagan's peace initiative of September 1, 1982.

62. Interviews with high ranking Israeli military officials directly involved in the invasion.

63. For a detailed description of the siege see Sean MacBride, Israel in Lebanon, pp. 143-160; also Palestinian Studies, No. 85, p. 107.

64. The U.S.-Israeli conflict involved not only the White House, but also Capitol Hill. On June 22, Begin met with a group of Senators that hotly disputed Israel's policies in Lebanon. The New York Times of June 23 reported: "Mood is angry as Begin meets panel of Senate...the meeting was described as 'highly emotional confrontation'." Prior to Begin's arrival in Washington senior State Department officials said that the President have not yet decided when to send the final notification concerning the 75 F-16 jets to Congress. The New York Times, June 16, 1982.

65. In his memoirs Haig expresses the same theory, saying that only a clear-cut military defeat of the PLO and Syria could bring about a withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon. See Haig, Caveat, p. 318

66. Shultz's news conference, August 20, 1982, Department of state Bulletin, September 1982, p. 8

67. The Reagan Peace Plan, The New York Times, September 2, 1982.

68. Secretary Casper Weinberger, NBC-TV, "Meet the Press," February 12, 1984

69. Larry L. Fabian, "The Middle East: War Dangers and Receding Peace Prospects," Foreign Affairs, January 1984, p. 637.

70. Ibid., p. 637. (The estimated cost of the Jordanian Rapid Deployment Force was \$220 million.

71. Ibid., p. 647

72. Jacob Goldberg, "What Saudi Key?" The New York Times, June 20, 1983

73. The Daily Telegraph, September 3, 1982

74. The Guardian, September 3, 1982

75. A detailed description of the events was published in Shimon Schleffer, Kadour Sheleg, (Hebrew,) A Snow Ball, (Tel-Aviv: Idanim Press), 1983.

76. Haig's resignation was announced on June 26, 1982
77. Thomas Friedman, The New York Times, November 13, 1983
78. Heller, The Military Balance, 1983
79. The New York Times, September 5, 1982
80. Shultz, CBS-TV "Face the Nation," September 5, 1983
81. White House press release, September 28, 1982
82. The New York Times, December 1, 1982
83. Ibid., December 1, 1982
84. Ibid., December 6, 1982
85. Congressional Records, June 10, 1982, Vol. 128, p. 2745.
86. Ibid., June 10, 1982
87. Reports on U.S.-Israeli rift in The New York Times, December 7, 11; also Weinberger's statement on NBC-TV news program "Today", March 1, 1983. Washington also feared a Soviet involvement in Lebanon after the Soviets installed long-range SA-5 missiles in Syria manned by Soviet personnel. See The New York Times, March 2, 1983.
88. Wall Street Journal, November 30, 1983
89. Shultz statement to the Senate Foreign relations Committee, October 24, 1983, quoted in Current policy No. 520
90. The numbers are estimated from various sources among them The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Fabian, "The Middle East: War Dangers and Receding Peace Prospects".
91. Flora Lewis, "U.S. -Israeli Reversal," The New York Times, October 31, 1983
92. See discussion in Shoshana Bryen, "Advancing U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation."
93. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "America's Mideast Policy in Shambles," The New York Times, October 9, 1983
94. U.S. News and World Report, January 9, 1984
95. Ibid., January 9, 1984

96. Reagan realized the change in the public mood and dispatched Habib and Draper to the Middle East on December 1, 1983, to try and end the deadlock. The "major problem has been Israel's insistence on withdrawing from Lebanon only through direct negotiations." On December 17 Reagan sent a direct message to Begin urging him to step-up the pullout. Reagan also tried to bring Hussein into the peace efforts and during Hussein's visit to Washington, on December 20, 1983, Reagan promised Hussein military aid and the creation of a Jordanian Rapid Deployment Force.

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter reviews our basic hypotheses in the context of the three case studies, and attempts to draw some lessons for future American Middle East peace policies.

The subject of our research is American Middle East peace efforts between 1968 and 1983 as a case study of leverage in international relations. We focused on U.S. leverage over Israel, in particular, the manipulation of arms transfers by the U.S. to achieve leverage. A major objective of this study is to demonstrate the questionable character of many of the premises and assumptions on which the theory of leverage has been based. The objectives and outcomes of transfer of arms as an instrument of leverage have often been oversimplified and overestimated (see discussion in the Introduction). This research examined the issue of leverage in the wider context of the international and global environments inferring from situations and events the causes for the existence or absence of leverage. We believe that this study, based on systematic examination of relevant historical experiences, can assist in developing a better theory of leverage.

Since 1968, the U.S. has been the sole supplier of arms to Israel, hence, Israel became completely dependent on the U.S. for its security. Such a situation is expected to yield a high level of leverage. Our study examined the objectives, practices and tactics of arms transfers to Israel to determine whether these tactics, namely, withholding or delivery of arms, actually

yielded the expected political leverage.

The difficulties involving the analysis of leverage were elaborated at length by K. Knorr in a study of twenty five cases of patron-client relationships, in which the patron-states tried to use withholding of aid (military as well as economic), to impose their policies upon their client-states, which received massive aid of both the West and the East. (The study was conducted between 1962-1970). Knorr concludes that in nineteen of the cases coercion (denial of aid) failed completely, two cases were successful, one suggested initial success but eventually failed, and three had an undetermined outcome.¹

Among the pressuring states, the U.S. appeared 17 times, the USSR five times, and Britain, France, and West Germany one time each. The overwhelming representation of the U.S. can be partly attributed to the broad range and large volume of its aid activities.²

Hence the historical record does not establish the coercive use of aid as a generally effective measure. (See also Schelling; Singer; Nagel; Russett; Blechman and Kaplan; and Wheelock, among others)

The study of leverage acknowledges several basic conceptual and methodological difficulties. Conceptually, a definition of leverage is necessary which is distinguished from the definitions of power and influence. In the conceptualization of leverage we assumed it to exclude the use of brute force, and to be used instead of force. We assumed that manipulation of arms transfers is used by the patron-state i.e., the U.S., in order to coerce or induce its client-state i.e., Israel, to

modify its behavior. Hence, leverage renders the use of force unnecessary. Unlike power and influence, leverage usually requires a relationship of dependence in which the patron-state can pressure the client-state by a withholding or granting of much needed aid. We assumed U.S.-Israeli relationship to be an excellent case in point and an appropriate subject for the study of leverage in a patron-client relationship.

The analysis of leverage requires (a) identification of conflict situations in which leverage is sought, (b) an examination of the tactics used by the patron-state to achieve leverage, i.e., the manipulation of arms transfers, and (c) the tactics used by the client-state to resist these pressures. In each case the outcome indicates whether or not leverage existed and to what degree.

In analyzing the three cases we assumed the overall relationship between the U.S. and Israel to be that of strong cooperation based on shared values, as well as shared interests. However, differences in political perceptions and different ranking of national priorities result in disputes and conflicts between the two allies. We assumed that the main conflict between the U.S. and Israel involved the issue of the Israeli-Arab peace process. The research confirmed our assumption and showed that the two countries define the peace process, its objectives and tactics in different terms. For example, the Rogers Plan, which was the first major American comprehensive peace initiative, invited an international

intervention in the peace process, bringing in "The Big Four", and creating an international peace conference in Geneva. Israel rejected both the Rogers peace plan and the "Big Four" forum on the basis that it involved the USSR whose hostility toward Israel was exemplified in the breaking of all diplomatic relations with Israel after 1967. Moreover, Israel insisted on direct negotiations, while the U.S. did not find this demand to be essential. During the negotiations of the Disengagement Agreements the U.S. and Israel expressed different views about border arrangements, territorial concessions and Arab political concessions. During the Lebanese crisis, which was a limited war and involved mainly Israel, the PLO, and Syria, Israel and the U.S. agreed on the PLO issue, but disagreed on the peace process. (see Israel's rejection of the Reagan peace plan of 1982).

Hence, concerning the theory and practice of the peace process, the U.S. and Israel did not see eye to eye. In 1969, when the U.S. launched the Rogers peace plan, believing that the time was right for such an initiative, Israel disagreed, arguing that the Arab states were not ready to make peace; the proof was the Khartum Resolution of September 1, 1967, which reaffirmed the three "noes": no peace, no recognition of Israel, no negotiation with Israel. Rogers, however, believed that if Israel would make the necessary concessions the Arab states would reciprocate.³ In addition, the American and the Israeli governments had differences of opinion concerning the meaning

and the process of peace. Rogers was ready to exchange almost all the territories conquered by Israel in 1967 for less than a contractual peace, i.e., an Israeli withdrawal in exchange for a formal termination of hostilities. This proposal was rejected by Israel. (see discussion of the Rogers Plan in chapter 1). Hence, the Rogers peace initiative resulted in a conflict situation between the U.S. and Israel, because each side defined its national interest in different terms, and neither was willing to modify its position.

The other two case studies analyzed also represent conflict situations between the U.S. and Israel with regards to the settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict. In each case the U.S. embarked upon a peace initiative, following a major Israeli-Arab war which resulted in a decisive Israeli victory. In each case the U.S. assumed that Israel could and should make territorial and political concessions needed to satisfy Arab demands, without which the peace process could not proceed. Israel, on the other hand, had a different perspective. Hence, the two countries, which have experienced strong friendly relations for almost four decades, disagreed on the issue of the ways and means to settle the Israeli-Arab conflict.

One area of disagreement, which was revealed during our research, is the question of priorities. Peace has always been America's first priority, while it is not always Israel's first priority. For Israel, security and survival is the first priority. If Israel has to choose between maintaining control

over territories essential to its security in a situation of "no peace no war", or giving up territories in exchange for questionable peace, Israel's choice is very clear. For example, the Reagan peace plan of 1982 proposed an agreement between Israel and King Hussein, requiring Israel to withdraw from most of the West Bank. Israel rejected the Reagan peace plan because it preferred control over the West Bank to a questionable peace with Jordan. The study shows that the U.S. is ready to take more risks for peace than are acceptable to Israel. (This is evident in all the three case studies).

The conceptual conflicts between the U.S. and Israel involved long-term peace policies as well as short-term policies, i.e., cease-fire and border lines. A case in point is the dispute over the cease-fire agreement of the October 1973 war which escalated to a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. (The USSR even threatened on October 25, to deploy Soviet troops to Egypt.) Another example is Israel's advance to and takeover of the Beirut-Damascus highway in June 1982, regardless of strong American opposition.

Once we had confirmed the assumption that the U.S. and Israel, although strong friends and strategic allies, do not share the same views on the issue of peace, we went on to examine the two countries' behavior in situations of conflict. We postulated that although Israel is heavily dependent on the U.S. this does not necessarily provide the U.S. with leverage. Military aid to Israel for the purpose of deterring the USSR

can, therefore, seldom be an instrument of leverage in the patron-client relationship because of the supreme interest in global deterrence.⁴

The existence or absence of leverage is measured in terms of compliance. The higher the level of compliance, the higher the level of leverage.⁵ (Deterrence can also be considered as leverage; see, for example, Schelling, *Arms and Influence*). Any discussion of leverage has to emphasize the limitations of the theory. We derived our conclusions explicitly from the empirical material of the case histories of U.S. peace efforts between 1968 and 1983. We tried to discriminate among varieties and patterns of leverage situations. This kind of analysis offered us a greater understanding of the problems, and more importantly, helped us in judging whether leverage is indeed an effective instrument of foreign policy in a strict bipolar context.

THE MANIPULATION OF ARMS TRANSFERS:
OBJECTIVES, TACTICS, CONSEQUENCES

While the subject of our study is political leverage in a patron-client relationship, our critical appraisal focuses on the transfer of arms as a means to achieve Israeli compliance with American policies in situations of conflict. We believe that the theory of leverage will benefit from, and indeed requires, a critical approach toward the use of arms transfers, since it is considered and has been used as an instrument of foreign policy.

Indeed, the study has confirmed our hypotheses that (a)

the U.S. did manipulate arms transfers to Israel, although it denied it publicly and, (b) the level of success was limited because of global and regional dilemmas (which are discussed later in this chapter). In applying coercion and inducement through arms transfers the U.S. used different tactics at different times, but the decisions to use one tactic or the other did not seem to follow from a coherent theory. The answer to this question can not be determined with reference to the theory of leverage; it has to be determined with reference to U.S. foreign policy.

The theory of leverage distinguishes between coercion and inducement. Coercion implies imposition of policy by the use of threats or actual punishment, and, therefore, may be counterproductive, (see discussion by Singer, Knorr, Wheelock) while inducement implies positive encouragement which, therefore, has more chances of gaining the client-state's cooperation.

In reality, however, the two tactics are usually exercised simultaneously; thus, the distinction between them becomes highly theoretical. (See discussion by Wheelock). The U.S. was using both tactics in all the three case studies, although during 1969-1970 the U.S. used more coercion (withholding of arms) while during 1973-1975 inducement was the preferred tactic. Leverage is a necessary and useful instrument of foreign policy, but the study could not prove whether inducement or coercion is more successful, since neither tactics yielded the

expected leverage. The Rogers peace plan is a case in point.

President Nixon, elected in 1968, decided to develop a new orientation to the Middle East based on "evenhandedness", i.e., support of both Israel and the Arab states. His peace initiative was part of a broader policy aimed at achieving regional as well as global goals. He sought to gain Soviet cooperation in the peace process, as well as the cooperation and friendship of the Arab states. When Israel objected to the U.S. peace initiative and rejected the Rogers plan, Nixon used arms transfers as a means of coercion. He decided to deliver the F-4 fighter-jets promised by his predecessor, but to suspend his decision on a new Israeli request for 25 F-4 Phantom-jets and 100 Skyhawk-jets. The delay, which was announced in summer 1969, continued for almost a year. Israel was angered but did not change its position. The situation in the region escalated and U.S. withholding of arms to Israel did not help to stop the war of attrition along the Canal, the heavy Soviet involvement in Egypt, or the Israeli deep penetration air raids into Egypt. The arms suspension was finally lifted in the summer of 1970 without achieving its purpose. Our study shows that in a close interdependent patron-client relationship the delay in arms transfers was not a source of leverage because the expectation is unaffected by the delay. More effective might be the qualitative aspect, i.e., the delay or denial of the most sophisticated weapons.

The withholding of arms neither promoted regional peace,

nor enhanced cooperation between the U.S. and the USSR. Moreover, it is unclear whether Israel's concessions of August 1970 (a ceasefire along the Canal and acceptance of U.N. Resolution 242) were induced by the resumption of arms transfers. Nixon's decision to sell Israel the requested 24 Phantom-jets can hardly be seen as leverage. As discussed in chapter 1, we assume that Israel made these concessions because (a) it wished to end the costly and painful war of attrition along the Canal, and (b) it did not want to strain its relations with the U.S. unnecessarily. Cooperation and friendly relations with the U.S. were important to Israel, and Israel tries not to antagonize the U.S. unless its national security is threatened. The two mentioned concessions were not considered dangerous or threatening to Israel's security.

In studying the question of American leverage during 1969-1970, the tactics used to achieve it, i.e., withholding of arms, and its consequences, we conclude that the most important variables are the regional and global dilemmas which control the Middle East political scene. On the global level, the U.S. had to renew the shipment of arms to Israel because the Soviet Union was intensifying its arms shipments to Egypt and Syria. The massive Soviet arms transfers, if continued unilaterally, would have changed the strategic balance of power in the region to America's detriment. Second, the denial of arms to Israel had a regional impact, i.e., it undermined Israel's strategic superiority, hence it provided the Arab states with incentives

to go to war. Withholding of arms to Israel could serve as a conflict-exacerbating factor. On the other hand, strengthening Israel had the opposite effect, i.e., it served as a deterrent and a restraint on any Arab leader who aspired to change the status quo. It is therefore clear that arms transfers to Israel could not be a useful coercive measure..

Our second case study covers the years 1973-1975. U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East took a new form, with Kissinger serving as the major power broker. The American peace initiative was much more modest, pursuing cease-fire agreements, and later using step-by-step diplomacy to achieve the three Disengagement Agreements between Egypt, Syria, and Israel. These peace efforts were different from the previous ones in their objectives, tactics, and outcomes. First, unlike the Rogers peace initiative, or the Reagan peace plan, which failed, these efforts are considered a success. Second, the U.S. changed its tactic from coercion (withholding of arms) to inducement (promises or actual delivery of large quantities of arms) which seems to strengthen the view that inducement provides better leverage than coercion. (Ball argues against this approach, while Singer argues for it).

ence, we used the Disengagement Agreements to compare and examine the validity of this argument. One of the difficulties was to determine whether Israel's concessions prove the existence of leverage gained through inducement tactics. We found that other factors, i.e., domestic reasons, or Arab

concessions may have played a role. Examining the Israeli domestic situation it became clear that the successful 1973 Arab surprise attack had a traumatic affect on Israel, which felt that the war could and should have been avoided if Israel's armed forces had been alert, well informed, and right in their interpretation of the intelligence information. As one Israeli general told me in a confidential interview, "we felt we needed time to recover, and that is why we were more willing to make concessions." Hence, it was difficult to evaluate the success of the inducement tactics used by the U.S. during 1973-1975; it involved indentifying the other relevant factors and weighing them against the weight of the arms transfers. During the research we realized that between 1973 and 1975 the U.S. and Israel were engaged in several cooperation-conflict situations during which arms deliveries were extensively used as leverage. Hence, to the examination of the domestic factors we added an analysis of the global and regional environments, which were important factors in both countries' foreign policy decisions.

On the global level, the U.S. and the USSR were engaged in an intensive arms race transferring arms in the billions, to Israel, Egypt and Syria, partly to replace lost weapons and partly to build-up the military capabilities of both Israel and its Arab neighbors. The 1973 arms airlift to Israel combined with a Congressional decision to waive payment on most of it, by definition reduced the level of American leverage on Israel. On the other hand, Israel's domestic difficulties combined with

the need to maintain friendly relations with the U.S., helped to create an atmosphere of cooperation in Israel.

On the regional level, Egypt was also in an urgent need of peace or at least for a "time out," because of the outcome of the war and especially because the entrapment of the Third Army was a traumatic event for Egypt. Hence, Sadat was willing to cooperate with the U.S.

The study of the Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement is perhaps the most revealing. Both sides were very reluctant to make political and territorial concessions, but because of domestic needs and security considerations they had to come to terms with each other. The U.S., which considered an Israeli-Syrian agreement a key to regional stability, could hardly exercise leverage on Syria. On the other hand, the U.S. found it difficult, if not impossible, to pressure Israel to give up territories which Israel considered vital to its security. The agreement was reached not as a result of pressure or leverage, but as a result of a combination of factors. First, Israel needed to strengthen the Sinai I agreement, which promised the reopening of the Canal, thinning of forces, buffer zones etc. Second, Israel feared that, in the absence of an agreement, a new war with Syria would break out. (Syria was conducting a "miniwar" of attrition along its border and threatened to start an all-out war). The promise to provide large quantities of American weapons, free of charge, contributed to Israel's decision to make concessions. Although

the decision was not easy, it was feasible. On the Syrian side, domestic-political factors, combined with the need to pacify the Israeli-Syrian border, resulted in Assad's agreement to make concessions.

Without going into much detail here (see the discussion in chapter 2), the Sinai II agreement was an important exercise in the study of leverage and the manipulation of arms transfers. The Sinai II agreement was significant because of its long-term political implications, and the fact that both Israel and Egypt agreed to make far reaching concessions. Egypt made a public, formal commitment not to resort to war again, while Israel agreed to the largest-ever territorial concessions. The role of the U.S. was extremely important as a power broker, inducing, threatening, and even "punishing" Israel during times of conflict of interests.

Our major difficulty in analyzing this period was determining whether or not the extensive use of military aid to Israel during the "Reassessment" period actually provided the U.S. with the leverage needed to influence Israel's policy. The research confirmed our hypothesis that the influence of arms transfers was very modest, since (a) in 1975 Israel was in no urgent need for arms because of the large quantities of arms delivered to it between 1973 and 1975 (b) Israel knew that in the long-run the U.S. would have to lift the arms ban because of the regional and global dilemmas which make it necessary for the U.S. to have a strong and reliable strategic ally in the region.

Thus, Israel reacted to the reassessment angrily and adopted harsh rhetoric condemning Ford's punitive measures. (See Former Defense Minister Peres's statements in Israeli press during the last week of July 1975).

But the question must be asked: If reassessment was ineffective, why did Israel agree, in the summer of 1975, to make concessions it refused to make in March? An examination of the events shows it was not only Israel that changed its position. Egypt and the U.S. also adopted more flexible stances. The agreement became possible only after all three parties recognized the others' legitimate concerns and agreed to make the necessary concessions.

These conclusions are based on time sequences, and follow the events in the order of their occurrence. We also examined American domestic factors, especially the "letter of the 76", which had some influence on President Ford, but not enough to change his mind. The research therefore, confirms our hypothesis that arms transfers to Israel can provide the U.S. with only limited leverage. On the other hand, the long-term cooperation between the two countries serves as an important incentive for Israel to comply with U.S. requests when they do not threaten Israel's basic security needs.

Lebanon and The Limits of Leverage

This study presented a critical analysis of leverage and leverage tactics as they have been applied by the U.S. in its efforts to promote the peace process in the Middle East. In the

study of leverage we postulated that it was limited mainly because of systemic reasons, and our case studies have supported that hypothesis.

The Lebanese crisis of 1982-1984, in particular the intense U.S. involvement in the crisis during that time and its outcome, constituted our third case study. From the summer of 1982 when the U.S. deployed eighteen hundred Marines to Lebanon and until the Marines were removed in February 1984, U.S. foreign policy in the region suffered a succession of setbacks and failures. The U.S. had hardly any leverage and could not influence either Israel or Syria to modify their policies

An examination of this frustrating situation revealed that the U.S. used coercion tactics (withholding of arms) to achieve an Israeli compliance; however, Israel successfully resisted these pressures. The U.S. inability to convert its power position as a supplier of arms to actual leverage derived mainly from the regional and global dilemmas which inhibited U.S. capability to pressure Israel. We assume that other factors also existed, namely, domestic pressure groups, a Congress supportive of Israel, etc. But, in distinguishing between necessary and sufficient causes, these factors can only be considered necessary, not sufficient.

The U.S. and the Soviet Union face each other in the Middle East, and the U.S.'s first priority is to have a strong ally in the region to enhance and buttress containment. Peace

efforts are high on America's priority list but containment ranks first. Hence, leverage tactics have to be examined and analyzed in the global and regional context which confirms our hypothesis that U.S. leverage over Israel will continue to be limited as long as these dilemmas exist.

On the regional level, new conditions add new complications. The U.S. has become the major supplier of arms to Egypt. Arms transfers to Egypt are closely linked to arms supplies to Israel. Cutting off arms supplies to Israel while supplying arms to Egypt becomes difficult, if not impossible. Evenhandedness has now assumed a new meaning, one which favors Israel's ability to withstand American pressure.

This study shows that leverage applied in the context of a patron-client relationship is of dubious effectiveness. The assumption that arms transfers yield self-evident leverage does not appear to be valid, which calls for an examination of U.S. global arms transfers. Roger Labrie et al, Michael Klare and Andrew Pierre, among others, raise the relevant questions but are far from providing a conclusive answer. Our research examined the theory of leverage from a different perspective, i.e., the global and regional environment, and we tried to illuminate one aspect which we felt was underestimated in the literature of leverage. Our study shows that in a patron-client relationships the patron should not assume leverage to exist or to be created as a result of one factor: the manipulation of arms transfers. Other structural factors play an important role and ultimately determine the existence or absence of leverage.

NOTES

1. Klaus, Knorr, The Power of Nations, pp. 180-183
2. Ibid., pp. 180-185. Egypt, Iraq, and China are mentioned as examples of Soviet aid, while Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and a few Latin American countries are mentioned as examples of American aid.
3. Regardless of the Khartum resolution and Israel's rejection of his plan, Rogers continued vigorously to pursue his peace initiative for over a year.
4. Andrew Pierre elaborates on this issue in The Global Politics of Arms Sales, pp. 3-82
5. See Schelling's discussion on deterrence and compellece in the context of military aid, in Arms and Influence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 69-91

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