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UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CASES OF EGYPT AND JORDAN

by

Maria do Céu de Pinho Ferreira Pinto

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

JUNE 1997

23 JAN 1998

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ABSTRACT

Political Islam has been at the centre of Middle East politics since the late 1960s and has since then changed the face of Muslim societies and namely of the political game. With the demise of communism and the end of the Cold War, a current of thought emerged in the United States saying political Islam was the new threat that confronts the West. Many analysts in the academic and political community have depicted political Islam as an hostile, and anti-democratic ideology that is closer in spirit to communism and fascism. Those analysts see it as aggressively anti-Semitic and anti-Western and charge Islamist movements of standing in direct competition to Western civilisation and challenging it for global supremacy. This dissertation focuses on the United States policy towards political Islam. It is premised on the assumption that as the sole remaining superpower and as a country that has major interests in the Middle East, it will the most affected by the development of Islamist movements bent on reordering the domestic and regional order. This study will look at Egypt and Jordan as examples of long-standing pro-Western countries and regional U.S. allies where the incumbent regimes are challenged by the Islamists.

This thesis will argue that although the U.S. policy towards political Islam shows an "accommodationist" tilt, it is largely rhetorical and fails to address a number of important issues. In the case of Egypt and Jordan, this work will demonstrate that the United States overriding interest is the maintenance in power of the incumbent regimes lest the Islamists challenge important U.S. interests in the Middle East. The Clinton administration has toned down its promotion of the "democratisation agenda" for fear that the opening up of the political systems gives the Islamists an opportunity to gain power.

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the issue of political Islam and depicts the Islamist movements in Egypt and Jordan. The second part is concerned with the United States policy in the Middle East. The third part outlines America's encounters with political Islam, looks at the prevailing views regarding the nature of the phenomenon and chronicles the development of the "Green Peril" idea. In addition it characterises the U.S. policy towards political Islam, looks at the contemporary foreign policy priorities and examines in which way the existence of strong Islamist movements in Egypt and Jordan has affected U.S. policy towards those countries.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... *i*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... *ii*

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... *iii*

GLOSSARY ..... *vii*

INTRODUCTION 1

PART I - POLITICAL ISLAM 5

1. Civilizational Clash: Islam vs. the West 6
   1.1. Political Islam as an Ideological Challenge to the West 6
   1.2. Causes of Islamist Anti-Westernism 10

2. Political Islam in Egypt and Jordan 15
   2.1. The Islamist Movement in Egypt 15
      2.1.1 The Creation of the Muslim Brotherhood 15
      2.1.2. Islamic Resurgence Under Sadat 17
      2.1.3. The Islamist Movement: A Challenge to the State 20
   2.2. The Islamist Movement in Jordan 25
      2.2.1. Origins of the Islamist Movement 25
      2.2.2. The Islamist Surge 27
      2.2.3. The Impact of the Islamist Movement 32
   2.3. Egyptian and Jordanian Islamists: A Contrasting Perspective 35
      2.3.1. Islamist Strategies and State Responses 35
      2.3.2. Islamist Performance in an Altered Domestic Setting 36

PART II - THE UNITED STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST 38

3. U.S. Middle East Policy Making 39
   3.1. The Process of Middle East Policy Making 39
   3.2. Patterns of Republican and Democrat Middle East PolicyMaking 46

4. Major Trends in the U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East 51
   4.1. The USSR's Bid For Hegemony in the Middle East 51

4.1.1. Initial Attempts at Containment: the Truman Doctrine, the Baghdad Pact, and the Eisenhower Doctrine 51
4.1.2. The Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Potential for Soviet Interference 56
4.1.3. The Decline of Soviet Influence in the Middle East 60
4.2. Defence of the Oil Interests 62
4.2.1. Oil: "Strategic Power" and "Material Prize" 62
4.2.2. Oil as a Political Weapon 64
4.2.3. The Gulf Dominant 67
4.3. The Defence of Israel and Termination of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 69
4.3.1. Truman's Support of Zionist Aspirations and the Creation of Israel 69
4.3.2. From the Suez Campaign to the 1967 War: Birth of the Strategic Relationship and the First Middle East Peace Plans 72
4.3.3. The 1973 War and Kissinger's Step-by-Step Diplomacy: A Precarious Middle East Settlement and Israel's Consolidation as a "Strategic Asset" 77
4.3.4. Carter's New Approach: Camp David and the Failure of a Comprehensive Peace Settlement 86
4.3.5. From Reagan to the Intifada: Collusion with Israel and Stalling in the Peace Process 90
4.3.6. From the Intifada to the Washington Agreement: From Palestinian Hopelessness to a Diplomatic Breakthrough 94
4.3.7. Clinton and the Endorsement of Israel Aims 100

5. U.S. Allies in the Middle East 102
5.1. The Recruitment of Regional Partners 102
5.1.1. The American Network of Relationships 102
5.1.2. Israel 103
5.1.3. Saudi Arabia 106
5.2. Egypt and Jordan: Their Standing in the U.S. Policy in the Middle East 110
5.2.1. The United States and Egypt: A Wavering Relationship 110
5.2.2. Jordan and the United States: Perseverance Against Adverse Odds ... 116

6. The Post-Cold War Middle East: Between American Hegemony and the Age of Chaos 121
6.1. Challenges to U.S. Interests in the Middle East 121
6.2. The Gulf: U.S. Strategy Under Fire 129

PART III - U.S. POLICY TOWARDS POLITICAL ISLAM 134

7. America's Encounter with Political Islam 135
7.1. The Iranian Revolution 135
7.1.1. Background to the Revolution 135
7.1.2. The American Failure to Anticipate the Revolution 138
7.1.3. Deepening the Rift: The Failure to Establish a Connection and the Hostage Crisis 142
7.2. The U.S. Support to the Mujahidin in the Afghan-Soviet War 145
7.2.1. America's Stake in the Afghan War 145
7.2.2. Bolstering the Islamic Resistence 147
7.3. The Shia Holy War Against the United States: America's Intervention in Lebanon 154
7.3.1. The Radicalisation of Lebanese Shiites 154
7.3.2. The Escalation of the Terror Campaign Against the U.S 156
7.4. The United States and Political Islam: A Flexible Approach 159

8. The Intellectual Backdrop: Approaches to Political Islam 161
8.1. The Nature of the Islamist Challenge 161
8.2. Divisions within the Academic Community 164
8.2.1. The Case for Accommodation 165
8.2.2. The Case for Confrontation 171
8.5. Political Islam as a Security Concern 178
8.6. The Green Peril: The Making of a Threat 184

9. U.S. Policy Towards Political Islam 200
9.1. The U.S. Policy Toward Political Islam: The Reagan and Bush Foundations 200
9.2. The Policy Formulation 201
9.3. The Democracy Conundrum 206
9.4. Islamist Terrorism 214

9.5. The Presidential Endorsement 221

10. Political Islam and Foreign Policy Priorities 225
10.1. Explaining the Challenges 225
10.2. America's Priorities and Policy Options 228
10.2.1. The Peace Process 228
10.2.2. Algeria 232
10.2.3. Iran 240
10.2.4. Sudan 249

11. The American Position Towards the Islamist Movement in Egypt and Jordan .. 254
11.1. The Islamist Challenge in Egypt and Jordan: U.S. Considerations 254
11.2. Egypt 256
11.3. Jordan 260

CONCLUSION 263

BIBLIOGRAPHY 267

GLOSSARY

A.I.S.: the Islamic Salvation Army; the armed branch of the F.I.S.. In French, "Armée Islamique du Salut".

A.J.C.: American Jewish Congress.

Ayatollah: a title for a high-ranking religious scholar in Shiite tradition.

C.I.A.: Central Intelligence Agency.

Dawa: propagation of the faith.

Dawla: state.

Dar al-Islam: the abode of Islam.

D.I.A.: Defence Intelligence Agency.

Din: faith; religion.

Dunya: way of life

E.U.: European Union.

Faqih: the jurisconsult of the *Sharia*.

F.I.S.: an Algerian Islamist party; acronym for "Front Islamique de Salvation".

F.L.N.: the Algerian ruling socialist part; acronym for Front de "Libération National".

G.I.A.: the "Groupe Islamique Armée"; an extremist Algerian Islamist group.

G.C.C.: Gulf Cooperation Council.

Hakimiyya: the reign of Allah's sovereignty on earth.

H.A.M.A.S.: the main Islamic group in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; acronym for "Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya".

Hijra: the Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina.

I.A.F.: a Jordanian Islamist party; acronym for Islamic Action Front.

Ijtihad: the action of using informed, independent judgement in a legal or theological issue.

I.L.P.: an Islamic Jordanian party; acronym for Islamic Liberation Party.

Imam: religious leader; for Shiites the "rightful" successor to Ali.

I.M.F.: International Monetary Fund.

I.N.R.: Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

I.R.G.: the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

I.S.I.: Pakistani Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence.

Jahilliyyah: time of ignorance before Islam; in contemporary use a "sinful society".

Jihad: effort or struggle in defence of Islam or aimed at spreading Islam; also, armed struggle.

L.P.: the Egyptian Liberal Party.

Majlis: the Iranian parliament.

M.B.: Muslim Brotherhood.

Mujahidin: a person involved in *jihad* ; armed fighters of the Islamic resistance parties in Afghanistan.

Mullah: mosque preacher or teacher.

N.A.T.O.: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

N.D.P.: the ruling Egyptian National Democratic Party.

O.I.C.: Organisation of Islamic Conference

P.A.I.C.: Popular Arab and Islamic Conference

P.D.P.A.: People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.

P.N.A.: Palestinian National Authority

Quran: Islam's holy book.

Salafis: the pious ancestors who lived at the time of Muhammad and the Rashidun caliphs.

S.A.V.A.K.: acronym for the Iranian intelligence apparatus.

Sharia: the structure of Islamic law.

Shiism: a major tradition within Islam. It has its origins in the faction (*Shia*) within the community who believed that Ali was the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad.

Shura: consultation or a council; a principle or institution of Islamic law.

S.L.P.: the Egyptian Socialist Labour Party.

Sufism: a dimension of Islam that stresses the immanence of God. An Islamic form of mysticism.

Sunna: traditions of the Prophet as legally binding precedents; customs of orthodox Muslims.

Sunnism: the tradition that accepts the legitimacy of the caliphs who actually succeeded the Prophet. The majority of the Muslims in the world are Sunnis.

Takfir: to charge some with unbelief; excommunication.

U.A.E.: United Arab Emirates.

U.K.: United Kingdom.

Ulama: Islamic scholars (sing. *Alim*).

Umma: the total community of believing Muslims.

U.N.: United Nations.

U.S.A.: United States of America.

U.S.S.R.: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; the former Soviet Union.

W.M.D.: weapons of mass destruction.

Zakat: compulsory almsgiving.

INTRODUCTION

Political Islam has been at the centre of Middle East politics since the late 1960s when a number of events sparked off a movement that, despite the diversity of views and the strategies adopted, saw Islam as being at the core of Muslim social and political life. This movement has since then changed the face of Muslim societies and namely the political game. The Islamists have managed - by pushing for the re-Islamisation of society - to shape individual and communal life. By entering the political realm, most of them have become powerful opposition forces, and, in some rarer cases, they have been able to share power.

The development of political Islam went largely unheeded in the West. It was only after the Iranian Revolution with its follow-up of fiery, revolutionary Islamist-sponsored turmoil, that its strength was properly considered. The Iranian revolution and the wave of Shiite radicalism that marked the 1980s contributed in another important way, to the shaping in the West of a stereotyped image of political Islam: that of an anti-democratic, anti-Western force.

With the demise of communism and the end of the Cold War, a current of thought emerged saying political Islam is the new threat that confronts the West. Many analysts in the academic and political community have depicted the rise of political Islam as a hostile, intolerant and anti-democratic ideology that is closer in spirit to communism and fascism. Those analysts see it as aggressively anti-Semitic and anti-Western and charge Islamist movements of standing in direct competition to Western civilisation and challenging it for global supremacy.

The aforementioned picture provides the background to the present study which is intended as a reflection on the "clash of civilisations" and related theories from the perspective of the West: it aims to assess in which ways political Islam is considered a challenge to the West and to highlight the perceptions, in Western circles, of political Islam as a multidimensional threat.

This dissertation focuses on the United States on the assumption that, as the sole remaining superpower and as a country that has major interests in the Middle East, it will be the most affected by the development of Islamist movements bent on reordering the domestic and regional order. This prospect is not welcomed by American policymakers interested in the stability of the region and in the maintenance of friendly pro-Western leaders in power.

The study of the U.S. policy on political Islam seemed relevant as the conflict in Algeria, pitting the Islamists against the regime, unfolded and as it became clear that U.S. approach to the Algerian Islamist movement diverged from the French one. Whilst the latter favoured an uncompromising approach and the crushing of the Islamists, the American government adopted a more discreet and cautions position, avoiding to outrightly condemn the Islamists and even embarking on exploratory talks with the FIS representatives in the United States. The United States' almost fearful response to an Islamist movement waging a savage war against the Algerianstate, and the lack of U.S. assertiveness seemed inappropriate - bearing in mind the American unhappy experience in Iran. This situation provided the incentive to look at the unofficial and official U.S. approach to political Islam.

The aim of this study is to elicit:

a) how political Islam is viewed by the American politicians and government;

b) to what extent and, in which ways, it is considered a threat to U.S. interests;

c) what policies the United States has devised to deal with the phenomenon;

d) in what ways the existence of strong Islamist movements in friendly Arab countries has affected and / or altered U.S. policies toward those countries.

The dissertation will look at the case of Egypt and/ Jordan in order to test hypothesis c) and d). Egypt and Jordan are long-standing pro-Western countries and pivotal regional states which have played an important role as moderating influences and as supporters of the peace process. In both countries, theIslamists are the main opposition force and the regime has been obliged to devise crafty approaches to keep them under control. They will serve to illustrate some of the issues facing the United States when dealing with political Islam, although the emphasis on this thesis is on the larger debate on the role of political Islam in U. S. foreign policy.

This dissertation will highlight the episodes that brought the United States in touch with political Islam (starting in a most forceful way with the Iranian Revolution), and how those experiences shaped American perceptions on the nature of political Islam. The present study will also chronicle the process that led to the creation of the idea of militant Islam as the "Green peril". It will argue that in academic and policy circles the views on political Islam were divided between those who saw it as a benign phenomenon and those who considered it an anti-Western and anti-democratic force. A tentative U.S. policy toward political Islam dates back to 1992. This study documents the development of this policy and shows how it has been refined. In looking at the case of Egypt and Jordan, this dissertation will conclude that the U.S.

policy on political Islam is not much more than a rhetorical stand whose purpose is to grapple with an emerging and unpleasant reality, from the perspective of the United States

The research for this thesis was carried out in two stages. The first stage involved an examination of all the secondary sources available on political Islam, the U.S. policy toward the Middle East and the U.S. policy toward political Islam. The second stage took place when I began to search for and study the documentary evidence and to conduct interviews with individuals specialised on the subject or linked to the U.S. establishment. In the United States, I also had the opportunity to collect material in several university libraries and in the Library of Congress where most of the primary sources used in this work are located. I was fortunate to be able to discuss my dissertation with interviewees who gave me a unique insight into my matter of research.

In organisational terms the dissertation is divided in three parts. Part One (chapters One to Two) deals with the issue of political Islam and depicts theIslamist movements in Egypt and Jordan. Chapter One explores the perspectives that point to the existence of a civilizational clash between Islam and the West. Chapter Two traces the evolution of Islamist movements in Egypt and Jordan and assesses their current situation.

Part Two (chapters Three to Six) of the thesis is concerned with the United States in the Middle East. Chapter Three expounds the process of U.S. Middle East policy making and draws the distinctions between the Republicans and the Democrats approach to the Middle East. Chapter Four outlines the major trends of U.S. policy in the area. It examines U.S. efforts to contain the Soviet Union and to check the spread of Soviet influence in the Arab world. It considers a major U.S. interest since World War I: the access to Gulf oil. A part of this chapter is devoted to U.S. policies in defence of Israel and to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Chapter Five looks at the U.S. main allies in the Middle East. It looks at the American network of relationship, mainly Israel and Saudi Arabia. It also assesses the U.S. alliance with Egypt and Jordan. Chapter Six provides the background on current U.S. policies in the Middle East and examines the challenges to U.S. interests.

Part Three (chapters Seven to Eleven) concentrate on U.S. policy toward political Islam. Chapter Seven outlines the setting of America's encounter with political Islam, looking at the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent hostage crisis, the American support to *mujahidin* rebels in Afghanistan, and U.S. confrontation withShia groups in

Lebanon during the first years of the 1980s. Chapter Eight examines the arguments surrounding the debate on the nature of political Islam. It presents the views of the two major schools, the "confrontational" and the "accommodationist", and analyses the development of the "Green Peril" idea. It presents the intellectual backdrop to that view and the considerations in the security field underlying it. This chapter also covers the origins of a concerted campaign in the media, academic and political circles depicting Islam as a threat to the West. Chapter Nine is about U.S. official policy towards political Islam. It characterises the main thrusts of this policy and its implications for other U.S. policies. Chapter Ten looks at the contemporary U.S. foreign policy priorities. Political Islam presents major challenges to the United States in the case of the peace process, Algeria, Iran and Sudan. Finally, ChapterEleven analyses in which way the existence of strong Islamist movements in Egypt and Jordan has affected U.S. policies toward those countries. It concludes by depicting how the United States has responded to Islamist-sponsored change underway in those Middle Eastern countries.

PART I - POLITICAL ISLAM

1. Civilizational Clash: Islam vs. the West

1.1. Political Islam as an Ideological Challenge to the West

The salience of political Islam as a force in politics can be traced back to the early 1970s. A series of events in the Muslim world - in the form of cumulative crises - generated a period of soul searching and self-criticism[1] . It resulted in an explicit return in private and in public life to Islamic practices and in the revitalisation of Islam as an all-encompassing ideology with a marked political penchant.

The Iranian revolution of 1978-9 seemed a watershed for the whole Muslim world. The success of a genuinely "Islamic revolution" generated a wave of euphoria and sparked a deep sense of pride not only among Shia but also among Sunni militants. It was interpreted as a victory of Islam and as the defeat of foreign, Western forces. The 1980s were marked by intense Islamic activism even of a revolutionary type[2] so that, by the end of the decade, Islamism had profoundly marked the political landscape and Muslim contemporary society.

In the West the unfolding of these events had contributed to moulding a perception of Islam as an antagonistic and hostile religion, and its actors as terrorists aiming at overthrowing the modern, Westernised world order. In Europe, the notion of an alleged Islamic menace has been reinforced by its proximity to the Muslim world and thus to its exposition to the spill-over effects of instability in this region. Events such as the terrorist bombings and assassinations in the main European capitals; the Rushdie affair; the Islamist current in North Africa and the revival of Muslim sentiment among the immigrant communities in Europe, have fuelled these feelings. In the United States, the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York brought terrorism to the American soil.

The Islamist reaction in North Africa came as a shock to the Europeans highlighting the civilizational gap between the two margins of the Mediterranean. The electoral strength of Islamic movements in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and the Sudan forced many to consider the overall implications of the Islamist challenge to the

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[1] Chief among them was the Six-Day War with Israel known in Arab Literature as "the disaster". The end of the 1960s also witnessed a generalised disillusionment with the West, with the Muslim leaders and their Western-inspired governments. A sense of failure was to set permanently in the Muslim world. See Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 164-5.

[2] For instance the activities of Iranian-sponsored groups (like Hizbollah in Lebanon), the Afghan Islamists and the radical Arab groups, generally dissidents of the Muslim Brotherhood (such as Jihad).

Western world. Chief among these concerns were the security considerations arising from the impact of potential migratory pressures of North African populations in the direction of Europe. European leaders are already concerned about what is seen as an "internal threat" posed by the presence of over 6 million Muslims in England, France and Germany. Their increasing cultural assertiveness, coupled with an unwillingness (or difficulty) to assimilate within the dominant cultures feed the discontentment of those Europeans who fear the loss of ethnic and cultural homogeneity.

The demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War bolstered the views of some analysts that Islamic activism would emerge as the next threat to the Western world. Huntington predicted that in the new world order the conflicts of civilizations would be increasingly central and that Islam and the West would collide on many fronts [3]. The 1991 Gulf War was understood by many as the rekindling of the ancient conflict between the Christian West and the Islamic world. The rhetoric employed to justify this conflict was thus seen as an ideological substitute of the former crusade against the Soviet Union [4].

On a more objective level, and as Halliday points out, Islamic activists have contributed to confirm Western stereotypes about the Muslims and their marked anti-Western proclivity [5]. Islamist positions have coloured Western perceptions of an imminent Islamic threat. They have thus provided policymakers with indicators to assess the impact of Islamic activism upon the domestic, regional and international dimensions and served as guidelines for devising policies toward the Muslim world.

It seems that what Westerners fear in Islam is its vitality as a religious and civilizational paradigm [6] and hence of its potential as a major ideological challenge to the West: "the Islamists' pretension to offer a coherent ideology for the social, economic, and political organization of Muslim societies challenges the Western view of the universal applicability of its liberal democratic philosophy in the post-Communist era" [7]. In fact, Islamists openly reject Western values of secularism, democracy, the

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[3] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs* (72), nº 3, Summer 1993.
[4] F. Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), p. 109.
[5] *Id.* : p. 110.
[6] B. Lewis said that "until the revolution in Iran, there was a steadfast refusal on the part of the Western media to recognize that religion was still a force in the Muslim world" : *Islam and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 135.
[7] Shireen T. Hunter, "The Rise of Islamist Movements and the Western Response: Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Interests?", in L. Guazzone (ed.), *The Islamist Dilemma* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1995), p. 341.

primacy of civil law, equality between men and women (or their equal participation in society), and between Muslims and non-Muslims. They have condemned the West's policy toward the Arab and Islamic world, its conduct of North-South relations and they have vowed to curtail or eliminate Western influence in the Muslim world. The current wave of Islamic activism favours the closure of Islamic society in itself and the repudiation of external influence. Islamists consider that the failure of the Muslim world is imputable to their departure from the straight path of Islam and their adherence to the Western model, with its secular, materialistic ideology. They think that the renewal of society requires the restoration of God's laws, that is, the application of the *Sharia* which would entail the rejection of Western-inspired civil codes. Mainstream Islamists condemn the Westernisation of society but not its modernisation. In this sense, science and technology are accepted but they are to be subordinated to Islamic beliefs in order to guard against the corruption of authentic values and the secularisation of Muslim society [8].

Radical activists take even further their hatred of the Western world. They conceive of a common Western, particularly American, conspiracy or at least alliance, with Israel opposed to the Muslim world. For these Islamists the most urgent danger that comes from the West is the cultural one. They attack the Westernised educational systems that were planted by Western colonialism in the Muslim world and which produced culturally alienated elites. These systems were allegedly aimed at the gradual replacement of the Islamic value system so that Muslims would submit to American-Israeli domination. Radical Islamists believe that the West is interested in undermining the credibility of Islam as a system of government. The United States is accused of working against Islamic unity which would spread Islam in the rest of Africa and Asia and would threaten the security of southern Europe [9].

The myth of a natural antagonism of the Muslim world vis-à-vis the West finds resonance in the stereotypes of most Westerners. They originate in the time-honoured distrust towards Islam: "The recurring unwillingness torecognize the nature of Islam ... as an independent, different, and autonomous religious phenomenon persists and recurs from medieval to modern times"[10]. The perceived Islamic threat has its foundation in the popular imagery of the historic clash that took place between Europe as Christendom and Arab, later Ottoman Turkish power, which was Islamic.

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[8] Esposito, *op. cit.* : pp. 169-70.

[9] See Walid M. Abdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement in Egypt* (London: Kegan Paul, 1994), pp. 146-172.

Rather than addressing the specific causes of present-day Muslim effervescence, Western populations prefer to believe in the historical pattern of Muslim belligerency and aggression, confirmed by terrorist acts against Western targets.

Thus, the Islamist anti-Western leanings are the result of acivilizational clash vision. In academic and policy circles many consider political Islam as a threat to Western security, legitimacy and way of life. Bernard Lewis in a much publicised article affirmed that the present confrontational mood derives from the dramatic encounter of the Islamic and the Western world and from the complex of "humiliation, envy and fear" felt by Muslims in relation to the West. The Islamist movement is in Lewis' viewpoint not a circumstantial phenomenon but is the result of "a rising tide of rebellion against this Western paramountcy" [11] and "... the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the world-wide expansion of both ..." [12] . Huntington also believes that there is a civilizational clash that derives from the incompatibility of Islam with such fundamental Western philosophical notions as democracy and modernity [13] .

Indeed, proponents of this view think that Islam is irreconcilable with the universal goal of creating modern political systems based on democratic principles and on the respect of human rights. Islam admits no separation of religion and politics, propounds that sovereignty belongs to God and that the Quran and the *Sharia* are the only sources of law. As far as gender relations are concerned, the positions continue to be strictly conservative with women being considered as ultimately inferior to men. The protection of non-Muslim minorities is often neglected.

It is equally true that reformists have tried to adapt traditional Islamic tenets to the modern world and in this endeavour they have emphasised the participatory and consultative aspects of Islam [14] . Hence they point to the potential of such concepts as *shura* (consultation, a functional equivalent of Western parliamentary rule),*ijma* (community consensus), and *ijtihad* (or reinterpretation of certain areas of the Islamic law in order to support notions of parliamentary democracy, representative elections, and religious reform). Most Islamists accept the relevance of popular will in the functioning of the Islamic state, albeit in a limited sense[15] . Krämer concludes that "...

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[10] Lewis, *op. cit.* : p. 133.
[11] "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *The Atlantic Monthly* (266), n° 3, September 1990: p. 49.
[12] *Op. cit.* : p. 60.
[13] Huntington, *op. cit.* : pp. 22-49.
[14] Hunter, *op. cit.* : p. 332.
[15] *Ibid.* .

the Islamic mainstream has come to accept crucial elements of political democracy: pluralism (within the framework of Islam), political participation, government accountability, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. But it has not adopted liberalism, if that includes religious indifference. Change is more noticeable in the domain of political organization than of social and religious values"[16] . One can affirm that the possibility for accommodation between Islam and democracy is quite reasonable [17] due to the fact that as a religion Islam is not unchanging and is open to diverse interpretations [18] .

1.2. Causes of Islamist Anti-Westernism

Both Western prejudices against the Islamic world and the Muslims' perceptions of the West coincide on one point: there is indeed a widespread antipathy toward Western and particularly American policies in the Arab and Muslim world. Islamist literature is replete with the image of the Muslims as pawns in the Western hands: "Many in the Arab and Muslim world view the history of Islam and the Muslim world's dealings with the West as one of victimization and oppression at the hands of an expansive imperial power"[19] . It is ironic that in an epoch when the Western world fears Islamic activism, it is the Muslim peoples that actually have the sense of being under siege. This feeling is in their view very real and historically justified.

The anti-Western feeling dates not primarily from the distant historical memories of the Crusades but from the beginning of this century[20]. From then onwards Western supremacy became a reality in the everyday life of the Muslims through colonial and imperialist rule. Contemporary Islamists point to the colonialist experience as the main reason for the failures of Muslim societies. The impact of

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[16] G. Krämer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy", *Middle East Report*, July/August 1993: p. 8.

[17] Joffé dismisses this point by arguing that "... Western concepts of democracy are irrelevant either because the realities of Middle Eastern life are based on patronage-clientage relations or consultation and consensus-building (*shura*) or because Middle Eastern political culture traditionally is perceived to be concerned with moral legitimacy and justice rather than democracy"; "Relations Between the Middle East and the West", *The Middle East Journal* (48), nº 2, Spring 1994: p. 259. See also p. 260.

[18] B. A. Roberson, "Islam and Europe: An Enigma or a Myth?", *The Middle East Journal* (48), nº 2, Spring 1994: p. 292.

[19] J. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 171.

colonialism has been profound, and Muslims ascribe the destruction of their Islamic heritage, particularly their legal and educational systems, to foreign rule. Colonialism is also held responsible for the redrawing of colonial boundaries and the creation of nation-states along artificial lines. These facts impugn the Islamic prescription of universalism of the *Umma* and they are seen as one of the main reasons for its present weakness and lack of unity. The unnatural division of the Muslim world into individual states is viewed by the Islamists as the device the Western world resorted to in order to control a potentially powerful political and cultural entity [21] .

Islamists also denounce Western economic imperialism. They believe that Western colonial powers have impeded the development of national industries in Muslim countries so that they would remain dependent on the Western markets. They accuse both Western and Zionist colonialism of aiming at plundering Muslim resources and of turning Muslim countries into markets for Western products. Another major grievance against the West was its opposition, after Arab emancipation from colonial rule, to indigenous forms of nationalism (economic or other), particularly Arab nationalism.

One can not understand the legacy of Muslim anti-Westernism without looking at the problem of Israel in the Middle East and at the Palestine question. The Muslims feel an intense outrage at the role played by the Western world, particularly the United States, in the creation and fortifying of the state of Israel. They are driven by a deep sense of injustice which they perceive as having been dealt to the Palestinian people.

After the 1967 Six-Day War, many Muslims began to identify Western support of Israel as part of a Judeo-Christian (or Zionist-Crusader) conspiracy against Islam: they believed that only a religious motivation could explain why Christians provided huge "Christian offerings to fanatics against Islam to fight it despite the fact that they believed that the Jews crucified Christ" [22] . They concluded that only a long-term Christian hatred of Islam could explain the Western alliance with the Israeli state.

Islamists view Israel's intransigence since 1967 and its unwillingness to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 as a consequence of Israel's empowerment by the United States, not only through direct financial and military aid,

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[20] James Piscatori, "Religion and Realpolitik: Islamic Responses to the Gulf War", in J. Piscatori (ed.), *Islamic Fundamentalisms and the Gulf Crisis* (Chicago, Ill.: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1991), p. 14.

[21] Maha Azzam, "Islamist Attitudes to the Current World Order", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* (4), nº 2, December 1993: p. 248.

but also in the diplomatic action at the United Nations to prevent world opinion from resolving the conflict in a just way.

Islamist dissatisfaction in the face of the lack of resolve of the international community to tackle the problem of the Palestinians explains the increase of extremism in the occupied territories. This sense of injustice has continued even after the signing of the 1993 Palestinian-Israeli peace deal. Violent activity byHamas and Jihad are considered alternative means to advance the Palestinian cause due to the widespread perception in the occupied territories that theP.L.O. and Y. Arafat have sold out. Islamists believe that the Washington accords lend legitimacy to the Israeli state, ensure its acceptance by the Arab regimes and serve primarily Israeli and Western interests both strategically and economically [23].

Palestine is a central tenet of the Islamist movement. During the Gulf War the Saudi Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Bin Baz declared that "the Palestine problem is an Islamic problem first and last", and that Muslims "must fight an Islamic*jihad* against the Jews until the land returns to its owners" [24]. The fight for Palestine, in theIslamist's eyes, is a fight in the name of Muslim dignity; it is also a demand that Muslims be recognised as having full rights and equal status in determining their future.

The war in Bosnia and the inactivity of the international community in the face of the genocide of the Muslim population is a more recent example of a perceived Western blow dealt against the Muslim world. Islamists wonder why the West was able to muster 750,000 troops against Iraq and then talk of difficult terrain in Yugoslavia. They think that Western reluctance to intervene in what it considered a civil war, masked in effect its disdain of the Muslim world: Western leaders were allegedly not interested in considering the existence of a Muslim majorityBosnian state in the heart of Europe [25]. They were only willing to give the Muslims humanitarian aid while denying them arms to defend themselves.

Another aspect of the Western policy that has irritated Muslim populations, has been the U.S. policy developed after the Gulf War on arms control and the regional and international military balance of power in the Middle East. Its content

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[22] Y. Haddad, "Islamists and the "Problem of Israel": The 1967 Awakening",*The Middle East Journal* (46), n° 2, Spring 1992: p. 281.
[23] Azzam, *op. cit.* : p. 251.
[24] Piscatori, *op. cit.* : p. 6.
[25] See Greg Noakes, "Republican Task Force Faces Backlash on Bosnia Report", *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (XII), n° 2, July/August 1993: p. 30, 86.

reinforces the belief that the West seeks to weaken Muslim countries by making them disarm or neutralise their military capability and that this process needs to be resisted.

Muslims find evidence for this accusation in the fact that the United States has put a lot of effort in dismantling Iraq's chemical and nuclear programme. Although most Muslim countries condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, they opposed the allied forces' destruction of the Iraqi military machine. In the eyes of theIslamists it came to represent the strength of the *Umma* in the face of Western massive power. Besides, international institutions are accused of double standards because they have intentionally overlooked the Israeli nuclear arsenal. Actually, Arab countries possessing similar capabilities were forced to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty whereas Israel was excused of this obligation.

The 1991 Gulf War brought to a head the grievances of the Islamic world against Western, especially U.S. policies. Islamist leaders attacked the American role in the crisis and explained the conflict as the machinations of anti-Islamic forces attempting to weaken a beleaguered and threatened Muslim world. Muslim Brotherhood leaders "called on the Muslims in all parts of the world to confront the aggressor infidels, join the battle of destiny, and support their brothers in Iraq to purge the holy land of Palestine and Nadj and Hijaz ... from the Zionists and imperialists" [26] .

Popular viewpoints pointed to the U.S.-Israeli conspiracy and collusion against Muslim interests and referred to the West's history of enmity to the region. There was a shared conviction that the West through the conflict was pursuing several goals: the low-cost exploitation of regional resources; strengthening its political dominance in the region; bolstering Israel at the expense on Arab states; supporting corrupt, non-democratic regimes, whose interests coincide with the larger U.S. goal of keeping control of the region politically and economically[27] . Iraq's defeat and the subsequent plight of the Iraqi people confirmed Arab historical stereotypes of suffering and humiliation at the hands of the West.

On balance, it seems that Muslim antipathy towards the West and anti-Americanism are not the result of a purely cultural hostility but are rather motivated by specific Western policies. Esposito says that "U.S. presence and policy, not a genetic

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[26] Beverly Milton-Edwards, "A Temporary Alliance with the Crown: The Islamic Response in Jordan", in James Piscatori (ed.), *Islamic Fundamentalisms* ... : p. 98.

[27] M. Azzam, "The Gulf Crisis: Perceptions in the Muslim World",*International Affairs* (67), n° 3, July 1991: pp. 481-2.

hatred for Americans, is often the primary, motivating force behind acts against American government, business, and military interests" [28] .

On the other hand, Western policymakers must bear in mind that current protest movements and especially the Islamist current have an activist agenda, want to change the character of existing regimes (many of them important U.S. allies), and pursue goals that are ultimately against Western interests. It would however be exaggerated to think that the Western presence in the Muslim world is in jeopardy. Even Islamists would be incapable of cutting off Muslim ties to the Western world since there are built-in complementarities between the two spheres. Besides there is the more elementary fact that Muslim countries remain economically underdeveloped and very much dependent on the West, particularly for technology, capital and know-how. Politically, Muslim countries remain divided and unable to achieve a modicum of political unity and economic solidarity. The supposition of an Islamic/Arab menace to the West is thus far-fetched.

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[28] Esposito, *op. cit.* : p. 207.

2. Political Islam in Egypt and Jordan

2.1. The Islamist Movement in Egypt

2.1.1. The Creation of the Muslim Brotherhood

The origins of today's Islamist thought and organisations can be traced to the Egyptian group al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, that is the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). This movement constitutes the ideological and institutional epicentre of the Muslim revival in the Islamic world [29]. The Muslim Brotherhood was created in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna in the context of Egypt's continued military occupation by the British and popular disappointment with the corrupted and manipulated political leadership. While living in Cairo and Ismailia, Banna was struck by the corruption and degradation of Muslims, especially the young of his time, and their capitulation to Western economic, political and cultural domination. Banna concluded, in face of the evidence, that the solution to Egypt's problems lay in a return to Islam as a comprehensive order for all aspects of human existence [30].

Initially the movement founded by al-Banna concentrated on educational and devotional programmes but, over time, the Brotherhood grounded its teaching in a wide network of social service institutions that provided direct assistance to displaced rural migrants newly arrived in urban areas. Banna's Brotherhood had a distinctive character that set it apart from older Islamic institutions or movements: it was an Islamic organisation with reformist aims, based on an activist ideology, a pragmatic course of action and a markedly social orientation that succeeded in galvanising and organising a committed mass following [31].

The Brotherhood eventually gained political significance as it grew into a major social movement impacting upon the political-cultural discourse of society. The Brothers effectively established themselves as a mass movement in the 1940s by

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[29] R. H. Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), p. 73.
[30] David Commins, "Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949)", in Ali Rahnema (ed.), *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994), pp. 133-4.
[31] Dekmejian, *op. cit.* : p. 75.

responding to the needs of large numbers of Egyptians who were affected adversely by the disruptions of the war and the British occupation.

The Brothers acted with similar vigour against the external threats to Egypt. When the government abrogated the Treaty of 1936, the Muslim Brothers took a leading role in the confrontation with the British in the Canal Zone[32] . The Brothers earned even greater nationalist credit for their engagement in the fight against Zionism and the Jewish occupation of Palestine. The Palace eventually came to view the Brethren as one of its major enemies. The political antagonism reached a violent climax in 1948 when a member of the Brotherhood murdered the Egyptianprime-minister. In the following year, al-Banna was murdered, probably in retaliation, and the Brotherhood was officially suppressed.

When the conspiracy of Free Officers erupted into the coup d'état of July 1952, the Brothers actively supported the military uprising. By the mid 1950s, however, this cooperation collapsed and the regime and the Brothers were locked in a deadly combat. The Brother's commitment to Islam made them a threat to the secular, pan-Arab goals that the military rulers had set to accomplish. The activist and aggressive nature of the Brother's commitment meant that they posed a real threat to the officers and their organisational skills provided the resources necessary to back up their threat.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the regime treated the Brotherhood as its most dangerous opponent. Major Muslim Brother thinkers and activists were assassinated or executed and thousands of followers were held for years in political detention camps.

The camps produced the most important contemporary Islamist thinker, Sayyid Qutb. Before being sent to his death by Nasser in 1966, he formulated the theory of opposition to the independent nationalist state still used today by militants all over the Sunni Muslim world. According to Qutb the dominant sociopolitical system of the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds was that of *jahiliyya*, injustice, suffering and ignorance of Islam's teachings. Muslims were bound by duty to transform *jahili* society through proselytization, *dawa,* and *jihad*. Qutb did not explicitly question the piety of all Muslims in the *jahili* framework. However, he considered it imperative that the Muslims emulate the Prophet's *hijra* by separating themselves from *jahili* society in order to constitute a strong vanguard (*taliá*) as a prelude to the establishment of

God's authority on earth (*hakimiyya*) through the setting up of an Islamic state. This vanguard should assume responsibility for the task of ending repression, since Islam and *jahiliyya* can not coexist. The prevailing social order must thus be overturned[33] . In other words, Qutb created a "... formal Islamic rationale for a modern revolution" [34] .

2.1.2. Islamic Resurgence Under Sadat

It was not until after Nasser's death in 1970, when Sadat proceeded to free the prisoners, that the Islamist visions of the world expanded beyond its core advocates to become one of the major forces in Egyptian politics. Besides the release of Islamic militants from prison, other acts opened the way for greater public visibility of activist Islam. The new constitution promulgated in 1971, for example, asserted that the principles of Islamic law would become a principal source of legislation. At the same time, Islamists were allowed more freedom in presenting their views publicly. The media increased the amount of programming devoted to religious subjects. Although formally outlawed, the Muslim Brotherhood published "al-Dawa" and "al-Itisan", popular magazines which were recognised as organs of the group.

The leadership of the Brotherhood was the old guard of the surviving organisation. Emerging from prison in the early 1970s, the old guard presented a reformist rather than a revolutionary alternative.Hudaybi, the new general guide, had set the tone in his rejection of Qutb's willingness to engage in the act of identifying people as apostates (*takfir*) [35] . The major shift in the Brotherhood's strategy was its decision to discard violence. While the movement continued to be committed to the goal of establishing a truly Islamic socio-political order, it pursued that goal without

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[32] The Brothers created a para-military wing - the "secret Apparatus" - that engaged in violent action against the regime.

[33] Y. Haddad, "The Qur'anic Justification for An Islamic Revolution: The View of Sayyid Qutb", *The Middle East Journal* (37), n° 1, Winter 1983; Roy, *op. cit.* : pp. 41-2; Gilles Kepel. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

[34] J. O. Voll, "The Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan", in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (ed.), *Fundamentalisms and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993): p. 372.

[35] Voll, *op. cit.* : p. 380.

recourse to violence, by influencing Muslim masses and seeking a hearing among the rulers [36].

Some members never accepted the new strategy of non-violence. The young militants, educated in Nasser's prisons, were strongly influenced by the most militant aspects of the thought of Sayyid Qutb. They did not compose a single unified movement but were instead a shifting and loose collection of individuals sharing a similar activist thought.

The most public, and least violent, of the more militant groups were the Gama'at Islamiyya (Islamic associations). This faction was implanted in university circles, where it was noted for its social work on behalf of students. The members organised tutorials, assisted students in acquiring textbooks and, as they gained strength, they demanded gender-segregated seating in classes and special separate facilities for women. Because they drove left-wing militants from the campuses, to the great satisfaction of the state authorities, they were initially welcomed by the state. Only gradually did the state realise that the *Gama'at* were a more serious challenge than the left-wingers had ever been. When they attempted to restrain the groups activities, a radicalisation took place, and a number of the more militant went into hiding [37].

The clandestine Islamists were also fragmented in several groups. They were largely affiliated to two different traditions of militancy. One was a politically revolutionary tradition [38] embodied in the Islamic Liberation Organization (also known as the "Military Academy Group") and the Jihad Organisation. Proponents of this tendency believe that most Egyptians are devout Muslims but are the victims of an unbelieving state. The ruling political elite is held responsible for the present decadence and corruption that characterises the present society. No amount of preaching, of religious consciousness-raising or other benign form of persuasion would bring about the religious conversion of the leaders. Accordingly, these groups advocate that the struggle must be directed against the rulers to remove them or force them to submit to the Islamic will [39].

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[36] Saad E. Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Activism in the 1980s", *Third World Quarterly* (10), n° 2, April 1988: p. 644.
[37] Gilles Kepel, "Islamists Versus the State in Egypt and Algeria", *Daedalus* (124), n° 3, Summer 1995: p. 113.
[38] Voll, *op. cit.* : p. 381.
[39] *Id.* : p. 383 and Ibrahim, *op. cit.* : p. 650.

The Jihad group was by far the bloodiest and most deadly in its confrontations with the state. The group that assassinated Sadat had a chief ideologue, Abd al - Salam Faraj who expounded his ideological blueprint in a small booklet entitled "Al - Farida al - Gha'iba" ("The Hidden Pillar"). Faraj contended that the failure of Muslim rulers to govern by God's laws, as was their duty, provided the believers with the legal justification for declaring them in apostasy from Islam, an offence punishable by death according to Islamic law. The struggle against the impious leaders should be carried out through *jihad* which, according to Faraj, was a "pillar" of Islam that Muslims had overlooked when it came to fighting the enemy at home [40] .

The second tradition rejected all of society as unbelieving and held that all institutions in society were not amenable to conversion.Shukri Mustafa, the leader of this current, believed that moral change was required from the grassroots upwards. Mustafa advocated a long-range strategy based on building a powerful nucleus of believers, patterned after the Prophet's community. The society would move against the authorities in *jihad* only when the membership of its cells had increased sufficiently to pose a credible challenge. The group known as Al -Takfir Wa al - Hijra (Repentance and Holy Flight) was suppressed by the state in the late 1970s, after it abducted and killed a former minister of Awqaf (religious affairs) [41] .

During the final period of Sadat's rule, radical Islamic groups spearheaded active opposition to the state through radicalised student unions, direct and at times spectacular militant actions, and participation in communal strife. The Brotherhood painstakingly distanced itself from the violence-oriented activists and largely benefited from the fanaticism of such groups by cooperating with the authorities [42] .

The Brother's semilegal existence allowed them to resume many of their former activities without depending on government sanction[43] . They enlarged their popular base of support by filling the ideological and political vacuum left by the demise of Nasserism. The Brethren concurred with Sadat when they judged the Nasserist current to be the strongest political force opposing their own movement. Simultaneously, they sought to prevent the radicals from contesting their leadership of

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[40] J. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty* (NY: Macmillan, 1986), p. 165, 167,169, 203.

[41] Ibrahim, *op. cit.* : pp. 653-4.

[42] Abdel Azim Ramadan, "Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt: The Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups", in M. E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (ed.),*Fundamentalisms and the State* , 3rd vol. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 167.

[43] Raymond W. Baker, "Afraid for Islam: Egypt's Muslim Centrists Between Pharaohs and Fundamentalists", *Daedalus* (120), n° 3, Summer 1991: pp. 48-51.

the Islamic current. To achieve these broader aims, the Brothers supported the regime's campaign to discipline the members of the radical Islamic fringe.

However the Brothers were unable to accept the complete identification with the regime and never compromised in matters of principles. In the years between 1977 until Sadat's death, the Brothers offered the most vigorous and widely disseminated public criticism of the regime. They declaredSadat's grand reorientation of the 1970s a failure, attacking the American connection, accommodation with Israel, and key aspects of the economic and political liberalisation. The combination of these elements constituted a grave threat to the integrity of Egypt's Islamic civilization [44] .

On balance, Sadat's attempt to manipulate Islamic forces in order to legitimise his rule backfired on him. He intended to contain the Brotherhood by keeping it under close observation but it grew bigger and stronger and was thus able to infiltrate many unions, councils, state agencies and religious institutions. On the other hand,Sadat's sponsoring of the Islamic movement fostered the emergence of radical groups that did not espouse the Brotherhood's plan of a peaceful transition to an Islamic society. They advocated violence and *jihad* against a regime that they considered impious. This cost Sadat his life.

2.1.3. The Islamist Movement: A Challenge to the State

Sadat's successor introduced a new approach to the Muslim politics of Egypt. Mubarak tried to reinforce the Islamic credentials of the state whereas controlling and directing the development of the Islamist movement [45] . He allowed for the partial re-Islamization of society and granted moderate Islamist groups a generous margin of manoeuvre. At the same time, he continued to suppress forcefully any group that advocated violent tactics and that posed a direct threat to the state. In doing all this, Mubarak tried to pursue a low-profile policy.

The Egyptian leadership came to realise that the Islamic movement was an indigenous movement in its own right and did not necessarily constitute a disruptive force in Egyptian society. Hence, under Mubarak's presidency, the conservative

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[44] S. E. Ibrahim, "An Islamic Alternative in Egypt: The Muslim Brotherhood and Sadat", *Arab Studies Quarterly* (4), n° 1/2, Spring 1982: 80-90.

Islamist faction that originated from the Muslim Brothers acquired increasing influence. The strategic decision of the Brother's leadership in the 1970s for limited cooperation with the regime laid the foundations for their expansion in the 1980s into nearly all aspects of public life. The Islamists therefore concentrated their efforts in gaining a foothold in the political arena.

Thus, in 1984, in the face of the continuous government refusal to acknowledge the MB's legal existence, the Brotherhood sought to enter Parliament under the auspices of the Wafd party. The coalition managed to win sixty-five seats (out of 450), seven of which were for the Brotherhood. The coalition came second only to Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) and served as the major opposition in the People's Assembly for three years. In the April 1987 elections, the Brotherhood shifted its alliance and formed a coalition with two smaller parties: the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and the Liberal Party (LP). The new coalition that took the name of Islamic Alliance, became a major opposition force to the government and gave a sizeable number of its parliamentary seats to Islamist candidates [46].

At this juncture the MB had become the chief partner in the alliance. In Parliament, the Islamist candidates pushed for the application of the *Sharia* and presented drafts of Islamic legislation. Entering Parliament gave the Brotherhood a direct experience in political life and created legitimacy for the Brotherhood in the eyes of the masses [47].

The Brothers have therefore steadily embraced a strategy of moderation and gradualism designed to accommodate the system. They have recognised the need to work within the existing political setting for the advancement of their goals. Their endeavour is designed to elevate the organisation to the status of a recognised political party and remove the restrictions on the group's activities [48].

In addition to their demands for full party status, and as an alternative to political participation at the national level, the Brethren have intensified their involvement in politics at the professional associations and syndicate level. The

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[45] Voll, *op. cit.* : p. 384. The NDP won 69.6 percent of the vote and captured 448 of the elected seats in the Chamber. The coalition won 17 percent of the vote and 56 seats.

[46] Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Activism": p. 646.

[47] In 1990 the situation changed, when, to counter the electoral gains made by Islamists, the election law was changed to allow only individuals, not parties to participate. To protest the government's manipulation of political life, most opposition groups, including the Brotherhood, boycotted the 1990 elections.

[48] Abdel A. Ramadan, "Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt: The Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups", in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (ed.),*Fundamentalisms and the State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 177.

Brotherhood has gained control of the doctors', engineers', and pharmacists' and lawyers' professional associations. These victories are significant indicators of the Brothers' infiltration of civil society and, particularly, of the modern segments of the population [49].

In the last years of the 1980s, radical Islamist unrest surfaced again, particularly in the upper Nile Valley and in the Fayoum oasis where Sheik Omar Abd el Rahman had settled. Released from prison after being found not guilty of Sadat's assassination, this former member of the Jihad group transmitted his radical, anti-regime views to a new breed of Islamic extremists.

Little is still known about the nature and inner workings of these radical groups. They are alternately credited as belonging to two organisations: the Gama'at al-Islamiyya and the Jihad [50]. The former is composed by "... a collection of associations and movements directed by self-proclaimed "emirs" in various towns and large villages in Egypt" [51]. They seem to be organised in regional clusters of groups rather than a national network and their preeminent spiritual leader is Sheik Abd el-Rahman. The Jihad group is what it is left of the original Jihad, active since the late 1970s. It appears to be divided into at least two separate factions: the remnants of the initial group led by Abbud al-Zumar, currently imprisoned in Egypt, and a new faction calling itself Vanguards of Conquest (Talaa'al al-Fateh or the New Jihad Group), which appears to be led by Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is currently outside Egypt. As Voll points out, "it is the willingness to confront the authorities directly, and violently if necessary, that characterizes the groups that maintain the Jihad tradition in the era"[52].

What began as a problem of sporadic violence in the middle Egyptian region around Asyut, escalated to a wave of violence in the capital itself. During the summer of 1993, the violence of the armed groups increased twofold as they launched a

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[49] Sana Abed-Kotob, "The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (27), 1995: p. 329.

[50] See Michael C. Dunn, "Fundamentalism in Egypt", *Middle East Policy* (II), n° 3, 1993: pp. 75-7. Mamoun Fandy expounds the view that "Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya is led by university students from southern Egypt. The Jihad movement, on the other hand, is led by military officers, engineers and doctors and they are from the north". According to this author the aim of Jihad is to establish an Islamic state in the north, while the Jama'a is more concerned with regional issues: "Egypt's Islamic Group: Regional Revenge?", *The Middle East Journal* (48), n° 4, Autumn 1994: p. 609, 625. The fact is that the Jihad group operates mainly in the Cairo area, whereas the Al-Gama'a operates primarily in the Al Minya, Asyut, and Qina governorates of Southern Egypt. See Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1993* (electronic file transfer), p. 44, pp. 46-7.

[51] Gilles Kepel, "Islamists Versus the State in Egypt and Algeria", *Daedalus* (124), n° 3, Summer 1995: p. 116.

[52] Voll, *op. cit.* : p. 389.

campaign to overthrow the Mubarak government which included: attempts on the lives of the Ministers of Interior and of Information, and of the Prime Minister. The Islamic Group traditionally targets mid and lower-level security personnel, Coptic Christians, and Western terrorists. The Jihad group appears to concentrate primarily on high-level, high-profile Egyptian government officials, including Cabinet ministers. It also seems more technically sophisticated in its attacks than the Gama'at, notably in its use of car bombs. The strong-arm tactics they use are aimed at undermining the state's credibility, security and economy in order to create an environment of instability propitious to the overthrow of the regime.

The government's crack down on the extremists has been harsh to the point of eliciting popular resentment. In 1993 the government established military courts to try Islamists in order to bypass slower civilian procedures: they have issued harsh verdicts, including many death sentences of Islamist suspects. However, the 18 April 1996 massacre of Greek tourists in front of a Cairo hotel has shattered the consensus among the nation's elite that the security forces' heavy-handed tactics brought the Jama'at under control.

The mainstream Islamist movement was not indifferent to the intensification of violence: in fact, many *ulema* close to the Muslim Brothers seemed to encourage the actions of militants of the *Jihad* and the *Gama'at*. The state thus decided, "... at the end of 1993, to break its gentleman's agreement with the conservative Islamist movement..." [53] . It has therefore lumped violent and non-violent movements together and has undertaken aggressive actions against both. The Egyptian government has, particularly since 1995, stepped up moves to crush the Muslim Brotherhood which it accuses of being involved with the violence of the Jama'at [54] .

In the course of 1995, the regime launched a wider campaign to remove the Brotherhood from overt political existence. It mounted a full-scale political assault on the Islamists' last significant bastion of expression - the professional associations - by enacting legislation that gave the judiciary virtual control over their internal elections[55] . Islamist opposition in parliament has been wiped out by the use of fraudulent

[53] Kepel, *op. cit.* : p. 117.
[54] Cherif Cordahi, "Crack-Down Intensifies", *Middle East International*, n° 494, 17 February 1995: p. 10; Egyptian Minister: Membership of a Banned Group Insufficient Grounds for Arrest", *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/2589/MED, 18 April 1996: pp. 19-20; "Agency Reports Arrest of "Leading" Muslim Brotherhood Figure", *SWB*, ME/2449/MED, 1 November 1995: p. 25.
[55] Cherif Cordahi, "Brotherhood Backs Down", *Middle East International*, n° 495, 3 March 1995: p. 12.

schemes that ensured a massive victory to NDP candidates in the November 1995 elections to the People's Assembly [56].

The conviction of 54 Muslim Brothers of banned political activity, in November 1995, signalled the end of the official tolerance of the banned organisation[57]. The government has subsequently engaged in another round of confrontation with its chief political opponents, by accusing some members of the Brotherhood of "reactivating the organization" and "seeking to corrupt political life" through setting up a political party - the Wast - as a front for the Brotherhood [58].

The Mubarak regime has been badly damaged by the current wave ofIslamist violence which poses a serious challenge to the state. It has been unable to stamp out the Islamist guerrillas operating from the Cairo suburbs and intouristic areas. The militants of these guerrillas now number hardly more than a few thousand, but they have become a heavy burden on the state, obliged to devote considerable energy to fight them.

The existence of the radical fringe groups has hurt the regime in another way: "The state has had to bargain for increased support of the conservative religious movement, which has exacted a high price for its backing, meting it out with a stinginess proportional to the weakness of the state"[59]. The Brotherhood has thus benefited, by default, from the fanaticism of the marginal extremists groups: it can exchange its support to the state's policy of confrontation with the radical groups for the state's commitment to the reislamization of society [60].

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[56] Steve Negus, "Election Disgrace", *Middle East International*, n° 515, 15 December 1995: p. 11; S. Negus, "Mubarak's New Government", *Middle East International*, n° 517, 19 January 1996: pp. 13-4.
[57] S. Negus, "Brothers Found Guilty", *Middle East International*, n° 514, 1 December 1995: p. 9; "Egypt: Interior Muslim Brothers are "More Dangerous" than Militant Gunmen", *Mideast Mirror* (9), n° 228, 24 November 1995: pp. 11-2.
[58] S. Negus, "Stamping on the Islamists", *Middle East International*, n° 526, 24 May 1996: p. 10; "Minister Says Detained Muslim Brothers Linked to New Wasat Party", *SWB*, ME/2580/MED: p. 20.
[59] Kepel, *op. cit.* : p. 116.
[60] Alain Roussillon, "Changer la Société par le Jihad: "Sédition confessionnelle", attentats contre LEAs touristes et violence qualifiée d'islamique en Égypte", in Riccardo Bocco and Mohammad-Reza Djalili (ed.), *Moyen-Orient: Migrations, Democratisation, Médiations* (Paris: PUF, 1994), p. 266.

2.2. The Islamist Movement in Jordan

2.2.1. Origins of the Islamist Movement

Like in other parts of the Muslim world, the Jordanian Islamist movement was an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The first branch was set up under the British mandate in May 1946, in Jerusalem, then a part of the Jordanian West Bank. In November 1945, King Abdullah patronised the inauguration of the General Offices of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. The movement had already obtained legal status as a "society". In 1953 the movement obtained legal status as an organised group. It thus evolved from being a charitable society into a general and comprehensive Islamic committee. Under its new status, the MB was given access to spread its call in the mosques and public places, to open branches all over the country, in short, to function in absolute freedom [61] .

It stands out that from the beginning the MB flourished with the monarch's blessing, unlike its counterparts in the rest of the Arab world. Adbullah's gesture showed the regime's willingness to extend official support to the movement, but also his determination to bring it under the state's tutelage. The MB served the official line in return for freedom of action and access to some important sectors of society. The symbiosis between the MB and the regime rested on shared perceptions regarding the interests of the nation. The MB concurred with the King's religious role - as a direct descendant of the Prophet - and with his personal commitment to Islam. Another advantage, from the Islamists' point of view, is that Jordan under King Hussein, became a secure haven for Muslims fleeing repression from more secular states such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq [62] .

Through their regular participation in elections, including those boycotted by the secular parties, and their support for the regime when it clashed with the Arab socialist and nationalist opposition, the Brothers were publicly seen to be in alliance with the Government. The Brother's identification with the regime was particularly strong in the 1950s when the King came under pressure from the secular leftist

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[61] H. Hourani, T. Awad, H. Derbies and S. Kilani, *Islamic Action Front Party* (Amman: Al - Urdun Al - Jadid Research Center, 1993), pp. 8-11.

forces. A strong bond between the monarchy and the Brotherhood was cemented in April 1957, following the failed coup attempt in the army. The Brotherhood backed the King's repressive measures and in return, when the regime prohibited all political activity, the Ikhwan were exempt from this decision[63]. From the 1950s the MB was Jordan's only legal political organisation[64].

In spite of this cooperation, the Brotherhood and the Hashemites were not natural allies. Although the MB paid lip service to the aims and guidelines of the regime and avoided any form of open confrontation, especially with the King, a fundamental conflict of ideas and interests existed from the start. As the movement's blueprint centred on the reformation of society along Islamic lines and the implementation of the *Sharia*, it criticised the state for failing to implement the principles of Islamic law in the running of the state. A major source of the Brotherhood's grievance was the regime's adoption of Western values, of secular ideologies and its close ties with the West[65]. The movement attacked King Hussein's openly pro-Western stance, his flirtation with the idea of joining the Western-sponsored Baghdad Pact and his adherence to the Eisenhower Doctrine.

There was clearly a great deal of mutual distrust and suspicion. At times of crisis this expressed itself in overt opposition to the regime on the part of the Brothers, and in suppressive measures against the movement on the part of the authorities. The Hashemites have combined a policy of conciliatory gestures with a strict monitoring of the Brothers' activities. Nonetheless, the latter invariably displayed a great deal of self-restraint in their criticism of the regime, whilst the latter's measures were never as harsh or as far-reaching as those taken against the Communist on the Baath[66].

The Brotherhood's alliance with the government was instrumental in both parties' strategy of containing another Islamist contestant: the Hizb al - Tahrir. The Islamic Liberation Party (ILP) was founded in Jerusalem in 1952 by a group of religious functionaries who had broken away from the MB, chief among them was

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[62] I. Barghouti, "The Islamists in Jordan and the Palestinian Occupied Territories" in L.Guazzone (ed.), *op. cit.* : p. 131.
[63] L. Tal, "Dealing with Radical Islam: The Case of Jordan", *Survival* (37), n° 3, Autumn 1995: p. 141.
[64] In fact it was never recognised as a political party; it was rather a legal *dawa* (proselytising) organisation of a moral and cultural type but capable of a political expression. See V.Yorke, *Domestic Politics and Regional Security: Jordan, Syria and Israel* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower for the IISS, 1988), p. 49.
[65] A. Cohen, *Political Parties in the West Bank Under the Jordanian Regime* (London: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 148-51.
[66] *Id.* : pp. 152-3.

Sheikh Taqii Eddin al - Nabahani. Al - Tahrir was refused legalisation on the basis that the party's programme did not recognise the Jordanian constitution. It was completely banned and its activities restricted.

Al - Tahrir's methods for achieving its objectives differ from those utilised by other Islamic movements. It refuses to compromise its objectives, which is the source of its political shortsightedness. The ILP's ultimate ideal is the revival of the Islamic Caliphate. In practice, it espouses primarily political goals since it aims at overthrowing the region's regimes and establish in their place the rule of the Caliph (successor to Prophet Mohammed) all over the Muslim world, based on the example of the first four Caliphs [67] . Unlike the MB, the ILP does not concern itself with the individual's reformation until the society, as a whole, has been transformed. Thus the creation of a universal Islamic state is the precondition for the implementation of a purely Islamic spirit [68] .

Al - Tahrir has thus rejected the principle of territorial nation-states and of Arab nationalism. Only Islamic nationalism can serve as the basis for the existence of a nation whose ultimate realisation would be that of a unified Muslim state. By rejecting the principle of hereditary succession and nationalism as the overwhelming political norms underlying the state, the ILP challenges the very legitimacy of the Jordanian regime. The members only accept the Quran and the *Sunna* as platform and constitution. Contrary to the Brotherhood whobelieve in the need for interaction with the government, the ILP categorically rejects any involvement in mainstream politics[69]. The movement's trajectory has been unremarkable, apart from its alleged implication in April 1993 in a plot to assassinate the King [70] .

2.2.2 The Islamist Surge

In the aftermath of the Iranian revolution, there was a surge of religious activism. The state was quick to sense the growing Islamic sentiment and escalated

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[67] *Id.* : pp. 227-9.
[68] Baghouti, *op. cit.* : p. 136.
[69] *Id.* : pp. 136-7; Suha Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London: Grey Seal, 1996), pp. 109-12; B. Wedeman, "The King's Loyal Opposition?", *Middle East Insight* (XI), n° 2, January/February 1995: p. 18.
[70] Taji-Farouki, *op. cit.* : p. 158, 163.

the level of Islamic activity. The creation in 1981 of the Al al - Beit, the Academy for the Study of Islamic Affairs, and the holding of symposia on Islamic issues, reflected the growing importance the regime attached to being seen to uphold Islamic traditions. The monarch tried likewise to restrict the expansion and influence of the activists by placing structural barriers to their advance and at the same time he claimed for himself the religious high ground [71] .

Actually, by the 1980s the MB had become deeply entrenched in majorareas of Jordanian life. The 1970s had been a decade of economic bounty and it enabled the Brotherhood to build its infrastructure. It also benefited from its unrivalled position of supremacy as the country's only legal organisation with a political expression, especially after the ousting of the Palestinian movement[72] . The running of medical clinics, schools, and security centres enabled the Brotherhood to conquer a popular constituency of its own. The Brothers were well entrenched in the Ministry of Education. They became strong in the university campus and controlled the appointments of faculty staff at the University of Jordan, became influential in the professional associations, and had something of a watchdog role over the content of school curricula and television programmes [73] .

Despite the growth of its popular appeal, the MB was still kept on a tight leash and was manipulated by the regime. In the early 1980s, the Brotherhood's assistance to members of the Syrian Ikhwan served the King's interests and was, very likely, endorsed by him. But when regional politics drove Hussein closer to Syria, he agreed to suppress the Brotherhood in return fora reconciliation with Damascus. A period of severe suppression ensued, especially on university campuses. After the riots, the state tightened its control over the country's universities. Three hundred members of the MB were arrested and stricter control was imposed on Muslim preachers[74] . This marked the end of the *modus vivendi* between the government and the Brotherhood.

By this time, the country was passing through an acute economic crisis due to reduced external rents from the Gulf following declining oil prices. The Brotherhood took advantage of the state's weakness in order to gain leverage trying to present itself as an alternative to the incumbent government. In and outside the parliament the group stridently called for an end to corruption, mismanagement and waste proposing

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[71] R. B. Satloff, *Troubles on the East Bank* (NY: Praeger, 1986), pp. 48-9.
[72] Tal, *op. cit.* : p. 141.
[73] Yorke, *op. cit.* : p. 50.
[74] Tal, *op. cit.* : p. 143; Satloff, *op. cit.* : pp. 53-7.

the redistribution of wealth. It led an aggressive opposition to the government's policies[75].

The Ikwhan were able to put to advantage their political experience in the 1989 elections, which resulted from the monarch's decision to shore up its legitimacy through a measure of popular participation in public affairs. The MB won 22 seats and independent Islamists won a further 12, making the Islamic bloc the largest in the 80-seat Lower House. The success of the MB was closely related to its well-developed organisation. It was able to capitalise on an already established social network and an organisational structure encompassing mosques, schools and welfare services. It even had its own religious programmes in the media[76]. The simplistic slogan of the Brotherhood - "Islam is the solution" - appealed to large segments of the population, including the Palestinians, who also relied on the Ikwhan's uncompromising call for a liberation of all Palestine.

The King was surprised and dissatisfied with the electoral results. In forming the Cabinet, he included only three Islamists elected to the Lower House. The MB was not represented in the government since it insisted on securing the vital ministries of interior, education, justice and information. The formation of the Cabinet seemed to be an attempt at weakening the cohesion of the two major alliances in the Parliament - the Islamic and the Democratic bloc. The King also seems to have realised at his juncture the need to open up the political spectrum to political parties in order to undermine the MB's predominance. He was quoted as saying: "The past situation which allowed some to move freely and deprived others of freedom is over"[77].

Six months after the election, indepth negotiations and talks were underway between leaders of the MB and other prominent Islamists to form a bloc which, in December 1992, became the Islamic Action Front (IAF). The bloc succeeded in having, in November 1990, a Brotherhood member elected Speaker of the Lower House (Abd al - Latif Arabiyyat). The IAF introduced legislative proposals on corruption, segregation of the sexes in schools and universities, prohibition of the sale

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[75] Tal, *op. cit.* : p. 142.

[76] The strength of Islamist were partially due to the absence of any other organised political force. Circumstances compelled the parties of the left to lead a clandestine existence, and while many leftists and nationalists languished in prison, the Brotherhood thrived. K. S. Abu Jaber and S. H. Fathi, "The 1989 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections", *Orient* (31), n° 1, March 1990: p. 83.

[77] *Id.* : p. 84.

of alcohol to Muslims, introduction of an Islamic dress code, and the institution of a *zakat* (compulsory almsgiving) tax [78].

The outbreak of the Gulf deepened the level of politicalcooperation between the Islamists [79] and the King. The monarch allowed the Brotherhood to manage the crowds at public meetings and to lead the protests against the American intervention. In response to the way in which the Islamic movement galvanised popular opinion, the government announced, in January 1991, a new Cabinet in which the Islamic movement was represented for the first time: "This historic step reflected the need of the King and his supporters to coopt the powerful Islamic Movement by bringing it into the highest echelon of the political system" [80]. Five Brothers and two independent Islamists were given the portfolios of Education, Health, Justice, Religious Endowments, Agriculture, Transport, Communications and Social Development.

Hussein used the Brotherhood to channel popular anger at the Western intervention against Iraq but dropped theIslamists from his cabinet in June 1991. The reason for the King's decision was the Islamists' opposition to Jordan's involvement in the Madrid peace conference. They used the parliamentary tribune to boycott this event and voted overwhelmingly against Jordan's participation in the peace process. The MB refused to be part of the new government formed byTaher Al - Masri which was in power at the time of the Madrid Peace Conference, and actually instigated its downfall as they once again moved into the role of the opposition.

Faced with an assertive Islamic movement bent on derailing the peace process, the King decided to change the rules of the political game. In the summer of 1993 he scraped the old system of voting whereby voters were allowed as many votes as there were parliamentary seats in their district. This was contrived to eliminate bloc voting, the key to the Brotherhood's victory in 1989. A second vital change in the legal atmosphere was the passage of the Political Parties Law of September 1992 which allowed parties to petition for legal status for the first time

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[78] Tal, *op. cit.* : p. 144.

[79] The Brotherhood only reluctantly adhered to the public wave of outrage since it meant antagonising its Saudi Arabian and Arab Gulf sponsors. Laurie A. Brand, "Liberalization and Changing Political Coalitions: The Bases of Jordan's 1990-1991 Gulf Crisis Policy", *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* (13), n° 4, December 1991: p. 29.

[80] B. Milton-Edwards, "A Temporary Alliance with the Crown: The Islamic Response in Jordan", in J. Piscatori (ed.), *Islamic Fundamentalisms* ... : p. 94.

since 1957. The law was aimed at weakening the Islamists electoral strength, by allowing other parties to compete for power [81].

With the legalisation of political parties, the MB chose to form a pseudo-independent party which adopted the name of the former Islamist parliamentary coalition [82]. In the November 1993 elections, the IAF lost one-third of its seats, although it remains the largest group in the Lower House. The Brotherhood won 16 seats and independent Islamists 6. The decline in seats won by Islamists was largely due to the changes in the electoral law[83]. It was also the result of the Islamists' loss of some prestige. During the 1989 elections Islamist candidates were seen as the champions of change. Once in parliament, however, their performance was lack-lustre. They tended to focus on moral issues, calling for sexual segregation at swimming pools and a ban on alcohol, while ignoring important issues such as poverty, economic development and education. This probably explains why the overriding themes in the 1993 elections were more realistic than those of 1989 [84].

Despite its overall retreat, the IAF performed surprisingly well, given the attempts to stifle it. Islamist candidates lost in some districts, but the IAF's gains in others were impressive. They won the greatest number of votes in four of Amman's six electoral districts, including two out of the three seats in the capital's Second District. They also won three of the four Muslim seats in Zarqa, Jordan's second largest city [85].

The current Islamist scene has been characterised by the emergence of some radical groups, which do not represent the main currents of Islamic activism in Jordan. The failure of the traditional opposition to stand up to the regime (namely on issues such as the peace with Israel and the King's reluctance to fully democratise the political system) creates a breeding ground for extremist splinter movements to emerge and engage in violent action. Such groups - such as the ILP, Islamic Jihad (Bayt al - Muqaddis), Muhammad's Army and the Vanguards of Islamic Youth - have allegedly been involved in acts of violence against the regime, Western targets[86] and

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[81] A. M. Amawi, "The 1993 Elections in Jordan", *Arab Studies Quarterly* (16), n° 3, Summer 1994: p. 15-7.
[82] See H. Hourani et al., *op. cit.* : pp. 25-33.
[83] Amawi, *op. cit.* : p. 24.
[84] *Id.* : p. 19; "Jordan's Islamists - A Growing Force or a Fading Footnote?", *Mideast Mirror* (7), n° 22, 16 November 1993: pp. 17-8.
[85] Tim H. Riedel, "The 1993 Parliamentary Elections in Jordan", *Orient* (35), n° 1, March 1994: p. 58; B. Wedeman, "Democracy in Jordan", *Middle East Insight* (X), n° 1, November/December 1993: p. 9.
[86] "Amman Uncovers Fundamentalist Ring Planning to Attack U.S. Targets", *Mideast Mirror* (9), n° 106, 6 June 1995: pp. 9-10.

what they consider un-Islamic institutions. However, they are marginal groups and lack the widespread popular backing required to be built up as viable contestants for power[87] .

2.2.3. The Impact of the Islamist Movement

The Islamist mainstream's aim of achieving a gradual Islamisation of society through effecting change in the social, educational and legal sectors has been largely attained. The MB's unparalleled political mobility and influence, enabled it to develop a strong monopoly over society and the country's various institutions. This enabled it to attract new members and participate in decision-making. The movement has succeeded in gaining a foothold in the political, economic and cultural fields, and particularly in the field of education. Over the years, the MB has succeeded in enjoying freedom at the political level, and was thus able to establish complete control over the Ministries of Education and Awqaf, other educational and religious institutions and, importantly, the national network of mosques.

The Islamist movement has established a position as a viable political factor in Jordan, but it does not necessarily translate into a political mandate for its opposition to the regime. The regime is worried that the growing Brotherhood strength might threaten Jordan's interests in the on-going Arab-Israeli peace process and the country's fledgling democratic process. The turning point in the relationship between the government (more accurately, the King), and the Islamic movement came with the initiation of the peace process in Madrid in 1991. On religious as much as on political grounds, Islamists are adamantly opposed to a negotiated settlement with Israel. IAF's leader, Farhan has frequently described recognition of Israel as a "crime" and he affirmed that Palestine "is an Islamic land and no organization or regime or Arab state or Arab leader has the right to relinquish one inch of the land of Palestine, because it is the land of the Islamic nation" [88] .

The subsequent signing of the Jordan-Israel peace agreement in October 1994 took the Islamists by surprise and incensed them. The Islamists have tried to take advantage of popular discontent with the Treaty in order to enlarge their political

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[87] Tal, *op. cit.* : p. 140; Wedeman, "The King's ...": p. 18.

constituency. They have used the Lower House for boycotting the normalisation of relations with Israel [89] . As the government has restricted the political and public space within which the Islamists can operate, the latter have turned to Jordan's professional associations as an arena within which to voice dissenting opinions [90] .

For the time being, the King has been able to muzzle the opposition. He has done so by a series of repressive moves unprecedented in Jordanian history. IAF deputies and other Muslim activists have been banned from delivering sermons in mosques. Mass rallies and marches by the opposition have been banned, the use of the media has been severely restricted and the security services have detained people for protesting against the peace treaty.

The King has particularly warned the IAF against misusing Islam, which "cannot be against peace, it cannot side with darkness against light or with death against life", and vowed that the pulpits of mosques "may not ... serve as places for irresponsible expression in the name of Islam"[91] . The monarch still holds the upper hand as far as the implementation of the treaty is concerned. As at other junctures, Islamists were reluctantly forced to respect their informal alliance with the palace and to follow its dictates. They have thus voted in parliament in favour of the treaty.

As far as the domestic political process is concerned, Islamists, though seemingly supportive of the democratic process, are worried that newly legalised parties might prosper from a democratic system and emerge to constitute a threat to the Brotherhood's leading position in the country's polity. On the other hand,Islamists question the sincerity of the government's commitment to democracy when it harasses opposition parties and attempts to undermine their bases of support[92] . Repeated confrontations and continued government pressure on the IAF and the Brotherhood are spawning increasing bitterness and resentment. IAF deputies complain that the government has never discarded the practices of an uglier, less democratic era.

On balance, the Islamist movement has not acted as a disruptive force posing a threat to the regime. Traditionally, the Islamic movement has pursued a non-

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[88] Wedeman, "Democracy ...": p. 11.

[89] Mark Power Stevens, *Political Liberalisation in Jordan* (London: Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, 1994), p. 22; "Jordan: Normalization Bill Survives Gruelling House Debate", *Mideast Mirror* (9), nº 123, 29 June 1995: p. 9.

[90] Tal, *op. cit.* : p. 148; "Sparks Fly in Amman", *Mideast Mirror* (9), nº 112, 14 June: p. 13.

[91] Stevens, *op. cit.* : p. 21.

[92] "Amman is Reversing Democratization, Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood Warns", *Mideast Mirror* (9), nº 235, 5 December 1995: pp. 10-1.

confrontational strategy aimed at participating in the official political framework. However, "it is foreign policy that could weaken, and possibly break, the traditional link between the King and the Muslim Brothers" [93] . Although Islamists have neither challenged the regime nor are strong enough to abort the Jordan - Israel peace agreement, they could create powerful obstacles to the continuation of the on-going peace process [94] .

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[93] Gudrun Kramer, "The Integration of the Integrists", in Ghassan Salamé (ed.), *Democracy Without Democrats?* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), p. 221.

[94] This prospect is all the more real as criticism of the government's performance has extended beyond the organised Islamist and Leftist groups to traditional loyalists of the regime. L. Andoni, "Hussein's Toughest Dilemma", *Middle East International*, n° 500, 26 May 1995: pp. 7-8; "Jordan is Being Driven to the Brink, Leading Dissident Warns King Hussein", *Mideast Mirror* (11), n° 26, 6 February 1997: pp. 13-5; "Islamic Action Front Official on Flights to Israel, Turco-Israeli Accord", *SWB*, ME/2582/MED, 10 April 1996: p. 8; "Islamic Deputy Calls for Cabinet Role for Islamists to "Monitor" Ties with Israel", *SWB*, ME/2851/MED, 24 February 1997: p. 7.

2.3. Egyptian and Jordanian Islamists: A Contrasting Perspective

2.3.1. Islamist Strategies and State Responses

Egyptian and Jordanian Islamists have pursued different aims and adopted different approaches in their quest for the implementation of an Islamic order.and these variations derived from their particular orientation. The incumbent regimes have dealt with the Islamists in accordance with the prevailing ideological orientation of the state and political circumstances. Their responses have alternated between repression or toleration of the Islamists´ political activities depending on the perceived challenge posed by the latter to the regime´s supremacy.

The existence of the Islamist groups in Egypt has been characterised by exclusion from political power due to government policies or particular ideologies or activities [95]. The Muslim Brotherhood played a visible political role from the 1930s until the advent of Nasser but was not drawn into official parliamentary life. The Brotherhood´s involvement in politics was most pronounced from 1945 to 1965, when it was implicated in assassinations of political opponents in both royal and revolutionary Egypt. It was such an attempt on Nasser´s life that broke the movements´s back and marginalised it in Egyptian politics for nearly 20 years.

The Muslim Brotherhood´s history in Jordan is altogether different. The group, which was founded in the 1940s with King Abdullah´s blessing, enjoyed a close relationship with the monarchy. This rapport has at times been marked by disagreements over specific political issues, but these divergences have not damaged the relationship between the monarchy and the Brotherhood, which has provided the regime with an Islamic lustre [96].

Thus while the MB in Egypt suffered from repression and had to survive in clandestinity, its counterpart in Jordan enjoyed considerable autonomy as the country's only legal organisation with a political expression. In the early 1970s,Sadat released Brotherhood leaders from prison and allowed them a reasonable measure of freedom. The leaders of the movement made the strategic decision to discard

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[95] Maha Azzam, "Egypt: The Islamists and the State Under Mubarak", in Abdel S. Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), p. 110.

violence and opt for change by peaceful means. This decision was not accepted by a number of younger members and it led to the breakthrough of several groups from the Brotherhood's ranks. The anti-regime leanings of the Islamic Liberation Organisation and the Jihad Organisation were apparent in their deadly confrontations with the state, culminating with the assassination plot that took the life of presidentSadat on 6 October 1981.

The polarisation of the Islamist spectrum in Egypt between moderate and extremist groups is thus a reality that dates back to the early 1970s. UnderMubarak, the Jihad and other like-minded groups resumed their confrontation with the state through acts of defiance and violence. Meanwhile, the MB had clearly accepted political pluralism and parliamentary democracy as the road forward. Though still illegal as regards formal political participation, the movement formed coalitions with other political formations and became the major opposition in thePeople's Assembly. After the 1987 parliamentary elections, the MB became the dominant partner in the coalition. Access to official political life gave the movement visibility, political experience and enabled it to push for the implementation of its electoralplatform which called for the implementation of the *Sharia*.

2.3.2. Islamist Performance in an Altered Domestic Setting

The Egyptian Islamists profited from the regime's political overtures to widen its constituency and its margin of manoeuvre in various instances of thesociopolitical life. In Jordan, the Islamist movement was able to put to advantage its accumulated political experience in the 1989 elections which marked the resurrection of parliamentary life under theKing's policy of democratisation. The greatest success of the Jordanian Islamists came however during the Gulf war which deepened the level of political cooperation between them and the King. In January 1991, a Cabinet was formed in which the Islamic movement was represented for the first time.

The 1990s have witnessed the declining fortunes of theIslamist movement in both Egypt and Jordan. In the latter country, the Islamists have spearheaded the opposition to the peace treaty with Israel and to normalisation of relations with the

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[96] Beverly Milton-Edwards, "Climate of Change in Jordan's Islamist Movement", *id.* : p. 126.

Hebrew state. King Hussein has prevented the Islamists from becoming an assertive opposition by changing the electoral rules that had once given them access to power. In Egypt, the Islamists considerable political weight and the intensification of extremist violence against the state have put the regime on the defensive and have led Mubarak to hinder Islamist activity by all means at his disposal.

In Egypt and Jordan, Islamists constitute powerful opposition forces that the incumbent regimes have to deal with. In both countries, the mainstream Islamist movement is tamed and, at the moment, under the control of the regime. In the case of Jordan, the Islamists have been allowed into the political process but their margin of manoeuvre has been highly limited and their capacity to voice dissenting opinions restricted. Egypt has opted for channelling Islamists into social and economic welfare activities where their work is appreciated and hindering them from entering the official political process. Contrary to Jordan, where the extremists fringes are effectively silenced, the Egyptian government has been faced with a widespread insurrection of radical Islamist groups that pose a real challenge to the state.

PART II - THE UNITED STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

3. U.S. Middle East Policy Making

3.1. The Process of Middle East Policy Making

The process by which U.S. decisions concerning the Middle East are made is complex, involving a great variety of actors and organisms often holding divergent positions and uneven abilities to exert leverage over the decision-making mechanism. At the centre of this process is the president (and the White House staff) since he has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs [97].

Actually, various governmental agencies are involved in the policy-making process: the State Department, the Defense Department, the Treasury Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council, and the Congress, among others. Adding to this complexity, the executive's action does not "... occur in a vacuum but in the context of world and regional politics and against the background of American domestic forces that condition policy-making" [98].

In order to integrate these disparate forces, and evaluate the way they constrain and condition the process and substance of policy making, three distinctive approaches are offered. They stress the role of different elements in the process of policy formation and are often unidimensional explanations of this phenomenon. A best overall picture will be formed if they are considered as complementary.

The bureaucratic and organisational theories [99] stress the power of the bureaucracy and its influence over the environment in which the executive is bound to take decisions concerning its foreign policy. This theory also points to the importance of the rivalries and different perspectives within and among the various agencies that play a role in the field of foreign affairs [100].

As far as the Middle East is concerned, analysts refer to the traditional rivalry between State Department and the White House, with the occasional involvement of the Defense Department. A classic example of this occurrence is the context in which

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[97] W. B. Quandt, "Domestic Influences on United States Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The View from Washington", in Belling, *op. cit.* : p. 264. See also Stephen E. Ambrose, "The Presidency and Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs* (70), n° 5, Winter 1991/92: p. 137.
[98] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : pp. 4-5.
[99] See Spiegel, *op. cit.* : pp. 384-386.
[100] Quandt, *Decade* : p. 24.

the Jewish state was created: Truman's decision to recognise the state of Israel was vehemently opposed by his secretaries of state and defence, as well as by the whole apparatus behind them.

The State Department has traditionally been an advocate of an even-handed policy toward the Middle Eastern states. It has often been thought of as sympathetic to Arab interests and as a fierce critic of the hands-off support provided by the executive and the Congress to Israel. Within the State Department, the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs harbours the "Arabists", the experts that presumably urge a pro-Arab and more balanced Middle East policy on the Secretary of State and his under-secretaries. Seldom, it succeeds in pressing its views on the administration, as was the case with the plans in 1969 and 1970. The most frequent pattern, however, is that of its recommendations not being adopted by the executive and neutralised by the more powerful pro-Israeli pressures [101].

Since the Truman era, these bureaucratic agencies have repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, criticised the high amounts of aid to Israel. Under Johnson, for instance, the Washington bureaucratic community was united against the 1968 Phantom arms sale to Israel and the president still overlooked their views; during the Nixon administration, the bureaucracy tried again to prevent a new Phantom arms deal with Israel. Despite this opposition to Israeli pre-eminence in Washington and to the strength of Jewish forces in domestic politics, the various agencies generally do not challenge the basic U.S. policy towards Israel. Virtually all accept as a dogma the United States commitment to Israel's security.

It should however be noted that bureaucratic efficacy in affecting policy is undermined by the divergent positions concerning specific policy courses, among the various agencies and within each of them. By and large, bureaucratic influence is quite limited [102]. The "permanent government" is sometimes able to influence the executive, to mould options through the analytical papers it produces but, usually, the direction of foreign policy is set by higher officials [103].

The one area in which bureaucrats usually succeed better is in delaying or accelerating policy formulation and in implementing decisions than in making decisions [104]. A classic example of policy sabotage occurred during the May 1967

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[101] *Id.* : pp. 25-6 and Quandt, "Domestic ...": p. 265.
[102] *Ibid.* .
[103] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 386.
[104] *Ibid.* ; Quandt, *Decade* : pp. 27-8.

crisis: the Near East Bureau sought to undermine the "Red Sea Regatta" supported by the president, thus seriously constraining presidential choices.

The domestic politics perspective stresses the role of domestic forces in the public arena and their impact on decision making. In a democratic society, like the United States, the political system is open to the competitive participation of interest groups and minorities. They try to achieve their goals by lobbying and exerting their influence on the members of Congress, and by trying to gain access to the executive. Congress, together with the press and the media, help shape public opinion which must be taken into account not only in the process of domestic decision making, but also in formulating and implementing foreign policy decisions.

Mass public opinion generally does not matter much in the policy equation except in times of crisis. In a context like this, a president can appeal to higher national ideals and put aside domestic political considerations that would normally constrain his action, in order to engage military forces abroad. However, if the crisis drags on for long with a heavy cost in material and human resources, the executive's margin of action is reduced and public opinion thus becomes a force to be reckoned with. This confirms Quandt's assertion that the "...American mood concerning international affairs is remarkably volatile" [105].

Another aspect that should be stressed is that the American media[106] and the public are largely pro-Israel and prejudiced against the Arabs. The traditional pro-Israeli sentiment is a result of several factors: the Judeo-Christian attachment of the American public; sympathy for the plight of the Jewish people during World War II; the prejudice and ignorance toward the Arab and Muslim world; and the Jewish and pro-Israeli organisations' success in creating real and supposed bonds between the American and the Israeli people [107]. Occasional exceptions to this pattern may be found: the media coverage of the *intifada* in the occupied territories had a profound negative impact on the American public as far as the Israeli policy was concerned. Public sentiment towards this country seems to be changing: a September 1994 poll conducted by the Council for the National Interest concluded that more than 53 percent of the American public supported phasing out aid to Israel as soon as possible [108].

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[105] *Id.* : pp. 17-8.
[106] This pro-Israeli stance has changed after Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. See William A. Dorman. "Media, Public Discourse and U.S. Policy" in Amirahmadi (ed.), *op. cit.* : p. 295.
[107] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 15.
[108] *The Washington Times*, December 6, 1994.

A second factor to be considered in the domestic public arena is the role played by interest groups. Analysts generally point to the overwhelming power of the pro-Israeli lobby [109], especially during the presidential and congressional elections. Their unique success is commonly attributed to their remarkable organisational skills, to their huge material and financial resources and to the singular passionate commitment that the American Jewry displays toward Israel. Tillman says that their strength lies "... in the solid, consistent, and usually unified support of the Jewish community of the United States" [110]. Rubenberg advances other explanations accounting for this phenomenon, namely: the congruence of the lobby's objectives with elite and mass perceptions; the ability of the lobby to tie Israel into the cold war anti-communist consensus; the evolving role of Congress on Middle East issues and the concomitant ability of the lobby to influence Congress; the lobby's ability to provide votes in greater quantities than its apparent size would suggest and at critical election periods [111].

Many analysts would concur with Rubenberg's assertion that "... the power of the Israeli lobby over the formation and execution of U.S. Middle East policy has become a virtual stranglehold" [112], and would agree that its activity has been largely detrimental to the U.S. interests: "As a result of the lobby's activities and the high degree of receptiveness to its importunities on the part of Congress, successive presidents have been compelled to make a difficult choice - between adopting policies weighted on the side of Israeli wishes at the expense of other national interests and attempting to frame policies based on the totality of American interests, with resulting controversy and political risk to themselves" [113].

Quandt acknowledges the existence of a powerful pro-Israeli lobby and a pro-Israeli predisposition in Congress and in the White House. Spiegel says that all presidents "... treated the pro-Israeli lobby as a political force to be reckoned with" [114]. There is a common tendency by the several administrations of shunning away from

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[109] The phrase "Israeli lobby" refers to the group of major Jewish organisations that concern themselves with Israel and with influencing the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli state. Chief among them are AIPAC (the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee), actually registered as a lobby, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. See Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 354.
[110] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 54.
[111] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 15.
[112] *Id.* : p. 375. In the same vein, see also Paul Findley, *They Dare toSpeak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1985).
[113] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 62.
[114] Quandt, *op. cit.* p. 20; Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 388.

estranging or confronting Jewish activists in electoral periods, especially during the presidential campaigns.

Despite the evidence, Spiegel concludes that the power of the Jewish lobby is a "myth" that politicians have an interest in perpetuating, either because it demonstrates their contribution to the Israeli cause, or because it shields them from criticism [115]. Both he and Quandt downplay the lobby's importance and argue that its influence has its limits: the activity of the lobby certainly raises the salience of pro-Israeli issues, but its impact and the feedback it provokes, has to do with the "preexisting beliefs" of the president or Congress, rather than with the demands of the interest groups [116]. The study of the pattern of decision making within the executive branch evidences the fact that "... individual decisions are ordinarily made for reasons unrelated to domestic politics and then packaged so as to flatter the administration" [117].

Other interest groups such as oil companies and pro-Arab lobbies do not enjoy the same degree of success and are less effective than the Israeli lobby in pressing for their interests. Oil companies have refrained from taking political positions on Middle East issues, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict although they are directly affected by the situation in the area. They have concentrated on bilateral U.S.-Arab relations and on obtaining commercial benefits, such as favourable tax write-offs.

As for the Arab community in the United States, it has since 1967 created institutions designed to advance their interests in the political process. Their activity has a limited impact due to the lack of emotional commitment of Arab Americans and due to the divergences within the Arab American community, a reflection of the divided character of the Arab world itself [118].

In order to be effective, interest groups must attempt to find allies in the political system interested in furthering their goals. These allies are mostly found in Congress, which is the most accessible part of the policy-making machinery [119]. Congress, however, has a limited scope of action in the formulation of foreign policy. It does not determine the specifics of diplomacy and its intervention in the Arab-Israeli peace process has been negligible. On the other hand, it possesses some relevant

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[115] *Id.* : pp. 389.
[116] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 20. At times, it seems that both the President and the Congress are themselves representatives of the interest groups.
[117] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 388.
[118] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 69.
[119] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 21.

means of leverage: the approval of the levels of foreign aid, of major arms sales and, because of the War Powers Act, Congress is entitled to veto deployment of American troops for combat situations abroad beyond an initial 60-day period [120].

Congress has consistently exercised leverage on aid for Israel. It has regularly increased its amount above administration requests and has influenced arms sales favourably to the Jewish state. It has blocked arms sales to Arab countries, and more often objected to specific deals. Every U.S. military sale to Arab regimes has been facilitated by still greater provisions to Israel. The Congressional debates surrounding Carter's decision to sell sixty F-15s to Saudi Arabia in 1977 and the Reagan's 1981 sale of AWACS to the same country, illustrate the difficulties of challenging the mass pro-Israeli sentiment in the legislative body.

Quandt indicates that a determining feature of the American political system on foreign policy is the electoral cycle. This cycle, spanning a four-year period includes congressional elections every two years and the start of the pre-election period generally by the end of the third year. The author argues that successful presidents are bound to gear their moves according to this electoral cycle [121]. Initiatives concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict are carefully studied to be launched at any given time (maximising the benefits and minimising the risks to the president's stand) due to the intractable nature of the conflict, to the complexity of the issue, to the high level of public interest and to the deep presidential involvement. Thus, the outcome of these initiatives affects the president's standing and his chances for reelection [122].

The electoral cycle follows a consistent pattern: during the first year, presidents go through the process of learning about Middle East issues in their regional and global setting. They usually launch new initiatives in foreign policy. The second year is dominated by the congressional elections, which while rewarding success and support for the Israeli cause, penalises controversial moves. By the third year, presidents tend to press on rewarding initiatives and, alternatively, if the prospects do not look good, to disengage, often carelessly, from the political process. During the fourth and last year, presidents shy away from launching new plans, try to

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[120] Quandt, *Camp David* : p. 7.

[121] *Id.* : p. 8.

[122] *Id.* : p. 10. Neff highlights the importance of the peace process for the Clinton Administration, especially in a presidential election year: "Peace in the Middle East has been the greatest regional goal of the administration, and especially of Christopher, who is ending his public career": *Middle East International*, n° 521, 15 March 1996: p. 8.

avoid controversy, go to great lengths to please the pro-Israeli forces and avoid displeasing the Arabs by deferring their demands [123].

The domestic political forces passed in review generally constrain but do not determine the formulation of American Middle East policy[124]. They "... are likely to make issues more prominent, to define possible costs of a given course of action, and to set outer limits beyond which policy makers will venture only at their peril"[125]. They shape the environment surrounding decision makers, but they do not dictate policy courses.

The presidential leadership perspective focuses on the interplay of individuals, especially the president and his chief advisers, and tries to draw out the dominating worldviews of the top decision makers [126]. Spiegel argues that American foreign policy is determined by: the basic assumptions of the president; the individuals on whom he relies for advice; the decision making system that results from the specific functioning of each administration and which converts ideas into policies. Consequently, American Middle East foreign policy is the result of presidential activity and assumptions, which are to a greater or lesser extent influenced by the key personalities that surround the president, their conceptual frame of reference and the way they interact. Domestic political forces, the press, the media, Congress and the bureaucracy exert an important influence and pose certain constraints to presidential action; however, they do not basically alter the executive's undertaking. This approach considers that "... all presidents enter the White House with specific assumptions that prove remarkably resistant to the effects of outside forces - interest groups, events and crisis in the area, the bureaucracy" [127].

As a result, the greatest changes in U.S. policy occur when a new administration takes office thus bringing in a new foreign policy team. The ideological predispositions of the occupants of the White House are the features that make up for a new approach to world affairs. The record of American Middle East policy shows that the greatest changes in policy directions occurred when a new president assumes office from a different party: it happened concretely in the passing of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Carter and Reagan administrations [128].

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[123] *Id.* : pp. 11-27; Quandt, *Decade* : p. 23.
[124] *Id.* : p. 24.
[125] *Id.* : p. 20.
[126] *Id.* : p. 6.
[127] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 10.
[128] *Id.* : p. 392.

3.2. Patterns of Republican and Democratic Middle East Policy Making

An analysis of the most relevant patterns of Republican and Democratic approach to the Middle East confirms Pipes' assumption that American policy towards the area has a non-ideological character. He argues that "Israeli and Arab sympathisers are found across the spectrum of mainstream political life, without reference to party affiliation, philosophical standpoint, or global foreign policy objectives" [129] and that "...election platforms to the contrary, there is no Republican or Democratic position on the Middle East" [130].

He further claims that Middle East politics fall outside the usual conservative/liberal debate, since there is no clear cut ideological predisposition that would favour either the Arab or the Israeli side. In fact, it is possible to detect in Congress the disruption of the traditional polarity of right/left politics, and, instead, to find single issue coalitions that attract support from across the whole spectrum of political forces. This absence of polarisation gives the president a wider margin of action and greater flexibility even in the deployment of armed forces to the region [131] .

This deemphasis of ideology in American Middle East policy is explained by the non-ideological nature of American interests in the region: the pre-eminence of financial and security concerns generally stand above partisan considerations, while religious beliefs (especially sympathy for the Israeli cause) are a field where personal feelings dilute concern about national interests [132].

These considerations notwithstanding, there is a constant feature that shapes party politics: a stronger commitment to Israel on the part of the Democrats than on the Republicans. Democratic presidential candidates are also more dependent on Jewish financial contributions and on the Jewish vote than their counterparts. It seems that since 1916 no Democrat has been elected president without winning at least 70 percent of the Jewish vote [133].

This feature of the Democratic approach to the Middle East is put forth in the table below, which also presents other major thrusts of the Republican and Democrat

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[129] Daniel Pipes, *The Long Shadow* (Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990): p. 242.
[130] *Id.* : p. 243.
[131] *Id.* : pp. 257-8.
[132] *Id.* : p. 250, 253.
[133] Thomas A. Dine (executive-director of AIPAC) quoted in Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 357.

administrations' foreign policy toward the region. Each administration is characterised according to the following general parameters [134] :

1. pro-Israeli tilt / sympathy for Israeli goals
2. pro-Arab tilt / sympathy for Arab goals
3. level of involvement in Middle Eastern issues / in the Middle East
4. level of involvement in Arab-Israeli peacemaking
5. Middle Eastern issues in the context of the global balance of power

DEMOCRATS

TRUMAN	- sympathy for Zionist aspirations
1945 - 52	- the Middle East: low priority concern
	- concern with the Soviet threat in the area
KENNEDY	- "strategic relationship" with Israel
1961 - 63	- sympathy for Arab nationalism
JOHNSON	- pro-Israeli tilt
1963 - 68	- support to pro-Western / conservative regimes
	- high involvement in the Middle East
	- focus on a solution to the Arab conflict

[134] Only the relevant parameters are applied to each administration, according to the main concerns

CARTER	- pro-Palestinian
1976-80	- the Middle East understood as the Arab-Israeli dispute
	- high involvement in peacemaking
CLINTON	- close alliance with Israel
1992 - 1996	- high involvement in the Middle East peace process

REPUBLICANS

EISENHOWER	- antipathy for Israeli pressures
1952 - 61	- opposition to Arab nationalism but improvement in relations with the Arabs (as a means to limit Soviet expansion)
	- high level of involvement in the Middle East
	- the Middle East as an arena for containing the Soviets
NIXON	- Israel as a proxy state
1968 - 74	- the Middle East: high priority area
	- high involvement in Middle East peacemaking
	- the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as subordinate to global balance of power considerations
FORD	- cooling of relations with Israel
1974 - 76	- high involvement in Middle East peacemaking
REAGAN	- Israel as a "strategic asset"

REAGAN	- Israel as a "strategic asset"
1980 - 88	- high involvement in the Middle East/Persian Gulf
	- high involvement in peacemaking
BUSH	- devaluation of the Israeli connection
1988 - 92	- the Middle East as the exponent of the "new world order": military intervention in the Arabian Peninsula / Persian Gulf
	- high involvement in peacemaking

The chart shows that Democratic presidents were more favourable to Israeli goals (due largely to electoral considerations, like Truman and Kennedy), with the noteworthy exception of Carter, who repeatedly confronted Israeli supporters. Republican presidents often antagonised the Israelis (mainly Eisenhower and Bush; Nixon and Ford at certain stages of the disengagement negotiations), although during electoral periods all favoured an approximation. Reagan was the only Republican president who came to office with a strong pro-Israel bias (Nixon and Ford, although consolidating the U.S.-Israeli relationship, tried to pursue an even-handed approach to the Arab-Israeli dispute).

Republican presidents were more involved than the Democratic ones with Middle Eastern issues and the peace process and gave higher priority to this area. This feature has to do with the fact that Republicans presided over some of the most critical periods in the Middle East (the 1954 crisis, the War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War, Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the*intifada* and the Gulf War). As a result of the tension engendered in the Middle East, of global balance of power and domestic considerations presidents like Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Bush had to grapple with the intricacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Nixon/Ford presidencies produced the disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and Egypt and Syria. The Bush administration launched the negotiating process that in 1993 delivered the second most important Palestinian-Israeli accord after the Camp David autonomy framework.

The Democrats were normally less engaged with the affairs of the area. Truman only reluctantly dealt with the Palestine issue; Johnson had to cope with the

1967 crisis and its denouement, and gave only a lukewarm contribution to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli peace process (Resolution 242). Carter, however, put the Arab-Israeli dispute at the forefront of his diplomatic agenda, while Clinton cashed in on the initiative of his predecessor. He has continued the process mainly on the Syrian-Israeli tracks, showing little personal involvement on the Israeli-Palestinian question.

4. Major Trends in the U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

4.1. The USSR's Bid For Hegemony in the Middle East

4.1.1. Initial Attempts at Containment: the Truman Doctrine, the Baghdad Pact, and the Eisenhower Doctrine

Until World War I American activity in the Middle East concentrated mainly on cultural matters. U.S. policy in the area concerned itself with the protection of American citizens and of their rights to preach, to teach and to trade. American missionaries were the principal envoys of its country and established fine educational institutions, thus serving as a vehicle of Western cultural penetration in the area [135].

During the interwar period, American presence in the Middle East was largely that of oil companies in search of concessions. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I created the opportunity for the United States to penetrate the political and economic life of the region. The United States endorsed the principle of the Open Door policy which prohibited the governing powers of restricting the participation of other countries in the commercial interests of the area. The mandate system fulfilled all the requisites to allow for the entry of capitalist forces in the area and for the stability required to do business.

After the War, the Soviet Union sought security in the South. The Soviet Union and previously Russia had had long-term interests in the Middle East although it was primarily since World War II that Soviet involvement became both intensive and extensive. One of the distinctive features of Russian imperialism throughout history was its expansion into territories contiguous to former Russian areas, resulting in the creation of a territorially compact empire. The Middle East was of the highest strategic and political importance. It provided waterways that were of major importance to the

[135] John C. Campbell, *Defense of the Middle East* (NY: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 29.

Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, so maintenance of the right of free passage was a central Soviet interest [136].

World War II increased Soviet interest in the Middle East and facilitated a more effective pursuit of its goals in the area. The Kremlin declared that "the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognised as the centre of the aspirations of the Soviet Union" [137]. Thus, the dominant concern of American foreign policy in the immediate post-war period was finding effective ways to check Soviet expansionism. When applied to the Middle East, this meant using all means available to prevent the Russians from filling the power vacuum being created by gradual withdrawal of old colonial powers.

The interrelated objectives of containing Soviet attempts to gain the upper hand in the Middle East and preserving access to the region's strategic facilities and vital resources required the development of effective tactical doctrines to attain the designated goals. The focus of the U.S. Middle Eastern policy was twofold:

- the promotion of peace and stability;

- the recruitment of regional partners to assist the United States in containing the Soviet Union.

The first orientation consisted in guaranteeing the territorial status quo and keeping the established political order in place as much as possible. Local disputes and radical processes of change were considered to provide appropriate grounds for Soviet/Communist activity. In fact, the wave of nationalism was among the earliest in colonial areas and could be expected to intensify after the war [138].

The policy of containing Soviet advances developed gradually during the post-war years. Early in 1945 the Soviet government terminated its long-standing treaty of 1925 with Turkey and made outright demands for basis on the Straits and for a sizeable part of Turkey's territory. Coming in the period when the Western powers were doing their utmost to lay the basis for long-term cooperation, these demands provided a clear test to the will and ability of the West to call a halt to further Soviet expansionism.

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[136] See R. C. Nation, "The Sources of Soviet Involvement in the Middle East: Threat or Opportunity?", in Mark V. Kauppi and R. C. Nation, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East in the 1980s* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1983), pp. 42-8.

[137] Quoted in Alexander J. Bennet, "The Soviet Union", in Bernard Reich (ed.), *The Powers in the Middle East* (NY: Praeger, 1987), p. 111.

[138] John S. Badeau, *The American Approach to the Arab World* (NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 1968), pp. 17-18.

Parallel Soviet pressures were being exerted on Iran: Russia attempted to set up puppet regimes in Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan after the agreed date for the evacuation of Allied forces. This delicate situation was reinforced by the presence of Soviet troops which constituted a menace to the integrity of Iran. The Soviets also intended to pressure Greece to provide a naval base in the Dodecanese islands, a request that was not well received because of the active Russian support of communist guerrillas in the north of the country.

President Truman and his principal advisors, particularly Secretary Forrestal, saw the Soviet moves as a direct threat to American security. In the year of 1946 they took several crucial decisions that gave proof of a determination not to let Soviet power move into the Middle East [139].

American steadfastness also reflected a definite conception of the importance of the Middle East itself to the United States. President Truman expressed this idea in 1951: "The Near and the Middle East contain vast natural resources ... lie across the most convenient route of land, air and water communication ... might become an arena of intense rivalry among outside powers ..."[140]. The view affirming the strategic importance of the area was reinforced when it became clear that Britain was unable to keep on supporting Greece and Turkey.

Acting Secretary of State Acheson believed in a version of the "domino theory" in the context of the Middle East: should Greece and Turkey fall to the Soviet Union other states would soon follow the same path, irrevocably entering the orbit of that superpower.

Thus, with the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine[141] and the implementation of Public Law 75, which authorised aid to Turkey and Greece, the United States joined the power struggle which had been taking place in the Near East throughout

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[139] The decisions taken by Truman regarding the situation in the Middle East are the following:
- the sending of the battleship "Missouri" to Istanbul;
- the rejection of Moscow's formal demands for a new regime of the Turkish Straits including their "joint defense" by the USSR and Turkey;
- the strong stand on Iran, which led to the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the eventual collapse of the Soviet-sponsored regime in Azerbaijan;
- the rejection of Soviet demands on Greece and the Italian colonies in the peace treaty negotiations. See Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 33 and Monteagle Stearns, *Entangled Allies* (NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992).

[140] Quoted in Naseer H. Aruri, "U.S. Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict", in Hooshang Amirahmadi (ed.), *The United States in the Middle East* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 91.

[141] The doctrine said that: "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures... ", Stearns, *op. cit.* : p. 19.

World War II and the post-war years. The progressive decline of British presence in the Arab world, forced the United States to consider the organisation of joint defence, and therefore to face the difficult problems involved with concealing divergent interests, some of them already contaminated by the rising wave of Arab nationalism.

By the early fifties, the American government was most concerned with the military aspects of what Secretary of State was later to call "northern tier" of nations (Pakistan, Iran and Turkey), the countries that were the most aware of the Soviet "menace" and the most likely to take steps against it. According to Dulles, containment was to become an aggressive encirclement strategy[142]. In 1954 the U.S. government invited Turkey and Greece to join NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) as full members. In February 1955 Turkey and Iraq signed the Mutual Cooperation Pact which was open to all other states concerned with "peace and security" in the region. The Baghdad Pact was thus created with the British adherence; the mentor of this organisation, the United States, did not become a member although it was represented on various committees of the alliance [143].

The Baghdad Pact had a decisive influence in the emerging alignments of the Middle East. This Western initiative to organise the defence of the Middle East had ignored the strong feelings of Arab nationalism and the major political trends in the Arab world. The whole conception of the Pact brought about an immediate deterioration of American relations with those Arab states in which Nasser had then a strong influence first Syria, then Saudi Arabia, and for a time Jordan. Overall, and as Campbell remarks, "the gap between the northern tier and the southern tier of states had been fatefully widened, creating opportunities for Soviet penetration of the Arab world which Moscow was not slow to exploit" [144].

In September 1955, Nasser concluded an arms purchase agreement with Czechoslovakia through the intermediary of the Soviet Union. Nasser turned to the Soviets after desultory negotiations with the United States: he came to the conclusion that he could not expect to keep his country's independence by accepting the American help. The following years Nasser took drastic decisions that would

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[142] "The basic objective was to build a series of interlocking alliances along the peripheries of the Soviet Union. In the Middle East the plan was to establish a link between NATO in Europe and SEATO in the Far East by drawing countries friendly to the West and suspicious of the Soviet Union into a common security system."; Alan R. Taylor, *The Superpowers and the Middle East* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), p. 58.

[143] Iran and Pakistan also entered the Pact. With the withdrawal of Iraq in 1958, the alliance system became the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) and practically ceased to exist.

[144] Campbell, *op. cit.* : pp. 61-2.

irreversibly mark his course of action: he accepted the Soviet aid for the construction of the Aswan Dam and he nationalised the Suez Canal Company, the event which was the immediate cause of the 1956 Sinai campaign.

In face of these facts, President Eisenhower deemed necessary to make a declaration stating that the security frontiers of the United States extended to the Middle East as they did to Europe and Asia, while raising the aid programs and making them a more flexible instrument of policy for the future [145]. Eisenhower proposed, in short, that the United States should uphold its resolve to support the sovereignty of each and every nation of the Middle East against the aggressive designs of the Soviet Union.

The first test of the Eisenhower Doctrine occurred in Jordan in April 1957 where the Hashemite King Hussein's pro-Western stance was challenged by his own prime minister, Nabulsi, a defender of Arab nationalism [146]. A second attack on a nationalist movement took place in Syria in the Fall of 1957, which led the United States to believe that Syria's neutralist move carried an explicit threat to the stability of its neighbours [147]. A full-blown intervention under the Eisenhower Doctrine finally took place in Lebanon in 1958 [148].

At the close of the year 1959 the United States had perhaps less direct influence in the Arab Middle East than at any time. The American administration's

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[145] The message addressed to the Congress on January 5, 1957 enunciated the following intentions:
- Congress authorisation to the President to employ, as he deemed necessary the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the integrity and independence of any nation or group of nations in the Middle East requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism;
- authorise the Executive to undertake programs of military aid to any such nation controlled by international communism;
- authorise cooperation with them in the development of economic strength for the maintenance of their national independence. See Campbell, *op. cit.* : p. 122.

[146] Although this affair was primarily internal, the State Department called attention to "the threat to the independence and integrity of Jordan by international communism as King Hussein himself stated" and announced an emergency grant of $10 million to the Jordanian government. See Campbell,*op. cit.* : p. 129.

[147] A series of Syrian actions - a trade agreement with Moscow, the expulsion of three American diplomats for their involvement in a conspiracy against the Syrian government, and several other incidents - led officials in Washington to believe that the oil pipelines running through Syria were about to fall into communist hands and that the Soviets were on the verge of turning Syria into a Soviet base.

[148] In 1957, catalysed by the Lebanese government's own domestic and foreign policies, civil strife erupted between Lebanese Arab nationalists and pro-Western Maronites. Initially, the United States was reluctant to intervene, but on July 14 a coup d'état took place in Iraq, home of the Baghdad Pact, and the monarchy was replaced by General Qassem, a reputed Nasserite. When the new Iraqi government allied itself with the United Arab Republic, fear of spreading instability in the region led Eisenhower to send troops to Lebanon. Washington eventually removed its troops and the country reverted, with the former's approval, to non-aligned status.

overriding concern with the threat of the Soviet Union and international communism, led to a misperception of the nature and strength of Arab nationalism - an essentially indigenous movement anchored on the reality and experience of the peoples of the region, whose circumstantial alliance with communism rested on purely pragmatic considerations.

4.1.2. The Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Potential for Soviet Interference

A major avenue for Soviet thrusts in the Middle East was the exploitation of the Palestinian issue, perceived as the Achilles heel of American policy in the Middle East. Soviet support for the Palestinian movement increasingly became a function of the Soviet-American competition. American staunch support for Israel served Moscow's ends, since it alienated Arab governments and peoples.

In fact, Israel served as the main vehicle for Soviet ascendancy in the Arab world. Goldmann affirmed: "the existence of Israel is vital to the USSR's position in the Arab world because, in view of the strong hostility to communism felt by most of the Arab people, had it not been for Russia's support for the Arabs in their conflict with Israel the Arabs would have become clients of the West" [149].

Soviet support for the Palestinian cause evolved after 1954, when Soviet delegates began to support the Arab position in an increasing number of U.N. (United Nations) debates. However, Moscow did not support PLO's pretensions in full, in particular the official PLO position calling for the destruction of Israel. It had consistently adopted the position that the Israeli state was there to stay and that changing this fact by a war was politically impossible and practically not feasible. The Soviets' main concern was the preservation of unity among Palestinian ranks in order to maximise anti-Israel force in the region [150].

The Soviet attitude regarding the major Arab-Israeli conflicts followed a consistent pattern. Although standing by its Arab allies, Soviet policy was in general led by caution at times of crisis by carefully limiting its own support and involvement and otherwise trying to restrain its Arab partners from rash and dangerous action.

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[149] Nahum Goldmann, "Israeli Policy: Proposals for Action", *Journal of Palestine Studies* (IV), Winter 1975: pp. 128-9.
[150] See Bennet, "The Soviet Union": pp. 113-4.

Glassman writes that "... while Russian behaviour has evolved in a less cautious direction, particularly in the period of the Yom Kippur War, there has been no overall absence of restraint on the part of Moscow. Soviet supplies of potentially decisive arms, such as regionally strategic weapons and weapons permitting overwhelming offensive results on the ground, have often been highly restricted" [151].

When Arab-Israeli tensions reached a stage of acute crisis and hostilities threatened or actually broke out, the United States and the USSR risked being directly involved in the conflict. As Peter Mangold points out "... every Middle Eastern conflict has raised the spectre of superpower confrontations" [152]. The one really dangerous near confrontation took place during the 1973 War. After the Israelis had succeeded in crossing the Suez Canal and began the encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army, they gained Kissinger's agreement to a cease-fire (Resolution 339). Both sides accepted it although the Israelis were in a position to turn back an Egyptian Red Cross convoy from Cairo carrying medical supplies and blood plasma for the Third Army. Desperate, Sadat called upon the Russians and Americans to enforce the cease-fire by sending their own forces. On October 24, 1973, the Soviets sent a note to the American government suggesting either a joint intervention or, should the Americans decline, a unilateral Soviet move to do so. The administration called for an American military alert that would increase the worldwide readiness of both conventional and nuclear weapons: "It was potentially the most serious confrontation with the Soviet Union since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962" [153].

Other episodes illustrate the potential of Soviet-American collision. The destruction of the American intelligence-gathering ship "Liberty" in the Mediterranean during the 1967 war initially led the Americans to believe that the Soviet Union - and not Israel - was behind the attack on the ship. In any event, the "Liberty" incident - in conjunction with the U.S.-Soviet contest over the Golan Heights - put into perspective the linkage between the Arab-Israeli conflict and superpower's relationship [154].

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[151] Jon D. Glassman writes that the extent of Soviet support and involvement in its Arab allies' wars depended on (a) the degree of support that the Soviets were willing to give to Arab "progressives", (b) the degree of success the Arab clients enjoyed, (c) the degree to which the Western powers were viewed as a source of military danger to the U.S.S.R.. See *Arms for the Arabs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 191.

[152] *Superpower Intervention in the Middle East*, (London: Croom Helm, 1978: p. 164.

[153] Steven C. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 263

[154] See Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 125-6 and Stephen Green, *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), pp. 212-42.

During the War of Attrition, in 1969-70, the threat of a direct clash between Soviet and Israeli forces kept open the possibility of American involvement if the Israelis were seriously affected. In fact, by early 1970 Egypt was being battered by Israeli "deep penetration" raids, in order to force Nasser to divert some of its forces from the highly-exposed canal area, but also with the aim of discrediting the Egyptian leader at home[155]. Offering careful explanations to the United States, the USSR began to take over Egypt's air defence with Soviet missile crews and Soviet-piloted fighter planes. An American-mediated cease-fire went into effect along the canal on August 8, 1970, suspending the War of Attrition, but leaving the Soviets as the main keepers of Egyptian's air defences.

The 1970 Jordan crisis proved to be another occasion susceptible of drawing superpower confrontation. The United States feared that the conflict in Jordan might ignite an Arab-Israeli war if Israel were forced to step in order to help King Hussein suppress the internal revolt. The possibility of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation would become a reality once Egypt and the Soviet Union decided to intervene in order to help their Syrian ally. As the situation evolved, there was nothing to indicate that the Soviet Union was seriously considering any direct move. In fact, and as Quandt remarks, Nixon and Kissinger overreacted to the situation and overemphasised "... the global U.S.-Soviet dimension of the crisis. The Soviets had comparatively little at stake in Jordan. Once Syrian units did enter Jordan in the September crisis, the Soviets adopted a cautious policy. They made no threats. Instead, they warned against all outside intervention in Jordan, called for a cease-fire, and pointedly took credit subsequently for making démarches in Damascus to bring the fighting to an end" [156].

It is accurate to affirm that, despite the course of the events, neither superpower had an interest in the actual wars of 1967 and 1973. Both, however, were drawn, with less than deliberate consent, into the role of non-combatant belligerents and, subsequently, as mediators to end the crisis. As Jacob Bercovitch points out: "If there is a paradox in superpower-client relations in the Middle East, it is to be found in the fact that increasing client dependence on the superpowers (mainly for military and economic aid) coincides with increased independent initiatives by the client states -

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[155] See William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions* (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1977), p. 95.
[156] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 124-5.

initiatives that are often at variance with, or in defiance of, the patron's interests..."[157]. Thus, the supply of modern weaponry enabled the Middle Eastern states to embark on military adventures harmful to Soviet interests, with the further drawback of potentially drawing the USSR into wars it did not want to fight (1956, 1967, 1973).

Although the Soviet Union has been the main arms supplier to the Arab confrontation states, the Soviets have consistently sought a political rather than purely military settlement of the Middle East conflict, and by their involvement in the diplomacy of the Arab-Israeli conflict from the partition plan of 1947 to the drawing up of Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967 and the convening of the failed Geneva Conference in 1973 [158]. The Soviets were, however, increasingly excluded from the peace process as Secretary of State Kissinger took centre stage with his "step by step" policy of limited disengagement agreements. Moscow was not in a position to deliver a peace settlement, because it lacked the leverage over both sides (Israel/the Arabs), nor was it willing to support a military solution, because it feared a confrontation with the United States [159].

The October 1, 1977 joint statement on the Middle East relaunched for a short period the Soviet role as co-chairman of the long delayed Geneva Peace Conference.[160]. However, this initiative was short-lived and faded under the wave of criticisms from the Israeli and pro-Israeli lobbies in the United States.

During the 1980s the Soviets were largely absent from the peace process. Under Gorbatchev's new thinking, the Soviets made it clear that they no longer had any specific positions on an Arab-Israeli settlement aside from a general principle: that of Israel's right to security, along with the Palestinian right to self-determination.

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[157] Jacob Bercovitch, "Superpowers and Client States. Analysing Relations and Patterns of Influence", in Moshe Efrat and Jacob Bercovitch (eds.), *Superpowers and Client States in the Middle East: The Imbalance of Influence* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 28.

[158] Seth P. Tillman, *The United States in the Middle East* (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 251.

[159] See Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., "The Soviet Role in the Middle East: An American View", in *The Middle East Journal* (39), nº 4, Autumn 1985.

[160] The major innovations of this deal included the endorsement by the Soviet Union of "normal peaceful relations" between Israel and its Arab neighbours instead of the mere termination of belligerency referred to in Security Council Resolution 242, while the United States, for its part, acknowledged the Palestinians to have "rights" and not only "interests" (a rather neutral designation). The statement called for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and it provided for Israel military withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 war; resolution of the Palestinian questions including assurance of the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinian people; termination of the state of war and the establishment of "normal peaceful relations" among the parties; measures to guarantee the security of borders between Israel and its Arab neighbours including the establishment of demilitarised zones and the stationing in them of U.N. troops as observers. See Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 231.

Moscow would rather find acceptable any arrangements agreed upon by the parties to the conflict [161].

In the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, the Soviet Union was finally allowed to cooperate with the United States in the post-war peace efforts. By this time, Gorbatchev appeared to be demanding no more than symbolic participation and it virtually endorsed every American, Egyptian and even Israeli move [162].

4.1.3. The Decline of Soviet Influence in the Middle East

Soviet influence in the Middle East reached its zenith in the period between the 1967 and the Yom Kippur War. Sadat's defection to the American orbit constituted a major setback for Soviet policy in the area. Egypt constituted the linchpin of Moscow's policy in the Middle East and of all Third World countries, it had benefited from the largest amount of Soviet assistance.

In the late 1970s, the negative reaction in much of the Arab world to Sadat's dramatic moves toward peace with Israel opened up opportunities for the Soviets to improve their tenuous position in the Middle East. Though they had some success in identifying with the Arab opposition to Sadat by expressing their own hostility to Camp David and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, they were never really able to orchestrate an Arab front movement against the peace process. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980 dealt a serious blow to Soviet plans: not only did it cause a major split in the Arab world and diverted attention from the Arab-Israeli conflict, it also led to an improvement in U.S. ties to Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states [163]. More importantly, the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan tarnished Moscow's anti-imperialist image and discredited the USSR as the Arab countries' natural partner.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan rekindled U.S. fears about a new thrust of Soviet expansionism. The Carter Doctrine and Reagan policies in the Gulf were formulated as warnings that any attempt to move into the Persian Gulf arena would

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[161] Galia Golan, *Moscow and the Middle East* (London: R.I.I.A./Pinter, 1992), p. 42.
[162] *Id.* : p. 44.
[163] Robert O. Freedman, *Moscow and the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 11.

be actively resisted by the United States. However, Soviet policy quickly re-assumed its more traditional non-assertive stance [164].

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent American intervention renewed the tensions between the superpowers. On two separate occasions in 1983 Moscow faced a possible confrontation with the United States because of Syrian actions in Lebanon. However, in both instances Moscow chose not to back the provocative actions of its Syrian ally. In fact, this event marked the low point of Soviet influence in the Middle East. Not only did the USSR fail to provide any meaningful political or military assistance to the PLO and the Syrian army, it also failed to dissuade the United States to commit its forces to Lebanon[165]. Atherton argues that "the Soviets, who have historically sought to exploit regional conflicts and tensions to strengthen their position, have been unable to exploit turmoil in the Middle East over the past several years to their advantage" [166].

As the decade drew to a close, growing Soviet disengagement from regional conflicts and the withdrawal of support to radical movements, emerged as consequences of Gorbatchev's "new thinking". The 1990 Gulf crisis brought the Soviet Union to the centre of major developments in the Middle East in a dramatic way. The Gulf War, coming at a time of acute economic crisis and domestic political upheaval in the USSR., confirmed the eclipse of the Soviet position in the Middle East [167]. The collapse of the USSR dealt a deadly blow to the external policy of the new Russia. Between 1991 and 1993 it was hard to perceive whether Russia even had a Middle East policy. Meanwhile, the United States had emerged as the top external player in the region.

On balance, evidence of Soviet behaviour shows that Moscow's policies in the Middle East did not conform to a pattern of aggressive and reckless expansionism and that, most of the time, Soviet policy carefully avoided confrontation with the

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[164] Richard Cottam argues that in general the Soviet behaviour in the Middle East was marked by a certain passivity and was defensive rather than expansionist. The invasion of Afghanistan was the most aggressive action in the Middle East since the Azerbaijan intervention in 1945. See "U.S. policy in the Middle East", in Amirahmadi, *op. cit.* : p. 46.

[165] Robert O. Freedman, "Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since Camp David", in Robert O. Freedman (ed.), *The Middle East Since Camp David* (Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1984), p. 22.

[166] Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., "The Soviet Role in the Middle East: An American View",*The Middle East Journal* (39), nº 4, Autumn 1985: p. 706.

[167] Robert O. Freedman, "Moscow and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait", in Robert O. Freedman (ed.),*The Middle East After Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait* (Gainesville, Fl.: University Press of Florida, 1993), pp. 125-6.

United States. Contrary to mainstream American political thinking after World War II, the U.S.S.R. never "mortally challenged" the United States in the Arab world [168].

4.2. Defence of the Oil Interests

4.2.1. Oil: "Strategic Power" and "Material Prize"

American interest in the oil resources of the Middle East developed after World War I when the U.S. and the British competed for control of the oil resources of the region, with each backing the pretensions of its corporate nationals [169]. American claims were shored up by the Open Door principle [170]. By the beginning of World War II the United States had already forced the British to concede oil interests in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

The most significant concession was that of Saudi Arabia. In 1933 the first agreement between an American oil company (later to be known as ARAMCO, the Arabian-American Oil Company) and Saudi Arabia. By the end of World War II an American official in the Middle East considered Saudi oil resources "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history" [171]. They were nominally in American hands.

The demand for fuel led by the economic reconstruction of Western Europe (in support of the Marshall Plan) and Japan grew rapidly. A 1951 study - the "Paley Report" - acknowledged the increasing degree of U.S. dependence on foreign suppliers of oil. It also asserted that the protection of the oil resources in the Middle

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[168] This phrase was included in NSC-68, a highly influential document drafted in 1950 by State and Defense Department officials; see Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 239.

[169] J. Stork says about U.S. government assistance to the penetration of U.S. firms in the Middle East: "No other industry ... has ever created quite the same degree of symbiosis with the government, one reflected in the mutuality of policies and exchanges of personnel. The major oil companies then became the chief and most visible advocates of a foreign policy that stressed American national interest in gaining access to foreign oil resources"; *Middle East Oil and Energy Crisis* , NY, Monthly Review Press, 1975: p. 19.

[170] *Id.* , p. 14; Alnasrawi, *op. cit.* : p. 57.

[171] Quoted in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945*, vol. VIII (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 45.

East, and the respective lines of communication, would remain a vital Western interest and would determine U.S. strategy and military deployments [172].

Perceived Soviet threats to the oil fields of the Persian Gulf shaped U.S. strategy to the region until the Suez crisis. By the 1950s the emerging Arab nationalist movement became an additional (and most likely) danger to U.S. hold over the oil resources of the region [173]. U.S. policy was thus guided by the basic conviction that radicalising political tendencies of any sort would challenge Western favoured access to cheap and reliable supplies of oil, the very key to the economic growth of the industrialised world. U.S. opposition to the nationalist movement had an early manifestation in Iran, when in 1953 the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) executed a plan to overthrow Mossadegh and to thwart the nationalisation of the oil sector. Another tangible display of this concern was U.S. policy to integrate the region in its global system of alliances and to preempt a possible shift by a regional state away from the American orbit. The U.S. support to "moderate" (i.e. pro-Western) regimes in the Middle East, as it contemplated the most important oil producers, was largely successful.

Up until the 1973 crisis the importance of oil resources to United States security was not accurately perceived. American dependence on imported oil began to be felt in the 1960s. By 1973, America's imports had reached 35 percent of the internal requirements, and most significant was the fact that the U.S.' internal production was reaching the limits of its capacity [174]. After the 1973 dramatic oil shortage "... oil emerged from being essentially a commercial-financial interest of American business and economic interests to become a significant component of the U.S. national interest affecting political and strategic interests and calculations of policy" [175].

The huge financial surpluses generated by the 1973 price increases (and oil profits in general) have benefited the United States in many ways:

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[172] Ian O. Lesser, *Oil, the Persian Gulf and Grand Strategy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1992), p. 25.

[173] In 1960 John C. Campbell wrote that: "Any ambitious Arab politician must be attracted by the temptation to seek popularity on the issue of Arab national rights to the resources which lie under Arab soil ... . Nationalist fervor could crystallize on the oil question as easily as it did on Suez."; *op. cit.* : p. 257.

[174] H. Kissinger, *For the Record* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson and Michael Joseph, 1981), pp. 299-300.

[175] B. Reich, "United States Interests in the Middle East", in H. Shaked and I. Rabinovich (ed.), *The Middle East and the United States* (London: Transaction Books, 1980), p. 62.

- the accumulation of foreign exchange reserves - "petrodollars" - were largely invested in the U.S. economy. This gives the oil producers, in particular the Saudis, a tangible stake in preserving the health of the major industrial economies on which the continued value of their foreign assets depends. It also explains the Saudis' role, from about the middle of 1974, in pursuing price moderation and in regulating the oil market[176];
- Gulf oil provides a very large international market for important sectors of the industrialised economies (construction, engineering, namely the sale of military equipment). Market opportunities have been enhanced by the fact that the oil states import heavily from the United States and have also required capital goods for their ambitious development plans [177];
- finally, the control of oil supplies to Japan and Western Europe (61.8 and 30.6 percent respectively of their oil supplies came in 1990 from the Middle East) - enhanced by the U.S. role as protector of the Gulf oil states - constitutes an important political means of influence in relations with those states [178].

4.2.2. Oil as a Political Weapon

Two weeks after the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war, Saudi Arabia announced an embargo on oil shipments to the United States and the Netherlands in protest against their support of Israel. The effect of this decision was limited. A far-reaching one was taken in early November: the Saudis and other Arab oil producers stated that they would reduce production by 25 percent from September 1973 levels until Israel decided to withdraw from the occupied territories. Not only did Saudi production drop sharply to just above 6 million barrels per day (mbd.); in December OPEC quadrupled the price of oil to $11.65 a barrel [179].

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[176] Paul Aarts' higher estimates put investment by Gulf states in the United States, before the Gulf crisis, at some $ 1 trillion: "The New Oil Order", *Arab Studies Quarterly* (16), 2, Spring 1994: p. 3; Dankwart A. Rustow, "U.S.-Saudi Relations and the Oil Crisis of the 1980s", *Foreign Affairs* (55), 3, April 1977: pp. 503-4; Kissinger, *op. cit.* : p. 321.
[177] Reich, *op. cit.* : p. 68; Peter Gowan, "The Gulf War, Iraq and Western Liberalism", *New Left Review*, 187, May/June 1991: p. 48.
[178] The estimate comes in Aarts, *op. cit.* : p. 9; see also Gowan, *op. cit.* : p. 48.
[179] W. B. Quandt, *Saudi Arabia in the 1980s* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1981), p. 128.

The oil embargo and the resulting shortages made possible the price rises that hurled the West into a protracted recession. It also marked the effective end of the traditional Saudi position of drawing a line between oil decisions and political issues [180]. King Faisal was reluctant to use the "oil weapon" until 1973, but ever since then a strong case could be made that Saudi oil policy became largely a function of the Arab appraisal of the Middle East situation. The Saudis emphasised the political dimensions of their oil decisions, especially by linking the oil embargo to the need for the United States to pressure Israel and satisfy Arab demands. In fact, the Arab states lifted the oil embargo after Kissinger had actively embarked on the "shuttle diplomacy" and brought the disengagement agreement between Syria and Israel.

Several officials in the Nixon administration advocated a policy of confrontation with the Arab oil producers. They even considered the feasibility, military and political, of a takeover of key oilfields by the U.S. or another foreign power[181]. As American dependence on imported Middle Eastern oil grew and as the possibility of a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed distant, analysts in the Carter administration built a scenario of military intervention. A Senate study issued in 1977 suggested the possibility of Iranian intervention on behalf of the U.S. government should Soviet actions or political changes in the Arab Gulf states jeopardise the oil supplies of the U.S. and its allies [182]. The increasing emphasis on a military intervention in the Gulf region led to the formulation in 1980 of the Carter Doctrine and had its corollary in the American-led multinational expedition against Kuwait in 1991.

In the period between the conclusion of the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty (December 1978 to July 1979) Saudi oil policy was once again dictated by political motives. Saudi decision to cut production to 8.5 million barrels (down from 9.5 mbd.) was certainly meant to signal Arab dissatisfaction with the Camp David process [183] and with American pressures for adherence to it. Furthermore, the Iranian revolution increased the Saudis' suspicions about the reliability of the U.S. ally and tightened their ties to Arab unity and Islamic orthodoxy[184].

The use of oil as a political weapon was thus limited to the two periods mentioned above. Since 1976 Saudi Arabia has generally pursued policies of price

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[180] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 76.
[181] *Id.* : p. 95; see also Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 224.
[182] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 96.
[183] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 131.
[184] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 108.

restraint within OPEC. Moreover, it acts as a regulator of the cartel (swing producer) adjusting its own production levels to meet the industrial world's needs and using their large excess capacity to bring market pressures to bear on high-price producers[185]. As a matter of fact the Saudis increased production in the Summer of 1979 (due to the loss of Iranian production) to alleviate the world oil shortage and again in the Fall of 1980 to protect the petroleum market from the effects of the Iran-Iraq War [186]. In the wake of the 1991 Gulf war, Gulf producers responded immediately to the U.S. call to increase their production to the maximum to cover the gap left by the U.N. embargo of Iraqi and Kuwaiti crude oil exports [187].

Arab oil prices have steadily declined after 1981 and especially 1986 when prices fell almost 50 percent from 1985 levels. Oil prices rose during the 1991 Gulf crisis but, once it became clear that the United States and its coalition partners would use force against Iraq, prices dropped precipitously. Following the end of the war, prices were actually lower then they had been prior to the invasion and they remained far below OPEC's target price of $ 21 a barrel [188].

Actually Arab oil producers have over time realised the benefits of price stability and moderation. Artificially maintained high prices harm oil's long-term competitiveness in relation to other energy sources and they encourage the development of non-OPEC oil supplies. Furthermore, due to their foreign investments, these countries have a stake in the stability of the Western economies. After the 1991 crisis, Gulf producers were brought face to face with Washington's hegemony in the region and thus became more dependent on its role as protector against radicalism and the possibility of aggression or subversion in the Arabian peninsula [189].

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[185] *Id.* : pp. 79-80.
[186] *Id.* : p. 80; Rustow, *op. cit.* : pp. 503-4.
[187] Aarts, *op. cit.* : p. 5; William C. Ramsay, "Oil in the 1990s: The Gulf Dominant", in P. Marr and W. Lewis (ed.), *Rising the Tiger* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993): pp. 54-55.
[188] Aarts, *op. cit.* : p. 6; E. Davis, "The Persian Gulf War", in Amirahmadi, *op. cit.* : p. 262.
[189] Aarts, *op. cit.* : pp. 5-6; Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 81.

4.2.3. The Gulf Dominant

The Persian Gulf region has since the enunciation of the Nixon Doctrine become the focal point of U.S. concerns in the Middle East due to the importance of its oil resources.

In 1979, the revolution in Iran signalled the collapse of the Nixon Doctrine: one of the "twin pillars" of this policy - the Shah's Iran - had been overthrown and the other - Saudi Arabia - was weak militarily-wise [190]. In 1980, faced not only with the collapse of its position in Iran but also with the Soviet move into Afghanistan, the Carter administration declared that the oil resources of the Gulf were a "vital" interest of the West, and that the United States would take whatever steps were necessary to defend that interest. To provide a more credible and less risky deterrent, the president announced the creation of a "rapid deployment force", intended to take prompt military action to resolve crises either in the Middle East or elsewhere.

In January 1983 the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) was given a separate command of its own: the Central Command, headquartered in Florida, was assigned responsibility for the region designated as Southwest Asia, which consists of the Gulf and adjacent areas. The aim of this force was to make possible the airlifting of both manpower and supplies from the United States compounded with the utilisation of the equipment already in the region [191].

In parallel with the development of CENTCOM the United States sought to reinforce its ties with friendly regimes, mainly on the basis of generous military assistance. A relevant development of this period is that the emphasis initially placed on the Soviet threat to the region gradually shifted to the more obvious potential of internal unrest in producer nations and regional disputes as causes of oil supply disruption [192]. The Carter administration strengthened the military posture of Saudi Arabia by, namely, selling it five AWACS in a move intended to serve as a visible sign

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[190] S. Lakoff, "Power and Limit: U.S. Strategic Doctrine in the Middle East", in A. Braun (ed.), *The Middle East in Global Strategy* (Boulder: Westview Press and London: Mansell Publishing, 1987), p. 80.

[191] Lakoff, *op. cit.* : pp. 82-3; Elizabeth J. Gamlen, "United States Strategic Policy Toward the Middle East: Central Command and the Reflagging of Kuwait's Tankers", in Amirahmadi, *op. cit.* : pp. 218-9. The United States sought (with little success) to reach agreements for limited access of U.S. forces and some prepositioning of equipment to facilities in Kenya, Oman and Somalia. Bases in Saudi Arabia were expanded and stocked with U.S.-made weaponry to be used with Saudi consent.

[192] Gamlen, *op. cit.* : pp. 222-3.

of the U.S. commitment to the Saudi Kingdom as well as a means to detect hostile air incursions into the Gulf [193].

The vulnerability of this area became patent as the Iran-Iraq war raged on. In mid 1983 U.S. concern about war in the Persian Gulf increased as Iran began issuing warnings that it would close the Strait of Hormuz and prevent all oil exports from the Gulf. Iraq launched the first phase of the "Tanker War", prompting Iranian retaliation against shipping dealing with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait alleging that these countries had provided effective support to Iraq. In this context, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, addressed Kuwaiti requests for help by accepting to reflag Kuwaiti vessels and provide them with naval protection. This action was intended to limit both Iranian attempts at subversion of the Gulf states and Soviet influence in the Gulf [194].

The massive U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf - North Arabian Sea led to the escalation of hostilities with Iran and, in fact, contributed to an increase of the disruption of Gulf oil shipping. Although this operation helped bring about Iranian defeat in the war with Iraq, it did not materialise U.S. aspirations to a permanent and substantial foothold in the region [195].

U.S. support to Iraq reinforced its regional standing and served as the background for its aggression of Kuwaiti territory in August 1990. For the first time U.S. presence in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf was requested by the regional states. The war against Iraq was partly justified by economic calculations: the fact that Iraq's control of 20% of the world's oil put at risk oil supplies to the United States and its allies and that it threatened the largest oil producer, Saudi Arabia [196].

The outcome of the war consolidated a process of regular consultation between Washington and the Gulf oil producers. This group dubbed GOPEC (Gulf Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) occupies now a hegemonic position within OPEC. They possess sufficient unused production capacity to play a dominant

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[193] See J. Stork and M. Wenger, "U.S. Ready to Intervene", *MERIP Reports* (14), 6/7, July/September 1984: p. 46.

[194] See Gamlen, *op. cit.* : pp. 224-8.

[195] *Id.* : p. 236.

[196] Some authors argue that the United States' main motivation for intervening in the Gulf was not the Iraqi threat to the Persian Gulf oil resources. See Davis, *op. cit.* : p. 255,262; Aarts, *op. cit.* : p. 2. Shibley Telhami asserts that evidence about patterns of trade in Middle East oil shows that states in the region sell oil independently of their ideological affinities and political-military alliances: *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 72-3, and, "Between Theory and Fact - Explaining U.S. Behavior in the Gulf Crisis", in T.Y. Ismael and J. S. Ismael, *The Gulf War and the New World Order* : p. 154.

role in the world market. They have become increasingly dependent on American political and military support for their continued existence. The United States, as a growing oil consumer, will heighten its dependence on foreign oil supplies[197]. This commonality of interests will continue as long as the *status quo* in the Gulf region is maintained, that is, stability, under the American aegis.

4.3. The Defence of Israel and Termination of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

4.3.1. The Creation of Israel: Truman's Support of Zionist Aspirations and the Creation of Israel

The U.S. interest in and resolve to assure the survival and security of Israel and termination of the Arab-Israeli conflict is deeply rooted in history and has been consistently reaffirmed by every administration since Truman. However, American commitment in the defence of both parties' concerns has been highly unbalanced and biased. As Joe Stork points out, the successive administrations have tended "... to subordinate the issue of Palestinian self-determination to Washington's strategic relationship with Israel ... . Within this dynamic, the United States has consistently endeavoured to marginalize the Palestine Liberation Organization, occasionally by cooptation but generally by supporting the efforts of Israel to crush the PLO ... " and on "... assigning to Jordan the role of custodian for Palestinian national rights"[198]. According to the same author, the stratagem that the various U.S. administrations have used to give an appearance of persevering involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace search is the mechanism of the "peace process". It is designed to bring the parties to the conflict - Israel, the Palestinians and the "front-line" Arab states - to a negotiated settlement. In reality, it serves to forestall any compromise that might put an end to the situation of permanent friction because it consistently denies some fundamental Palestinian claims and, namely, that of self-determination [199].

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[197] Aarts, *op. cit.*: pp. 5-6.
[198] See "U.S. Policy and the Palestinian Question", in Amirahmadi (ed.), *op. cit.*: p. 125.
[199] *Id.*: p. 126.

American involvement with Israel starts in earnest with Truman. He had initially stuck to the traditional view that regarded Palestine as a British matter - the British held the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine and thus was formally charged with the responsibility for the future of the territory. The combination of war in Palestine between the Arab and Jewish communities, British abdication of its role in the Spring of 1947, and growing pro-Zionist political agitation in the United States radically altered the situation.

The Truman administration accepted the U.N.S.C.O.P.'s (Special Committee on Palestine) plan to divide Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states, in economic union whereas Jerusalem would be administered by the United Nations[200]. U.S. recognition of Israel was announced on 14 May 1948 while the U.N. General Assembly was discussing an alternative American proposal, put forward by the Department of State and Defense, and favouring a U.N. trusteeship over Palestine[201]. The juxtaposition of these two events, as Reich argues, highlights the enduring dilemma of U.S. action in the Middle East and towards Israel in particular: "the lack of an overall scheme or policy that would provide a basis for specific commitments or decisions" [202].

Truman's decisions to support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was made against the advice of most of the State Department and of the president's advisors. They thought that this decision would damage U.S. relations with the Arabs (there was the question of the American oil companies in the area; this commodity was also a major component of the Marshall plan for the economic recovery of Europe; the Americans wanted to preserve their access to the military bases in the region, especially to the base of Dhahran, in Saudi Arabia); that it would increase extremists attitudes in the Arab world and would be favourable to Soviet penetration in the region[203].

President Truman's inclination towards the Zionist cause had to do initially with the humanitarian problem of aiding the displaced European Jewish community after

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[200] The Arabs would get 43 percent of the land, the Jews 57 percent. At the time, the Jews made up less than one-third of the population of Palestine. On November 29 the General Assembly recommended the partition plan by a vote of 33 to 13. The USSR voted in favour of the resolution reversing its earlier position on Zionism.

[201] It was a manoeuvre to forestall the implementation of the partition plan and was meant to send the signal to other countries in the U.N. that America's endorsement of the plan was unenthusiastic. See Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 30-4.

[202] Bernard Reich, *Quest for Peace* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1977), p. 21.

[203] Spiegel, *op. cit.*: p. 26.

World War II. Truman believed in the need to fulfil the pledge of the Balfour Declaration, concerning the creation of some form of Jewish homeland in Palestine[204]. He was also concerned about the domestic political implications of the partition issue. Within the Democratic Party in particular, pro-Zionist Jewish financial contributors helped convince the president that political advantages might accrue if appropriate decisions were made on the issue of Palestine. As he later confided, he was under the influence at the time of a substantial and influential American Jewish lobby exerting inordinate pressure on him[205]. As a result of this combination of factors, he declared during a meeting with U.S. ambassadors to the Middle East: "I'm sorry gentlemen, but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism: I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents" [206].

After the Israeli war of independence, the American policy sought to maintain regional security and stability while preventing the development of an arms race that might generate local conflicts with the potential of involving the superpowers. The United States, England and France - the main arms suppliers of the region - presented their policy on arms supply and related defence matters in the Tripartite Declaration. In that document, they declared that requests for arms or war materials by Israel or the Arab states would be considered if the recipient country pledge not to undertake any act of aggression against another state[207]. This came to be the philosophy underlying U.S. policy toward the region until the Suez crisis.

Until the 1956 conflict, American policymakers tried to pursue a more impartial policy toward the region, in part in order (as the Secretary of State realised on his

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[204] "My purpose was then and later to help bringing about the redemption of the pledge of the Balfour Declaration and the rescue of at least some of the victims of Nazism. I was not committed to any particular form of statehood in Palestine or to any particular time schedule for its accomplishment. The American policy was designed to bring about, by peaceful means, the establishment of the promised Jewish homeland and easy access to it for the displaced Jews of Europe."; Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope 1946 - 1953* (Suffolk: Hodder and Stongliton, 1956), p. 167.

[205] See Bernard Reich, *The United States and Israel* (NY: Praeger, 1984), p. 183. Spiegel refers that Truman was highly influenced by some members of his administration. He says that the Zionists activists "... were intensely involved with Congress, the press, and both political parties.". During the 1948 presidential campaign, Truman was attacked by his adversary Dewey who criticised the administration's vacillation on Palestine. The incumbent president immediately released a statement saying that "he stood «squarely on the provisions covering Israel in the Democratic platform», expressed the «hope» that the United States would soon aid Israel with financial assistance, and promised to grant de jure recognition as soon as a permanent Israeli government was elected";*op. cit.*: pp. 17-8, 43.

[206] Quoted in Sheldon L. Richman, " "Ancient History": U.S. Conduct in the Middle East Since World War II and the Folly of Intervention", *CATO Policy Analysis*, n° 159, 16 August, 1991: p. 10.

[207] Reich, *Quest for Peace*: pp. 22-3.

Middle Eastern trip in 1953) to "allay the deep resentment against it that has resulted from the creation of Israel" [208]. Dulles realised the importance of oil and, consequently, the political support of the Arab countries was considered vital in order to stop Soviet penetration in the area. The United States sought in particular to increase the stability in the area, notably by putting an end to the ongoing Arab-Israeli skirmishes. The Johnston Plan - for the development of the Jordan Valley - was considered as an important step for the creation of favourable economic conditions and thus for peace and stability in the area [209].

The period was marked by certain strains between the United States and Israel: a significant one developed after the 1955 Soviet-Egyptian arms deal, when the American government refrained from providing Israel with arms to counterbalance Nasser's (in accordance with the spirit of the Tripartite Declaration) and urged it to turn to the U.N. for its security.

4.3.2. From the Suez Campaign to the 1967 War: Birth of the Strategic Relationship and First Middle East Peace Plans

In October 1956, following repeated incursions into Israeli territory and acts of violence perpetrated by the Palestinian *fedayeen*, Israel, with French and British support, invaded Egypt ignoring American pleas for forbearance[210]. Eisenhower's opposition to the conduct of Israel, Great Britain and France was not totally based on considerations of international law. Eisenhower's underlying reasons had to do with hostility to the old-style colonialism of those European countries, and the prevention of both Soviet opportunities for expansion and Arab alienation from the United States. Significantly, it was on the U.S. motion that, on October 31, the UN Security Council

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[208] *Id.* : p. 25.

[209] The plan was designed to settle a heated controversy that had developed between Israel on one side and Syria on the other, over the divisions of the waters of the Jordan Valley. Johnston's enterprise did not attain any significant results; *id.* : p. 27, 62.

[210] Israeli aggression of Egyptian sovereignty was also based on her exclusion from the use of the Suez Canal. Aggrieved by Nasser's act of defiance in nationalising the Canal Company, Britain and France issued an ultimatum to Egypt and Israel to withdraw within twelve hours to a distance of ten miles from the Canal. As Nasser rejected it, on October 31 British and French air forces launched air attacks on Egyptian territory. See George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), p. 50, 43.

called on Israel to withdraw from the recently invaded Egyptian territory and that it issued an appeal to other nations to stop aid to Israel [211] .

By March 1957 Israel had withdrawn from all the occupied areas, but not before the United States had given assurances that UN troops would be stationed on Egyptian territory to ensure free passage of Israeli and Israel-bound ships through the Straits of Tiran and to prevent *fedayeen* activity. The U.S. government also acknowledged that the Gulf of Aqaba was international waters and that no country would be entitled to prevent passage in the Gulf and through the Straits. Thus, the United States came to be involved in the resolution of the crisis and gave guarantees that would be subsequently invoked by Israel [212].

In dealing with the Third World, Kennedy took a decidedly more friendly stance toward states seeking an independent path between East and West. Kennedy tried to approach the Arab states in a more sympathetic way, regardless of their ideological definitions or network of relationships [213]. The Kennedy team did not overlook the policy of containment, but rather that containment would be more effective if the United States deemphasised the issues that caused divergence.

The new president directed its efforts toward Nasser: he hoped to encourage the Egyptian leader to cooperate with the United States, which might result in Nasser's being more conciliatory toward Israel. However, the Yemen War destroyed the new Kennedy approach to the Arab world, and his policy eventually came to resemble the Eisenhower-Dulles defence of the conservative forces in the Middle East.

Kennedy abandoned a initial preference for a balance of power between Israel and the Arabs in favour of a strategic relationship [214]. In 1962, the administration informed the American ambassadors to the Middle East of the impending sales of Hawk antiaircraft missiles to Israel. As Spiegel remarks: "For the first time, the United

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[211] See Rubenberg, *op. cit.*: p. 70.

[212] Cheryl Rubenberg says: "The war proved highly successful for Israel". The *fedayeen* bases created in the aftermath of Israel's 1955 attack on Gaza were destroyed and were not used for the next ten years; the Straits of Tiran were open to Israeli shipping, contributing to Israel's significant economic growth in the subsequent years; *Israel and the American National Interest* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1986), p. 86.

[213] "He definitely did not want to identify the United States with the forces of reaction and tradition in the Arab community of nations.", Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 73.

[214] Israeli concerns over Russian arms shipped to Egypt (because of its intervention in the Yemen War) and Iraq had led the Israeli leaders to ask for the Hawk missile late in the Eisenhower era. The request was refused on the basis of the traditional American policy of not encouraging an arms race in the region. Kennedy believed that by fostering Israeli military superiority vis-à-vis the Arabs, peace would more likely obtain in the region. See Spiegel, *op. cit.*: pp. 107-8 and Rubenberg, *op. cit.*: p. 91.

States agreed to an arms deal with the Jewish state. This new relationship with Israel had major long-term implications for American policy toward the Arab-Israeli dispute"[215] . It marked the beginning of Washington's endeavour to keep a regional balance of power favourable to Israel. The president further committed the United States when he told Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir that his country was engaged in a "partnership" with Israel. Kennedy stressed Israeli responsibilities and American expectations from this relationship and he sought Israeli cooperation for the attainment of American objectives, especially in the Middle East[216]. Thus, a new era of cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem was inaugurated on the basis of common interests and of an "informal alliance" [217].

The arrival of Lyndon B. Johnson in 1963 at the White House was in many ways adverse to the pursuit of U.S. interests in the Middle East. Unlike his predecessor, Johnson had no sympathy for Arabs aspirations and its relations with Arab nationalist leaders, particularly Nasser, deteriorated markedly over time. Furthermore, under this administration, U.S. policy took an explicit turn in favour of Israel. During the first three years of his presidency the United States shifted its role as a moderate supplier of defensive weapons to highly sophisticated offensive arms for Israel's military establishment. In 1966 American military aid to Israel rose sevenfold from $12.9 million in 1965 to $90 million, more than doubling the cumulative amount of aid provided since 1948 ($40.3 million) [218].

The June War of 1967 confirmed this trend. This event marked the definite loss of some of the prestige the United States had gained during the Suez crisis, thus becoming the most hated country of the Middle East and the epitome of imperialism. Johnson's behaviour during the weeks that preceded the war was at least ambivalent. It certainly encouraged Israeli leaders to go to war against Egypt, especially the

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[215] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 107.

[216] "In the Middle East we have the twin problems of being historically and obviously associated with Israel and, especially in this Administration, building on that association through our actions with respect to the Jordan waters, Hawks, and aid while at the same time we have other responsibilities in the Middle East. Israel, the United States and the free world all have difficult survival problems. We would like Israeli recognition that this partnership ... produces strains for the United States in the Middle East". "We are interested that Israel should keep up its sensitive, tremendous historic task. What we want from Israel arises because our relationship is a two-way street. Israel's security in the long run depends on what it does with the Arabs, but also on us"; *id.*: p. 109-10.

[217] *Ibid.*.

[218] Lenczowski, *op. cit.*: p. 106.

military chiefs, who picked on Nasser's move as an excellent opportunity to launch a pre-emptive strike against Egypt [219].

Israeli officials frequently consulted with U.S. officials in the days before June 5; they were looking for support by invoking Eisenhower's statement that if force were used to close the Strait of Tiran, Israel would be within her rights under article 51 of the U.N. Charter to respond with force [220]. On June 2 Evron, minister of the Israeli ambassador to the United States, met Walter Rostow (National Security Advisor) in order to seek reassurance that the United States would not oppose if Israel started the hostilities. In the days preceding the outbreak of hostilities, Israeli officials had the perception that the Johnson administration, although not openly encouraging Israel to go to war, was not interested in openly restraining it. Brecher writes that: "At the same time the perceived impression was that if Israel took the initiative ... the United States would not take an unfriendly view" [221]. Israeli Foreign Minister Eban wrote in his autobiography that in his visits to Washington he found "... the absence of any exhortation to us to stay our hand much longer" [222].

When the war started, the United States refrained from criticising Israel's aggression and, at the U.N., the American delegate, Ambassador Arthur Goldberg helped Israel to fulfil its political objectives concerning no return to the prewar boundaries. The U.S. delegate opposed a proposed U.N. order for the return of forces to their initial lines, thereby helping Israel consolidate its grasp over its freshly conquered territories. The United States also gave Israel substantial help, including

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[219] After the 1956 Sinai campaign, there was a lot of friction on the border between Israel and Syria. The cause of this unrest was Israeli settlement activity in the demilitarised zone established after the 1948 war, disputes about fishing rights in Lake Tiberias, guerrilla incursions into Israel, and Israeli development of a water project involving the Jordan River. Israel retaliated against the guerrilla activity (carried out by al-Fatah, the Palestinian National Liberation movement, led by Yasser Arafat and still not a part of the PLO) with violent raids into Syria and even Jordan. The immediate cause of the 1967 war was motivated by Nasser's moving of troops into the Sinai due to a false alert of the Soviets of an alleged Israeli invasion of Syria. On May 22 Nasser blocked (verbally) the Strait of Tiran which leads from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba and to the Israeli port of Eilat. See Richman,*op. cit.*: pp. 19-20, and Richard B. Parker, "The June 1967 War: Some Mysteries Explored", *The Middle East Journal* (46), n° 2, Spring 1992: pp. 177-97.

[220] Quandt, *Decade* : p. 44.

[221] Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 420.

[222] Eban quoted in Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 291. Quandt concludes that "there was no U.S.-Israeli collusion, but there was acquiescence in what Johnson had come to believe was an inevitable Israeli resort to force to solve a problem for which the United States could offer no solution of its own":*Peace Process* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1993), pp. 52-4.

diplomatic support that facilitated Israel's conquest of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and its attacks against Syrian territory [223].

Israel's stunning solo performance in the 1967 war helped the United States consolidate its hegemony in the Middle East by crippling its main adversary in the area and Soviet client - Nasser - and by bringing immediate relief to threatened friendly Arab countries. It enabled the United States to use its Middle East position as a leverage to influence the Soviet's behaviour in the global arena at a time when the Americans were facing military defeat in Vietnam [224]. Another outcome of this war was that "... for the majority in the policymaking elite, Israel's spectacular military performance validated the thesis that Israel could function as a strategic asset to the United States in the Middle East. The belief about Israel's strategic utility was expressed in U.S. policy through the provision of virtually unlimited quantities of economic assistance and military equipment, a de facto alliance between Washington and Israel, and in American support for virtually every Israeli foreign policy objective"[225].

One of the possibilities left open by the 1967 conflict was the search for a sweeping resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Johnson administration persistently sought to use the superiority gained by Israel in the Six-Day War to achieve a final peace settlement. The Americans presumed that they needed only to oppose diplomatically efforts that were being made to compel Israel to withdraw unconditionally. This did not mean that the United States backed Israel on its pretensions to keep a hold on the territories - rather that they should be exchanged for a genuine peace agreement. Johnson's main concern was the establishment of a peace framework detailing the principles for a future settlement. On June 19, 1967 the president committed the United States to an Arab-Israeli peace based on five fundamental principles:

- the right to national life
- justice for the refugees

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[223] Lenczowski, *op. cit.*: p. 109 and Rubenberg, *op. cit.*: p. 123. On June 8 Israeli troops and planes attacked Syria and, on June 10 Soviet Premier Kosygin threatened intervention if Israel did not stop. The Johnson administration showed its resolve to confront the Soviets by turning the Sixth Fleet toward Syria. This was the first near-confrontation between the superpowers in the course of Arab-Israeli wars. Stephen Green contends that the United States took a direct part in the war by providing aerial reconnaissance assistance that helped the Israeli forces capture strategic ground in a very short time; *Living by the Sword* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Amana Books, 1988), p. 210.

[224] Nadav Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 582-3.

[225] Rubenberg, *op. cit.*: p. 126.

- innocent maritime passage
- limits on the arms race
- respect for political independence and territorial integrity of all states [226].

In the course of the following five months, American efforts were directed at the approval of a U.N. resolution incorporating these principles. On November 22, the Security Council adopted resolution 242 that called for a "just and lasting peace" between Israel and its neighbours. As Tschirgi affirms, this resolution, intended to appease the Arabs and to please the Israelis, was characterised by vagueness: it neither addressed the core issues of contention - namely, the extent of the Israeli withdrawal and the new delineation of frontiers -[227] nor the procedures and the time schedule for the negotiations to take place. It was "... a carefully crafted masterpiece of ambiguity that won approval because of its ability to accommodate conflicting interpretations" [228].

4.3.3. The 1973 War and Kissinger's Step-By-Step Diplomacy: A Precarious Middle East Settlement and Israel's Consolidation as a "Strategic Asset"

The years between 1967 and 1973 were marked by considerable violence and instability in the Middle East - the backlash of the wounds left open by the war. By 1969 regional developments seemed to demand an effective peace initiative. The War of Attrition intensified along the Suez Canal; the growing strength of the Palestinian movement and its guerrilla activity was visible in Jordan. The new president Richard Nixon came into office with the intention of changing the state of American-Arab relations as left by L. Johnson. The administration gave high priority to dealing with the instabilities of the Middle East.

No administration, including Eisenhower's, had entered office with a conception of the Middle as more relevant to American interests[229]. Emphasising

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[226] Quandt, *op. cit.*: p. 64 and Dan Tschirgi, *The American Search for Mideast Peace* (NY: Praeger, 1989), p. 14.

[227] The Palestine question, subsumed under the "refugees" terminology, was perceived as a humanitarian issue whose political importance accrued from the fact that it might be a factor of tension between Israel and the Arabs states - not as a matter of national identity and aspiration to self-determination.

[228] Tschirgi, *op. cit.*: p. 44.

[229] Spiegel, *op. cit.*: p. 168.

world balance of power and determined to pursue a foreign policy based on a framework imbued with ideological presuppositions, Nixon and his mentor, Kissinger, relied on three approaches to achieve their goals: power politics, linkage and détente. Based on a realistic foreign policy grounded on the*raison d'état* and national interest, both politicians wanted, by the means of détente, to create a climate of political accommodation with the USSR. In effect, détente was aimed at diffusing tensions between the superpowers and at containing Soviet expansionism around the globe[230]. The concept of linkage pointed to the fact that various global issues interesting both powers could be linked together so that the advances achieved in one sector could be tied to progress in another [231].

The Middle East was viewed in the light of the global competition with the USSR. The resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict was central to improving the American position in the Arab world, to reducing Soviet influence and the potential for Soviet-American confrontation in the area.

The goal of an Arab-Israeli settlement was generally shared by the members of the Nixon administration, although the strategies pursued differed substantially. Nixon's first term was marked by the opposing views and the fierce competition between the Secretary of State, William Rogers and the then National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger.

Kissinger did not speed up the process of reaching a peace settlement. He believed that only when Russians or one or more of the key Arab states had moderated their demands could the peace negotiations proceed. The National Security Advisor was mainly worried with reducing Soviet involvement with the Arab countries and discrediting the USSR as an effective ally and co-partner of the Arabs in a likely settlement between the Middle East contenders [232]. He urged Nixon to discourage the State Department from going ahead with Soviet-American initiatives that were based on Israeli concessions regarding the territories conquered in the 1967 war in exchange for a peace guaranteed by both superpowers. Kissinger believed that an outcome of this nature would be viewed as a victory for Arab radicals and, mainly,

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[230] Rubenberg, *op. cit.*: p. 139.

[231] "Since U.S.-Soviet interests as the world's two competing superpowers were so widespread and overlapping, it was unrealistic to separate or compartimentalize areas of concern. Therefore, we decided to link progress in such areas of Soviet concern as strategic arms limitation and increased trade with progress in areas that were important to us - Vietnam, and Mideast, and Berlin": Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (Book Club Associates, 1978), p. 346.

[232] *Id.* : p. 216.

for the USSR [233]. He was inclined to share the Israeli view that only a show of strength by Washington and Jerusalem could improve the American position and Western interests in the area. Kissinger adhered to the idea that Israel constituted a strategic asset to American interests and actively pursued a policy of reinforcing Israel's regional power so that it could fulfil its functions as a regional surrogate of the United States.

Secretary Rogers' intent of pursuing a "balanced policy" in the Middle East originated a far-reaching peace plan. It supported the provisions of Resolution 242 endorsing the principles of non-acquisition of territory by war, calling for withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 war, and establishing secure and recognised boundaries. Rogers proposed a trade-off in which Israel would withdraw from the occupied territories and the Arabs would agree to enter into some form of contractual arrangement guaranteeing a permanent peace with Israel. Although the Secretary of State did not satisfy Arab demands that Israel withdraw to the 1967 frontiers, he came close by proposing that modifications in the 1967 borders should be "insubstantial" and only for "mutual security". Rogers advanced other proposals that further dissatisfied Israel: it raised the refugee question and stressed the need to address the aspirations of the refugees; it suggested that Israel and Jordan should participate in the civic, economic and religious life of Jerusalem [234].

Because of its central provision that occupied territories should be returned to the Arabs in exchange for peace, the Rogers plan was met with strong hostility in Israel. Furthermore, Nixon and Kissinger dissociated themselves from the plan and worked together to undermine it. Nixon later wrote in his memoirs: "I knew that the Rogers plan could never be implemented but I believed it was important to let the Arab world know that the United States did not automatically dismiss its case regarding the occupied territories or rule out a compromise settlement of the conflicting claims. With the Rogers plan on record, I thought it would be easier for the

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[233] Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (NY: Summit Books, 1983), p. 216.

[234] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 186. At the Big Four talks in New York, American ambassador to the U.N., C. Yost went further by presenting proposals for an Israeli-Jordanian settlement. According to his plan, Israel would return to its pre-1967 frontiers in exchange for guarantees, improved access to the holy places in Jerusalem, and an agreement ruling out violence across the Jordanian border. Israel would have to accept back some refugees and both countries would recognise each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Spiegel affirms that: "The Rogers speech and the Yost follow-up at the U.N. were the most comprehensive effort yet to deal with the Arab-Israeli problem."; see pp. 187-8.

Arab leaders to propose reopening relations with the United States without coming under attack from the hawks and pro-Soviet elements in their own countries" [235].

Nixon's commitment to Israel started before he was elected: in a speech to a Jewish assembly during his electoral campaign on September 8, 1968, Nixon advocated the sale of supersonic Phantom F-4 jets to provide Israel with technological military superiority. In an effort to garner Jewish votes, President Johnson announced his intention to sell Israel fifty of these jets. He therefore established the U.S. role as the principal supplier of non-defensive, sophisticated military equipment. This policy was consistent with the Nixon Doctrine, articulated by the president in July 1969 and aimed at easing out the United States from entanglements in Southeast Asia.

Under that doctrine the United States would rely on local powers to keep internal regional order and furnish "military and economicassistance when requested and appropriate". The United States, affirmed Nixon, would continue to provide a nuclear umbrella if a nuclear power threatened an American ally; otherwise, the nation directly threatened should assume the primary responsibility of assuming its defence and preservation [236]. This policy was aimed at arming proxy states that would further American purposes without the need for U.S. troops.

As the first term evolved, two states seemed particularly able to play this role in the Middle East: Iran and Israel. Iran, with the aid of American advisors and personnel, was to replace the British as they left the Persian Gulf in the early 1970s. As for Israel, Nixon later said: "We are for Israel because Israel in our view is the only state in the Mideast which is pro-freedom and an effective opponent to Soviet expansion. This is the kind of friend Israel needs and will continue to need ... ." [237].

The supply of American arms and military equipment to Israel rose steadily until the 1973 war. After Israeli denunciation of Egyptian violations of the cease-fire on the Canal zone (August 1970), President Nixon authorised a $7 million package of arms for Israel to use against the Egyptian missile sites. On September 1, Nixon agreed to sell Israel at least eighteen more Phantom jets to compensate Israel for the canal violations; hours later an amendment passed in the Senate gave the president almost unlimited authority to provide Israel with arms to counter Soviet weapons in Egypt. Furthermore, in December 1971, as Kissinger took hold of the Arab-Israeli diplomacy, the United States agreed to supply Israel with new Phantoms and

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[235] Quoted in Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 188.
[236] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : pp. 117-8.
[237] Emphasis in original. Nixon, *op. cit.*: p. 481.

Skyhawks over three years to avoid the polemics that erupted when short-term deals expired. This arrangement became the first long-term arms deal between Washington and Jerusalem [238].

The importance of Israel as an American proxy in the Middle East became especially patent after the Israelis cooperated with the United States in the Jordanian crisis of September 1970 and helped to thwart an attack by the Russian-backed Syrian regime [239]. U.S.-Israeli relations were quickly brought to an unprecedented high level and aid was provided by Washington without restrictions: "The crisis and its denouement demonstrated to them in a concrete and dramatic fashion the value for the United States of a strong Israel." [240]. Simultaneously, the conventional wisdom of the State Department - in favour of an "even-handed" approach and regarding American support for Israel as an impediment to U.S.-Arab relations - was seriously damaged.

In mid-1972 Sadat, whom the Nixon administration did not take seriously as a political leader, expelled the 15,000 Soviet advisors that were in his country. After the 1973 elections, Kissinger maintained secret negotiations with the Egyptians and kept a special channel with the Soviet ambassador. The proposal Kissinger made, which included the establishment of Israeli military posts in the Sinai, was rejected by Sadat. In reality, Kissinger resisted America's active involvement in the peace-making process, preferring a stalemate and maintenance of the*status quo*, just like Israel [241]. Sadat summed up his frustration in a statement he made in early April: "If we do not take things into our own hands, there will be no movement ... Every door I have opened has been slammed in my face by Israel - with American blessings ... The Americans have left us no other way out ... Everything is being mobilized for resumption of the battle - which is now inevitable" [242].

During the Yom Kippur /Ramadan War, Kissinger already assuming almost exclusive control of the policy-making apparatus, ordered four ships of the Sixth Fleet

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[238] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 211.

[239] On the eve of the day the Jordanian monarch ordered air attacks on the invading Syrian forces (September 21), Israeli ambassador to the U.S.A., Y. Rabin conveyed to Kissinger the cabinet's decision to intervene if Syrian tanks continued to advance. The Israeli air force would attack first, but, if this proved insufficient, a tank force would also be sent into Syria as well. Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 117.

[240] Safran, *op. cit.* : p. 455.

[241] "To provide a semblance of coherence, I sought to delay any new State Department initiatives in the second term and stall Soviet overtures until I could determine in the meeting with Hafez Ismail what the Egyptians had in mind. This was no easy matter since I was the only person aware of all three tracks, and the State Department was being stone-walled."; Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson and M. Joseph, 1982), p. 207. See also Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 128.

to within 500 miles of Israel and in the U.N. tried to advance Israeli interests by tying up the Soviets and delaying a cease-fire resolution. The Israelis asked for arms, but Kissinger was reluctant to comply believing that Israel would quickly defeat its foes, and that the U.S. should avoid a visible involvement in the war. As the war continued, it became difficult for the administration to keep its refusal without loosing the confidence of Israel and its supporters at home. Nixon and Kissinger finally made the decision on October 9 to resupply Israel because of the massive Soviet airlift to Syria [243]. The supplies and equipment may have not decided between victory and defeat, but they boosted Israel's morale. The magnitude of the airlift was indeed impressive. Several hundred individual missions and tons of equipment, an effort longer than the Berlin airlift of 1948-49 [244].

Kissinger also worked through the U.N. Security Council in the elaboration of resolutions that clearly benefited the Israeli army. The first, passed on the October 22, was negotiated by Kissinger and the Soviets [245]. The Israelis were outraged at the joint accord because they had not been consulted [246].

To compensate them, Kissinger allowed a few hours "slippage" in the cease-fire deadline. This margin of time came to be a six-day offensive during which Israeli troops crossed the Suez Canal, and completed the encircling of Egypt's Third Army in the Sinai. When the offensive was over, Israel had reached the Gulf of Suez and occupied 1,600 square kilometres of Egyptian territory [247].

One consequence of the huge U.S. arms shipments to Israel, and Nixon's decision on October 19, to ask Congress to appropriate $2.2 billion in emergency aid to Israel (including $15 billion in outright grants), was the O.P.E.C. (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil embargo [248]. On October 20, Saudi Arabia

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[242] Quoted in Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 157.

[243] Safran refers that Prime Minister Golda Meir hinted that her country would be forced to make use of "every means at its disposal to ensure its national survival". Kissinger knew that Israel possessed a very short nuclear option. The secret nuclear program was being developed in the Negev Desert near Beershea, the focus of it being the Dimona reactor. Thus, as Safran reports, " ... on October 12, 1973, the scenario of an Israel feeling on the verge of destruction resorting in despair to nuclear weapons, hitherto so hypothetical, assumed a grim actuality"; *op. cit.* : p. 483.

[244] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 25; Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 184-5; Green, *op. cit.* : pp. 95-7.

[245] That was resolution 338 and it became the legal basis for ending the October 1973 war and the framework for the negotiations that followed.

[246] Israeli opposition to this resolution also stemmed from the fact that the second paragraph called for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242, "in all its parts". Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 261.

[247] Safran, *op. cit.* : pp. 491-2 and Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : pp. 169-70.

[248] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 130.

announced that it would stop selling oil to the United States; Iraq, Abu Dhabi, Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar followed suit.

By the end of the war, Kissinger had attained diplomatic leverage with both Cairo and Jerusalem. He had restrained Israel from destroying the Egyptian army and had avoided a total Israel victory. During the war Kissinger had established a good communication with Sadat, who consistently held out the possibility of better relations with Washington and had conveyed his own interests in a peaceful settlement with Israel [249]. Despite this improvement in American-Egyptian relations, from that time on Israel became the single largest recipient of American aid. "Whereas the total U.S. aid to Israel in 1972 amounted to $350 million, by 1974 it reached the figure of $2,630 million, and from the mid-1970s it hovered around $2 billion a year"[250].

The months that followed the October war saw unprecedented American involvement in the search for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Kissinger tried to manipulate the military stalemate toward a political disengagement that satisfied both parties. On November 5 Kissinger inaugurated a phase of complex peace negotiations involving several Middle Eastern actors and known as "shuttle diplomacy". Kissinger's objectives in the talks were:

- to create a good understanding with the Egyptians and to convince them of the benefits of a settlement with Israel;

- to demonstrate to the Arab oil producers the United States' ability to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict;

- to convince the Israelis that peace would be a better means of achieving their goals than by making war;

- to maintain the support of the Jewish domestic constituency [251].

Initially, Kissinger focused on the question of disengagement and the separation of forces between Egypt and Israel. The second agreement, dealing with the separation of forces in the Golan Heights, was concluded between Israel and Syria on May 31, 1974.

The second stage proved more complex. Kissinger found the demands made by Egypt and Israel unreasonable and the differences between the latter proved irreconcilable. In March President Gerald Ford announced a reassessment of U.S. policy to determine appropriate "next steps" in light of the complexity of the

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[249] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 266.
[250] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 139.
[251] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : pp. 267-8.

international system, including the communist victory in Cambodia and Vietnam. He also intended to pressure Israel to a moderate position; in fact, he was convinced that Rabin wanted peace.

The reassessment triggered a loud protest of the pro-Israeli forces and brought about the first major confrontation with the Ford administration. Seventy-six senators sent a letter to Ford calling for undiminished economic and military aid to Israel. They criticised the administration's intention of withholding future military requests of military equipment from Israel and bolstered Israel's negative attitude regarding withdrawal from the Sinai. The letter strongly undercut the whole gist of the proposed "reassessment" and revealed congressional uneasiness over the administration's attribution to Israel of the responsibility for the breakdown of the talks [252].

Finally in September 1, 1975, the Sinai II agreements were signed by Egypt and Israel. It was the Israeli/American "Memorandum of Understanding", though, a confidential document not subject to Senate ratification, which became most controversial. In that document, the Ford administration agreed to most of the aid Israel had requested for the forthcoming year. It provided for substantially increased military assistance to Israel, including delivery of large new quantities of sophisticated weapons [253] and to compensate Israel economically for the oil lost for the return of the Gulf of Suez oilfields [254]. Political guarantees were also given to Israel. Chief among them was what amounted to an American security guarantee: the United States was to hold consultations with Israel in case a third party (meaning the USSR) intervened militarily[255].

Lenczowski mentions other pledges: "not to initiate any moves in the Middle East without prior consultation with Israel; not to diverge from U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as the sole basis for peace negotiations; to insist that all negotiations should be bilateral as between Israel and the Arab countries and not multilateral (as the brief Geneva Conference foreshadowed); and not to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) or negotiate with it without Israeli consent and until the PLO formally recognised Israel's right to exist and promised to adhere to

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[252] *Id.* : p. 296.

[253] Lenczowski says that this pledge "... opened the door to generous deliveries of sophisticated American weapons to Israel, so that in the period between the October 1973 war and June 1977, the Israeli military forces doubled their strength and Israel's airforce, with 574 combat aircraft ... became the third strongest in the world."; *op. cit.* : pp. 152-3.

[254] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 301; Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 152.

U.N. resolutions 242 and 338" [256]. This clause was the most relevant political concession of the agreement and it evidenced American compliance to Israeli security requirements. Since the Palestinians were denied participation in the peace negotiation, armed struggle and guerrilla activity continued to be considered legitimate means (to many in the PLO) to furthering their goals.

On balance, the "shuttle diplomacy" activated by Kissinger had the advantage of breaking intractable issues into smaller less complex components that were susceptible of being discussed and settled. It was hoped that a success in one particular issue would create momentum for the next. This approach worked until after military disengagement agreements were negotiated after the 1973 war. Once discussions centred on substantive issues and on matters pointing to political accommodations between the Arabs and Israelis, the impetus was lost. U.S. diplomacy under Kissinger was conducted to achieve quick, sectoral diplomatic successes designed to bolster the President's domestic credibility - especially during the crucial period of Nixon's Watergate crisis [257].

The major liability of Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy was the fact that it was never intended to produce a comprehensive peace settlement, but rather to face the impending danger of a renewal of the hostilities. One must also add the point that, in its conception, it avoided the central issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict - the Palestinian dimension of the process. Kissinger maintained that the Palestinian problem was an intra-Arab affair and, thus, should be dealt with in the context of a Jordanian-Israeli settlement (and not with Israel) [258].

In any case, the 1975 agreements initiated a period of relative stability in the Middle East and because it laid the groundwork for the search of an overall peace settlement. For the first time, the resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute had become

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[255] Aruri, *op. cit.* : p. 101.
[256] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 152.
[257] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 313.
[258] Ishaq I. Ghanayem and Alden H. Voth, *The Kissinger Legacy: American-Middle East Policy* (NY: Praeger, 1984), pp. 173-4. Aruri concurs saying that Kissinger intended "... a transformation of the very nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict: a settlement that would remove the conflict from its ideological context and transform it into an ordinary territorial conflict."; *op. cit.* : p. 101. The first public reference to the Palestinian problem was made in 1976 by Harold Saunders, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs, while testifying at the House Foreign Affairs Committee hearings. He then stated that the Palestinians were the "heart" of the Arab-Israeli conflict: "The issue is not whether Palestinian interests should be expressed in a final settlement, but how. There will be no peace unless an answer is found"; quoted in Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 306. Under Kissinger, the United States established informal contacts with the PLO.

America's top foreign policy priority; it enhanced the prestige of Kissinger and Ford and it constituted their most outstanding foreign policy achievement in 1975 [259].

4.3.4. Carter's New Approach: Camp David and the Failure of a Comprehensive Peace Settlement

Carter entered the White House determined to work for a comprehensive Middle East peace. In fact, the Carter administration was the first to direct its major foreign policy initiatives in the direction of the Middle East, understood mainly as the arena of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Despite the admiration and affinities he felt for Israel - due to his Southern Baptist religious convictions - Carter defended that the pursuit of peace should centre on the exchange of most of the occupied territories for Arab political concessions. Apparently he saw no clash between his commitment to Palestinian rights and his enduring support for Israel [260].

The Carter administration believed that cooperation with the Soviet Union would help to achieve the goal of Middle East peace. A settlement was considered the means to stabilise the oil supply and prevent a more serious oil crisis. National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote in 1975: "It is impossible to seek a resolution to the energy problems without tackling head-on - and doing so in an urgent fashion - the Arab-Israeli conflict. Without a settlement of that issue in the near future, any stable arrangement in the energy area is simply not possible"[261]. In fact, "the oil question now replaced the U.S.S.R. and anticommunism as Washington's pre-eminent concern" [262]. Saudi Arabia became consequently a favoured ally.

Carter de-emphasised the tense relation with the Soviet Union and saw it as a potential cooperative partner for his Middle Eastern endeavours. On October 1, 1977, both superpowers issued a communiqué stressing the need for achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The plan included Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab lands, a resolution of the Palestinian issue, normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arab states, and international guarantees provided at least in part by the USSR and the United States. The point of the proposal was to

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[259] Reich, *Quest.* : p. 351.
[260] *Id.* : p. 326.
[261] "Recognizing the Crisis", *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1974-75: p. 67.

reconvene the Geneva Conference, which had failed due to the efforts of Henry Kissinger [263]. The statement did not mention a Palestinian state, it did not call for direct PLO participation in the Geneva Conference and it did not require Israel to return to the 1967 borders or to abandon East Jerusalem [264].

When he took office, Carter focused on the Palestinian's concerns. In the Spring of 1977 he made several references to a Palestinian political entity: "There has to be a homeland provided for the Palestinian refugees ...". Although he appeared to be endorsing a Palestinian state, he explained his position when he stated that "... some provision has got to be made for the Palestinians, in the framework of the nation of Jordan or by some other means"[265]. Later Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Carter made it clear that they would deal directly with the PLO only if it accepted Resolution 242, even with a proviso concerning Palestinian rights. In their opinion, the Palestinians were not simple refugees, but had been unjustly forced out of their homes by the Israelis [266].

These declarations evidenced Carter's ingenuity and even lack of political expertise. The Soviet-American statement, in particular, was vehemently condemned by Israeli leaders who saw in it the first step towards an imposed settlement and the violation of Kissinger's pledge not to deal with the Palestinians. The Israeli officials were incensed with the fact that the phrase "legitimate rights of the Palestinians" included in the document pointed to a possible displacement of Israel by a Palestinian state.

Carter's efforts were further thwarted by the arrival at power in the Summer of 1974 of the right-wing Likud coalition. The new government, headed by the revisionist Prime Minister Menachem Begin, intensified the repression of the Palestinians on the West Bank and accelerated the building of settlements on their land - a policy equivalent to annexation. This aggressive policy was in reality a translation of Begin's Herut party blueprint to a Greater Israel (Eretz Israel) that stretched across the Jordan River. Carter condemned the creation of settlements in the West Bank, declaring the

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[262] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 320.
[263] The first Geneva conference was convened in December 1973 under U. S. and Soviet cochairmanship and was designed more as a pro forma gesture.
[264] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 201.
[265] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 332.
[266] *Id.* : p. 335.

practice to have no legal validity and to constitute an "obstacle to peace". Despite private angry outbursts, Carter took no punitive actions against Israel [267].

A decisive phase of Carter's diplomacy began with Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. When the Egyptian president addressed the Knesset on November 20, he extended recognition to Israel, and proposed peace based on a comprehensive settlement. The initiative was then passed on to the Israelis: on a return trip to Egypt, Begin carried a proposal that did not correspond to his host's expectations. The Begin plan, as it came to be known, addressed Egyptian concerns over the Sinai and included an autonomy plan for the Palestinians called "Home Rule for Palestinian Arabs, Residents of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District".

The distance between Begin and Sadat induced Carter to involve himself in the negotiations, as Israel failed to make further concessions and as Sadat's peace initiative lost momentum. Carter was about to give up on Begin but then decided to bring him and Sadat to the presidential retreat at Camp David, where from September, 4 until September 17, he personally managed the negotiations. As Tillman stresses, Camp David was "... a final, desperate throw of the dice by an American administration at the end of its patience and of the resources it was prepared to use" [268].. The agreements that came out of the conference on September 17, 1978 were a "Framework for Peace in the Middle East", and a "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel".

On March 26, 1979 Carter joined Sadat and Begin in Washington for the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. The treaty invoked the Camp David framework and followed most of its stipulations. It constituted a remarkable achievement of American diplomacy but it had many shortcomings. The formulations that emerged were closer to a separate peace than to Carter's goal of a comprehensive solution including the Palestinians. Carter's most far-reaching decision had been to separate the Sinai issue from the more general framework.

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[267] Spiegel refers that the most serious manifestation of opposition to the Israeli Government's creation of new settlements in the occupied territories occurred on March 1, 1980. The United States voted in favour of a Security Council Resolution calling upon Israel to dismantle the existing settlements and to cease the planning and building of new ones. Under intense pressure from Israel and domestic pro-Jewish supporter, the administration reversed its vote as a bureaucratic "error". Spiegel writes that: "Most analysts agreed that the president would have won the (New York) primary except for the controversial U.N. vote that reminded Jewish voters of Carter's tough stand against Israeli settlements and in favour of Palestinian rights ..."; *op. cit.* : pp. 377-78.

[268] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 25.

Quandt argues that by the second year of his term, Carter had realised that he could obtain little concessions from Begin and had become aware of the costs of a confrontation with Israel in terms of his domestic support: "These realizations had convinced him to pull back from his original ambitious plan for a comprehensive peace and had made him particularly cautious in dealing with the Palestinian question" [269].

The accords cost Sadat much Arab support and, eventually, his life. In March 1979 Egypt was suspended from the Arab League, and even the moderate Arab states accused Sadat of deserting them for a bilateral treaty with Israel. President Sadat was obviously the weakest part in the negotiations and he was the one who had the most to lose if the process failed. The issue of Palestinian self-determination was eluded and the provisions regarding administrative self-rule were too vague. "The major and perhaps decisive flaw from the Egyptian point of view was the lack of any explicit linkage between the Egyptian and West Bank agreements. It was possible, therefore, that Egypt might first conclude with Israel a treaty of peace while a comprehensive settlement concerning the West Bank and the fate of the Palestinians might wait indefinitely" [270].

As for Israel, it chose the lesser of two evils: it returned the Sinai to its former enemy and in the process neutralised any possible threat from its southern flank - henceforth, it was able to pursue its military adventures against its northern neighbours without fear of an attack from the militarily strongest state in the Arab world[271] . By sacrificing the Sinai, Israel managed to perpetuate its hold over the highly prized Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. Indeed, Begin did not feel himself bound to the treaty he had signed: shortly before that he announced that Israel retained the right to remain on the West Bank indefinitely and that a provision freezing the Judea and Samaria settlements was only for three months [272]. In the negotiations that started within one month of the signing of the treaty and that contemplated the future of the West Bank and Gaza, no progresses were made [273].

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[269] William B. Quandt, *Camp David* (Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1986), p. 258.
[270] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 178.
[271] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 249.
[272] Quandt says that on September 17, the final day of the Camp David meeting, Begin had spelled out that a freeze on settlements would take place for a three-month period; *op. cit.* : p. 252.
[273] During the autonomy talks, the administration could not settle conflicting Israeli and Egyptian interpretations of the Palestinian council. In July 1980, the Knesset also voted to reaffirm a united Jerusalem as the Israeli capital and Sadat abandoned the autonomy talks in protest. The negotiations remained thereafter in abeyance as first the United States and then Israel underwent election campaigns.

Additionally, as a prerequisite of their signing a peace treaty with Egypt, the Israelis demanded a series of guarantees from the United States. In a Memorandum of Understanding, the American administration pledged to be "responsive" to Israel's military and economic needs, and reaffirmed and extended its 1975 commitment to provide Israel with oil in case Israel were unable to obtain it itself: "The alliance that emerged between the United States and Israel as a result of that memorandum represents one of the high points in Israeli diplomacy vis-à-vis the United States" [274].

4.3.5. From Reagan to the *Intifada*: Collusion with Israel and Stalling in the Peace Process

When Reagan entered office in January 1981 the Arab-Israel conflict ceased to enjoy its usual priority as the region's main concern. The fall of the Shah in January 1979, the ensuing revolutionary chaos in Iran, the seizure of American hostages by the Iranian revolutionaries in November 1979, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, taken together formed the background to an altered strategic position in the Middle East and particularly in the Persian Gulf. The principal focus of U.S. policy turned to the threat of Soviet penetration of the economically and strategically vital oil-rich Persian Gulf [275]. The Reagan team stressed terrorism as a major political threat and considered Moscow as the major sponsor of this problem [276].

Alexander Haig, the Secretary of State, declared on March 18, his administration's priority in developing "a consensus of strategic concerns throughout the region among Arab and Jew and to be sure that the overriding danger of Soviet inroads into this area are not overlooked"[277]. It entailed increased reliance on Israel as a surrogate military instrument in the Middle East and the building up of the military capacities of the Arab component of the projected anti-Soviet defensive arrangement (Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Israel, and the Arab Gulf states). These disparate allies

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[274] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 245; see also Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 33.
[275] The Reagan administration's policy represented an expansion of the Carter Doctrine: it identified a potential Soviet threat to the Persian Gulf and affirmed U.S. determination to take whatever steps necessary to protect its interests.
[276] Haig stated that "international terrorism will take the place of human rights" on the State Department agenda; Stork, "U.S: Policy ...": p. 140.
[277] Quoted in Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 37.

were expected to transcend their regional hostilities and unite against the threat of the Soviet Union and its proxies [278].

The new administration came to office with a strong commitment to Israel[279]. During the campaign Reagan had proclaimed that "Israel is a strategic asset", which underscored the fact that in the context of the desiquilibrium created by the collapse of the Iranian monarchy, Israel was considered the main American ally and Soviet stumbling bloc in the area. It also meant the rejection of an earlier assumption that the resolution of the Palestine-Israel conflict was crucial to the U.S. goal of maintaining its strategic position in the Middle East and, especially, the Persian Gulf [280].

In June 1981, Israel's electorate returned the Likud to power. The Likud's programme of expanding and consolidating Israel's presence in the occupied territories was increasingly complemented in the late 1970s by Israel's growing military involvement in South Lebanon and its open support of Lebanese Christian militias to the north [281]. The objective was the destruction of the PLO; the establishment in Lebanon of Maronite (Phalangists) rule that would recognise Israel's claim to Lebanese territory from the northern Israeli border to the Litani river; and to force Syria, which had been in Lebanon since 1976, to withdraw, leaving the Palestinians unprotected.

On June 6, 1982 Israel launched a massive invasion of Lebanon. The Reagan administration knew the Israeli plans, particularly Secretary of State Alexander Haig, an admirer of Gen. Sharon (Israeli Defence Minister) and a fervent advocate of a strategic alliance with Israel. Some authors affirm that Haig gave the "green light" for

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[278] Joe Stork, "Israel as a Strategic Asset", *MERIP Reports* (12), nº 4, May 1982: p. 8. To that end, the United States offered to sell additional equipment for F-15 aircraft and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control Systems) aircraft to Saudi Arabia (despite strong Israeli protests and pro-Israeli sentiment on Capitol Hill). also tried to set up a Jordanian logistics force (JLF) as a rapid deployment force for the Gulf was considered an instrument for keeping the Straits of Hormuz open. Once more, Congressional and Israeli opposition killed the deal.

[279] During the campaign, Reagan had declared about the Camp David peace process that he would "continue to support that process as long as Israel sees utility in it". He also gave assurance that he would use "all appropriate instruments" including the American veto in the U.N. Security Council, "to insure that the PLO has no voice or role as a participant in future peace negotiations with Israel". Shortly after he was elected, Reagan further declared that the building of new settlements in the occupied territories was "not illegal"; Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 36, 170.

[280] Stork, "U.S. Policy ...": p. 139.

[281] In March 1978 Israel invaded Lebanon with the pretext of retaliating against guerrilla attacks. The actual purpose was to establish a security zone in southern Lebanon under the supervision of the Lebanese army officer Saad Haddad. Israel withdrew its forces underCarter's and U.N.'s pressure. See Richman, *op. cit.* : p. 32.

the invasion[282] although he claims that in a meeting with Sharon he confirmed Israel's right, in principle, to respond to acts of terrorism as long as they were indisputable internationally recognised provocations on the part of the PLO[283]. Ryan and Tschirgi suggest that the Reagan administration saw the benefits that would derive from the Israeli move: the crushing of what Haig labelled a "terrorist" organization and a Soviet client - the PLO -, and the harming of the main Israeli enemy and the Soviet proxy in the region - Syria [284].

In mid-August, the United States helped to arrange an agreement that included a cease-fire and the PLO evacuation to other countries under supervision of a multinational force and of U.S. Marines. In a context of diplomatic strength - Palestinian retreat and Syrian defeat in Beirut - the Reagan administration felt that the conditions offered the possibility of building a stable Lebanon, a pillar of peace in the Middle East[285]. Shultz, the new Secretary of State, found that there was a linkage between the resolution of the Lebanese conflict and the eradication of the root causes of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis.

On September 1, after the last PLO forces left Beirut, President Reagan unveiled his peace plan crafted by his new Secretary of State, George Shultz. In his televised speech, the president for the first time referred to the Palestine problem as "more than a question of refugees", opposed Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and firmly endorsed the formal U.S. policy since 1967 that a negotiated settlement must involve an exchange of territories for peace. The focus of this plan were the proposals regarding the final status of the West Bank and Gaza: Reagan opposed both Israeli annexation of these territories and an independent Palestinian

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[282] William B. Quandt, "U.S. Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict", in William B. Quandt (ed.), *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1988), p. 364.

[283] See Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), p. 335; Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), pp. 73-6; Sheila Ryan, "Israel's Invasion of Lebanon: Background to the Crisis", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer/Fall 1982: pp. 27-31 and 34-7, and David Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 283.

[284] Ryan, *op. cit.* : p. 29 and Tschirgi, *op. cit.* : pp. 163-5.

[285] Haig thought that " [A] settlement in Lebanon would have significant consequences ... Syria and the PLO, the heart of Arab opposition to Camp David, had been defeated with the PLO's "military option" gone, Israel's arguments against granting a wider measure of autonomy to the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza would be negated ... (creating) a fresh opportunity to complete the Camp David peace process ... "; quoted in Tschirgi, *op. cit.* : p. 164. Tschirgi explains that, in this context, Washington would remain opposed to any form of Palestinian statehood, favouring instead a Jordanian role in the affairs of the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza: p. 175.

state. He preferred Palestinian self-government on the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan.

The plan was rejected by Begin and his Cabinet because it compromised their claims to Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza and differed from their interpretation of the Camp David accords. The Arabs, at the Arab League Fez summit, offered a plan of their own, thus rejecting the Reagan proposal. It called for the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories under the leadership of the PLO and with Jerusalem as its capital [286].

Following the announcement of the plan, Reagan tried to persuade King Hussein to put Jordan forward as a viable representative of the Palestinians in future negotiations with Israel. In the following months, the King concluded that there was no basis for developing a joint negotiating position without PLO and Arab League support. After Reagan's reelection King Hussein tried to resurrect the Jordanian-PLO platform as a new attempt to relaunch American interest in the peace process. This time the monarch pursued the idea of an international conference that would discuss the possibility of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation[287]. Actually, he was interested in American participation, signalling the need for U.S. contacts with a group of Jordanians and Palestinians. President Reagan rejected that possibility arguing that he did not want the United States to become an engaged partner in the negotiations. Instead, he urged the parties to enter into direct talks [288].

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[286] The Fez Plan recognised Israel implicitly and was a "watered-down version" of the 1982 Fahd Plan. The main element of this plan was that the Arab world accepted U.N. Resolution 242, including the right of every country in the region to live in peace. This was obviously and implicit recognition of the state of Israel, an attempt to deal with that country. See Spiegel, *op. cit.* : pp. 420-1; Mohamed Heikal, *Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations* (London: HarperCollins, 1996): p. 367, and Barry Rubin, "U.S. Policy on the Middle East in the Period Since Camp David", in Freedman, *The Middle East Since Camp David* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1984), p. 73.

[287] Shimon Peres, acting Prime Minister supported this idea. He held a secret meeting with King Hussein in London on October 5, 1985. He proposed that an international conference should be immediately followed by direct talks between Jordan and Israel; Heikal, *op. cit.* : p. 375.

[288] Quandt, *op. cit.* : pp. 369-71.

4.3.6. From the *Intifada* to the Washington Agreement: From Palestinian Hopelessness to a Diplomatic Breakthrough

It would take the Palestinian *intifada* that erupted in December 1987 to revive the Reagan administration interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict. American Jewish leaders and Israeli politicians urged Shultz to become more actively involved. In Congress, Israel's supporters seemed troubled by the consequences of the Israeli policy of repression, put in practice in the occupied territories by the Defence Minister Y. Rabin.

For several months the American and European public were exposed to daily reports of Israeli ferocity and Palestinian helplessness. Significantly, there were signs that a gap was growing between public opinion and official U.S. policy with respect to the Palestine-Israel conflict [289].

Faced with this explosive unrest, Shultz launched in January 1988 a peace proposal that outlined the goal of a comprehensive peace. The negotiations were to be conducted on the basis established in Camp David, but with a faster timetable. Shultz suggested that the final status of the occupied territories should be decided within one year of elections for a self-governing Palestinian authority[290]. The proposal spoke of U.S.-Israeli-Jordanian cooperation in establishing limited Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza. The plan was adamantly rejected by Shamir[291] and most Arabs felt that the plan was flawed. It failed to recognise the magnitude of the Palestinian issue and to insist on the "territory for peace" formula that had been central to Reagan's 1982 proposal.

As with the Reagan Plan, Shultz did not pursue his initiative with much insistence, and within a month he referred to it as being merely a process that would leave "something constructive for my successors" [292].

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[289] Naseer Aruri, "The United States and Palestine: Reagan's Legacy to Bush", *Journal of Palestine Studies* (XVIII), n° 3, Spring 1989: pp. 10-4. Egypt's President Mubarak came to Washington and urged the Americans to urgently take measures in order to neutralise the extremist wave in the region.

[290] At Camp David, it had been decided that the final status of the occupied territories should be decided within five years of elections for a self-governing Palestinian authority. See Aruri, *op. cit.* : p. 20 and Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 376.

[291] Shamir argued that the plan was a departure from Camp David, rejected the principle of the exchange of territory for peace, and the idea of an international conference.

[292] Kathleen Christison, "The Arab-Israeli Policy of George Shultz", *Journal of Palestine Studies* (XVIII), n° 2, Winter 1989: p. 42.

The Reagan administration's inaction was countered by a major change in the PLO's position on key aspects of its traditional platform. On November 15, the PNC (Palestine National Council) proclaimed an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Later, on December 7, Arafat confirmed the PLO's acceptance of Israel's existence and its rejection of terrorism. Shultz was at last satisfied and announced on December 14 that the United States was ready to begin a substantive dialogue through the American ambassador in Tunis [293].

Taylor argues that "the reluctance Shultz displayed in arriving at this major change in the official American attitude toward the PLO reflected the degree to which Washington has become rigid and unreasonable in its policies on the Arab-Israeli conflict" [294].

The November 1988 elections in the United States brought to power George Bush, and James Baker as his Secretary of State. Neither of these men shared the same dogged attachment to Israel and they showed no reserve when facing down the Shamir government over its policies. Bush and Baker felt an intense dislike for Shamir and the Secretary of State called on Israel to "lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel", cease construction of settlements in the occupied territories, forswear annexation of territory, and reach out to the Palestinians "as neighbours who deserve political rights" [295].

Early in the administration, the settlements issue became a focal point of President's Bush attention. He was outraged when Shamir publicly affirmed in February 1990 the need for a "big Israel" to accommodate the influx of Soviet Jews. Bush learned that 10 percent of the immigrants were moving to East Jerusalem (whose annexation the United States never recognised) after Shamir assured him privately that fewer than 1 percent were living in the occupied territories[296]. U.S.

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[293] He further added: "Nothing here may be taken to imply an acceptance or recognition by the United States of an independent Palestinian state. The position of the United States is that the status of the West Bank and Gaza cannot be determined by unilateral acts of either side, but only through a process of negotiations"; quoted in Heikal, *op. cit.* : pp. 396-7.

[294] Taylor, *op. cit.* : p. 105.

[295] Kathleen Christison, "Splitting the Difference: The Palestinian-Israeli Policy of James Baker", *Journal of Palestine Studies* (XXIV), n° 1, Autumn 1994: p. 42.

[296] The massive exodus from Russia which had begun in mid-1989 decreased by the end of 1991. Settlement construction slowed in the last months of the Shamir government as supply outstripped demand. Rubenberg argues that Washington pressured Moscow on behalf of Israel to permit the Jews to leave the Soviet Union. The Union States restricted the entry of these immigrants, thus directing them to Israel; "The Gulf War, the Palestinians, and the New World Order", in Tareq Y. Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael (ed.), *The Gulf War and the New World Order* (Gainesville, Fl.: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 319.

criticism of the settlement issue contributed to the downfall of the Likud-led coalition government in March 1990. However, due to the Labour's inability to form its own coalition, Shamir came back forming a more intransigent Likud government. He dropped the West Bank-Gaza election plan which served as the basis for U.S. efforts at peace.

Eventually, Baker allowed U.S. policy to remain closely linked to that of Shamir rather than designing a distinctive and original peace proposal that would take into account the existing positive elements[297]. Baker launched his own five-point plan which reassured Israel that its participation would be conditioned on the formation of an "acceptable" Palestinian negotiating team. The Baker plan proposed U.S.-Israeli-Egyptian cooperation in the selection of a Palestinian delegation. This satisfied Shamir and effectively precluded PLO participation in the negotiations. As Stork and Khalidi point out: "The Baker scheme proposed a process of exasperating complexity and indirectness..." and the Palestinians "... immediately perceived in this ludicrously convoluted plan the outlines of crucial issues of substance, such as the status of Jerusalem and the issue of Palestinians outside the occupied territories" [298].

With the Baker initiative at an impasse by the end of 1989 (due to Israeli reluctance to agree to its formula), American-Israeli relations began to deteriorate. In early March, Baker applied indirect pressure on Shamir by announcing he favoured cuts in U.S. aid to Israel and Egypt to make funds available to countries in Eastern and Central Europe [299].

Baker's inability to make progress on the negotiations was partly due to the views of the Middle East advisory staff just below the top level[300]. Some of them had participated in the drafting of a report by the pro-Israel think tank, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Building for Peace" advocated a gradualist approach. It urged a slow "ripening process" involving confidence-building moves by Palestinians and Israelis that would ultimately build a foundation for direct negotiations[301]. This

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[297] Baker asserted that Shamir's plan was the only game in town. Christison, *op. cit.* : p. 43.
[298] Joe Stork and Rashid Khalidi, "Washington's Game Plan in the Middle East", *Middle East Report* (20), n° 3/4, May/August 1990, pp. 10-1.
[299] Taylor, *op. cit.* : p. 109.
[300] Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, and National Security Council Middle East specialist Richard Haass played an important role in defining Middle East policy. See Taylor,*op. cit.* : p. 107; Khalidi and Stork, *op. cit.* : p. 9 and Steve Niva, "The Bush Team",*Middle East Report* (19), n° 3, May/June 1989: p. 31.
[301] One of the authors, Alfonso Chardy affirmed that the content of the report is reflected in the Baker Approach; Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 333.

approach obviously met Shamir's preferences for delaying negotiations and immobilise rather than facilitate any movement towards a political settlement.

The United States also did not fully exploit the dialogue with the PLO. Only five meetings were held during the first eight months of the dialogue, and for some capital issues - for instance, the form of Palestinian representation in the negotiations and which Palestinians were to take part in the elections proposed by Israel - the United States used Egypt as an intermediary with the PLO, thus preempting a confrontation with Israelis or pro-Israeli Congress members[302]. Furthermore, on June 20, President Bush announced the suspension of the American dialogue with the PLO on the grounds that Arafat had not specifically condemned the May 30 raid by the Palestine Liberation Front on Tel Aviv beaches. Bush, himself under pressure from Congress and the pro-Israeli lobby, argued that Arafat's refusal to condemn the act was a violation of his pledge to renounce terrorism.

The Bush administration's lack of resolve to force a solution of the Palestinian problem coupled with the hopelessness of the Palestinians living in the occupied territories, forced Arafat to choose a new alignment. As he came under increasing pressure to abandon the peace process, Arafat aligned himself with Saddam Hussein who had emerged as a visible threat to Israel [303].

Soon after the war against Iraq came to an end, Baker and President Bush made it clear that an Arab-Israeli settlement was near the top of their diplomatic agenda[304]. The United States launched a diplomatic initiative of a skill and intensity that had not been seen since the Carter administration. The United States emerged from the conflict as the unchallenged, pre-eminent external power in the Middle East; many Arab states including Syria together with Israel were now tacit allies of the United States; finally, support for the Palestinian cause waned in many Arab capitals

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[302] Christison, *op. cit.* : p. 44.

[303] Arafat's relationship to S. Hussein dates back to the start of the Iran-Iraq war. Arafat felt isolated since Egypt had made peace with Israel and relations with Iran and Syria remained tense.

[304] In his address to the U.N. in October 1, 1990, Bush said that if Iraq withdrew from Kuwait, he believed that there "may be opportunities ... for all states and the peoples of the region to settle the conflicts that divide the Arabs from Israel" (a rather evasive formulation since Bush did not use the words "Palestine" or "Palestinians"). He reiterated his commitment in his address to Congress on March 6, 1991 when he declared that: "A comprehensive peace must be grounded in resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of territory for peace. This principle must be elaborated to provide for Israel's security and recognition , and at the same time for legitimate Palestinian political rights"; Bush quoted in Robert E. Hunter, "U.S. Policy Toward the Middle East After Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait", in R. O. Freedman (ed.), *The Middle East After Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait* (Gainesville, Fl.: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 68, and in Heikal, *op. cit.* : p. 405.

and Palestinian interests suffered a significant setback as a consequence of a new intensity and openness in relations between Arab states and the United States [305].

The Bush administration resumed discussion of an international conference. The parties invited were Israel, Syria, Lebanon and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Given the PLO's weakened position. Arafat was forced to accept that no member of the PLO would be included in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation for peace talks with Israel [306]. Israeli demands meant in effect that the conference would be chaired by the United States, not the U.N., along with a less vocal Soviet Union; that the conference would be largely symbolic without any binding power and that it would set the stage for separate, bilateral talks between Israel and individual Arab states [307]. On the opening session of the Madrid conference, on October 30, 1991 Prime Minister Shamir reiterated his rejection of the principle of land for peace and of demands for a halt to settlement construction.

Before the Gulf War Bush had expressed his opposition to Israeli settlement expansion. In May 1991 Shamir's government asked Washington to guarantee loans of $10 billion to pay costs arising from the influx of Soviet Jews. In September the Bush administration decided to defer Israel's request [308]. This stand effectively discredited the Likud government, thus helping to bring about a Labour victory [309].

The Washington talks, consisting of several rounds of talks, did not produce any major breakthrough in the Palestinian-Israeli track. Moreover, the Israeli campaign overlapped with the primaries of the U.S. presidential election. Israeli delegates in Washington were more cautious than ever. The American team, on the other hand, did not want to alienate further the Jewish constituency during the election period.

The victory of the Labour party in Israel (with Yitzhak Rabin as Prime Minister and S. Peres as Foreign Minister) immediately eased the tensions in the U.S.-Israeli

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[305] See Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 325-8.

[306] The Israelis had to be assured that they were not obliged to negotiate with anyone they considered unacceptable. This was partly offset by the principle laid by the American negotiators that only Palestinians could choose their delegation members, that they were not subject to veto from anyone. In practice, Palestinians were able to circumvent these restrictions by attaching a "steering committee" to the Palestinian delegation, composed of people with links to the PLO, like Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi. With the help of Amman, they also included a Palestinian Jordanian with family roots in East Jerusalem. See Heikal, *op. cit.* : p. 407.

[307] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 322.

[308] The issue eventually was resolved in Israel's favour on 11 August 1992 when President Bush considered that Rabin had done enough to qualify for loan guarantees, and passed a recommendation to Congress. Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 311; see also Heikal, *op. cit.* : p. 423.

[309] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 311; Heikal, *op. cit.* : p. 423.

relationship. When Rabin visited the United States in August, President Bush signalled the beginning of a new period and highlighted the close friendship between the two countries and the strategic importance of Israel. He affirmed that he was ready to move forward with military cooperation between the two countries and asserted Washington's traditional policy of assuring Israel's qualitative military edge over its Arab neighbours[310].

When the Clinton administration took office, hopes increased of developments in the negotiations as the new Israeli government seemed willing to trade at least some land for peace. However, as months passed, both Israel and the PLO were growing weary of the unproductive official talks. By the eighth round of Washington talks in December 1992, Israeli officials no longer pretended to be negotiating with a Palestinian delegation unconnected to the PLO [311].

Heikal affirms that the deadlock in the talks produced attempts to bypass it. "Apart from Washington, numerous other lines of contact were open ... . No fewer than nine different channels ran through Cairo, where aides to President Mubarak were highly active in arranging meetings"[312]. The most productive of all came to be the "Oslo Link".

The Oslo agreements constituted the biggest breakthrough in Middle East negotiations since Sadat made peace with Israel in 1979. The agreement was arranged in two parts. Part one was a plan for Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. It set a period of four months for Israel to withdraw its military forces and occupation administration from Gaza Strip and the town of Jericho. The withdrawal marked the start of a five year transitional period. It was established that by the end of the second year negotiations were to start on final status[313]. The second part of the declaration consisted of an agreement on mutual recognition and ending the state of war between Israel and the PLO.

The agreement although not entirely sanctioned, received the support of most Arab leaders (with the exception of the Syrian President Assad) and of the population of the occupied territories. The PLO executive committee was divided and some members were angered by the concessions Arafat had made without consulting them. In fact, the agreement deferred the Palestinians' aspirations to an independent state

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[310] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 332.
[311] Heikal, *op. cit.* : p. 433. The Israel official policy still banned contacts with the PLO.
[312] *Ibid.* .
[313] For the content of the agreement see Louise Lief et al., "Israel and the PLO: A New Beginning",*U.S. News and World Report*, September 13, 1993: pp. 24-5 and Heikal, *op. cit.* : pp. 453-4.

[314] and did not satisfy their desire to have East Jerusalem as their capital. The accord also failed to address the question of frontiers and settlements and dealt with the refugee question in a vague way.

4.3.7. Clinton and the Endorsement of Israeli Aims

In the Middle East, the Clinton administration during the first term of office concentrated its diplomatic efforts on the Syrian track, tried to build up the Palestinian Authority (PA) by mobilising funds for it and intervened directly whenever serious crises, likely to jeopardise the peace process, erupted.

The most conspicuous characteristic of the Clinton administration is the fact that it has in fact fully endorsed Israeli pretensions and has not made use of its guarantor rights over the peace process. Ever since the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP), Washington has acted as if it were not a co-sponsor of the peace process. The reality is that the US no longer pursues a distinctive policy on the Arab - Israeli conflict. Most of the times it simply endorses Israel's policies. Under Clinton, the U.S. has given up the defence of certain core issues of the past half-century and declared that a final solution is up to the parties themselves. Even the once strong condemnation of settlements as illegal has been abandoned. Settlement construction and extension are considered natural activities.

Since the Declaration of Principles was signed almost 50,000 more Israelis live in the occupied territories [315] . Settlement activity continues particularly in East Jerusalem, where the Jewish population has increased by 40,000 to 160,000 since 1990 [316] .The Israeli government has created other problems for the Palestine National Authority by imposing collective punishment, closing down Gaza and the West Bank, with or without reason, and by delaying deployment from Hebron. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seems even more intent on delaying the peace

[314] Heikal says that: "The effect of the Oslo agreement had been to cancel the state[provided for in the 1988 Tunis declaration], by accepting something inferior", *op. cit.* : p. 469.
[315] The number of settlers grew from 96,000 to 145,000. Donald Neff, "Netanyahu Gets the Royal Treatment in Washington", *Middle East International*, n° 530, 19 July 1996: p. 5.
[316] Marc Safman, "No Peace in Jerusalem", Council for the National Interest (electronic file transfer).

process: not only has he "unfrozen" settlement building in the West Bank and Gaza, he has also renegotiated the Oslo deal on the question of Hebron [317].

In effect, Israeli relations with the Clinton administration are the best that Israel ever had with any administration and political coordination on all possible issues between Jerusalem and Washington reached its peak under Clinton. The President made it clear that it would treat Israel more favourably that it would the Palestinians. Martin Indyk, who in May 1993 spelled out the administration's Middle East doctrine, asserted that the continuation of the U.S. role of full partner in the peace process would "involve working with Israel, not against it" [318]. Washington thus refused to exert any pressure on Israel. The U.S. endorsement of Israel's policies is to a large extent a function of domestic and electoral advantages: Zionists contributed 60 per cent of Clinton's campaign funds and 80 per cent of their votes in 1992 [319]. Washington's embrace of Israel has resulted in the continuing deterioration of the peace process and of the political climate in the Middle East.

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[317] Graham Usher, "Dark Channels", *Middle East International*, n° 533, 6 September 1996: pp. 6-7.

[318] John Law, "Indyk Points the Way for Clinton", *Middle East International*, n° 452, 11 June 1993: p. 4.

[319] See the list of Clinton's pledges to Israel made during the three-day visit of former Prime Minister Shimon Peres to the United States: Donald Neff, "Clinton's Total Commitment to Israel", *Middle East International*, n° 525, 10 May 1996: p. 4.

5. U.S. Allies in the Middle East

5.1. The Recruitment of Regional Partners

5.1.1. The American Network of Relationships

In the post World War II era, American interest in the Middle East developed gradually. The most important stimulus to U.S. involvement in the area was the activity of the Soviet Union. Early efforts to co-opt regional partners to assist the United States in containing Soviet moves in the area translated in Truman's and Eisenhower's attempts to build an American-sponsored Middle East alliance system.

Although these efforts failed, the United States was able to secure some strategically located partners. Turkey was the first country to develop a close relationship with Washington, since, together with Greece, it was the object of the 1947 Truman Doctrine. It later became a member of the short-lived Baghdad Pact, but its special position in the American security system derives from the fact that it has been the only NATO ally in the Middle East. Turkey's collaboration in the Gulf War, in pursuit of the American defined aims, enhanced its standing as a reliable ally.

Iran was the country where the United States first intervened directly. John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen Dulles (director of the CIA) orchestrated the covert operation that ousted Mossadegh and returned the Shah to power. Iran became a major recipient of American aid and, until the fall of the Shah, functioned effectively as an American proxy. Within the framework of the Nixon Doctrine, Washington provided it with enormous quantities of American weapons and Teheran acted to further American interests.

Taylor rightly points out that the crumbling of this relationship, in the wake of the 1979/80 Islamic revolution in Iran, epitomizes "... a globally oriented surrogate policy reduced to shambles by Washington's inability or unwillingness to take a country's internal dynamics into account as part of a regional approach" [320].

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[320] Taylor, *op. cit.* : p. 115.

Other countries occupy a secondary position in the American surrogate system. Morocco and Oman have special agreements with Washington providing access to military and naval facilities. Both countries are strategically located and consider their relationship with the United States important for their national security. Extended cooperation with the Moroccan monarch has turned thatMaghreb country into a virtual U.S. ally. The United States also has good relations with Tunisia and the Gulf Sheikdoms [321]. Following the Gulf War Arab Gulf states have dramatically developed their security ties with the United States. This section will focus on two American Middle Eastern partners whose association with the United States has been characterised by long-standing shared interests and resilient endurance: Israel by virtue of its "special relationship" and Saudi Arabia due to the importance of its oil resources.

5.1.2. Israel

The United States-Israeli relationship is indeed unique and differs from the standard United States foreign relations. It is based on perceived ideological, emotional and historical affinities and is reinforced by a shared empathy between the American and Israeli peoples [322]. It explains why "the magnitude of U.S. support for Israel - militarily, politically, economically, and diplomatically goes beyond any traditional relationship between states in the international system" [323].

American commitment to Israel's survival, security and well-being has been strengthened over time and has translated into impressive amounts of aid. From 1949 until 1996, the United States has provided over $65 billion in economic and military aid to Israel (in loans and grants) [324]. Government aid between 1979 and 1983 averaged about $2.7 billion a year, but from 1986 on it increased to about $3 billion a year [325].

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[321] *Id.* : p. 119.
[322] B. Reich, "Reassessing the United States-Israeli Special Relationship", *Israeli Affairs* (1), n° 1, Autumn 1994: p. 65; Reich, *The U.S. and Israel* : pp. 65-8.
[323] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 330.
[324] S. L. Twing, "A Comprehensive Guide to U.S. Aid to Israel", *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (XIV), n° 8, April 1996: p. 7-49.
[325] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 255. Twing estimates that the total U.S. aid to Israel (in loans and grants) for FY96 amounts to $5.5 billion: *op. cit.* p. 49.

Israel's strategic value became a widespread notion following the 1967 War, when policymakers began to conceive of Israel as an instrument of American power, a strategic asset to U.S. regional interests. After the 1970 Jordan crisis, Kissinger became instrumental in propagating the idea that Israel constituted a bulwark protecting pro-American regimes from domestic insurrection. During the Nixon tenure, U.S. arms transfers grew significantly and the United States provided the Jewish state with absolute diplomatic and political support, during and after the 1973 War. It was only during the Reagan Administration that the concept of strategic cooperation between the two states became institutionalised.

In reality, the American commitment to Israel has not translated into a legally binding document joining the two states in a formal alliance. Hence frequent references of the president and political leaders to Israel as an ally do not imply a legal commitment to take up arms on its behalf[326]. U.S. commitment to the survival of the Israeli state has been partly codified in specific documents associated with the 1975 Egyptian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement (Sinai II), the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty process (particularly the accompanying U.S.-Israel letters and memoranda)[327], the 1981 (reconfirmed on April 1988) U.S.-Israeli Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation. This last document in particular "represented a major move of American involvement on Israel's side" [328]. "Strategic cooperation" included joint military exercises in the Mediterranean; joint readiness activities; cooperation in research and development, and in defence trade; the storage of medical supplies in Israel for possible use by American forces assigned to the Middle East in an emergency, and a free trade agreement [329].

Despite the lack of a mutual security treaty or of a formal alliance system, the American commitment on behalf of Israel is indeed remarkable. Many analysts stressed the benefits of this relationship by arguing that Israel acted as a bulwark against Soviet penetration, that it has maintained regional stability through its military power and that, for these same reasons, it ensured the survival of pro-American Arab regimes [330].

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[326] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 261.
[327] Reich, "Reassessing ...": p. 71. They addressed possible Soviet military threats.
[328] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 262.
[329] S. Green states that from 1981 "the military-industrial complexes of the two countries have been effectively merged, and the bases have been laid for Israel's becoming the third most advanced ... military power on earth. No other U.S. military alliance, including those with NATO countries, is as strong or as broad based" : *Living by the Sword* : p. 225.
[330] Rubenberg, *op. cit.* : p. 2.

It seems clear, however, that the Israeli contribution to the advancement of American interests in the Middle East has been far less positive than is widely acknowledged. In fact, Israel has rather constituted a liability to American interests in the region.

In reality, Soviet penetration in the area was to a great extent a result of the policies pursued by the Israeli state. As Rubenberg points out: "each increment of growth in Soviet influence in the region has been directly related to Israeli policies, beginning with Israel's large-scale, unprovoked attack on Gaza in February 1955, after which Nasser turned to the Soviet Union for arms" [331]. The Soviets expanded their presence in Egypt after the Israeli invasion of that territory in 1967; they intensified their involvement during Israel's escalation of post-war hostilities along the Suez Canal; they consolidated co-operative relationships with other Arab states after the 1967 and 1973 wars and the subsequent radicalisation of Israeli actions. The 1982 invasion of Lebanon was the last instance of Israeli aggression against her neighbours, the outcome of which was characterised by: an upsurge of Soviet power and of rejectionist Arab states such as Syria, and the decline in U.S. influence and prestige in the Middle East [332].

The U.S.-Israeli association has been negatively viewed by the Arab states, thus impeding Washington's ability to achieve stable and constructive relationships with the Arab states. Traditional pro-American regimes like Jordan and Saudi Arabia have mostly refrained from openly allying themselves with the United States, for fear of domestic criticism [333].

In the wake of the 1973 War, the Saudis punished the United States for its support of Israel by raising oil prices and cutting production; they distanced themselves from the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and, in 1981, despite their fear of the Soviet Union, declined to join in the Reagan Administration's proposed "strategic consensus".

It would be equally inaccurate to state that Israel furthered American interests by protecting conservative Arab regimes from domestic insurrection. One can point to the fact that Israel has consistently mobilised its lobby in the American Congress to

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[331] *Id.* : p. 7.
[332] *Ibid.* : p. 7.
[333] The Gulf War was an exception, as far as Saudi Arabia is concerned.

defeat Jordan and Saudi requests for arms, even when they proved crucial for regional stability [334].

Israel's inability to protect these regimes and to enhance the American position was played out during the 1991 Gulf War. The United States asked Israel to keep a low profile in order to avoid splitting the Arab anti-Iraq coalition, and when President Bush asked that Israel not respond to the Iraqi Scud attacks Israel complied [335]. The administration preferred to enlist other regional states, such as Turkey and Egypt (and even Syria), for both military forces and logistical support.

In the post-Gulf and post-Cold War era, Israel will retain its centrality in American policy, due not so much to strategic reasons but to the four decades of political and cultural ties [336]. With the demise of the Soviet bloc, some analysts put forth the view that Israel has less to offer as a strategic ally than others. Hence, they argued, the intensity of the American commitment to Israel will undergo some kind of change. Israel will be expected to tackle difficult issues concerning its security and economic domestic situation. A co-operative attitude to solving the Arab-Israeli dispute would greatly enhance the Israeli case in the United States, in an era when the American commitment to Israel is questioned by some and when economic stringency dictates restraint in foreign aid.

That prospect did not materialise . In effect, Israeli relations with the Clinton administration are the best that Israel has ever had with any administration and political co-ordination on all possible issues between Tel Aviv and Washington reached its peak under Clinton.

5.1.3. Saudi Arabia

The United States and Saudi Arabia have developed a mutually beneficial relationship, based on a primary concern: oil. Interests in this commodity took a unique form during World War II, when the British seemed about to get a bigger share of the oil riches. In order to provide needed financial assistance to the Saudi

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[334] The decision by President Bush to sell 72 F-15s to Saudi Arabia in 1992 is a case in point. Prime Minister Rabin opposed the sale alleging that it would adversely affect Israel's security.
[335] Bernard Lewis, "Rethinking the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs* (71), nº 4, Fall 1992: pp. 110-1.
[336] P. Marr, "Strategies for an Era of Uncertainty: The U.S. Policy Agenda", in P.Marr and W. Lewis, *op. cit.* : p. 228.

government (and thus secure a predominant position for American oil companies), President Roosevelt issued a directive to the Lend-Lease administration in which he stated that "in order to enable you to arrange Lend-Lease aid to the government of Saudi Arabia, I hereby find that the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States" [337]. American financial and military assistance started to flow lavishly in the direction of the Saudi kingdom.

The U.S.-Saudi relationship developed on the basis of a mutuality of interests, both political and economic. American technology, management, equipment and expertise were seen as requisites for modernising Saudi economy, society and the defence apparatus. The Saudis and the Americans also converged in maintaining regional stability by checking the spread of communist and radical nationalist influences in the Middle East. The bottom line was that the Saudis would expand their oil output to meet the needs of the capitalist world and sell such oil at a reasonable price in exchange for American protection and assistance[338]. The 1973-4 oil embargo constituted a brief exception to this arrangement.

In the wake of the embargo, the United States sought to draw Saudi Arabia into its political and economic orbit in order to create disincentives to future oil embargoes. For this purpose a joint economic commission was created with Saudi Arabia in June 1974. The new Saudi-American interdependence translated into a 1000 percent increase in U.S.-Saudi trade between 1972 and 1976[339]. The 1974 agreement enabled the United States to play a major role in a wide variety of Saudi economic, military, and social affairs, such as the creation of a joint commission on economic cooperation to promote programmes on industrialisation, trade, manpower training, agriculture, and science and technology, the formation of an American-Saudi industrial development council, mutual cooperation in the field of finance and the transfer of technical and advisory services [340].

One of the most significant areas of cooperation and trade was the military sector. From the mid 1970s on Saudi Arabia embarked on an ambitious programme of military preparedness and modernisation. Because the Americans were, among all foreign powers, more engaged in Saudi oil production and other technological innovations, the Saudis relied on America as a principal provider of arms and builder of its military facilities. This proved to be a sensitive matter, where Saudi perceptions

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[337] Alnasrawi, "U.S. Foreign Policy": p. 60.
[338] *Id.* : p. 67.
[339] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 226.

of its defence needs and American (i.e. Congressional) views about the regional balance of power clashed [341].

The controversy arose in the Carter and Reagan Administrations. In 1978, president Carter announced a "package" arms sale for the Middle East (Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia) that included sixty F-15s - the most advanced fighter plane in the United States arsenal - to Saudi Arabia. The proposed sale was seen as an American incentive to Saudi Arabia in order to draw it into the Camp David negotiations and as a reward to a friendly regime. The initiative met with strong opposition from pro-Israeli forces in Congress, on the ground that the military equipment would destabilise the Arab-Israeli balance of power and that it represented a real threat to the special relationship between Israel and the United States.

In 1981, the Reagan Administration announced the sale of five AWACS to Saudi Arabia. The sale of these radar-equipped planes was decided in the context of the destabilisation in the Persian Gulf provoked by revolutionary Iran, whose regime was hostile to Saudi Arabia on account of its monarchical nature and because the Saudi kingdom was financially supporting Iraq in its war with Iran. Reagan had indeed pledged to defend Saudi Arabia against internal and external threats: "We will not permit Saudi Arabia to be an Iran ..." [342]. It was a complement of the Carter Doctrine.

The sale was approved following the president's personal intervention with a number of senators [343]. The test of wills over the AWACS was again repeated in 1986 and 1988. Frustrated with Congressional opposition and in an urgent need to upgrade its air defence system by acquiring aircraft and other military equipment, Saudi Arabia turned to Britain and signed a major arms agreement with that country [344].

For both countries the maintenance of the security relationship is of vital importance, but each party had different concerns. The Saudis preferred a highly visible U.S. assistance in the form of sales of sophisticated weapons, while rejecting American requests for a larger military presence. They resent being treated with less deference than Egypt and Israel, both U.S. allies whose needs are readily taken into account. The United States, for its part, has had difficulties in responding to Saudi requests due largely to domestic constraints. The reluctance in satisfying Saudi

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[340] Alnasrawi, *op. cit.* : p. 68.
[341] See Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 259-60.
[342] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 121. See also pp. 98-122.
[343] The passage of the arms authorisation had a price: all sorts of restrictions were placed on the use of the AWACS planes; the F-15s were sold smaller than standard fuel tanks and denuded of bomb racks.
[344] Lenczowski, *op. cit.* : p. 260.

demands is partly rooted in the impression that the Kingdom can not be considered a reliable ally. The oil embargo, pro-Arab attitudes and a militant anti-Israeli stance have clouded popular perceptions of Saudi Arabia [345].

Another area of disagreement in the U.S.-Saudi relationship had to do with the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although the Palestinian issue has not been necessarily the most important problem in bilateral U.S.-Saudi relations, and although the Saudi attitude towards the Palestinians in general, and the PLO in particular, is ambivalent (but not unsympathetic), it certainly constitutes a bone of contention. Common membership in the Arab *umma* and the Saudi belief that the greatest threat to regional instability is the unresolved Palestinian question, make up for the salience of this issue [346].

The United States was dismayed by Saudi actions in the wake of the Camp David accords. Saudi leaders acquiesced in joining in the total embargo of Egypt, decided at the Baghdad meeting in late March 1979. They were disappointed by the lack of will or ability of the United States to carry through the Camp David process to anything meaningful beyond the Egyptian-Israeli settlement [347].

The 1990-1 Gulf crisis dramatically altered the setting of the U.S. Saudi relationship. For the first time, Riyadh invited American troops to Saudi Arabia to defend the Kingdom. This country had traditionally insisted on an "over the horizon" U.S. presence with no guarantee that in a crisis it would agree to grant access. In the wake of the 1991 War, Saudi Arabia became dependent on the American commitment to its defence. Riyadh decided to do the previously unthinkable - depend on bilateral security arrangements with the United States. A heightened though discrete American presence is ensured by arrangements forprepositioning military equipment and for joint exercises and assistance in training to double the size of the Saudi army[348]. Riyadh has also became the biggest arms importer of the region: between 1991 and 1993, Saudi Arabia bought $24,7 billion worth of U.S. armament, which include the most advanced conventional weapons [349].

The Kingdom intends to become the newAmerican surrogate in the Gulf and is now more willing to do America's bidding even at the price of strained relations with

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[345] Quandt, *Saudi Arabia* : pp. 142-3.
[346] Tillman, *op. cit.* : p. 91.
[347] *Id.* : pp. 111-2.
[348] Efforts to preposition equipment for a "rapid reaction" armoured brigade have been resisted by Saudi authorities on the grounds that the presence of U.S. defence forces aroused popular opposition; see Donald Neff, "Bombing in Riyadh", *Middle East International*, n° 513, 17 November 1995: p. 11.

its Arab allies [350]. There is now a regular consultation between Riyadh and Washington, particularly on oil policy. Washington's predominance is highlighted by the fact that Saudi Arabia has repeatedly informed Washington on proposals it was going to make within OPEC.

5.2. Egypt and Jordan: Their Standing in the U.S. Policy in the Middle East

5.2.1. The United States and Egypt: A Wavering Relationship

Egypt's entry in the American sphere of influence constitutes a success story in the annals of U.S. Middle Eastern relations. During the 1967 WarNasser severed diplomatic relations with the United States. Sadat's accession to the presidency brought about a noticeable improvement in Washington-Cairo relations. Within four to five years, Egypt developed special relations with the United States. Since 1978, the United States has become a "partner" in Egyptian-Israeli relations, the major supplier of arms, and the primary donor of economic assistance to Egypt.

The 1973 War was the turning point in U.S.-Egyptian relations.Sadat had for long mistrusted the Soviets and felt frustrated over their inability to provide enough arms for Egypt to defeat Israel in the 1967 and 1973 wars. WhenSadat took office he signalled to Washington his willingness to end the Soviet military presence in Egypt and of co-operating with the United States in order to negotiate some kind of peaceful settlement with Israel. Only after the Yom Kippur War did Kissinger pay heed to Sadat's intentions and engaged in intense "shuttle diplomacy" which brought about two disengagement agreements between Egypt and Israel.

Sadat boldly turned Egypt to the United States with political and economic objectives in mind. He wanted to secure U.S. support in the peace negotiations with Israel, for he thought that only that superpower was able to deliver such a result. He intended to recover Sinai due to its economic importance (oil and the Suez Canal) and its strategic value as a buffer zone with Israel. He also hoped to obtain U.S.

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[349] *Ibid.* .

[350] Martin Indyk, "Watershed in the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs* (71), n°1, America and the World 1991/2: p. 78.

military aid, economic assistance, technology, and investment to promote economic growth [351].

In the wake of the October war, the Egyptians signed an agreement with Washington that guaranteed American investment in Egypt and permitted American banks to open branches in the Republic. All this was part of the "open door" (*infitah*) economic policy which was designed to create conditions attractive to foreign investment capital. Economic liberalisation was the other side of the coin ofSadat's post-1973 foreign policy: it intended to demonstrate to the Western world and to conservative Arab regimes that the Nasserist revolutionary zeal was over.

This new Egyptian setting succeeded in producing lavish capital inflows not only from the United States and other industrialised countries, but also from the I.M.F. (International Monetary Fund) and Arab oil producers. From 1973 to 1976, Egypt received from Washington $1.6 billion; from 1975 to 1979 the United States increased its level of aid to compensate for the reduction in budgetary support granted by Persian Gulf states. American aid, funnelled mainly through the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) mounted from $370 million to $950 million [352].

American support to Egypt increased with the advent of the Carter Administration. Carter materialised the promise of military aid: he furnished Egypt with its first F-5Es and other offensive weapons, despite strong congressional opposition. By the time Sadat engaged in the Camp David meetings, Egypt's purchases of American weapons amounted to $937 million [353].

Camp David was the cornerstone of the political association between the two countries and it was largely the result of the unique personal working relationship established between Carter and Sadat. The accords addressed Egyptian requirements: they compensated Egypt for losses resulting from the Arab economic boycott and re-equipping the Egyptian military with large number of U.S. armoured personnel carriers, self-propelled artillery, anti-aircraft missiles, advanced combat aircraft and ground-to-ground missiles, with deliveries of weapons linked to the progresses registered in carrying out the Camp David accords. Within weeks of the peace treaty Cairo and Washington signed a comprehensive military agreement which

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[351] W. B. Quandt, *The United States and Egypt* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1990: p. 14; A. E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", in Bahgat Korany and A. E. H. Dessouki, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States* (Boulder Colo.: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 166-7.

[352] Paul Jabber, "Egypt's Crisis, America's Dilemma", *Foreign Affairs* (64), n° 5, Summer 1986: pp. 965-6.

provided for the delivery of $2 billion worth of American weapons to Egypt, for co-production of American arms in Egypt, and the use of military facilities in that country by American armed forces [354].

With Sadat's assassination in October 1981, Egypt's influence in Washington declined. On the other hand, the new American president, R. Reagan had different priorities from those of his predecessor. The Egyptian president, H.Mubarak did not hold Sadat's "American-centric" [355] worldview, but believed instead that Cairo needed to open its channels to a multiplicity of power centres, in particular, to restore Egypt's relations with the Arab world. In doing so, it needed to distance itself from its American patron and to erase the negative image created by its compliance with Israeli demands in the Camp David accords.

The 1980s were marked by a series of strains in the U.S.-Egyptian relationship. The 1982 invasion of Lebanon caused a wave of anti-American sentiment in Egypt since the public perception was that the United States had condoned the Israeli action. Responding to domestic outrage,Mubarak withdrew its ambassador from Tel Aviv and froze further normalisation of Egyptian-Israeli relations. This caused unease in Washington and in the next four years, despite American pressure for Mubarak to return to the spirit of the Camp David accords, the Egyptian president refused to do so.

The relationship was again severely tested by the events of the 1985Achille Lauro affair and the interception of an Egyptian plane by U.S. military planes[356]. The widespread official and popular condemnation of this incident in Egypt left a lingering feeling of resentment.

One important source of Egypt's frustration had to do with Reagan's failure to follow through on Camp David commitments. Egyptians realised that not only had Washington downgraded the peace process and gave up the role of an "honest broker", it had also become an unstinting supporter of Israeli policies and an uncritical adherent of some of the Israeli leader's substantive ideas [357]. Egypt's role in any

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[353] Dilip Hiro, *Inside the Middle East* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 305.
[354] *Id.* : pp. 306-7.
[355] Dessouki, *op. cit.* : p. 167.
[356] The italian cruise ship was seized on October 7, 1985, off the coast of Egypt by armed Palestinians from the Palestine Liberation Front. While off the coast, the gunmen killed an American, Leon Klinghoffer. The Egyptian authorities took custody of the hijackers and sent them to Tunis to be put on trial by the PLO. While on flight, the Egyptian plane was intercepted by American F-14 fighters over the Mediterranean and forced to land at a NATO air base in Sicily. See Quandt, *op. cit.* : pp. 21-2.
[357] Hermann F. Eilts, "The United States and Egypt", in *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David* , (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1988), p. 121.

resumed peace process came to be seen as secondary and at best supportive of Jordan, which was targeted by Washington to represent the Palestinians. Egypt resented American's intentions of side-stepping the issue of Palestinian representation since it saw Cairo's future role in the Arab world linked to achieving an acceptable Palestinian settlement and to active participation in the process [358].

Shultz's readiness to open an official dialogue in 1988 encouraged the Egyptians to work closely with the PLO to help Arafat move toward meeting American conditions. Having patched up its ties to the PLO, Cairo emerged in the late 1980s as a player in the Arab-Israeli game once again. Thus, when Reagan left office bilateral U.S.-Egyptian relations were on a better footing.

Egypt's close alignment with President Bush's anti-Iraq coalition during the Gulf crisis has contributed greatly to the overall strengthening of the relationship. Mubarak "short-circuited" Arab diplomacy in favour of a U.S. military intervention and sent 35,000 Egyptian troops (the second largest contingent) to the battlefield[359]. This won Cairo the favour not only of the petro-monarchies but of the American patron: in the Fall of 1990, Washington gave Egypt over $10 billion in aid including forgiveness of outstanding military debt ($7.1 billion) plus cash and new military hardware [360].

Cairo's close cooperation with Washington in trying to pave the way for the opening of Israeli-Palestinian talks and to the Madrid Peace Conference had once again given it a role as a peace broker. Egypt also worked hard to bring Syria into the framework of peace negotiations and to find a reasonable formula for Palestinian representation. Egypt's role in the formal peace talks was necessarily limited: it participated in the multilateral talks, especially on arms control. It has played a more efficient role in serving as a channel for Israeli messages to other Arab leaders, as an inducer for the Arab parties to go to the negotiation table and as a partisan of moderation.

U.S.-Egyptian relations will, however, continue to depend on much more than cooperation in the peace process. It was Egypt's willingness to move boldly in a Middle East peaceful settlement that gave it a privileged place in American foreign policy. Paradoxically, Egypt has also become a hostage of that process: if no

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[358] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 31.

[359] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Egypt, Syria and the Arab State System in the New World Order", in Haifaa A. Jawad (ed.), *The Middle East in the New World Order* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 125.

[360] David Garnham, "Explaining Middle Eastern Alignments During the Gulf War", *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* (13), n° 3, September 1991: p. 78.

substantial movement in the negotiations is registered, the Egyptian-Israeli cornerstore for regional stability could begin to crumble. This would entail pressure from other Arab states and from its own Islamic movements to curtail its relationship with Israel. In that case, U.S.-Egyptian ties would also suffer. Such a course has been observed by Eilts who remarks that "whenever the Egyptian-Israeli link deteriorated for whatever reasons, U.S.-Egyptian ties were reflexively strained"[361]. In fact, bilateral U.S.-Egyptian ties should be "... seen as one side of a triangle, the other sides of which link the United States to Israel and Israel to Egypt"[362]. While in times of crisis Israel maintains its leverage over Washington, Cairo lacks a comparable capability. It is thus a vulnerable partner.

Other factors are likely to have a negative impact on the American-Egyptian relationship as well. Economic issues have become the dominant concern in the bilateral dialogue. Egypt has benefited from the second largest amount of aid provided by the United States to a foreign country[363]. About three-quarters of all American economic aid to Egypt has been provided through the Economic Support Fund (ESF), most of which has come in the form of grants. On the military assistance side, Washington has since 1979 provided $1.3 billion each year in Foreign Military Sales (FMS)[364]. Since fiscal year 1985 this aid has also been provided on a grant basis.

Years of avoiding the sort of structural reforms that other countries have undertaken, weakened the Egyptian economy. The economy stagnated during the 1980s, while external debt rose nearly 150 percent, from $21 billion to $50 billion. In 1991, with arrears to foreign creditors mounting Egypt, was forced to agree to a reform programme monitored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World

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[361] Eilts, *op. cit.* : p. 127.

[362] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 5. A recent case in point was Egypt's insistence that Israel sign the NuclearNon-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This stand caused considerable tension with Israeli leaders and the White House made the continuation of the existing level of aid to Egypt conditional on its signing the treaty (naturally without Israel's adherence). See Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, "Menacessur l'Egypte", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, n° 492, March 1995: p. 11; Jane Hunter, "Egypt and the Non-Proliferation Treaty", *Middle East International*, n° 497, 31 March 1995: pp. 17-18. Under intense U.S. pressure, Arab countries led by Egypt and Algeria on 11 May 1995 backed down from earlier attempts at boycotting the Treaty and withdrew on the last day a resolution condemning Israel for its nuclear programme: Jules Kagian, "Israel Exempt", *Middle East International*, n° 500, 26 May 1995: pp. 10-11.

[363] Between fiscal years 1974 and 1990 the United States provided about $17 billion in various form of economic aid and a total of $17.8 billion in military assistance. In fiscal year 1993, total U.S. assistance levels to Egypt were $815 million in Economic Support Fund grants. Public Law 480 food aid amounted to $50 million, down from $150 million annually in previous years. See Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 41 and United States Department of State, "Egypt", *Background Notes* (5), n° 7: p. 6.

[364] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 32, 36. In 1993, the level of military assistance to Egypt remained the same.

Bank[365]. The cancellation of foreign debts from bilateral creditors were conditioned on Egypt's complying with the international lending agencies' stipulations [366]. Egypt completed its IMF and World Bank programmes in March 1993 and a new three-year IMF Extended Fund Facility, concentrating on structural reforms, was approved by the IMF in September 1993.

The United States echoing the IMF has increasingly used aid as a direct leverage to get Egypt to reform its economy. The Republican Congress elected in 1994 questioned Egypt's value in a post-Cold War Middle East, where it no longer is considered a strategic asset in the struggle against Soviet influence[367]. Mr. Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stated in 1995 that the current level of financial aid to Egypt finds no current justification. So far the possibility of reducing current levels of aid to Egypt has not materialised [368].

In the United States a number of analysts and Congressmen have expressed doubts about the nature of Egypt's role in the U.S. Middle Eastern policy. The issue at stake is the domestic stability of the regime at a time when it is facing an irresistible build up of the fundamentalist forces. As the United States grapples with the phenomenon of "political Islam" in the Arab world, Egyptian officials have made a compelling case to U.S. policymakers and Congressmen that bolstering their economy and preventing extremists from taking advantage of the ongoing economic crisis will require a continuation of U.S. aid levels.

The predominant view in the Clinton administration, however, is that a friendly and stable Egypt remains vital to U.S. regional interests. Egypt provides critical air access to the Gulf; the Suez Canal is a vital strategic waterway, and Egypt's moderate policies are needed as a balance to emergent radicallslamist forces in the region [369].

One should conclude that "while both countries share strategic interests, they are no longer bound by a common strategic threat or a shared vision for the future"

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[365] Zelmys Dominguez, "Egypt: Its Role in the Postwar Middle East", *Revista de Africa y Medio Oriente* (4), n° 1, 1992: p. 6.

[366] See Stanley Reed, "The Battle for Egypt", *Foreign Affairs* (72), n° 4, September/October 1993: p. 95.

[367] Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 1.

[368] The foreign aid bill moving through Congress in October 1995 contemplated no cuts to Egypt: it remained at the $2,1 billion level; Donald Neff, "Congress and the Embassy", *Middle East International*, n° 512, 3 November 1995: p. 6.

[369] See Gregory L. Aftandilian, *Egypt's Bid for Arab Leadership* (NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), p. 79; P. Marr, "Egypt's Regional Role", *Strategic Forum*, n° 24, April 1995: p. 4.

[370]. Development of a common strategic vision is essential to bolster the U.S.-Egyptian relationship in the new era: the fight against extremism, Islamist or other, might as well provide the motive.

5.2.2. Jordan and the United States: Perseverance Against Adverse Odds

The U.S.-Jordanian relationship took shape in the midst of the 1956 crisis during which Nasserist and socialist forces threatened King Hussein's leadership. Within the framework of the Eisenhower Doctrine, units of the Sixth Fleet were ordered to the eastern Mediterranean and Hussein was assured an initial sum of $10 million in financial aid. Fortified by this support, the King was able to assert authority over his armed forces and dismiss the Nabulsi government. This event marked Jordan's entry in the American orbit.

During the 1958 crisis, in the wake of the Republican coup in Iraq, the United States intervened again to preserve Hussein's throne. Washington stepped up economic and military assistance to Amman. Between 1958 and 1965, American aid to Jordan, amounted to an average of $64 million a year[371]. Besides budget support, the United States contributed to the development of many sectors of the Jordanian economy. A less substantial military aid made it possible for Jordan to double the strength of its army to 45,000 men [372].

Congruence with American objectives was not a constant pattern of Jordanian policy. In the crisis that preceded the Six Day War, the King made peace withNasser, joined the Syro-Egyptian Defence Pact and placed his armed forces under Egyptian command. In the resulting debacle, Jordan lost East Jerusalem and the West Bank of the Jordan River. Jordan's stance in the war placed considerable strain on Jordan-American relations. However, King Hussein had not severed relations with Washington during the course of the war. Following the conflict, he decided not to turn to the Soviets to equip his armed forces. This regained his former special position with Washington: the American arms shipments were resumed in early 1968.

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[370] Marr, "Egypt's Growing Challenges", *Strategic Forum*, n° 4, August 1994: p. 1.
[371] Hiro, *op. cit.* : p. 320.
[372] Robert. W. Stookey, "Jordan's Relations with the United States", in A. Sinai and A. Pollack, *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the West Bank* (NY: American Academic Association for Peace in the Middle East, 1977): p. 163.

During the interwar period, King Hussein emerged as a moderate leader and worked vigorously to improve Arab relations with the United States. He also launched several diplomatic initiatives manifesting Jordan's willingness to recognise Israel in exchange for a return to the internationally recognised borders [373].

By the late summer of 1970 Jordan was in the throes of civil war, with Palestinian commandos threatening to take control of the country. The Nixon Administration acted swiftly to bolster the King's position. The Palestinians' repression brought down upon Hussein the condemnation of nearly all Arab states and the suspension of their financial subsidies. The United States stepped into the breach by resuming both economic and military aid on an enhanced scale.

Jordan-American relations came out unscathed during the October 1973 War due to Jordan's limited participation in the conflict. This won Jordan a dramatic improvement in economic and military aid. The growing assertiveness of Congress in foreign relations account for the new tensions that emerged in 1975 as Jordan tried to purchase from America a sorely needed air defence system, to be financed by Saudi Arabia. The sale of mobile Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to Jordan was vehemently protested on Capitol Hill. Pro-Israeli congressmen argued that the absence of an air defence had prevented Hussein's participation in the 1973 War. A deal was finally struck, but the use of the missiles was subject to multiple restrictions [374].

Throughout the 1970s Hussein encouraged Kissinger's peace initiatives but had only a marginal participation. The arrival of President Carter at the White House changed this picture, bringing Jordan back into play. The Camp David agreements called for Jordan's cooperation in talks on an interim period of autonomy for the Palestinians of the West Bank and in eventual negotiations about the West Bank's future status. However Jordan resisted U.S. pressures to join in the Egyptian-Israeli talks. Hussein repeatedly voiced his criticisms of the process by saying that it was "limited" and "doomed" to failure and that Israeli forces should withdraw from the occupied territories before he could join the negotiations[375]. The Jordanian monarch criticised the provisions of the accords relating to the West Bank and refused to assume the role of "protecting the Israelis" from the population of that area [376].

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[373] Hiro, *op. cit.* : p. 321.
[374] Spiegel, *op. cit.* : p. 303-4.
[375] Hiro, *op. cit.* : p. 325.
[376] A. E. H. Dessouki and Karen Aboul Kheir, "The Politics of Vulnerability and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Jordan", *op. cit.* : p. 229.

Reagan's Middle East policy disappointed Hussein, who grew increasingly frustrated at U.S. insensitivity to the realities of the regional situation. He blamed the Americans for their all-out support of Israeli policies in the occupied territories and in Lebanon. Reagan's speech on September 1, 1982, had broached the possibility of some form of association between the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan. The U.S. president tried to persuade the King to join in his peace plan but Hussein quickly concluded that there was no basis for developing a joint negotiating position with the PLO. Following Reagan's reelection, Jordan and the PLO tried to revive the September 1, 1982 initiative. By the time Hussein arrived in Washington in May 1985, the stage seemed to be set for the Reagan Administration's return to the peace-making game. However, the King realised that the Americans were not interested in carrying it through and that they had never been enthusiastic about the idea of dealing with a joint Jordanian-PLO delegation [377].

Reagan also failed in winning congressional support for a big new arms package to Jordan - something Reagan had promised the King in writing in December 1982. The package was part of a programmme to set up a Jordanian Logistics Force (J.L.F.) intended to assist in the Western defence of the Gulf. The administration's public abandonment of the programme added fuel to KingHussein's frustration with Washington. The stipulation that arms shipment be conditional on Jordanian acceptance of Camp David (among other conditions), led the King to suggest that Americans had a "double standard everywhere" and to accuse the United States of having "succumbed to Israeli dictates", as well as those of "AIPAC and Zionism"[378]. By the end of the 1980s Jordan's ability to withstand U.S. pressures and to maintain an independent behaviour diminished as Arab aid was affected by the fall in oil prices.

Jordan's reluctance to join the anti-Iraq coalition during the Gulf crisis came as a shock to those who knew it as the most pro-Western Arab state. In early 1991 the Bush Administration and Congress punished the King by suspending military and economic aid which amounted to $55 million. Also, Secretary of State James Baker's March 1991 trip to the Middle East pointedly omitted a stopover in Amman [379].

However, by late April King Hussein had succeeded in convincing the Bush Administration that hurting Jordan would adversely affect U.S. interests and that

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[377] Quandt, "U.S. Policy ...": p. 372.
[378] Aruri, "U.S. Policy ...": p. 111.
[379] Adam Garfinkle, "The Nine Lives of Hashemite Jordan", in R. B. Satloff (ed.), *The Politics of Change in the Middle East*, (Boulder Colo.: Westview Press/The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 100.

Jordan's role remained vital to the enforcement of the blockade against Iraq and to an Arab-Israeli settlement. Hussein's participation in peace diplomacy was aimed at gaining the financial and political support of the Western nations and Japan and of securing Washington's protection against prospective Israeli acts of hostility [380].

Jordan was invited to head the joint Jordanian-Palestinian team to the Madrid Peace Conference and to the Washington rounds of peace talks. King Hussein, like most Arab leaders, was astounded by the outcome of the Oslo meetings and dismayed at the concessions that the PLO had made. In this context Hussein decided to resume negotiations with Israel in view of a bilateral peace agreement. In July 1994, King Hussein and Rabin declared the state of war between their countries to be over. Hussein was thus able to insulate Jordan from the turmoil in the occupied territories, while ensuring that his country would henceforth be able "to become economically stronger and politically more united" [381].

The Jordan-Israeli peace treaty has aroused widespread domestic criticism. However, there was no alternative to making peace with Israel, and for Jordan to go its own way after the Palestinians opted for the Oslo accord. Close ties with Israel are a must, for strategic and economic reasons. As far as the official view is concerned, warmer relations with Tel Aviv have been crucial to reopening the gates to Washington[382].

In this vein, the King has since February 1995 set in motion a process of normalising relations with Israel. Domestic opposition leaders and Jordan's Arab neighbours have expressed concern that the government is dragging the country into an unprecedented security alliance with Israel[383]. This course naturally pleases the strongly disposed pro-Israeli Clinton Administration.

Jordan is now fully engaged in a process of reconciliation with the United States and is trying to restore its role as an American ally. The kingdom expects to reap the economic advantages of its peace treaty with Israel, and there would be a terrible backlash if the United States could not deliver on its pledges to help Jordan and persuade other countries to do so. King Hussein is counting on American willingness to reduce Jordan's debt on an increase in military and economic

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[380] *Id.* : p. 101.

[381] Heikal, *op. cit.* : p. 528.

[382] See George Hawatmeh, "In the Thick of It", *Middle East International*, n° 515, 15 December 1995: p. 10; Lamis Andoni, "Two Goals Achieved", *Middle East International*, n° 517, 19 January 1996: p. 9.

assistance [384]. Jordan also hopes that the Clinton Administration will encourage third parties (the European Union and Japan) to step up aid, in the form of debt reduction and financial support for both the budget and specific economic projects.

In the first months of 1996, two events indicate that Jordan has succeeded in its choice of tying the country, as never before, to a U.S.-led political and military strategic alliance. The United States offered to provide Jordan with F-16 war planes and upgraded M60 tanks: the U.S. Secretary of Defence Perry's promise to supply Jordan with these equipment was meant as a signal to neighbouring Arab countries that Jordan has an important role to play in the region as U.S. ally[385]. Jordan also took the unprecedented decision in early February to allow the Americans to use the country as a base for F-16 flights over Southern Iraq[386]. In spite of being a heavily constrained player, Jordan has managed once again to turn an unfavourable situation to its advantage and to tie its fate to the remaining dominant power in the region: the United States.

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[383] Before the start of the Sharm al - Shaikh Conference, Jordan had focused almost exclusively on co-ordination with the U.S. and Israel. See Lamis Andoni, "Walking a Tightrope", *Middle East International*, n° 521, p. 10.

[384] Prospects for both intents are not encouraging: a Congressional sub-committee proposed a debt write-off of only $225 million for 1995 while the administration asked Congress to allocate only about $48 million in economic and military assistance to Jordan for 1996 (well below Jordanian requests); see George Hawatmeh, "Frustrated on Several Counts", *Middle East International*, n° 496, 17 March 1995: p. 6.

[385] Andoni, "Two Goals ...": p. 9.

[386] Andoni, "Walking ...": p. 10.

6. The Post-Cold War Middle East: Between American Hegemony and the Age of Chaos

6.1. Challenges to U.S. Interests in the Middle East

The political-military landscape of the Greater Middle East region has undergone a far-reaching transformation since 1990. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the Americans were presented with an historic opportunity to reshape the region, owing to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the defeat of Iraq, and the acceptance of the Madrid/Oslo peace process by the PLO and other Arab states. Overall, the Gulf War provided Washington with enhanced influence in the Middle East. It enabled the United States to deploy its forces in Persian Gulf states and strengthen the ties between Washington and the region's critical powers: Egypt, Israel, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Three events - the October 1991 Madrid peace conference, the 13 September 1993 signing of the Declaration of Principles between the PLO and Israel, and the July 1994 Jordanian-Israeli accord -seemed to mark the beginning of the end of the Arab-Israeli confrontation.

The Clinton administration's overriding concern in the Middle East is maintaining local military and political balances of power favourable to U.S. friends and allies. One way of achieving this goal is to prevent the emergence of a hostile regional hegemon in any sub-region of the area. Any domination of the Persian Gulf by one state, especially a hostile state like Iraq or Iran, would threaten vital U.S. interests, because that state would be in a position to manipulate oil prices and to use the oil revenues to develop weapons of mass destruction. It would also destabilise the ruling pro-Western Gulf regimes.

While a Pax America prevails in the Middle East, the region today is a hotbed of trouble for the American hegemon. As Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Robert Pelletreau, has stated: "there are few areas of the world that combine such strategic importance to the United States with such chronic instability"[387]. He lists the main obstacles to stability in the region as being proliferation threats, border disputes, the problems of domestic instability and economic

underdevelopment, human-rights problems, terrorism, extremism and fanaticism. Thus, when the Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman, SamNunn stated that "this is a world of regional wars, of spreading ethnic religious and tribal warfare", in which more countries are acquiring the capability to unleash mass death, he had the Middle East in mind [388] . Martin Indyk, the former senior director for Middle Eastern affairs at the National Security Council and U.S. Ambassador to Israel, summarised well Washington' fears regarding developments in the region when he stated that "in the next decade the Middle East could become a nuclear "wild west" where economic distress, radical ideologies and military capabilities combine to present much more formidable threats to U.S. interests" [389] .

Washington is concerned with the implications of turmoil in this region: "It can threaten the security of close friends and partners such as Israel and Egypt and the GCC states. It can threaten our NATO partners in Europe. It can threaten our ability to protect vital oil supplies from the Gulf. It can bring new outbreaks of terrorism to our shores. And it can fuel a race to acquire weapons of mass destruction"[390] . In short, regional instability may jeopardise major U.S. interests and have serious spillover effects into other areas of the world.

The decline of regional deterrence previously provided by superpower security guarantees has caused many nations to turn towards doctrines of self-reliance in security. The 1991 Gulf War deepened, rather than ameliorated, regional security concerns and the result has been an increase in regional defence budgets. The unprecedented and disturbing fact in the current rearmament cycle is the escalatory danger of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) acquisition. Increasingly, Middle Eastern political and defence elites are coming to see WMD as uniquely suited to filling the emerging security vacuum. SSMs (surface-to-surface missiles) are the platform of choice for WMD weapons, as they can carry nuclear, biological, or chemical payloads with minor modifications to the missile's configuration. Lewis says that for Middle Eastern states "the most important is that conventional armaments are

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[387] Robert H. Pelletreau, "American Objectives in the Middle East", Remarks Before the CENTCOM Annual Southwest Asia Symposium, Tampa, Florida, 14 May 1996: p. 1.

[388] Quoted in "If Nonproliferation Fails, Pentagon Wants "Counterproliferation" in Place", *The Washington Post*, 15 May 1994: p. A 11.

[389] Martin Indyk, "The Implications for U.S. Policy", in Yehudah Mirsky and Ellen Rice (eds.), *Islam and the United States: Challenges for the Nineties* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1992), p. 50.

[390] Pelletreau, *op. cit.* .

not an effective equalizer. Rather, the nation with accurate SSM delivery systems has both an equalizer and a potential advantage over most of its adversaries" [391] .

Advanced delivery system technology and most of the materials required to make weapons of mass destruction will be accessible to small states and sub-state organisations. That will not confer the ability to seize territory but will make available the potential for producing severe social and economic damage[392] . The introduction of advanced systems will significantly expand the security defence zones, as was demonstrated by Iraq's missile attacks against Israel: "the improved SSMs will provide attacking forces with substantial target flexibility, ranging from military targets to population centers" [393]. The weakness of the non-proliferation regime and the multiple sources of potential conflict in the Middle East generate fears about the reckless use of these weapons.

Nuclear weapons acquisition by Iran and Iraq are viewed with special concern. For the Americans, the test case for halting proliferation in the Middle East is Iraq. Other countries have pursued chemical and biological weapons development with as much fervour as nuclear weapons. Besides Iraq, at least five governments in the region are suspected of pursuing nuclear weapons: Syria, Libya, Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Israel, India and Pakistan are already nuclear-weapons states.

NATO member states are particularly concerned about the proliferation of modern delivery systems amongst states along the southern reaches of the Mediterranean region. A RAND report predicts that within ten years every southern European capital will be within range of ballistic missiles based in North Africa or the Levant [394] . NATO members are largely bereft of the early warning, air defence, or retaliatory capabilities necessary to deter the "over the horizon" threat emanating from the Middle East or North Africa.

Pentagon planners have engaged in efforts to change strategic thinking in view of the uncontrollable proliferation trend. Thus, in December 1993 Washington redefined its military doctrine and adopted the DefenceCounterproliferation Initiative

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[391] William Lewis, "The Military Balance: Change or Stasis?", in Phebe Marr and William Lewis (eds.), *Riding the Tiger: The Middle East Challenge After the Cold War* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993), p. 75.

[392] John D. Steinbruner, "Hearings on United States Security Interests in the Post-Cold War World", Statement to the House Committee on National Security, 6 June 1996 (electronic file transfer): p. 3; Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Strategic Assessment 1995: U.S. Security Challenges in Transition*, Chapter 5 (electronic file transfer).

[393] Lewis, *op. cit.* : p. 75.

[394] Ian O. Lesser and Ashley J. Tellis, *Strategic Exposure: Proliferation Around the Mediterranean* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1996).

(DCI) [395] .The aim of the programme is devising new weapons and equipment for U.S. and allied troops to use against reckless enemies in a dangerous new environment. Former Defense Secretary Les Aspin stood up for the programme alleging that today's rogue states "can be expected to have different doctrines, histories, organizations, command and control systems and purposes ... In addition, proliferators may have acquired [nuclear, biological and chemical weapons] for the express purpose of blackmail or terrorism and thus have a fundamentally different calculus not amenable to deterrence"[396] .

Another category of challenges confronting the United States in the Middle East concerns the endemic conflicts between and among regional states. First of all, a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict would result in the reduction of threats to U.S. interests as well as significant improvements in the regional political scene. If some progress is not registered, the United States would find it increasingly difficult to insulate its relations with Israel from its dealings with the rest of the Arab world. In this scenario, one would expect the deterioration of relations with Persian Gulf states and the moderate pro-Western governments. Extremist forces, especially those embedded within Islamic movements, would gain ground and probably become dominant in some countries [397].

The setback to the Arab-Israeli peace process delivered by the policies of the Netanyahu government already seems to be reducing divisions within the Arab world and prompt rethinking on foreign policy. In this new environment, the United States must anticipate a weakening of regional resolve in confronting Iraq and Iran. Furthermore, Arab governments are expected to be more reluctant to accommodate the expanding U.S. presence in the Gulf region [398] .

In the occupied territories, extremist forces are gaining ground. There are growing signs that the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) is regaining much of the popularity it lost following the spate of suicide bombings in Israel in early 1996. The trend seems to be a manifestation of profound disappointment with the stumbling and unpromising peace process and with the uncompromising stance of theLikud

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[395] Mariano Aguirre, "Guerre de civilisations?", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, n° 489, December 1994: p. 25.

[396] "If Non Proliferation Fails ...", *op. cit.* .

[397] Quandt, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict in the 1990s", *op. cit.* : p. 105; Phebe Marr, "Strategies for an Era of Uncertainty", in Phebe Marr and W. Lewis (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 215.

[398] Shibley Telhami, "Uneasy in Arabia: The U.S. Can't Take its Saudi Presence for Granted", *The Washington Post*, 30 June 1996: p. C 1.

government [399] . The precarious regional stability is jeopardised as both sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict seem to be quietly preparing for war [400] .

A further danger to the United States is that it will become the target of extremists. Washington's endorsement of the Israeli shelling of Lebanon (Operation Grapes of Wrath) in April 1996 as an anti-terrorist act prompted university students in Cairo to burn the American flag. The administration's acceptance of the Israeli explanation that the shelling of the U.N. base at Qana, which resulted in dozens of civilian casualties, was an accident was considered especially insulting. One Arab newspaper condemned "the degree of disregard and contempt to all Arabs shown by the American president" [401] . Another newspaper wrote that President Clinton has offered his protection for Israeli occupation and expansionism and warned that "the ramifications of this position will make themselves felt, possibly in the not too distant future" [402] .

Another conflictual area, representing Washington's top priority, is the Persian Gulf region. An outbreak of an armed conflict or a significant shift in the regional balance could affect Western access to oil at reasonable prices. The Arab and Persian divide of the Gulf stand for different and historic and cultural conceptions and clashing interests constituting major grounds for conflict[403] . Iran and Iraq are seen in Washington as outlaw states, capable of posing a threat to the United States of a magnitude that justify the resources it has devoted to countering both under the "dual containment" policy.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states relations, although facing similar challenges, are riven with dissension. Tensions among the southern Gulf Arab states is a major reason for the GCC failing to develop into an effective regional security organisation. There are countless intra-GCC disputes, ranging from mundane to fairly serious. Economic issues, such as oil production quotas, and territorial issues are especially significant sources of discord. Historical tension between Saudi Arabia and Qatar has been caused by border disputes. The same happens with Oman, due to Saudi claiming of large portions of Omani territory. Oman and the UAE (United Arab

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[399] Khalid Amayreh, "Hamas Gaining Ground", *Middle East International*, n° 540, 20 December 1996: p. 4.
[400] Godfrey Jansen, "Preparing for War?", *Middle East International*, n° 540, 20 December 1996: p. 6.
[401] Quoted in Stanley Kober, "Why Spy? The Uses and Misuses of Intelligence", *CATO Policy Analysis*, n° 265, 12 December 1996 (electronic file transfer): p. 8.
[402] *Id.* .
[403] Marr, "Strategies ... ", *op. cit.* : p. 216.

Emirates) also have numerous disputed spots along their borders[404] . Most GCC states resent Saudi Arabia for its domination of the GCC and for its heavy handed dealings with its neighbours in the past. Personal jealousies and tribal animosities are a well-known characteristic of intra-GCC relationships and they prevent higher level of trust between states. Despite the recent historical record (namely Iraq's invasion of Kuwait) and the many military threats in the region, inter-GCC defencecooperation has grown only slowly [405]. The recurring disagreements have generated a weak commitment to building a pan-GCC force in sufficient size and strength to enhance the credibility of collective defence capabilities and combined national force structures[406] .

Other challenges to resolving pan-GCC defence need are: the still embryonic structure of the six countries' defence force; the inability tocoordinate decisions on major weapons procurement and spreading the defence burden; the diminished financial ability of some customers to pay for purchases already committed to; the delay in moving toward "jointness" in the training and exercises of GCC military forces[407] .

The current economic and social situation of the Middle East presents fresh challenges for governments in the region, as well as for the United States and the West. Population pressures, reduced export revenues, urban environmental problems, and growing economic and social needs are taxing government capacities. There is a risk that the most extreme manifestations of government collapse will lead to failed states. Steinberg says that in the current international order the primary source of threat is not the impulse for imperial orirredentist expansion but rather the danger of internal disintegration[408] . Extremist movements already seek to overthrow the existing government in Algeria, and to a lesser extent in Egypt.

Elsewhere, dissident ethnic or sectarian groups desire secession from existing states. The Gulf War created new political realities for ethnic groups in the region. It seems to have given rise to a new sense of purpose and opportunity to the region's

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[404] Barbara Conry, "Time Bomb: The Escalation of U.S. Security Commitments in the Persian Gulf Region", *CATO Policy Analysis*, nº 258, 29 August 1996 (electronic file transfer): p. 3; P. Marr, "U.S.-GCC Security Relations, I: Differing Threat Perceptions", *Strategic Forum*, nº 39, August 1995 (electronic file transfer): p. 3.

[405] Marr, *ibid.* .

[406] John A. Duke, "The U.S.-GCC Relationship: Is It a Glass Leaking on a Glass Filling?", in David Lesch, *The Middle East and the United States* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), p. 361.

[407] John Duke Anthony, "Selected Documentation of the Sixteenth GCC Heads-of-State Summit: Insights and Indications", *Middle East Policy* (IV), nº 4, October 1996: p. 161.

[408] Steinberg, *op. cit.* .

ethnic minorities, thus opening the possibility of reshaping the regional agenda on the question of ethnicity [409] . The case of Iraq set the parameters for this re-evaluation. The intervention of the international community in protecting Iraqi and Shiite populations as well as the weakening of the Iraqi state as a result of the sanctions and of Washington's "dual containment" policy, might have unforeseen and unpredictable consequences. If carried to the extremes, they could result in the collapse of the Iraqi state. This, in turn, would endanger the stability and security of the Gulf region and the Middle East, leaving Iran, by default, the major power in the Gulf. Turkey would have to deal with its Kurdish population seeking to change the distribution of power. A weakened Iraq would also invite interference by Syria, Turkey, and Iran in its domestic affairs, further thwarting the current regional balance.

The likelihood of widening ethnic and sectarian conflicts in the Middle East is closely related to the question of resources, to their distribution and to the process of development. The economic outlook will be bleak for the next decade. Demographic growth will exacerbate the economic problem with a high birth rate insuring that the area's youthful population will predominate. The most likely scenario is rising youth unemployment, which may translate into political unrest, and add to pressures on weak and ineffective governments. Recruits for Islamic movements are often drawn from this pool of unemployed youth [410] .

For the region as a whole, per capita GNP fell by an average of 2.3 percent annually from 1980 through 1992, a cumulative 25 percent drop[411] . The oil producing nations have run into serious external debt problems. Saudi Arabia is borrowing heavily abroad to finance budget deficits. Continuing expenditure reductions (affecting arms purchases) and new taxes will be needed in order to avoid unsustainable foreign debt in the long run [412] . Still income disparities in the Middle East remain glaring: the most populous Arab country, Egypt, has a per capita income that is only 3 percent that of the richest, the United Arab Emirates [413] .

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[409] Abdul Aziz Said, "Beyond Geopolitics: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict Elimination in the Middle East and North Africa", in P. Marr and W. Lewis (eds.), *op. cit.* : pp. 178-9.
[410] Thomas Naff, "Hazards to Middle East Stability in the 1990s: Economics, Population, and Water", in P. Marr and W. Lewis (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 145; Alan Richards, "Economic Roots of Instability in the Middle East", *Middle East Policy* (IV), n° 1/2, September 1995: p. 175.
[411] Institute for National Strategic Studies, *op. cit.* , Chapter 5 (electronic file transfer).
[412] Patrick Clawson, "U.S.-GCC Security Relations, II: Growing Domestic, Economic and Political Problems", *Strategic Forum*, n° 40, August 1995 (electronic file transfer): p. 2.
[413] Institute for National Strategic Studies, *op. cit.* .

Allocation of scarce resources, especially from rivers flowing across state boundaries, is a source of tension in the region. Rising water scarcity jeopardises autarchic food-security strategies. This concern is especially acute in the face of the prospect of growing food dependency in the immediate future. Middle Eastern countries (especially those that do not have oil) need to make sweeping changes in their economies, that, owing to their structural nature, will require fundamental reordering of key sectors and the modification of established policies. Indeed, most Arab states have highly inefficient statist economies, though of late they have engaged in some form of structural adjustment. The combined pressures of jobs, food, water, and money will inexorably press against rigid political systems, eroding political stability [414].

Current developments indicate that political consciousness will be universal, particularly among the young, who will demand more government accountability and political participation. In fact, the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War have contributed to the bankruptcy of the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world. In most Arab countries there were varying degrees of popular demands vis-à-vis respective Arab regimes. Krämer notes that "democracy has become a catchword of Middle Eastern politics" and that it "constitutes a common theme for all political movements, irrespective of the socioeconomic order and the foreign policies they advocate" [415].

Facing their mounting internal loss of legitimacy, Arab leaders have chosen to introduce a tactical liberalisation [416] as a safety valve to prevent a radical change of their political systems [417]. They have however refused to fully democratise the system (in the sense of allowing the legalisation of political parties, the equal access to the mass media and free and fair elections) since it might pose a direct challenge to their rule [418]. The purpose of liberalisation is "system maintenance in a situation of acute socioeconomic crisis, by co-opting wider circles of the political public, distributing responsibilities for future austerity policies more broadly, directing political and

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[414] Richards, *op. cit.* .

[415] Gudrun Krämer, "Liberalization and Democracy in the Arab World",*Middle East Report* (22), n° 1, January/February 1992: p. 22, 23.

[416] Alan Richards, "Economic Imperatives and Political Systems", *The Middle East Journal* (47), n° 2, Spring 1993: p. 218; Gawdat Bahgat, "Democracy in the Arab World: An Elitist Approach", *International Relations* (XII), n° 2, August 1994: p. 53.

[417] Liberalisation includes making such concessions as freedoms of the press, associations, and the right to travel abroad. See Saad E. Ibrahim, "Crisis, Elites and Democratization in the Arab World", *The Middle East Journal* (47), special report, 1993: p. 294.

[418] *Ibid.* .

religious organisations into controllable channels and excluding all those outside the "national consensus" defined by the regime" [419].

The traditional relationship between the rulers and the ruled is fragmenting and public opinion is becoming increasingly polarised under the light ofIslamist scrutiny. In the Gulf Arab states, political radicals using Islam as "the answer" are gaining support and influence. They demand the establishment of truly Islamic government, an end to rule by unjust, corrupt, unIslamic leaders, and the elimination of foreign - especially U.S. - influence and interests [420] .

Several developments could provide Islamic radicals with the opportunity to widen their popular base and gain influence over decision making. Looming succession crises might give them this chance. There are few well-established mechanisms for leadership change. If it intersects with imploding political and social forces, a change of leadership could have profound implications for a state's orientation. A succession unpopular with large segments of the population could, in the case of key regional states now supporting U.S. objectives (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Pakistan) alter the *status quo*, seriously undermining U.S. interests [421].

6.2. The Gulf: U.S. Strategy Under Fire

America's interest in the Gulf remains appropriately unchanged with the end of the Cold War. A key national security concern is to guarantee the uninterrupted flow of oil to the world market at prices that do not damage the economies of the United States and the advanced industrial countries. The disappearance of the Soviet military threat removes the chief reason for Washington to worry about continued American access to overseas oil [422] . In the aftermath of the Gulf War, American access to the

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[419] Krämer, *op. cit.* : p. 24. See the same argument in Michael Hudson, "After the Gulf War: Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World", *The Middle East Journal* (45), nº 3, Summer 1991: pp. 424-5.
[420] Judith S. Yaphe, "Islamic Radicalism in the Arabian Peninsula: Growing Risks", *Strategic Forum*, nº 67, March 1996 (electronic file transfer): p. 1.
[421] Institute for National Strategic Studies, *op. cit.* .
[422] James Phillips, "Rethinking U.S. Policy in the Middle East", *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, nº 891, 10 April 1992 (electronic file transfer): p. 4.

region was made easier. This provided U.S. forces with an ability to deploy in the Persian Gulf [423].

The Carter Doctrine in 1980 formally committed the United States to preventing any "hostile power" from dominating the area. As the Clinton administration understood it, the chief threats in the post-Cold War order come from Iran and Iraq who are not only intrinsically hostile to Western influence in the area, but also espouse hegemonic ambitions in the region. Their record, according to U.S. officials, also includes the pursuit of ambitious weapons programmes, the promotion of terrorism, the suppression of human rights, the disregard for democratic governance and the aggressive behaviour toward their neighbours.

The "dual containment" policy enunciated by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and National Security Council Senior director for the Near East and South Asia, Martin Indyk, rejects the previous policy of tilting toward one country to contain the other (as was the case with Iran under Carter and with Iraq under Reagan and Bush) [424]. "Dual containment" is predicated on the assumption that the U.S. European and Arab allies will strive to prevent Iraq and Iran from achieving Gulf hegemony or from fomenting regional conflict. In Iraq, the policy officially demands fulfilment of all U.N. Security Council Resolutions instituted after the Gulf War. The United States relies on drastic import and oil export restrictions and no-fly zones in the north and south of the country as instruments to fulfil those goals. In Iran, a change of regime behaviour on six key points is sought, among them cessation of terrorism, overt opposition to the peace process, and attempts to destabilise neighbouring states. To this end, Washington seeks to deny credit and military technology to Iran.

"Dual containment" has generated debate on several grounds. Some point to the intellectual inconsistency of the approach charging that it lacks a strategic focus

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[423] Richard Cheney, who served as Secretary of Defense under Bush, said: "In a perverse sort of way, Saddam made it easier for the United States to operate in the region. Before the Gulf crisis, it was not possible to get significant U.S. military forces into Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or northern Turkey. The Gulf States wanted a U.S. aircraft carrier around but they wanted it over the horizon and out of sight. Now there is a major U.S. military presence in the region that is built around the fact that Saddam is still in power ... So in a perverse way the current relationship is comfortable because Gulf states fearSaddam and thus tolerate our presence"; John Wilner and Dan Blumenthal (eds.), *America and the Middle East: An Enduring Role in a Changing World* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1995), p. 23.

[424] Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States", *Foreign Affairs* (73), nº 2, March/April 1994: p. 48.

on which country, Iran and Iraq, represents the greater problem[425] . Others point that the policy fails to enunciate the real issue, which is the American long-term goal as regards the fate of both regimes: either overthrowing the incumbent leadership or merely modifying the behaviour of those regimes [426] .

According to Gause, the main flaw of the policy concerns Iraq, since it does not anticipate or provide for a likely course of action. In fact, no one knows with certainty what is going to happen over the next few years, the most likely outcome being internal chaos. Gause also criticises the current U.S. policy on the grounds that it contributes to the weakening of the Iraqi state: in caseSaddam should fall, Gause contends, Iran would exploit its relationship with Iraqi Shiite groups thus becoming a key player in the future of Iraq. Gause further contends that "dual containment" requires the unlikely cooperation of Western and Arab nations who, for a number of reasons, are unwilling to isolate Iran and are calling for an easing of sanctions on Iraq. Even GCC states find a geopolitical imperative to prevent Iraq's disintegration [427] .

Some analysts focus their attention on the consequences that accrue to American interests from the application of such policy. As Gause points out, one condition for the success of "dual containment" is a continuation, perhaps expansion, of the American military presence in the Gulf[428] . The upgrading of the U.S. military forces in the region has several negative implications. As it stands, it represents a tremendous commitment that will place the United States at great risk of becoming entangled in regional conflicts. The enhanced American presence increases the cost and risks of American policy toward the Persian Gulf and aggravates popular resentment of U.S. meddling in regional affairs [429] .

The June 25 1996 Dhahran bombing, the second attack on U.S. citizens in the Gulf in seven months, is indicative of what lies ahead. Devout Saudis, indeed the majority of Muslims, increasingly resent what they perceive to be U.S. encroachment on the sacred precincts of the faith. They want U.S. military forces out of the region. Therefore, the United States can expect to encounter increasing hostility toward American forces in the region and toward the Saudi regime that invited them there.

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[425] Leslie Gelb. panel discussion on " "Dual Containment" and U.S. Interests in the Persian Gulf", in Wilner and Blumenthal (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 21.
[426] Robert Satloff. *ibid.* .
[427] F. Gregory Gause, III, "The Illogic of Dual Containment", *Foreign Affairs* (73), n° 2, March/April 1994: p. 62, 60-1.
[428] *Id.* : pp. 61-2.
[429] Barbara Conry, "America's Misguided Policy of Dual Containment in the Persian Gulf", *CATO Foreign Policy Briefing*, n° 33, 10 November 1994 (electronic file transfer): pp. 7-8.

The attacks on U.S. citizens in Saudi Arabia and several recent developments in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman raise the spectre of violent change and potential efforts to disrupt regime-U.S. ties. The bombing of U.S. facilities, according to one analyst, "... should be viewed, not as a problem confined to Saudi Arabia, but as a symptom of a larger challenge to the U.S. presence in the Middle East"[430] . A more sober assessment is that "the Gulf is ripe for dissent, not for revolution" and that "the challenge for GCC governments will be accustoming themselves and their societies to open dissent, which is a new phenomenon that some government officials will find disturbing" [431] .

What seems nonetheless certain is that Middle Eastern politics are changing in ways that require new U.S. responses. Analysts notice the rising anti-American tide and advise U.S. diplomats to maintain a low profile in Saudi Arabia so as not to exacerbate anti-U.S. feeling. The American presence in that Gulf country has fuelled popular perceptions that the kingdom has lost much of its political independence. The high American profile has become a lightning rod for domestic discontent and has been used by militant Saudi dissidents to advance their primary goal: the overthrow of the Saudi government [432] .

Among educated elites and the man in the street, support for Washington's tough posture against Iraq, is thin. One prevalent conspiracy theory in the Gulf, even among policy elites, holds that the United States assured the survival of Saddam Hussein after the Gulf War in order to justify an increased military presence in the region [433] . Gulf leaders are worried that if the United States continues to weaken Iraq politically and militarily, the only significant regional strategic counterweight to Iran may collapse, creating a massive power vacuum that would favour Tehran's intervention. However, GCC countries are wary of the U.S. "dual containment" policy since it antagonises Iranian leaders thus raising the potential for military confrontation. They criticise the U.S. unilateral policy initiatives toward Iran and would like Washington to consult them whenever it considers confronting or dramatically changing any of its policies toward Tehran [434] .

U.S. disregarding of the threats in the region and its recent actions under the "dual containment" policy have created a sense that the coalition against Iraq has

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[430] Kober, *op. cit.* : p. 9.
[431] Clawson, *op. cit.* : p. 2.
[432] Yaphe, *op. cit.* : pp. 4-5; Telhami, *op. cit.* : p. C 1.
[433] Marr, "U.S.-GCC Security Relations", *op. cit.* : p. 1.
[434] Duke, *op. cit.* : p. 163.

weakened significantly. There is the widespread suspicion, particularly in the Arabian peninsula that the United States may be moving toward Iraq's dismemberment. Other events, such as the apparent stalemate in the Arab-Israeli conflict and rising tensions between Israel and Syria have revived fears that Israel, seeking to weaken the Arab world, aims, among other things, the dismemberment of Iraq [435].

The United States has also come under increasing criticism from Gulf states that question the underlying rationale for current U.S. defence policies. Many of them express resentment at perceived U.S. strong-arm tactics designed to pressure Gulf governments into implementing a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), pointing to the effect of this measure in pre-revolutionary Iran. A related criticism is that the Americans disregard the sensitivity of Gulf leaders and peoples.

GCC officials criticise the United States for imposing a regional security threat assessment that is tailored to serve U.S. strategic, economic and corporate interests, but of questionable validity if measured against the yardstick of GCC national, regional and intra-regional interests. They argue that U.S. military sales are primarily designed to assist the United States economically in shoring up the military-industrial complex and that Washington overstates the nature of the threats to Gulf states in order to press them to buy expensive equipment[436]. GCC analysts contend that the October 1994 confrontation with Saddam Hussein, Operation Vigilant Warrior, was largely the result of U.S. strategic and domestic considerations. Gulf leaders resent being presented with enormous bills to cover defence costs. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain - especially Saudi Arabia - face debt and the burden of having financed much of the operations against Saddam Hussein and are in the process of scaling back subsidies and services for their populations.

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[435] Shibley Telhami, "Dismember Iraq? No Gulf State Would Be Able to Balance the Power of Iran", *The Washington Post*, 18 September 1996: p. A 19; Ted Galen Carpenter, "U.S. "Leadership" and the Shattered Gulf Coalition", *This Just In ...*, CATO Institute, 12 September 1996 (electronic file transfer): p. 1.

[436] Anthony, *op. cit.* : p. 164.

PART III - U.S. POLICY TOWARDS POLITICAL ISLAM

7. America's Encounter with Political Islam

7.1. The Iranian Revolution

7.1.1. Background to the Revolution

America's encounter with political Islam took place in a most dramatic way during the 1978-79 Iranian Revolution and the subsequent events and it definitely contributed to shape certain public and official perceptions on Iran and on the nature of the Islamist movement. As Edward Djerejian put it: "ever since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the hostage crisis, U.S.-Iranian relations have been marked by outright hostility, suspicion, distrust, and failed efforts at initiating a dialogue" [437].

The United States entered Iran in the wake of World War II, when the Truman administration realised that protection of Iran was in the U.S. national interest. It proceeded to remove Soviet influence from that country and successfully pressed the U.S.S.R. to withdraw its forces from Azerbaidjan. American intervention on behalf of Iran created a reservoir of goodwill towards Washington. The Americans played well the role of a third force that would help maintain the nation's independence.

America's credentials as a friendly power did not last for long. In 1953, the Americans participated with the British in the overthrow of the popularprime minister, Muhammad Musaddiq, who had nationalised Iranian oil, and the restoration ofReza Shah Pahlavi to the throne. James Bill affirms that "this direct covert operation left a running wound that bled for twenty-five years and contaminated America's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran following the revolution of 1978-79" [438]. The population came to see the United States as an imperialistic, oppressive external power whose actions resembled those of Russia and Britain.

The introduction of unprecedented amounts of military and economic aid and the influx of U.S. advisers coincided with an increase in political oppression and economic corruption in the country. By the early 1960s the Shah was gradually

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[437] "The Prospects for U.S.-Iranian Relations", *Middle East Insight* (XI), n° 5, 1995. p. 4.
[438] *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 86.

hardening his system of control and, in 1963, he launched his controversial programme for modernising the country: the White Revolution. The plan antagonised almost all stratas of society and was highly resented by the clerics, because it attacked their power base, and by the old aristocracy, because of their opposition to land reform.

The generous American aid was largely wasted and the misuse of funds increased the levels of corruption in society thus creating the impression, in the eyes of the masses, that Washington was behind the corrupt and oppressivePahlavi rule [439]. Popular outrage against the Americans was brought to unprecedented levels when, on October 1964, the Majlis (Iranian parliament) passed a law that provided American personnel and their dependants stationed in Iran with full diplomatic immunity. The outrage widened and deepened when, twelve days after, theMajlis approved a bill authorising the government to accept a $200 million loan provided by the Americans. The Iranian public immediately saw in this the Iranian government's pay off for accepting the new law of capitulations [440].

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini made at this time his public debut as contestant of the Shah's regime and he launched a frontal attack on the Shah's policies. He said the Iranian people stood on "a lower level than that of an American dog" and roundly condemned the Shah and America for attempting to destroy the dignity, integrity and autonomy of Iran [441] . Khomeini's fiery speeches struck a chord among the masses that also viewed the whole episode as a humiliation to the Iranian people. This appreciation was coupled by the condemnation of the royal court's way of life and the imported values, which undermined Islamic principles.

The 1960s witnessed the tightening of Iranian-American relations. Rubin affirms that American officials, preoccupied with the international implications of the United-States Iranian relationship, remained poorly informed on Iran's rising domestic difficulties. However, as early as 1973, Iran specialists such as Marvin Zionis and Richard Cottam, were trying to draw attention to the potential troubles on the country's horizon. While acknowledging Iran's economic advances, they also pointed to the growing gap between rich and poor, the endemic corruption, andSAVAK's repression, all of which were alienating millions of Iranians from the Shah [442].

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[439] *Id.* : p. 125, 128-9.
[440] *Id.* : pp. 156-7.
[441] Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution* (London: KPI, 1981), p. 182.
[442] Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 142-3.

When in 1973 OPEC caused the price of oil to soar, Iran became one of the main beneficiaries. Only a few Iranians enjoyed the fruits of their country's development, however, as a result of rampant corruption and poor fiscal planning. By 1977, "the mismanagement of the national economy had produced widespread unemployment, urban slums, the worst inflation ever, and visible signs of strain throughout the government apparatus" [443].

The year 1977 set the stage for the revolution. A number of factors account for the intensity of the popular discontent with the regime. The economic system was in the midst of a sharp retrenchment after the phenomenal economic growth of 1973-75. The situation in the cities was aggravated by a severe recession in some economic sectors that affected mainly the newly-arrived migrants. The runaway corruption that had accompanied the boom showed little sign of abating. The heavy-handed anti-inflation policy that that the regime inaugurated alienated the bazaar, the heart of the Iranian economy.

On the political side, the partial liberalisation introduced by the Shah in 1977 attempted to cope with growing dissent in an inconsistent and ineffective manner. The programme failed to transfer any real power to the secular and religious opposition, who became more vocal and organised in their protests against the government.

Signs of a religious revival were also apparent among the general population. Khomeini was able to capitalise on popular frustration and used the idiom of religion to highlight their everyday problems and suffering. Throughout 1978,Khomeini issued proclamations from Najaf condemning the Shah, praising Islam, castigating the United States for its support of the monarch, and honouring those Iranians that who were demonstrating and rebelling against Pahlavi rule. Khomeini kept the pressure on, pushing relentlessly to end the Pahlavi dynasty. The opposition solidified under the hammer blows of the police and military forces. The revolutionary wave became unstoppable and led to the overthrow of the Shah.

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[443] Michael Leeden and William Lewis, *Debacle: The American Failure in Iran* (NY: Vintage Books,

7.1.2. The American Failure to Anticipate the Revolution

The events that led to the revolution caught Washington by surprise and constituted a monumental intelligence failure. Not only did it fail to prevent the traumatic collapse of Pahlavi rule, it also damaged the power and credibility of the United States in this critical part of the world. Perhaps more important, it overruled the prospects of constructive U.S-Iranian relations in the post-Shah period. Later President Carter would express his "dissatisfaction with the intelligence community failure to warn the administration of the political crisis in Iran"[444]. In December 1977, during a visit to Tehran, Carter had referred to Iran as "an island of stability in a turbulent corner of the world" [445]. This line reflected the view of the majority of Washington's political establishment.

As late as June 1978, Sullivan went to Washington and delivered "very optimistic reports...that the Shah was firmly in command and quite capable of dealing with the problem" [446] and this sense of confidence indulged him in an extended home leave during the summer. The belief that the Shah would remain in power despite the wave of protest was the prevailing view of the Embassy and the possibility that he might be forced out of office as a result of the crisis was dismissed [447].

The CIA also felt secure about the Shah's grip on power. An August 1977 study concluded that "the Shah will be an active participant in Iranian life well into the 1980s, and that "there will be no radical change in Iranian political behaviour in the near future"[448]. An August 1978 intelligence assessment asserted that "Iran is not in a revolutionary or even a 'pre-Revolutionary situation" [449]. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), linked to the Department of Defense, shared the same assumption. As

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1982), p. 99.

[444] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser* (NY: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983), p. 367.

[445] Bill, *op. cit.* : p. 233.

[446] Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran* (NY: Random House, 1985), p. 65.

[447] U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *U.S. Policy Toward Iran, January 1979* (Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 52.

[448] U.S. Congress, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Iran: Evaluation of U.S. Intelligence Performance Prior to November 1978* (Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 6.

[449] *Id.* : p. 7.

late as September 1978 its prognosis was that the Shah "is expected to remain actively in power over the next ten years" [450].

However, and as David suggests, "enough information was available to high-level policymakers at least by November 1977 to have moved the Carter administration to seriously examine the possibility of profound instability for the one-man government in Iran " [451]. Such information came mostly from the State Department, through its Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), from the academic community and from American diplomats posted in Tehran, namely John Stempel, the political officer of the U.S. Embassy. He concludes that "the great weight of responsibility must lie on decisionmakers who failed to effectively use the information that was available to them"[452] .

Gary Sick explains that Washington's inactivity and inability to draw the proper conclusions from the on-going events had to do with "the paralysis of bureaucratic structures in high-risk situations" [453]. He argues that if the revolutionary events had taken place in an area of the world with less strategic importance, there would have been "little reluctance to speculate about a range of possible outcomes, including revolutionary overthrow of the existing power structure. No one in the bureaucracy from the ambassador to the Washington analyst, wished to be the first to "make the call" that the shah was on his way out. As a consequence, each individual and each organizational element procrastinated, waiting for incontrovertible evidence before pronouncing such a fateful judgement" [454].

The "wishful thinking" tendency explains the predominant procrastination strategy that gripped the administration between the outbreak of anti-Shah violence in November 1977 and the rapid deterioration of the Shah's government that set in after the 8 September 1978 Black Friday massacre[455]. A more realistic assessment of the situation emerged in the late months of the year. On 9 November Ambassador Sullivan sent a secret cable to the State Department stating that, while the U.S. Embassy believed the Shah, backed by his armed forces, could "face down" the

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[450] *Id.* : p. 6.
[451] Charles Philippe-David, *Foreign Policy Failure in the White House* (Lanham, MA: University Press of America, 1993), pp. 64-5.
[452] *Id.* : p. 65.
[453] Sick, *op. cit.* : p. 42.
[454] *Ibid..*
[455] David, *op. cit.* : p. 69.

threat of Ruhollah Khomeini, the United States should be beginning to "think the unthinkable" - that is, Iran without the shah and under the leadership of Khomeini [456].

Sick argues that the administration did not endorse "the kind of steps that Sullivan seemed to be suggesting - preparing the way for easing the shah and his senior command out of the way as painlessly as possible while beefing up the position of the moderate opposition - could not be concealed... There was simply no high-level support for such a policy shift - from the president, from Brzezinski, from (Defense Secretary) Brown or from Vance. The official policy of total support for the shah was bent on the assumption that the shah was capable of acting vigorously and decisively - an expectation that also proved to be unfounded and based largely on wishful thinking..." [457].

Bureaucratic rivalries and the conflict of personalities within the administration resulted in further confusing the situation. The differing assessments inevitably generated confusion in decision-making. Bill argues that the task of the President was complicated by the fact that he "was inundated with conflicting information, much of which was filtered by Brzezinski" [458] which resulted in Carter leaving the Shah without an explicit direction.

Conflicting perceptions and the paralysis that got hold of the executive thwarted attempts to build ties to the opposition movement in Iran. Sullivan eventually came to the conclusion that a transition to power was inevitable and that if relations with Khomeini and the United States were improved there might be a minimum of bloodshed and a more optimal context for U.S. - Iranian relations[459]. However "Carter vetoed any direct American contacts with Ayatollah Khomeini ... . After seriously considering approving a mission that was to be headed by former State Department official Ted Eliot to meet with Khomeini in Paris, Carter backed away when Brzezinski, through the means of clever bureaucratic tactics of stalling and intrigue, smothered the idea" [460].

Contacts with the Iranian opposition had been proscribed in the mid -1960s and remained the policy through the 1970s. It was taken for granted that it was not in the interests of the United States to establish contacts in Iran that could upset the

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[456] Sick, *op. cit.* . pp. 81-2.
[457] *Id.* : pp. 86-7.
[458] Bill, *op. cit.* : p. 260.
[459] *Mission to Iran* (NY: W.W. Norton, 1981), pp. 199-213.
[460] Bill, *op. cit.* : p. 258.

"mutually beneficial relations between Tehran[that is, the Shah] and Washington"[461]. Harold Saunders reckoned later that "during this period we did, on occasions, limit our contacts with certain elements of Iranian society. We did that out of sensitivity to our relationships with the Iranian government. It perhaps in a few instances deprived us of a feeling for the intensity of individual feelings about certain issues" [462].

In fact, and as a January 1979 staff report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence highlighted, "U.S. close identification with the Shah limited the opportunities for U.S. officials to hear from Iranians who opposed him thereby causing Iran to resemble a closed society from the U.S. perspective" [463]. Thus, reporting critical of the Shah was curtailed. On the other hand, the strong ties thePahlavis had over the years built with large segments of the American political and financial elite and with the media had created the impression that U.S. interests in Iran were coterminous with those of the Pahlavi regime [464].

The report concludes that "long-standing U.S. attitudes toward the Shah inhibited intelligence collection, dampened policymakers appetite for analysis of the Shah's position, and deafened policymakers to the warning implicit in available current intelligence" [465]. The inability of the Carter administration to develop a clear picture of the situation in Iran [466] and to devise a consistent policy, placed it in the awkward position of having to deal with an Islamic revolutionary government it was ill-prepared to discuss with. It also fostered the feelings of distrust and ignorance on the part of American policymakers and impaired the prospects of dialogue between the two governments in the post-Shah era. The Iranian revolutionaries, for their part, capitalised on this situation to make their particular views on the new domestic order prevail.

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[461] NSA 03560, quoted in David, *op. cit.* : p. 74.
[462] U.S. Congress, *op. cit.* : p. 32,12.
[463] *Op. cit.*: p. 3.
[464] See Bill, *op. cit.*, chapter 9.
[465] House Select Committee on Intelligence, *op. cit.* : p. 7.
[466] Asked about Khomeini's intentions and the thrust of its policies, Saunders replied that the information on the religious leader was unclear and stated: "I think we just have to take his own statements at face value"; U.S. Congress, *U.S. Policy Toward Iran*: p. 54.

7.1.3. Deepening the Rift: The Failure to Establish a Connection and the Hostage Crisis

In the aftermath of the Revolution, the Americans did little in the way of establishing constructive ties with the new Iranian government and toning down the anti-American tone of the Revolution. Using the limited Iranian contacts at its disposal, the Carter administration attempted to develop a new policy towards revolutionary Iran. The fundamental obstacle in the path of normalisation between the U.S. government and the Provisional Government of Iran was the crisis of mutual confidence.

America's attempts to build ties with the Provisional Government of Iran were undertaken in a very delicate environment. Once again, the Americans reached out to the moderate, Westernised elements that were the dominant force in the early months of the revolution [467]. They found willing interlocutors in the Bazargan government, namely in the persons of Abbas Amir Entezam, the deputy prime minister, and Ibrahim Yazdi, the foreign minister. Entezam talked to American officials at various levels and suggested several steps the United States could take to demonstrate its sincerity towards the new Iranian government. As the Americans dragged their feet on those issues, the Bazargan government accused Washington of "playing a waiting game " [468]. Another very important prejudicing factor was that Embassy officials made no efforts to call on Ayatollah Khomeini. A carryover from the time of the Shah - when Brzezinski blocked plans for direct contacts with Khomeini - was that the United States persisted in failing to establish any meaningful relationships with the major extremist religious leaders.

In the context of widespread instability and certain counter-revolutionary activity, Iranian negative perceptions about American intentions developed into suspicion about the U.S. hand behind every trouble. A host of counterproductive acts and ill-timed policies of the Carter administration contributed to theembitterment of the relations with the Iranian government. Iranians were especially sensitive to the rumours of CIA and general U.S. intelligence activity in undermining the new regime. Two events, which came to light after student groups gained access to secret documents on occupying the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, highlighted the Americans

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[467] R. K. Ramazani, *The United States and Iran: The Patterns of Influence* (NY: Praeger, 1982), p. 165.

manoeuvres in Iran: the CIA plan to co-optAbol Bani Sadr, the first elected president of the Islamic Republic; and the contacts with important members of the moderate faction (from the Liberation Movement), namely Yazdi and Entezam [469].

America's misguided policies played directly into the hands of the hard - line, extremist factions of the Iranian regime which were able to use that evidence as a powerful political tool to dislodge the moderates, who were now demonstrated to be in collusion with the U.S. government. The conspiracy mentality was still in the ascendant phase and was fuelled by Khomeini who accused the United States of hatching plots to overthrow the new Iranian regime [470].

The final blow to the rule of the moderates and to the reinstitution of bilateral U.S. - Iranian relations, was the admission of the Shah to the United States. Under strong pressure from the Shah's powerful friends (namely theRockefellers, Nixon and Henry Kissinger), Carter decided on humanitarian grounds to admit the Shah to the United States for medical treatment [471].

A second simultaneous event further heightened theconspirational paranoia in Iran: the meeting in Algiers on the 1st November of Bazargan and Yazdi with Brzezinski, on the anniversary of the host country's independence. The meeting, broadcast on Iranian television, sparked a wave of demonstrations in Iran. On November 4, a group of nearly five hundred extremist students attacked the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, initially taking sixty-one Americans hostages.

Khomeini initially did not endorse the move but, realising its popularity, used it to consolidate the extremists' hold on power and to oust the Bazargan government. One month after the Embassy take-over, the constitution, which established Ayatollah Khomeini as *Faqih,* was passed by a huge majority. This episode of U.S-Iranian confrontation is a classic case of what political scientists call "externalisation" in which "state-to-state conflict is primarily caused and driven by domestic politics" [472]. Analysts have concluded "the revolution's rabid anti-Americanism was largely a result of a

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[468] Quoted in A.H.H. Abidi, *The Tehran Documents* (New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1988), p. 283.
[469] Bill, *op. cit.* : p. 286. See the documentation on the U.S. Embassy contacts with the Provisional Government of Iran in Abidi, *op. cit.* : pp. 245-87.
[470] Rubin, *op. cit.* : p. 293.
[471] Bill, *op. cit.* : chapter 9.
[472] Robert Snyder, "Explaining the Iranian Revolution'Hostility Toward the United States", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* (XVII), n ° 3, Spring 1994: p. 20. See also Harold Saunders, "The Crisis Begins", in Warren Christopher et al. (eds.), *American Hostages in Iran* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 44-5, 59.

power struggle in which the radicals used conflict with the U.S. to defeat the moderates" [473].

The hostage crisis, which would last for 444 days, was one of the most humiliating episodes in American history. As the months passed and the prospects for negotiations became dimmer, the Carter administration realised that "thehostages' fate had become entangled in the internal political manoeuvring of various factions in Iran"[474]. Only in the late summer of 1980, when the parliament was seated and a new government was in power, did the Iranians concentrate their attention and started negotiating. Meanwhile, the U.S. government had frozen Iranian assets in the United States, severed bilateral diplomatic relations, imposed sanctions on Iran and cancelled all entry visas for Iranians. When all these measures failed, president Carter approved a military rescue mission to save the hostages. The mission not only failed but met with disaster, leaving eight members of the crew dead [475].

The hostage crisis enabled the *mullahs* to consolidate their rule. It helped them marginalise their rivals, dominate the parliament and appoint a prime minister of their choice. Further, the *mullahs* had embarassed the United States and established their revolution as the only movement capable of standing up to Washington in the Middle East. In terms of bilateral relations, the hostage crisis left a heavy legacy of distrust and anger that has persisted over the years.

Both the Carter and Reagan administration reflected the difficulty in adjusting to the new reality produced by the appearance of political Islam. Both failed to consider the implications of the Iranian Revolution as it had evolved. There was no systematic effort to consider the question of what the effects were for U.S. objectives in the Middle East and South Asia as a consequence of the consolidation of a militant Islamic government in Iran. The general view was that Iran was a second "evil empire", a "barbaric country" as Reagan put it in 1987 [476].

Washington's support for Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, in spite of theformer's role in the beginning of the hostilities, reinforced the Iranian leaders' conviction about American double standards and it increased Iran's alienation from the United States. To Iran's leaders, the United States was continuing its hostile, counter-revolutionary

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[473] *Id.*: p. 31.
[474] Warren Christopher, "Introduction", in W. Christopher et al. (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 3.
[475] Gary Sick, "Military Options and Constraints", in W. Christopher (ed.), *op. cit.*, chapter 3. The President of the United States, *Use of U.S. Armed Forces in Attempted Rescue of Hostages in Iran* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980).
[476] Bill, *op. cit.*: p. 307.

policy and apparently intended to resort to any means to destroy the Islamic Republic. The anti-Iranian mood prevalent in the Reagan administration reflected also the concern about a perceived Iranian threat to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms.

The Reagan's administration sense of impotence coupled with a lingering inability to develop a clear picture of the Iranian situation, helped promote the ill-fated arms for hostages initiative of 1985-86. The underlying misleading rationale was that it was possible to initiate contacts with more "moderate" elements within the Iranian government and even to help strengthen their position vis-à-vis the more extremist factions [477] . American misperceptions about Iran had once more led to a disastrous policy and, in the process, had worsened the prospects for the improvement of U.S. - Iranian relations.

The Iranian Revolution and subsequent events also contributed to the formation of an image of political Islam as a revolutionary, disruptive and anti-Western force. Senator John Glenn echoed this general perception when he affirmed in 1981 during a congressional hearing: "... this whole thing is the first time, in modern days at least, that we have seen a whole nation perpetrate what in effect is a terrorist activity and base it in large part on fundamentalist religious beliefs" [478].

7.2. The U.S. Support for the *Mujahidin* in the Afghan - Soviet War

7.2.1. America's Stake in the Afghan War

The United States involvement in the Afghan morass and support for the Afghan rebels took place in the Cold War scenario, as a response to the Soviet invasion. America's interest in Afghanistan, from the end of the Second World War was quite limited, since it was considered that the country had no value to American security interests [479]. The Soviets, on the other hand, launched since the early 1950s

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[477] James Bill. "The U.S. Overture to Iran, 1985-1986: An Analysis", in Nikki Keddie and Mark Gasiorowski (eds.), *Neither East Nor West* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 169.
[478] U. S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Iran Agreements* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 45.
[479] Leon B. Poullada, "The Road to the Crisis 1919-1980", in Rosanne Klass (ed.), *Afghanistan: The Great Game Revisited* (NY: Freedom House, 1987), pp. 47-8.

leading aid giver, sponsoring, in particular, the recruitment and equipment of the army, but also providing significant levels of economic aid.

It was only in the late 1950s that the United states made a serious effort to reverse that trend: Washington maintained then a considerable presence and an active aid programme (to the tune of some $500 million) in Afghanistan, in an indirect but nonetheless very real competition for influence. But the prevailing view was that the Americans should not seek a closer relationship involving, for instance, a higher degree of military cooperation, since the Soviet Union most probably intended to let Afghanistan serve as an example of a non-aligned state living undisturbed in the Soviet vicinity [480]. By the mid 1970s, American political presence had been curtailed dramatically, and economic aid was cut down to an insignificant $15 million in 1975. The declining U.S. clout coincided with significant inroads made by the communists in Afghanistan.

By this time the Soviets had started to show their real intentions towards Afghanistan. In 1973, they sponsored the coup d'état that overthrew the monarchy. In 1978 another coup d'état took place, this time by the Khalqi (Masses) faction of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), an operation that was meticulously planned by Soviet experts. By mid-1979 the Soviets were already deeply involved in Afghanistan with thousands of troops and advisers.

Throughout most of this period, Washington remained largely silent about the massive human rights abuses and oppression to which the Afghan people were subjected. It was only after the abduction and murder of U.S. Ambassador Dubbs in March of 1979 that U.S. relations with the regime were downgraded and the aid programme curtailed, though not completely eliminated. By the end of the year, at a time when U.S. intelligence services had overwhelming evidence that an invasion was about to begin, the State Department refused to characterise Soviet forces in Afghanistan as "combat troops" and Under Secretary of State David Newson reportedly objected to a press backgrounder on the subject "on the grounds that this might be seen by the Soviets as U.S. meddling in Afghan affairs" [481]. In December 1979, noting the precarious position of the communist regime in Kabul, the USSR, claiming that they had been invited in by the Afghan government, invaded

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[480] Charles F. Dunbar, "U.S. Policy Toward Afghanistan", in Noor A. Husain and Leo E. Rose (eds.), *Pakistan - U.S. Relations* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of Est Asian Studies, 1988), p. 35.

[481] Quoted in Alexander Alexiev, *The United States and the War in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, January 1988), p. 7.

Afghanistan, killing the incumbent prime minister and installing the Parcham leader, Babrak Amal, in his place.

The full-scale Soviet invasion finally elicited a strong response from Washington, which had until then adopted a rather passive position[482]. The invasion was described by Carter as "the most serious threat to world peace since the Second World War..." [483]. The view taken by Carter that the invasion was a strategic challenge to American interests led to the enunciation of the Carter Doctrine which warned against Soviet aggressive intentions vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf. Brzezinski, whose perspectives underlaid Carter's approach, considered the April coup "as the opening gambit in a Soviet master plan for achieving hegemony in Southwest Asia" and that "it would be followed in due course... by the incorporation of Afghanistan into the Soviet orbit and ultimately by political and military moves to subjugate the oil-producing states"[484] .

Vance's appraisal of the Soviet motivations differed. He thought Moscow's objectives were "primarily local, and related directly to perceived threats to its national security" [485] . He saw the regional "fundamentalist Islamic resurgence" as an external threat to the internal stability of Soviet Central Asian republics and the security of its southern borders. The immediate aim of the Soviet invasion was the weakness of the incumbent Afghan regime which might create a context where Islamic fundamentalists would take power. This in turn would likely be followed by the spread of the Islamic fundamentalist rule to other nations along Russia's southern border [486].

7.2.2. Bolstering the Islamist Resistance

The perceived threat posed by the Soviet invasion led Carter to give the CIA the green light for an American-orchestrated covert assistance programme to be

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[481] Quoted in Alexander Alexiev, *The United States and the War in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, January 1988), p. 7.
[482] Poullada, *op. cit.* : pp. 55-6.
[483] Quoted in Gabriella Grasselli, *British and American Responses to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing, 1996), p. 121.
[484] Diego Cordovez and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 32.
[485] Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 388.
[486] *Ibid.* : p. 396.

financed in part by congressional appropriations and in part with Saudi Arabian help. As in other instances of U.S. policy in the Arab world, the American response to the Afghan war was solely driven by preoccupations with the Soviet influence and, by doing so, it failed to appreciate fully the dynamics of the conflict from the perspective of its direct interveners. The overriding need to bolster the Afghan resistance led the United States to provide uncritical support to the most extremist factions of the *mujahidin*, a policy that the United States would subsequently regret. Chosen solely on the basis of expediency and short-term usefulness in support of what was conceived as America' s national interests, they later went their own way and turned against U.S. interests. Aid started out at relatively modest levels of $30 million in 1980 and $50 million in 1981 [487].

In the Carter administration, the motivation for providing aid to the Afghan resistance groups was not the intention to drive out the Soviets, since it was taken for granted that Afghanistan was lost to communism. U.S. policy aimed only to impose costs that might discourage the Soviets from further adventures and to keep the Soviet Army from consolidating its position in Afghanistan and moving against Pakistan [488]. Pakistan agreed to serve as the conduit for the gradually expanding aid but only after tough bargaining with Washington.

In the process, Washington let Pakistan assume control of the entire operation. The Pakistani Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) not only administered the distribution of aid, but also insisted on controlling and directing the military operations of the *mujahidin*. Rubin explains the American's limited direct involvement in the distribution of aid as deriving from the fact that Washington was not looking for political alternatives to the Kabul regime, but merely inflicting damage on the Soviets: "The United States was particularly indifferent about which groups might have more popular support, to be more amenable to a political settlement, or be more likely to form a stable government" [489].

Islamabad favoured fundamentalist Islamic groups in the allocation of aid. Pakistan had been the driving force behind the development of Afghan fundamentalist groups. Under the monarchy, they were not a significant force. Based primarily in ethnic minorities, especially the Tajiks, they were opposed to Pushtun domination

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[487] Cordovez and Harrison, *op. cit.* : p. 53.
[488] *Id.* : pp. 102-3.
[489] *Ibid.*.

because of their ideological rejection oftribalism, a characteristic that contended with their goal of creating a unified Islamic state.

Due to the harsh repression under communist rule, the fundamentalists, numbering a few hundred adherents, were forced to flee to Pakistan. There they forged an alliance with Pakistan fundamentalists and Pakistani intelligence agencies that was to become central in the context of the Afghan conflict. The Pakistanis used the Afghan fundamentalists in their rivalry with Kabul. The predominantlyTajik Jamiat-i Islami [490], trained by the ISI - a derivation of the Pakistani Jamiat-i Islami - and another fundamentalist faction also recruited in 1974,Hizb-i Islami, [491] were later to become the principal beneficiaries of Pakistan-administered U.S. aid [492].

With the communist take-over in Kabul in 1978,Hizb-i Islami and other exiled fundamentalist groups, took advantage of the stream of Afghan refugees flowing into Pakistan to enlargen their ranks. They recruited cadres among the refugees with the help of the ISI and affluent fundamentalist groups in the Gulf region and throughout the Middle East. The Islamists consistently received more aid than other Islamist, traditionalist or nationalist groups. Rabbani's Jamiat, Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami and Saayaf's Ittihad-i Islami [493] received the largest share of aid at the expense of four other groups headed by traditionalist Muslim personalities with tribal alliances[494] . In bolstering the fundamentalist factions, Zia was also legitimating his Islamisation agenda[495].

In 1980 the Pakistani regime, attempting to organise the Afghan resistance, officially recognised six Islamic parties [496] as representatives of the refugees and *mujahidin.* At Saudi Arabia's insistence, a seventh was added - that of Saayaf. Parties with other credentials were left out or encouraged to join existing groups.Yousaf,

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[490] Headed by Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani, it is considered a moderate Islamist group. See Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chapter 9; O. Roy, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War* (Princeton, NY: The Darwin Press, 1995), pp. 80-1, and Graham Fuller, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991), pp. 50-1.

[491] Led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, it is generally viewed as a radical Islamist group. According to Roy (*Afghanistan*, p. 80), the Pakistani Jamiat choice from among the *mujahidin* has always been the Hizb-i Islami. See also Roy, *Islam and Resistance* and Fuller, *op. cit.* : pp. 49-50.

[492] The background to this question is provided by Cordovez and Harrison, *op. cit.* : p. 61, and Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 83-4.

[493] Headed by Abd Rasul Saayaf, it is a radical Islamic group, that due to its ties to Saudi Arabia, has a Wahhabi, anti-Shia orientation: See Fuller, *op. cit.* : pp. 51-2.

[494] Rubin, *The Fragmentation*: pp. 198-9.

[495] Rubin, *The Search for Peace*: p. 35; Cordovez and Harrison, *op. cit.*: p. 162.

director of ISI's Afghanistan operations during 1983-87 affirmed that "it was then a firm principle that every commander must belong to one of these seven parties, otherwise he got nothing from ISI" [497]. Elaborating on the Pakistani's method of evaluation of the Afghan groups merit, Rubin says that "the ISI explicitly excluded as criteria for aid the extent of a party's political support among Afghans or its potential for establishing a stable government" [498]. Thus only the more radical Islamist groups were favoured.

Pakistan was not the only party to the process of filtering Afghan groups that served its interests. The Saudis were highly involved in the Afghan operation and they "treated Afghanistan as a religious issue and deferred to their own religious establishment, which preferred the Islamists, and particularly the Salafis among them" [499].

ISI involvement in the Afghan war effort became the single largest programme of the agency. It operated seven training camps where a grand total of 80,000 resistance fighters were trained during the course of the war. According to Yousaf, the flow of one thousand a month in 1984 increased steadily in number. The training camps became known as the "University of *Jihad*". Many Islamists got there in touch with radical interpretations of Islam and the training in arms that they acquired enabled them, once they disbanded and returned to their countries, to engage in Islamist-inspired activity against the state.

In the United States there was never much concern over the fact that fundamentalists had gained control over the resistance and in the process had overrun more moderate elements. In Yousaf's account there was "endless bickering" and "never-ending" friction between the ISI and the CIA but primarily over the question of the control of the aid programme and only secondarily over the role of the fundamentalists [500].

Assistance to the *mujahidin* by the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, and other donors increased gradually. American aid - probably the most significant - did not give the fighters the capacity to mount an efficient campaign against the Soviets.

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[496] Apart from the aforementioned parties, the others included were: the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan; the Afghan National Liberation Front; the Movement of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Party - Khalis Group.

[497] Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin, *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story* (London: Mark Cooper, 1992), p. 40.

[498] Rubin, *op. cit.* : p. 201.

[499] Rubin, *op. cit.* : p. 199.

[500] Yousaf and Adkin, *op. cit.* : p. 83, 95-6, 102-3, 105.

Part of the problem lay in the fact that the United States refused to supply the resistance with truly effective modern weapons that would have allowed it to achieve its combat potential.

Beginning in the second half of 1984, the U.S. Congress and especially the Senate, where support for the Afghan cause was unanimous and truly bipartisan, became increasingly concerned about the seemingly ineffective assistance to the resistance. A resolution was introduced mandating a large increase in U.S. assistance and, more important, making the supply of effective weapons possible [501].

In the early months of 1984 Representative Charles Wilson, literally forced the CIA to expand the Afghan programme, pushing for a massive increase in appropriations for the 1984-85 fiscal year. The $30 million that had initially been requested by the CIA shot up to $120 million. Wilson's success in quadrupling the Afghan programme opened the way for burgeoning increases to $250 million in 1985, $470 million in 1986, and $630 million in 1987[502] . As a result of this congressional victory, President Reagan signed a national security directive, NSDD 166, which stipulated that it was U.S. policy to help the Afghan resistance drive out the Soviet forces "by all available means" [503].

The increasing aid permitted substantial improvements in resistance capabilities on the ground, and in the fall of 1986 in the air as well, with the first deliveries of sophisticated American anti-air missiles changing the nature of the war in several important ways. The U.S.-made Stingers and the less effective British Blowpipe missile greatly enhanced the operational effectiveness and survivability of resistance units, as well as extracting a steep price from the Soviets in terms of aircrafts lost and casualties. The coming to power in the Kremlin of Mikhail Gorbatchev created a new context that led to the signing in April 1988 of the Geneva Accords, by which the Soviets pledged to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan within nine months.

In the United States, the previously unshakeable support for the Afghan policy began to waver. In the fall of 1989, the State Department challenged the large share of aid that went to Hikmatyar and Saayaf, as well as the Peshawar parties exclusive status as conduits for assistance. The State Department questioned not only the fundamentalist group's effectiveness and their opposition to a negotiated settlement,

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[501] Harrison, *op. cit. : pp. 155-6.*
[502] *Id.* : p. 157.
[503] Alexiev, *op. cit.* : p. 12.

which in the circumstances, seemed to require the sidelining of extremists. In 1989, Representative Anthony Beilenson, chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence called for an end to all assistance to fundamentalist groups. He assessed the U.S. policy towards the Afghan resistance in the following terms: "Some of the largest and best equipped factions are made up of Islamic fundamentalists whose goals for a new Afghanistan are in stark contrast with our own. We may have been willing to ignore the ideology of the rebels while they were fighting the Soviets, but now that they are fighting only their countrymen and are trying to form a new post-occupation government as well, we face an entirely different situation that demands a cut-off of our military aid" [504] .

The Bush administration decided that preference should be given to regional or local military *shuras* inside Afghanistan, although, in practice, the arms pipeline continued to strengthen the Afghan groups that U.S. policymakers wanted to drop. In 1990, Congress allocated only $280 million, a 60 percent reduction of the previous year's outlay [505]. It was only after the abortive 1991 coup that led to the dissolution of the USSR that Moscow and Washington cut off all weapons supplies. Despite opposition from the CIA, the United States terminated all deliveries as of the end of fiscal year 1991.

The United States support to the Afghan Islamists was a major foreign policy blunder since Afghanistan became a breeding ground of Islamic extremists. What is now regarded as the "Afghan menace" is just one more example of how maladroit the Americans are in choosing local allies that ultimately threaten U.S. interests [506].

Pakistani officials estimate that at least 2800 foreign Muslims were still in Afghanistan in 1993. Veterans of the Afghan War have now surfaced in a dozen different countries. They have returned home and have become the spearheads of radical Islamist movements in Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Egypt, Sudan and many other places. Many of them are undergoing training by Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Sudanese camps. Extremists trained in Afghanistan have also struck against American interests: some were involved in the World Trade Centre bombing and, allegedly, in the 1995 bombing of the National Guard facility in Riyadh.

There was never much reflection in Washington on the fact that the fundamentalists might become a liability to American interests.Krakowski, advisor to

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[504] Kurt Lohbeck, *Holy War, Unholy Victory* (Washington, D. C. : Regnery Gateway, 1993), p. 173.
[505] *Id.* : p. 105.

Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, stated flatly that "no one at State was interested" [507]. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger is quoted as saying "we knew we were involved with Islamic fundamentalists. We knew they were not very nice people, that they were not at all people attached to democracy. But we had this terrible problem of making choices"[508]. He says that the United States considered the possibility of cultivating moderate elements and that "there was some attempt to do that, but that the real point is that we had to make choices" [509].

The strange cooperation between fundamentalists and Western intelligence agencies was never openly questioned until the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. One U.S. official argued against the continuation of the arming of the Afghan resistance in the following terms: "There's the issue of narcotics trafficking, attitudes toward women, human-rights violations, the shadow of Islamic fundamentalism"[510]. Congressional debates on Afghanistan show, however, a glaring lack of reflection on the nature of the Afghan Islamists groups Washington was supporting. There is a notable absence of analysis on the kind of principles they upheld, the interests they represented and their international connections. This is because, as Barnett Rubin explains, "the debate about policy in Afghanistan continues to unfold within a bi-polar conceptual framework derived from the Cold War, which is true to the realities of neither Afghanistan nor the contemporary international system" [511].

It seems as if among American policymakers there was never a consensus or even an awareness on the kind of challenges Afghan Islamists might pose after the Soviet withdrawal. As informed an observer as Rubin declared in 1990: "I do not subscribe to the view that the U.S. should necessarily fear or oppose Islamic political movements in Afghanistan" who fight not only for the "self-determination" of their country, but also "for their own version of an Islamic state"[512]. In the late 1980s, the strongest voice against the continuation of military aid to the *mujahidin* was Selig Harrison, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment, who pointed out before Congress the "Islamic fundamentalist obscurantism of many of the resistance groups"

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[506] Godfrey Jansen, " "The Afghans" - An Islamic Time Bomb",*Middle East International*, n. 438, 20 November 1992: p. 16.
[507] Cordovez and Harrison, *op. cit.* : p. 164.
[508] *Ibid.* .
[509] *Ibid.* .
[510] Quoted in Linda Feldman, "U.S.-Afghan Policy Under Pressure",*The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 September 1989: p. 8.
[511] U. S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *United States Policy Toward Afghanistan* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1990), p. 81.
[512] *Id.*: p. 128.

and their ideological incompatibility with "American values" [513]. Beyond these considerations, he stressed the far-reaching consequences of "supporting fundamentalist groups that are attempting to destabilize Central Asia" [514].

American intelligence agencies were not also fullycognizant of the reality. In a 1991 RAND study on Afghanistan, expert Graham Fuller doubted the*mujahidin* would engage in terrorist activity against U. S. interests since they "recognize the role that the United States played in supporting the anti -Soviet jihad"[515]: "Afghan Islamists maintain no distinct and outstanding grievance that is likely to lead to such an attack on the U. S. interests" [516]. As in other episodes of American foreign policy, only time and experience would prove how wrong the Americans were.

7.3. The Shia Holy War Against the United States: America's Intervention in Lebanon

7.3.1 The Radicalisation of Lebanese Shiites

American setbacks in Lebanon must be set against the background of the disintegration of the country, the radicalisation of the Shiite community and Iran's intervention in the factional fighting. Although the 1982 Israeli invasion is at the origin of Lebanon's descent into chaos and facilitated Iran's involvement in Lebanon affairs, a number of the other factors made Lebanon susceptible to foreign intervention and a risky precinct for Americans.

The chronic weakness of the Lebanese state stemmed from the imbalance of political power among its sectarian groups. The Maronite Christians and the Sunni Muslims had shared power uneasily since Lebanon was granted its independence in 1946. The Shiite community was excluded from power-sharing schemes and its existence largely ignored. The system reflected the population divisions that existed in the 1940s but, less than thirty years later, it became outmoded. Between 1956 and

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[513] U. S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Recent Developments in U. S. Policy Toward Afghanistan* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 30.
[514] *Ibid.* .
[515] *Islamic Fundamentalism in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991), p. 34.
[516] *Id.*: p. 35.

1975, the Shiite population tripled, from 250,000 to 750,000, making it Lebanon's largest single confessional community [517].

The Lebanese political system was never altered to reflect these changes. The poor, less-educated, and politically - disorganisedShia were powerless to redress the event. Residing in the underdeveloped southern half of Lebanon, they suffered discrimination and felt alienated from the mainstream of Muslim politics and society.

The radicalisation of the Shia in Lebanon heightened in the 1980s at Iranian instigation. In 1981 Islamic Amal, an offshot of the Shia secular party, Amal, was created. Shortly thereafter, another faction split fromAmal, and under the leadership of Abbas Mussavi and the spiritual guidance of Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, an activist Shia leader, came to be known as the Hizbollah, or the party of God.

An offshoot of the Iranian Hizbollah, the party served Khomeini's purposes of exporting the revolution and its terrorist activities were a planned and deliberate instrument of Iranian foreign policy. Hizbollah became known and feared for the use of "martyrs", willing to kill in the service of the faith, in a crusade against "impiety" and the "infidels". Fadlallah, the mentor of the Lebanese Hizbollah, committed to the transnational ideology of Shia activism, corroborated the basic underpinnings of Khomeini's thought. He said that "we do not hold in our Islamic belief that violence is the solution to all types of problems; rather, we always see violence as a kind of surgical operation that a person should use only after trying all other means, and only when he finds his life imperilled..." [518] .

Hizbollah provided Iran with a crucial opening to consolidate and expand its influence in the Middle East. Iran exploited and co-opted the spontaneous support of Lebanese Shiites, whose human distress and hopelessness made them the most receptive of all Shiites to the export of the Islamic Revolution [519].

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[517] Martin Kramer, "The Calculus of Jihad", in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Fundamentalisms and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 540.
[518] Quoted in Bruce Hoffman, *Recent Trends and Future Prospects of Iranian Sponsored International Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, March 1990), p. 10.
[519] Kramer, *op. cit.* : pp. 541-2.

7.3.2. The Escalation of the Terror Campaign Against the United States

The 1982 events, including the Israeli occupation of the Shiite south, the massacre of Palestinians by Maronite militiamen in league with Israel, and the deployment of American and French troops near the Shiite slums of Beirut, led to the escalation of Shia terrorism in Lebanon.

In the circumstances, Hizbollah and affiliated Shia groups willingly mobilised for what they considered "the last stages of our Holy War to end the domination of Lebanon by Cross-worshippers and their Crusader masters" [520]. Fadlallah envisioned Hizbollah's role as "a battle with vice at its roots", the first root being in the Shia leader's view, the United States. The party's manifest stated that "Imam Khomeini, our leader, has repeatedly stressed that America is the cause of all our catastrophes and the source of all malice... We will turn Lebanon into a graveyard for American schemes" [521]. Hizbollah's ambitions also included the ousting of the Maronite regime and the crushing of Israeli forces.

The deployment of a Multinational Peacekeeping Force (MNF) comprising military units from the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy to Lebanon in order to protect the Palestinians and to restore some semblance of order, was met with a series of terrorist operations. In March 1983, a detachment of Italian soldiers was attacked by Shia operatives, a group of U.S. Marines was fired upon and a French paratroop unit was targeted. The incidents continued throughout April, when a two-man command drove a car loaded with explosives into the chancellery of the United States in Beirut, killing 69 persons.

Shia violence against Western targets escalated as the United States became increasingly mingled in the inter-communal fighting. U.S. military forces provided the Lebanese Army with support in its offensive against Shia militias and their Druse allies during September 1983.

In response to this situation, Shia militias unleashed an intensified campaign of terrorist suicide car and truck bombings in October and November designed to drive the U.S. forces from Lebanon and destroy the MNF arrangement. On 23 October, simultaneous suicide truck bombings rocked the U.S. Marine headquarters at Beirut Airport, killing 241 Marines, and the French paratroop headquarters in that

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[520] Taheri, *op. cit.* : p. 11.

city, killing 58 persons. A similar attack was staged on the Israeli military government building in Sidon, on 4 November, resulting in 67 deaths [522].

The 1983 attacks were claimed in the name of Islamic Jihad, which, according to Taheri, was not in fact a single terrorist entity, but a front or coalition of individual Shia groups operating at the behest of Iran under a common framework. Islamic Jihad was a cover name for operations carried out by Hizbollah, sponsored by Iran, with additional support provided by other Middle Eastern countries" [523].

Taheri contends that terrorist activities in Lebanon were supervised in Tehran by Fazl-Allah Mahalati, who was in charge of "one of the largest terror groups in the Middle East" [524]. Within months of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the first Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) were dispatched to Lebanon, ostensibly in support of the beleaguered PLO forces. The IRGC quickly established a forward headquarters at Baalbek in the predominantly Shia Bekaa Valley and a general headquarters just over the border in the Syrian village of Zebdani. The Zebdani headquarters, in fact, was transformed by the Revolutionary Guards into their largest single base of operation outside Iran. With the IRGC firmly entrenched in Lebanon, direct and immediate contact had been established between Teheran and sympathetic Shia extremist groups in that country, the most affected by the collapse of the state and of the violence that ensued [525].

The individual terrorist organisations that are believed to have carried out operations under the banner of Islamic Jihad include Hizbollah, al-Dawa and Jundollah (soldiers of God). According to Taheri, although dependent on Tehran for spiritual guidance and instructions the groups acted independently and mostly without coordinating the activities among themselves: "with the exception of some key operations which involved Syrian and Iranian Intelligence services, at least at the planning level and in providing necessary logistical support, the groups in question seemed to have almost total operational independence" [526].

There is reason to believe that the nerve centre of Islamic Jihad operations in the Middle East in the early 1980s was Iran's Embassy in Damascus. Syria shared Iran's aims and was willing to accept a tactical alliance with Tehran in order to get rid

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[521] Quoted in Kramer, *op. cit.* : p. 545.
[522] U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), p. 281.
[523] Taheri, *op. cit.* : p. 125.
[524] *Id.* : p. 88.
[525] Robin Wright, *Sacred Rage* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1985), pp. 80-1, 84.

of hostile foreign forces in its Lebanese backyard. With an operational budget in 1983 of some $400 million - the largest of any Iranian legation - the Iranian Embassy in the Syrian capital also had a staff of over 200 persons. The Ambassador, Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, reportedly enjoyed direct access to Khomeini in his role as coordinator of Islamic Jihad activities [527].

Shia terrorist operations eventually forced American and French forces into a full retreat from Lebanon in 1984. The violence also pushed Israeli forces back to a narrow "security zone" in the south. From 1984 onwards, and due to increased security measures that made bombing attacks more difficult to execute,Shia terrorist activity concentrated on kidnappings and hijackings.

An American airliner was hijacked in 1985 to secure the freedom of Lebanese Shiites held by Israel, and two hijackings of Kuwait airliners in 1984 and 1988 to win freedom for Lebanese Shiites held by Kuwait for the bombings there. Islamic Jihad and other groups affiliated with Hizbollah abducted dozens of foreigners in Lebanon: 13 in 1984, 23 in 1985 and 11 in 1986, the number declining ever since. The five Americans abducted in 1984 by the Islamic Jihad were used to coerce the United States into pressuring Kuwait to release the aforementioned Shia terrorists held in that country [528]

The terrorist campaign against the United States symbolised the growing anti-American mood in the Arab world, largely as a result of the American support to Israeli policies. Islamist acts of terror shocked the Americans and left policy makers in disarray. Hermann Eilts, a former American ambassador to the Middle East, explained this state of affairs by pointing out that "the road to confrontations of the type that we have experienced" have come as a surprise because "issues involving Islamic fundamentalism have been handled on a policy level by essentially uninformed and superficial individuals" [529]. Referring to the issue of Islamic fundamentalism as the grounds for those acts, he said "the whole issue of religion as a factor in politics is not one that plays a very prominent part in our thinking" [530].

The Islamic crusade inspired by Iran succeeded in creating an energetic wave of militancy, bringing with it varying degrees of instability throughout the region, as well as outside the Middle East. The United States approached the crusade basically

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[526] Taheri, *op. cit.* : p. 125.
[527] *Id.* : pp. 125-6.
[528] Hoffman. *op. cit.* : pp. 17-8.
[529] U. S. Congress, *Islamic Fundamentalism*: p. 76.
[530] *Id.*: p. 77.

from the standpoint of mere violence. Representative Steven Solarz defined the general perception when, during the 1985 congressional hearings on Islamic activism, he stated: "Islamic fundamentalism poses a problem for the United States ...when terrorists who appear to be motivated by the ideology of fundamentalism engage in actions which put at risk the lives of American interests and which threaten established American policies"[531]. Islamist-inspired violence came, furthermore, to be indissociably associated with the image of political Islam.

The second consequence of the terrorists acts against Western targets, was to assume that the Iranian hand was behind every trouble, and that Tehran constituted an immediate threat to the stability of pro-Western allies and to the Gulf region. The belief in the Iranian-orchestrated campaign of subversion led the United States, on the one hand, to gradually side with Iraq in the first Gulf War, and, on the other, to strengthen cooperation with its Arab allies.

7.4. The United States and Political Islam: A Flexible Approach

As the preceding sections highlight, American approach to political Islam was not a monolith and undifferentiated, but depended on the type of movement and the latter´ s disposition towards American interests.

Looked at superficially, American dealings with political Islam proved to be a bitter affair and the setbacks infringed by Islamists hard to swallow. Terrorism and hostage-taking by Shia groups such as Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah in Lebanon, and the occupation of the American Embassy in Iran by a group of students atKhomeini´s behest, were acts that moved the problem of Islamic activism to the centre of American consciousness. Amorphous fears of a threat emanating from Islamic religious "fanatics" and the feeling of helplessness, symbolised by the pitiful attempt in April 1980 to free the American Embassy hostages by force, were widespread among the Americans.

However, during the 1980s there was one instance of long and systematic cooperation with Islamist Afghan groups against the Soviet Union. The *mujahidin*

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[531] *Id.*: p. 149.

received approximately $3.5 billion in arms and other aid from the CIA[532], regardless of their political orientation or Islamist zeal. In this way, the most radicalIslamist group - Hekmatyar's party-received the lion's share of American aid. For a long time, it did not seem to worry the Americans that Hekmatyar's party was openly anti- American, that it committed all sorts of human rights abuse, quite apart from the fact that he was also trafficking in heroin on the side. And it was only after the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, in fact, when both superpowers cooperated closely in the run-up to the 1990-1 Gulf war, and when Hekmatyar's party took Saddam Hussein's side in the conflict, that the Americans acknowledged his well-known crimes, reduced their support for him and finally ended it.

Therefore, it seems clear that it was not religious character, nor cultural tradition that was a problem for Washington's foreign policy, but actions which threatened Western, specifically, American interests. The U. S. Middle Eastern policies are primarily determined by the analysis of economic and power interests, not by the evaluation of a religion. Islamist tendencies were largely irrelevant to American foreign policy, as long as they constituted no threat to certain vital interests, such as the oil question, the maintenance of pro-Western regimes, Israel, and regional stability. Within this setting, Washington saw "good" and "bad"Islamists. During the 1980s, when American policymakers and strategists considered the Persian Gulf as a key region, their primary concern was the Soviet threat, not Islam, and the latter was effectively used as a weapon against communism.

[532] "The Dark Side of Islam", *Time*, 4 October 1993: p. 62.

8. The Intellectual Backdrop: Approaches to Political Islam

8.1. The Nature of the Islamist Challenge

In the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79 political Islam was seen and evaluated mainly as a Shia and Persian phenomenon and as the mainspring of Islamic uprisings and revolution. The fears of Iranian-inspired widespread destabilisation were reinforced by Iran's call for a worldwide Islamic revolution and to topple unIslamic governments; Shia uprisings and riots in 1979 in the oil-rich eastern province of Saudi Arabia and the seizure of the Grand Mosque by militants in Mecca; attempted coups and bombings of foreign embassies in Bahrain and Kuwait in the early 1980s. Following Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the radicalisation of the Shia population and the emergence of extremist Shia Islamist groups, such as Hizbollah, further strengthened those perceptions. Shia extremists were responsible for the suicide truck bombings of American, French and Israeli military in Lebanon in October 1983 and the subsequent rash of kidnappings of foreigners in Lebanon.

Although the most visible from the Western perspective, Islamist radicalism was not exclusively Iranian: in 1981, the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat was assassinated by members of an extremist group. Moreover, "revolutionary Islam", as Olivier Roy calls it [533], was not the only or the most pervasive feature of political Islam. Actually, during the 1980s, "Islamic revivalism [had] become part of the mainstream Muslim society, producing a new class of modern educated but Islamically oriented elites ..." [534]. The pressures for more Islamic-oriented societies was common among the middle and lower classes, educated and uneducated, professionals and workers, young and old, men and women.

Islamists have scored points almost everywhere in pushing governments to adopt Islamist measures and to tolerate their hold over professional unions, university campuses, and inner-city neighbourhoods. These developments have also forced rulers from Morocco to Malaysia to become more Islamically sensitive, to co-opt religious institutions or leaders and to enhance their Islamic legitimacy. Arab rulers have employed Islamic rhetoric and symbols more often, expanded support for

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[533] *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

Islamic institutions, increased religious programming in the media, and been more attentive to public religious observances such as the fast ofRamadan. In the 1980s, Islamists forced an amendment to the Egyptian Constitution introducing*Sharia* as the main source of legitimisation and engineered the *Sharia*'s actual imposition in Mauritania in 1983 and in Pakistan in 1985. They pressuredAlgeria's FLN to amend the family code in 1984 and forced changes in Sudan's penal code while Gen. Numeiry was still in power [535].

By the end of the 1980s, a series of events have coalesced to giveIslamists more prominence in the political scene of their countries. One of the most important was the climate of economic distress caused by the decline in the quality of life over the course of the decade. A sharp economic crisis prompted governments to engage in partial openings of the political system. Actually, the effort by Arab governments to undertake political liberalisation was mainly the result of the adoption of structural adjustment programmes.

Popular disillusionment with incumbent regimes, over internal problems or their handling of inter-Arab issues, eroded the legitimacy of governments. Protests over their poor performance came to a head with the Gulf crisis, with Arab governments being questioned also for lack of assertiveness in face of the Western intervention against Iraq.

Signs of modest change in the wake of riots and demonstrations in Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Algeria and Morocco were visible. In Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan and Algeria relatively open parliamentary elections enabled Islamists to access official political life by democratic means. Islamist activists even held cabinet positions in Sudan, Pakistan, Jordan and Malaysia.

In most Muslim countries, Islamist political activity has been carefully monitored and controlled since Islamists are considered the major opposition to incumbent regimes. This was particularly the case in Algeria, where the military aborted the electoral process in order to impedeIslamists from gaining power. The suppression of the latter has led to their radicalisation. In these circumstances, the extremists groups have since engaged in a ferocious war against the state.

The fact that political Islam is, in the current context, mainly a protest movement, is nothing new and has in fact become a pervasive pattern in contemporary Arab politics. The unexpected development is the wayIslamist protest

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[534] Esposito, "The Persian Gulf War ...": p. 344.

has been directed against an avowedly Islamic state: the case of Saudi Arabia. In 1995 and 1996, Islamic extremists have conducted acts of terror against regime and U.S. interests and local security forces have been unable to prevent them. Political radicals using Islam as their banner are gaining support and influence in the Arabian peninsula [536]. They demand the establishment of truly Islamic governments, an end to the rule by corrupt, unIslamic leaders, and the elimination of foreign, especially U.S. influence. These developments are ominous portents for the United states in view of the huge political and economic investment it has made in the area.

Islamist gains in Turkey also caught Western observers by surprise. A modern, westward-looking and comparatively liberal state, Turkey is considered a secular beacon in a sea of Muslim states. In March 1994,Refah, the Islamic Welfare Party, took 18 percent of the votes in local elections and won the mayoral races in Istanbul and Ankara. The December 1995 parliamentary elections gave thelslamists a narrow victory over the leading centre-right parties and enabled them to join the governmental coalition. Following the June 1996 disintegration of the coalition government, the Islamists emerged as the senior party of the coalition headed by prime minister Necmettin Erbakan.

The results alarmed Western policymakers, due to Refah´s domestic and foreign policy agenda. Erbakan´s political agenda contemplated the reversal of the secularist path and the application of *Sharia* law. The Islamists have harshly criticised American foreign policy, Turkey´s close ties with the West, its membership in NATO and its efforts to join the European Union and they have vowed to extricate Turkey from the Western orbit [537].

It seems however that Erbakan will not take any action to achieve these things. He has adopted a pragmatic approach and softened his stance considerably on many issues. Since the December elections he has talked of "respect for democratic and secularist principles of Atatürk" [538] and continued efforts towards integration in Europe. Equally important is the fact that the army would hardly remain neutral were the principles of Atatürk´s republic violated. The Islamist victory in Turkey marks, nonetheless the turning of a new page in thecountry´s history, as it puts the secularist political philosophy behind it.

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[535] Ghassan Salamé, "Islam and the West", *Foreign Policy*, n ° 90, Spring 1993. pp. 25-6.
[536] See Yaphe, "Islamic Radicalism in the Arabian Peninsula", *op. cit.*: p. 2.
[537] Sabri Sayari, "Turkey´s Islamist Challenge", *Middle East Quarterly* (III), n ° 3, September 1996: p. 42.
[538] Al-Wasat quoted in *Mideast Mirror* (10), n ° 129, 4 July 1996: p. 18.

8.2. Divisions Within the Academic Community

In the United States, the debate on political Islam has been polemic and has produced a variety of views, reflecting the multiple divisions within the academic and policy communities. Although the representations of Islam in the American media tend to be stereotyped, superficial or selective, the discussion involving scholars or experts on Islam is more sophisticated and the arguments more substantiated. This debate has not been confined to academic circles, but has been eagerly embraced by think-tanks, which often intend to successfully put across their message. The results have filtered into the policymaking processes, where political Islam has arisen as a major foreign policy issue, especially under the Clinton administration. The emerging policy on political Islam is to a large extent the result of the confluence of the views of experts on the best way for the United States to approach that phenomenon.

While most analysts agree on the nature and origins of the phenomenon, there is however little consensus on the likely direction of theIslamist movement or on how best to approach political Islam. The emerging consensus is thatIslamist movements tend to be an indigenous, homegrown response to the socioeconomic and political circumstances of Arab countries for which the incumbent governments are responsible[539] . The Islamist movements are broadly a response to ineffectual governance at home. Most Arab governments have proven unable to satisfy the demands of their peoples and have failed to meet thesocioeconomic needs of their societies. They have blocked calls for democratisation, restricting political participation, and proven insensitive to the need to effectively incorporate Islam as a major signpost of national identity.

A survey of the different approaches to political Islam, brings out two schools of thought regarding political Islam: an accommodationist and a confrontational school[540] . Within each school, the analyses that make up for the argument present different nuances but the bottom-line and the elicited policy recommendations are similar. What clearly sets the difference of approach of both schools is the appreciation of the following parameters: the nature of theIslamist movement and its ideological blueprint; its views on the domestic and regional situation and its agenda

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[539] Jonathan S. Paris, "When to Worry in the Middle East", *Orbis* (37), n° 4, Fall 1993: p. 554.
[540] This classification comes in Paris, *op. cit.* : p. 554, 556.

for change; its views of the West and its stance toward the U.S. interests in the Middle East.

8.2.1. The Case for Accommodation

The accommodationist school considers that the Islamic movement is not a threat but a healthy grassroots response to the failure of Arab governments to tackle growing socioeconomic problems. A main proponent of this approach is John Esposito, a leading American expert on Islamic groups, who maintains that the West should not brand Islamists as pariahs simply because initial efforts to create enlightened Islamic entities and movements in the Middle East have not succeeded. The thrust of this argument rests on the fundamental assumption that the Islamic revival is a complex phenomenon and encompasses a variety of movements, the diversity of which calls for a nuanced Western approach [541].

According to Esposito, there are great differences among those labelled as fundamentalists in the West. He concedes that armed, violent groups such as the Gama' at al-Islamiyya in Egypt, Hizbollah in Lebanon, and the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria jeopardise stability and violate human rights in the Middle East. But he points out that such groups are only the extremist fringe of Islamic movements and that political Islam is a multifaceted and dynamic force. This point was presented by Esposito and John Voll in an article published in 1994 in the*Middle East Quarterly* [542]. They affirm that "some who are identified as Islamic fundamentalists... are not extreme militants, and that it is in the interests of democratization and of the United States that those groups not be treated as if they were on the violent fringes of society rather than representing the views of a significant portion of many Muslim societies"[543].

He argues further that there is ample space for accommodation between Islam and democracy. Rather than attacking political Islam, he says, the governments of the West ought to be nurturing Islamic moderates. If Islamists enter coalition governments with the military and elected officials, they will be forced to compromise and abandon

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[541] Esposito, *The Islamic Threat* : p. 212.
[542] "Islam's Democratic Essence" (I), n ° 3, September 1994: pp. 3-11.
[543] "Islam and Democracy: Rejoinder" (I), n ° 4, December 1994: p. 71.

some of the rigidity that characterises them in opposition. Esposito believes that, although Islamic leaders tend to be critical of U.S. policies, in the last instance they "will generally operate ... on the basis of national interests and demonstrate a pragmatic flexibility that reflects acceptance of the realities of a globally interdependent world" [544] .

Esposito contends that the gravest flaw in the U.S. approach to the Muslim world and Islamic movements is the failure to differentiate between those that are moderate and those that are violent. This attitude "can undermine U.S. policy in the region" since it "convinces many Muslims that the United States is simply anti-Islamic"[545]. He also condemns the U.S. ideological bias against Islam. The author exhorts the U.S. government to accept or at least tolerate the ideological differences between the West and Islam. In light of the requirednuanced approach to the Islamist movement, he urges the United States to "take care to avoid being seen as intervening or as opposing the activities of Islamic organizations where such programs or activities do not directly threaten U.S. interests" [546] .

James Piscatori argues that the Western tendency to think of Islam as a monolithic bloc has obscured the diversity of ideological interpretations and of actual religious practice in Muslim societies. The misrepresentation of Islam - equating it with "fundamentalism" - has contributed to the propagation of an image of Islamic movements as inherently anti-Western[547]. He says that the views which build on the notion of the confrontational nature of Islam "must be set against the complex history of interaction between Islam and the West". This is because, he argues, "civilizations rarely, if ever, act as monolithic entities with single-minded, doctrinally-defined interests or passions. As Islamic history demonstrates political pluralism has been the norm within the Muslim world, and between it and the West and there has been a pattern of alternating cooperation and competition, alliance and violent confrontation"[548].

He argues that the differences among Islamicstates and movements are often profound and that one must distinguish between movements and not view all of them as a threat to the West. In his opinion, Islamist groups are "neither simply

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[544] *Id.* : p. 209.
[545] Esposito, "Islamic Movements, Democratization, and U.S. Foreign Policy", in P.Marr and W. Lewis (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 188, 201.
[546] *Id.* : p. 203.
[547] J. Esposito and J. Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam", *The Middle East Journal* (45), n° 3, Summer 1991: p. 440.

revolutionary nor merely accommodationist" and the continuous adaptation of their ideas and strategies "belie the simplicity of an "illiberal" or "angry" Islam"[549]. He contends that the politicisation of religion does not pose a serious threat to global order in terms of internationally coordinated action against the West. If, on the one hand, it may enable extremist Islamist movements to establish connections across international borders, it also exposes them to democratic participatory ideas and practices [550].

A similar view is defended by the RAND senior analyst Graham Fuller who believes political Islam to be the most pervasive and powerful force in the Muslim world and not necessarily antagonistic to the West. Fuller says that given the "disastrous status quo", the Islamist movements are the only opposition groups actually able to politicise and mobilise elements of the population in states where this has never happened before[551]. He does not view them as necessarily negative but surely as "historically inevitable and politically tamable. Over the long run it even represents ultimate political progress toward greater democracy and popular government" [552].

Fuller argues that Islamists have already been forced to talk in terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and justify why they are not enforcing democratic practices, and he cites the cases of Sudan, Iran and even Pakistan. He thinks that Islamists who have "ideologically totalitarian visions" are essentially a small minority [553]. In any case, should they come to power they would be forced to compromise with political reality as they would have to negotiate with political opponents and would be accountable to the people. Fuller further affirms that a weakening of the Islamist appeal would surely result: "Islamists may come up with some interesting thoughts, or some useful approaches in certain areas, but Islam does not have any unique answers" [554].

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[548] J. Piscatori, "Religion and Realpolitik", in Piscatori (ed.), *Islamic Fundamentalisms...*: p. 13.
[549] *Id.*: p. 18.
[550] Conference report; panel on "The Role of Culture, Ethnicity, and Religion in World Affairs", published in the *Baker Institute Report*, n° 3, March 1996.
[551] G. Fuller, "A Phased Introduction of Islamists", in Yehudah Mirsky and Matt Ahrens (eds.), *Democracy in the Middle East: Defining the Challenges* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), pp. 22-3.
[552] G. E. Fuller, "Islamic Fundamentalism: No Long-Term Threat", *The Washington Post*, 13 January 1992: p. A 1.
[553] "A Phased Introduction ...": p. 25.
[554] *Id.* : pp. 23-4.

Fuller thinks that Islamist forces should not be excluded from the political system, since the longer they are kept out, the more extreme they will grow. He advocates a "phased introduction" of Islamic forces into the system. This would test their capacities and their competence and expose them to public scrutiny. The author thinks that the opening up of the political system to as many Islamic parties as possible, would enlarge the debate and expose their shortcomings. In fact, he argues "one of the biggest problems within Islamic society so far is that there has not been honest critique of the shortcomings and weaknesses of other Islamic movements. Islamists have been very coy and unwilling to talk about these sensitive issues, especially when they are out of power, because they feel this quest for solidarity" [555].

Fuller advises Washington not to impede the coming to power of thelslamists since such a move would only augment the anti-West sentiment in the Arab world. He counsels the United States to give the process a little time and to let it run its course. In the end, the public in the Middle East will be the main judge to "whether Islam really has the "right stuff" to operate in the political scene for long" [556] .

Shireen Hunter believes that if Islamists came to power they would have little choice but to adopt a policy of accommodation toward the West and come to terms with it. They would "be faced with the same economic and technological shortcomings and needs that face current governments" [557] . From this perspective, any adverse effect on the West's economic interests - for instance, the disruption and manipulation by the Islamists of the supply and price of oil - would work against their countries' interests and would be short-lived [558] .

Hunter criticises the current U.S. policies to Islamists which she characterises as "denial" and "containment": the former consisting of denying the Islamists the involvement in the political process of their respective countries; the latter, applied to Islamist regimes (Iran and Sudan), is a strategy of economic weakening and political isolation [559]. She points to the danger of combating and marginalising them. She states: "this policy does run the risk of further radicalizing Islamist movements, polarizing the Arab world along secular-Islamic lines, delaying the process of reform, and thus increasing the risk of violent confrontation and chronic instability"[560] . She

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[555] *Id.* : p. 28.
[556] "No Long-Term ...".
[557] Hunter, "The Rise of Islamist Movements", *op. cit.* : p. 345.
[558] *Ibid.* .
[559] *Id.*: pp. 345-6.
[560] *Id.* : p. 346.

concludes her reasoning by saying: "in the coming years the major challenge to the West in dealing with the Islamist phenomenon will be to devise a mixed strategy of containment and dialogue strategy which would minimize short-term risks to its interests while allowing for long-term political liberalization, Islamic reformation and Islamic accommodation with the West" [561] .

Richard Murphy has a very critical view of Washington's position regarding the evolution of the political situation in the Middle East and the Islamist role. He believes that for the foreseeable future politics in this region is "likely to mean more "Islamic" politics" [562] and he acknowledges the challenges posed by Islamic groups that have anti-Western leanings, criticise the United States foreign policy, openly confront Israel and reject the peace process. However, he thinks that the enforcement of the *status quo* by Washington will, in the long run, be detrimental to American interests since political change is inevitable. He affirms that it "is not that Muslims are not "ready" for democracy", but rather that "Washington is not ready for the choices that they would probably make" [563]. The Americans, he says, in order to assure orderly transformation in the region, should encourage friendly Arab regimes to open up their political systems in an evolutionary way [564].

Leon Hadar advises the U.S. government to adopt a policy of "benign neglect" toward the coming political changes in the region [565] . He says that Washington should not continue, through aid and military support, to provide incentives for maintaining autocratic regimes. Such regimes, such as Saudi Arabia, should reform the political system in order to address popular grievances. The failure to do so makes it look that Washington is interested in the maintenance of repressive regimes, a perception that fans the Arabs' animosity towards the United States.

Hadar defends that "disengaging from the Saudis and other Middle Eastern despots will ensure that when new regimes come to power, they will not direct their wrath against Washington" [566] . America's attempt to shore up Arab regimes under assault from Islamist forces would also have major implications in domestic terms: "Clinton's geo-economic strategy with its goal of shifting resources from the military to the civilian economy, does not fit with a costly involvement in the Middle East, which a

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[561] *Id.* : p. 347.
[562] Richard Murphy and F. Gregory Gause, III, " Democracy in the Muslim Middle East", *Middle East Policy* (V), n ° 1, January 1997: p. 2 (electronic file transfer).
[563] *Ibid.* .
[564] *Id.* : p. 3.
[565] Leon T. Hadar, "What Green Peril?": p. 42.

crusade against Islam would certainly entail"[567] . The United States should rather adopt a pragmatic policy of maintaining friendly relations with the new Islamic governments instead of isolating them.

Hadar thinks that the rise of Islamic regimes in countries like Algeria or Egypt is inevitable and constitutes a transitional phase in the ongoing process of transformation of the old order in the Middle East. He deems that, once in power, the zealotry and extremism of the Islamist groups will be tempered by political realities. Their ideological rigidity and theocratic agenda will also be challenged by the need to deliver on their promises, the most difficult being economic development.

The "benign" nature of the Islamist movement is also highlighted by Robin Wright who views it as a "constructive alternative" and remarks that " a growing number of Islamists are now trying to reconcile moral and religious tenets with modern life, political competition and free markets"[568] . Wright asserts that "Islam is now at a pivotal and profound movement of evolution, a juncture increasing equated with the Protestant Reformation"[569] . This is also the viewpoint of Hooshang Amirahmadi who thinks that Islam is now in a state of flux and that the outcome of the actual debate on Islam will produce a variety of solutions capable of reconciling Islam with the modern world[570] .

A host of other academics have put forth views countering the generalisations and over-simplifications about modern Islamic movements. American scholars who have written and spoken widely on the subject include John Voll (Georgetown University), James Bill (College of William and Mary), John Entelis (Fordham University), Richard Bulliet (Columbia), Charles Butterworth (University of Maryland) and Augustus Richard Norton (Boston University). They generally assert that the failure to make distinctions among the many Islamic movements and the stereotyping of Muslims as violence-prone radicals will strengthen the extremists at the expense of the vast majority of moderate and responsible Muslims. They note that the failure to reckon the diversity of the Islamist movement creates distortions and misrepresentations and complicates the ability of the U.S. government to carry out a constructive foreign policy.

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[566] *Ibid.* .
[567] *Id.* : p. 41.
[568] "Islam, Democracy and the West", *Foreign Affairs* (71), n° 3, Summer 1992: pp. 132-3.
[569] *Id.* : p. 133.
[570] Interview with the author.

Most of them argue in favour of the inclusion of Islamists in the political sphere, as long as they renounce the use of violence. Far from hijacking democracy, they argue, the inclusion of Islamists would deepen the democratic process. It would not only reinforce the position of the moderates but would bring all Islamists into dialogue with the political system, encouraging them to be more pragmatic and less millenarian in their definition of political goals. The integration of Islamists into the political system through legal parliamentary means is preferable to letting the Islamists come to power through violence. Legal integration, they argue, at least favours the triumph of Islamists who respect parliamentary process. The question is thus not so much whether Islamists would come to power but rather how they would come to power [571].

8.2.2. The Case for Confrontation

The confrontational school argues that political Islam is inherently hostile to the Western world and is on a collision course with the latter. The West cannot mollify the Islamic world by promoting democratic ideals because there is no convergence of values between the two cultures. On a policy level, confrontationalists argue that as undemocratic and unpalatable as Arab authoritarian governments are today, the Islamist alternative might be worse. The contention here is that the Arab world is not ready for democracy. Proponents of this school would thus argue against opening up the political system to Islamist parties too soon since they are likely to "hijack" democracy. According to this rationale, Islamists are instrumentalists whose aim is to exploit the democratic system for their own long-term, non-democratic ends.

A related interpretation has been developed by Harvard's Samuel Huntington in a different context - that of international relations theory. According to Huntington, security problems in the post-Cold War world will henceforth parallel the fundamental divides between the world's civilizations. With opposed and competitive ideologies, the Judeo-Christian West is destined to conflict with the Muslim Near East and, perhaps, with the Muslim world in general.

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[571] See, for instance the conclusions of the debate on "Civil Society and the Prospects for Political Reform in the Middle East", Conference Report, 30 September - 2 October 1994, Queenstown, MD: pp. 12-3.

Huntington's analysis is based on the premise that the traditional geopolitical way of looking at international relations - balances of power among nations or blocs - is being supplanted by a geocultural set of conflicts. The core of global politics will increasingly be the interaction between the West and non-Western cultures, the underlying assumption being that the fault lines between civilizations will determine the battle lines of the future [572].

Huntington affirms that the increasing contact between cultures brought about by the media and travel has intensified consciousness of the awareness of differences between civilizations as well as commonalties within civilizations. The economic modernisation process and social change driving and accompanying this growing contact between cultures has separated people from their traditional local identities, weakening the state as the primary source of that identity in the post -colonial era. Religion - mainly in the form of fundamentalist movements - and a return to roots would increasingly move in to fill the gap in most places: "The revival of religion ... provides a basis for identity and commitment that transcends national boundaries and unites civilizations" [573].

Civilizational conflicts are thus likely for a number of reasons. Huntington argues that though Western mass culture has spread across most of the globe, Western concepts of individualism, liberalism, human rights, equality, liberty, law, democracy, free markets, separation of church and state, differ fundamentally from those prevalent in Islam, Confucian, Hindu or Buddhist cultures. In fact, the propagation of Western values as "universal" has helped instead to stimulate reactions such as the religious fundamentalism taking hold in Islamic societies.

Huntington notes that, in the case of Islam, he considers it a "militant religion", there is no distinction between what is religious and what is secular. This theocratic proclivity makes it inordinately difficult for Islamic societies to accommodate non-Muslims and for Muslims to easily fit into societies where the majority is non-Muslim[574].

Huntington anticipates that in a scenario that pits "the West against the rest", an Islamic-Confucian connection is very likely, its main feature being their philosophical opposition to Western liberalism. At the moment, the conflict between the West and the Confucian-Islamic states focuses largely on the question of

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[572] Huntington, *op. cit.* : p. 22.
[573] *Id.* : p. 26.

armament and on the latter's attempt to assert their right to acquire and deploy whatever weapons they think necessary for their security[575] . This connection serves the purposes of China and North Korea on the one hand, and several Middle Eastern states on the other.

A parallel trend is that Western societies are spiritually decadent.The same analysis is made by Brzezinski who denounces the "culture of permissive cornucopia" in America that jeopardises the underpinnings of American superpower status[576]. Brzezinski considers that apart from moral implosion in the domestic front, the West will be faced with the dangers caused by instability in large stretches of the globe. Like Huntington, he acknowledges the existence of clashing civilizations along a geographical perimeter that stretches in an oblong shape across the map of East Asia. This "geographical vortex of violence", seized by political awakening and possessed with ethnic and religious fervour, is where the West is likely to see the next use of nuclear weapons [577] .

A major version of the confrontational thesis is the one that emerged in recent years and that equates Islamic fundamentalism with the communist threat. Adherents to this position claim that fundamentalism is as dangerous as communism was in its heyday. Like communism, political Islam rejects the social, economic and cultural underpinnings of the West. Just as communism thrived as an international movement fostered by a revolutionary regime in the Soviet Union, Islamic fundamentalism thrives as an international movement fostered by an odd regime in Tehran. Islamic fundamentalists have singled out the West as their main enemy, just as the Marxist-Leninists did, and are committed to destroying it. They bring to their struggle not simply the ideological zealotry that was one of the characteristics of Soviet communism, but also the religious zealotry of *Jihad* that propounds the use of violence and terrorism as major means of combating the "infidel" West [578] .

The equation of Islamic fundamentalism with communism has been made most forcefully by Daniel Pipes in the pages of his journal, the *Middle East Quarterly*, as well as at various forums. He affirms: "fundamentalist Islam is a radical utopian movement closer in spirit to other such movements (communism, fascism) than to

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[574] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Islamic - Confucian Connection",*New Perspectives Quarterly* (10), n° 3, Summer 1993: p. 21.
[575] *Ibid.* .
[576] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Weak Ramparts of the Permissive West",*New Perspectives Quarterly* (10), n° 3, Summer 1993: p. 6.
[577] *Id.* : pp. 6-7.

traditional religion"[579]. According to this author, fundamentalists believe that the great conflict of this age is between the West and Islam[580] and they see their movement as standing in direct competition with Western civilization in a fight for "global supremacy"[581].

Pipes likened the struggle to the Cold War, saying it was the American Right who won the Cold War by standing up to the USSR, and it can do the same against Islam [582] . He opposes a dialogue with "good" or "bad" fundamentalists, since he believes that "while fundamentalist groups and ideologies differ from each other in many ways, all of them are inherently extremist and all despise ourcivilization" [583] . According to Pipes, the fundamentalists' insistence that the *Sharia* be applied in Muslim countries and that Muslim rule be extended are aggressive by nature and thus incompatible with Western interests.

In light of this analysis, he urges the U.S. government "not tocooperate with fundamentalists, not encourage them, and not engage in dialogue with them. We should not work with fundamentalists but stand up against them"[584] . Pipes makes four recommendations for U.S. policy to combat the new "green" menace: (a) confront the fundamentalists; (b) pressure fundamentalist states - Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan - to moderate their policies; (c) assist those Muslims who stand up to the fundamentalists; (d) back governments in the region who are combating fundamentalism, like Algeria. Pipes alerts to the dangers of democratising Arab countries too quickly and he points to the case of Algeria, where the hasty convening of elections brought anti-democratic forces to the fore. He argues for a more modest approach, deferring the goal of democratisation to the distant future. The priority, he defends, should be the formation of a civil society and, only when it comes into existence, are elections appropriate [585] .

Martin Kramer has made a parallel argument, in which he argued that militant Islamic groups, by nature, can not be democratic, pluralistic, egalitarian or pro-

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[578] Karabell, *op. cit.* : p. 38.
[579] "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", *The National Interest* (41), Fall 1995: p. 48.
[580] "The Muslims Are Coming! The Muslims Are Coming!", *National Review*, 19 November 1990: p. 29.
[581] "There Are No Moderates", *op. cit.*: p. 48.
[582] Quoted in Noakes, *op. cit.* : p. 43.
[583] Robert H. Pelletreau. Jr., Daniel Pipes, John Esposito, "Symposium: Resurgent Islam in the Middle East", *Middle East Policy* (II), n° 2, 1994: p. 6; "There Are no Moderates": p. 54.
[584] *Ibid.* .
[585] *Id.* : p.8.

Western[586]. In an article published in *Commentary*, Kramer notes that Islamic law is not legislated but divinely revealed, that in an Islamic state the*Sharia* is the overriding criterion for governing and that in Islam the sovereignty belongs to God and not to the people. The author concludes that an Islamic state, such as it is suggested by fundamentalist thinkers, is not amenable to democracy [587].

Fundamentalists, argues Kramer, unreservedly affirm that Islam is superior to democracy. Islamists do not accept the principle of political pluralism and he points to al-Turabi, whose tract on the Islamic state argues that such a state has no need of party politics or political campaigns. He also notes the opportunistic nature of the Islamist groups in their vying for power: "There are those in these movements who allow that believers may participate in elections, envisioned as a kind of referendum of allegiance to a regime of divine justice, which would eventually bring Islam to power. But once established in power, the fundamentalists would be remiss in their Islamic obligation were they to let it slip from their hands. Anomocracy of Islamic law cannot envision its own disestablishment" [588].

Kramer affirms that Islamic movements work against Western interests and that they are irredeemably opposed to the peace process, since their ultimate aim is the elimination of Israel. He also notes that the Islamists' alliance with the West (in the case of the United States cooperation with Sunni fundamentalist groups in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan) is circumstantial and motivated by tactical considerations. Kramer flatly asserts that "for fundamentalists, the identity of the enemy has remained constant since Islam first confronted unbelief" [589].

The other danger posed by Islamic fundamentalism is, in Kramer's viewpoint, the creation of a co-ordinated transnational movement that fosters subversion and instability on a global scale. This commentator notes that "fundamentalist movements have an irresistible tendency to think and act across borders" [590]. The modern means of communication and transportation greatly enhance the dissemination ofIslamist ideology and the work of underground, clandestine groups whose aim is the creation of a "global village of Islamic fundamentalism" [591].

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[586] See. for instance, Martin Kramer, "The Drive for Power",*Middle East Quarterly* (III), n ° 2, June 1996: pp. 37–49.
[587] "Islam vs. Democracy", *Commentary*, January 1993: p. 38.
[588] "Where Islam and Democracy Part Ways", in Y. Mirsky and M. Ahrens (eds.), *op. cit.* : pp. 34-5.
[589] "Islam vs. Democracy": p. 40.
[590] *Id.* : p. 39.
[591] *Ibid.* .

Kramer accuses Western intellectuals of self-deception regarding the true aims of Islamist groups. He asserts that "the refusal to see Islamic fundamentalism in this context, or to take seriously the discourse of the Islamists, is evidence of the persistent power of the West to create a wholly imaginary Islam"[592] . In the academic and intellectual community, the prevalence of the view that fundamentalism constitutes a movement of democratic reform "assures the West that no society on earth has the moral resources to challenge the supremacy of Western values"[593] . According to Kramer, the Islamist victory in the 1991 Algeria's parliamentary elections should have been understood as a caveat to "Western democracy doctors, with their blithe promise that the fundamentalist appeal would fade in a truly free ballot"[594] . Instead, Kramer remarks, the Algerian elections demonstrated that free elections in the Muslim world would rather serve Islamists' aim and were more likely to produce fundamentalist rule than not.

Judith Miller, in an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, also cautions against the reckless promotion of democracy in the Middle East and she argues that "America's mindless, relentless promotion of elections immediately is likely for now to bring to power through the ballot box those who would extinguish democracy in the name of Allah" [595] . Like Pipes, she recommended the pursuit of "more modest goals: increased political participation in government and the need for a freer press and freer public debate in all countries in the region" [596] .

Miller says that those in the West that defend universal human rights, democratic government, political tolerance and pluralism, and peace between Arabs and Israelis, should be aware of the threat posed by the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and its dissemination on a global scale. Miller argues that in spite of their rhetorical commitment to democracy and pluralism, in private Islamists reject both. She observes that "their basic ideological covenants and tracts, published declarations and interviews (especially in Arabic) appear to make these pledges incompatible with their stated goals of establishing societies under Islamic laws and according to Islamic values" [597] . There is simply no way around the fact that "Islamists are likely to remain anti-Western, anti-American and anti-Israeli" and that an

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[592] *Id.* : p. 41.
[593] *Ibid.* .
[594] *Id.* : p. 37.
[595] "The Challenge of Radical Islam", *Foreign Affairs* (72), n° 2, Spring 1993: p. 53.
[596] *Ibid.* .
[597] *Id.* : p. 51.

"Islamic state as espoused by most of its proponents is simply incompatible with values and truths that Americans and most Westerners today hold to be self-evident"[598] . She concludes that an American dialogue with such Islamic forces is a waste of time [599].

Bernard Lewis, a renowned historian of the Middle East, argued in a 1993 article published in *The Atlantic Monthly* that the nature and history of Islam and the relationship between Islam and temporal power do not make liberal democracy and Islam natural bedfellows. Islam, he explains, has been characterised through history by the absence of any legal recognition of corporate persons or the legal person, which is at the heart of the representative institutions embodied in Roman Law. The Islamic state was a theocracy where the legitimacy bestowed upon the ruler derived from God. The latter thus enjoyed an authority that could not be challenged since defying it amounted to defying God. Autocracy was thus the norm.

Lewis makes the point that the Islamists' discourse does not really address the question of democracy as it is understood in the West, as Islamic thought does not make room for such concerns. The fact remains that Islamists talk about Islamic government rather than democracy and when they speak of the "rule of law", they are referring to the unalterable law of Islam[600] . He maintains that in the current context the Islamists` emphasis on elections obscures the fact that they view it as an end in itself: "they make no secret of their contempt for democratic political procedures and their intention to govern by Islamic rules if they gain power. Their attitude toward democratic elections has been summed up as"one man, one vote, once" "[601] . Thus, "the pressure for premature democratization", he argues, "can weaken existing regimes" and "lead to their overthrow, not by democratic opposition, but by other forces that then proceed to establish a more ferocious and determined dictatorship"[602].

Peter Rodman, a former staff member of Reagan's National Security Council, has repeatedly pointed to the un-democratic intentions of the current Islamic movements. Rodman sees in Islamism as a "radical", "atavistic force hostile to all

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[598] *Id.* : p. 45. 54.
[599] For a later more refined analysis, see Miller`s "A Cresting Wave", *Middle East Quarterly* (III), n ° 2. June 1996: pp. 51-9.
[600] B. Lewis, "Islam and Liberal Democracy", *The Atlantic Monthly* (269), n° 2, February 1993: pp. 94-5.
[601] *Id.* : p. 91.
[602] *Id.* : p. 96.

Western political thought" [603] . He argues that Islamic parties invoke democracy merely as a means of capturing power and to produce militant Islamic regimes that are, in fact, inherently anti-democratic: "Islamic parties seek (out of moral conviction) to make institutional changes that would negate the possibility of their removal once in power, not only through political action but by reshaping educational and cultural life"[604] . Even Entelis, reflecting on the case of the Maghreb, says that political Islam is not so much a theology but rather a "political ideology" that uses religion to mobilise public support, being ultimately "incompatible with democracy" [605].

8.3. Political Islam as a Security Concern

As the Cold War came to an end, America's foreign policy establishment started re-evaluating the security doctrines in light of the new international realities, namely the emerging challenges to the new world order. Possible new threats included instability in Europe - ranging from German resurgence to new Russian imperialism, environmental degradation, nuclear proliferation, narcoterrorism, and Islamic fundamentalism. Eventually, the perception of political Islam as "the enemy", or, in a benign version, as a security threat, made its way into military thinking and shaped the debate on the role of NATO in the new environment. It concerned not only the European Alliance members, worried with their troubled neighbourhoods, but also the United States, whose overriding interest is the safety of its European partners.

In the United States, the preferred scenario involved a reformed NATO led by the United States in order to ensure the security of the Western Alliance. The uncertainty of the European environment seemed to warrant the continuity of the organisation, whose tasks would henceforth include protecting Europe against the new threats on its doorstep. There was talk of an imminent religious war threatening the former Yugoslavia right in the middle of Europe and of a Muslim theocratic state in Bosnia. The *New Republic* said there was a cultural rift running through Europe: "a

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[603] Rodman's intervention in the panel discussion on "Islam and Democracy: A Dilemma for U.S. Policy", in Y. Mirsky and E. Rice (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 44; See also Rodman, "Co-opt or Confront Fundamentalist Islam?", *Middle East Quarterly* (1), nº 4, December 1994: p. 64.
[604] *Ibid.* .
[605] *Id.* p. 42.

cultural curtain is descending in Bosnia to replace the Berlin Wall, a curtain separating the Christian and Islamic worlds" [606].

NATO's mission would also be redefined to include responding to out-of-area threats, such as the ones in North Africa and the Middle East [607]. The American-European unity, based on the common political and cultural history of what the *Economist* characterised "Euro-America", - a civilizational complex in Huntington's manner - [608], would still be an imperative . "Euro-America", according to this view, should hold together in order to face the challenges posed by other areas of the world, such as "Islamistan". This scenario anticipates the scaling of cultural and political-military tensions between the two civilizations, as the economic and social situation in "Islamistan" deteriorates. The 19 states that lie between Morocco and Iran, with their young, increasingly poor populations, are vulnerable to radical, anti-Western ideologies, particularly to Muslim fundamentalism. The militancy of those social groups would, consequently, be exported to Euro-America through immigration, terrorism, and new gulf wars. "Excitable governments" would easily acquire chemical weapons and medium-range missiles giving them the capacity to strike at European territory. Moreover, with its control over oil and large military forces,Beedham argues, "Islamistan" directly threatens the core interests of Euro-America [609].

In the wake of the Gulf War, the growing electoral power ofIslamist groups in Algeria - which became apparent in that country's open election - pointed to the potential for dangerous political explosions in theMaghreb. As revolutionary socialist institutions, including Algeria's ruling party, went politically bankrupt and Tunisia's pro-Western political elite declined, Islamism emerged as a powerful alternative. The huge anti-American and pro-Iraqi demonstrations that took place in Rabat, Algiers, and Tunis during the Gulf crisis had some effect in the neutral, even pro-Saddam, positions adopted by the incumbent governments. Those positions increased European concern about the potential popularity in the Maghreb of radical movements, a mix of the anti-Westernism and Islamic fundamentalism.

These events have given credence to the view that "with the end of the Cold War, the Mediterranean, which had often been considered Europe's strategic

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[606] R. D. Kaplan,"Ground Zero - Macedonia: the Real Battleground" , 2 August 1993: p. 16.
[607] Hadar, *Quagmire* : p. 123, 129.
[608] Brian Beedham, "A Standing Alliance", *The Economist* (316), n° 7670, 1-7 September 1990, supplement: pp. 5-6.
[609] B. Beedham, "The Case for Holding Together",*The Economist* (316), n° 7670, 1-7 September 1990, supplement: pp. 3-5.

backwater, is now a region where the Alliance may be most likely to face new challenges" [610] .

Even the Americans who, when they think of the Mediterranean, think first and foremost of the Eastern Mediterranean (above all Greece and Turkey as well as the Black Sea region) and see it as a transit zone to both the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, have shown a new awareness of the region. In the new international environment, practical American interest in the Mediterranean is gathering pace very rapidly and is giving rise to new perspectives and new policy concerns, alongside traditional security issues. Much of the new interest in the Mediterranean flows from its role as a centre of region and conflict [611] .

The U.S. renewed consciousness of the Mediterranean as an area of geopolitical consequence, was expressed by Secretary of Defense, William Perry at the February 1995 Munich Conference on Security Policy. There he stated: "While we must focus on Russia and the East, real, immediate challenges to NATO allies have been mounting in the South", and he added: "we must all come to grips with the threats to our interests posed by the growth of instability and extremism in North Africa and elsewhere. This is not just a Southern European problem" [612] . The remarks of the then U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Affairs, Joseph Kruzel, at the February 1995 AFSOUTH meeting, further elaborated on that point: "For NATO, the Mediterranean, rather than the Elbe, has become the front line for a variety of security issues ranging from the spread of extremism and uncontrolled migration to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction ..." [613] .

These statements highlight the factors that account for the now widespread view among Alliance members that candidates for future European security crisis are located in the Mediterranean, particularly in the sensitive region of North Africa. Instability and social extremism in the Maghreb are likely to increase primarily as the result of population growth and economic decline. In fact, the North African population (excluding Egypt) is expected to double by the year 2025[614] . Demographic pressures coupled with diminishing prospects for economic growth is the main feature of a

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[610] Ronald D. Asmus, F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, "Mediterranean Security: New Challenges, New Tasks", *NATO Review* (44), n° 3, May 1996: p. 25.
[611] Ian O. Lesser, "Southern Europe and the Maghreb: U.S. Interests and Policy Perspectives", *Mediterranean Politics* (1), n° 2, Autumn 1996: p. 231, 238.
[612] Quoted in Rodrigo de Rato, *Draft Interim Report*, North Atlantic Assembly, Sub-Committee on the Southern Region, AM 295, PC/SR (95) 2, October 1995: p. 6.
[613] *Id.* : p. 9.
[614] Asmus, Larrabee and Lesser, *op. cit.* : p. 25.

region where populations grow faster than their economies. This situation fuels growing migrations to European Union (E.U.) countries, creating economic, political and social problems for the most countries and exposing them to "thespillover of political violence from inter and intra-state conflicts across the Middle East. The spectre of Palestinian terrorism in Europe has been replaced by the new reality of bombings and assassinations carried out by opposition groups, anxious to extend the scope of their battle against existing regimes" [615] .

The prospect of the spread of WMD, a leading post-Cold War security interest, is nowhere anticipated more keenly than around the Mediterranean. Systemic, regional and political turmoil reinforces proliferation risks in North Africa[616] . The potential advent of a radical Islamic regime in Algeria, with its nuclear ambitions and missile interests, could accelerate WMD acquisition and worsen the outlook for their use in times of crisis. Lesser and Tellis point that violent political change in the Maghreb could create the setting for broader WMD-based alliances in the Middle East (Algeria-Syria-Iran, for instance).

As WMD and long-range missile systems proliferate in North Africa, traditional distinctions between European, North Africa, even Middle Eastern security, become blurred. In effect, the spread of long-range weapons enables possessor states far from centres of conflict to play a role in events far from their borders. On the other hand, the vulnerability of European population centres (especially in the context of ballistic missile threats) is likely to change the calculus ofcooperation in ways that will directly affect U.S. strategies: European countries may be less willing to offer support and facilities for contingencies in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf [617].

In the often unstated views of Alliance members, the greatest challenge facing NATO is how to deal with political Islam as a leading force for change, perhaps violent change within key North African states. This concern was expressed in an awkward manner by the former Secretary-General of the Organisation who, in 1995, voiced concern at the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa and the Middle East. Claes declared that the Alliance was now as worried aboutIslamist extremism as it

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[615] *Id.* : p. 26. See also F. Stephen Larrabee and Carla Thorson, *Mediterranean Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1995), p. 9.

[616] Gregory L. Schulte, "Responding to Proliferation: NATO's Role", *NATO Review* (43), n° 4, July 1995: p. 15.

[617] Asmus, Larrabee and Lesser, *op. cit.* : p. 25; Lesser, "Southern Europe ...": pp. 236-7.

used to be about Communism [618] . These declarations were fiercely criticised by several Alliance members who charged the Secretary - General for misrepresenting the organisation's view of Islam and some diplomats pointed out that launching a "new crusade" against Islam was dangerous and misleading[619] . Maghrebi countries, on the other hand, fear that NATO is looking for a new enemy to legitimate itself in the post - Cold War period and that fundamentalism may become that enemy [620] .

NATO members are concerned that Islamic fundamentalism may prove to be the final catalyst of the multiple risks currently building up on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Within the Alliance, some have since the early 1980s monitored the development of the Islamist movement. Starting in 1993, the Sub-Committee on the Southern Region, a division of the North Atlantic Assembly, issued the first of a series of reports on "Fundamentalist Tendencies and the Future of Democracy in North Africa". It analyses the origins and nature of the phenomenon and presents the policy options available to Western governments.

The final report [621] expressed Western concerns for the rise of Islamic radicalism in North Africa, in view of the threat it poses to the stability of a number of countries, above all Algeria. According to the author of the report, the development of political Islam menaces Alliance countries in at least three different ways:

- "the hostility of Islamist movements, especially of the revolutionary brand, to Western values, fuels the concern that those movements could increasingly resort to terrorist violence against citizens and assets of Alliance members";
- "... Islamist groups could undermine public confidence in democracy in Muslim countries as well as in European countries with strong Muslim communities ...";
- "increasing violence and measures to counter it could lead to large-scale refugee or migrant movements to Europe, expanding on the flow that is already visible from Algeria" [622] .

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[618] Roger Boyes, "Muslim Militancy is Next Big Threat Says NATO Chief", *The Times*, 3 February 1995: p. 13.

[619] Shada Islam, "NATO: Direct Dialogue", *Middle East International*, n° 495, 3 March 1995: p. 12.

[620] Pedro Moya, *Cooperation for Security in the Mediterranean*, North Atlantic Assembly, Sub-Committee on the Mediterranean Basin. NA 83, CC/MB (96) 1, May 1996: p. 2; Sergio Balanzino, Deputy Secretary General of NATO subsequently said: "Let me state clearly that NATO does not see Islam as a threat, and does not need to find a new role or conjure up new threats to keep itself busy"; quoted in Larrabee and Thorson, *op. cit.* : p. 4.

[621] Pedro Moya, *The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism and the Future of Democracy in North Africa*, North Atlantic Assembly, Sub-Committee on the Mediterranean Basin, AL 199, CC/MB 94 (4), November 1994.

[622] *Id.* : p. 14.

The heart of the matter is whether Western countries could condone governments based on Islamist tenets, even if they cannot be expected to conform to the democratic model, as the "extremist" or "radical" Islamist movements advocate. The rapporteur points that Alliance members fear the "Iranization" of North Africa and that is the reason why they have tacitly accepted the governments' crackdowns on Islamist movements in, for instance, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

The author dwells on the case of Algeria to highlight possible Western courses of action in relation to political Islam. He affirms that the tacit preference of Western governments for authoritarian regimes may bring dividends in the form of short-term stability, but it is likely to be a wrong bet in a long-term perspective. Not only does this policy give the impression that the West is hypocritical and has "double standards", but it also fosters extremism and the recourse to violent means by groups opposed to the incumbent governments. The rapporteur concludes that economic, social and political conditions in the Maghreb make the development of an Iran-style or Sudan-style scenario possible and that Alliance countries, for their part, can only have an indirect influence in the outcome of the events[623] . Economic cooperation between Maghrebi and European Union countries and the opening of Western markets to goods from other Mediterranean countries are essential prerequisites for removing the economic, social and political conditions on which Islamist movements thrive.

These realisations have bolstered the view that the Alliance needs an outreach programme for the region. On 8 February 1995, NATO announced its readiness to open up a dialogue with countries bordering the Mediterranean, including Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan. The dialogue was meant to "lower the conflict potential in the Mediterranean through increased mutual knowledge and enhanced interaction" [624] .

Besides these very general principles, there is currently no clear consensus, within NATO, or within the dialogue countries, on what the content or ultimate aim of this initiative should be. A U.K. diplomat stated its view that "we see it as more than a channel for North African states to discuss security questions. We are not seeking to advise them how to stem fundamentalism" [625] . Another interpretation is that NATO seeks "to reduce a propensity for maverick behaviour by showing we are no threat"[626]. The bottom line seems to be determining whether NATO, throughcooperation, could

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[623] *Id.* : p. 18.
[624] Moya, "Cooperation for Security ...": p. 2.
[625] *The Guardian*, 9 February 1995.

help address the security concerns of Mediterranean states, thereby ensuring that instability in that sensitive region is reduced to a minimum.

8.4. The "Green Peril": The Making of a Threat

The perception of political Islam as a threat dates back to the 1980s. The fabrication of the "Green Peril" however is coterminous with the end of the Cold War and is the result of the confluence of a variety of interests and perceptions. With the Soviet collapse, there resulted a void in U.S. strategic thinking as the system put in place to confront the "red threat" lost its purpose[627]. U.S. policy and defence planners devoted themselves to the task of searching for a new organising principle for a strategy [628] . In practice, this search amounted to devising a new focus for the U.S. defence and military apparatus. In an inventive twist, the American security community made the point that the collapse of the superpowerbipolarity has made the world a more complex place and that global threats will emerge unpredictably. In a January 1996 edition of the *New York Times*, Elaine Sciolino wrote: "The end of the Cold War sparked a kind of intellectual contest to identify the biggest and most credible new enemy. There was unfair trading.Global warming. Computer terrorism. The spread of weapons of mass destruction. Drugs. But none of these caught fire. Even ethnic hatred did not capture Americans' imaginations... . But one threat has resonated in the public mind: Islamic holy war" [629] .

It was not just popular imagination that fanned the myth of a threatening Islam: political interest groups - the governments of Israel, Pakistan, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey and Egypt, among others, wanting popular support - propagandise about the Islamic danger. Pro-Israeli think-tanks and groups warrant the Islamic phobia. Conservatives advocate a policy of combat and containment of the Islamists.

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[626] *The Times*, 9 February 1995.
[627] Interview with Hooshang Amirahmadi, New Brunswick, N.J., 10 October 1996.
[628] Interview with Zalmay Khalilzad, Washington D.C., 15 October 1996.
[629] "The Red Menace is Gone. But Here's Islam", *The New York Times*, 21 January 1996: p. 1 (section 4).

According to Hadar, the process of creating the "Islamic threat" delusion is simultaneous with the end of the Cold War and was accelerated after the Gulf War[630]. That period coincided with the occurrence of a series of events and the manifestation of several trends that evidenced to many analysts and to the media in general the potential of the Islamic menace. These events [631] included: the electoral victory of the anti-liberal Islamic FIS in Algeria; the popularity of Islamic parties in Tunisia; terrorist attacks by radical Muslim groups in Egypt; the uncertainty over the situation in the newly independent Central Asian Republics; the civil war in Sudan and the alliance between Tehran and Khartoum; Iran's penetration in Africa and in Central Asia and its military build-up; Arab support for Bosnian Muslims.

The 1993 bombing of the World TradeCenter clearly added a new dimension, portending that terrorism - in the public mind, the Islamic "jihad" - would "strike terror into the hearts of God's enemies" [632] . The media echoed the fears of the creeping encroachment of Middle Eastern violence. According tothe *New Republic*, the World Trade Center bombing "should be the occasion torecognize that the violent habits of the Middle East are gradually slipping across our borders"[633]. The blind leader Sheikh Abdel Rahman seemed the emissary of a global threat to America and its way of life.

All the above mentioned events produced, in the words of *The Washington Post* columnist Jim Hoagland, an "urge to identify Islam as an inherently anti-democratic force that is America's new global enemy now that the Cold War is over"[634]. Amos Perlemutter, a professor of political science at the American University, compared in the pages of the same newspaper, Islamic radicalism with the ideology of fascism and Nazism of the 1930s and characterised it as "authoritarian anti-democratic, and anti-secular" [635] . Its goal is the establishment of a "totalitarian Islamic state" in the Middle East, he argued, suggesting that the United States should make sure that the movement is put down at its inception: "The Western world ...

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[630] Leon T. Hadar, "The "Green Peril": Creating the Islamic Fundamentalist Threat", *CATO Policy Analysis*, n° 177, 27 August 1992: p. 1, 4.
[631] Leon T. Hadar, "What Green Peril?", *Foreign Affairs* (72), n° 2, Spring 1993: p. 29.
[632] Eleanor Randolph, "Prosecutors Pressing For Group Trial In Alleged N.Y. Bombing Conspiracy", *The Washington Post*, 15 May 1994: p. A 12.
[633] "The Bomb Threat", 29 March 1993: p. 9.
[634] J. Hoagland, "Washington's Algerian Dilemma", *The Washington Post*, 6 February, 1992: p. A 3.
[635] A. Perlemutter, "Wishful Thinking About Islamic Fundamentalism", *The Washington Post*, 19 January 1992: p. A5.

cannot permit the replacement of one form of totalitarianism with another; the Soviet model with an Islamic one" [636] .

Like the Red menace of the Cold War era, this line goes, the Green Peril spread its tentacles around the world, undermining the legitimacy of Western values and subverting political systems. "The cosmic importance of the confrontation would make it necessary for Washington to adopt a long-term diplomatic and military strategy; to forge new and solid alliances; to prepare the American people for a never-ending struggle that will test their resolve; and to develop new containment policies, new doctrines, and a new foreign policy elite with its 'wise men" and "experts'" [637] .

The "line of the day" was that political Islam "may be comparable to the threat of communism", since it is "intrinsically, irredeemably anti-Western and has as tremendous an ideological appeal as communism in its early days"[638] . According to Krauthammer, it would be a mistake to deal with Islamic fundamentalism as represented by Iran and its derivatives "with anything less than a pure "stick approach'" [639] . The right way of tackling it "is a policy of severe containment, isolating Iran as much as we can and dealing severely with its allies in Algeria, the occupied territories, Egypt, and elsewhere" [640] . In a Cold Warrior vein, Krauthammer affirmed that a "policy of appeasement would be a terrible mistake in dealing with a threat as serious as this one" [641] .

Other analysts pointed that the alleged threat from Iran and militant Islam is different from the one posed by communism. Islamists were portrayed as irrational and "fanatical" people whose very nature made it impossible to co-opt them into balance of power arrangements by inducements and whose religious obduracy created a psychological mindset that proved immune even to diplomatic or military threats. The impact of the coming struggle between that force and the West would be unprecedented and was portrayed as a zero-sum game that would result in the defeat of one of the sides.

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[636] Quoted in Arthur L. Lowrie, "The Campaign Against Islam and American Foreign Policy",*Middle East Policy* (IV), n° 1/2, September 1995: p. 212.
[637] Hadar. "The "Green Peril'": p. 3.
[638] Panel discussion on "The Emergence of Political Islam", in John Wilner and Dan Blumenthal (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 24. See also C. Krauthammer, "America's "Great Sucess Story'", *Middle East Quarterly*, n° 4, December 1994: p. 76.
[639] *Ibid.* .
[640] *Id.* : p. 25.
[641] *Ibid.* .

Thus, any comparison between communism and political Islam failed to apprehend the intrinsical nature of the latter. Robert Satloff, a member of the Washington Institute, remarked that "the useful comparison and contrast with the Soviet Union is that although political Islam doesn't have the power of the state, great armies, or nuclear weapons ... many of its adherents have a much greater sense of personal mission (ex: suicide bombings) ... it's a new danger and a new face of an ideology-driven mission that we didn't see in the Cold War" [642] . Fuller provides a more refined explanation to this view. He says: "as a nation we are culturally ill-equipped to understand the passions of religious policy. American political science, based on its Western "rational actor" school of political analysis, knows not what to make of religious zealotry, suicide bombings, and the concept of martyrdom as an integral part of the political process" [643] . American inability to come to terms with these conceptions thus inflated the perception of Islam as an alien, threatening religion.

Hadar has described the process that led gradually to the creation of the "Islamic threat" paradigm, and stressed the role played by the media in that development [644] . He likened it to the "efforts by some of Washington's iron triangles as well as by foreign players during the months leading up to the 1990-91 Persian Gulf crisis" that "succeeded in building up Saddam Hussein as the "most dangerous man in the world"" [645] .

According to Hadar, the creation of the fiction is set off by government officials and lobby organisations who leak information usually under the guise of "unnamed" or "mysterious" sources. The information thus disclosed on a tentative basis reflects debates and discussions taking place within government. Journalists then start investigating those leads and end up finding collaboration from foreign sources that help the press uncover further information substantiating existing suspicions.The flow of information is augmented by intelligence reports and the expertise of government officials that, in the case of political Islam, used questionable evidence and exaggerated credible information to create a conspiracy theory from isolated events: they warned of Iranian subversion in Central Asia, the export of terrorism to North Africa and Egypt, and a Khartoum-Tehran connection. Think-tank studies, op-ed pieces, congressional hearings and policy conferences amplify the phenomenon,

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[642] *Ibid.* .
[643] G. Fuller, "The Appeal of Iran", *The National Interest*, n° 37, Fall 1994: p. 92.
[644] See Hadar, *op. cit.* : p. 2 and Lowrie, *op.cit.* : pp. 212-3.
[645] The process is described in Hadar, *Quagmire*, Chapter 2 and 3.

adding to it new perspectives. Thus, the "Islamic threat" myth acquires a public, official and academic dimension and becomes institutionalised [646].

The political Islam debate in the United States has become one of the hottest, most controversial debates in academic circles mirroring the Cold War period debate on how strong and monolithic the communist menace was.The debate is dominated by two currents: one sees Islam as an aggressivecivilization bent on confronting the West. The other current says that it is a big mistake to see political Islam as a unified threat, rather than as an encompassing ideology that inspires local bids for power. The debate is nurtured by think-tanks studies and academic publications that add colour and variety to the debate, putting forward practical policy options but, more often, being no more than intellectual exercises.

Every major university and research centre has come up with contributions to the on going debate. The Council on Foreign Relations, hardly a source of radical thinking, has come under fire for its monthly newsletter, "Muslim Politics Report", a forum for the exposition of a broad range of thinking by Islamic experts and leaders. The pro-Israel think-tank, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, has for several years now surveyed the development of theIslamist movements in the Middle East, mainly from a perspective of their implications for the peace process and for Israel. Over the last few years, the Washington Institute has also focused on the challenges posed by political Islam to U.S. interests [647].

Prominent among the think-tanks contributing to the debate on the Islamic threat is the conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington, which on 21 July 1994, discussed the "Islamic threat to North Africa. The conference analysed the rise of Islamism in North Africa and stressed the effectiveness of the Tehran-Khartoum axis in the spread of Islamic radicalism [648]. The Heritage Foundation has produced a number of reports on the countries where political Islam is simmering. The reports point to the ideological, subversive, military and, mainly, terrorist threat that radical Islamism poses to America, advocating a tough, non-compromising stance on the part of the U.S. government [649].

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[646] Hadar, *op. cit.* : p. 4 and "What Green Peril?", *op. cit.* : p. 30.

[647] See for instance the 1992 Soref Symposium dedicated to "Islam and the U.S.: Challenges for the Nineties".

[648] Greg Noakes, "Heritage Foundation Conference Assesses Islamist Threat", *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (XIII), n° 3, September/October 1994: p. 21, 43-4.

[649] See "The Challenge of Revolutionary Iran" (March 1996); "The Rising Threat of Revolutionary Islam in Algeria" (November 1995); "The Changing Face of Middle Eastern Terrorism" (November 1994); "To Promote Israel-PLO Peace, Press Araft to Crack Down on Terrorism" (September 1995).

Political Islam came to be viewed in the United States as a, or the, major threat, in the post-Col War international environment. In the words of Graham Fuller "political Islam - Islamic fundamentalism - is on the march, and it scares Washington more than any other political force since the heyday of messianic communism" [650] .

Esposito asserted that for many political Islam seemed the ideal candidate for the post-Cold War villain role [651] : "the fear in the 1980s that Iran would export its revolution has been superseded by the larger fear of an international pan-Islamic movement" [652] . The predominant Western stereotype of Islam as a threat was analogous to creating, in the wake of the collapse of communist ideology, a second "evil empire" [653] . As David Ignatius put it, "it's big; it's scary; it's anti-Western; it feeds on poverty and discontent", adding that "it spreads across vast swaths of the globe that can be colored green on the television maps in the same way that communist countries used to be colored red" [654] .

Alarmist views on the kind of threat political Islam poses to the Western world abound in Congress where the former is often equated with terrorism. A representative view is put forth by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, who presided over the 1995 congressional hearings on "The Threat of Islamic Extremism in Africa" and on "Terrorism in Alge
ria" . She referred to Islamic activism as "one of the most serious threats to Western security": "Islamic extremism and militant groups pose a direct threat to regional stability, to the fragile democracies of the African continent, and to U.S. security interests. They are swom to fight the "Great Satan America" for the global supremacy of Islam. They overtly challenge U.S. leadership and that of its allies by making them primary targets of their hatred and their hostility" [655].

In the opening session of the hearing on Algeria, she quoted a secret report of French Defence Ministry stating that "Islamic terrorism is becoming an international affair aimed at destabilizing Arab oil-producing countries, traditional monarchies, and

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[650] Fuller, *op. cit.* : p. 93.
[651] John Esposito, "Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace", *Current History* (93), n° 579, January 1994: p. 19.
[652] *Id.* : p. 22.
[653] Conclusions of a symposium on political Islam: Timothy D. Sisk, *Islam and Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1992), p. 13.
[654] "Islam in the West's Sights: The Wrong Crusade?", *The Washington Post*, 8 March 1992: p. A 4 (Outlook Section)
[655] U. S. Congress, House Committee on International Relations, *The Threat of Islamic Extremism in Africa* (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 2.

moderate pluralistic republics"[656]. Islamist terror in Algeria, she affirmed, is but "the first phase of the "intifada" ...believed to encompass half a dozen countries. Hit squads are now operating with the full blessing of some underground authorities which have accepted this decree, legalizing the death by assassination of all those who oppose their extremist interpretation of certain laws, and who favor secular systems of government. Intelligence agencies have also discovered a proliferation of various cultural and charitable organizations which frequently did serve as fronts for terrorist cells and arms-smuggling centers throughout the world"[657]. Political Islam is, in the minimum, considered a major source of instability in the post-Cold War world. Republican Senator John McCain says: "The clash of Islamic fundamentalism with the values of democratic society should offer enough of a geopolitical challenge to keep us busy and history's end uncertain for at least the near term" [658] .

Hadar contends that the members of the powerful pro-Israeli lobby had been arguing even before the Gulf War that a major threat to the West would be the rising political power of Muslim fundamentalism. A confrontation between Western and Islamic forces would thus constitute a probable source of conflict requiring continued U.S. involvement in the Middle East and buttressing Israel[659] . In effect, the Green Peril would serve to restore Israel's role as America's strategicasset which was put in question with the end of the Cold War and that was put in evidence during the Gulf War. Strategists in Israel conjured up the theory that the demise of the Soviet threat in no way diminished Israel's strategic value to the United States. The military strength of the Jewish state could, in the new environment, serve as a deterrent to radical Arab regimes and help buttress pro-Western regimes under assault fromIslamist forces [660] : "Israel could thus become the contemporary crusader nation, a bastion of the West in the struggle against the new transnational enemy, Islamic fundamentalism" [661].

The campaign against the Islamic menace was initiated by the Likud government, but the Labour government underYitzhak Rabin took it to new heights. Rabin tried to make the point that Israel's "struggle against murderous Islamic terror"

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[656] U. S. Congress, House Committee on International Relations, *Terrorism in Algeria: Its Effect on the Country's Political Scenario, on Regional Stability, and on Global Security* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1996), pp. 2-3.
[657] *Ibid.* .
[658] "After Victory: Defining an American Role in an Uncertain World" , conference organised by The Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom. 2 March 1995 (electronic file transfer).
[659] Leon T. Hadar, "The Rise of the Middle Eastern Bogeyman",*CATO Foreign Policy Briefing*, n° 2, 5 September 1990 (electronic file transfer).
[660] Hadar, *Quagmire*: p. 83.
[661] Hadar, "The "Green Peril" ": p. 7.

is "meant to awaken the world which is lying in slumber"[662] . He called "on all nations, all peoples to devote their attention to the great danger inherent in Islamic fundamentalism" [663] . Rabin concentrated his attacks on Iran: Tehran was depicted as replacing Moscow as the centre of ideological subversion and military expansionism. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the need to "contain" Iran became all the more pressing as the emergence of several Central Asian republics opened up opportunities for Iranian thrusts of a resurgent Iran exporting revolution throughout much of the Muslim world. They disclosed Tehran's plans for controlling the oil-rich Gulf, destroying Israel and threatening areas on the periphery of a new "arc of crisis" - the Horn of Africa, Southern Europe, the Balkans and the Indian subcontinent [664].

Iran's ambitious military plans have sparked considerable concern in Israeli circles that Tehran seeks to establish regional hegemony by building its military capabilities far beyond its legitimate defence needs. Iran's missile build-up is considered especially worrisome given Tehran's determined efforts to build weapons of mass destruction. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons makes it, according to Israeli Professor Shlomo Aharonson, the most threatening of Israel's "remote" enemies (which also include Iraq, Libya and Algeria) [665] . Starting in 1993, shortly after Bill Clinton was sworn in as president, the media in Israel and the pro-Israel lobby in the United States began a coordinated effort to enlist America into an alliance against Iran. Several news stories in the Hebrew press set the tone for the campaign to demonise Iran [666] .

Those media articles laid out the military intelligence's assessment of Iran's capabilities and set forth scenarios for a confrontation with Tehran. One intelligence official surmised that "Israel alone could not deter Iran so it should try to create the situation so that it will appear similar to that of Iraq before the Gulf crisis ... we should hope that, emulating Iraq, Iran will ... start a war [with its Arab neighbours]" [667] . Ahronson also concluded that Israel cannot mobilise its entire army to fight a ground

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[662] Quoted in Leon T. Hadar, "Reviving the Strategic Consensus: The Time Against Islam", *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (XII), n° 2, July/August 1993: p. 18.
[663] Quoted by Michael Parks, "Israel Sees Self Defending West Again", *Los Angeles Times*, 2 January 1993; p. 2.
[664] See Esposito, *op. cit.* : p. 22.
[665] Israel Shahak, "Israel Seeks to Build a Coalition Against Iran", *Middle East International*, n° 456, 6 August 1993: p. 16.
[666] Donald Neff, "Israel Lurks Behind Harsh U.S. Policy Aimed Against Iran", *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (XIV), n° 7, February/March 1996: p. 88.
[667] Quoted in Neff, *op. cit.* : p. 88.

war in Iran, in line with its doctrine of a pre-empire first strike" [668] . Likewise, Israel's air force is not capable of devastating Iran with conventional weapons. The viable alternative, in the case of Iran, is that "Israel will have to rely not so much on conventional components of the Israeli army as on nuclear deterrence, long-range missiles and improved cooperation with the U.S. and some neighbouring states, like Egypt or Turkey" [669] .

Policy-makers in Israel believe that the United States, Israel and Turkey(of the secular kind) have a common interest in establishing a stable regional alignment of secular, moderate and pro-Western regimes in the Middle East and in curbing Islamic fundamentalism. The formation of coalitions with friendly Arab countries would enable Jerusalem to accomplish this goal and, above all, to contain Iran. With the prospect of normalising relations with its Arab neighbours at hand, Israel sees itself as performing the task of precluding anything that might encourage extremist forces to follow in the footsteps of the Iranians or the Algerians. One military officer puts it that "its location at the centre of the Arab-Muslim Middle East predestines Israel to be a devoted guardian of stability in all the countries surrounding it. Its[role] is to protect the existing regimes: to prevent or halt the processesof radicalisation, and to block the expansion of fundamentalist religiouszealotry" [670] . In this sense, Israel considers it is performing a vital service to the West in guaranteeing regional stability, thus performing its traditional role of strategic asset for the United States [671] .

Israeli politicians have by and large equated the Islamic threat with the Iranian threat and, in doing this, they have convinced Washington that Tehran is the ideological and logistical centre of a conspiracy to subvert the West and to undermine U.S. interests [672] . Israel's campaign to persuade Washington to contain Iran by adopting a tougher policy were noted in early 1995 by the *Washington Post* that reported: "Israel is attempting to convince the United States that Iranian-inspired Islamic extremism and Iran's military rearmament drive have become a major threat to the stability of the Middle East and the interests of the West" [673] . The story also revealed that the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee (AJC) had released studies warning of the Iranian threat, with the latter

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[668] Quoted in Shahak, *op. cit.* : p. 16.
[669] *Ibid.* .
[670] Israel Shahak, "How Israel's Strategy Favours Iraq over Iran",*Middle East International*, n° 446, 19 March 1993: p. 20.
[671] *Ibid.* .
[672] Interview with Amirahmadi. Lowrie, *op. cit.* : p. 211.

asserting that "we cannot run away or avoid the possibility that Iran by the end of the decade may become the 'dominant" force in the Middle East" [674] .

Such propaganda began to filter into the policymaking processes of the Clinton administration, so that by March 1993 Secretary of State Christopher was publicly calling Iran "a dangerous country" and an "international outlaw" because of what he claimed was its support for international terrorism and its efforts to develop nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction" [675] . These declarations were the beginning of a harsh anti-Iran policy and the escalation of the anti-Iran campaign that included:

- the inclusion in April 1993 of Iran in the State Department's annual report on terrorism, citing Tehran as "the most dangerous sponsor of terrorism" in 1992, with over twenty acts attributable to it or its surrogates;
- the announcement by Martin Indyk of the "dual containment" policy, that set forth Washington's goal of containing Iran. Indyk stated: "If we fail in our efforts to modify Iranian behaviour, five years from now Iran will be much more capable of posing a real threat to Israel, the Arab world, and Western interests in the Middle East" [676] .

The anti-Iran fever was patent in Congress where AIPAC worked hard during early 1995 preaching against Iran. Its efforts were largely successful, namely in the Conoco affair. The American oil firm, Conoco had been negotiating with the Iranians for three years to develop two offshore oilfields near Iran'sSirri Island in the Persian Gulf and the Iranians had finally agreed to reasonable terms.Conoco promised to bring in investment of $600 million to be paid off in returns from the development of the field. In the days following the signing of the contract, the Israeli press published a report that altered the course of events. The report quoted military sources and stated that Iran would within three years have the capacity to make nuclear weapons.

According to *Le Monde Diplomatique* Israeli and American experts had concurred in the evaluation that it would take Iran at least from seven to fifteen years to be ready to make nuclear weapons [677] . The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* later revealed that the story was a deliberate "leak" aiming at inciting Washington to stop Iran from buying nuclear reactors from Russia and China [678] . In the United States, the

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[673] Neff, *op. cit.* : p. 88.
[674] *Ibid.* .
[675] Donald Neff, "Congressional Cowboys", *Middle East International*, n° 513, 17 November 1995: p. 11.
[676] Quoted in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer 1994: pp. 159-61.
[677] E. R., "Dialogue avorté entre Téhèran et Washington", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, n° 495, June 1995: p. 7.
[678] *Ibid.* .

subject caused uproar and Congress was dominated by whatNeff described as an "anti-Iran fever" [679] . AIPAC compiled and distributed to congressmen a booklet outlining Israel's case against Tehran and calling for a complete halt to all trade with Iran. In early Spring bills were introduced in both houses not only banning any U.S. business with Iran, but also banning Americans from doing business with any company worldwide that conducts business with Iran. The Republicans seized the opportunity to launch an offensive against the administration, accusing Clinton of being too "soft" with the Iranians. Thus, in April 1995 President Clinton announced, at a meeting of the World Jewish Congress, the imposition of comprehensive sanctions on Iran, prohibiting all commercial and financial transactions with that country.

Under a bill introduced in the Senate during the Summer by New York Republican Senator Alphonse d'Amato, and signed by a further 31 senators, the chief executives of firms involved in energy trade with Iran would be barred from entering America, U.S. purchases of the firms' products would be prohibited and exports by their U.S. subsidiaries banned. It would also give the president the discretion to bar loans to such firms and refuse their imports. A similar bill was introduced in the House by New York Republican Benjamin Gillman and California Democrat Howard Berman, and also sponsored by 31 others[680] . This constituted the background to the approval of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act: it penalises foreign companies that provide investments over $40 million for the development of petroleum resources in Iran or Libya.

Former Ambassador Andrew I. Killgore affirmed that the U.S. policy on Iran is largely an alignment with the perceived interests of Israel: "The simplest explanation of Washington's anti-Iranian policy is domestic politics. Bill Clinton believes that he cannot be re-elected without overwhelming media and financial support from the Israel lobby ... Thus he and Warren Christopher are ready to "buy" Israeli exaggerations of the dangers emanating from Iran, whether they really believe them or not" [681] . Likewise, David D. Newsom, former Undersecretary of State under Carter wrote: "the U.S. action can only be fully understood in the light of a fundamental objective of Washington's policy in the Middle: the security of Israel", since "it is Israel that feels most threatened by Iran" [682].

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[679] "Anti-Iran Fever", *Middle East International*, nº 518, 2 February 1996: p. 9.
[680] Neff, "Congressional Cowboys": p. 11.
[681] "Israeli-Inspired U.S. Pressure May Backfire in Iran", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (XIV), nº 3, September 1995: p. 15.
[682] "Behind Iran Embargo Lies Israel's Security", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 May 1995: p. 19.

The Israelis have thus constantly prodded the United States to take steps, either by itself or through its allies, to destabilise Iran. The aim is to put on as many economic and political screws as possible and pressure other countries and international institutions such as the World Bank to isolate Iran[683] . According to an Israeli official, the surest way to weaken Iran is by worsening the economic conditions: "the already shaky Iranian regime could be overthrown by economic sanctions, or at least some method of making it hard for Iran to export oil, 90 per cent of its economy" [684] .

Hadar has highlighted the role of the media in the creation of the "Iranian threat" myth. He observed that in the occurrence journalists amplified the phenomenon giving credence to the new stories in the Hebrew press that laid out the Israeli position. According to Hadar the process starts with the Israeli officials which are followed by leaks to the press attributed to Israeli "military" and "intelligence" sources elucidating the threat Iran, through its support to the Islamists, poses to various Arab regimes. Other Israeli-inspired reports provided details of Iranian aggressive designs referring namely to Tehran's ties to Sudan,Hamas and to Muslim groups in the West, including in the United States. The dissemination of that myth counts with the effective assistance of AIPAC and other pro-Jewish organisations. Syndicated columnists, "terrorism experts" and members of Congress provide the intellectual and institutional legitimacy to this view [685] .

In Congress, powerful Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and a strong supporter of Israel, became one of the most vocal and hysterical critics of Iran. He has called it "a permanent, long-term threat to civilised life on this planet ... a terrorist state ... committed to defeating the West in any way it can"[686] . He warned Americans that Iran's efforts to acquire WMD could enable it "to annihilate Tel Aviv and in the long run to annihilate Chicago or Atlanta"[687] . Gingrich was the moving power behind the December 1995 directive approved in Congress that ordered the CIA to launch an $18 million covert action programme against Iran.

Congress has thus been the locus of the campaign, driven by Republicans, to castigate Iran for its maverick behaviour. Sudan has also come under increasing

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[683] Colin MacKinnon, "Iran Sanctions: Dual Containment Gets Teeth", *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (XIV), nº 8, April 1996: p. 91.
[684] Shahak, "Israel ...": p. 16.
[685] Hadar, "Reviving ...": p. 18.
[686] Neff, "Anti-Iran Fever": p. 10.
[687] *Ibid.* .

attack with a strong lobby in Congress pressing for the upgrading of sanctions against that country. Sudan has been included in the list of rogue states since 1993: it has been accused of fostering Islamic insurgency and terrorism in theMaghreb and in Africa, of implication in the assassination attempt, in June 1995, against President Mubarak in the Ehtiopian capital, and of being involved in the second plot of the World Trade Center conspiracy. Esposito, during a congressional hearing, affirmed that the tendency to "demonize" Iran and Sudan has been identical and mounting: "In some recent hearings that I was involved in, it seems to me there was a kind of quick fix here the way we had years ago with Qadhafi" [688]. He also affirmed that "a lot of the accusations about what is going on ...remain unsubstantiated" [689].

Interest groups have also been involved in anti-Islamist lobbying. Pro-Israeli organisations have fuelled suspicions that terrorist groups opposed to the peace process established a nerve centre on U.S. territory. Pressure from pro-Israeli lobbyists arguably swayed a number of Congressmen into initiating a witch-hunt for alleged Hamas activists. This drive grew in intensity when Israel arrested several Palestinian Americans and charged them with being part of Hamas' U.S. network. Some members of Congress repeated Israeli claims that over the past several years, Hamas has been conducting operations from several locations in the United States and that the movement is engaged in fund-raising activities in U.S. cities.

Jewish organisations have campaigned openly for the February "Omnibus Counter-Terrorism Act of 1995", a bill that facilitates crackdown on Islamist political activities in the United States. The bill prohibits fund-raising in American territory by "terrorist" organisations, creates special deportation courts for actions related to terrorist activities and increases the punishment for "international terrorism" in the United States. The legislation follows an executive order, issued bypresident Clinton on 24 January, freezing the assets of 12 organisations and their leaders, who Clinton said threatened the peace process.

Malcom Heinlein of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish organisations has stated that members of his organisation had been working for months with the FBI and other officials in the legislation [690] . Significantly, the American Jewish Committee urged the government to "develop counter-terrorism

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[688] U. S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Recent Developments in North Africa* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 35.
[689] *Ibid.* .
[690] Ann Devron and Laurie Goldstein, "Clinton Freezes Assets of Mideast Groups Linked to Terrorism", *The Washington Post*, 24 January 1995: p. A 22.

legislation approaches - perhaps embodied in an omnibus terrorismbill ..." [691] . Pro-Israeli groups called on the government to take tougher measures against international terrorism which is "largely perpetrated by fanatical Islamic groups" and "poses a substantial threat to Jews, to the U.S., and to the entire West" [692] .

As the peace process falls apart due to terrorist attacks against civilians, Israeli leaders, threatened by the violent acts of Hizbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad have also tried to enlist the United States and Europe in the battle against Islamic fundamentalism. Prime minister Netanyahu, exploiting the resulting erosion of Israeli support for the negotiations, has tried to make a case that Arafat has become completely unimportant, since he can not possibly stem the tide of Islamic terrorism. In the face of the growing Iranian-inspired terrorist wave that threatens Israel and other Arab states, the Likud leader has shown off Israel's role as a deterrent against Islamic extremism. This role would help it regain its status as a main strategic asset for the West. This other angle of this reasoning serves Netanyahu's rejectionist stance. As Baram puts it: "The Hamas fighters are motivated by Iran, Israeli "concessions" lead nowhere, and the best policy is to cling to Eretz Israel. This is new politics geared to the same old goals ..." [693] .

Growing American fears about political Islam have also played into the hands of foreign governments that, for a variety of reasons, exploit U.S. concern with Islamic fundamentalism. Esposito says that "fear of fundamentalism, like fear of communism, has made strange bedfellows. Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt join Israel in warning of a regional and international Islamic threat" [694] . The "Islamic threat" is an "excuse for increasing authoritarianism and violations of human rights and the indiscriminate suppression of Islamic opposition, as well as for the West's silence about these actions" [695] . The "green menace" is thus a convenient way for a leader to explain away opposition based on a country's economic, social, and political inequities. It is also an argument in favour of the continuation of U.S. support to regimes whose strategic value weakened with the end of the Cold War.

Elaine Sciolino reports that in visits to Washington, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Tansu Ciller of Turkey, all told president Clinton that "the greatest threat to their governments came from globally linked

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[691] Jane Hunter, "Act Against Terror", *Middle East International*, n° 494, 17 February 1995: p. 12.
[692] The American Jewish Committee, *Taking a Stand: AJC on the Issues* : p. 7.
[693] Haim Baram, "The Demon Islam", *Middle East International*, n° 489, 2 December 1994: p. 8.
[694] Esposito, *op. cit.* : p. 22.
[695] *Ibid.* .

fundamentalism". Hadar affirms that the convergence of Arab and Israeli views on purported threat from political Islam, is a re-enactment of "strategic consensus", only this time against Islam [696] . Sciolino remarks that they risk "sounding like one-time American friends, such as President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines and Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi of Iran, who resisted reform to the very end presenting themselves as bulwarks against Communism" [697] .

Egypt, like Israel, is also concerned that the end of the Cold War, combined with the economic difficulties in the United States, might produce a mood in the American public and Congress conducive to the reduction of the aid the United States has accorded Egypt ever since the signing of the Camp David Accords. The Egyptian president brands the Islamic threat every time the issue is discussed: "When Mubarak evokes al-Jihad and asks the United States for money, he has an easy task: the spiritual head of al-Jihad and Gamaa is none other [than] the Sheikh Abd al-Rahman"[698] , allegedly the head of the World Trade Center conspiracy.

Cairo has repeatedly voiced concern of Tehran's role as instigator of Islamist-instigated instability in Egypt and accuses Iran of financing the extremist Islamic groups. The Egyptian government has also called attention to the Tehran - Khartoum axis and to their subversive activities in the Middle East and North Africa. Egyptian leaders view Khartoum as a major transit point and base for a number of Iranian-inspired groups. Egypt accused Sudan of complicity in the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Egyptian president in Adis Ababa on 26 June 1995. Surviving assailants captured by Ethiopian police incriminated the Sudanese government, dominated by the National Islamic Front, in planning the crime and training the assailants.

The Islamic threat argument is exaggerated by Egyptian leaders who fear the loss of Cairo's strategic significance and cast Islam as larger-than-life enemy stretching its tentacles around the globe. On the aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing, president Mubarak on a visit to Washington, used that event to make his point. He portrayed the terrorist act in New York as part of a global, Iranian-financed conspiracy that not only threatened Egypt, but was also aimed at the United States, and urged the formation of a "global alliance" against this menace [699].

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[696] Hadar, *op. cit.* : p. 18.
[697] Sciolino, *op. cit.* : p. 6.
[698] Zachary Karabell, "The Wrong Threat: The United States and Islamic Fundamentalism", *World Policy Journal* (XII), n° 2, Summer 1995: p. 44.
[699] Esposito, *op. cit.*: p. 22.

As the Islamist wave gained consistency and came to dominate the political discourse in many Arab countries, policy makers in the United States came to recognise the need to address the phenomenon with subtlety. The confrontational approach and the propaganda surrounding the myth of an "Islamic threat" offended the susceptibilities of the Muslim community, creating the impression that, now that the United States had conquered communism, the next opponent in the firing line would be Islam. Thus, a differentiation evolved recognising the legitimate and genuine nature of political Islam and setting it apart from Islamist groups or movements that espouse violence and extremism in the pursuit of their aims. This distinction was politically useful and enabled Washington, on the one hand, to oppose any Islamic group that resorted to violent tactics and challenged regimes with a pro-Western inclination, and on the other, to resist any regime of the Iranian type.

9. U.S. Policy Towards Political Islam

9. 1. U.S. Policy Towards Political Islam: The Reagan and Bush Foundations

U. S. policy toward political Islam incubated during the Reagan administration, which began a year after the 1979 revolution in Iran and ended just before a wave of Islamist electoral victories took place in the Middle East. There was not apparently the need to develop a comprehensive policy on this subject. By and large, political Islam was considered a hostile, fanatical force although the circumstances in Afghanistan led the American government, driven by practical considerations, to ally itself with Islamist groups in their fight against the Soviets.

During the eighties, political Islam was viewed primarily from the perspective of Shia revolutionary drive and quest for power through acts of violence and subversion. An aggressive policy of containment against the Islamic Republic of Iran and its cohorts seemed to suffice.

Administration officials' views of Islamism were unsophisticated. Put in a straightforward way, they alluded to it in hostile terms. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy referred to political Islam's "revolutionary and sometimes violent nature", and characterised it as an "ideology of an extreme nature"[700]. Undersecretary of State Michael Armacost labelled the Islamic Republic of Iran a "messianic, radical state" [701]. George Shultz referred to political Islam as a form of "radical extremism"[702]. President Reagan considered Iran a second "evil empire". These statements suggested a growing awareness of the challenges posed by Islam although they did not result into a comprehensive policy.

By the late 1980s, the face of political Islam began to change and the Gulf crisis mobilised its latent power. Islamist electoral victories came to a head in December 1991 in Algeria, when the Islamic Salvation Front swept the first round of Algeria's parliamentary elections. As the Islamists successfully adopted a legalistic

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[700] Richard W. Murphy, "Middle East Peace: Facing Realities and Challenges", *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, September 1988: p. 44.

[701] Michael H. Armacost, "U.S.-Soviet Relations: Testing Gorbatchev's "New Thinking"", *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, September 1987: p. 36.

[702] George Shultz, "The Future of American Foreign Policy: New Realities and New Ways of Thinking", *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, 31 January 1985.

approach - seeking power through the ballot, not the bullet - they created a set of quandaries for American policymakers. The basic dilemma was encapsulated in the "democratisation vs. upholding of the *status quo*" formula.

9. 2. The Policy Formulation

Until recently, the argument was dominated in public policy statements and writings by those who believed political Islam to be a primary security concern for the United States. The "Islamic threat" became a popular term in some State Department offices and a coterie of writers and policy-makers described Islam as a new seedbed for anti-Western aggression, replacing communism [703] .

The Bush administration seemed to understand the complexity of the phenomenon and of the challenges posed by radical Islam in areas where the United States has vital interests. Edward P. Djerejian, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in the Bush administratio, realised that "a coherent policy framework toward Islam has become a compelling need as foreign policy challenges erupt involving an "arc of crisis" extending from the Balkans, the Caucasus, North Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South Africa"[704] . Djerejian further justified this necessity by pointing out that the traditionalrealpolitik approach which prevailed during the Cold War was insufficient to deal effectively and comprehensively with the challenging realities of the current international system, political Islam being a case in point [705] .

In June 1992, Djerejian unveiled America's policy toward Islam, an approach thoughtfully drafted by State Department officials and experts. In a speech known as the "Meridian House Declaration", Djerejian said the United States had nothing against Islam, "one of the world's great faiths" and "a historiccivilizing force among the many that have influenced and enriched our culture". He added that America "does not view Islam as the next"ism" confronting the West", and he stressed that, in

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[703] Robert Marquand, "Media Still Portray Muslims as Terrorists", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 22 January 1996: p. 11.
[704] Edward P. Djerejian, "The Arc of Crisis", *Middle East Insight* (XII), n° 3, March/April 1996: p. 18.
[705] *Ibid.* .

the U.S. government's perspective, "the Cold War is not being replaced with a new competition between Islam and the West" [706] .

These points were obviously addressed to the domestic and international Muslim community. They were intended to assuage them by dispelling the views, frequently put forth by U.S. officials, that Washington considers Islam as a hostile religion and the Muslims as fanatics and terrorists. They were also intended to make clear that the United States is not engaged in an anti-Islamic crusade. Many of the United States's allies are themselves regimes which belong to the Islamic cultural area, some of them are even considered "fundamentalist", such as Saudi Arabia. Should the United States adopt a confrontational approach regarding Islam, they would encounter considerable problems of credibility, or would put off important allies.

Djerejian recognised that the diversity of the Islamist movement required a diversified approach. On the one hand, he argued, Washington had nothing against Islamists, that is, "believers living in different countries placing renewed emphasis on Islamic principles". But Washington would oppose those who used religion as a cover for extremism and violence. "Stated simply", Djerejian concluded, "religion is not a determinant - positive or negative - in the nature or quality of our relations with other countries. Our quarrel is with extremism, and the violence, denial, intolerance, intimidation, coercion and terror which often accompany it" [707] .

Djerejian's distinction was politically useful for the administration. It enabled Washington, on the one hand, to oppose any Islamic group that espoused violence and challenged moderate pro-Western regimes, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It made possible, on the other hand, to resist groups opposed to the peace process and anti-American Islamic regimes in power - such as Sudan and Iran - which met his criteria of being violent, intolerant and coercive[708] . The doctrine also provided room for American support to "good" Islamic groups - those seeking to overturn communist or fundamentalist states (such as the *mujahidin* rebels in Afghanistan).

The doctrine further hinted at a stance. What the United States wanted, he explained, was for Middle Eastern nations to broaden political participation for their societies, as an important contributor to long-term stability. The United States does not look with favour on those who use the democratic process to come to power, only to destroy that very process in order to retain power and political dominance: "While

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[706] Edward P. Djerejian, "The U.S. and the Middle East in a Changing World", *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (3), n° 23, 8 June 1992: p. 446.
[707] *Id.* : p. 447.

we believe in the principle of "one person, one vote"", he said, "we do not support "one person, one vote, one time"" [709] .

Whereas Arab regimes should engage in "real political dialogue", Islamist movements vying for a place in government should accept a number of prerequisites for being allowed into domestic politics. Support for free elections, Djerejian noted, was one of the six requirements listed as necessary conditions for American recognition and support - the first, but not the only one. The Assistant Secretary of State affirmed: "Those who are prepared to take specific steps toward free elections, creating independent judiciaries, promoting the rule of law, reducing restrictions on the press, respecting the rights of minorities and guaranteeing individual rights will find us ready to recognize and support their efforts, just as those moving in the opposite direction will find us ready to speak candidly and act accordingly" [710] .

The "Meridian House" speech and Djerejian's subsequent declarations while Assistant Secretary of State clarified U.S. attitudes towards political Islam. They became the official position on this subject in both the Bush and Clinton administrations. The "accommodationist" tilt was confirmed in subsequent speeches and in congressional testimony [711] and were publicly sanctioned by Robert H. Pelletreau - Djerejian's successor- [712] former Secretary of State, Warren Christopher,[713] Anthony Lake, the National Security Adviser, [714] and Bruce Riedel, deputy assistant secretary of defence for Near East and South Asian affairs [715]

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[708] *Ibid.* .
[709] *Ibid.* .
[710] *Ibid.* .
[711] Djerejian, "U.S. Policy in the Middle East", *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (4), n °11, 15 March 1993; "North African Countries: U.S. Relations and Assistance", *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (4), n ° 21, 24 May 1993; "U.S. Policy on Recent Developments and Other Issues in the Middle East", *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (4), n ° 32, 9 August 1993; "Review of U.S. Efforts To Achieve Near East Policy Goal", *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (3), n° 26, 29 June 1992; "Developments in the Middle East", in United States Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Developments in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993).
[712] Robert Pelletreau, "Robert Pelletreau, Assistant Secretary of State, Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East", *Federal Document Clearing House Congress Testimony*, 1 March 1994; "Islam and U.S. Policy", Address delivered to the Middle East Policy Council, Washington, D.C., 26 May 1996; "Dealing with the Muslim Politics of the Middle East: Algeria, Hamas, Iran", Address delivered to the Council on Foreign Relations, 8 May 1996.
[713] Christopher stated: "Islam is not our enemy. Nor do we consider Islam a threat to world peace or to regional security". W. Christopher, "U.S. Commitment to the Middle East Peace Process", Address to the Arab - American Anti-Discrimination Council Conference, Arlington, Virginia, 23 April 1993: p. 3.
[714] He stated: "America has a deep respect for the religion and culture of Islam. It is extremism, whether religious or secular, that we oppose". Referring to Iran, he said: "The American quarrel with Iran should not be misconstrued as a "clash of civilizations" or opposition to Iran as a theocratic state". Lake, *op. cit.* : p. 52. See also "From Containment to Enlargement ", *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (4), n

The policy formulation showed understanding of the complexforces at work in Muslim society and the need to address them in a constructive way. The declarations of U.S. officials have, by and large, corresponded to the nuanced approach of the "accommodationist" school led by John Esposito, one of the most heard academics in policy circles [716] and whose views were not estranged from the elaboration of the U.S. policy towards Islam. They are the result of the realisation that political Islam is a "very complex movement" [717] that defies conventional wisdom and requires a sophisticated approach. Pelletreau affirmed in 1994, during a congressional hearing: "It is a complex phenomenon. It is one that we are studying quite carefully. We have a group within the State Department composed of a number of officials who are looking at the way political Islam exists in different countries"[718]. By emphasising the elusive nature of political Islam, he referred to the need for a seasoned approach on the part of State Department officials: "So we are actively studying and learning and developing our approach, refining our approach on this subject" [719].

Official pronouncements on political Islam draw clear distinctions between extremist movements and the Islamic revival as a whole, and caution against tarring the entire movement with the brush of extremism. He said: "We have declined to take a sort of overall, broadly limiting and broadly molding approach toward this phenomenon and have looked at it ... in each country, in each circumstances where it arises. I think we need to keep ... our own minds open about the various forms that political Islam or Islamic militancy can take, whether, in some cases, these movements or parties in given countries define themselves in a way that excludes themselves from broader participation or whether they are willing to participate in a broader constitutional structure or within a broader social compact as they are in some countries, such as Jordan for example" [720].

Pelletreau affirmed that, in approaching Islam, the United States avoids repeating the views put forward "both in scholarship and public discussion, that Islam

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° 39, 27 September 1993; "Remarks by Tony Lake, National Security Adviser to the President, at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy", *Federal News Service*, 17 May 1994.

[715] Riedel said: "the Pentagon rejects the argument that a clash of civilizations is imminent between Islam and the West. There is no Green Menace to replace the Reds", *Middle East Quarterly* (III), n ° 3, September 1996: p. 87.

[716] See U.S. Congress: *Recent Developments in North Africa* : p. 22.

[717] *Id.*: p. 9.

[718] *Ibid.* .

[719] *Id.*: pp. 9-10.

[720] *Id.*: p. 9.

equals Islamic fundamentalism equals extremism" [721] . He stated that "if we treat Islamic political activism as a monolithic political movement implacably or unalterably opposed to the West, we run a risk of alienating the broader Muslim world and paralyzing our own ability to act with discrimination and effectiveness"[722] . Rather, the United States sees multiple Islamic movements seeking to reform their societies, with considerable diversity in expression and aims. American officials have stressed that Muslims in general are peaceful and not violence-prone. They point to the rulers of Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, moderate pro-Western leaders, as examples of believers who incorporate the tenets and teachings of Islam into the way they rule. They also make clear that it is not the intention of the U.S. government "to exclude moderate, tolerant, peaceful Islamists who seek to apply their religious values to domestic political problems and foreign policy" [723] .

The Clinton administration gravitated toward a more comprehensive analysis that deepened, for instance, American understanding of the motivations behind resurgent Islam. Pelletreau's 1996 speech on "Islam and U.S. Policy" admitted that Islamic extremism "suggests that people in the region are dissatisfied with their current lot and leadership" and that "very often, they are reacting against the existing order" rather than aiming at the creation of a genuine Islamic state. This realisation, implying an overt recognition of the existing regime's shortcomings, prompted Pelletreau to "encourage governments in the region to take steps toward advancing the rule of law, enhancing local governance, and developing democratic institutions"[724].

Another aspect of Washington's nuanced approach has been an acknowledgement that there is no monolithic international effort behind Islamic movements. David C. Welch, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs affirmed: " Islamic militancy is not a coherent or unified international political movement. It is but one of several responses to the perceived inadequacies of existing governments, and this anti-government sentiment is often very nationalistic in character" [725]. This notwithstanding, U.S. officials have repeatedly expressed serious concern over Iran's exploitation of extremist elements, and over Sudan's destabilising role in North Africa.

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[721] Pelletreau, "Islam and U.S. Policy".
[722] Pelletreau, "Dealing with the Muslim Politics ...": p. 2.
[723] *Id.* .
[724] Pelletreau, "Islam and U.S. Policy ...".
[725] U. S. Congress, *Terrorism in Algeria:* p. 6.

America's tolerance of Islamist activism, affirmed Pelletreau, will stop as soon as Muslims use the cover of Islam to oppress minorities, preach intolerance, or violate human rights [726]. Recent declarations have gone a step further by narrowing the Islamists' freedom of action in the political and social realm. They stipulate that the United States will deal firmly with governments or groups that affect issues of importance to the United States, such as the peace process, terrorism, free markets and stability. Pelletreau hinted that Washington would take a tough stance against Islamic militants that challenge U.S. leadership and that of its allies: "there is little prospect for working productively with groups and individuals who are so intensely anti-Western that they aim not only to eradicate any Western influences in their societies, but to resist any form of cooperation with the West or modernizing influence at home"[727]. In the case of Algeria, where radical Islamists are major contestants for power, Pelletreau stated firmly: "those who say that the United States is resigned to or willing to condone a victory of extremism in Algeria are wrong. The goal of U. S. policy toward Algeria is to avoid such developments" [728].

9. 3. The Democracy Conundrum

Critics of the U.S. policy point that the conceptual differentiation between "moderate" and "extreme" Islamists - reserving a different treatment for both - overshadows the fact that even moderates have an agenda that antagonises Western interests. Sattloff remarks that "the tough part is what to do about the challenge to Western interests that comes from Islamists who may share goals with extremists but opt for different means" [729] . Miller questions "how would Washington view such groups as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan, Ghannoushi's al-Nahda movement in Tunisia and the FIS in Algeria, all of which have vowed repeatedly to establish their Islamic states by playing by domestic rules?" [730] .

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[726] "Dealing with the Muslim Politics ...": p. 3.
[727] *Ibid.* .
[728] *Recent Developments* ...: p. 5.
[729] Robert Sattloff, "An American Strategy to Respond to Political Islam", in Y. Mirsky, Matt Ahrens and Jennifer Sultan (eds.), *Challenges to U.S. Interests in the Middle East: Obstacles and Opportunities* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 34.
[730] Miller, *op. cit.* : p. 47.

Islamist call for the cleansing from Muslims lands of all traces of Western society, a feeling that is widespread even among the masses. Others point to the cunning tactics of Islamist groups that enable them to conceal their true nature and intentions. Gera says that "Islamists are sufficiently well-versed in Western discourse to assuage Western concerns" [731] . He adds that there is frequently a "division of labor" between the moderate or political wings of Islamist groups and the violent ones. It is thus moderation only in tactics (e.g. on the means to attain power and create an Islamic state: through violent revolution or through gradual, social evolution) and not in the ends, that remain the attainment of power in order to transform society, in light of the idealised Islamic order [732] .

Critics argue that such mainstream Islamist movements as the Muslim Brotherhood call for the strict application of the *Sharia* in a future Islamic state, a situation that would entail the violation of the prerequisites set forth byDjerejian for the creation of a democratic society.

The promotion of democracy and human rights has been proclaimed one of the three pillars of the Clinton administration's foreign policy. Officials have repeatedly stated that the administration's commitment to the "global revolution for democracy" is a part of a strategy for laying the foundations for a more just and stable world. The defence of democracy and human rights is understood as a part of U.S. efforts to improve American security and thus strengthening American interests. Clinton has often declared that a democratic world is a safer world, where nationscooperate and conflict becomes an exception. Democratic countries "are much more likely to be reliable partners in diplomacy, trade arms accords and global environment protection"[733] . Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, Robert Pelletreau, stated that in the Middle East democracy is regarded as "an important and necessary contributor to long-term stability" , and as a necessary requisite for having "peaceful, stable and prosperous partners in this important region" [734].

American officials have admitted that in the Middle East the persistence of authoritarian government has been an all too present reality. Regional conflict and instability have been wielded by autocratic governments as an excuse to suppress

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[731] Gideon Gera, "An Islamic Republic of Algeria?" (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1995), p. 25.
[732] *Ibid.* .
[733] Warren Christopher, Senate Confirmation Hearing, 13 January, 1993, quoted in Mirsky and Ahrens (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 72.
[734] Pelletreau, Pipes and Esposito, *op. cit.*: p. 4.

domestic opposition and stifle free expression. This situation, declared Pelletreau, "fuels extremism, whether of a secular or Islamist variety, which works against U.S. interests as well as the broader interests of the Middle Eastern states"[735] . Clinton's agenda (during his first term of office) for the region contemplated not only the protection of vital resources and conflict resolution but also the support for human rights, pluralism, women's and minority rights and popular participation in government. These "worldwide issues", stressed Djerejian, "constitute an essential part of the foundation for America's engagement with the countries of the Near East" [736] .

In the Meridian House speech, Djerejian clearly articulated the view that an infallible way of stemming the flow of Islamic extremism is the broadening of political participation. Pelletreau subsequently listed "promoting more open political and economic systems, and respect for human rights and the rule of law" as one of seven American objectives in the Middle East [737]. He explicitly stated the Clinton's administration commitment "to help countries make the arduous transition from authoritarianism to freedom and to work to create institutions that will make leaders accountable and responsive to their peoples' aspirations" [738].

Testifying before Congress, Djerejian affirmed that U.S. engagement in favour of more open political systems is not a mere propaganda slogan, and that even in the case of friendly states such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, U.S. officials do not fail to mention those issues with the local authorities: "No matter what the relationship, if the countries are close friends of ours, we press the issue"[739] . Pelletreau welcomed the encouraging signs of change in several Middle Eastern countries towards popular political participation: the significant political openings and elections in Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen, and the appointment in Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia of consultative councils to provide an avenue for broader participation[740] . The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded a multimillion-dollar project on "governance" in the region and to strengthen the institutions of civil society in ways that promote democracy.

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[735] Robert H. Pelletreau, "American Objectives in the Middle East", Remarks before the CENTCOM Annual Southwest Asia Symposium, Tampa, Florida, 14 May 1996: p. 7.
[736] Djerejian, "The U.S. and the Middle East ...": *op. cit.* : p. 446.
[737] "American Objectives..." : p. 7.
[738] R. Pelletreau, "Political Reform in the Middle East: America's Stake", Remarks before the Foundation for Democratization and Political Liberalization in the Middle East, 20 October 1995: p. 2.
[739] Hearing of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, 20 November 1991, quoted in Mirsky and Ahrens (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 61.
[740] "Political Reform ...." : p. 2.

However cogent and appealing, this U. S. policy is not without several problems one of which is how far and how fast to push the agenda for democracy and human rights in the face of a fear of Islamic backlash and extremism. Jonathan Paris highlights "the potential conflict in U.S. policy that might occur by encouraging democracy in the Arab world on the one hand, and containing radical Islamic fundamentalism and promoting the Arab-Israeli peace process on the other"[741]. In fact, the Islamic world brings into question Washington's straightforward assumption that the promotion of democracy on a global scale is in the national interest of the United States. While in some countries the democratisation process may enhance the legitimacy of current regimes and promote stability, in others it may contribute to bring to power, through democratic elections, Islamic parties that will undermine U.S. interests [742].

In spite of a rhetorical commitment to democratisation, many are sceptical of how that process in the region could guarantee American political and economic interests. The debate on democracy in the Middle East has become thorny due to the sensitivity of the issues involved. Richard Murphy defined the dilemmas that Washington faces when dealing with this question as the "democracy conundrum", and he affirmed: "Nowhere in the world do the cross-pressures ofAmerica´s interests and America´s ideals present starker choices"[743]. In general, he goes on to say, "the United States faces the difficult task of balancing between its principles - support for free and fair elections - and its particular interests in supporting some incumbent regimes and delegitimizing others" [744].

The United States can not be certain what will happen to countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, vital to U.S. economic interests - oil, markets and recycling of petrodollars into investments in Western countries - if democratic government should take over. Washington is worried about the Islamist challenge to the U.S.-perceived new world order and American hegemony in predominantly Muslim regions. Surely if democratic states are established in the Middle East, they will make it much harder for any Western coalition to destroy the industrial base and infrastructure of a country like Iraq. The Jordanian experience during the Gulf War showed that when the masses are free, they can affect the course of government policy. It logically ensues

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[741] Paris, *op. cit.* : p. 553.
[742] *Ibid.* .
[743] Murphy and Gause, III, *op. cit.*: p. 1.
[744] *Ibid.* .

that Washington would rather keep in place the existing dictatorships, who are at least constrained in varying degrees by judicious calculations and the international order.

Former Secretary of Defense and CIA chief James Schlesinger spoke for more than himself when he questioned "whether we seriously desire to prescribe democracy as the proper form of government for other societies. Perhaps the issue is most clearly posed in the Islamic world. Do we seriously want to change the institutions in Saudi Arabia? The brief answer is no: Over the years we have sought to preserve those institutions, sometimes in preference to more democratic forces coursing throughout the world"[745] . In a similar vein, Jean Kirkpatrick affirmed: "The Arab world is the only part of the world where I've been shaken in my conviction that if you let people decide, they will make fundamentally rational decisions"[746] . Even Pelletreau recognised the exceptional nature of the Middle East when he affirmed that the region "presents unique challenges to the growth and acceptance of democratic principles" [747] .

Martin Indyk, the former director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, an influent pro-Israeli think-tank that has looked into the challenges posed by political Islam, and a senior member of the Clinton administration, summarises well the "stark choices" U.S. officials face: "rely on the democratic process to moderate the behaviour and objectives of the fundamentalists; or treat democracy in the Middle East as a luxury that friendly regimes cannot afford because it enables anti-democratic forces to seize power"[748]. Indyk affirms that the most comfortable choice would be to take no stand at all, but he recognises that in the Middle East context it would only make things worse. An effort to promote democracy in the region should, he recommends, give priority to a "minimalist" approach: "the U.S. should seek to focus first on supporting the building blocks of democracy - i.e. - fundamental human rights of free speech, assembly, religion and"due process" - whose achievement and implementation are necessary prerequisites for democratic elections" [749] .

Another dimension of the democracy dilemma, is that the process of democratisation in the Arab world would likely constitute a threat to the peace process. It is widely believed that a resolution of the Arab-Israeli peace process would remove one of the main causes of extremism in the region, thus undermining Islamist

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[745] "The Quest for a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs* (72), nº 1, 1993, p. 20.
[746] Quoted in Kramer, "Islam vs. Democracy". p. 37.
[747] "Political Reform ...": p. 2.
[748] Indyk, "The Implications ...", in Mirsky and Rice (eds.), p. 51.
[749] *Ibid.* .

appeal. Paris remarks that "as the process ofdemocratization advances in the Arab world, criticism of both established regimes and Israel is likely to increase, especially if the peace process achieves mixed results. The conventional wisdom that only Arab democracies can make lasting peace with Israel may not be true on a substantive level, given the elite/street schism toward Israel, nor on a procedural level, in that dictators have wider latitude to reach an agreement with Israel that does not have to be approved beforehand by the voters" [750] .

The promotion of human rights poses similar problems to U.S. policy-makers. Clinton has agreed that the quest for human rights must sometimes "be tempered with prudence and common sense" [751] . A Senior State Department official said it would be pointless for instance to cut off weapons sales to Saudi Arabia as a pressure tactic to extend the rights of Saudi women: "They wouldn't do it.[Instead] they would buy from France and Britain and Germany. It would lose U.S. jobs" [752] . Officials cite other instances in which it may be hard to enforce human-rights policies. In the case of Algeria, they point out that the United States is in a difficult position in pressing that country to restore democracy because it does not want to bolster indirectly the Islamist cause [753] . There is a common understanding that, in foreign policy, human rights are not the only consideration and that strategic, diplomatic, and economic interests may prevail.

For U.S. policy-makers, democracy in the Arab world is equivalent to trouble. In the case of moderate, pro-Western regimes like Egypt, Jordan or Saudi Arabia, U.S. officials are apt to share the incumbent leaders' interpretation that the Islamic extremists are the most pressing threat. Esposito points out that "for leaders in the West, democracy raises the prospect of old and reliable friends sometimes referred to as client states being transformed into more independent and less predictable nations should Islamists come to rule" [754]. They see a fundamentalist victory in these countries as a deadly blow to Western interests and as the first domino, after which the rest of the Arab world might well succumb to fundamentalist revolution. So long as

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[750] Paris, *op. cit.* : p. 564.
[751] Address on "Democracy in America". Milwaukee, 1 October 1992, inMirsky and Ahrens (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 71.
[752] Ben Barber, "Clinton's Foreign Policy Brings New Emphasis to Human Rights", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 15 April 1993: p. 2.
[753] *Ibid.* .
[754] U. S. Congress, *Recent Developments* ...: p. 17.

repression works, there is little impetus for American officials to reassess the policy of firm support for those regimes [755] .

Hadar criticises Washington for applying double standards according to its priorities. He says that "when it comes to free elections in Algeria or Egypt, Washington suddenly begins to lament over the 'dilemmas" and the "difficult choices" but, it does not seem to express a similar sense of sorrow when the regimes in Algeria and Tunisia repress their own citizens" [756] . Murphy says that the rhetoric of "democratic enlargement" is used selectively and dropped whenever it might endanger superior American security and economic goals. In the case of pro-Western regimes, Washington is willing to remain silent when sham elections are held or anti-democratic practices are used. When genuine elections are held in countries that oppose the United States, such as Iran, then the American government labels them antidemocratic [757]. He urges the U.S. government to be less hypocritical regarding the democracy issue, an attitude which consistently disappoints human rights and pro-democracy movements who look to Washington for support and that enrages Islamists [758].

Karabell remarks that "the United States has adopted what it believes to be the lesser of two evils. Better the pro-Western military or authoritarian governments than an Islamic state like Iran. This is an interesting spin on theKirkpatrick doctrine of the 1980s that it was better for the United States to countenance military governments than allow for the possibility of a communist takeover" [759] . This fact enables Hadar to conclude that Washington's profession of faith in democracy (and precautions against political Islam) "masks clear political interests and has little to do with concerns over the status of liberty in the Middle East. Such rhetoric is used tomobilize support for the pro-Western autocratic regimes and by extension to secure U.S. hegemony in the region ..." [760] .

The Clinton administration, despite its initial global democracy project and language of Wilsonian idealism, has been careful in the advocacy of the "democratisation agenda" in the Middle East [761] . Washington's preference is for the

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[755] Karabell, *op. cit.* : p. 45.
[756] Hadar, "What Green Peril": p. 37.
[757] Murphy and Gause, III, *op. cit.*: p. 1.
[758] *Id.* : p. 3.
[759] Karabell, *op. cit.* : p. 47.
[760] Hadar, *op. cit.* : p. 40.
[761] P. Marr, "The United States, Europe and the Middle East", *The Middle East Journal* (48), n° 2, Spring 1994: p. 222.

maintenance of the status quo, ahead of support for democratisation.Esposito argues that "the status quo bias is "rationalized by the claim that both Arab culture and Islam are anti-democratic," citing the absence of democratic tradition and the "paucity" of democracies in the Muslim world"[762] . Esposito, speaking at a congressional hearing, stated that the United States should send "a clear signal to our... allies and to Islamic movements out there, that if we, for example believe indemocratization, that is not just democracy for the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but it is also for the Maghreb, for the Middle East and the broader Muslim world" [763].

Esposito reckons that a significant first step has been taken in the case of Algeria where the U.S. government urged the leadership to establish a dialogue with the moderate Islamist opposition. However, he points out, this position also "needs to go beyond Algeria to indicate that we are not taking this position because Algeria is not terribly important in the larger scheme of American military-economic-political interests"[764]. He doubts the American government would be so forthcoming in the case of Egypt where U. S. interets are more critical. Speaking in the context of the Maghreb, he says that "it would signal something significant if, in the case of Tunisia and Morocco as well, we articulated the same kind of nuanced position on Algeria regarding the opposition; that governments should open up and talk to moderate Islamist movement"[765].

Indyk points to the examples of Egypt and Jordan to draw some principles as to the way of managing successfully the Islamist challenge without endangering the survivability of the incumbent regimes. He says that the best option would be limiting the political sphere to secular parties and channelling Islamic activists into the social and economic spheres where their welfare activities are highly appreciated, a strategy that in fact, is tantamount to their politicalmarginalization Only in the last instance, he advises, should one co-opt non-violent, mainstream Islamic movements into political life[766] .

Murphy points out the potential of the "Turkish model", after the 1995 parliamentary elections, which has demonstrated how to accommodate Islamist political activity and avoid "the dangerous polarization of politics into an autocratic secular government and a violent undergroundIslamist opposition so characteristic of

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[762] Quoted in Sisk, *op. cit.* : p. 11.
[763] U. S. Congress, *op. cit.:* p. 22.
[764] *Id.*: p. 29.
[765] *Id.*: pp. 29-30.
[766] *Ibid.* .

many Arab states" [767]. The incorporation of Islamist groups was the result of a prolonged democratic practice that allowed the development of strong political parties across the electoral spectrum. This resulted in compliance ofIslamists to the rules of pluralism. Murphy sees Turkey as a model that other Middle Eastern countries should emulate and that the United States should promote [768]. It epitomises the ideal situation, which is the opening up of political systems in an evolutionary way.

9. 4. Islamist Terrorism

Islamist movements pose other kind of challenges to U.S. policy-makers which have to do with the use of violence and terrorism. Actually, the Middle East is the major source of state-sponsored international terrorism. Five of the seven states that have been branded by the U.S. government as sponsors of international terrorism- Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria - are located in the region[769] . Moreover, twenty-two of the forty-one major international terrorist groups described in the State Department's annual report on global terrorism are based in the Middle East[770] . In the 1990s, terrorism by extremist individuals or groups claiming to act for religious motives has been on the upsurge. This is particularly the case with Islamic extremists[771] . In the last few years, they have attracted the Americans' attention as they have stepped up the attacks on U.S. targets. The trend has been confirmed by the World Trade Center bombing and the uncovering of a plot to launch a wider terror campaign on American territory; the continuing attempts by Islamic extremists to undermine the Middle East peace process, and the attacks against U.S. targets in Saudi Arabia, fuelling concerns that more serious challenges to the U.S. presence in the region lie ahead.

The World Trade Center bombing underscored to Americans the degree to which radical Islamic extremists have supplanted radical nationalists, such as the PLO, as the chief Middle Eastern terrorist threat to the United States. The bombing

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[767] Murphy and Gause, III, *op. cit.*: p. 4.
[768] *Ibid.* .
[769] The others are Cuba and North Korea.
[770] U.S. Department of State, *1995 Patterns of Global Terrorism*, April 1996 (electronic file transfer).
[771] "International Terrorism", Remarks by Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Amb. Philip C. Wilcox Jr. before the Denver Council on Foreign Relations, Denver, Colorado, 12 September 1996: p. 3.

clearly snapped the United States to attention and was an ominous announcement that terrorism could touch the United States directly. The jury that convicted Sheikh Rahman and his followers found that the *jihad* organisation conspired to wage war against the United States - not simply to bomb its civilian population, murder its politicians, hold its law enforcement officials hostage, and break imprisoned members of the group out of American jails. Although exaggerating the threat out of its proportions, the fact is that the jury's pronouncement reflected the average American's perception that "all of these activities were part of a greater whole - an all-out attack on America itself, aimed not merely at American engagement in the world at large, but at American freedoms, ideals and the American way of life" [772].

News stories and intelligence reports have indicated that radical Islamic movements have found sanctuary in the West among Muslim immigrants. The World Trade Center bombers were all either recent immigrants or illegal aliens. Although they may have been drawn to America by economic opportunities, many of them take advantage of the Western political systems to travel freely, organise politically, raise funds, recruit new members, support underground opposition movements in their home countries, and sometimes to direct terrorist activities. It is believed that the United States has become, for several years now, a safe haven forHizbollah, the Islamic Group, Algerian fundamentalists, and Palestinian fundamentalists [773].

The loosely linked informal webs of Islamic militants, often organisedin small groups around a charismatic cleric, are harder to track and infiltrate. Pentagon analysts agree the main problem now is the increasing number of fragmented and freelancing Islamic extremist groups supported by private sources [774]. The "privatization of the support of terrorism" makes it difficult to identify the people responsible for terrorist acts[775]. A major sponsor of international terrorism isOsama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi exile based in Afghanistan who seeks to overthrow the Saudi regime. He is believed to be funding Islamic terrorism in Egypt and elsewhere, and the Islamic group, an Egyptian underground that has staged terrorist strikes to destabilise President Mubarak's regime.

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[772] Andrew McCarthy, "Jihad in an Open Society", in Alicia Gansz and John Wilner (eds.), *Fighting Terror, Waging Peace: Twin Challenges for Democracies and Peacemakers* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute For Near East Policy, 1996), p. 4.

[773] James Phillips, *The Changing Face of Middle Eastern Terrorism*, The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder, n° 1005, 6 October 1994: pp. 6-7.

[774] David B. Ottaway, "U.S. Considers Slugging It Out With International Terrorism", *The Washington Post*, 17 October 1996: p. A 32.

[775] Kober, *op. cit.* .

Privately financed terrorism seems to be one of the several unforeseen consequences of the Afghan war, called by some journalists the "University of *Jihad*" and a breeding ground of Islamic terrorists. Thousands of Muslims from roughly forty countries flocked to Afghanistan following the 1979 Soviet invasion. Pakistani officials estimate that at least 2800 foreign Muslims were still in Afghanistan in 1993 [776].

An expert on terrorism explains the *modus operandi* of these militants: "Now you don't have a group, you have an old boys' network where people keep in touch. This is not something that can be penetrated, because they may just come together for one operation and disperse again. They don't have to have an office and a car pool and stationery. All they need are their modems - one in the Philippines, one in New York and one in Peshawar - and you've got your group"[777] . A Pentagon official noted that "today's terrorists don't have to depend that much any more on states for access to financing or the technological means" [778] .

At least three of the six bombers of the World TradeCenter had fought in the war in Afghanistan against Soviet and Afghan communists. Sheikh Omar Rahman also made at least three visits there since 1980 and two of his sons reportedly fought there. A *Washington Post* news story states that among the ultra-radicals that spearhead the opposition against the ruling Saudi family, are the 15,000 militants who fought in Afghanistan, where some received CIA-organised military training and forged links with radical leaders from a number of Arab countries. It also reveals that of the four Saudis who confessed to the 1995 November's bombing at the National Guard facility in Riyadh, three were veterans of the Afghan conflict. One of them confessed to having been influenced by a radical Muslim preacher and militant that he encountered in Afghanistan [779] .

Besides the homefront, America's most critical role is defending the Middle East peace process. Hamas attacks, meant to derail the peace process, began accelerating shortly after Yasser Arafat and the late Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on their 1993 historic agreement. Hamas' most recent bombs are increasingly lethal as

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[776] Edward Gargan. "Where Arab Militants Train and Wait", *The New York Times*, 11 August 1993: p. A 8.
[777] Quoted in Kober. *op. cit.*: p. 9.
[778] Ottaway, *op. cit.* : p. A 32.
[779] Edward Cody, "Saudi Islamic Radicals Target U.S. Royal Family", *The Washington Post*. 15 August 1996: p. A 1; "Four Saudis Confess to Riyadh Bombing, Saying They Were Influenced by Massa'ri and Bin-Laden", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 79, 23 April 1996: pp. 18-9.

greater technological sophistication makes it more difficult to protect mass civilian targets, the main aim of Hamas' attacks [780].

Following the four bombings that rocked Israel in late February and early March 1996, President Clinton convened the Sharm el-Sheikh conference. The conference launched a process to expand joint efforts against terrorism throughout the region. President Clinton and Shimon Peres signed a new anti-terrorism accord that will strengthen cooperation between the two governments. In addition, the United States promised Israel $100 million in extra aid to fight terrorism [781]. The U.S. government also began to bolster the counterterrorism capabilities of the Palestinian Authority. With American support, Israeli and Palestinian security services started cooperating in a joint campaign to root out the terrorist infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza [782].

Americans believe that Iran plays a leading role in the campaign of violence to disrupt the peace process. The *1995 Patterns of Global Terrorism* identifies Iran as "the premiere state sponsor of the international terrorism" responsible for "the planning and execution of terrorist acts both by its own agents and by surrogate groups". Iran's great success, which dates back to the early 1980s, came in war-torn Lebanon, where it helped to create, finance, train and equip Arab fundamentalists for political violence.

Hizbollah, an Iranian-sponsored and Syrian-backed terrorist group based in Lebanon, perpetrated the October 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut. It is considered in the words of former CIA Director James Woolsey, the "world's principal international terrorist organization" [783]. The movement has tried to disrupt the peace process by provoking clashes with Israel that Hizbollah hoped would bring Israel into conflict with Syria and Lebanon. Hizbollah has also supported radical Palestinian groups opposed to peace. They are united by their opposition to any territorial compromise with Israel and by their fears that a successful peace agreement will weaken them politically. The late 1980s Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip created an opportunity for Hizbollah to develop *de facto* alliances with rejectionist Palestinian groups such as the Islamic Jihad. The uprising

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[780] *1995 Patterns of Global Terrorism*; see "Middle East Overview".

[781] Donald Neff, ""Peace Summit" Ends in Tame Compromise", *Middle East International*, n° 522, 29 March 1996: p. 3.

[782] Warren Christopher, "Fighting Terrorism: Challenges for the Peacemakers", in Gansz and Wilner (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 22.

also helped spawn another militant group, Hamas, with which Hizbollah and Iran are also reported to have developed strong ties [784].

Katzman asserts that Hizbollah is gaining the ability to mount a sustained, coordinated, and well-organised terrorist campaign all over the globe. The 1994 bombings against Jewish and Israeli installations that in nine days swept Argentina, Panama and Britain are believed to be the handiwork of the organisation. The expansion of the organisation's terrorist infrastructure abroad to such places as Sudan, Europe, and Latin America aims at hedging against any peace settlement that requires Hizbollah's dismantlement. Katzman contends that the movement has timed its acts of vengeance to adversely affect the Middle East peace process [785].

In December 1996, and in the aftermath of the Israeli operation, "Grapes of Wrath", the Iranian Supreme National Security Council decided to strengthen the military and financial capacity of the movement. Tehran's annual contribution to Hizbollah passed from $80 to $100 million. The Iranians have substantially increased the pace of delivery of Sagger anti-tank missiles and of upgraded Katiousha rockets[786].

Iran has also established good working relationships with several Sunni fundamentalist groups since 1990, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine, the Islamic Group of Egypt, and similar groups in Algeria, Jordan and Tunisia. The opening of Arab-Israeli peace talks at the Madrid Conference in October 1991 gave Iran and Palestinian extremists a common interest in disrupting the U.S.-sponsored negotiations by escalating terrorists attacks against Israel. Iran invited a Hamas delegation to attend an October 1992 international conference held in Tehran to coordinate opposition to the peace process. Iranian authorities subsequently agreed to help train Hamas terrorists and permit Hamas to open an embassy in Tehran [787].

Iranians meet frequently with all other major radical groups opposed to the peace process, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the PFLP-GC (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command). It provides them with money - up

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[783] James Phillips, "The Challenge of Revolutionary Iran", *The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, n° 24, 29 March 1996 (electronic file transfer): p. 3.
[784] Kenneth Katzman, "Hizbollah: Narrowing Options in Lebanon", Roundtable on Terrorism: Hizbollah, Hamas and the Iranian Connection, Conference on *Terrorism: National Security Policy and the Home Front*, Georgia Institute of Technology, 4 November 1994 (electronic file transfer).
[785] *Id.*.
[786] *Le Monde du Renseignement*, n° 303, 16 January 1997: p. 6.
[787] Phillips, *op. cit.*: p. 2.

to several million dollars a year in the case ofHamas, Islamic Jihad and others. Iran also supplies them with arms and material support, training, and, in some cases, operational guidance. Iranian-trained terrorists have frequently infiltrated Israel and the Palestinian territories [788].

Iran's links to Sudan are a major concern for U.S. authorities. Iran has become the chief supporter and ally of Sudan's National Islamic Front, a Sunni fundamentalist movement that came to power following Lt. Bashir's 1989 coup. Sudan, Africa's largest state, offers Iran a strategic foothold to outflank Saudi Arabia and extend its revolutionary influence throughout North Africa and the Horn of Africa. Iranian-Sudanese cooperation escalated following President Rafsanjani's December 1991 visit to Sudan [789]. Hundreds of Iranian military advisers and Revolutionary Guards were dispatched to Sudan to help train the Sudanese army and internal security forces.

Egyptian intelligence officials claim to have evidence that Iranians train terrorists in about twenty camps that come mainly from Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia. Sudan has enabled Iran to expand its contacts with Egyptian groups that can easily infiltrate the porous Sudanese-Egyptian border, seeking to overthrow the Egyptian government. The powerful Islamic extremist groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah have all sent members for training. Open offices, like the oneHamas keeps in the Ammarat district of Khartoum, presumably facilitate the ingress, training, and egress of the foreign nationals [790].

Terrorism has also struck the American presence in the Gulf region. The deadliest terrorist attack against U.S. interests in the Middle East since the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut took place on 13 November 1995 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. A vehicle bomb badly damaged the headquarters of the National Guard training centre, killing seven persons, including five U.S. citizens. A worse attack occurred on 25 June 1996 when nineteen more Americans were killed by a truck bomb that exploded in front of a residence for U.S. airmen at Dhahran, in eastern Saudi Arabia. Defense Secretary William Perry, fearing more such attacks, took the decision of putting American servicemen on the highest security alert [791].

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[788] Christopher, *op. cit.* : p. 23.
[789] Mireille Duteil, "Un entretien avec Hassan el-Tourabi", *Monde Arabe: Maghreb-Machrek*, n° 137, July/September 1992: pp. 116-7.
[790] Harmon, *op. cit.* : p. 19.
[791] Cody, *op. cit.* : p. A 1.

The attacks signalled a rise in Islam-based political opposition that surfaced soon after the Gulf War. Since the end of the war, the expanded American military presence has become visible, raising controversy among many Saudis who think it is *haram* to have the infidel soldiers in Saudi Arabia. American troops have become the main targets of the Islamic radicals in what they regard as a holy war against the corrupt Saudi ruling family. These events which caught the Americans off guard seem to portend serious challenges to U.S. interests in the region [792].

The Clinton administration, increasingly frustrated in its efforts to thwart terrorism in the Middle East, [793] is considering a more activist policy that could include pre-emptive strikes and expanded covert counterterror operations against Arab groups and states that sponsor terrorism. CIA Director John Deutch said in September 1996 that the CIA was drawing a list of military options to present to Clinton "to act against terrorist groups directly either to prevent them from carrying out operations or to retaliate against groups we know are responsible for operations"[794]. The debate over how to combat terrorism came up during the electoral campaign amid charges from Republican presidential Bob Dole and his party that the Clinton administration has been too soft on Middle East state sponsors of terrorism [795].

Growing concern over the security challenges posed by terrorism has, in fact, led the administration to spearhead efforts to combat terrorism on a global level. In December 1995, the American government convened a ministerial meeting in Ottawa with the G-7 countries and Russia to develop common strategies for fighting terror. And, in April 1996, President Clinton joined Russian president Yeltsin and other leaders in Moscow, where they agreed on new steps to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands [796]. New legislation, including the 1996 Terrorism Prevention Act, provides law enforcement with new tools to fight terrorism. Among other things it stipulates a ban on fundraising activities in the United States by terrorists and terrorist-linked organisations and lists procedures for expediting the deportation of aliens convicted of felonies [797].

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[792] Najm Jarrah, "The Bomb at Al-Khobar", *Middle East International*, n° 529, 5 July 1996: pp. 7-8.
[793] See "International Terrorism", Remarks by Amb. Philip C. Wilcox, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, before the Denver Council on Foreign Relations, Denver, Colorado, 12 September 1996.
[794] Quoted in Ottaway, *op. cit.* : p. A 25.
[795] John Mintz, "Republicans Seize Upon Unusual Issue to Assault Clinton: Terrorism", *The Washington Post*, 25 August 1996: p. A 4.
[796] Christopher, *op. cit.* : pp. 21-2.
[797] John O'Neill, "Fighting Terrorism: The Challenge for Democracies - Part I", in Gansz and Wilner (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 13.

The administration has alternately adopted policies of containment, pressure and dialogue - or a mixture of the three - depending on the diplomatic needs of the moment, the willingness of U.S. allies to cooperate and the other issues at stake in relations with Middle Eastern states that sponsor terrorism. While a combination of U.N. sanctions and military pressure has largely succeeded in curbing the terrorist activities of Libya and Iraq, U.S. efforts to curtail Iran's involvement through economic boycotts and joint allied Western pressure have failed. Some analysts argue that more forceful actions taken against rogue states, such as Sudan and Iran, still can make a significant difference. Military strikes against terrorist "safe heavens" are one of the suggested actions [798] .

U.S. strategists are divided over whether terror-sanctioning states or independent terrorist groups should be the primary targets of more aggressive U.S. action. Officials also disagree over whether military action - an option fraught with potential problems - would prove more effective than traditional diplomatic tools such as sanctions and boycotts against governments the State Department considers terrorism sponsors. In any case, the fight against terrorism is bound to get more complicated as U.S. intelligence officers and counterterrorism agents increasingly have to deal with a murky network of home-grown, privately financed and largely independent groups freely going around.

9. 5. The Presidential Endorsement

The U.S. policy on Islam has been strongly endorsed bypresident Clinton who has engaged in a sustained effort to improve relations between the United States and the Islamic faith [799]. Inspired partly by political considerations and partly by the president's personal religious convictions, the effort is aimed at convincing the world's one billion Muslims that America is not opposed to their faith and at convincing non-Muslim Americans that Islamic doctrine and culture are not hostile to U.S. values. The message from the Clinton administration is that the vast majority of Muslims are not violent fanatics but ordinary people going peacefully about their business, and that

[798] Ottaway, *op. cit.* : p. A 25.
[799] Interview with William Quandt, Washington, D.C., 14 October 1996.

they have nothing to fear from Islam. This point is made consistently in policy statements, responses to world events and symbolic gestures.

The U.S. government has carefully avoided linking terrorist crimes to the Muslim religion. The roundup of Muslim suspects in theWorld Trade Center bombing reinforced the popular impression of Islam as a menace, as do attacks on foreigners by Muslim extremists in Algeria and Egypt. U.S. officials have affirmed that the United States is opposed to terrorism and threatening behaviour wherever it occurs, not to Islam as a faith. "Islamic terrorists have captured our attention", State Department counterterrorism coordinator Philip C. Wilcox affirmed. "These groups share a common opposition to secular Arab government, to Israel and the West. They are a threat. But those groups who practice terror under the flag of Islam are a small minority, rejected by the great majority of Muslims". He added: "Nor do we regard Islamic extremism as the wave of the future" [800] .

During Clinton's visit to Indonesia in November 1994, his major public appearance was at the main mosque in Jakarta. Asked why he had visited the site, Clinton said "I have tried to do a lot as I have travelled the world ... and say to the American people and the West generally that even though we have had problems with terrorism coming out of the Middle East, it is not inherently related to Islam - not to the religion, not to the culture" [801] . Clinton stressed this is "something our people in America need to know, it's something people in the West, throughout the West, need to know" [802] .

When president Clinton addressed the Jordanian Parliament in 1994 he stressed the same idea: "though we know in every corner of the world ... there are those who insist that between America and the Middle East there are impassible religious and other barriers to harmony, that our beliefs and cultures must somehow inevitably clash. America refuses to accept that our civilizations must collide ... We respect Islam ..." [803] . Clinton himself revised the text drafted by his speech-writers to deliver the same message in personal terms [804] .

Like his senior officials, the president defined extremists not as the ordinary Muslims but as "the forces of terror and extremism, who cloak themselves in the

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[800] Quoted in Thomas W. Lippman, "To Islam, An Olive Branch", *The Washington Post*, 28 December 1994: p. A 18.
[801] *Ibid.* .
[802] *Ibid.* .
[803] "President Clinton Addresses Joint Session of Jordanian Parliament", *Federal News Service*, 26 October 1994.

rhetoric of religion and nationalism, but behave in ways that contradict the very teachings of their faith" [805].

President Clinton´s positive appraisal of Islam was reiterated in March 1995, at a joint press conference with Morocco´s King Hassan II. The president concluded his opening remarks by stating: "I share this conviction that Islam can be a powerful force for tolerance and moderation in the world, and that its traditional values - devotion to family and to society, to faith and good works - are in harmony with the best of Western ideals" [806]. In both countries, Clinton´s praise of Islam and its "traditional values" was akin to advocating the ruling monarch´s brand of Islam.

On the homefront, the Clinton administration has made more friendly gestures toward American Muslims than any previous administration. The President sent greetings to Muslims during the fast of Ramadan and the First Lady hosted a celebration of Id al-Fitr in the White House in April 1996. In the Autumn of 1995, Vice President Al Gore visited a mosque, and in 1995 the first Muslim chaplain to serve the 10 000 Muslims in the U.S. armed forces was sworn into the Air Force [807].

The estimated four million Muslims in the country are becoming more assertive. Islam is a religion expanding rapidly in the United States. There is a growing sense of solidarity among Muslims, partly due to the adversity stemming from such crises as the Gulf War, the World TradeCenter bombing, and the Oklahoma city bombing. Black Muslims, more than one-third of the Islamic community, were energised by the Million Man March in Washington. They want to change their lack of clout and secure a toehold in the American power structure [808].

The President received a delegation of Arab Americans in the White House to discuss a wide range of issues, both domestic and international. The First Lady, Hillary Clinton, has played a particularly active role in building bridges with the Muslim community and, in visits abroad, has emphasised American respect for Islam. The National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, received a delegation of Muslims to discuss the ramifications of the Bosnian crisis. Moreover, American Muslim Council Representatives have met both State and Justice Department officials to voice their

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[804] Lippman, *op. cit.* : p. A 18.
[805] "President Clinton..." .
[806] "Transcript of Remarks by President Clinton and King Hassan II of Morocco in Press Conference", *U.S. Newswire*, 15 March 1995.
[807] Robert Marquand and Lamis Andoni, "The Muslims Learn to Pull Political Ropes in U.S.", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 5 February 1996: p.1.
[808] Robert Marquand, "Islam Takes Root in the Land of Levis", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 22 January 1996: p. 9.

concerns over the anti-terrorism bill and to lobby against provisions which were felt to be unfair towards Muslims. President Clinton's gestures towards Muslims were sufficiently high profile to provoke a hostile article by Stephen Emerson in the *Wall Street Journal* in March 1996, raising the spectre of "Friends ofHamas in the White House". The article alleged that some of the president's Muslim guests were friends of Hamas and supporters of the Palestinian movement [809] .

[809] Ali Mazrui, "Between the Crescent and the Star-Spangled Banner: American Muslims and U.S. Foreign Policy", *International Affairs* (72), nº 3, July 1996: p. 499.

10. Political Islam and Foreign Policy Priorities

10.1. Explaining the Challenges

Political Islam has become a major issue in U.S. foreign policy, particularly the challenges posed by extremist groups or Islamist regimes that are believed to threaten U:S. interests and allies by engaging in subversive or terrorist activities. In fact, political Islam has generally been seen mainly through the prism of violence, and "Islamic fundamentalism" equated with "terrorism" mainly Iranian. Arab and Islamic "terror" has become the U.S. administration's main preoccupation these days and one of the main issues in the 1996 presidential election.

The United States has been particularly concerned with countries where Islamist movements have shaped domestic and regional dynamics in ways that are adverse to Washington´s interests: that is the case of Iran, Sudan, the Arab-Israeli peace process and Algeria. 1996 witnessed the upgrading of Washington's punitive policies against the Iranian and Sudanese regimes and the Islamist movements opposed to the peace process. In the case of Algeria, the U.S. policy has abandoned its passive approach in favour of a more proactive one. Clinton's tightening of sanctions against those regimes - and, in the case of Iran, the imposition of sanctions on third parties that invest in that country - are largely a reflection of the highly-charged and emotive climate in the United States in the aftermath of the downing of TWA flight 800 and of the bomb in Atlanta. The bombing of the U.S. facilities in al-Khobar enabled commentators and certain sectors in the U.S. policy apparatus to unambiguously denounce those countries and groups which are accused of promoting terrorism and instability designating Iran as the main culprit.

Washington's approach to terrorism is also heavily influenced by the political agenda of Israel and its lobbysts and supporters in the U.S. political and media establishments. In the attempt to portray Iran as a threat to the world, Israeli president Ezer Weizman accused Iran of being behind the terrorist explosion in Dhahran. He presented no evidence to support his allegations. There is some truth in the Syrian analyst's assertation that "all manner of pro-Israeli American politicians and self-styled "experts on terrorism" have been pointing the finger at those countries and groups

which Israel wants to find pretext to act against. Hence, accusations have already been levelled against Iran, Iraq, Syria and Hizbollah. Sudan and Libya cannot be far behind"[810].

Iran tops the list of the U.S. outlaw states. Tehran is the depository of Washington's fierce mistrust and hostility due to the frustrating episodes of the Iranian Revolution, the hostage affair and the failed attempt in the mid-80s to cultivate ties with the Islamic Republic. America's complaints against the Iranian regime include: Tehran's involvement in terrorism, particularly that which undermines the peace process in the Middle East; its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms buildup which could, if realised, pose real threats to the Persian Gulf states; its attempts to subvert friendly U.S. governments in the region and its unfortunate human-rights record.

The international campaign against Iran is fuelled by Israel but even Egypt joined the chorus by accusing Tehran of sponsoring a subversive organisation active among Egypt's tiny Shiite minority [811] . In the aftermath of the al-Khobar bombing there was talk in political, defence and media circles, chiefly in the United States and Israel, of a new international coalition, along the lines of the Gulf War alliance, which would confront the "Iranian threat" and prevent Tehran from building its military forces and developing its offensive capabilities [812] .

The Islamist Sudanese regime is likely to face tougher sanctions as it has been increasingly pointed as a terrorist state. It reportedly hosts terrorist training camps for large numbers of "Afghan Arabs" and provides refuge for a number of extremist groups. Sudan has been depicted as a Trojan horse which Iran is using to penetrate neighbouring states by helping it open embassies in a number of West African states. These subsequently prove to be merely a front for Iranian intelligence and the promotion of Iranian and Shiite influence.

The Egyptians have been particularly vocal in their complaints against Khartoum and they allege having solid evidence proving that the Sudanese authorities are directly involved in training terrorists and sending them to Egypt[313] . The U.S. administration has been receptive to these charges and its heightened concern about

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[810] *Al-Quds*, quoted in "Who was the Real Target in al-Khobar: The U.S. or Saudi Arabia?", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 125, 28 June 1996: p. 13.

[811] "Iran Dismisses Egyptian Subversion Charges", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 211, 29 October 1996: pp. 12-3.

[812] "Israel, U.S. on Joint Strike Against Iran Seems Just a Matter of Time", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 20, 24 May 1996: p. 10.

Sudan inspired a three-day visit by the director of the CIA, John Deutch, to the Ethiopian capital in order to orchestrate a campaign against Khartoum. More important, Washington has been providing military aid to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda as front-line states that border Sudan and because of their role in helping the Americans contain the Sudanese regime [814].

A major concern of the United States is the weight of the Islamists in the offensive they have launched to put an end to the peace process. Washington has developed a multi-pronged effort to thwart that offensive which includes: the setting up of an international diplomatic campaign to support the peace process and to condemn Palestinian terror; the provision of financial and material aid to Israel to crack down on terrorists; the approval of tough new measures aimed at cutting off fund-raising in the United States for Hamas and the Islamic Jihad; and the tightening, at the international level, of surveillance of Middle East groups. A related consequence has been the mounting outcry against Iran which is believed to give support to Palestinian groups that oppose the peace process and to the Lebanese Hizbollah.

A different set of considerations have attracted U.S. attention to the case of Algeria whose regime is besieged by violent Islamist movements. Algeria concerns the United States in a different way since it has not traditionally been in the American sphere of influence and Washington has relatively few direct interests in that Mediterranean country. However, the Americans are deeply worried about the strategic implications of a possible Islamist takeover for U.S. interests in the wider Middle East, especially the impact on pro-Western regimes in the region and on European allies. The outcome of the ongoing struggle in Algeria is not indifferent to Washington although it has adopted a policy of equidistance regarding the internal development of the situation. Faced with a possible victory of Islamist forces and/or breakdown, American policy-makers have of lately moved to a more interventionist approach.

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[813] *Al-Ahram*, quoted in *Mideast Mirror*, nº 228, 24 November 1995: p. 15.
[814] *The Washington Post* quoted in "U.S. Said Shifting to Covert Action to Subvert Sudan's Islamist Regime", *Mideast Mirror* (10), nº 220, 11 November 1996: p. 12.

10.2. America's Priorities and Policy Options

10.2.1. The Peace Process

American attitudes toward political Islam are shaped to a large extentby the Islamist groups´ rejection of the peace process and their attempts to undermine it. Terrorist attacks and suicide bombings against civilians in Israel have fuelled the perception that political Islam and its sympathisers are the main forces undermining the peace process. They have shaped the negative images ofIslamism in Congress, media and in the U.S. public at large. Richard Murphy says that "the United States does not take lightly expressions of determined opposition to the peace process". This is because, he goes on to explain "the United States has for the past generation, made major investments of political will in the Middle East" [815] .

The peace process is obviously one facet of America's protective role toward its favourite Middle Eastern ally - Israel - and is a major condition for the creation of a stable Middle East. Sick argues that "our interest in the peace process drives our policy on every other aspect of the Middle East. Everything else is subordinated to that, sometimes in very unhealthy ways" [816] .

Since the signing in 1993 of the Oslo accords and related agreements, the peace process has come under serious challenge from groups that either oppose its nature or dispute the PLO's role and direction of the process. The leading opposition groups are Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. In an attempt to derail the peace deal with Israel, they have claimed responsibility for suicide bombings that have killed nearly 200 Israelis and wounded many others. Their attacks reflect the frustrations of many Palestinians over the slow implementation of self-rule inJericho and the Gaza Strip, as well as a perception that the new Palestinian authority led byYasser Arafat is increasingly dependent on Israel.

Hamas, the strongest opposition Palestinian group sprouted shortly after the Palestinian uprising in 1987, has built an effective organisational infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza. The military wing, formed in 1990, played a major role in

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[815] "Prospects for Improved US-Iranian Relations", in H. Amirahmadi (ed.), *Revisiting Iran's Strategic Significance in the Emerging Regional Order* (New Brunswick, NJ: U.S.-Iran Conference, 1995), p. 70.
[816] "The New Nationalism in Iran's Foreign Policy", *id.* : p. 8.

assassinating Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel before turning its arsenal against Israel. Hamas' politically-motivated violent attacks against Israeli targets in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Israel, are devised to force Jerusalem to start negotiations with Hamas. Additionally, Hamas' pressures on the PNA and Arafat are intended to force him to consider serious power sharing with that Islamic movement[817] .

The Palestine Islamic Jihad considers itself "a resistance movement against foreign occupation" [818] and refers to Israel as "an illegitimate entity created by armed force, dispossession and terror" [819] . The movement argues that for peace to be achieved the "aggression" and "injustice" that was inflicted on the Palestinian people when their land was "usurped" must end by returning the territory to their legitimate occupants [820] . Armed struggle is viewed as a "political and military necessity" to create a "balance of terror" with Israel and teach it that its systematic repression of the Palestinians will not go unanswered [821] . The leader of the Islamic Jihad, Damascus-based Ramadan Abdallah Shallah stated that his group, which has carried out suicide bombings against Israeli targets, would not give up military action until the Palestinian people regained their legitimate rights - which he defined as an Islamic Palestine, "from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean Sea]" [822] .

The spate of terrorist attacks that rocked Israel during February and March 1996 and left 62 Israelis killed, constituted the harshest blow to the peace process yet. Hamas launched the assaults in revenge for the Hebron massacre and for the Israeli-sponsored assassination in February of Yahia Ayyash, the alleged brain behind a spate of Hamas suicide operations that, between April 1994 and August 1995, claimed 50 Israeli lives.

The attacks aggravated the conditions in the occupied territories as Israelis reinforced the closure of Palestinian towns - virtually turning them into crowded ghettos - and imposed collective punishments. The bombings discredited the Peres

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[817] Ziad Abu-Amr, "Palestine's Islamic Alternative", *Middle East Insight* (X), n° 2, January/February 1995: p. 14.
[818] "Islamic Jihad Leader Warns Israel to Expect More Attacks", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 64, 29 March 1996: p. 11.
[819] *Id.* : p. 12.
[820] *Id.* : p. 13.
[821] *Id.* . p. 9.
[822] "Islamic Jihad: Revenge for Shakaki is Bound to Surprise Israelis at Any Time", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 219, 18 November 1996: p. 8.

government and opened the way for the hard-line Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

The other victims of the terrorist operations were Arafat and the PNA. Both came under pressure from the Israeli government and the United States to crack down on Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. Martin Indyk voiced the demand that "Arafat must dismantle Hamas' infrastructure in the self-rule areas. We[Israel and the U.S. government] want less of the carrot and more of the stick in the PNA's actions against Hamas" [823] . These pressures have forced Arafat to create a draconian security apparatus whose repressive actions in the self-rule areas have elicited much popular anger.

The hastily arranged Sharm al-Sheikh summit on terrorism, convened in the wake of the suicide bombings by president Clinton, brought together the leaders of the United States, Israel, the leading Arab and European nations and Japan with the ostensible purpose of discussing ways of combating terrorism and reinforcing the peace process with security and financial assistance. In reality, and as Israel's prime minister had declared before the summit, it was no more than a show of solidarity with Israel and an implicit backing of its stands and policies[824] . The gathering resulted not only in the strong condemnation of all acts of terror against the peace process but also in the American pledge to commit at least $100 million as part of an anti-terrorist pact to be fashioned with Israel [325] .

Far more important than the pronouncement about terrorism was the clear message that the mere convening of such a meeting sent to several constituencies behind terrorist acts, namely Hamas and Iran. The United States announced tough new measures aimed at cutting off fund-raising in the United States forHamas and at tightening surveillance of Middle East groups. The conference was a prelude to the imposition of sanctions against Iran, which has long topped a list of governments that the United States contends support terrorism.

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[823] Graham Usher, "Israel, Arafat and the Politics of Atrocity", *Middle East International*, nº 520. 1 March 1996: p. 3.

[824] "A Summit to Terrorize the Arabs", *Mideast Mirror* (10), nº 48, 13 March 1996: p. 15. The U.S. spokesman declared the summit "would be an attempt to reassure the people of Israel that their security is important to the international community itself" while Clinton declared that the message he would take with him from Egypt was that "Israel is not alone": "Looking Forward to Regional Coalition Against Violence from Next Week's Anti-Terrorism Summit", *Mideast Mirror* (10), nº 49, 8 March 1996: p. 3; "After the Sharm al-Sheikh "Carnival" ", *Mideast Mirror* (10), nº 54, 15 March 1996: p. 13.

[825] "Clinton Pledges $100m to Anti-Terror Pact and Will Discuss Security Pact Further with Peres in April", *Mideast Mirror* (10), nº 53: p. 7.

The Israel prime minister denounced Iran in the strictest termsand called for concrete international action against the "terrorist snake". "This terrorism is not anonymous. It has a name, it has an address", he said. Terrorism he charged, "has bank accounts, it has an infrastructure, it has networks camouflaged as charity organizations. It is spearheaded by a country - Iran". Peres further affirmed that "it is a regime that initiates, promotes and exports violence and fanaticism - Tehran has become the capital of terror" [826] .

Peres' diatribes against Iran and the implication that "a conclusion must be drawn how to contain it" [827] were viewed by Arab analysts as an "ultimatum against Iran" and the escalation of the campaign against Tehran. In fact the overwhelming animosity in Washington's political circles towards Tehran is largely a function of the latter's role in sabotaging the Palestinian-Israeli entente. Sick argues that the American hostility toward the Islamic Republic "plays extremely well in the capitals of our two principal allies in the peace process, Egypt and Israel" [828] .

The prevailing assessment is that after Netanyahu's election, Iran has been trying to entice Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, Muslim radicals of Hizbollah in Lebanon, and secular Arab rejectionist groups to forge a "united front" against the peace process [829] . During the April 1996 offensive that Israeli forces launched to end cross-border rocket attacks on northern Israel, Tehran sent large provisions of weapons to the Hizbollah that kept it resupplied [830] .

As the peace process falters and the split in Israeli society grows, the extremist forces are emboldened. The current mood in Israel has already encouraged Hizbollah to plan even more attacks on the IDF and its client South Lebanon Army (SLA) in the coming months [831] . Washington's traditional support for Israel and backing of the peace process will continue to make the difference. However, its blind endorsement of Israeli actions - as during its wanton attacks on Lebanon - does little to bolster Israel's position and only increases the widespread feeling of outrage in the Arab world.

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[826] "World Leaders Agree Joint Stand Against Terrorism", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 48, 13 March 1996: p. 10.
[827] *Ibid.* .
[828] Sick, *op. cit.* : p. 8.
[829] Jonathan S. Landay, "Iran Under U.S. Eye in Wake of Israeli Elections", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 June 1996: p. 4.
[830] *Ibid.* .
[831] "IAF Jets Strike in Lebanon as PM Urges Syria to Rein in Hizbollah", *Mideast Mirror* (11), n° 29, 11 February 1997: p. 2.

10.2.2. Algeria

For the past few years, Algeria has been torn apart by political violence emanating from radical Islamist groups bent on overthrowing the secular, military government. The outcome of the struggle in Algeria will have repercussions beyond its borders. It will influence the debate, currently taking place in the Arab world on the fate of democracy and development and on the role of Islam in the politics of the Middle East. Which way it tips will have a profound impact on Western interests in the Middle East and beyond [832].

Algeria's crisis dates back to the late 80s when the socialist-oriented regime came under challenge due to widespread discontent over the regime's mismanagement of the economy and resentment of the ruling elite's corruption and dictatorship. In 1988, the country was the scene of violent riots, triggered by an increase in prices of basic goods that was mandated by the IMF. The regime's response was partial liberalisation: it decided on constitutional reform, authorising new political parties, freeing the press to publish almost anything, and pushing forward with economic reform. President Benjedid reversed the government's policy of repression as a way to balance rivals within the ostensibly pro-regime FLN (Front National de Libération) and legalised the growing Islamist movement, the various strands of which organised themselves as the Front Islamique de Salut (FIS).

The real test of the popular appeal came in elections for local and provincial assemblies in June 1990. The FIS did remarkably well, winning 4.3 million votes out of an electorate of 12.8 million (33.7 percent, with 34.8 percent of the eligible voters abstaining) [833]. Almost all of the major towns came under FIS control. Although only recently organised, the FIS had managed to bring together in a relatively structured party the areas of influence of the numerous informal groups that claimed to be based on Islam. By using not only the network of mosques, but also teachers from various levels and disciplines, it had very rapidly built up an opposition force that could readily be stirred into action.

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[832] Andrew Pierre and William Quandt. "Algeria's War on Itself", *Foreign Policy*, nº 39, Summer 1995: p. 131; John P. Entelis. "U.S.-Maghreb Relations in a Democratic Age: The Priority of Algeria". *Middle East Insight* (VIII), nº 3, January/February 1992: p. 33.

[833] Andrew Pierre and William Quandt, *The Algerian Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), pp. 7-8.

During the Gulf War, the FIS abandoned its tactics of reserve and prudence and found itself facing the army. The movement capitalised on popular outrage to proclaim the illegitimacy of the government and attack the army[834] . After great controversy and internal splits, the regime decided to go ahead with parliamentary elections in 1991. Although the FIS received one million fewer votes than the previous year (3.3 million), and only 24.5 percent of registered voters actually voted for the FIS (the abstention rate was 41 percent), the FIS won 47.3 percent of the vote in the first round of balloting[835] . The army reacted to the latter's imminent parliamentary victory by cancelling the second round of voting and voiding the election altogether. In early January 1992, the hard-liners in the military declared martial law, banned the FIS and set up a transitional authority.

The self-proclaimed mandate of the Higher Executive Committee was to expire on December 1994, but no end to the violence was in sight, and the conditions for a return to parliamentary political life were far from being filled. In early 1995, the army named Defence Minister Liamine Zeroual for the vacant presidency. He twice attempted to broach the issue of readmission of the FIS to the constitutional process. However, the army commanders overruled Zeroual and aborted the process by resuming the military offensive against the rebellion and so scotching any prospect of a truce[836] .

The escalation of the civil war in 1994 and 1995 has been marked by a lethal campaign by the extremist Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA), most of whose founding members are believed to be "Afghanis". Consolidation of many armed groups under the wing of the GIA reportedly occurred in the early summer of 1994. The GIA has been responsible for most of the killings of women, journalists, intellectuals, foreigners and was responsible for the hijacking of an Air France jet in December 1994. The GIA "has adopted an intransigent revolutionary posture, has regularly denounced the very idea of negotiations or compromise with the state ..."[837] . The Islamic Salvation Army (Armée Islamique du Salut, AIS), which is the armed branch of the FIS, has been

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[834] Remy Leveau, *Algeria: Adversaries in Search of Uncertain Compromises*, "Chaillot Paper", n° 4, September 1994: pp. 6-7, 9.
[835] Pierre and Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. 8. Leveau, *op. cit.*: p. 14.
[836] Hugh Roberts, "Algeria's Ruinous Impasse and the Honourable Way Out", *International Affairs* (71), n° 2, April 1995: pp. 257-9.
[837] *Id.* : p. 251.

willing to countenance negotiations between the FIS and the regime. Its terrorist attacks have been directed against the security forces and state employees [838].

The crisis in Algeria has had a deep impact upon E.U. countries, mainly France and the countries of southern Europe who fear that political turmoil in the Maghreb will unleash destabilising political, economic and social forces.

The divergences opposing Paris and Washington on the subject of Algeria were particularly noted. These differences were visible throughout much of 1994 when French officials, especially Interior Minister Charles Pasqua insisted on a "eradicationist" approach predicated on the assumption that all Islamists are extremists. Pasqua advocated a policy of crushing all Islamists on French soil and of helping the military regime in Algiers to do so. American diplomats began discrete talks with Anwar Haddam, a high-level FIS representative based in Washington. The ostensible purpose of the talks was to pull the FIS into political dialogue with the regime that might lead to a political settlement. The dialogue would also improve the chances of good relations with the FIS if and when it came to power[839]- a lesson gleaned from the Iranian revolution

The U.S. cautious policy on Algeria has been driven by memories of Iran, where the Americans ignored growing opposition to the pro-Western regime of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, which was toppled in 1979 by Islamic militants, and where it has been branded as the "Great Satan" ever since. Determined not to be burned again, Washington engaged in exploratory talks with the FIS in order to position itself for a possible Islamist takeover and to ensure that such an occurrence would not irremediably hurt American interests[840]. The French criticised the State Department's initiative saying that it inflated the Islamists' real strength.

Actually, Washington's position on the Algerian crisis has antagonised Algiers, since it has called for the development of a more democratic system and the broadening of political participation to encompass all factions, including Islamist leaders who reject terrorism. The U.S. government has repeatedly stressed the need to respect human rights and advised the Algerian regime to implement economic reforms. U.S. officials also criticised the military's rough tactics in handling the Islamic extremists: "Algeria's leaders cannot ease this crisis through over-reliance on repressive policies. In the absence of serious political change, violence is likely to

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[838] *Id.* : p. 252; Brahim Younessi, "L'islamisme algérien: nébuleuse ou mouvement social?", *Politique Étrangère*, n° 2, Summer 1995: p. 373.
[839] Pierre and Quandt, *op. cit.*: p. 52.

escalate and to threaten Algeria's stability"[841]. Behind the policy is a conviction that a political settlement is the only basis for domestic peace in Algeria.

In reality, and as Garçon points out, Washington's and Paris' evaluation of the situation are not that different. What differs are the public expressions of the analyses made on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as perceived role of the Islamists and of the opposition in general [842]. Quandt and Pierre remark that "few in Washington really wanted to see the FIS succeed in toppling the regime in Algiers, just as few in Paris were confident that the "eradicators" could prevail. The biggest difference was that for the United States, the whole issue of Algeria was quite remote, whereas for France it was close to the top of the foreign policy agenda ..." [843].

In fact, Washington's apparent position of neutrality - calling on the regime and opposition forces to engage in dialogue - helped protect American lives and seemed to warrant the prospect for constructive relations with the Islamists if they come to power. In reality, Washington's stance toward the Algerian situation has been characterised to a great extent by a certain ambiguity. Following the cancellation of the 1991 electoral process, American officials abstained from condemning the military's act and issued no public demand that the elections be reinstated. The ambivalent State Department response showed respect for French positions. Above all, it reflected the difficult choices it faced in Algeria between the principle of democracy, which it has long championed, and a regime that democracy could produce which could prove inimical to Western interests. Actually, just days before the parliamentary elections, Bush administration officials were sticking to a familiar line: "If what results in Algeria emerges from a democratic process we will work with it. We want to engage with whatever regime holds power" [844].

Responding to criticism that the United States was taking sides, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Twiliter, conveying a more neutral position, declared: "We are not going to take sides on whether [Algeria's High Security Council] are indeed operating within their Constitution or, as the opposition claims,

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[840] Paul Schemm, "Hope for Algeria", *Middle East Insight* (X), n ° 6, September/October 1994: p. 47.
[841] "Update on the Crisis in Algeria", statement of Mark R. Parris, Acting Assistant Secretary of State before the House Subcommittee on Africa, 22 March 1994. quoted in *Middle East Policy* (III), n° 3, 1994: p. 190.
[842] José Garçon, "L'Algérie, si loin de Washington ...", *Politique Étrangère*, n° 2, Summer 1995: p. 433.
[843] *Op. Cit.* : p. 52.
[844] George D. Moffett, III, "Algeria's Electoral Turnaround Leaves U.S. Weighing Its Policy", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 January 1992: p. 1.

they are not"[845] . Washington thus declined to remind the Algerian government that constitutional guarantees should be respected [846].

Washington has since taken a milder position regarding the military government. It has endorsed Algeria's efforts to transform the economic system. The United States supported the economic reform programme which the Algerian government is implementing in co-ordination with the IMF. It is also joined with other creditors in rescheduling Algeria's public debt through the Paris Club [847] .

Other changes in the U.S. policy have also become evident. Initially, American appreciation of its interests and the nature of its ties to Algeria seemed to warrant a disinterested U.S. policy. For reasons of geography and history that country is not in a traditional area of influence of the United States. U.S. interests in Algeria and North Africa in general have been less significant than in the broader Middle East. These facts comforted U.S. officials in that the development of the domestic situation in Algeria would not touch on major U.S. interests and consequently would not require American involvement to solve the conflict [848] . Also, the realisation that Washington lacked the traditional instruments of diplomatic leverage (like economic or military assistance) led U.S. officials "to appreciate the limits of U.S. influence in Algeria" [849] .

The relatively limited U.S. economic involvement in Algeria has been mainly in the energy sector. Over the years, U.S. firms have helped Algeria develop its oil and gas resources. The Export-Import Bank has guaranteed $2 billion in loans to private American corporations, including loans for gas liquefaction plants and to the Europe-Maghreb pipeline. Annual U.S. exports of machinery and services to Algeria's hydrocarbon sector amount to approximately $300 million. In addition, Algeria received $550 million in loans for the import of agricultural commodities as part of the Commodity Credit Corporation programme The United States has not provided military assistance to Algeria but Algerian military officers have participated in military educational training in the United States [850] .

Even these facts seem to be changing. The combination of political legitimacy (conferred by the 1995 elections) and the continuing improvement of economic

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[845] *Ibid.* .

[846] This ambiguity is reflected in Djerejian's interview, "One Man, One Vote, One Time is not Democracy". *New Perspectives Quarterly* (13), n° 4, Fall 1996: p. 14.

[847] "Terrorism in Algeria", Statement by David C. Welch, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs before the Subcommittee on Africa, 11 October 1995: p. 1.

[848] Pierre and Quandt, *op. cit.* : p. ix.

[849] Parris, *op. cit.* .

[850] *Id.* .

legislation has assuaged international companies which have been flocking to Algerian shores attracted by the still unexplored potential of gas and oil resources. Atlantic Richfield is committed to a $1.5 billion plus contract for developing oil fields[851].

U.S. statements on its strategic interests in the event of an Islamist takeover in Algeria have emphasised regional stability. Pelletreau affirmed that "beyond the far-reaching consequences for Algeria itself, further radical Islamist gains there could embolden extremists in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco - key U.S. allies in the region"[852]. Lewis argues that Moroccans and Tunisians regard the Islamic Salvation Front as the principal threat to the stability of their countries: "The Tunisians feel strongly that the decision by the government in Algiers to cancel the second phase of elections in December 1991 was prudent"[853]. Both Tunisia and Morocco have suffered terrorist attacks at the hands of Algerian Islamists. Egypt, which has managed to survive an upsurge of Islamist terrorism since 1992, would also face the possibility of Algerian aid to Egyptian Islamists channelled through Sudan. Egypt's principal worry, explains a Western diplomat, "is that if Algeria becomes a revolutionary Islamic state, you can expect an alliance with Iran and Sudan, and that would really scare the moderate Arab regimes"[854].

Although at present it seems unlikely that an Islamist takeover in Algeria would initiate a North African domino effect, the triumph of the Islamic movement in Algeria would harden other Islamic movements outside the country and increase pressure on other regimes in the region. Even pro-Western Arab countries such as Jordan and Turkey watch developments in Algeria with interest. An Islamic success in Algeria would embolden other Islamic revolutionaries, providing a psychological boost to those who might see it as a vindication of Islamism and a harbinger of things to come in their own countries[855].

A paramount security concern of the United States is the possible impact of developments in Algeria on Europe, creating a tide of refugees in France, Italy and Spain. Across French society, especially and inside France's ruling institutions, there

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[851] Jan Ellis, "Algeria Pushes for Credible Rule", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 30 January 1996: p. 6.
[852] Pelletreau's statement, *Recent Developments ...:* p. 49.
[853] William Lewis, "The Pending Crisis in North Africa" (conference report), *Strategic Forum* (electronic file transfer): p. 2.
[854] Peter Ford, "Egypt Watches, Worries About Algeria and Iran", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 January 1992: p. 5.
[855] S. Bakhash quoted in George Moffet, "Algerian Turmoil Poses Test for the Region", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 18 August 1994: p. 1; Welch, *op. cit.*; Peter W. Rodman, "Don't Destabilize Algiers", *Middle East Quarterly* (V), n° 4, December 1996: p. 18.

is a growing worry since France retains deep emotional ties to its former colony and is now home to at least 4 million Muslim immigrants, mainly from Algeria. The widespread perception is that an Islamic revolution in Algeria could have devastating consequences, inundating France with Algerian refugees, strengthening the country's right-wing parties and turning its Muslim immigrant community into a dangerous fifth column [856].

France has been the target of Algerian terrorists because of its long colonial ties in the Maghreb. The 1995 attacks, which killed 8 and wounded 151, were attributed to the GIA which blames France for its support of the Algerian government. In December 1996 a bomb planted in a Paris train station killed two people and wounded more than 100. This has forced French authorities to tighten security measures. Starting in 1993, the French police raided Islamic networks and uncovered arms caches. The raids have evidenced the extent of informal Islamist networks composed of French-born, ethnic Maghrebians that extend beyond France's borders[857].

Given the incumbent Algerian's government support for the Arab-Israeli peace process, an Islamist regime in Algeria would be expected to join other extremist groups opposed to the peace process. A related U.S. concern is that, in that eventuality, Islamist rulers would not discard terrorism as an instrument of policy. An Islamic Algeria, like Iran and Sudan, is likely to become a haven and base forIslamist terrorist groups. The Algerian "Afghanis" have already established links with a wide variety of other Islamists, both during the war in Afghanistan and in training camps in Pakistan and Sudan. Furthermore, exiled FIS leaders have made contact with a wide array of Islamic radicals in Europe [358].

Americans are particularly worried about the possibility that a radical-leaning Algeria would acquire weapons of mass destruction. In 1991, U.S. intelligence agencies discovered a nuclear research reactor that Algeria was building secretly with Chinese assistance. A nuclear-armed revolutionary Algeria would pose a critical threat to NATO allies, regional friends and American forces in the Mediterranean basin [859]. Already, Algeria has a significant military capability with Kilo submarines and SU-24 bombers and the largest military in North Africa after Egypt. A power

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[856] Gera, *op. cit.* : p. 20.
[857] François Sudan, "Opération Salim", *Jeune Afrique*, n° 1799, 29 June 1995: pp. 17-8.
[858] James Phillips, "The Rising Threat of Revolutionary Islam in Algeria", *The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, n° 1060, 9 November 1995 (electronic file transfer). p. 7.
[859] *Ibid.*.

vacuum in North Africa or a hostile government coming to power in Algeria would thus complicate U.S. operations worldwide. In fact, the United States depends on sea lanes of communications from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Suez Canal to allow the rapid deployment for naval forces from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Likewise, air operations during initial deployments to the region and in support of operations during a conflict depend onoverflight and basing rights in North Africa [860] .

The above considerations highlight the fact that Washington does have a major stake in the outcome of the struggle inside Algeria [861] since anIslamist takeover would undermine U.S. interests in a number of ways[862] . Algeria can not be weighed alone in terms of the damages to U.S. interests. What is going on in Algeria involves issues extending beyond its borders and affecting the evolution of the Muslim world. It is a debate between those who perceive Islamic resurgence as a threat to Western civilisation and those who defend that it accommodates humanitarian and democratic values [863] . Quandt and Pierre assert that "Algeria ... is something of a test case for whether democracy, Islamic populism, or military dictatorship will be the wave of the future in the Arab world [864] .

This testing ground has major implications for the United States. This realisation has already produced changes in Washington's approach to Algeria, especially after the 1995 presidential elections that confirmedZeroual's position and constituted a setback to extremist forces. A more proactive U.S. policy - as recommended in the Carnegie Endowment report on Algeria - is in the making. It transcends the former official rhetoric that, while reflecting a rational approach, offered little follow - through action.

In December 1995, President Clinton wrote to the newly-elected president offering to support him as he takes steps to broaden and accelerate the policy of national reconciliation, political dialogue and economic reform[865] . In March 1996, Robert Pelletreau travelled to Algiers where he heard PresidentZeroual reaffirm his commitment to national reconciliation through dialogue. Pelletreau also met with a

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[860] Testimony of Bruce Riedel, U.S. Congress, House Committee on International Relations, *Terrorism in Algeria:* p. 26.
[861] Welch, *op. cit.* .
[862] Pelletreau's statement in U. S. Congress, *Recent Developments in North Africa*: p. 5.
[863] W. Lewis, "Algeria At the Brink", *Strategic Forum*, n° 32, June 1995 (electronic file transfer): p. 3.
[864] *Op. cit.* : p. 2.
[865] Robert Pelletreau, "Developments in the Middle East", Statement before the House International Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., 12 June 1996: pp. 8-9.

range of opposition political leaders [866] . U.S. Ambassador Ronald Neumann - mirroring U.S. concern with the pattern of censorship and seizure of Algerian newspapers by the Algerian government - visited, in late 1996, the complex housing the embattled journalists where he championed the idea of a free press. The United States has now become a more active third party although it does not seem to be interested in supplanting France's role.

10.3.2. Iran

The Clinton Administration has taken an extraordinarily tough line against Iran, as it is considered the chief threat to American security interests in the Middle East. The "demonisation" of Iran stems from the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the resultant hostage crisis. The image of U.S. citizens held hostage for 444 days was seared into the public mind. Americans listened as Khomeini called the United States the Great Satan and they watched as a succession of terrorist attacks targeted U.S. citizens. Iran became, in Esposito's words, "a country that many Americans loved to hate" [867].

Under the Clinton administration, the "demonisation" process has reached a new height and, in fact, the governmental stance mirrors public debate, where Iran, Islamic fundamentalism and Muslim terrorism became inseparable. Iran has become the "rogue state", *par excellence*. The areas of disagreement between Washington and Tehran encompass five major issues: (1) disturbing acquisition of weapons by Iran; (2) Iran's sponsorship of international terrorism and assassination of its political foes; (3) a hostile attitude toward the Arab-Israeli peace process; (4) subversion directed against its neighbours; (5) violations of human rights [868] .

The spiralling of the conflict [869] between the two countries dates back to the end of the Bush administration. This administration had in fact showed no particular

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[866] Pelletreau, "U.S. Policy Toward Algeria" Statement before the Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Washington, D.C., 16 April 1996: p. 2.

[867] "Islamic Movements, the Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations, and the Role of Regional Players", in Hooshang Amirahmadi and Eric Hooglund (eds.), *U.S.-Iran Relations: Areas of Tension and Mutual Interests* (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1994), p. 29.

[868] Peter Tarnoff's statement, U.S. Congress, House Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward Iran* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), pp. 7-8.

[869] Richard Cottam, "American Political Dynamics and Iran", in Hooshang Amirahmadi and James A. Bill (eds.), *The Clinton Administration and the Future of U.S.-Iran Relations* (*Middle East Insight* - Policy Report n° 3, 1993), p. 9.

hostility towards Tehran. Secretary Djerejian had, for instance, made an important speech calling for good relations between the United States and Iran[870] . During the last months of the Bush administration a tendency began to crystallise, one that considered Iran a focal point of threat for U.S. policy in the Middle East.

James Bill and Richard Cottam observed that in early 1993 "an image of Iran that is increasingly stereotypical is beginning to appear from Israeli leaders and the Israeli press. This suggests that very important pressure is also likely to be manifest on United States' policy toward Iran" [871] . The *Los Angels Times* quoted Israeli spokesmen as stating that "Iran has to be identified as EnemyN° 1". According to this article, "the whole Israeli political and intellectual establishment, in fact, has been galvanized to put across this message" [872] . The concerted campaign involved well-known newspaper commentators, individuals and groups in the United States. Gulf leaders joined the chorus of censure by depicting Iran as the orchestrator of subversion in their countries. Arab states, led by Egypt, pointed to Iran's rearmament activity in the Gulf as conclusive proof of Iran's expansionist and hegemonic drive[873] . These allegations, although often exaggerated for political purposes, have nonetheless a very accurate basis.

Much of the concern surrounding Iran's intentions has to do with Tehran's building up of its military capabilities. Iran's weapons procurement programme, underway since 1989, aims at rebuilding, expanding and modernising its armed forces. Since the 1979 revolution, its forces have been weakened by political purges, huge losses of up to 60 percent of its major weapons systems in the eight-year war with Iraq, and shortages of spare parts for U.S. and Western arms supplied before 1979 [874] . Rafsanjani's government allocated, in January 1990, $2 billion per year for five years to buy advanced weapons. Iran has acquired weapons mainly from Russia, China and several Eastern European states although financial constraints have forced it to cancel a number of contracts and dramatically cut procurement.

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[870] *Ibid.* .

[871] *Ibid.* ; James Bill, "Opening Remarks", in Amirahmadi and Bill (eds.), *op. cit.* : pp. 5-6; Bill, "The United States and Iran: Mutual Mythologies", *Middle East Policy* (II), n° 3, 1993: p. 98.

[872] Parks, *op. cit.* : p. 2.

[873] Gary Sick, "U.S. Interest in Iran and U.S. Iran Policy" in Amirahmadi and Hooglund, *op. cit.* : pp. 19-21; Sick's intervention in the debate on "Iran's New Role in Politics of the Region", in Amirahmadi (ed.), *Revisiting Iran's Strategic Significance* : p. 31.

[874] Michael Eisenstadt, *Iranian Military Power* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996), pp. 35-6; Phillips, "The Challenge of Revolutionary Iran" : p. 5.

These developments are viewed as natural by some analysts who point out that "seen from Tehran, the entire region is unstable"[875] . In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the United States stepped up its involvement in the region through a series of bilateral defence arrangements with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar. Tehran was furthermore excluded from GCC security arrangements[876] . Compared with its Gulf oil-rich neighbours, Iran's build up is modest [877] .

Yet, Iran's military plans have sparked considerable concern that Tehran seeks to establish regional hegemony by building its military capabilities far beyond its legitimate defence needs [878] . Iran's long-term objective is to acquire a modern air force of roughly 300 advanced combat aircraft; a modern army with 5,000 to 6,000 tanks, 2,000 self-propelled artillery pieces, and thousands of armoured personnel carriers, and a navy upgraded with three advanced Russian*Kilo* - class submarines and scores of fast patrol boats armed with missiles [879] .

Iran's conventional capabilities are still modest and a greater financial effort would be required in order to equip it with, for instance, strong offensive capabilities [880]. In fact, since the end of 1991 overall military expenditures have been declining and since 1993 they have not exceeded $1 billion[881] . A more legitimate U.S. concern is the fact that Iran also purchased hundreds of ballistic missiles and the technology to produce them from North Korea and China. Tehran has acquired at least 300 SCUD-B surface-to-surface missiles with a range of approximately 185 miles, and an unknown number of improved SCUD-Cs, with a range of approximately 370 miles. Iran's missiles can reach major population centres across the Persian Gulf. Iran reportedly has also agreed to buy 150 North Korean Nodong 1 missiles with an estimated range of over 600 miles. These surface-to-surface missiles are capable of

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[875] Shaul Bakhash, "Iranian Political Dynamics and the United States", in Amirahmadi and Bill (eds.), *op. cit.* : p. 13; Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Iran's National Strategy", *Jane's International Defense Review* (27), April 1994: pp. 35-7.

[876] Amirahmadi, "Containment or Collision?", *Middle East Insight* (XI), n° 5, July/August 1995: pp. 27-8; "The Spiralling Arms Race", *Middle East Insight* (10), n° 2, January/February 1994: p. 47.

[877] Shahram Chubin, *Iran's National Security Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994), pp. 34-6. See Sick's critical view on the Gulf's arms race and on Saudi Arabia's drive for armament: *op. cit.* : p. 16, 21-2.

[878] Bruce Riedel's statement, U.S. Congress, *U.S. Policy Toward Iran*: p. 11.

[879] Phillips, *op. cit.* : p. 5.

[880] Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* : p. 63.

[881] Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Tehran's Response to Change", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Yearbook: The World in Conflict 1994/5, p. 72.

delivering conventional, chemical, or nuclear warheads on targets as far away as Israel [882].

Iran's missile build up is especially worrisome given the possibility of marrying chemical warheads and biological warheads on long range missiles. Eisenstadt affirms that "Iran has the most active chemical warfare program in the developing world" [883]. The CIA estimates that Iran has produced and stockpiled up to 2,000 tons of chemical warfare agents. Iran also has an active biological warfare programme and has tried to buy biological agents from Europe [884].

But the West's chief worry is Iran's effort to develop nuclear weapons, which has been making progress under the cover of Iran's civilian nuclear power programme. Iran has attempted to acquire materials and technologies potentially useful to the production of nuclear weapons in a number of countries. American intelligence analysts have reported that Iranian acquisition teams have shopped for weapons - related nuclear equipment and nuclear scientists from poorly guarded facilities in the former Soviet Union, concentrating on Azerbaijan, Kazakhastan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine[885].

There is some disagreement among experts as to Iran's progress in that direction but the minimal assessment, as put forward by Gary Sick, is that "Iran has almost certainly embarked on an effort to acquire what might be called the precursor infrastructure for a nuclear weapons project" [886]. There have also been several estimates about how long it would take Iran to produce a bomb. The CIA estimate says eight to ten years [887].

Washington's fierce hostility towards Iran, largely Congress-driven, will not abate as long as Tehran remains the main supporter of terrorist groups opposed to the peace process. Israeli analysts attribute a rise in terrorist activity, and an increasing tendency for Iran to become directly involved, to Tehran's determination to scuttle the Middle East peace process. "Iran's message forHamas and Islamic Jihad

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[882] Nye's statement, U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward Iran and Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 22; Phillips, *op. cit.* ; Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* : pp. 28-30.
[883] *Op. cit.* : p. 26.
[884] Phillips, *op. cit.* : p. 5.
[885] Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* : pp. 14-6.
[886] *Op. cit.* : p. 16.
[887] *Ibid.* .

and Hizbollah is the same: make terror and lots of it", says an Israeli military officer [888].

Although not taking direct orders from Iran, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad receive from Tehran considerable military and economic support.Clawson estimates that Hamas and the Islamic Jihad receive $20 to $30 million annually in financial support and military training from Hizbollah and Iranian instructors in Lebanon, Sudan and Iran [889]. According to Israeli intelligence, approximately 100Hamas fighters have received military and terrorist instruction at Iranian bases. Iran reportedly paid a cash bonus of $120,000 to Hamas following a series of bloody suicide bombings in Israel in February and March 1996 [890].

Iran also provides the Lebanese Hizbollah with a variety of political, military, and economic support - including as much as $100 million annually in arms and financial assistance (though the stipend dropped to $60 million in 1995). Several hundred Revolutionary Guards, the militant shock troops of the Iranian revolution, work closely in support of Hizbollah in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Iran resupplied the movement with 500-900 Katyusha rockets during Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996 [891]. All these activities contradict Rafsanjani's pledge that "practically speaking, we do not take any action against the peace plan"[892]. Hizbollah's list of terrorist acts include the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut Airport, and the kidnapping of most of the 15 American hostages held in Lebanon.

Iran's involvement in terrorist activities continues under various guises. Some of them have highlighted the high degree of coordination among diverse Iranian government agencies and entities. The September 1992 assassination in Berlin of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran's chief, Sadegh Sharafkandi, exposed, according to a French official, that "the whole Iranian state apparatus is at the service of these operations" [893]. Terrorist actions are thus decided at the top of the Iranian government. The key groups involved in planning and executing terrorist attacks are the

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[888] Thomas Sancton, "Iran's State of Terror", *Time* (148), nº 20, 11 November 1996: p. 84.
[889] Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* : p. 74.
[890] Sancton, *op. cit.* : p. 24.
[891] Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* : p. 66, 74.
[892] George A. Nader, "Interview with President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani", *Middle East Insight* (XI), nº 5, July/August 1995: p. 11.
[893] T. Sancton, "The Tehran Connection", *Time* (143), nº 12, 21 March 1994: p. 52.

Revolutionary Guards, headed by Moshen Reza'i, and the Intelligence Ministry, headed by Sheikh Ali Fallahian [894] .

In recent years, Iran has stepped up terrorist attacks against Iranian exiles. More than a dozen Iranian dissidents have been assassinated in European cities since 1987, including the August 1991 murder of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar and the September 1992 murders of four Kurdish opposition leaders in the "Mykonos" restaurant in Berlin. In recent years, the locus of Iran's terrorist campaign has also moved from the main European capitals to its periphery and to Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey [895] .

Iranian-supported terrorists have been particularly active against targets in Turkey. The Turkish Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the murder of an Israeli diplomat and the bombing of an Istanbul synagogue. It also is believed to be responsible for a series of murders of Turkish journalists and of members of Iranian opposition groups. The Turkish government indicated that Turkish militants were trained in Iran [896] .

The number of Iran-backed assassinations is actually on the rise - about 14 in 1996, compared with five for all of 1995 [897]. U.S. intelligence agencies and dissident groups believe that Iranian agents may be preparing to increase their firepower in future hits. In March 1996, Belgian authorities found aspecially-designed high-calibre mortar launcher with a range of more than 630 meters in an Iranian ship docked in Antwerp. The ordnance is believed to have been intended for use in Iranian terrorist operations in Europe [898] .

Iranian efforts have also been directed toward subversive pro-Western regimes. Egypt has repeatedly charged Tehran of fomenting instability and of providing support to Islamic radicals. It has viewed with increasing concern the Iranian partnership with Sudan, which has allowed Tehran to use its territory as a forward base for exporting the Islamic revolution to North and Black Africa [899]. The Algerian prime minister Ahmad Ouyahya said Iran "provides the biggest financial backing to

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[894] Sancton, "Iran's State ...": p. 82.
[895] Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* : p. 66.
[896] "Turkish Probe Says "Iranian Hit Team" Killed Israeli Embassy Guard in Ankara", SWB ME/25-84 MED, 12 April 1996: p. 8. Sami Kohen, "Turkey Says Iran is Base for Terrorist Training", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 11 February 1993: p. 6; Phillips, *op. cit.* : p. 4.
[897] Sancton, *id.* .
[898] *Ibid.* .
[899] "Interior Minister Accuses Iran of Plotting Against Egypt", *SWB*, ME/2846 MED, 18 February 1997: p. 15.

the terrorist groups that are waging war against the Algerian state"[900] . In December 1995, Jordan expelled an Iranian diplomat from Amman for trying to incite Jordanians to murder Israeli tourists visiting that country[901] . In Bahrain, which was the target of an abortive revolution in 1981, the authorities arrested a group of suspects in connection with an alleged pro-Iranian plot to topple the government. One of the suspects confessed the Bahrainis were trained by pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon [902]. Saudi authorities suspect Iranian involvement in the al-Khobar bombing that took 19 lives [903] .

Washington is also concerned with the Iranian presence in Bosnia. The relationship between Bosnia and Iran was allowed to develop during the war, in large part because of the embargo which drove the Muslim government into alliances with some of the world's most radical states, as well as terrorists movements. The Clinton administration has led a campaign to wean the Muslim-ledBosnian government from its war-time dependence on Iran, which smuggled hundreds of tons of weapons into Bosnia between 1993 and 1995. The training of a unit of theBosnian army, called the 7th Muslim Brigade, was undertaken by Iran and was modelled after that of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah organisation in Lebanon. Fearing the creation of a terrorist foothold in Europe and the possibility of attacks against U.S. troops in the NATO force now enforcing peace in Bosnia, Washington demanded that all foreign forces must depart as part of the 1995 Dayton accord [904] .

In responding to the challenges posed by Iran, Washington has employed both multilateral measures to "contain" and induce it to change its policies as the "Dual Containment" policy lays out. They have included economic pressure (in the form of partial trade bans and in May 1995 a total trade ban), a ban on arms transfers, restrictions on the transfer of dual-use and nuclear technology, a ban on loans and credits, and efforts to block all lending to Iran from international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank [905] .

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[900] *Asharq al-Awsat* quoted in "Velayati: The U.S. Will Be "Taught an Unforgettable Lesson" if It Attacks Iran", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 154, 8 August 1996: p. 18.
[901] Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* : p. 66.
[902] "Suspects in Bahraini Plot Name Iran Before Cameras", *The Washington Post*, 6 June 1996: p. A 25; "Tehran Daily Accuses U.S. of Targeting Iran to Cover Up for Netanyahu",*Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 108, 5 June 1996: pp. 17-8.
[903] R. Jeffrey Smith, "Saudis Hold 40 Suspects in GI Headquarters Bombing", *The Washington Post*, 1 November 1996: p. A 1.
[904] John Pomfret, "Mujaheddin Remaining in Bosnia", *The Washington Post*, 8 July 1996: p. A 1; "How Bosnia's Muslims Dodged Arms Embargo", *The Washington Post*, 22 September 1996: p. A 1.
[905] Pelletreau's statement, U.S. Congress, *U.S. Policy Toward Iran and Iraq*: pp. 17-8.

Iran has dominated the U.S. foreign policy agenda as well as the minds of top policy-makers, especially former Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. The question of Iran was put on the agenda of the summit talks between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin in Washington in September 1994. In order to put the Americans at ease, Yeltsin felt the need to assure them publicly that Russia had no intention of signing new arms agreements with the Islamic Republic. And again in May 1995 president Clinton asked Yeltsin to cancel a S1 billion sale of light water nuclear reactors to Iran, which Russia refused to do. In June of the same year President Clinton pressed, again unsuccessfully, the G-7 (Group of Seven) meeting at Halifax, Canada, to follow the U.S. trade embargo, in light of "Iran's continuing support for terrorism, including support for acts which undermine the Middle East peace process, as well as its intensified efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction"[906] . Given the U.S. allies' reluctance to follow that path, Washington approved the "Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996" that imposes sanctions on foreign companies that engage in specific economic transactions with Iran or Libya.

The U.S. attempt to build an international consensus regarding the threat posed by Iran has largely failed. Russia, China and North Korea have not stopped the transfer of dangerous arms and technologies to Iran. Russia and China have growing ties with Iran and they look toward that country as a source of valuable hard currency and a potential ally in a number of foreign policy areas[907]. America's major trading partners - Canada, Japan, and Europe - were outraged by Washington's unilateral heavy-handed approach. They are reluctant to adopt measures that will mean a loss of business for their companies. European countries favoured until April 1997 a policy called "critical dialogue" (Japan and Canada favour a similar approach), arguing that political dialogue rather than economic pressure are more likely to induce moderation in Tehran's policies [908] . Germany was the most fervent advocate of continuing diplomatic contacts and business relations, arguing that the E. U. should not give in to U.S. pressure to isolate Iran.

The European position regarding Iran has changed following the 10 April ruling by a German court implicating the Iranian political leadership in the assassination in Berlin in September 1992 of four Iranian opposition activists, including three senior

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[906] *Ibid.* ; Adam Tarock, "U.S.-Iran Relations: Heading for Confrontation", *Third World Quarterly* (17), n° 1, 1996: p. 149.
[907] Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*: p. 91.
[908] Rick Atkinson, "Divergent Policies Toward Iran Strain U.S.-German Relations", *The Washington Post*, 27 June 1996: p. A 21.

leaders of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran. Within hours of the ruling, the E.U. presidency condemned Iran in the "Mykonos case" and declared its behaviour totally unacceptable. It invited the 15 members states to recall their ambassadors for coordinated consultations on future relations with Iran[909]. Although emphasising the gravity of the affair, E.U. officials were adamant that there will be no move to impose sanctions against Iran [910].

Critics are pointing out with increasing urgency that the U.S. policy toward Iran has been a miserable failure. This feeling is espoused by large part of the academic community. Those participating in the many conferences and debates that have discussed the issue [911] have favoured initiation of some sort of dialogue between the two countries and the need to cut into the "spiral conflict" in order to dissipate the misperceptions [912] . Analysts point that the U.S. policy toward Iran fails to recognise that country's strategic importance in the Gulf and that its fosters scenarios of uncertainty and instability. Amirahmadi says that "the present Dual Containment policy is counter-productive because discord between Iran and the U.S. curtails the capability of both countries and strengthens hardliners on both sides, while placing American corporations at a disadvantage in the face of competition from Europe and the Pacific Rim ..." [913] .

In the United States, "there is an understandable restlessness in the foreign policy community to the effect that the hard-line U.S. strategy of "containing" Iran is in need of revision" [914]. The policy has been criticised by personalities in the U.S. foreign policy establishment. Former national security advisers, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, and former Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Murphy, wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that "U.S. Persian Gulf policy is at an impasse... The policy of unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran has been ineffective and the attempt to coerce

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[909] Saeed Barzin, "Bitter Fruits of *Mykonos*", *Middle East International*, n° 548, 18 April 1997: p. 11.
[910] Saeed Barzin, "Carrot and Stick", *Middle East International*, n° 549, 2 May 1997: p. 6.
[911] See, for instance, the 1993, 1994 and 1995 U.S.-Iran Conferences.
[912] See, for instance, the views of Richard Murphy, "Prospects for Improved U.S.-Iranian Relations", in Amirahmadi, *op. cit.* : pp. 76-7; Graham Fuller, congressional hearing on *U.S. Policy Toward Iran and Iraq* : p. 52; Gary Sick, "A Sensible Policy Toward Iran",*Middle East Insight* (X), n° 415, May/August 1994: pp. 21-2.
[913] Amirahmadi Remarks in Amirahmadi (ed.), *op. cit.* : p. 2; in the same vein, Shireen Hunter, "The Post-War Middle East", *Middle East International*, n° 393, 8 February 1991.
[914] Peter Rodman, "Why Ease Up on Iran?" *The Washington Post*, 11 December 1996: p. A 25. See the critics in Geoffrey Kemp, *Forever Enemies? American Policy & the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Washington, D.C.: the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994); William A. Rugh, "Time to Modify Our Gulf Policy", *Middle East Policy* (V), n ° 1, January 1997; Fawaz A. Gerges, "Washington's Misguided Iran Policy", *Survival* (38), n. 4, Winter 1996-97: pp. 5-15; Shahram Chubin, "U.S. Policy Towards Iran Should Change", *Survival* (38), n. 4, Winter 1996-97: pp. 16-8.

others into following America's lead has been a mistake". They charge that the policy is "strident" and instead of isolating Iran it is driving the United States and its allies apart and Iran and Russia closer together [915].

The May 1997 victory in Iran' s presidential election of moderate former culture minister, Mohammad Khatami, has reinforced the views of analysts who have been urging the Clinton administration to rethink the long U.S. drive to isolate Iran. They have pointed out that the administration should respond with new overtures, even if rhetorical [916]. The latter has followed the election and its aftermath with a keen interest. A State Department official declared that a change in U.S. policywill depend on real changes in Iran' s behaviour in those areas that have been a source of concern to the American government [917].

The prospect of domestic evolution in Iran is not likely to mark a turning point in U.S. harsh policy towards Iran. Domestic considerations will make this very difficult. Fuller and Lesser highlight this fact by pointing out that "any alteration now will require a change of mindset in Congress, where the issue has been politicized and entrenched" [918]. Conservative politicians and pro-Israeli groups want the United States to take unilateral military action against Tehran if it is found to have been involved in the June 1996 bombing of U.S. military facility in Saudi Arabia [919].

10.3.3. Sudan

Sudan, under military rule and the spiritual leadership of Sheikh Hasan al-Turabi, has became a main concern of the United States has been branded one of the most dangerous terrorist regimes not only in Africa, but in the entire Muslim world. Sudan has become the centre of *mujahidin* networks and activists who were forced to leave Pakistan. It is now the training and logistical headquarters for the so-called "Afghanis" wherever they fight in the 1990s. A key supporter of the "Afghanis" is Osama bin Laden, the Saudi businessman who served as an Islamic recruitment

[915] "Differentiated Containment", *Foreign Affairs* (76), n. 3, May/ June 1997: p. 28, 20.
[916] See the opinions of Richard Murphy and traditional advocates of U.S. efforts to contain Iran, like Kenneth Katzman and Patrick Clawson: Reuter, 25 May 1997.
[917] Reuters, 24 May 1997.
[918] Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, "Persian Gulf Myths", *Foreign Affairs* (76), n. 3, May/ June 1997: p. 47.

agent for Afghanistan and maintains an office in Sudan. Bin Laden has large land holdings south of Khartoum that Western intelligence agencies suspect have been used as military training camps for Islamic fundamentalists [920].

Sudan's guest list includes: two radical Palestinian groups, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; the fundamentalist Palestinian group Hamas; the Iranian-backed Islamic Jihad; the outlawed FIS; Tunisia's Nahda; Yemen's Al-Islah; and Egypt's Gamaat Islamiyya.

Turabi created in 1991 the Popular Arab and Islamic Conference (PAIC) to serve his ambitions to lead the Sunni world of Islam and to substitute for the conservative Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). Seeking to project its influence beyond its borders, Sudan has joined forces with Tehran thus becoming Shiite Iran's first ally in the Sunni Muslim world. Critics of Sudan´s behaviour affirm that "Islamists chose Sudan to become a staging ground for their ideological conquest of Africa" [921]. In effect, Sudan is geographically ideal as a base for the export of Islamism. It has a long border with Egypt, a country that is the object of Turabi's contempt. It is very close to Saudi Arabia, a rival in terms of leadership of the Islamic world. It is the gateway to black Africa, which is seen by the fundamentalists as promising missionary territory [922].

The relationship has taken off since a visit to Sudan in December 1991 by Iran's leader Hashemi Rafsanjani. Rafsanjani reportedly committed $17 million of financial aid to Sudan on the spot, but he also agreed to pay China $300 million for weapons to be supplied to Sudan. Iran also agreed to deliver a million tons of oil annually, free of payment [923]. Iran is to dispatch thousands of "construction *mujahidin*", a paramilitary organisation, to Sudan to help build logistical infrastructure. Port Sudan provides the Iranian navy, and its three new Russian-built attack submarines, with its

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[919] Bruce Clark, "U.S.: Washington Split on How to Handle Iran", *Financial Times*, 17 April 1997.

[920] "What Has Sudan Done with Saudi Dissident and "Terrorist Sponsor" Osama bin-Laden?", *Mideast Mirror* (10), nº 108, 5 June 1996: pp. 14-5.

[921] Khalid Durán's statement, U.S. Congress, House Committee on International Relations, *The Threat of Islamic Extremism in Africa* (Washington. D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1995), p. 65.

[922] Amir Taheri quoted in "Khartoum Airs Its Suspicions of Washington", *Mideast Mirror* (11), nº 9, 29 January 1997: p. 18.

[923] John Hughes, "Behind Concerns Over Iran-Sudan Ties", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2 September 1993: p. 19; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Relations, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Africa and Implications for U.S. Policy* (Washington. D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), pp. 19-20.

only mooring facilities outside Iran [924]. Iran has shipped contingents of Revolutionary Guards to Sudan that are operating training camps for Islamic extremists. The guards are also drawn from the "Qods [Jerusalem] Force", which is responsible for extraterritorial activities, including terrorist operations. 500 cadets of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard are fighting alongside the Sudanese government's troops against the opposition on Sudan's eastern and southern fronts [925]. Iran's man in Khartoum is Ambassador Majid Kamal, Tehran's top agent in Beirut during the 1980s, who played a key role in the creation of the Shiite terrorist group Hizbollah [926].

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak is convinced that at least some of the mounting terrorism in his country is orchestrated from Sudan. He says Sudan has trained and gives refuge to Islamic extremists active in Egypt and that it is the source of a vast illegal arms traffic to Egypt. These protestations have grown since June 1995 when President Mubarak was nearly assassinated on a trip to Addis Ababa. Apparently, Sudanese citizens were directly involved, working with the Egyptian gunmen in the attack on Mubarak and his guards in the Ethiopian capital.

Sudan's subversive activities have become a source of great concern for its neighbours. All of the eight states it borders have complained about Sudanese interference or subversion, usually via extremist organisations of localIslamists who receive funding or weapons from Khartoum. This is most blatant in the case of Algeria[927] and Eritrea, which has repeatedly complained to theU.N. about an Islamist insurgency that is totally dependent on Sudan [928]. A string of bombings in Ethiopia's capital also points to Sudanese involvement [929]. Kenya has similar complaints, and so has Uganda. Poorly policed borders between Sudan and some of its neighbours allowed it to smuggle in weapons. Refugee camps constitute an easy ground for recruitment of would-be extremists [930].

Israel has taken a keen interest in Sudan since the sharp rise of bombings attributed to Hamas. Khartoum has made no secret of its warm relations withHamas

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[924] Amir Taheri, "Sudan: An Expanding Civil War with an Iran Connection", *International Herald Tribune*, 9 April 1997.
[925] "Iranian Military Aid Reportedly Arrives in Sudan", *SWB*, ME/2846 MED, 18 February 1997: p. 17.
[926] Richard Z. Chesnoff et al., "Bad Company in Khartoum", *U.S. News & World Report*, 30 August/6 September 1993: p. 45.
[927] "Sudanese Opposition Official Alleges Sudanese Islamic Front Role in Algeria", *SWB*, ME/2314 MED, 27 May 1995: p. 14.
[928] Durán, *op. cit.* : pp. 60-4.
[929] Judith Matloff, "Ethiopia Edgy Over Violent Islamic Militancy Seeping In", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 7 May 1996: p. 7.
[930] Harman, "Sudan's Neighbors Accuse It of Training Terrorists": p. 19.

though it denies that the group has training camps. The group's representative in the Sudanese capital boasts that Sudan has been "very supportive of our operations"[931] . Sudanese officials contend that they have an open society for Arabs and that they can not be condemned for the actions of those who simply pass through their country. The reality, according to U.S. intelligence reports, is that the "government's policy is to let terrorists in without a visa, and to grant them passports"[932] . Sudan's performance in support of Islamist terrorism led the U.S. government to place it in March 1993 State Department list of nations that support terrorism. Washington's decision to formally condemn Khartoum's government was taken after U.S. officials told Sudan in December 1991 to close the training camps and cut its terror links to Iran. Sudanese diplomats have denied everything.

Evidence also pointed to the role of Sudan in the second plot of the World Trade Center conspiracy, the plan to bomb the United Nations headquarters, two New York commuter tunnels and to assassinate prominent political figures. Members of the Sudanese delegation to the U.N. were apparently directly involved with one of the leading perpetrators, another Sudanese[933] . According to the *U.S. News & World Report*, "U.S. authorities have firm evidence that Sudanese spiritual leaderHassan al-Turabi personally informed Sudan's U.N. ambassador that although the two had diplomatic cover, they were in fact intelligence operatives" [934] .

The Sudan issue has risen right up the U.S. agenda, with a strong lobby in Congress for maximum sanctions. During the September 1994 congressional hearing on the situation in North Africa , Esposito asserted that there was a concerted campaign to demonize Sudan, even in the absence of concrete evidence to condemn it. Referring to the role of Congress in this campaign, he affirmed: "We take a country like Sudan and suddenly we totally demonize Sudan" [935]. If indeed this thrust is to intensify, the composition of the experts panel summoned to testify in the April 1995 hearings on "Islamic Extremism in Africa", is revealing. The hearings brought together some harsh critics of Sudan´s policies: Steven Emerson, author of the contested T.V documentary, "Jihad in America"; Jason Isaacson, a member of the pro-Israeli American Jewish Committee, and Khalid Durán, editor of "Transstate Islam", a

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[931] *Ibid.* ; Steve Emerson, "Militant Islam and the West", U.S. Congress. House Committee on International Relations, *The Threat of Islamic Extremism in Africa*: p. 41.
[932] Peter Ford, "N.Y. Bomb Plot Renews Charges of Sudanese Terrorist Ties", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 28 June 1993: p. 3.
[933] Emerson, *op. cit.* : p. 40.
[934] Chesnoff et al., *op. cit.* : p. 45.

quarterly journal with an anti-Islamist orientation. They unanimously pointed to the Sudan´s efforts to instigate subversion on a wide international level.

The Security Council has echoed these charges. It condemned Sudan in January 1996 for terrorist activity and, by implication, involvement in the assassination attempt of President Mubarak. The condemnation, which was unequivocal and unanimous, translates "the seriousness of Khartoum's position and the persuasiveness of the evidence originally put to the Council by Ethiopia"[936] . Council's Resolution 1044 considered the attack against Mubarak "as aimed, not only at the president of Egypt, and not only at the sovereignty, integrity and stability of Ethiopia but also at Africa as a whole" [937] .

During the course of the year, the U.N. imposed "diplomatic sanctions" and an air embargo on Sudan contrary to the U.S. will, which is now calling for stiffer sanctions. Sudanese leaders, though, have not changed their position since Ethiopia officially asked Khartoum to hand over the three suspects of the assassination attempt denying all along knowledge of their whereabouts. Meanwhile, the United States has decided to send military aid to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda to help them "contain Sudan". Washington says that the aid is for the three governments, which have all publicly called for the overthrow of Khartoum's National Islamic Front and all actively helped the Sudanese opposition [938] .

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936 Gill Lusk, "Sanctions in the Air", *Middle East International*, n° 519, 16 February 1996: p. 12.
937 *Ibid.* .
938 Gill Lusk, "U.S. Aids the Opposition", *Middle East International*, n° 538, 22 November 1996: p. 12.

11. The American Position Towards the Islamist Movement in Egypt and Jordan

11.1. The Islamist Challenge in Egypt and Jordan: U.S. Considerations

The rising popularity of Islamic political movements has developed into one of the most important issues facing the Middle East. It has generated a great deal of analysis and many different conclusions, with some seeing it as a radical, externally-driven force, and others viewing it as a natural and indigenous reflection of Islamic sentiment and as a yearning for democracy.

U.S. official pronouncements on Islam display a good deal of ambiguity in current U.S. policy toward the Middle East and the issue of political Islam. Within the U.S. government, a nuanced approach has been advocated and even President Clinton has stressed that Islam is not viewed by the United States as the next great "ism" confronting the West or threatening world peace. He has repeatedly stated that the target of U.S. animosity is not Islam, but extremism.

On the other hand, the same officials make conflicting statements which underlie a structural mistrust and suspicion of political Islam, an attitude which is widely shared by most Americans, who tend to see Islam in terms of its extremists. The aforementioned ambiguity in U.S. policy toward Islam, is displayed in the declarations of Edward Djerejian, former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, in relation to the American reaction to the cancellation of the electoral process in Algeria. Despite Washington's professed neutral stance, Djerejian remarked that, at the time, the prevailing feeling was that "the Algerian situation was so confrontational and polarized that to let the Islamists in would have amounted to a legalistic takeover through the framework of an election"[939]. He further declared that the Bush administration stated its "opposition to the Islamists coming to power, but only if the Algerian regime embarked on a dual-track policy": broadening the political dialogue and embarking on economic reforms [940].

It seems that the general but mostly unstated view at the top echelons of the American government is that political Islam constitutes a threat to pro-Western regimes and that their coming to power would endanger Western interests in the area.

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[939] Djerejian, "One Man, One Vote ...": p. 14.

namely access to oil. This being the case, American policymakers can hardly remain indifferent to the developments in Egypt and Jordan, wherelslamists constitute major opposition forces. In both countries, the mainstreamIslamist movement is tamed and, at the moment, under the control of the regime. In the case of Jordan, thelslamists have been allowed into the political process but their margin of manoeuvre has been highly limited and their capacity to voice dissenting opinions restricted. Egypt has opted for channelling Islamists into social and economic welfare activities and hindering them from entering the official political process. Contrary to Jordan, where the extremist fringes are effectively silenced, the Egyptian government has been faced with a widespread insurrection of radical Islamist groups that pose a real challenge to the state.

U.S. preoccupation with the implications of Islamist activity at a wider level led the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 1993 to draft a study aiming to "assess whether and how its programs will affect the political composition and basic security of traditional friends and allies in the region"[941] . The report was all the more relevant as it was felt compelling to articulate the new administration's commitment for democracy and human rights with the question of the Islamists' bid for power [942] .

Faced with their political ambitions and increasing legitimacy in the context of a widespread discrediting of the existing regimes, the Clinton administration has adopted a cautious approach towards issues that are at the forefront of the Middle Eastern political agenda, especially liberalisation and democratisation. Quandt remarks that the democratisation agenda is now primarily a "rhetoric" issue and that "the application of this theme to the Middle East is halfhearted at best " [943] . This is because "it may produce a negative backlash, versus promoting ideas and practices that may produce stable, reliable, and prosperous friends for the United States" [944] .

Egypt and Jordan, to different degrees, highlight the U.S. dilemmas and the preoccupation with the potentially disrupting effect of an Islamist takeover in those countries. This concern has been reflected primarily in the fact that Washington has revealed a preference for the *status quo*, ahead of support for democratisation in

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[940] *Ibid.* .
[941] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Battle Looms: Islam and Politics in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), p. v.
[942] *Ibid.* .
[943] "New U.S. Policies for a New Middle East", in David Lesch (ed.), *The Middle East and the United States* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), p. 416, 417.
[944] *Id.* : p. 417.

those countries [945]. The Americans have shown "less interest in pushing the "democratization agenda", for fear that it might be the Islamists who exploit any openings" [946] . On the other hand, the U.S. government has by and large respected President Mubarak's and King Hussein's handling of the Islamists. Jordan and Egypt are even considered model cases in the way they manage thelslamist challenge. The practice of co-opting non-violent, mainstream Islamic movements - set against the background of the partial liberalisation of the political system - has moderatedIslamist positions and largely worked in favour of those regimes.

11.2. Egypt

U.S.-Egyptian relations have been characterised by the periodical eruption of strains that generate a climate of tension. Under the present U.S. administration, Egypt has been increasingly at odds with the United States over a number of issues. Cairo's disagreements with Washington centre mainly on the peace process and the direction that the latter wants to impose to it. Egypt views the United States as being so biased towards Israel on this issue that it is trying to impose arrangements that uphold Israel's security alone and ignore that of Egypt and the Arabs. Cairo is highly critical of the limitless support Washington provides to Israel to the point of giving it a free hand to blitz Lebanon, provoke Syria and besiege the Palestinian Authority.

Egypt's distancing from Washington was heightened when Egyptian diplomacy pushed Israel's nuclear weapons to the top of its list of priorities and refused to sign the chemical non-proliferation treaty until Israel signed the nuclear NPT. Lately, Cairo has been very concerned with the kind of Israeli-dominated regional order Washington seems to be promoting in the Middle East. The alarm voiced by Egypt is over the axis Israel is developing with pro-Western Turkey and Jordan, alleging that it seeks to supplant the leadership role Egypt has traditionally played in the region, and to threaten both Iran and Syria [947] .

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[945] Esposito quoted in Timothy Sisk, *Islam and Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1992), p. 11.
[946] William Quandt, message to the author, 9 January 1997.
[947] "Egypt Seen Warming to Iran as Regional Alliances Shift", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 87, 3 May 1996: pp. 15-6, 17.

In the United States, a number of people have put forth the view that Egypt has lost its strategic value as far as American interests are concerned. After Egyptian-American relations reached their zenith after the war for the liberation of Kuwait, some research centres - namely the Washington Institute for Near East Policy - began promoting the idea that Cairo had lost its regional capabilities. RobertSatloff, that Institute's executive director, argued that Palestinian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli peace, along with Israel's budding relations with the Arab Maghreb and the Gulf States, make the shrinking of Egypt's role inevitable. The idea was also promoted that Islamist violence against the Egyptian state has put the country on the Algerian road of no return [948].

Other assessments have been presented which point to the growing concern in the United States that the "political investment" Washington has made in the Middle East generally is too big and unrewarding, and that more of the U.S. administration's attention should be focused on Europe and the Pacific Rim. The current American tendency to be less involved in the peace process and to leave the parties to work out a settlement themselves, is viewed as contributing to the waning of Egypt's role. As far as the other major U.S. interest in the Middle East is concerned - oil - no role for Egypt in safeguarding Gulf security and, by extension, the stability of the overall regional order is in view. Proponents of this current see Egypt's importance to U.S. foreign policy as diminishing and advocate a commensurate reduction in U.S. aid to Egypt.

The existence of a strong Islamist movement has also featured high on the list of U.S. concerns and they have fuelled American doubts about Egypt's political and economic stability. This, in turn, has reinforced the views of those who argue in favour of U.S. disinvestment on the grounds that Egypt "ultimately belongs to an alien Arab-Islamic culture that Americans fear, and that it has not"Westernized sufficiently" in terms of either economic or political liberalization" [949].

In June 1996, Djerejian voiced the U.S. government's preoccupation with the Islamist challenge to Mubarak's regime and he commented that "the violence of Islamic extremists in Egypt is a matter of serious concern to us ..." [950]. But the generalized view in the U. S. government is that "the Muslim extremists do not

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[948] Ibrahim Nafei, "A New Look at Egyptian-American Relations", *Mideast Mirror* (9), nº 63, 31 March 1995: pp. 13-4.-

[949] Al-Hayat quoted in *Mideast Mirror* (10), nº 148, 31 July 1996: p. 16.

[950] "Developments in the Middle East", Statement before the International Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., 12 June 1996: p. 5.

constitute an immediate threat to the stability of Egypt, although they continue to pose a serious problem for public security and the economy. The extremists do not have sufficient public support to challenge the government or its institutions at this time and popular abhorrence of terrorist tactics makes it unlikely they will gain such support in the near future" [951].

In connection with the question of political Islam and the way the Egyptian government handles it, the United States has frequently expressed its doubts on the wisdom of the current heavy-handed approach used by Cairo. The U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices have registered the charges against the Mubarak government of torture, use of excessive force and the conducting of unfair trials. U.S. officials and congressmen have echoed these concerns by arguing that "the Egyptian government runs the risk of going too far in its counterattack against the *Jemaat* " [952] and that "if the government's response becomes oppressive against violent and nonviolent Islamists alike, it could backfire" [953].

Samuel Lewis, former director of the Departmentof State Policy Planning staff and a counselor to the Washington Institute, criticised the Egyptian government´s approach saying it is "trying to use only the "stick" and they are beating themselves over the head" [954]. Krauthammer, speaking at a Washington Institute´s roundtable on the issue of political Islam, expressed the commonly held view that "other than with police power, it is going to be very difficult for the Egyptians to pull themselves together to deal with a serious threat" [955].

In light of this appreciation, the Americans have thus urged the Mubarak regime to respect human rights and to make political and economic reforms, so as to reduce the level of discontent in Egyptian society. Lee H. Hamilton, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, questioned in October 1994 the wisdom of the social and economic policies of the Egyptian government, which apparently deepen the gap between the social classes, a situation which, according to him, "might very well be feeding a situation which leads to Islamic extremism" [956]. Some have suggested that the U.S. assistance programme in Egypt should be geared towards

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[951] U. S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Developments in the Middle East October 1994* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 132.
[952] Senate report, *op. cit.* : p. 19.
[953] *Ibid.* .
[954] Wilner and Blumenthal (eds.), *America and the Middle East*: p. 26.
[955] *Ibid.* .

strengthening the Egyptian system of justice and the efficiency of the legislative[957] . Following the charges of government manipulation of the 1995 parliamentary elections, the State Department said it "hoped" Cairo would look into allegations of fraud and take the necessary steps. Many U.S. congressmen went on record questioning the fairness of the Egyptian elections, and some suggested that future U.S. aid to Egypt should be linked to Cairo taking serious steps towards democratisation [958] .

Washington's open criticism of the Egyptian human rights record is understood in Cairo as a little more than a pretext to meddle in its internal affairs. What it shows in reality is the U.S. government alarm about the way Cairo has been muzzling and excluding the legally sanctioned opposition, the underlying message being that democratisation is vital for Egypt's stability.

In spite of these realisations, the Americans would not cross the red line and be too vocal in their criticisms or press the Egyptian government to put its record straight. Mubarak successfully resists the delicate suggestions of U.S. officials that he liberalise because he knows that rather than jeopardise Egyptian stability the United States will grudgingly acquiesce in his refusal to make more than token changes to Egypt's political system.

The Egyptian president deflects American criticisms by pointing to Algeria. He says that his first priority is rooting out subversive Muslim groups. Then, maybe he will consider allowing more democracy in Egypt[959] . American commitments to the Middle East peace process, to the security of Israel, and to stability in the pivotal Arab ally in the region make it well high impossible for U.S. officials to contemplate any policy that might plunge Egypt into chaos and to provide Islamists with a chance to gain power.

In fact, the opinions that question Egypt's continued importance to the United States, although quite disseminated, are not shared by the Clinton administration nor do they represent the dominant view within the U.S. establishment. The Americans hold the view that the U.S. policy in the Middle East hinges upon Egypt. Because of its role in maintaining regional stability and its traditional leadership in the Arab world, Egypt's importance to the United States remains intact. And the fact is that, despite all its shortcomings, the Egyptian handling of the Islamist challenge has so far been effective. Martin Indyk, former director for Middle Eastern affairs at the National

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[956] *Developments in the Middle East*: p. 40.
[957] *Ibid.* .
[958] Al-Quds al-Arabi quoted in *Mideast Mirror* (9), nº 241, 13 December 1995: p. 18.

Security Council and U. S. ambassador to Israel, praised the Egyptian approach for channeling Islamist activity into the social and economic sphere and for co-opting only non-violent, mainstream Islamist movements into political life [960].

Mubarak is aware of this appreciation and he knows U.S. officials are apt to share his interpretation that the Islamic extremists are the most pressing threat and that a fundamentalist victory in Egypt would be a disaster for American interests in the region[961] . The Islamic threat is perhaps the best justification Mubarak invokes for asking the United States for money. He has so far succeeded in maintaining the significant quantities of annual U.S. economic and military assistance. It is indeed noteworthy that "as American economic aid to all nations has been reduced, eliminated or "under review" in the past several years, U.S. aid to Egypt ... has retained its second-place position"[962] . This is all the more remarkable as the foreign aid budget has been cut dramatically (by about 40 percent) since 1992, the 1996 reduction being 10 percent [963] . During Mubarak's visit to Washington in late July 1996, there was quasi-agreement on keeping U.S. economic aid at its current level in the foreseeable future, that is, around $2.2 billion [964] .

11.3. Jordan

Since the end of the Gulf War, Jordan has largely restored its relations with the United States through its participation in the Middle East peace process and enforcement of U.N. sanctions against Iraq. Starting in 1992, the King moved slowly to distance Jordan from Iraq and in October 1994, the King signed a peace agreement with Israel which ensured that the country returned to the centre of regional politics.

With the signing of the accord, Jordan regained its place as one of the most pro-Western of Arab leaders as well as the much-needed U.S. assistance for solving

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[959] Mary E. Morris, *New Political Realities and the Gulf* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993), p. 10.
[960] "The Implications ...", in Mirsky and Rice (eds.), p. 51.
[961] Fouad Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt", *Foreign Affairs*, (74), n° 5, September 1995: p.
[962] Denis J. Sullivan, "American Aid to Egypt, 1975-96", *Middle East Policy* (IV), n° 4, October 1996: p. 36.
[963] Lee Hamilton et al., "Development Assistance to the Middle East", *Middle East Policy* (IV), n° 4, October 1996: p. 15.
[964] "Mubarak's "Success Story" in America", *Mideast Mirror* (10), n° 150, 2 August 1996: p. 12.

the desperate economic situation of the country. President Clinton agreed to cancel $702 million of Jordan's debt to the United States, nearly three-quarters of what the Kingdom owes the United States. The administration also encouraged other Western nations to accept debt relief to Jordan. In addition, the United States offered new military equipment, the encouragement of U.S. investment and help in ending the boycott from the Gulf states, support for water projects, the lift of the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba and increased foreign aid [965] .

Cooperation with the U.S.-led peace process was just a part of Jordanian participation in the Pax Americana that is in the making. It aims at creating a stable Middle East, with Israel as the driving political and economic force, and with the Arab states at peace with her [966] . In the U.S. perspective, Jordan is central to this project. The Kingdom's quiet border with Israel has helped to establish a working relationship between the two countries, as evidenced by the creation of numerous economic joint-ventures and the climate of normalisation in bilateral discussions.

This has enabled president Clinton to announce in November 1996 that Jordan was to be given special military status, that of a major non-NATO ally of the United States. With the change in status, Jordan will be able to receive improved military assistance and to modernise its armed forces, a cherished Jordanian aspiration. The Kingdom took delivery of $100m of military hardware from the United States on December 1996, under the enhanced ExcessDefense Articles programme. Included in the equipment received were: 18 helicopters, 50 M-60 tanks, 250 trucks, 2 M-4 boats, an air-sea rescue vessel and machine guns. The delivery of a C-130H aircraft and of 16 F-16 fighters are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year[967] .

By and large, the United States is happy with the internal situation in Jordan, whose stability is maintained by a deft monarch. Contrary to Egypt, Jordan has since 1989 undergone impressive political liberalisation and might be considered perhaps the most democratic country in the Arab world. It has been highly questionable whether this liberalisation is authentic and not merely tactical. The fact remains that the parliament wields real political power, there is some freedom of expression in the media, popular demonstrations are allowed and an open political debate is raging.

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[965] Stephen Zunes, "The Israeli-Jordanian Agreement", *Middle East Policy* (III), n° 4, 1995: pp. 60-1.
[966] Lamis Andoni, "The Arabs Put on a Show of Solidarity", *Middle East International*, n° 529, 5 July 1996: p. 16.
[967] The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Jordan*, Country Report, 1st quarter 1997: p. 12.

Jordan is looked on as an example of a country that has been able to establish a relatively successful *modus vivendi* with the Islamists. It has ensured all nonviolent Islamists a meaningful outlet in Jordan's political system, as demonstrated in their brief participation in the cabinet and in the last parliamentary elections. At the same time, this system has permitted the King to closely monitor Islamist expressions of dissent and to limit their opposition. Djerejian presented Jordan as a "model" for Arab countries in the way of dealing with the Islamists. The fact that "King Hussein decided ... that the Muslim Brotherhood should be allowed to compete in elections and join in the parliamentary structure ... resulted in the moderation of the Islamist movement because they became accountable before the electorate for their record of governance" [968] . Pelletreau also commended the Jordanian approach for integrating Islamists in a broader constitutional structure, [969] and, by doing so, being able to tame them.

The Washington Institute, an influential pro-Israeli think-tank which has attentively monitored the development of political Islam, has considered Jordan as a success case, as the only Middle Eastern country that is dealing intelligently and in a balanced manner with political Islam. Samuel Lewis says the Jordanians "have an advantage because their king can say he is the descendant of the Prophet, which helps in dealing with the Islamists. But Jordan has also been wise politically in that they gave the Islamists a little power, let them show that they had no solutions, and thus reduced their appeal at the polls. They also keep a very close eye on any potential subversion " [970]. Robert Satloff, the Institute's executive director, says that the difference in the "Jordanian model is that the Islamists are allowed to participate in the government but they can never win complete control because Jordan is a monarchy..." , and concludes: "The Jordanians have worked out their own answer, but we don't know if other states can follow that model yet" [971] .

Washington sees Jordan's stability as hinging on the figure of the King. Therefore, the question of the successor to the throne and his ability to manage a orderly transition, dominate U.S. concerns over the evolution of that Middle Eastern country.

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[968] Djerejian, *op. cit.* : p. 14.
[969] U. S. Congress, *Recent Developments in North Africa*: p. 9.
[970] Wilner and Blumenthal (eds.), *op. cit.*: p. 26.
[971] *Ibid.* .

CONCLUSION

In the West, Islamism has come to be seen as a disruptive force that threatens friendly Arab regimes, has a strong anti-Western bias, is anti-democratic and the main source of subversive and terrorist activity. Events such as the terrorist bombings and assassinations that rocked the main European capitals in the 1980s, the Rushdie affair, and the Islamist savage war against the Algerian state, have fuelled these feelings. The Americans' negative image of Islam was seared into the public mind in the wake of the Iranian Revolution, the hostage crisis and the succession of terrorist attacks that targeted U.S. citizens - a result of the wave of anti-Americanism that swept the Arab world. After the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing and the uncovering of the Islamic network led by Sheik OmarAbdel Rahman that conspired to launch other terrorist attacks, the American's imagination was captured by the possibility of an Islamic *jihad* against the United States.

Many intellectuals have seen these acts of terrorism and the ubiquitous Muslim diatribes against the West as part of a deepening conflict between an aggressive Islam and a defensive Western civilisation. In fact, the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War bolstered the views of some analysts that Islamic activism would emerge as the next threat to the Western world. Huntington placed this conflict in the context of a general confrontation resulting fromcivilizational fault lines.

This dissertation has highlighted how political Islam came to be identified as one of the major security threats evidencing the anarchic nature of the new international order. It was picked on by many in the American security and defence community as the new global enemy thus justifying a mission and a budget and continuing American leadership in the post - Cold War world. Other variants of the "Islamic threat" theory were put forward. They basically affirmed that fundamentalist Islam is a movement closer in spirit to communism and fascism than to traditional religion. It is by nature anti-democratic, fanatical, anti-Semitic and anti-Western. According to those theories, Islamists see their movement standing in direct competition to Western civilisation and challenging it for global supremacy. The coming confrontation would thus require from Washington a long-term diplomatic and military strategy and the development of new containment policies of political Islam.

These views gained wide currency in the media and eventually prevailed in public opinion and in the political debate. In looking closely into the Islam-bashing

campaign, this study brought to light that a host of political interest groups and entities fanned the myth of a threatening Islam. Chief among them was Israel. The Labour government under Yitzhak Rabin stridently alerted to the need to combat "murderous Islamic terror", and depicted Iran as the centre of ideological subversion and of military expansionism. The Israelis disclosed Tehran's plans for controlling the oil-rich Gulf, destroy Israel and threaten areas on the periphery of a new "arc of crisis" involving the Horn of Africa, Southern Europe, the Balkans and the Indian subcontinent. Pro-Israeli organisations in the United States have amplified these charges. They have also been the driving force behind the tightening of sanctions against Iran and the crackdown on Islamist political activities in the United States.

Growing American fears about political Islam have also played into the hands of foreign governments, such as in the case with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan. The "green menace" is a convenient way for a leader to explain away opposition based on a country's economic, social, and political inequities. It is also an argument in favour of the continuation of U.S. support to regimes whose strategic value weakened with the end of the Cold War.

The debate in the media on the nature of political Islam and of the threats posed by it was nurtured by academic studies and think-tanks publications on the subject. The debate produced a variety of views reflecting the multiple divisions within the academic and policy communities. This study has highlighted the two major schools of thought regarding political Islam that have emerged. The accommodationist school considers the Islamic movement not as a threat but as a healthy grassroots response to the failure of Arab governments to tackle growing socio-economic problems. It is premised on the assumption that the Islamic revival encompasses a variety of movements, that Islam is compatible with democracy and that Islamic moderates, with whom the West can talk, do exist. The confrontational school argues that political Islam is inherently hostile to the Western world, that Islamists are only rhetorically committed to democracy and pluralism and that their real aim is the establishment of a religious dictatorship. Proponents of this school thus urge the U.S. government not to cooperate with fundamentalists and not engage in dialogue with them, but rather to stand up against them.

The Bush administration seemed to realise the need to build a coherent policy framework towardsIslam that dealt comprehensively with the challenges posed by this rising religion in areas where the United States has vital interests. The policy, first enunciated in June 1992, stated the U.S. government did not consider Islam as a

hostile religious and civilisational force. The policy differentiated mainstream Islam, genuine in nature and generally peaceful, from the Islamist groups and movements that espouse violence and extremism in pursuit of their aims. The latter would be actively opposed by the United States.

The policy, developed and refined under the Clinton administration, showed understanding of the complex forces at work in Muslim society and avoided tarring the entire Islamic movement with the brush of extremism. The present inquiry has however demonstrated that this U.S. policy is largely rhetorical and fails to address a number of important issues such as when, in what circumstances and how the United States would agree to enter into dialogue with Islamist groups, especially if they came to power in states with a pro-Western orientation.

The policy is rather an abstract construction, a theory, since it has never been put to the test. Enunciating it was an important step in the way of recognising the reality of political Islam but the fact remains that the act itself had no major consequences. In fact, the majority of Islamic movements in Arab states of high strategic importance to the United States are "contained" and hardly on the verge of gaining power. In the Middle East, Turkey has been an exception since 1995 when the Refah party became a member of the governmental coalition. This Islamist sucess was the result of the consolidation of democracy which enabled the Islamists to be reincorporated into the political system. In the last few years, the Refah party has attained political legitimacy and has adopted the procedural rules of democracy. The party has also adopted an increasingly more secular platform and a more pragmatic approach. At least for the moment, the prospect of an Islamic, anti-Western oriented regime seems to be ruled out.

In the Arab countries that were analysed in this dissertation, an Islamist takeover would create an altogether different context forcing U.S. policy-makers to face a challenging situation which would obviously vary according to the nature of the Islamist movement in presence. The need to evolve responses to that situation would provide the real test to the aforementioned policy and would dictate the extent of U.S. compliance to it.

In the case of Egypt and Jordan, the present work has shown that the United States overriding interest is the maintenance in power of the incumbent regimes whose stabilising role, position regarding the peace process and pro-Western orientation make them important regional allies. The U.S. government has implicitly and explicitly shown its preferences for President Mubarak and King Hussein -

notwithstanding their authoritarian and undemocratic practices - to theIslamists, lest the Islamists challenge important U.S. interests in the Middle East. In order to safeguard the incumbent regimes, the Clinton administration has toned down its promotion of the "democratisation agenda" for fear that the opening up of the political systems would give the Islamists an opportunity to gain power. In following this line, the United States is acting in accordance with the U.S. traditional stance in the Middle East: the defence of the conservative forces and the upholding of the *status quo*.

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