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SUSAN MORGAN

A STUDY OF AMERICAN -ISRAELI RELATIONS 1967-73

M.A.

1995

The War of June 1967 proved to be instrumental in changing the perceptions of the principal protagonists in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and also the major powers outside the region. The preemptive strike launched by Israel on 6 June began a comprehensive defeat of the Arab states, and in just six days Israel increased her size threefold, incorporating large portions of Arab land into her territory. The changes that occurred can be briefly summed up as follows:

- Soviet influence within the Arab states increased with military advisers sent to Egypt and Syria in great numbers to help reconstruct the defeated armies (despite the fact that Soviet armaments had failed to avoid a convincing Israeli victory).
- Israel's confidence both in her own strength and in her ability to survive increased.
- The idea that Israel could act as a "strategic asset" became a firmly established tenet of American foreign policy

Ironically, relations between the Soviet Union and the Arab states, who backed them, were strengthened after the defeat inflicted by Israel. On a practical level, the Soviet Union embarked upon a massive programme of military and economic support for the Arab states, quickly replacing the amount of military hardware that had been lost in the war. The Soviet newspaper "Izvestia" suggested that the Arab states realised that only:

"through reliance upon the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, can they abolish completely imperialist influence in the Middle East and achieve Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories"<sup>1</sup>

**A STUDY OF  
AMERICAN - ISRAELI  
RELATIONS  
1967 - 1973**

**SUSAN MICHELLE MORGAN**

**M. A.**

**UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM**

**POLITICS DEPARTMENT**

**1995**

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**14 NOV 1995**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of the people who have provided me with support and advice in the preparation of this thesis. Mr. Gabriel Piterburg, himself involved in the final stages of a thesis, and also lecturing, offered both his time and knowledge of Israeli politics and I extend my thanks to him. Also, to Dr. Noah Lucas at the Postgraduate Centre For Hebrew Studies in Oxford, who gave me much help and an invaluable reading list! I must also add my thanks to the company Evans Vanodine, who not only provided me with employment during the academic breaks, but also gave me a significant sum of money towards payment of my fees. Last, but certainly not least, my thanks to my supervisor, Bob Williams, not only for his patience during the early stages, and my efforts to come to terms with the intricacies of the American political system, but also for the support and confidence he has given me throughout my year in Durham and afterwards.

# ABBREVIATIONS

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>ADL</b>   | Anti Defamation League of B'nai Brith          |
| <b>AID</b>   | Agency For International Development           |
| <b>AIPAC</b> | American Israeli Public Affairs Committee      |
| <b>AJC</b>   | American Jewish Congress                       |
| <b>ESF</b>   | Economic Support Fund                          |
| <b>IDF</b>   | Israeli Defence Force                          |
| <b>JINSA</b> | Jewish Institute For National Security Affairs |
| <b>OMB</b>   | Office Of Management And Budget                |
| <b>PAC</b>   | Political Action Committee                     |
| <b>PFLP</b>  | Popular Front For The Liberation Of Palestine  |
| <b>PLO</b>   | Palestine Liberation Organisation              |
| <b>UJA</b>   | United Jewish Appeal                           |
| <b>UN</b>    | United Nations                                 |
| <b>UNEF</b>  | United Nations Emergency Force                 |
| <b>UNSC</b>  | United Nations Security Council                |

## INTRODUCTION

How did America's relationship with Israel evolve? Why is the Jewish lobby such a powerful interest group in American politics? What effect did the 1967 and 1973 wars have on the future of American-Israeli relations? These are some of the questions that this study sets out to address. The study focuses on the period 1967-73 and aims to demonstrate understanding of a number of key themes including:

- The changes in the international order that took place following the second world war, and the way in which these shaped America's increasing influence in the Middle East.
- The importance of superpower relations in shaping American Middle Eastern policy.
- The widespread support that exists for Israel within the United States and the reasons for this.
- The influence of the Jewish lobby in American politics.
- The pivotal importance that the 1967 war had, not only in terms of American-Israeli relations, but also Arab on perceptions of Israel.
- The effects the 1973 war had on American-Israeli relations, and Israel's relationship with the Arab states.

The study is divided into three parts; American-Israeli relations prior to 1967; the different political systems and culture that exist in the United States and Israel; the chronology of events in the 1967-73 period. In the first part, the historical context of the relationship is examined, including the establishment of the state of Israel, and the issues facing the United States at the end of the Second World War. This section looks in some detail at the choices that confronted America and the way that her expanding role in the Middle East was in many ways indicative of her enhanced position in world affairs in the post war period. Essential background information is provided concerning the support the United States offered Israel from the 1940s and the reasons why the scale of assistance increased.

Part two of the study focuses on the parameters set by the different political systems and culture in the two countries. The Jewish lobby is examined in detail, as well as the reasons behind the strong support that exists for Israel in the United States. There were a number of key factors influencing the formation of Israeli policy in the pre-1967 period, many of which remained after the Six Day War. These are identified and explained.

In the final section, the chronology of the six year period is examined, and the pressures that influenced policy making in the United States and Israel during this time are explained. The section begins with an introduction that examines the importance of the 1967 war, which is subsequently described in detail in the first chapter. The consequences of the war are also analysed including:

- The role that the United States now believed Israel could fulfil in the Middle East
- The reaction of the Arab States to their defeat
- The increase in Soviet influence in the Middle East
- The way in which the political elite in Israel reacts to the choices that it now faces over the future of the Occupied Territories.

After numerous peace initiatives, the focus moved to the importance of detente and the increasing frustration of the Arab states as the peace process stalled. The result of this, the 1973 war and its consequences are explained. The study ends with a consideration of the future implications for the relationship given the outcome of the 1973 war.

There were a number of limitations which made the completion of this thesis more difficult. My lack of Arabic and Hebrew meant I was confined to sources in English. In addition there were significant time constraints once I had finished the one year full time study. The thesis was completed whilst working full time in London, which made liaison with my supervisor more difficult than it might otherwise have been, and the time which I could devote to the study was very much at the mercy of work pressures.

I have used a library based approach supplemented by interviews and discussions with a number of experts on the field. The bibliography indicates the range of quantity of primary and secondary sources

consulted in the preparation of this thesis.

## **PART ONE**

### **AMERICAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

- The Birth of Israel
- Changes in International Politics in the Postwar Period

## **PART ONE**

# **AMERICAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The conflict has not lasted for thousands of years as is often said. It is very much a product of our twentieth century...Only when Ottoman rule had given way to the British mandate and the prospect of self determination for Palestine emerged, did the Arab and the Jew, after having coexisted peacefully for generations, begin their mortal struggle over the political future of this land.

Henry Kissinger

## THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL

The purpose of this first section is to look briefly at the events that surrounded the creation of the state of Israel. By examining the context of the creation of the state of Israel, the background to the development of American-Israeli relations will be established. Several areas in particular will be examined:

- The problems experienced by the British during the time they held the mandate over Palestine.
- The response of the UN to the growing crisis in Palestine.
- The pressures that coincided to enable the birth of Israel.

In the years that followed the first world war, Britain and France remained the dominant powers in the Middle East region. In 1920 the British mandate over Palestine was established with the following objectives:

- To give effect to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, by promoting the well being and development of people in the mandate territory and provisionally recognising Palestine as an independent nation.
- To put into effect the Balfour declaration which stated Britain's support for:

“the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people”<sup>1</sup>

These two objectives<sup>2</sup> did not rest easily together. The vast majority of people in Palestine at this time were Arabs and were therefore opposed to the Balfour Declaration, which stated as its intention, the establishment of a Jewish homeland, in lands which had been in Arab hands for generations.

Given these objectives, the British position was contradictory throughout the period. During the 1930s, it became increasingly clear that Britain’s Palestine policy could no longer give full support to the Jewish claims without damaging Arab interests and therefore antagonising Arab states, something that Britain wanted to avoid. (In 1939, the British introduced a White Paper designed to restrict the numbers of Jewish immigrants to Palestine, but it was defeated.) In light of this, Zionist groups looked increasingly to the United States for support.

Traditionally, the US had been viewed favourably by the Arab States. The absence of imperial involvement saw her viewed as the champion of self determination and democratic freedoms. Prior to the second world war, American involvement in the Middle East had been limited to commercial interests. But rising Zionist expectations with regard to her stance on Palestine accurately reflected her increasing international importance. And there was some evidence to suggest that the United States would favour the Zionist case. In 1922, a Joint Resolution of Congress had stated:

“that the United States favours the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”<sup>3</sup>

In many ways, the outcome of the second world war served to strengthen the trends that were apparent towards the end of the 1930s:

- US interest in the region, and influence internationally increased substantially. (In 1946 there was a joint Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to consider the problem of Palestine).
- Jewish immigration to Palestine increased greatly.
- British influence in the area was reduced.

Economically, the second world war placed great pressure on Britain and consequently she was no longer in a position to maintain her imperial interests. This contrasted greatly to the position of the United States in 1945, whose influence and world standing increased rapidly in the postwar period, as did her interest in the Middle East. There were two reasons for this:

- The strategic importance of the Middle East in its proximity to Russia. (This was particularly important in the postwar period, with the onset of the Cold War.)
- The importance of oil. <sup>4</sup>

Having failed to find an adequate solution to the problems in Palestine and as a result of her reduced economic strength, Britain declared a desire to relinquish her responsibilities in the area. In response to this, in 1947, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was appointed to investigate Jewish and Palestinian claims in the area and the United States became formally involved in the search for a solution to the problem of Palestine. At this time, two events coincided to increase the support of the Zionist case in the USA:

- The feeling of guilt about the treatment of Jews in Germany in the second world war, as illustrated by Truman:

“My purpose was then and later, to bring about the redemption of the Balfour Declaration and the rescue of at least some of the victims of Nazism. I was not committed 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 ease access to it for the displaced Jews of Europe”<sup>5</sup>

- The domestic political agenda in the USA was dominated by forthcoming Congressional elections. Governor Mead and Senator Lehman were doing badly in the local campaign in New York and it was hoped that Truman’s support of the Jewish Agency proposal for:

“the creation of a viable Jewish state in control of its own immigration and economic policies in an adequate area of Palestine”<sup>6</sup>

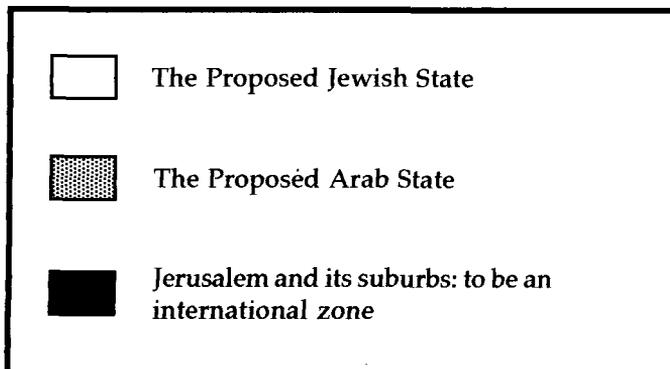
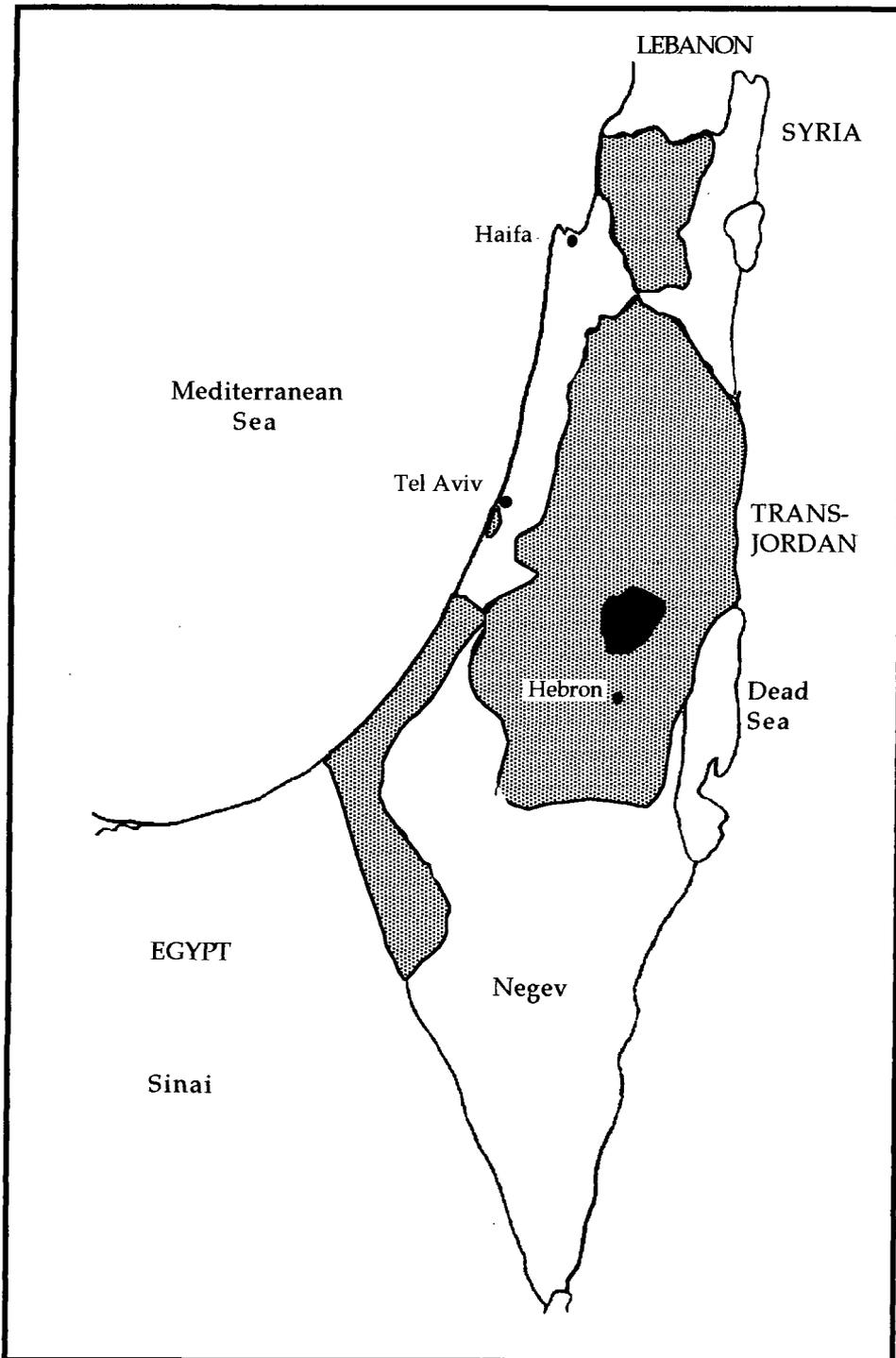
would win the Jewish bloc vote in New York.

The UNSCOP was divided in its findings, with two reports published. The minority report, supported by three members of the committee, India, Iran and Yugoslavia advocated an extension of the British mandate for a further three years, followed by the creation of an independent federation of Arab and Jewish states. The majority report recommended an immediate and more drastic solution to the problem; partition (the details of which are shown in fig 1 overleaf). This was advocated by Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay. Palestine was to be divided into an Arab state, a Jewish state and the City of Jerusalem. There was to be a two year transitional period during which time the UK would continue the administration of Palestine under the auspices of the UN.

Despite the rejection of both reports by the Arabs, on the grounds that they were against the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of Palestine, the partition proposal was accepted, and this led to an escalation of violence in Palestine. At the time the reports were published, the United States was again involved in elections, this time presidential. The American endorsement of the UNSCOP partition plan on 11 November 1947 was given probably because Truman saw it as the most practical solution at the time which also had Jewish support. In the forthcoming election, President Truman's top political advisers,

Fig 1

THE UNITED NATIONS PARTITION PLAN 1947



J R Gainsborough, *The Arab Israeli Conflict*, Aldershot, Gower Publishing Co. 1986, p 307

David Niles and Clark Clifford believed that the Jewish vote in the State of New York could prove crucial. (The first poll of American Jewry conducted by Elmo Roper in 1945 regarding the establishment of an Israeli state showed 80% supported it<sup>7</sup>). Consequently, they campaigned strenuously for Truman to adopt a favourable approach to the Zionist case. Although in previous years, David Niles had been the driving force behind this, by the run up to the election it was Clifford who was the more influential of the presidential advisers. On 12 May 1948, in a meeting to discuss what action would be taken if Israel declared independence, Clifford put forward the Zionist case. One participant, Robert McClintock later commented that:

“Clifford argued entirely on grounds of domestic politics”<sup>8</sup>

The United Nations decision to favour the partition of Palestine can be seen as a “springboard” towards Israeli independence. In the postwar period rising Jewish will to see an independent state established coincided with consistent international support to provide legitimisation for the creation of the state of Israel. Britain terminated the mandate over Palestine on 14 May 1948, and the United States gave almost instant recognition to the Israeli state that was successfully created from the vacuum left by Britain’s departure from Palestine. America’s leading role in providing international recognition for the new state was crucial and in subsequent years it was to the United States that Israel looked for support.

The focus of the next section will be the years 1948-1966 and the

way in which American-Israeli relations developed in the early days of the new state.

NOTES:

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4. K Roosevelt, 'The Partition Of Palestine. A Lesson In Pressure Politics', Middle East Journal, vol 2, 1948, p 8
5. C Rubenberg, (1986), p 31
6. K Roosevelt, 'The Partition of Palestine. A Lesson In Pressure Politics', Middle East Journal, vol 2, 1948, p 12
7. J Stork & S Rose, 'Zionism and American Jewry', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol 3, 1973, p 41
8. J Snetsinger, Truman, The Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1974, p 108

## CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN THE POST WAR PERIOD

As stated in the previous section, a number of factors came together to increase America's interest in the Middle East, the most significant of those being the onset of the Cold War and the perceived threat that the USSR posed to the region. This chapter will examine the ways in which international politics changed in the period following 1945, and the effects that these changes had, in relation to America's Middle East policy and specifically towards Israel.

The foreign policy options of the United States were fundamentally altered as a result of the outcome of the second world war. Involvement in the first world war had been followed by a return to isolationism and a withdrawal from international affairs, but 1945 saw radical changes in the existing international order. The European countries that had played an important part on the world stage prior to 1945 found themselves under increasing economic strain in the period following the end of the war. Consequently, America found herself playing a new key role in the post 1945 era. In the words of Kissinger:

"The period after World War II marks the first era of truly global foreign policy".<sup>1</sup>

The wartime co-operation that had existed between the United States and the USSR was replaced by suspicion. There are numerous contending hypotheses as to the origins of the Cold War, including that put forward by Spanier, that the power vacuum in Europe that followed

Germany's defeat, enabled the USSR to increase her power and influence in the postwar period.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly, the world became aligned into Communist and non-Communist spheres, as Russia expanded into Eastern and Central Europe. Consequently, postwar American diplomacy rested on the following premises:

- The Soviet Union was an expansionist nation
- The Soviet goal was world domination
- As leader of the "free world", the United States was the only nation able to stop Soviet aggression
- Force must be met with force
- The fate of the world was determined by superpower relations<sup>3</sup>

In 1947, George Kennan was the first to articulate what was to be adopted as the strategy of containment. Kennan focused on the USSR as a hostile nation and that the US response to this antagonism would need to be a:

"long term, patient, but firm and vigilant containment"<sup>4</sup>

He described the perceptions of Communism in the following terms:

"that the outside world was hostile and that it was their duty eventually to overthrow the political forces beyond their borders. The powerful hands of Russian history and tradition reached up to sustain them in this feeling. Finally, their own aggressive intransigence with respect to the outside world began to find its own reaction..."<sup>5</sup>

To some extent, this change in American policy resulted from Britain's decision that she could no longer protect Greece and Turkey. The threat that Communism posed became a widely accepted tenet of American political philosophy, and combating this *perceived* threat assumed considerable importance in the postwar foreign policy of the United States. The Truman Doctrine, embodied this belief, as illustrated below:

"I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures"<sup>6</sup>

As America became central to the fight against the spread of Communism her foreign policies were described thus:

"The foreign policies based on unambiguous efforts to foster American and Western value systems in the face of Soviet attacks may be characterised as rational interventionism."<sup>7</sup>

It was in this atmosphere that the first attempts were made to use foreign assistance as an instrument of foreign policy. The Marshall Plan launched after the end of the war saw considerable American aid invested in the economic rebuilding of Europe, beginning with Greece and Turkey, where money, troops and civilians were sent to help in the postwar effort. General Marshall described the Plan in these terms:

“its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist”<sup>8</sup>

Events in Eastern Europe (for example the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia in February 1948) helped to foster the growth of foreign aid as an anti-communist measure. The increasing world stature of the USSR was fundamental to the development of foreign aid programmes. Such a perceived threat to American security interests helped to provide support for the expansion of American influence abroad. And foreign assistance was seen as a crucial way in which this could be achieved. In 1986, R W. Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State said foreign assistance programmes:

“provide critical reinforcement to policies and institutions that the US is committed to support in principle as a global power exerting influence to protect legitimate interests”<sup>9</sup>

The degree to which American Foreign Assistance has been extended is demonstrated in the table overleaf:

**Table 1**

**US FOREIGN ASSISTANCE 1946-85**

| DESCRIPTION   | ECONOMIC  | MILITARY  | TOTAL     |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Total economic /<br>military assistance<br>fiscal years 1946-85 | 186,509.0 | 112,791.0 | 299,300.0 |
| Total other US<br>loans/ grants fiscal<br>years 1946-85         | 54,809.0  |           | 54,809.0  |

(Dollars in millions)

Source: The Politics of Foreign Aid, M Rabie, 1988, p 44.

As Table 1 demonstrates, foreign assistance programmes tend to be largely separated into two distinct categories; the Economic Development Programmes designed to offer the means to achieve economic growth, and Military and Security Assistance, relating to the defence capabilities of the countries involved.

Three main aims were pursued by the United States in the Middle East:

- Access to the oil located there (it is estimated that Saudi Arabia holds 25% of the world's oil reserves).

- The control of Soviet expansionism in the region (but also the avoidance of superpower conflict).
- The survival and security of Israel.

The onset of the Cold War in the post 1945 period did much to foster American concern regarding the proximity of the Soviet Union to such a strategically important region as the Middle East. Indeed the second and third aims above are linked, with Soviet expansionism checked *through* the survival and security of Israel.

After the Declaration of Independence establishing the Jewish State in 1948, Israel required considerable assistance. In 1949, the United States responded to this, beginning an aid programme with \$100 million from the Import-Export Bank which was supplemented two years later by a further 35 million dollars loan from the same source. 50% went towards agricultural development and 50% to establish Israeli industry. From its inception, Israel received considerable financial assistance from America which enabled the Israeli government to pursue an economic strategy with a number of goals including the development of industries and agriculture and the attraction of capital investment and private enterprises.<sup>10</sup>

In 1952, the level of aid was extended through the establishment of a series of economic grants and also the Food For Peace Program designed to ease the shortages that had resulted in rationing in some areas. In the period 1952-73, \$635 million of US wheat, dairy products, fats and oils were transferred to Israel.<sup>11</sup> The scale of economic assistance provided by the United States is demonstrated by the following table:

**Table 2****US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL****1949-76**

| YEAR    | TOTAL | GRANT | LOAN  |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1949-50 | -     | -     | -     |
| 1951    | 0.1   | 0.1   | -     |
| 1952    | 86.4  | 86.4  | -     |
| 1955    | 52.7  | 21.9  | 30.8  |
| 1962    | 70.7  | 1.9   | 68.8  |
| 1967    | 6.1   | 0.6   | 5.5   |
| 1968    | 51.8  | 0.5   | 51.3  |
| 1972    | 104.2 | 50.4  | 53.8  |
| 1976    | 782.0 | 525.0 | 257.0 |

(Dollars in millions)

Source: M Rabie, (1988), p 59

In contrast to the supply of economic aid, military aid was less forthcoming. The 1950s saw a period of "evenhandedness" which can be illustrated well by the Tripartite Declaration of Britain, France and the United States which stated:

- 1) The three governments recognise that the Arab states and Israel all need to maintain a certain level of armed forces for the purpose of assuring their internal security and their legitimate self-defence and to permit them to play their part in the defence of the area as a whole. All applications for arms or war material for these countries will be considered in the light of these principles. In this connection the three governments wish to recall and reaffirm the terms of the statements made by their representatives to the Security Council on August 4 1949, in which they declared their

opposition to the development of an arms race between the Arab states and Israel.

- 2) The three governments declare that assurances have been received from all the states in question, to which they permit arms to be supplied from their countries, that the purchasing state does not intend to undertake aggression against any other state. Similar assurances will be requested from any other state in the area to which they permit arms to be supplied in the future.
- 3) The three governments take this opportunity of declaring their deep interest in and their desire to promote the establishment and maintenance of peace and stability in the area. The three governments, should they find that any of these states was preparing to violate frontiers or armistice lines, would consistent with their obligations as a member of the UN, immediately take action both within and outside the United Nations to prevent such violation.<sup>12</sup>

Although this declaration was intended to reassure Israel that she was territorially secure, it did not solve the problems that she was experiencing in gaining arms. In the 1950s, American arms began arriving in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Whilst they might have been in response to the growing internal problems that these countries were facing, this did not allay Israeli concerns. Despite Israeli fears that the United States was favouring the Arab states at the time, continued American declarations pointed to the concern on the part of the United States not to be drawn into a significant arms supplying role within the

region. America did not, however, object to the supply of weapons from other states such as Britain and France (to whom Israel looked for alternative sources of supply). This position is shown by Dean Rusk:

“We have ourselves tried not to become a principal supplier of arms in that region. But we are committed to the political independence and territorial integrity of the states in the Middle East.”<sup>13</sup>

Therefore whilst providing necessary diplomatic support to the territorial integrity of the states in the area (which was still important to Israel given the refusal of the Arab states to recognise her right to exist), the United States hoped to refrain from becoming involved in the large scale provision of weapons to the Middle East. This is not to say though, that she was committed to the non-provision of weapons. Rather, she wished to *detach herself* from such a role, whilst being willing to supply a limited number of weapons if this became necessary.

Several developments in the region rendered this position obsolete. The rise of Nasser in Egypt was one of the most fundamental concerns to the United States as it was feared that radicalism would spread throughout the Arab world. The establishment of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria also seemed to validate this position. In the international context of the post 1945 era, the emergence of Arab nationalism was seen to indicate a general reduction of Western influence in the Middle East. Coupled with this was the steady rise of Soviet influence in the area, for example through the provision of MIG-21's and TU-16's to Egypt following the Suez campaign of 1956. Soviet

military supplies to the Middle East, when coupled with the increase of radical Arab nationalism served to change Washington's perception of the role Israel could play in the region.

Israel became more fully incorporated into the global strategy of the United States with the accession to power of Kennedy in 1961. The dominant theories behind thinking on the Middle East in the 1950s had assumed a more advantageous position for the United States through a balance between Arab and Israeli interests. Developments by the turn of the decade served to weaken the validity of these ideas. If the 1950s was the decade when American involvement regarding the supply of arms was kept to a minimum, the 1960's saw American commitment substantially increased. The first signs of this were in 1962 when the sale of the Hawk missile to Israel was announced and justified in the following terms:

"we also keep the arms situation in the area under constant scrutiny and may supply purely defensive weapons with an overall picture of not becoming a major supplier of arms to either side. When in the course of recent review it was established that Israel needed an improved air defense capability the United States agreed to sell Israel the Hawk, a short range defensive missile."<sup>14</sup>

This sale came close on the heels of the disclosure of an extensive military shipment from the USSR to the principal Arab states (Egypt, Iraq and Syria) and in the same year Kennedy qualified the new relationship that was developing between the United States and Israel:

“The United States has a special relationship with Israel in the Middle East, really only comparable to that which it has with Britain over a wide range of world affairs...We are in a position to make it clear to the Arabs that we will maintain our friendship with Israel and our security guarantees...I think it is quite clear that in the case of an invasion the United States would come to the support of Israel - we have the capacity and it is growing”<sup>15</sup>

The Israeli premier at the time, Levi Eshkol was anxious to extend American-Israeli military ties for two reasons; doubts over the future supply of French arms (their main source of supply since 1956) and also the added sophistication of many of the American weapons available. In June 1964, he was the first Israeli PM to be officially invited to Washington, and just two years later, the rise in American military commitment was demonstrated with the sale of 48 Skyhawk planes and a further 52 soon after. Increasingly in this period, there was a dichotomy between the ‘official’ line and the actions that were taken. The official policy was still described in these terms:

“established policy ...to refrain from becoming a major supplier of arms in this area while retaining the option of helping countries of the area to meet their defense requirements through occasional and selective sales”<sup>16</sup>

The policies of the 1950s had failed to bring stability to the area. By the outbreak of the 1967 war, America’s role in the region had changed significantly. However, after the war, and Israel’s performance during it,

the scale of US military aid was transformed. The following table provides clear quantitative evidence of the radical shift in the US position:

**Table 3**

**US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL 1948-1974**

| YEAR    | TOTAL  | LOANS | GRANTS |
|---------|--------|-------|--------|
| 1948-61 | 0.9    | 0.9   | -      |
| 1962    | 13.2   | 13.2  | -      |
| 1967    | 7.0    | 7.0   | -      |
| 1968    | 25.0   | 25.0  | -      |
| 1969    | 85.0   | 85.0  | -      |
| 1970    | 30.0   | 30.0  | -      |
| 1971    | 545.0  | 545.0 | -      |
| 1973    | 307.5  | 307.5 | -      |
| 1974    | 2482.7 | 982.7 | 1500.0 |

(Dollars in millions)

Source: M Rabie, (1988), p 66

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## PART TWO

# POLITICS AND POLICYMAKING IN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL

(American Jews)...are a political factor whose influence may vary but is always felt...American Jews have never hesitated, as American citizens, to bring their weight to bear in the cause of Israel, though it is hard to say how often, if ever, it has been decisive. Anything they do, they must do of their own free will. Israel cannot employ, command or incite them, though she can, and does keep them informed of her policies and needs.

Walter Eytan "The First Ten  
Years"

## **PART TWO**

### **POLITICS AND POLICYMAKING IN THE UNITED STATES & ISRAEL**

- Israel's Political System And Culture
- The American Political System

## ISRAEL'S POLITICAL SYSTEM AND CULTURE

To be able to examine the relations between America and Israel in the years 1967 - 1973, it is necessary to understand the composition of, and pressures upon Israeli society and the political elite. In many ways, which will be examined during this chapter, the Jewish state is unique and factors such as its geographic location and hostile Arab neighbours have served to shape the parameters of Israel's domestic and foreign policy.

### I

The political system in Palestine greatly influenced that of post independence Israel. Arab hostility to the idea of a Jewish national revival made it essential for the Jewish community of Palestine (Yishuv) to concentrate their efforts on the establishment of a Jewish homeland. To incorporate the differing shades of opinion, the Yishuv was viewed as a single community and elections to representative bodies in the period 1920-1948 reflected this. After independence had been achieved, this method was adopted in the state of Israel, with the whole state becoming one electoral district. Votes are counted nationally and seats allocated in direct proportion to the number of votes cast.

Large numbers of parties compete for representation in the Knesset. For example, in the 1969 election, there were sixteen party lists with thirteen gaining representation. But, despite the number of parties and rapidly changing coalitions, there has been an underlying stability in the Israeli political system. The Labour party, with numerous coalitions

formed the Israeli government from 1948-1977. Although the Israeli political system enables numerous parties to gain representation in the Knesset, there has been stability in the formation of government, and the percentage of votes that the three main blocs gain. The three main blocs in the political system, the religious parties, the socialists and the national-liberal parties held consistently high levels of support from the declaration of independence in 1948 until 1977. In the period 1948-1973 the picture was as follows:

Religious bloc        received between 13 & 15% of the vote.

Labour bloc            received between 47 & 51% of the vote.

National Liberals    received between 23 & 27% of the vote.<sup>1</sup>

This degree of stability has been surprising given the changing nature of Israeli society. Peretz describes immigration as the lifeblood of Zionism and a major objective in the establishment of the Jewish state.<sup>2</sup> In July 1950, the Law of Return was passed, described by David Ben Gurion in the following terms:

“This law lays down not that the state accords the right of settlement to Jews abroad, but that this right is inherent in every Jew by virtue of his being a Jew if it but be his will to take part in settling the land. This right preceded the state of Israel, it is that which built the state.”<sup>3</sup>

This right to return has resulted in far reaching consequences. The institutions created before independence was achieved, accurately reflected the European values of the majority of Palestine Jewish

immigrants at the time. Yet, following the establishment of the state of Israel the continual influx of immigrants have been from differing cultural and economic backgrounds. The dominant Jews of the early pre-state period were Ashkanazim, of Western origin, but in the late 1940s and 1950s, the vast majority of Jews were Sephardi, from Asia and Africa. There were a variety of reasons for this. As a result of the War of Independence in 1948, many Jews no longer felt safe in their Arab countries and therefore moved to Israel. In 1949-50 nearly all the Jews in Yemen were flown to Israel. At the same time, Iraq enacted a law to allow Jewish emigration (with the result that 121,000 Jews went to Israel<sup>4</sup>). Increasing political unrest in Arab countries at this time and economic insecurity also contributed to the influx. Israel however, being a modern and secular state was a very different country to the one that they had left behind. Several assumptions (that were true for the majority of Jews already in Israel) were inappropriate when applied to the Sephardim:

- That they would be politically active, in a country where political activity was an importance feature.
- That they were socialists (when the countries that they had come from were not).

Peretz has concluded that Israel is really several societies in one country.<sup>5</sup> By the early 1970s this was becoming increasingly apparent. In spring 1971, the Sephardi based Black Panther movement organised illegal street demonstrations reflecting their increasing frustration at poorer education standards, employment prospects and other social factors. By

this time, the Sephardim, with a higher birthrate than the Ashkenazim, represented over half the total Jewish population.<sup>6</sup>

Linked to this right of return, the most important aspect of Israeli political culture is ethnicity - the "Jewishness" of the state. This has arguably affected the policy decisions of Israel to a great extent. Shabtai Roseanne explained the influence it has had in these terms:

"Israel is a Jewish state. The only Jewish state in the world, it was reestablished deliberately by the Jewish people as a Jewish solution to the Jewish problem which has scarred the history of mankind for over 2,000 years. This is the cardinal feature dominating all Israel's policy, domestic and foreign. This makes Israel unique. Without full appreciation of this elemental factor, it is impossible to understand Israel or any aspect of Israel's policy - domestic or foreign".<sup>7</sup>

As the only Jewish state, Israel is seen as inextricably linked with Jews worldwide. Ben-Gurion described the ties thus:

"This is Israel's primary and principal bond, prior to all other attachments and ties, vital to her life and soul, her character and future".<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the 'Jewishness' of the state of Israel, a number of other factors have influenced the domestic and foreign policy decisions that have been taken. One of the most important strategic factors before

the Six Day War was Israel's geographic position as illustrated by Moshe Dayan:

"Three quarters of the population of Israel lives in the coastal plain, running from north of Haifa to south of Tel-Aviv, with a slender salient branching off to Jerusalem. This densely settled area has an average width of no more than twelve miles between the Mediterranean and the Jordanian border. From the Israeli Parliament buildings in Jerusalem, the armed sentries of the Jordanian Arab Legion can be seen a few hundred yards away. The headquarters of the Israeli General Staff in the coastal plain are within clear view from the hills which mark the Jordanian frontier.

...Scarcely anywhere in Israel can a man live or work beyond the easy range of enemy fire. Indeed, except the Negev, no settlement is at a distance of more than twenty miles from an Arab frontier.

Thus, the term "frontier security" has little meaning in the context of Israel's geography. The entire country is a frontier and the whole rhythm of national life is affected by hostile activity from the territory of neighbouring states".<sup>9</sup>

Security up until the 1967 war was Israel's primary concern. The legacy of the war that had been fought to create the state in 1948, and the continuing hostility of her Arab neighbours resulted in a significant percentage of Israel's GNP going towards defence expenditure (approximately 12% until the 1967 war<sup>10</sup>). In a state where security is so high on the political agenda, the boundaries between the military and

the state have occasionally become blurred. For example, in the period immediately before the 1967 war, the military played a significant role in the political decisions that were made. As Eban and Eshkol continued to favour a negotiated settlement to the build up of tensions in the area (discussed in greater detail in part three) the military leaders became increasingly insistent upon the need for war. They offered a number of reasons to substantiate their demand:

- Egypt had altered the political and military balance in the region by her actions and only a war would restore the status quo.
- Egypt had knowingly carried out a series of provocations and failure to respond would undermine Israel's defence policy which was based on deterrence.
- If the IDF did not initiate war, Egypt would and Israel would lose the strategic benefit of the first strike.
- The Egyptian army was rapidly moving into position in the Sinai.
- If Israel carried out a preemptive strike, it would enable her to make military gains that could be used for bargaining after the war.
- Israel should use the war to correct the distortions of the War Of Independence and conquer territories not captured then eg. the West Bank.<sup>11</sup>

By the 30 May 1967, with the signing of the UAR Jordan Defence Agreement (which placed Jordan's armed forces under Egyptian control) the coalition and opposition parties were practically united on the need for a National Unity Government. At this time, the military leadership was also hoping to see Moshe Dayan as the new Defence Minister (a post traditionally held by the Prime Minister) and his appointment on 1 June was illustrative of a move towards the military interpretation of events. Ben Gurion, by this time a member of the Rafi party, supported Dayan's appointment as is illustrated by the following quote:

"I have heard from three senior commanders that the inclusion of Dayan is a necessary condition to breathe life into the army's flagging confidence in the political leadership...There are difficult moods in the army and who knows what will happen in the army. The army has to have confidence and it will have it when Moshe Dayan is Minister of Defence."<sup>12</sup>

After Dayan was appointed, these words were echoed by Brigadier General Haim Barlev:

"we felt that we had a representative in the Cabinet."<sup>13</sup>

The outcome of the 1967 war had a significant impact upon Israeli society in a number of different ways. The rivalry between the Progressive and Revisionist strands of Zionism, which in the 1940s had cooperated in order to ensure the establishment of the Jewish state, was revived. In the initial years after the war, there emerged serious divisions over what should be the territorial boundaries of Israel. The

Labour Party position continued to see the issue in terms of security considerations, however, the religious and 'right wing' parties were influenced by ideological factors and this fostered the growth of the Greater Israel movement. Initially though, there was a consensus over the need for secure and defensible borders to be the prerequisite of a peace settlement.

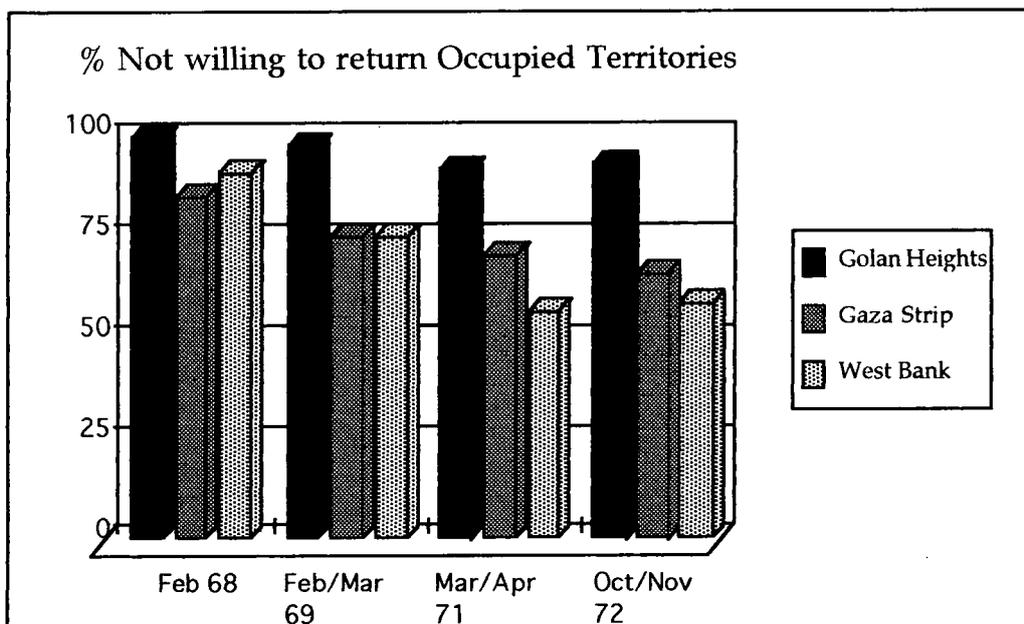
R J Isaac argues that the 1967 war was crucial in the impact it had on the stability of Israel.<sup>14</sup> He suggests that prior to the war stability was achieved in part, through the *perceived* threat to the state. (italics added) With the outcome of the Six Day War, Israel was for the first time presented with a number of options. All major parties saw the future of the occupied territories as a significant political issue, and this produced disagreement as to the way it was to be tackled. Israel had a number of alternatives; whether to return the territories, which ones to return, which to retain in the interests of Israeli security and what conditions there should be for return of the territories. Isaac cites a number of factors which undermined the consensus that had been Israel's strength before the war:

- The prolonged stalemate which followed the 1967 war.
- Continued rule over occupied people and territories.
- Rising international criticism.
- The sense that Israel had 'cards to play'.<sup>15</sup>

In the period that followed the war, the Jewish people in Israel demonstrated considerable support for maintaining the territories, as is illustrated in the following table:

**Table 4**

**WILLINGNESS TO RETURN TERRITORIES  
TO OBTAIN PEACE**



*Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol 16, No 2, 1974, p 194

Israel's occupation of the territories she had captured in 1967 also brought economic consequences, as well as the political ones already highlighted. The 1967 war brought a large increase in military spending, to incorporate defence of the newly acquired territories. As already mentioned, defence spending prior to the war was approximately 12% of the GNP. This increased to 32% in the period up to 1973.<sup>16</sup>

## II

Israel's involvement with the two superpowers has had a crucial impact on its foreign policy decisions. In 1947-48 it was American and Soviet support at the United Nations which secured international legitimacy for the independence of Israel and her entry into the United Nations in May 1949. The Basic Principles of the Israeli Government Programme announced in March 1949 contained five principles regarding foreign policy. The first, was a policy of *ee-hizdahut*, or non identification:

"Loyalty to the principles of the UN Charter and friendship with all freedom loving states and in particular with the United States and the Soviet Union"<sup>17</sup>

The reference to both the United States and the USSR reflected, even at this early stage, Israel's dependence upon the two superpowers. But, the commitment to a policy of neutrality formulated by Ben-Gurion and Sharrett was to last less than two years. The early postures of non-alignment in Israel were soon replaced by an assessment that American support was crucial. An interview with a Foreign Ministry Official in Jerusalem in 1968 showed the importance of the American role:

"the stakes in relationship to America have been tremendous. She has the capacity to keep us afloat, to give us victory or to prevent defeat. It is crucial - (governmental economic) aid, Jewish aid, military aid, if necessary"<sup>18</sup>

An Israeli academic, Dr. Benjamin Akzin saw the early 1950s as:

“a conscious effort to become a US satellite, to win American friendship and support”<sup>19</sup>

At this time, the United States hoped to avoid identification with any of the protagonists in the Middle East conflict. Although 1951 saw the beginnings of American economic aid to Israel, her quest for American arms proved largely unsuccessful, and France became Israel’s main supplier until 1967.

The outcome of the 1967 war obviously changed the geographic structure of Israel fundamentally. The strategic problems Israel had experienced since the establishment of the Jewish state were significantly reduced in just six days and, for the first time, Israel had achieved some degree of territorial security. Yet, this did not translate into greater regional stability. The Arab states remained determined to recapture the territory that they had lost in the war, and when the diplomatic process stalled, the October war of 1973 was the result. In addition to this, the victory of the war brought about changed circumstances *within* Israel as the political parties became increasingly divided over the way forward with regard to the occupied territories. A number of issues have dominated Israel’s policymaking process since 1948, of which security has been just one. The “Jewishness” of the state has been crucial both in the fact that Jews have the right to return to Israel (with implications for the character of Israeli society) and the fact that Israel is a focal point for Jews worldwide. This final point is of particular relevance to the next chapter, which will focus on the American political system, and the strength of

the Jewish lobby within it.

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## THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

In order to understand the relationship between Israel and the United States in the period 1967-1973, it is necessary to have an appreciation of the American political process and the way in which policy is created. The Jewish lobby is often seen as one of the most influential interest groups in the political process and it is the purpose of this chapter not only to explain some of the reasons for this, but also to examine the wider issues that result in support for the state of Israel.

### I

The increasing complexity of government and the social structure, especially since the end of the second world war has resulted in a proliferation of interest groups addressing the issues that have now become the responsibility of government. The lengthy process of policy determination and the considerable number of institutions involved in its formulation provide numerous opportunities for such groups to gain access to the political arena.

The arrival of Jewish immigrants to the United States early in the 1900s saw the establishment of a number of community organisations such as the American Jewish Committee. They were formed to defend Jews against anti-semitism and to promote their community interests at all levels. The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 extended the role of Jewish organisations to incorporate support and help for the Jewish state. There is little doubt that community organisations have become an effective focus of support for Israel. This is arguably one of the reasons

that the Jewish lobby has been so successful in influencing the political process, and is demonstrated in the following quote:

“...the hallmark of American Jewry is its diversity. Being a Jew does not automatically endow one with a set of values and ideas shared by all others who are called Jews...The community can only be united in so far as it has areas of mutual concern to all its members; within American Jewry, there is one primary concern, namely Israel...”<sup>1</sup>

Linking to this, Truman states that a key factor in the success of an interest group is the unity of the group itself:

“The problem of cohesion is a crucial one for the political interest group. Other factors bear upon its capacity to assert its claims successfully upon other groups and institutions in the society, but the degree of unity in the group is probably the most fundamental in determining the measure of success it will enjoy.”<sup>2</sup>

Efforts which were traditionally applied to the maintenance of a positive image for American Jews were, after 1948, largely directed towards the adoption of a beneficial foreign policy towards Israel. The original role of the community organisation has to a large extent been surpassed by the protection of the interests of the state of Israel. The coordination that exists between the national and grassroots levels of the Jewish community provides a key to their sustained influence within the policy process. Senator James Buckley described the Jewish community as:

“extremely effective in doing what the Constitution encourages; that is peaceful assembly and the right to petition. I only wish others were as good at it as the Jews are”<sup>3</sup>

The American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is the successor of the American Zionist Council and whilst a prominent position in Washington may be the most visible sign of its success, this has been built on the foundations of American Jews operating through more than 200 national groups.<sup>4</sup> The staff of the AIPAC is only small in comparison to other Jewish organisations (approximately 60) but it is able to take advantage of a national network of voluntary committed activists.

Established in 1959, the AIPAC is the only group officially registered to lobby on behalf of legislation affecting Israel. The focus of the AIPAC is on Congress, and it has been described by Paul Findley as:

“the preeminent power in Washington lobbying”<sup>5</sup>

There are a number of factors that affect the influence the AIPAC is able to exert on Congress:

1. Voter Turnout

Jews represent approximately 4% of the American population as a whole, but for a number of reasons the electoral weight of their vote is greater than that. Overall, the average turnout in a presidential election is 50-55%, but the Jewish vote is regularly 85%. This is significantly

higher than the national average and therefore increases the effect that the Jewish vote can have on the outcome of an election. The same is also true in primaries, where the national voting figure can be reduced to a 35% average.

Coupled with this is the location of the majority of the Jewish population in eight significant electoral states. (New York, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut and Florida.) In a close election therefore, the high turnout of Jewish voters can be decisive in a key state.

A final point in relation to voter turnout. If congressmen considered that Jewish constituents did not see their stance on Israel as significant, the electoral consideration would disappear. A CBS Election Survey in 1976 found that 44% of Jewish voters in the state of New York considered support for Israel as one of the three key issues they looked for when determining the way that they would vote.<sup>6</sup> In the words of Charles Liebman:

“support for Israel becomes not only support for a state...or for its inhabitants - rather support for Israel is the symbol of one’s Jewish identity.”<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Involvement in Politics

The greater Jewish turnout in elections is also reflected in their general involvement in politics. This is demonstrated by the following quote by Spiegel:

"Jewish strength in America arises from the thousands of individual Jews who are prepared to express their sentiments to politicians and officials."<sup>8</sup>

Milton Himmelfarb explains the Jewish interest in politics in the following way:

"The zeal of untraditional Jews for politics is their de facto religion. With all they've gone through, those Jews are still messianic and their religion is politics."<sup>9</sup>

Historically, the Jewish people have supported the Democratic party and Hurley estimates that Jews represent between 10 and 20% of people actively involved in Democratic politics.<sup>10</sup> In general terms, Jews seem to be more involved in politics than the average American. This interest is demonstrated in a number of ways, one of which is financial. Jews give generously in political campaigns. On the issue of donations, Truman suggests the following:

"Except when a donation is purely a matter of personal friendship, the central objective of contribution is access to the power of the elected official".<sup>11</sup>

Lee O'Brien suggests that:

"This high level of voter participation goes hand in hand with financial donations to candidates...American Jews are estimated to donate more than half the large gifts to national Democratic campaigns and an increasing

amount to Republicans as well.”<sup>12</sup>

Jews are also generous when giving their time to support a candidates election campaign. Through both day to day involvement in politics and contributions made during the time of an election campaign, Jews are likely to be influential in the political system.

### 3. Supply of Information and Scrutiny of Congressmen

The extent to which the AIPAC provides information is demonstrated by Senator Charles Mathias’ comments in 1981:

“When an issue of importance to Israel comes before Congress, AIPAC promptly and unfailingly provides all members with data and documentation...Beyond that, signs of hesitation or opposition on the part of a Senator or Representative can usually be relied upon to call forth large numbers of letters and telegrams or visits and phone calls from influential constituents”<sup>13</sup>

Senator Mathias’ comments not only demonstrate the widespread nature of the AIPAC’s role in supplying information, but also the close scrutiny of members of Congress by AIPAC staffers and supportive representatives. Special attention is given to proposed legislation of relevance to Israel. Close monitoring is made possible by the attendance of at least one AIPAC representative at every open committee meeting, with closed meetings attended by someone from the pro-Israel caucus. In addition to this, the weekly newsletter produced by the AIPAC the “Near East Report” is distributed free to all Congressmen, key government officials and other people prominent in foreign policy.

Another way in which support is gained from Congress is through tours of Israel, therefore widening congressional "knowledge" regarding Israel. Up to 50% of members of Congress have travelled on such all expenses paid visits to Israel.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4. Relationship With Key Individuals

One highly successful method that the AIPAC has employed has been the association with key individuals within the policy making process, for example legislative aides. Both Morris Amitay and Thomas Dine (former leaders of the AIPAC) had themselves been aides. In cultivating these types of associations, the AIPAC is able to open another avenue for access to the political system through which information may be channelled.

#### 5. Lack Of An Effective Opposition

The Arab lobby faces a number of challenges when attempting to influence the American political system. Support for Israel is already a well established part of the American political process, generated by well organised and coordinated Jewish organisations. The Arab lobby does not have this kind of operational base. In addition, popular American perceptions and understanding of Arab culture and Islam are in no way comparable to the knowledge of the state of Israel. Israel is able to capitalise effectively on the similarities that exist between the United States and Israel. Curtiss offers this interpretation of the Jewish lobby:

"Whatever resentment many congressmen may inwardly entertain about the pressures of the lobby, the American system itself predestines them to yield. Israel possesses a

powerful American constituency, the Arabs do not, and despite their wealth, the oil companies as well, (they) are unequal to the impact of ethnic politics" 15

To summarise, the Jewish lobby is able to affect the American political process for a number of reasons:

- The high turnout rate of Jews in elections.
- The level of interest of Jews in politics in America.
- The information that is given to congressmen and the scrutiny of their position over Israel.
- Relations with key congressional figures.
- The lack of an organised opposition to the Jewish lobby.

The Chairman of the AIPAC I L Kenan recognised the importance of Congress in gaining support for Israel:

"...AIPAC has worked through Congress to win economic and military aid for Israel. administrative diffidence in meeting Israel's requests was always based in the fear that the US initiatives in support of Israel would be counterproductive. The State Department had one eye on the Persian Gulf, one eye on Moscow - and Israel was out of sight. It was Congress - not the Administration which moved to vote supporting assistance to Israel in 1971 and for aid to Soviet Jewry in 1972. Over the years, Israel had to go deeply into debt to pay for its weapons and it was not until October 1973 that the Administration proposed massive grant military aid, commensurate with Israel's urgent need."16

## II

Many Congressmen attempt to explain their allegiance to Israel in terms of the character of the Israeli state. They see it as a friendly nation, similar in many ways to the United States.<sup>17</sup> Israel is viewed as the only pro-Western democracy in the Middle East, and this contrasts greatly with the lack of understanding of Arab culture and way of life. This perception of Israel was particularly important during the period 1967-1973 given the context of the Cold War. Israel was seen as the only country in the Middle East that could maintain American interests in the region and control Soviet expansionism in the area. Central to this was the idea that American and Israeli interests coincided. The Chairman of the American Jewish Committee described the relationship in these terms:

“We bend over backwards to help people understand that help for Israel is also in America’s strategic interest.”<sup>18</sup>

There has also been a ‘traditional’ association with, and commitment to, Israel. This is often put forward as justification for the continuation of support. President Ford expressed this notion in 1974:

“The United States...has been proud of its association with the State of Israel. We shall continue to stand with Israel. We are committed to Israel’s survival and security.”<sup>19</sup>

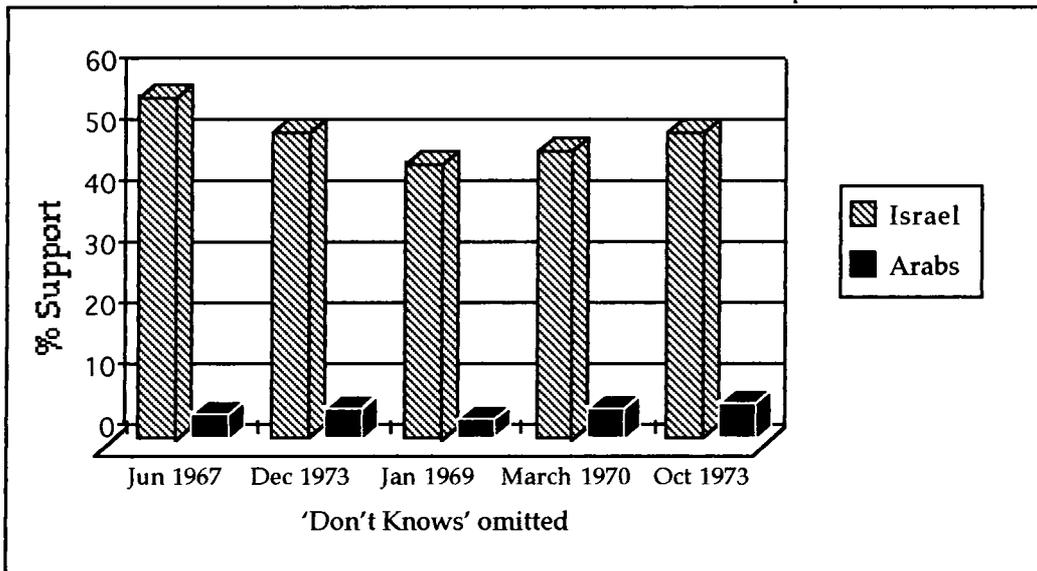
A mid 1975 Washington Post poll confirmed this position when 87% of the House of Representatives said that the United States had a moral

obligation to prevent the destruction of Israel.<sup>20</sup>

This commitment appears to be mirrored in American public opinion which reflects strong support for Israel as is shown by the following table;

**Table 5**

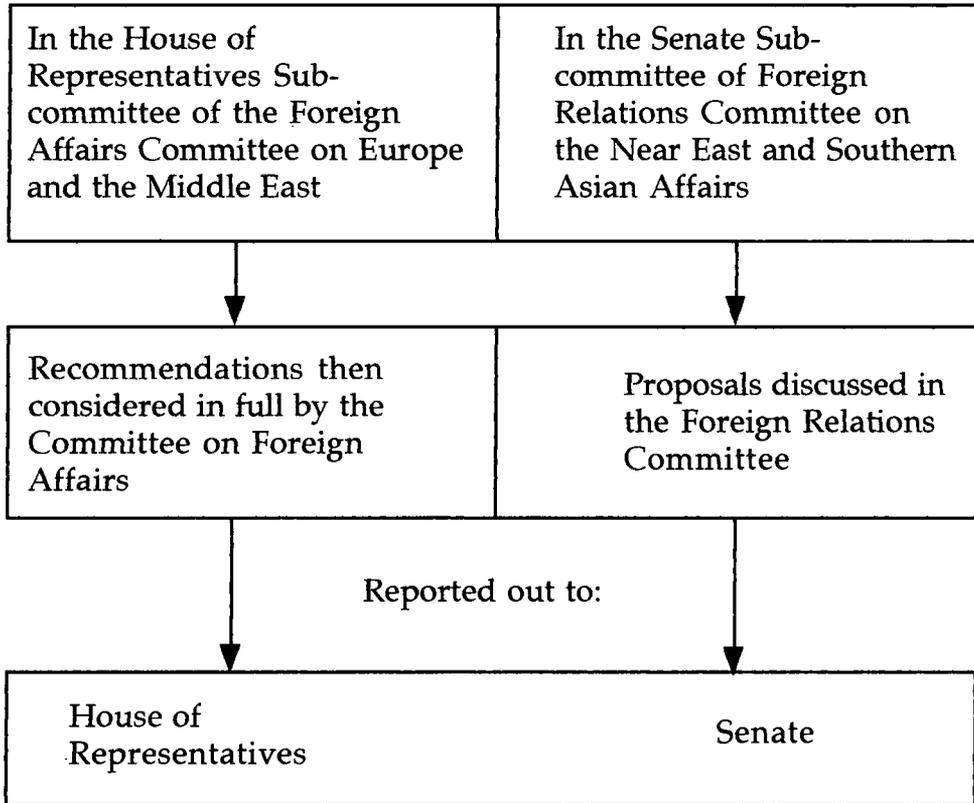
**MEASURE OF AMERICAN SYMPATHY  
TOWARDS ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES**



The \$36 Billion Bargain. Strategy & Politics In The US  
Assistance To Israel, A F K Organski, 1990, p 43

One of the most effective ways to demonstrate the support that exists within congress for Israel, is to examine the allocation of foreign aid. Whilst the executive prepares the country's foreign aid programmes (in consultation with the US Agency For International Development, the Office Of Management And Budget, and other interested government agencies), Congress actually has the powers of appropriation. The following diagram illustrates the passage of an Israeli foreign aid bill through Congress:

**INITIAL CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS BEGIN FOR ISRAEL:**



It is interesting to note that since 1970, the Israeli Minister of Finance submits a report titled "Requirements For US Aid" which reviews economic trends and requirements of the military and civilian sectors. This contrasts to the usual procedure when an AID mission would visit the country to prepare the initial programme.

Traditionally, foreign aid has not been popular in Congress, but aid to Israel has proved to be the exception to this rule. In the period 1969-76, Congress did not reduce the administrations' requests for aid to Israel. Rather, Congress increased them by an average of 8.7% at a time when overall requests were being reduced by as much as 23.5%.<sup>21</sup> In the same period, an average of 80% of votes cast in the Senate and 86% of

votes cast in the House were in favour of Israel.<sup>22</sup>

To conclude, the nature of the American political system gives a number of opportunities to interest groups wishing to influence the decision making process. The Jewish lobby has been particularly effective in this. The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 extended the role of Jewish organisations to include support for the Jewish state. And as will be demonstrated in the following chapters of this study, the way in which support for Israel was sought, changed over time. Initial requests for aid were based on humanitarian grounds. The war of 1967 changed this and aid for Israel became more closely linked to American foreign policy objectives as is demonstrated in the following quote:

“It was not long ago when most Americans tended to cite primarily moral and emotional reasons for their support for Israel...but...the case for stressing the strategic side of the story has intensified in recent years. Israeli officials themselves have encouraged this trend, fearing that the massive sums of US military and economic assistance to Israel might cease to be acceptable to the American public and Congress unless explained in such a hard nosed way. If Israel were shown to provide a useful military and strategic service to the United States on the other hand, the aid becomes justified on the basis of self-interest as well as national morality.”<sup>23</sup>

It is the purpose of the remaining text in this thesis to examine in detail the events that took place between the years 1967-1973 and the shape of American-Israeli relations in this period.

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## **PART THREE**

# **AMERICAN - ISRAELI RELATIONS 1967-73**

The conflict between us (Israel) and the Arabs is insoluble. The war is not about this hill or that river, but over the very existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

Moshe Dayan

## **PART THREE**

### **AMERICAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS 1967-1973**

- Introduction
- The 1967 War
- Nixon in Command - The First Years 1969-1970
- Diplomacy and Stalemate
- The Results of Frustration

## INTRODUCTION

Having examined the background and context of American-Israeli relations, and looked at the political systems of the two countries, it is the purpose of this part of the study to trace the developments of relations during the period 1967-73. Several themes throughout this period served to influence the direction of America's Middle East policy:

- The changing nature of relations between the superpowers
- The continued perception of the Soviet threat
- The fear of radicalism in the Arab world

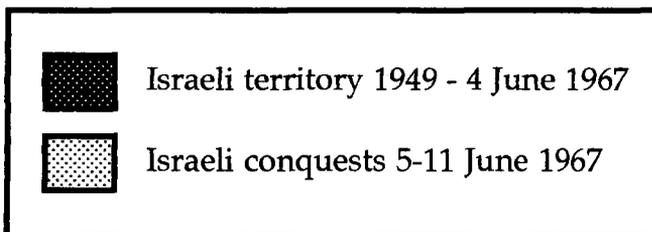
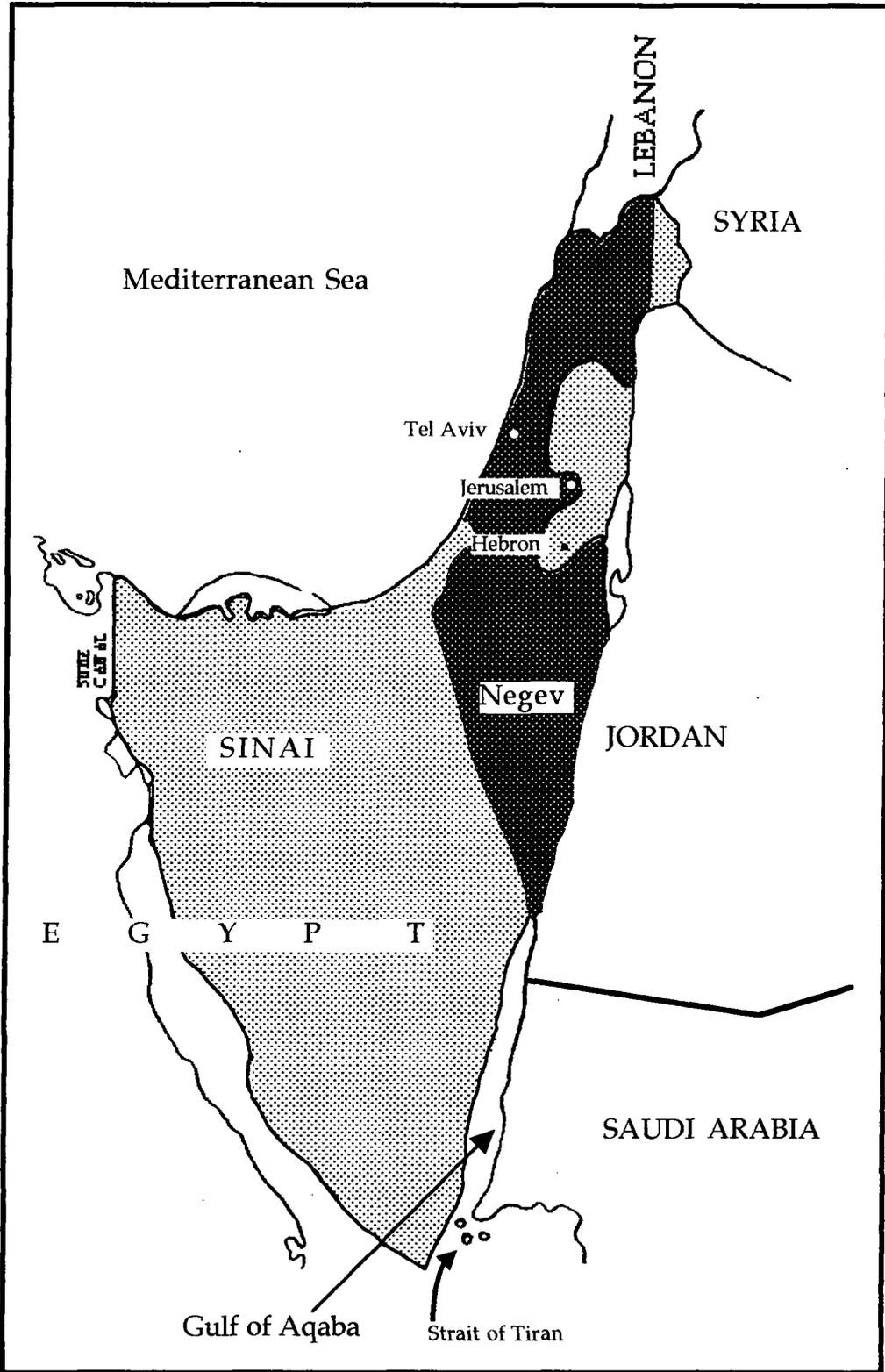
The Six Day War and Israel's performance in it proved crucial to the role that America believed Israel could play in the area.

The War of June 1967 proved to be instrumental in changing the perceptions of the principal protagonists in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and also the major powers outside the region. The pre-emptive strike launched by Israel on the 6 June began a comprehensive defeat of the Arab states, and in just six days Israel increased her size threefold, incorporating large portions of Arab land into her territory (as illustrated in fig. 2 overleaf). The changes that occurred can be briefly summed up as follows:

- Soviet influence within the Arab states increased with military advisers sent to Egypt and Syria in great numbers to help reconstruct the defeated armies (despite the fact that Soviet armaments had failed to avoid a convincing Israeli victory).

Fig 2

ISRAELI CONQUESTS 1967



J R Gainsborough, *The Arab Israeli Conflict*, Aldershot, Gower Publishing Co. 1986, p 314

- Israel's confidence both in her own strength and in her ability to survive increased.
- The idea that Israel could act as a "strategic asset" became a firmly established tenet of American foreign policy.

Ironically, relations between the Soviet Union and the Arab States, who backed them, were strengthened after the defeat inflicted by Israel. On a practical level, the Soviet Union embarked upon a massive programme of military and economic support for the Arab states, quickly replacing the amount of military hardware that had been lost in the war. The Soviet newspaper "Izvestia" suggested that the Arab states realised that only:

"through reliance upon the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, can they abolish completely imperialist influence in the Middle East and achieve Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories"<sup>1</sup>

A principal concern of the Israeli government before the war had been the survival of the state itself. What Michael Brecher terms "The Holocaust Syndrome"<sup>2</sup> was a relevant component of Israeli decision-making in the prewar period, as described by this quote from the then Chief of Staff, Yitzak Rabin:

"We have no alternative but to answer to the challenge forced upon us, because the problem is not freedom of navigation, the challenge is the existence of Israel and this is a war for that very existence"<sup>3</sup>

Following Israel's dramatic victory, initial government speeches demonstrated more confidence and a determination to hold on to some of the newly acquired territories. This can be illustrated in a number of ways, for example through the initial policies of the ruling Labour government. The war radically transformed the territorial and strategic position of Israel, making her considerably more secure. The early view of the Labour Party in response to this was that there should be:

- No return to the 1967 borders
- No redivision of Jerusalem
- A "security" border along the Jordan river

These views were quickly implemented. The Knesset soon legislated for the reunification of Jerusalem, which in effect annexed the Arab section of the city. In September, only a few months after the end of the war, the construction of Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories began. It has been suggested that by December 1969, the Israeli government of Golda Meir had established as one of its most important tenets:

"the acceleration of military settlements and permanent agricultural and urban settlements in the territory of the homeland".<sup>4</sup>

In the context of superpower relations, the Israeli victory in the Six Day War was crucial to the position that America believed Israel could occupy in the Middle East. In such a strategically important area as the Middle East (given its proximity to the USSR) the United States saw

Israel as a potential 'strategic ally' in the aftermath of the June War, and a buffer against the tide of Soviet expansionism in the region. America's Middle East policy as a consequence of this, was designed to maintain the status quo (and the position of Israel) until a peace settlement could be achieved. The next chapter will focus in more detail on the reasons for the 1967 war and the practical results of it, whilst subsequent chapters will examine the way in which American-Israeli relations developed in the years that followed 1967.

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## THE 1967 WAR

### I

In the period which led to the 1967 war, the borders between Israel and her Arab neighbours saw a flurry of activity which culminated in the shooting down of a number of Syrian aircraft. This had been precipitated by Israeli attempts to cultivate the land in the demilitarised zones on the Israeli-Syrian border. Russian involvement in the area, although slight during the early part of the 1960s, witnessed something of a transformation towards the end of the decade. Soviet-Egyptian relations especially, in the years preceding 1967, had flourished. Glassman identifies two themes in Arab-Soviet relations in the pre 1967 period:

- The USSR hoped to further the unity of the Arab states by making a confrontation with Israel a realistic military possibility.
- The Soviet role within the individual Arab states, and the politics of the Middle East in general (especially as regards the provision of weapons) increased significantly.<sup>1</sup>

These themes coincided with radical change in the region which pointed to a more socialist orientation, for example, the monarchies of both Iraq and Yemen fell between the Suez and the Six Day War crises. At this stage, the Arab states had already developed a close relationship with the USSR and considerable Russian aid was invested in the region throughout the 1960s.

The relationship between Israel and the United States remained ill defined. Concern about their potential isolation and the legacy of the Suez crisis when America compelled their withdrawal from Sinai, the Gaza Strip and Sharm-el-Sheikh, prompted the Israeli government to try to clarify the position of the United States. Initial crisis decisions were taken by the five party coalition government elected to office on 12 January 1966. The two key Cabinet ministers were Levi Eshkol as both Prime Minister and Defence Minister and Abba Eban as Foreign Minister. Eban was a particularly strong believer in gaining American support to avoid isolation and in the immediate prewar period, he put forward a number of reasons for an intensive political effort to achieve this goal. He believed that American support was vital for ensuring arms aid when the war came, and also for retaining the fruits of victory at the end of the conflict. He also thought it would help to mobilise international opposition to Nasser. The Minister of the Interior, Moshe Shapira was another supporter of this course of action, stating:

"If the war came...it was essential that Lyndon Johnson should not be against us...If we had not waited we would still have conquered in the field of battle; but we would have lost in the political arena. The United States would not have stood by our side in the way which she did."<sup>2</sup>

Both the United States and France emphasised the risks involved if Israel was to attack first. On 24 May in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) session, de Gaulle warned Eban that:

"Israel must not make war unless she is attacked by others. It would be catastrophic if Israel were to shoot first."<sup>3</sup>

Those words were echoed just days later by Johnson, again to Abba Eban:

"The central point Mr. Minister is that your nation not be the one to bear the responsibility for any outbreak of war".<sup>4</sup>

A subtle distinction can be made between these two quotes however, in that de Gaulle concentrates on the importance of Israel not launching the first strike whereas Johnson emphasises the Israel should not *bear responsibility* for an outbreak of war. Following Israel's preemptive strike, the French placed an embargo on future shipments of arms to Israel. There appears however, to be a crucial discrepancy between the official line adopted by the Johnson administration in the days leading to the outbreak of war and their reaction to Israel's preemptive strike when it occurred.

Both Eshkol and Eban were relatively "dovish" members of the Israeli political establishment, anxious to explore all possible avenues for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis. In the latter part of May, the inevitability of war became an accepted tenet of the Israeli military and intelligence establishments, with the Chief of Military Intelligence, Ahron Yariv, pressing for a war that he thought was both unavoidable and within Israeli's grasp.<sup>5</sup> David Hirst suggests that a war in the late 1960s was in a sense "needed".<sup>6</sup> Israel was experiencing its most severe economic depression and immigration, the traditional yardstick of

Zionist success was almost equalled by emigration. A war therefore would serve to distract attention away from Israel's internal problems. Eshkol continued to stress the importance of gaining full American backing before entering into war. The trend seemed to move towards the military interpretation of events, with Moshe Dayan's appointment to the Ministry of Defence (a post traditionally held by the PM) on 1 June confirming this.

Coinciding with Abba Eban's trip to Washington at the end of May was a visit by the head of Mossad, Meir Amit, who held a number of meetings with senior political figures in Washington. Information regarding the details of such discussions is understandably scarce, but it appears relatively certain that Amit met with the Director of the CIA, Richard Helms and the Defense Secretary, Robert McNamara. He returned to Israel a few days later believing that the United States did not oppose a preemptive strike by Israel. (This, it is suggested by Andrew and Leslie Cockburn, convinced Levi Eshkol that he had obtained the necessary support from America, making the first strike from Israel a realistic possibility<sup>7</sup>). The idea that America's public rhetoric urging caution was not echoed privately is strengthened by Johnson's failure to lay the blame of the Six Day War at Israel's door.

In the countdown to war, Nasser's closure of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran proved to be an ill-advised step in the already tense atmosphere surrounding the increased activity around Israel's borders. Eshkol's description of this development as a 'gross violation of international law...an act of aggression against Israel' was supported by President Johnson. Since 1957, the United States had been committed to

the freedom of navigation in the Straits (the price of Israeli withdrawal in 1956).

In the days before the war broke out, western press and public opinion displayed significant support for Israel's situation. The "David versus Goliath" image fostered sympathy for a people who only 25 years ago had faced genocide. David Hirst offers a different perspective which demonstrates the confidence of the Israeli military machine:

"there were those, the generals, who knew that the real situation was the exact reverse of the apparent one, that David was not merely a match for Goliath, but hopelessly outclassed him. They knew that, whatever the politicians might say or the people believe, Israel's survival was never at stake, that even if Nasser actually intended to go to war, he had no chance of winning"<sup>8</sup>

The part played by the Israeli intelligence community in the Six Day War was crucial. Meir Amit had taken over as head of Mossad in 1963 and his appraisal of Mossad's most important task; the collection of military and political data on the Arab states, was to prove invaluable to Israel's victory. For example, the first two and a half hours of the war virtually guaranteed its outcome because of the almost complete destruction of the Egyptian airforce as it was on the ground being serviced. (This occurred for only 10-15 minutes but the Israeli intelligence service had managed to ascertain when and for how long this would take place).<sup>9</sup>

In the post 1967 period, the victory that had been won came to

dominate much of the Israeli policy making process. In his first policy statement following the end of the war, the Israeli premier, Levi Eshkol was keen to emphasise that there would be no withdrawal from the Occupied Territories as there had been in 1957:

“Do not deceive yourself that the State of Israel is ready to return to the plight it experienced a week ago. Israel was founded by right, yet it has been forced to struggle and struggle again to defend this right. We alone fought for our survival and security and we are to determine what are our genuine and vital national interests and how to secure our own future”.<sup>10</sup>

In the summer of 1967, two policies were adopted which set the tone of the Israeli governmental response to the war. The first, adopted on 17 June gave authorisation for the application of the “Law Jurisdiction and Administration of the State of Israel to any area of Eretz Israel designated by government order”. This settlement policy affected principally five areas; the West Bank, Jordan Valley, Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Secondly, a policy was adopted by the Knesset stating that the present situation regarding the Occupied Territories would continue until direct negotiations between Israel and her Arab neighbours resulted in a peace treaty.<sup>11</sup>

The Ben-Gurionist “bargaining from strength” approach therefore achieved a great amount of credibility and affected the terms of a settlement that Israel was likely to accept. The desire to maintain the territories for strategic and nationalistic reasons was also supplemented by ideological and religious factors. In Dayan's words:

"One factor should be taken into account in any debate on the future of the occupied areas - the yearning of the people of Israel to return to their land - without this yearning and its fulfilment there would never have been a state of Israel, nor a return to Zion, which is more important than the state"<sup>12</sup>

Prime Minister Eshkol also referred to such a bond in the immediate aftermath of the war:

"The roots of the Israeli people are in this land, as deep as ancient days. Throughout the generations the people of Israel maintained their spiritual and material bonds with this land, which were never cut off even when they were driven into exile. Simultaneously, the land has been faithful to us and did not give herself to an alien nation. She remained waiting for the return of her sons and for the ingathering of her exiles. Today the whole world has become aware of the fact that there is no power capable of uprooting us from this land".<sup>13</sup>

After acting as Chief of Staff during the conflict, Yitzak Rabin expressed an interest in becoming the Israeli ambassador to the US and his appointment was confirmed in October 1967. Rabin was a firm believer in the necessity of increasing links between the United States and Israel, something he saw as vital to maintain the power of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Following the war, the difference in the American attitude between 1956 and 1967 was immediately evident. There were no immediate demands for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Occupied Territories. This was to be indicative of a wider change in the

American perception of the situation in the area. A State Department study, directed by the former ambassador, Julius C Holmes, concluded by stressing the connection between the conflict and the expansion of the Soviet presence in the region.<sup>14</sup> With this in mind, the achievement of peace in the Middle East became seen as an essential prerequisite for the reduction of Soviet influence in the area.

## II

A special emergency session of the UN General Assembly was called in mid June to discuss the latest conflict. The differences existing between the parties were quickly exposed. There were three crucial areas to be resolved; the nature, timing and extent of the Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Fundamental issues separated the positions of the Arab and Israeli delegates. The Arab States demanded an immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal, but Israel continued to stress that withdrawal could only be dealt with *alongside* direct peace negotiations towards a final peace settlement. The memoirs of both Rabin and Eban provide useful information on the subject of the postwar negotiations and the problems that beset them. Rabin is scathing of the Arab commitment to peace, illustrating this with the adoption by the Arab States at the Khartoum Conference, in September 1967, of the famous three no's stance:

- No peace.
- No recognition of Israel.
- No negotiations with Israel.

Eban suggests in his autobiography,<sup>15</sup> that the Israeli moderates who wanted peace were hemmed in by the political right wing which strengthened after the war. The war fostered the growth of the Eretz (Greater) Israel movement, which advocated the retention of all the territories. Consequently, the forces for peace on both sides faced an uphill battle in the immediate postwar period.

The failure of discussions in the General Assembly (GA) precipitated the referral of the issue to the Security Council which on 22 November 1967 adopted Resolution 242 (for the text see Appendix C) an ambiguous document intended to paper over the cracks of seemingly irreconcilable differences. The aims of Resolution 242 can be summarised as follows:

- The withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the Occupied Territories
- An end to the state of war between the countries in the region
- The achievement of a settlement of the refugee problem

### III

In the year that followed the war, the Johnson administration, whilst pursuing peace through the UN attempted to limit arms to Israel and hoped also to gain the cooperation of the USSR. From the Soviet perspective the issue of arms control was clearly linked to the peace process itself, as illustrated by this quote from Tass:

“measures for a slackening of the arms race in the Middle East of course, could only be considered in condition of...full evacuation of Israeli forces:.

(Tass: English, July 1968)

There is some evidence to suggest that the USSR did wish to limit its military involvement in the Middle East. For example, they resisted Egyptian attempts to sign a formal pledge for a role in Egypt's defence, yet they continued to supply a considerable number of arms to the Arab States.

In January 1968, the American embargo on new arms shipments to the region was lifted and that same month saw Levi Eshkol in Washington to discuss Israeli arms requests. In the postwar period, the role of the United States developed significantly until the USA became Israel's primary source of supply of sophisticated weaponry. David Pollock suggests three main reasons for this development; American determination to preserve Israel's military superiority, Soviet resistance to regional arms control pending the rearmament of Egypt and Syria and finally, the French refusal to resume the role of major arms supplier to Israel.<sup>16</sup> July 1968 saw the first development in this direction, with the announcement of the first new sale of arms. The failure of talks between France and Israel led to the outgoing Johnson administration agreeing to the sale of over 50 advanced F-4 Phantom jets as a replacement for the French Mirage planes in December 1968.

Whilst it was only after 1967 that the substantive changes in American policy really became evident, they were in fact, a continuation

of the policies Johnson had supported in the prewar period. For example, the scale of military assistance that was offered to Israel. In the financial year 1964, virtually no assistance was of a military nature, yet in just two years, this negligible amount had increased to 71% of all assistance offered to Israel.<sup>17</sup> Whilst in the period that immediately followed the war, arms supplies to Israel were limited, in the medium to long term, America became Israel's principal source of arms and military assistance. These developments, during Nixon's presidency, are the focus of the next chapter.

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## NIXON IN COMMAND - THE FIRST YEARS 1969-70

Having travelled extensively in the 1960s, and serving as Eisenhower's Vice-President between 1953-1961, Nixon came to the White House already possessing much political experience and a good knowledge of foreign affairs. His choice of National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger also had a specialist knowledge of foreign policy, but was not an obvious choice, given his support for Nixon's Republican rival, Nelson Rockefeller in the 1968 election. To complete the major appointments in foreign affairs, William Rogers was appointed as Secretary of State.

### I

Kissinger noted in his autobiography, the problems faced by any incoming administration, in having to deal with the problems they have criticised the previous administration for not tackling.<sup>1</sup> When describing the decade following the Suez crisis, Dan Tscirgo makes all too evident the dangers of a protracted conflict:

"Despite the facade of a relatively stable impasse between the Arab States and Israel, the issue merged with global and regional political currents to form the volatile mixture that eventually culminated in war".<sup>2</sup>

In light of this, the 1967 war encouraged the administration not only to consider the need for a solution to the problems of the Middle East but to assume a prominent role in the search for a solution. The

decision to adopt a more active diplomatic role was taken by the Nixon administration in response to two factors:

- The lack of progress towards peace in the Middle East
- Nixon had campaigned on the issue of new initiatives being taken

Just a few days after he had become president, Nixon pointed to the new direction of the American administration:

“What I want to do is to see to it that we have strategic arms talks in a way and at a time that will promote, if possible, progress on outstanding political problems at the same time - for example, on the problem of the Mideast and on other outstanding problems in which the United States and the Soviet Union, acting together, can serve the cause of peace...I believe we need new initiatives and leadership on the part of the United States in order to cool off the situation in the Mideast. I consider it a powder keg, very explosive. It needs to be defused.”<sup>3</sup>

This quote demonstrates that Nixon placed great emphasis on Soviet-American relations and the global context. This was applied to Nixon’s (and Kissinger’s) vision of the Middle East. Importance was attached to the potential for superpower conflict rather than the integral parts of the Arab-Israeli conflict itself. For a broad range of foreign policy questions regarding Israel, the responsibility for policy making was split. Global aspects were the responsibility of the National Security Council and the White House (a team headed by Kissinger). Regional policy was to be handled by the Department of State, with coordination achieved at

assistant secretary of state level. The National Security Council (NSC) met on 1 February to review Middle Eastern policy. Three options were considered:

- To leave the search for a settlement to the parties involved in the conflict and Dr Jarring.
- To pursue an increasingly active American role - involving USA and USSR talks.
- To assume that no settlement was possible and concentrate on objectives that would fall short of a settlement.<sup>4</sup>

The second option was seen as the optimum position, but the third alternative was to be considered if no progress could be made towards a settlement.

At the beginning of Nixon's term of office, the United States had a number of opportunities to take up the more active role that it wished to pursue. Before Nixon's inauguration, the Soviets had suggested a peace plan to implement Resolution 242 (which was to fail) and on 16 January, the French proposed four power consultations regarding the Middle East (a suggestion that had been made before and rejected under the Johnson administration). The United States accepted both four power and bilateral talks, reflecting the new outlook of the Nixon administration. This was despite misgivings over the pressure that America may be under to 'deliver' Israel at the negotiating table (as no one else had the influence to do so). The fears of the Washington administration regarding the course of the negotiating process were succinctly put by

Kissinger in a memorandum to the President:

“Everyone points out that we will be expected to deliver Israel in any negotiation. The Arabs assume - wrongly, but irrevocably - that we can make Israel do as we wish. The French and British assume we could do more than we have. Perhaps only the Soviets - who know the limits of their own influence in Cairo and Damascus - realistically understand the limits of our influence in Jerusalem, but they find too much propaganda advantage in our support for Israel to admit the truth publicly.”<sup>5</sup>

The reactions of Israel and her supporters to such discussions were not favourable. A delegation of Congressmen expressed their concern to Nixon and Kissinger that events were not moving towards an imposed settlement. At this stage, the relationship between the USA and Israel was not as close as that of the Arab States and the Soviet Union. For example, in the discussion that took place between Assistant Secretary of State, Joseph Sisco and the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly Dobrinin, the involvement of the Arab states was considerable but the Israelis were only briefed after such meetings had taken place.<sup>6</sup> Regular contact was maintained between Sisco and Rabin. At one informal meeting Sisco outlined the American position:

“Our interests in the Middle East do not centre on Israel alone. Our moral and practical commitment to Israel is by no means everything that Israel wants or does. Let me tell you frankly; if her friendship with Israel is the only thing the United States is left with in the Middle East, that would be a catastrophic setback for American

policy. We must work for a political solution because it is the only thing that will safeguard our own array of interests in the region."<sup>7</sup>

The State Department was keen to press for new initiatives in the search for peace and believed that a compromise solution could be reached under the auspices of UN envoy, Dr Gunnar Jarring. In a paper released by the State Department, general principles outlining the objectives America hoped to achieve in the discussions taking place were laid down as:

- A binding peace agreement (although not necessarily a peace treaty).
- Territorial adjustments that crucially, *did not* reflect the weight of the Israeli conquest in the war of 1967.

Implicit here, is the idea that such objectives could only be achieved *with* the cooperation of Israel and, on the latter point in particular, most probably *through* the influence that the United States could exert on her.

The beginnings of the Nixon administration posed potential problems for Israel. The election in 1968 had seen unprecedented activity by the rapidly expanding Jewish Lobby, but Nixon had entered the White House without the majority of their vote. And the initial policies of his administration suggested changes from the Johnson era. For example, America's commitment to a more active role in the peace process within the region alarmed Israel, especially when it involved other major

powers such as the USSR and France whose positions were opposed to her own. Israel preferred negotiations to be conducted between the parties directly involved, viewing any outside intervention as unnecessary, as is shown in the quote below:

“Israel entirely opposes the plan to convene the representatives of states that lie outside the Middle East in order to prepare recommendations concerning the region. Israel is not and will not accept any recommendations which are in conflict with her vital interests”.<sup>8</sup>

Such concerns were reiterated by Eban, in a visit to Washington in the middle of March. When shown the general principles paper he rejected it outright and asked that it not be submitted. Eban suggested that Egypt was not ready to sign a peace treaty acceptable to Israel, and seemed to be content, for the time being, with the status quo.<sup>9</sup>

American arms policy towards Israel developed significantly under Nixon. Both Nixon and Kissinger believed military assistance could be used to extract concessions from Israel which might lead to peace in the Middle East, as is illustrated by the following quotation from Kissinger’s memoirs:

“The President reacted to this seeming softening of the Soviet attitude by modifying his original decision on Israeli military aid. Realising that we could not approach Israel with the cease-fire proposal while rejecting its military requests, Nixon the same day approved my suggestion to replace Israeli aircraft losses with up to eight Phantoms and

Military assistance under Nixon increased significantly, but debate continues as to whether it actually encouraged Israel towards the compromise necessary for peace. This is illustrated in the words of Fred Khouri in 1983;

“The United States created such a strong military force in Israel that there was little incentive to make those major concessions considered in Washington to be necessary for peace with the Arabs. In addition the more Israel was armed by the United States, the more dependent the Arab States became on Soviet military and economic aid. In short, Israel’s superior military power and its resulting unwillingness to make the concessions needed for peace, made Israel more of a liability than an asset in preventing the spread of Soviet power and influence in the Middle East.”<sup>11</sup>

## II

Golda Meir took over as Israeli premier, following Eshkol’s death in 1969, and she faced a difficult position both internally and internationally. At this time, the National Unity Government (the central decision-making body in the 1967 war), was still in place. This included the anti-Socialist bloc known as Gahal (led by Menachin Begin) which included the ‘hawkish’ Herut party, therefore making

compromise over the territories difficult. Differences in both ideology and approach in the National Unity Government were evident at this time. Internationally, the deadlock remained between the parties in the Middle East and this was soon reflected in the positions of the USA and the USSR. There was little progress towards peace as it became obvious that the two superpowers could not agree on the essential elements of peace. This did not deter the efforts of the State Department. To some extent, the breakdown of the ceasefire prompted this, with Nasser's launch of the War of Attrition in March 1969, (which lasted until August 1970) designed to change the military and territorial status quo that had resulted from the Six Day War. At the beginning of 1969, Nasser outlined Egypt's aims in this:

"...The first priority, the absolute priority in this battle is the military front, for we must realise that the enemy will not withdraw unless we force him to withdraw through fighting. Indeed, there can be no hope of any political solution unless the enemy realises that we are capable of forcing him to withdraw through fighting"<sup>12</sup>

On December 9 1969, Secretary of State, Rogers, outlined what became known as the Rogers Plan:

"We believe that while recognised political boundaries must be established and agreed upon by the parties, any changes in the preexisting lines should not reflect the weight of conquest and should be confined to insubstantial alterations required for mutual security. We do not support expansionism. We believe that troops must be withdrawn as the resolution provides. We support

Israel's security and the security of Arab states as well".<sup>13</sup>

The proposed accord between Egypt and Israel called for:

- The states to agree on a timetable for withdrawal from the Occupied Territories.
- To end the state of war and refrain from acts of aggression.
- The future of the Gaza Strip to be negotiated between Israel, Jordan and Egypt and Jordan under the auspices of Dr Jarring.
- Egypt to allow Israel the use of the Suez Canal.
- Each state to recognise the sovereignty of the others and their political independence and right to live in peace within secure boundaries.

Despite the hopes of the State Department, the reactions to the Rogers Plan were, for the most part, negative. Israel was the first to denounce the proposal, Golda Meir stating that:

"Israel won't accept this...nobody in the world can make us accept it. It would be treasonous for any Israeli government to accept it"<sup>14</sup>

This was followed by an Israeli cabinet statement;

"Israel will not be sacrificed by any power or interpower policy and will reject any attempts to impose a forced situation on her..."

The proposal by the USA cannot but be interpreted by the Arab parties as an attempt to appease them at the expense of Israel"<sup>15</sup>

Russia and Egypt also rejected the plan. By proposing such an accord, America had damaged her relationship with Israel. In the period following the 1967 war, Israel was aware of her stronger position on the Middle East vis-a-vis the Arab states and was not therefore eager to compromise. The unity of the coalition government reflected this. The Rogers plan had been an American initiative, reflecting the direction that the NSC had wanted American Middle East policy to move in and, following its failure, American-Israeli relations began to enter a new phase. As Soviet involvement in the area increased, American relations with Israel began to deepen and the provision of aid, specifically military aid, increased.

#### NOTES:

1. This classic political problem is discussed in H Kissinger, White House Years, Boston & Toronto, Brown & Co, 1979, p 349
2. D Tschirgi, The American Search for Mideast Peace, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1989, p 6
3. W Quandt, (1977), p 81
4. W Quandt, (1977), p 82
5. H Kissinger, (1979), p 356
6. Y Rabin, (1979), p 115
7. Y Rabin, (1979), p 116
8. D Tschirgi, (1989), p 60
9. This was the impression given by Kissinger in White House Years, (1979), after a meeting with Eban, p 359-360
10. H Kissinger, (1979), p 568
11. C Rubenberg, (1986), p 142
12. A S Khalidi, 'The War of Attrition', Journal of Palestine Studies,

- vol 3, 1973, p 77
13. H Kissinger, (1979), p 375
  14. New York Times, December 23, 1969
  15. W Quandt, (1977), p 91

## DIPLOMACY AND STALEMATE

The United States reacted with alarm to the stationing of Soviet troops in Egypt following Nasser's visit to Moscow in January 1970. The gravity of the situation was expressed by Joseph Sisco:

"The United States regards with the utmost seriousness the installation of Soviet missiles in Egypt and the fact that Soviet planes are flying operational missions...If the Soviet Union wants to test the readiness of the United States to intervene in the Middle East she would be making a grave error if she thought the Vietnam experience had undermined the capabilities of our country to defend her interests in the Middle East".<sup>1</sup>

American perceptions of Soviet aims were particularly critical in this period, as shown by Nixon's comments to William Rogers:

"The difference between our goal and the Soviet goal in the Middle East is very simple, but fundamental. *We* want peace. *They* want the Middle East."<sup>2</sup>

It was at this stage that American policy towards the region reached something of a crossroads. The State Department (supported by the Department of Defense) continued to oppose increasing the supply of arms to Israel, and blamed her for the deepening of the War of Attrition. At this time though, Kissinger began to argue for a new course. He remained primarily concerned with the presence of the USSR in the region. As this increased, the Israeli rationale that only a strong

Israel could deal with Russian influence in Egypt, became more difficult to resist. American policy in the early 1970s therefore had two strands; the supply of additional arms to Israel and the pursuit of a cease-fire in the region.

Following the failure of the Rogers Plan, the NSC met to discuss Middle East policy. On 26 June, Kissinger issued the following statement:

“we are trying to get a settlement in such a way that the moderate regimes are strengthened and not the radical regimes. We are trying to expel the Soviet military presence, not so much the advisers, but the combat pilots and the combat personnel before they become so firmly entrenched”<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, a less ambitious scheme was announced which became known as Rogers ‘B’. The framework of talks that had taken place earlier in Nixon’s Presidency (two and four power) was maintained, but the Rogers Initiative was essentially an American proposal. The principal details of the plan were as follows:

- A 90 day cease-fire with negotiations taking place under the auspices of Dr. Gunnar Jarring.
- UN Resolution 242 to be the basis for progress towards a settlement.
- Egypt and Jordan were to accept the principle of peace and recognise Israel’s right to exist.

- Israel to accept the principal of withdrawal from the Occupied Territories.<sup>4</sup>  
(see Appendix D for further details).

At this time, American-Israeli relations were strained in a number of ways. Immediate Israeli rejection of the second American initiative was criticised in the United States. Rabin, the Israeli ambassador, notes in his memoirs that the link was made between Israel's reaction to the proposal and the outcome of current Israeli requests for Phantom aircraft.<sup>5</sup> Israeli foreign relations were consequently dominated by tension with the United States and also the War of Attrition with her neighbours. It is worth noting here that the prospects for agreement between the superpowers were possibly greater than at other times. The development of detente between the superpowers made the United States more anxious to persuade Israel to accept the initiative, especially given the increase in Soviet involvement in the region. At the same time, Nixon was also concerned to reach agreement to reaffirm domestic fears that the administration was not abandoning its 'commitments' to the Jewish state.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, on 23 July Nixon sent a message to Meir indicating that the administration would not pressure Israel to accept the Arab interpretation of Resolution 242 or support a settlement that would jeopardise the security of the Israeli state.<sup>7</sup>

Following Nasser's acceptance of the initiative on 22 July, the Israeli cabinet at the end of July voted to accept the American proposal. This decision was significant for a number of reasons. As regards domestic politics, the decision caused the break-up of the coalition. After

the end of the 1967 war, there had been broad agreement amongst leading Israeli political figures. Yet, by 1970, there were deep divisions within the coalition. Acceptance of the proposal meant the practical withdrawal from the commitments made in the period immediately following the war. Essentially two principles were rescinded in the acceptance of the Rogers' Initiative; the demand for direct negotiations (replaced with the idea of mediation), and the possibility of partial withdrawal from *all* fronts was considered. It was for these reasons that Gahal refused to accept the Rogers' Initiative and they withdrew from the government in August 1970.

As a result of the Egyptian and Israeli acceptance of the Rogers' Initiative, the cease-fire came into operation on 8 August. Israel soon claimed to have found evidence of Egyptian violations of the agreement, with continued troop movements. This only served to foster the idea that the Egyptians were using the cease-fire as a way to re-group for the War of Attrition. Following this, and America's refusal to supply Israel with additional arms, Israel announced on 6 September that it would not be participating in the Jarring mission until the cease-fire was correctly implemented. Events on the same day in Jordan transpired to alter American perceptions of the Middle East and its strategy there.

On 6 September, the PFLP (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) hijacked three international planes, with nearly 500 hostages, many of whom were American, and flew 2 of them to Jordan (the third landed in Cairo and was blown up minutes after the hostages had been rescued). The twin objectives of the PFLP were to secure the release of Fedayeen prisoners held in Israel and to provoke a confrontation

between King Hussein and the Fedayeen. Nixon hoped for the confinement of the conflict within Jordan, but on 20 September Syria invaded Jordan. The full consequences of this are only understood when looking at the bi-polarisation of the region which had occurred especially since the war of 1967. The United States principal ally against the spread of Soviet influence was Israel, but King Hussein led another pro-western power in the region. It was therefore inconceivable to allow a Soviet backed regime to invade. Jordan requested assistance from the United States, which was given by increasing Israel's military strength. Bolstered by this, on 22 September King Hussein sent his air force to attack the Syrian tanks which quickly retreated towards Syria. American interests in the region were preserved when the Syrians backed down. King Hussein had remained in power and Israel had successfully promoted American interests. In a speech in November 1970, Israel was used as an example of the Nixon doctrine in operation:<sup>8</sup>

“the change that the Nixon doctrine calls for from bearing the primary responsibility ourselves to enabling our friends to shoulder it much more themselves...Nowhere is our support more necessary or more closely linked with our efforts to achieve peaceful solutions, than in the Middle East”.<sup>9</sup>

As a consequence of the events in Jordan, the Fedayeen was weakened and a few days after the crisis, an agreement was signed in Cairo between Hussein, Arafat and other Arab leaders to prevent further clashes between the PLO and King Hussein in Jordan.

This favourable outcome to the problems in Jordan came at a

particularly useful time for the Nixon administration. Faced with November congressional elections, their foreign policy had been struggling prior to the Jordan crisis; with the Vietnam war continuing to take American lives and little progress towards peace in the Middle East.

The results in Jordan were also used (partly) as validation for a new approach to reducing Soviet influence in the Middle East. Following the Jordan crisis, effective control of Middle East policy passed from the State Department to Nixon and Kissinger (ironically, at a time when Nixon would soon become preoccupied with domestic political scandals). The White House, after 1970, became increasingly reluctant to maintain the link between political concessions and military assistance to Israel, although the State Department preferred to retain this approach. Military aid to Israel was justified as a means of promoting peace in the following ways:

- Compensating Israel for the strategic disadvantages suffered as a result of Soviet rearmament of Egypt.
- Inducing the Israeli government to return to the Jarring talks.

When it was realised that the Egyptian missiles violating the cease-fire would not be withdrawn, (American intelligence had verified Egyptian violations on 14 August) the alternative course pursued by the United States was that of matching the Soviet commitment to Egypt with more military assistance to Israel. For the next three years, relations between the two countries flourished with unprecedented levels of aid.

The region now seemed relatively calm following the Jordan crisis and Soviet influence in the region declined. In this period, as American-Israeli relations evolved, the key to stability in the area was defined in terms of a military balance, rather than new peace initiatives.

The death of Nasser in late 1970 had led to a more open policy being pursued by Egypt. The 'socialism' implemented by Nasser was not followed by Sadat in his 'Open Economic Policy' and the United States was consequently encouraged to adopt a new policy towards Sadat. Principally, this involved demonstrating that a Soviet military presence in Egypt was a hindrance to Sadat rather than a help. It was argued that Egypt would not recover the Sinai militarily as any military assistance provided by the USSR would be matched by aid to Israel from the United States. Therefore, the recovery of the captured territory was more likely if the involvement of the Soviets was curtailed and in 1972 Sadat expelled the Soviet military advisers.

From 1971, it appeared that the immediate danger in the Middle East had passed. The continuing cease-fire along the Suez Canal, the death of Nasser and the consolidation of King Hussein's authority in Jordan all pointed to greater stability in the area. It was not only the lack of imminent danger that precipitated the diplomatic standstill in the Middle East after 1970. Again, the Washington administration became preoccupied with other areas of the world; the lingering problem of Vietnam, China and the SALT treaty all drew attention away from the Middle East.

William Quandt also claims that electoral considerations

influenced the desire to maintain a low profile in the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> He suggests that the chances for a negotiated settlement were negligible (especially given Egyptian cease-fire violations) and thus there was little electoral gain to be made from actively pursuing a treaty in a Presidential election year. "Firm American diplomatic and military support of Israel, rather than active pursuit of an Arab-Israeli settlement" was the line adopted by the Washington administration in 1971.<sup>11</sup> Towards the end of the year, a new arms deal with Israel was announced, incorporating the sale of 42 Phantom aircraft and 90 Skyhawks over the next two years, with \$300 million in credits each year to help finance the purchase. The type of commitment made by the United States appeared to change in this year. Talks held in Washington with Golda Meir were aimed at the *long range* modernisation of Israeli military power. At this time, Israeli spokesmen expressed their hopes that military and political issues in US-Israeli relations would no longer be subject to the same linkage as had been the case in the recent past.

During this period, both American and Soviet military deliveries to the Middle East continued at a high level. But, in 1972, Soviet weapons supplies to Egypt were reduced, which precipitated (to some extent), the expulsion of Soviet military advisers from the country later in that year. Early in 1972, Sadat was convinced that the detente between the superpowers was already affecting arms supplies to the region. For example, he returned empty handed from Moscow in February 1972:

"It was clear that the stalemate - no peace, no war suited the superpowers. There was some agreement between them about the level of arms supplies".<sup>12</sup>

Speaking to the Central Committee of Egypt's Arab Socialist Union, Sadat pointed clearly to the need for Egyptian freedom of movement, as the reason behind the expulsion of the Soviet advisers.

Shlomo Slonim suggests that, to Sadat, the Soviet presence was very much a 'two-edged sword' as although they were of assistance to Egypt's defence capability, Sadat's room for manoeuvre for a permanent end to the conflict (through military or diplomatic means), was restricted.<sup>13</sup> The War of Attrition had obviously failed to dislodge the Israelis, and consequently Arab frustration increased. In the words of Shlomo Slonim:

"The removal of the Russians was a conditional precedent to Egypt's freedom of action in the projected confrontation with Israel".<sup>14</sup>

One further major development in this period, was the politicisation of oil, which until now, appeared to have remained outside the parameters of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the post 1967 period, optimism remained high that they would remain separate and numerous factors encouraged this belief. For example, the collapse of the Arab oil embargo declared after the 1967 war. David Pollock sets out three developments which, by 1973, were cause for concern:

- In the United States, the domestic supply proved unable to keep up with the pace of demand, which resulted in a greater dependency upon oil imports (especially from the Middle East)

- An increase in the uncertainty about the availability and price of imported oil, caused by a number of nationalisations of oil companies
- Political isolation that American policy had so far experienced was threatened eg. Qaddafi announced the nationalisation of USA oil companies.<sup>15</sup>

Progress towards peace in this period was slow. The development of detente between the superpowers and the increased stability in the region following the Jordan crisis, resulted in American foreign policy making being directed elsewhere. In addition to this, the preoccupation with Vietnam and the emerging scandal of Watergate deflected attention away from the Middle East. However, relations between the USA and Israel did develop in this period. The first Rogers Plan in 1968 created a rift in relations, but in the first few years of the 1970s, a closer relationship developed. Peace through military parity was the theme at the beginning of the 1970s, with Soviet military aid to the Arabs being matched by American aid given to Israel. In the victory she had won in 1967, Israel had proven to be a strategic asset in the region, and Nixon clearly saw Israel as a demonstration of the Nixon Doctrine in action.

Whilst the United States viewed Israel as her principal ally in the region and armed her accordingly, she failed to take into account the increasing frustration felt in the Arab States at this time. The Arab States had been deeply affected by the outcome of the Six Day War and were anxious to move towards regaining some of the territory they had lost in 1967. In part, the inertia of American policy during this time was

responsible for the stalemate in the peace making process. Nixon and Kissinger relied on the provision of arms to Israel to retain the status quo and failed to anticipate that the Arab States would be prepared to enter another war so soon after the losses that were inflicted upon them in 1967. The consequences of this are discussed in the next chapter.

#### NOTES:

1. S Slonim, US Relations 1967-1973. A Study in the Convergence and Divergence of Interests, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1974, p 23
2. R Nixon, (1979), p 477
3. W Quandt, (1977), p 100
4. D Tschirgi, (1989), p 63
5. Y Rabin, (1979), p 138
6. Nixon discusses the problem of attempting to change relations with other Middle Eastern countries and the negative response of the pro-Israeli Lobby in his memoirs... "many saw the corollary of not being pro-Israeli as being anti-Israeli or even anti Semitic" p 481
7. W Quandt, (1977), p 102
8. Nixon defined the Nixon Doctrine in Congress on 18 February 1970; "Its central thesis is that the United States will participate in the defence and development of allies and friends, but that America cannot - and will not - conceive all the plans, design all the programmes, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defence of the free nations of the world. We will help where it makes a difference and is considered in our interest". B Rubin, 'US Policy And The October War', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol 3, 1973, p 99
9. D Pollock, (1982), p 82
10. W Quandt, (1977), p 129
11. D Pollock, (1982), p 103
12. Insight On The Mideast War, The Insight Team Of The Sunday Times, London, Andre Deutsch, 1974, p 31
13. S Slonim, (1974), p 31
14. S Slonim, (1974), p 34
15. This topic is dealt with in much greater depth than is possible here in D Pollock, (1982), p 117

## THE RESULTS OF FRUSTRATION

### I

The war of 1973 shattered two basic assumptions that had been made by the American administration in the early part of the 1970s:

- That the military balance in the Middle East was the key to political stability eg. if Israeli military superiority was maintained, the Arabs would not attack.
- War seemed to make sense for the Arabs only if there was no possibility of recovering the territory by political or diplomatic means.<sup>1</sup>

The extent to which these ideas were entrenched goes at least some way to explaining the reasons for the Egyptian and Syrian attack on Israel being such an international surprise. There had been a high level of Arab secrecy, but both the CIA and Mossad had previously concluded that the possibilities for war were marginal. In his memoirs, Nixon points to the fact that the CIA had misinterpreted a number of events. For example, massive troop movements were seen as annual manoeuvres and the large increase in Syrian military activity had been seen as a precaution against Israel's recent shooting down of three Syrian jets.<sup>2</sup>

Crucial to the outcome of the 1967 war was the part played by the intelligence community and the information they gathered prior to the

outbreak of hostilities. The story of 1973 was of an intelligence service that failed to perform its primary function; the advance warning of the onset of war.

The primary reasons for the failure of the Israeli intelligence service to detect the impending attack were threefold. The problem of the displaced Palestinians had remained untackled since 1948 and the 1950s and 60s saw Palestinian nationalism flourishing. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was founded in 1964, and this marked a turning point in the 'armed struggle' that many of the Palestinians believed themselves to be engaged in. Coupled with this, there was the outcome of the 1967 war, which resulted in Israel occupying the areas where the majority of Palestinian terrorists had been based. Consequently, in the years that followed, the incidents of Palestinian terrorism increased significantly. In the interwar years therefore, Israeli intelligence became increasingly focussed upon combating this internal problem (especially after the Munich Olympics and the killing of eleven Israeli athletes). A number of agents in this period were withdrawn from other areas (principally Egypt and Syria) to enable a greater concentration on this problem. Illustrating the scale of the problem, between 1968 and 1970 alone, 115 planes were hijacked by the PFLP.<sup>3</sup>

The seeds of the second reason were ironically sown in the victory of 1967. Primary responsibility for the failure to detect the oncoming war must lie with the military intelligence part of the service (Amman), the largest and most important body of the intelligence service.<sup>4</sup> The new head of Amman in 1972 was General Eli Zeira (following the departure of General Ahron Yariv), who believed that Egypt lacked the

organisational and military capability to attack Israel. Despite the information gathered by various intelligence agencies relating to the troop movements in both Egypt and Syria, it was concluded that war was unlikely. Moshe Dayan (the Defence Minister) predicted in August 1973 that there would be no war for several years.<sup>5</sup> This ultimate confidence in the status quo was derived to a large extent from *La-Konseptzia* or the 'concept'. The origins of the 'concept' can be traced back to the military victory of 1967 and the scale of American military aid which followed the victory. The 'concept' had three main strands to it - the Arabs were not ready/prepared for an all out war with Israel; if there was a war it would be a short one; if there was a war, the Arabs would be defeated quickly and Israel would be left with the option of advancing to both Cairo and Damascus.<sup>6</sup>

Clearly the extent to which the 'concept' had become an accepted part of the military establishment goes at least some way to explaining the failure of the intelligence community to accurately interpret the information it had gathered. If most military personnel subscribed to this idea, Stewart Steven suggests that information contradicting the 'concept' was quite possibly ignored.<sup>7</sup> Other contrary indicators were also present, for example Sadat's rhetoric:

"We shall spare no efforts or sacrifices to fulfil our objective. I shall not discuss any details, but the liberation of the land is the first and main task facing us."<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Mossad *did* predict a war, but in May 1973. It is possible that the unnecessary alert in May deterred a military build-up just a few

months later; but Chaim Landau, a leading member of the Israeli opposition talks scathingly of the financial considerations of mobilisation:

"The May mobilisation cost us £40 million and the Arabs did not attack. The war cost us £50 million an hour, not to mention the lives lost. How much of a saving was that?"<sup>9</sup>

Sadat's motives for war were misunderstood. American and Israeli analyses of the situation in the immediate prewar period dismissed the potential for armed conflict because of the lack of Arab military capacity to regain the Occupied Territories. In the war of 1973, this was not Sadat's primary goal. Rather, he hoped that a further war would break the stalemate that had developed in the peace process; *the conflict was interpreted as necessary to rejuvenate the diplomatic process.*

"After six years, our men on the Suez Canal and our students wanted action. Ideas started to crystallise in my mind as early as 1972"<sup>10</sup>

There were three basic differences to the wars that had preceded the one of 1973; there was no intention of destroying Israel, the claims of the Palestinians were *not* amongst the main considerations and the main conflict with Israel was, by now, its continued occupation of the Arab lands captured in the 1967 war.

The intelligence community's assurance that the government

would always be given at least 48 hours notice before a war, failed. A meeting between Dayan, Galili and Meir on 3 October concluded that Israel was still in no immediate danger of attack (this conclusion was also reached a day later by Eban and Kissinger in Washington). The evacuation of Russian advisers in Syria on 5 October (a parallel of what happened in June 1967) did arouse the suspicions of the Israeli premier, however, as she notes in her memoirs, she failed to take decisive action, preferring instead to rely upon the assurances of the Department of Defence and the intelligence service.<sup>11</sup> The Arabs struck on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, when many regular servicemen were spending the day with their families, and much of the Israeli army was made up of reservists. This placed the Israeli army at a severe psychological disadvantage, and they were also outnumbered in men and weaponry. Golda Meir states that the war proved a number of basic Israeli assumptions had been incorrect:

- The low probability of an attack in October
- The certainty that there would be sufficient warning before an attack took place
- The belief that Israel would be able to prevent the Egyptians from crossing the Suez Canal (the Egyptians achieved this on the first day of the fighting and Sadat became known as the 'hero of the crossing'.)<sup>12</sup>

The initial policy of the United States was dependent upon a swift Israeli victory. Their concerns at the beginning of the war were

threefold; assure the security of Israel, maintain relations with the moderate Arab states eg.. Jordan and Saudi Arabia and avoid a confrontation with the USSR whilst preserving the current detente.

These objectives necessarily dictated a low profile in the conflict itself. This would also result in the United States being in a strong position in the post war period to influence the diplomatic process that would be taking place. Nixon made a clear reference to both his belief in a quick Israeli victory and also the need for a settlement, in a statement two days after the commencement of the war:

“We must not under any circumstances allow them (Israel) because of the victory they are going to win - and they’ll win it, thank God, they should - but we must not get away with just having this thing hang over for another four years and have us at odds with the Arab world. We’re not going to do it anymore”.<sup>13</sup>

As stated above, this postwar position relied upon a decisive Israeli victory. But, by the 12 October, this possibility had disappeared, and was now replaced by an urgent Israeli request for American arms. Kissinger noted that, throughout the early days of the war, it appeared that Israeli hopes for a victory had been overoptimistic culminating in the demand for arms on 10 October.<sup>14</sup> At this stage in the conflict, America’s first aim (the security of Israel) was proving to be more difficult to achieve than had first been thought. In addition to this, relations with Saudi Arabia were worsening. Relations had been deteriorating throughout 1973 for several reasons including principally, America’s persistent failure to influence Israel to accept

and implement Resolution 242. King Faisal had already indicated at the beginning of 1973 that he was prepared to use oil as an instrument of foreign policy and after the outbreak of the October War that is exactly what happened. A conference was held to decide how the oil producing Arab States could help in the 'Arab war of liberation'. It was agreed that oil production would be reduced by 5% each month:

"until such time as total evacuation of Israeli forces from all Arab territory occupied during the June 1967 war is completed and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are restored".<sup>15</sup>

As far as domestic American politics were concerned, the outbreak of the October war could not have come at a worse time, in that the Watergate revelations were affecting not only the domestic political scene, but also the abilities of the administration to operate effectively in other areas. Throughout the duration of the conflict, Nixon remained completely preoccupied by the domestic scandals which were hounding his administration, investing in Kissinger an unprecedented degree of authority in the foreign policy realm. The problems that Nixon faced at home are well illustrated by the resignation of his Vice-President Spiro Agnew on charges of corruption and tax evasion on 10 October, (the fourth day of the conflict). These internal matters also had ramifications in the foreign policy process, in that it became increasingly difficult to expect Congressional approval for any commitments made. In mid 1974, Chalmer Roberts, a columnist for the Washington Post wrote:



"Foreign policy is made both by commission and omission. It is affected by mood and nuance, by judgments of strengths and weaknesses, by one government's measure of another's will as well as its ability to act, by one national leader's perception of a rival or friendly leaders' political standing in his own country and its effect on both national power and policies". 16

(italics added)

During the war, the American and Israeli positions began to diverge. Whilst the United States hoped for an early cease-fire, Israel wanted to ensure a military victory. Nixon saw the impracticality of attempting to encourage the protagonists, at an early stage in the war, to accept a cease-fire, but hoped that they would accept one when neither side had a decisive military advantage. Early American hopes of maintaining a relatively balanced approach to the war faded in light of Israeli requests for military assistance, and a subsequent Soviet airlift to the Arab states. On 13 October Sadat refused a proposed cease-fire and Nixon authorised an airlift of military equipment to Israel. The next week was crucial in that it brought both the implementation of the cease-fire and the reversal of Arab fortunes. It was 16 October when the Israeli forces re-crossed the Suez Canal and this prompted Egyptian hopes for an end to the conflict soon after. The impartiality of the United States was undermined further, just three days later, when Nixon requested \$2.2 billion in aid for Israel. On 20 October, in response to this, King Faisal announced an embargo of oil to the United States:

"in view of the increase of American military aid to Israel the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has decided to halt all oil exports to the United States for taking such a position".<sup>17</sup>

At this time, the superpowers coordinated their efforts to achieve a cease-fire in the region. Kissinger left for Moscow on 20 October and therefore was unaware of the domestic developments in the United States. The Special Prosecutor, Cox, was fired, followed by the resignations of other senior officials in what became known as the 'Saturday Night Massacre.' In light of these domestic problems, Kissinger was given complete authority on his peace-seeking mission to the USSR but, much to his displeasure, the Soviets were informed of this, therefore robbing him of the usual delaying tactic of 'referring back to Washington'.<sup>18</sup> This turned out to be unnecessary because agreement upon a cease-fire was reached in a matter of hours. All that remained now was for the respective superpowers to convince their allies in the region of the validity of this proposal. In a letter to Golda Meir, Kissinger wrote:

"We believe that this is a major achievement for you and for us and supportive of the brave fighting of your forces. (First) It would leave your forces right where they are. (Second) There is absolutely no mention of the word 'withdrawal' in the resolution; (third), for the first time, we have achieved the agreement of the Soviet Union to a resolution that calls for direct negotiation without conditions or qualifications between the parties under appropriate auspices."<sup>19</sup>

At this stage, it is interesting to note the changes that occurred in the positions of the participants in the war, reflecting their relative strengths and weaknesses in the conflict itself. In the first week of the conflict, the United States stood alone in its pursuit of an early settlement (followed later by Israel when the tide of the war did not appear to be turning in its favour). Israel accepted a proposed settlement on 12 October, only for it to be rejected the next day by Egypt. In the coming days this position was reversed. By the third week in October, the Soviet Union and Egypt were anxious to reach a settlement, whilst the Israelis were not. Nixon and Kissinger secured an Israeli agreement by suggesting that continued arms supplies would be in doubt without a cease-fire. In light of this, the Israeli government reluctantly agreed.

The proposed cease-fire was finally adopted on 22 October by the UNSC, with it reaffirming the principles of Resolution 242 and concluding the current conflict in the region. The most serious moment of the crisis was yet to come. The implementation of the cease-fire failed to curb fighting in the region. The Israelis moved to surround the Egyptian Third Army after Resolution 338 had been implemented, and the Egyptians responded. A day later, Resolution 339 was passed, reiterating the resolution of the previous day (and it was only at this point that the Syrians actually announced their acceptance of the cease-fire). Yet, once again, there were clear violations by both the Egyptians and Israeli sides. At this stage, Brezhnev proposed the dispatch of Soviet and American troops to the area to ensure compliance with the resolution, but the letter delivered to Kissinger gave great cause for concern as it contained the possibility of unilateral Russian intervention:

"...Let us together, the USSR and the United States urgently dispatch to Egypt, the Soviet and American contingents, to ensure the implementation of the decision of the Security Council of 22 and 23 concerning the cessation of fire and all military activities and also our understanding with you on the guarantee of the implementation of the decisions of the Security Council. It is necessary to adhere without delay. I will say it straight to you that if you find it impossible to act jointly with us in this matter, we should be faced with the necessity urgently to consider the question of taking appropriate steps unilaterally. We cannot allow arbitrariness on the part of Israel."<sup>20</sup>

The Nixon administration was now faced with a serious problem. Sadat's expulsion of the Soviets in 1972 had been a welcome development for the United States, but the action proposed here, would put them back in their position, *with* American consent! Yet, the refusal of the Soviet suggestion ran the risk of Soviet unilateral action, and a possible superpower confrontation. As a consequence of this, for two days, the forces of the United States were on alert and the dangers of superpower conflict loomed.

The administration eventually decided to reject the Soviet proposals, as is demonstrated by Kissinger's response:

"The United States does not favour and will not approve the sending of a joint Soviet-United States force into the Middle East. It is inconceivable that we should transplant the great power rivalry into the Middle

East...It would be a disaster if the Middle East, already torn by local rivalries, would now become, as a result of a UN decision, a legitimised theatre for the competition of the military forces of the great powers".<sup>21</sup>

The situation was diffused by the Egyptian acceptance of a UN security force excluding the permanent members of the SC. It had initially been the idea of the Egyptians for a force including the two superpowers and therefore, their acceptance of this compromise made it easier for the Soviets to accept. In accordance with these developments, Resolution 340 was adopted by the UNSC on 25 October 1973, which legislated the establishment of the Emergency Force. ( see Appendix E for details.)

## II

The Yom Kippur war was instrumental in bringing about a more radical and active American policy towards a settlement. Three fundamental assumptions of the United States had been challenged:

- The military balance remaining in Israel's favour had *not* brought stability to the region. And it was now apparent that Israeli strength alone would not result in the desired political settlement.
- Contrary to all expectations, the Arabs had fought well in the conflict crossing the Suez Canal, making early gains and *had broken the myth of Israeli invincibility.*

- The detente between the superpowers had failed to reduce the chance of regional conflict.

The most crucial outcome of the 1973 war, in American eyes, was that it proved invalid the theory that a military balance was the prerequisite for stability in the Middle East. Since 1967, a settlement of the conflict had been viewed by the United States as the most satisfactory way to protect American interests, but this goal had assumed a low priority whilst a relatively stable situation existed. The 1973 war radically changed these perceptions and a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was regarded as an important American issue. In the post 1973 period, Kissinger, as both Secretary of State and National Security Adviser became the leading figure in a prominent diplomatic campaign to ensure that a 'just and durable peace' was reached.

For Israel, the effects were profound. The myth of Israeli military invincibility had been shattered. Contrary to Israeli expectations following the outcome of the Six Day War, the Arab soldiers fought well. Egyptian troops re-crossed the Suez Canal and Sadat became known as "the hero of the crossing." And although Israel eventually won the war, the psychological victory belonged to the Arab states. They had proved their fighting ability and had succeeded in their main aim which was arguably to rejuvenate the stalled diplomatic process. Stewart Steven suggests that for 36 hours, Israel was on the brink of defeat.<sup>22</sup> The unrivalled reputation which the Israeli intelligence community had enjoyed in the wake of the 1967 war was broken, and there was a general loss of confidence in the ability of the secret services to perform effectively. This loss of confidence was extended to the political

leadership as is illustrated by the following quote:

"The Israeli public is engulfed in much confusion with regard to its stand vis-a-vis the political leadership."<sup>23</sup>

The warning of war, when it did come, came too late to recall many of the regular troops already on leave for Yom Kippur, which left the Israeli army comprised predominantly of reservists. The Israeli army was, therefore left fighting from a numerical and psychological disadvantage. While, ultimately Israel defeated the Arab states, the war brought grave problems for Israeli in terms of unprecedented economic and military consequences.

The impact of the war was perhaps increased by the proximity of the election. Originally planned for 23 October, it was postponed after the start of the war until 31 December. The true costs of the war were known then (although the economic consequences were only just beginning to be felt). Military losses and casualties in the war had been unprecedented with 3,000 dead and an equal number wounded, scores of planes were lost and also hundreds of tanks.<sup>24</sup> These statistics alone were sufficient to provoke much unrest in Israel, which was reflected in the outcome of the 1973 election. In the final result, the two major blocs, Labor and Likud remained, but the Labor party's support was much reduced and, in 1977, it was to be overtaken by the more radical and 'hawkish' Likud coalition. Shortly after the 1973 election, Golda Meir put forward her resignation as PM, her government paying the ultimate price in the fallout from the 1973 war.

### III

The post-war policies of the United States reflected the new priorities of the administration in light of the events of 1973. Peace in the Middle East had always been a distant goal on the American foreign policy agenda, but now it assumed a much larger role. Pollock identifies three goals for the United States in this period; to reduce the dangers of another interruption in the flow of oil, lessen the chances of more Soviet penetration on the region and decrease the possibilities of another war.<sup>25</sup>

Crucially, in the long term, Israel's dependence upon the United States increased dramatically, a dependence that could be advantageous for the pursuit of American political objectives. Indeed, the carrot and stick approach became an integral part of American policy. The October war marked a new chapter in American-Israeli relations. In the few years prior to the war, the United States had transferred arms almost unconditionally to Israel, and the relationship had also extended to the defence industry itself. For example, in December 1970, the two countries signed the Master Defense Development Data Exchange Agreement, giving Israel access to technical information from which it could manufacture.<sup>26</sup> But, in the years that followed 1973, aid came with many strings attached. This can be effectively illustrate by the peace process that unfolded in the months after the war.

The formal framework of the peace process, the Geneva Conference, opened in December 1973, but became almost entirely ceremonial in its role. Although it played an important part by involving the Soviet Union in the settlement process and legitimising

the process itself, its influence ended here and the real post-war diplomacy was dominated by Kissinger's step-by-step approach. Crucial to this approach was the leverage which could be used regarding the question of arms transfers to Israel. Three agreements were concluded between January 1974 and the end of 1975:

- January 1974 - First Sinai disengagement treaty
- June 1974 - Golan disengagement treaty
- August 1975 - Second Sinai accord

The transfer of arms played a principal part in the diplomacy that preceded all three. Pollock emphasises the role that arms transfers played in these accords by suggesting that arms were designed to help replace the strategic territory in the Sinai and the Golan Heights<sup>27</sup> which Israel would have to compromise on if agreement was to be reached. Of the three agreements, the one with Syria was by far the most difficult, due to the security concerns involved. Not only were the Syrians engaging in a miniwar of attrition and illegally holding prisoners of war, but full possession of the Golan Heights by either Syria or Israel would represent a potential strategic threat to the other. Illustrating the role of arms and American aid, the day before Kissinger was due to fly to Damascus to conclude the Golan treaty, Nixon reduced Israel's military debt by one billion dollars.

In the diplomacy that took place following the war, the American role was preeminent. The actual negotiations were outside the formal framework established for peace and this guaranteed that the Soviet Union would remain on the sidelines of the peace process. Events were,

therefore, dictated to a large extent by American action. Russia had been effectively excluded from the negotiations (although their position in the region continued to be the focus of American interest) and Israel, in the wake of the war, became increasingly dependent upon American generosity.

#### NOTES:

1. W Quandt, (1977), p 168
2. R Nixon, (1978), p 920.
3. S Steven, (1980), p 248.
4. D Raviv & Y Melman, (1990), p 206
5. S Steven, (1980), p 299
6. S Steven., (1980), p 297
7. S Steven, (1980), p297
8. D Raviv & Y Melman, (1990), p 209
9. A R Wagner, (1974), p 146
10. A R Wagner, (1974), p 146
11. G Meir, My Life, New York, G P Putman's Sons, (1975), p 423-425
12. Sadat: Quoted in Insight on the Middle East War, The Insight Team of the Sunday Times, London, Andre Deutsch, 1974, p 31
13. H Kissinger, (1983), p 468
14. H Kissinger, (1983), p 492
15. F Itayim, 'Arab Oil - The Political Dimension', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol 3, 1973, p 90
16. H Kissinger, (1983), p 124
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18. Years of Upheaval, H Kissinger, 1983, p 547
19. H Kissinger, (1983), p 555
20. H Kissinger, (1983), p 583
21. C Bell, 'The October Middle East War', International Affairs, vol 50, 1974, p 536.
22. S Steven, (1981), p 294
23. E Shoufrani, 'Israel. Reactions To The War', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol 3, 1973, p 61
24. D Peretz, 'The War Election and Israel's Eighth Knesset', Middle East Journal, vol 28, 1974, p 111-1
25. D Pollock, (1982), p 157
26. A & L Cockburn, (1991), p 169
27. D Pollock, (1982), p 183

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, before returning to the six themes mentioned in the introduction, a number of general comments can be made about the 1967 - 73 period. Throughout these six years, there were many common interests between Israel and the United States. For example, Israel's need for military aid and equipment (following France's withdrawal of support) and the belief in the United States that Israel could be a 'strategic asset' to her in the Middle East - which led her to arm Israel heavily. This is not to suggest that differences did not exist. In the aftermath of the 1967 war, Israel sought both Arab acceptance of her right to exist *and* retain the occupied territories. The United States was committed to Israel's existence but, other interests in the region (most importantly oil) necessitated that America take a more balanced approach to the search for a resolution of the conflict. For example, when presenting the Rogers Plan in 1970, Secretary of State Rogers noted the problems in achieving peace and suggested that America would take a balanced approach to them:

"Our policy is and will continue to be a balanced one. We have friendly ties with both Arabs and Israelis. To call for Israeli withdrawal as envisaged in the United Resolution without achieving agreement on peace would be partisan towards the Arabs. To call on Arabs to accept peace without Israeli withdrawal would be partisan toward Israel. Therefore our policy is to encourage the Arabs to accept a permanent peace based on a binding agreement and to urge the Israelis to withdraw from the occupied territory when their territorial integrity is

assured as envisaged by the Security Council  
Resolution.”<sup>1</sup>

This balanced approach did at times lead to tension with Israel, as the United States cajoled her into compromise. But in the long term, it was the Arab states that felt they were making little progress towards their goal. As America continued to arm Israel heavily, there was little incentive for Israel to make the necessary territorial concessions to move the peace process forward.

In addition to these differences, domestic political considerations in the two countries did much to influence the foreign policy agenda, which again caused tension. In an American election year, Middle Eastern policy was unlikely to feature highly unless considerable domestic political capital could be made. In Israel, the commitment of both the population and the political elite to the retention of the occupied territories imposed considerable constraints upon those who would have compromised to achieve peace. With these constraints in mind, it is the purpose of this conclusion to draw together the results of this study and look at the possible future implications for American-Israeli relations.

## I

The changes that occurred following the second world war significantly increased the influence of the United States in world affairs. Largely as a result of the war, Britain was no longer in a position to sustain her international interests. Consequently, in the late 1940s she

relinquished her role in Palestine and that of protecting Greece and Turkey. The rise of the Soviet Union in Eastern and Central Europe and the perceived threat that Communism posed became an important element in US foreign policy making, as is illustrated in the following quotation:

“...unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose on them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.”<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the 1967 - 73 period, relations between the superpowers had a significant impact in shaping American policy towards the Middle East. This was especially true during Nixon's presidency, when both Nixon and Kissinger were predominantly concerned with the containment of Soviet influence. In the aftermath of the Six Day War, Israel and the United States forged a closer relationship, with both the scale and nature of American aid to Israel changing. Aid to Israel was increased significantly, and in 1968, fighter planes (Phantom jets) were sold to Israel for the first time. These developments took place against a backdrop of the Soviet Union continuing to arm the Arab States heavily. Just as in the prewar period, American Middle Eastern policy had been based on the maintenance of a military balance in the region; after 1967, Israeli military superiority became seen as essential:

“Although the USSR has replaced a major portion of the Arab aircraft losses, the Arab effective capability is still far below that of Israel and in our judgment will remain so for some time”<sup>3</sup>

The post 1967 era saw an expansion of the Cold War into the Middle East as Russia and the United States increasingly aligned themselves to the Arab States and Israel. In this atmosphere the United States offered Israel a plentiful supply of credit and sophisticated weaponry. In 1972, the Deputy Secretary of State, Joseph Sisco offered this explanation:

“Yes our aid to Israel is immense, I admit that. But you must remember that America does not see the Middle East crisis as a question of Israel and the Arab countries, it sees it from the angle of the general political situation and its requirements”<sup>4</sup>

Israel’s performance in the Six Day War did much to precipitate this. The belief of the United States that Israel was a ‘strategic asset’ in the region and a barrier to Soviet expansion was crucial in determining the levels of aid that she received. Steven Isaacs has commented, with regard to the Jewish Lobby, that:

“Jewish activists on the Hill used the anti-Communist tool broadly for maintaining the support of Israel.”<sup>5</sup>

## II

The United States has been associated with Israel since its inception. Numerous reasons are suggested for the existence of the support that Israel has received including:

- Historical (and to a certain extent emotional, following the second world war)
- The character of the Jewish state, in that it is similar to that of the United States (Western style democracy). This is especially important when compared to the Arab states of the Middle East.
- A moral responsibility to prevent the destruction of the Jewish state.

On a practical level, the general support for the state of Israel within the United States, both in public opinion and the political elite, has resulted in Israel receiving vast sums of aid from America. Given the widespread support that exists within the United States, the success of the Jewish lobby should perhaps come as no surprise. But this support has not been the only factor determining the influence that the Jewish lobby has gained. The commitment of the American Jewish population to Israel has been crucial:

This is not a lobby in the conventional sense...It is rather a commitment rooted in powerful bonds of kinship, in memory of a common history and the conviction of a

common destiny. The root strength of this most formidable of domestic political lobbies...lies not in its skills in public relations, access to the media or ample financing, although all of these are impressive, but in the solid, consistent, and usually unified support of the Jewish communities of the United States."<sup>6</sup>

This grassroots support manifests itself in many ways, most significantly; high voter turnout in elections, high involvement in domestic politics generally and generous contributions to political campaigns. All of which can assume crucial significance during election times. This individual Jewish commitment has been built upon by a number of highly organised and effective Jewish organisations and lobby groups, the most notable being the AIPAC. With its focus on Congress, the AIPAC has been very successful in gaining access to the political process:

"AIPAC is very effective. They have a good grassroots operation which is vital. It can deliver letters, calls to members from their home state. At any given moment, it can mobilise."<sup>7</sup>

Cheryl Rubenberg expands on this theme by saying that 'the AIPAC possesses a computerised listing of supporters of Israel in every state and congressional district.'<sup>8</sup> Therefore, through a variety of different methods; supply of information; scrutiny of Congressmen and relationships with key individuals, the AIPAC has gained significant access to the political process. Israel has found consistent support in Congress and presidents have been unlikely to challenge the validity of this. In the words of Seth Tillman:

"American presidents have sought to avoid a direct confrontation with Israel and its strong supporters in the United States because of the terrific domestic controversy sure to be engendered by such a face-off; because of the powerful and apparently undiminished hold Israel and its supporters have upon Congress."<sup>9</sup>

### III

The 1967 war had a crucial impact on American-Israeli relations, in that it changed the aspirations of the Jewish state, and America's perception of the strategic role that Israel could play in the Middle East. Prior to the war, the government of the state of Israel and its people were concerned for the very survival of the state. Following the closure of the Straits of Tiran, Yariv made the following comments:

"The post Suez period is over. It is not merely a questions of freedom of navigation. If Israel does not respond to the closure of the straits, there will be no value to its credibility, or to the IDF's deterrent power because the Arab states will interpret Israel's weakness as an excellent opportunity to assail her security and very existence."<sup>10</sup>

Yet, in six days, the strategic and military balance within the region altered significantly; both to the advantage of Israel. Israel had captured a large amount of Arab territory and in the period after the war, the question of what to do with the land dominated the Israeli political scene. In the aftermath of the war, the captured territory became the

focus for pressure group activity. In the period 1967 - 73, the Land of Israel Movement was the most dominant group acting to ensure that the territories were retained. And in the late 1960s the rationale behind keeping the territories was put forward not only in security terms, but also to preserve the bonds between the Jewish people and their ancient homeland, as is illustrated by the following quote by Moshe Dayan:

“We have returned to the mountain, to the cradle of our people, to the inheritance of the Patriarchs, to the land of the Judges and the fortress of the kingdom of the House of David. We have returned to Hebron and Shechem, to Bethlehem and Anatst, to Jericho and the fords of the Jordan at Adam Ha’ir”<sup>11</sup>

The Six Day War had made Israel territorially more secure and in the immediate post war period, there was a great desire to retain the captured territories.

Y Yishai has identified three ways in which the occupied territories have affected Israel:

- In the world arena, Israel has been denounced for her continued occupation of the territories.
- Regionally, there has been a change in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Prior to 1967, the Arab states were united in opposition to the *existence* of the state of Israel. Since the Six Day War, the principal bone of contention has been the occupied territories, rather than the existence of Israel. Arab leaders have seen their return as

an essential condition for progress towards a solution of the conflict.

- Domestically, continued occupation of the territories has involved an enlarged Arab population living within Israel.<sup>12</sup>

Within the context of the Cold War, Israel's performance in the 1967 war against her Arab neighbours was crucial to the United States. Since the Suez crisis of 1956 (when America had led the UN demands for Israeli withdrawal from the captured territories) there had been a significant policy reappraisal. This was largely due to the political instability in the Middle East region at this time. In the 1950s and 60s, there had been a large increase in Arab nationalism and Soviet influence in the area was expanding. Prior to 1967 therefore, the United States was already looking towards Israel as a possible 'buffer' against Soviet expansionism and, her performance in the war validated this position.

"In short, US support for Israel in 1967 was premised upon the conviction that this was the best means of stemming the tide of Soviet penetration into the Middle East"<sup>13</sup>

Probably as a result of the Suez crisis, there had been strong support in Israel for gaining American backing before any Israeli action was taken. Meir Amit's visit to Washington in May was designed to achieve three things:

- clarify, check and compare with American intelligence information regarding military and political developments

- clarify the mission of the special (naval) task force to handle Middle East affairs
- clarify the USA reaction of Israel decided to act militarily.<sup>14</sup>

Crucially, Amit came away from the meeting seeing 'no differences between the Israeli and US appreciations of the military situation.'<sup>15</sup> This belief was validated in the American reaction to the 1967 war, when there was no repeat of the 1956 calls for withdrawal from the captured territory.

The 1973 war was crucial both in terms of the regional politics of the Middle East and American-Israeli relations. Key results were:

- It proved invalid the idea that Israeli military superiority would guarantee regional security
- The performance of the Arab states broke the myth of Israeli invincibility, even though Israel did eventually win the war
- In terms of superpower relations, the war brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the point of conflict and consequently proved the importance of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict.

There are a number of contrasts to be made between the wars of 1967 and 1973. Israeli intelligence information had been crucial in 1967, with the attack on the air forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan on 5 June

destroying 70-80% of the Arab air strength.<sup>16</sup> In 1973, Israeli intelligence had predicted a war, but in May 1973, not October. And many prominent political and military figures continued to believe that as long as Israeli military superiority was maintained, the Arab states would not attack. Consequently, the simultaneous Arab attack that was launched placed the Israeli military at a great disadvantage. (This failure to predict the war came in spite of a massive increase in Soviet military aid to the Arab states. For example in the first half of 1973, the USSR supplied Syria with \$185 million, which was \$35 million more than the total arms Syria received in 1972.<sup>17</sup>) Abba Eban's comments also illustrate the extent to which the state of Israel believed that there would be no war:

"Historians who read the Israeli newspapers published in the first days of October will be startled to find that there was no hint of any crisis, let alone imminent war."<sup>18</sup>

Numerous American and Israeli analyses of the situation before October 1973 agreed that whilst Syria and Egypt lacked the military capacity to retain their territory, there would be no war. To a great extent, Sadat's motives were misunderstood. The fundamental objective of the war was not territorial gain, but the creation of a situation that would break the diplomatic stalemate that existed, and produce a more flexible Israeli approach. This proved invalid the theory that Israeli military superiority would guarantee stability in the Middle East. The Arab states fought the 1973 war in the hope of rejuvenating the diplomatic process *in spite of*, on paper at least, their military disadvantage.

There were a number of important consequences following on from the Yom Kippur War. In terms of the AIPAC, its efforts to secure future aid for Israel were redoubled. In May 1974, the following statement was issued:

"The United States should continue to maintain an adequate defense posture. The October War demonstrated the critical importance of the American capacity to provide timely assistance to countries that are victims of aggression, through the supply of needed armaments, including aircraft, tanks, artillery and ammunition. We also recognise the value of American military strength in deterring direct Soviet military involvement in the Middle East."<sup>19</sup>

The increase in aid to Israel following the 1973 war was immense. Prior to 1973, Israel had been twenty fourth amongst post war recipients of American foreign aid, but in just six years, she became the second largest received of combined economic and military assistance (and was soon to overtake South Vietnam.<sup>20</sup>) During the war, Nixon had proposed (and Congress approved) a \$2.2 billion programme of military credits to pay for aircraft and tanks that had been sent to Israel. This was especially important as it was the first time that Israel had received a military grant as opposed to a loan. This was to become increasingly common in the post 1973 period.

In the decade following the war, the United States became the most important source of foreign assistance for Israel. In this climate, both Nixon and Ford used the scale of foreign assistance as leverage to

induce Israeli territorial concessions. In the war of 1973, the first effective use of oil as a weapon and the close proximity of superpower confrontation had reinforced the need to find a resolution to the Arab Israeli conflict. But, the Israeli lobby was also using the strategic importance of Israel to make the case for maintaining the levels of foreign aid. In 1975, the AIPAC sent a detailed memorandum to all Congressmen explaining why US aid to Israel was in America's national interest:

"The Arab states will never make peace with a weakened Israel they feel can be defeated militarily and Israel cannot make further concessions if her national security is endangered."<sup>21</sup>

Israel's strategic position and security, had, by this time become an integral feature of American-Israeli relations. This, in addition to the importance of domestic American politics in foreign policy making, did to some extent, tie the hands of the policymakers. And whilst the carrot and stick approach was used to induce Israeli concessions, Israel's geographic location ensured ultimate American support. As regards aid, whilst the aftermath of the 1967 war saw American aid to Israel flourish, it was not until the outcome of the Yom Kippur war that the quantum leap from loans to outright grants was made, and Israel became the United States' number one recipient of foreign assistance.

#### **NOTES:**

1. C Rubenberg, (1986), p 149
2. J Spanier, (1980), p 28
3. S Green, (1984), p 10
4. B Rubin, 'Us Policy January - October 1973', Journal of Palestine

- Studies, vol 3, 1973, p 102
5. S Isaacs, (1974), p 258
  6. C Rubenberg, (1986), p 14
  7. M C Feuerwerger, (1980), p 94
  8. C Rubenberg, (1986), p 356
  9. C Rubenberg, (1986), p 8
  10. D Raviv & Y Melman, (1990), p 217
  11. Y Yishai, (1987), p 63
  12. Y Yishai, (1987), p xviii
  13. S Slonim, (1974), p 7
  14. D Raviv & Y Melman, (1990), p 221
  15. D Raviv & Y Melman, (1990), p 221
  16. D Raviv & Y Melman, (1990), p 223
  17. Insight Team of the Sunday Times, (1974), p 39
  18. H Kissinger, (1983), p 463
  19. M C Feuerwerger, (1980), p 134
  20. W Blitzer, Between Washington & Jerusalem. A Reporter's Notebook, New York, Oxford, OUP, 1985, p 99
  21. W Blitzer, (1985), p 101

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Letter from the agent of the Provisional Government of Israel to the President of the United States, 15 May 1948.

My dear Mr. President: I have the honour to notify you that the state of Israel has been proclaimed as an independent republic within the frontiers approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution of 29 November 1947, and that a provisional government has been charged to assume the rights and duties of government for preserving law and order within the boundaries of Israel, for defending the state against external aggression and for discharging the obligations of Israel to the other nations of the world in accordance with international law. The Act of Independence will become effective at one minute after six o'clock on the evening of 14 May, Washington time.

With full knowledge of the deep bond of sympathy which has existed and has been strengthened over the past thirty years between the government of the United States and the Jewish people of Palestine, I have been authorised by the provisional government of the new state to tender this message and to express the hope that your government will recognise and will welcome Israel into the community of nations.

Very Respectfully Yours,

Eliahu Epstein

Agent, Provisional Government of Israel<sup>1</sup>

**NOTES:**

1. Text of document taken from A Decade of American Foreign Policy. Basic Documents 1941-1949, Department of State, Washington, 1985, (Revised edition), p 712

## APPENDIX B

### **United States Proposal For A Temporary United Nations Trusteeship For Palestine.**

Statement by President Truman, 25 March 1948.

It is vital that the American people have a clear understanding of the position of the United States in the UN regarding Palestine.

This country vigorously supported the plan for partition with economic union recommended by UNSCOP and by the General Assembly. We have explored every possibility with the basic principles of the Charter for giving effect to that solution...

The UK has announced its firm intention to abandon its mandate in Palestine on 15 May . Unless emergency action is taken there will be no public authority on Palestine on that date capable of preserving law and order. Violence and bloodshed will descend upon the Holy Land. Large-scale fighting among the people of that country will be the inevitable result. Such fighting would infect the entire Middle East and could lead to consequences of the gravest sort involving the peace of this nation and the world.

These dangers are imminent. Responsible governments in the UN cannot face this prospect without acting promptly to prevent it. The United States has proposed to the Security Council a temporary United Nations trusteeship for Palestine to provide a government to keep the

peace. Trusteeship is not proposed as a substitution for the partition plan but as an effort to fill the vacuum soon to be created by the termination of the mandate on May 15...<sup>1</sup>

**NOTES:**

1. Text of document taken from A Decade of American Foreign Policy. Basic Documents 1941-1949, Department of State, Washington, 1985, p 711

## APPENDIX C

### RESOLUTION 242 : Adopted by the UNSC 22 November 1967.

The Security Council:

*Expressing* its continuing concern with the grave situation on the Middle East.

*Emphasising* the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security.

*Emphasising* further that all member states in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter.

1) *Affirms* that the fulfilment of the Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the following principles:

- i) Withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from the territories occupied in the recent conflict
- ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force

2) *Affirms* further the necessity:

- a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international water-ways in the area
- b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem
- c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarised zones

3) *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contact with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions of this resolution.

4) *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible. <sup>1</sup>

Given the distance between the parties involved within the region, Resolution 242 was necessarily a masterpiece of ambiguity and debate continues as to its precise meaning, centring upon whether the Resolution specifies withdrawal from territories or *the* territories (eg. *all* those captured in the 1967 war.) Here, the English and French versions differ, the latter referring to *the* territories. Although Resolution 242 was a British text, the languages have equal status as official languages of the SC and so whilst the original text was submitted in English, the doubt to its precise meaning remains.

**NOTES:**

1. Text of Resolution 242 taken from The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, I S Pogany, Aldershot, Gower Publishing Co. Ltd, 1984, p 104-105

## APPENDIX D

### **The Principles of the Rogers' Initiative**

The principles of the Rogers' Initiative were contained in a letter from Jarring notifying the Secretary-general that Israel, Jordan and Egypt had consented to the commitments contained in the letter.

"The UAR (Jordan) and Israel advise me that they agree:

a) that having accepted and indicated their willingness to carry out Resolution 242 in all its parts, they will designate representatives to discussions to be held under my auspices according to such procedure and at such places and times as I may recommend, taking into account as appropriate each sides experience between the parties.

b) that the purpose of the aforementioned discussions is to reach agreement on the establishment of a just and lasting peace between them based on :-

1) mutual acknowledgement by the UAR (Jordan) and Israel of each other's sovereignty territorial integrity and political independence

2) Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict, both in accordance with Resolution 242.

c) that, to facilitate my task of promoting agreement as set forth in Resolution 242 the parties will strictly observe, effective July 1 at least until October 1, the cease-fire resolution of the Security Council" <sup>1</sup>

**NOTES:**

1. Text taken from Y Rabin, (1979), p 138

## APPENDIX E

### **RESOLUTION 340: Adopted by the UNSC 25 October 1973.**

This Resolution was the necessary legislation to establish a UN Emergency Force for the Middle East.

The Security Council:

Recalling its resolutions 338 of 22 October 1973 and 339 of 23 October 1973.

Noting with regret the reported repeated violations of the cease-fire in non-compliance with Resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973).

Noting with concern from the Secretary-general's report that the UN military observers have not yet been enabled to place themselves on both sides of the cease-fire line.

1) Demands that immediate and complete cease-fire be observed and that the parties return to the positions occupied by them at 16:50 hours GMT on 22/10/73.

2) Requests the Secretary-general, as an immediate step, to increase the number of UN military observers on both sides.

3) Decides to set up immediately under its authority, a United Nations Emergency force to be composed of personnel drawn from state members of the UN except the permanent members of the Security Council, and requests the Secretary General to report within 24 hours on the steps taken to this effect.

4) Requests the Secretary General to report to the Council on an urgent and continuing basis on the state of implementation of this resolution as well as Resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973).

5) Requests all member states to extend their full cooperation to the United Nations in the implementation of this resolution as well as Resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973).<sup>1</sup>

**NOTES:**

1. Text taken from M Medzini Ed. Israel's Foreign Relations. Selected Documents 1947-74, Jerusalem, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1976, p 1061-2

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