Nixon and Carter: A comparative analysis of American foreign policy toward the Middle East

Kristen Josie Dolan
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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Nixon and Carter: A comparative analysis of American foreign policy toward the Middle East

Dolan, Kristen Josie, M.A.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1993

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NIXON AND CARTER: A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN
POLICY TOWARD THE
MIDDLE EAST

by

Kristen J. Dolan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Political Science

Department of Political Science
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
December 1993
The Thesis of Kristen J. Dolan for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science is approved.

Robert M. Bigler
Chairperson, Robert M. Bigler, Ph.D.

James W. Lamare, Ph.D.
Examinig Committee Member

Jerry L. Simich, Ph.D.
Examinig Committee Member

Donald E. Carns, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative

Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
December 1993
ABSTRACT

*Nixon and Carter: A Comparative Analysis of American Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East* examines the Nixon Administration's policies and objectives toward the Middle East, particularly its handling of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and contrasts them with the Carter Administration's policies, which culminated in the peace talks at Camp David. This examination focuses on how these two very different presidents approached a dilemma which has been central to American Middle Eastern policy since the creation of Israel; how can the United States achieve a balance between the competing interests of protecting Israel and maintaining access to Middle East oil?
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to recognize several faculty members of the Political Science Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for their invaluable assistance in this endeavor. First and foremost, I'd like to thank the members of my committee: Dr. Robert M. Bigler, Dr. James W. Lamare, and Dr. Jerry L. Simich, for helping me to stay on the right track. I'm also deeply grateful to Dr. Douglas Imig and Dr. Allison Drew for their comments during the initial phases of this project, which helped me to find the track in the first place. Finally, I'd like to thank Dr. Mehran Tamadonfar, whose advice on how to approach such a large project proved to be very timely and right on the mark.

I would also like to thank Dr. Donald E. Carnes and Dr. David R. Dickens, of the Sociology Department, for their valuable assistance and insight.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On October 6 1973, when Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise attack against Israel, they managed to catch not only Israel, but to a certain extent both of the superpowers, off guard. The regional conflict that ensued had global implications because it highlighted the tenuous boundaries of the international system which had evolved during the Cold War, a system in which the two major players, the United States and the Soviet Union, sought to satisfy their respective national interests while avoiding potentially disastrous confrontations (Craig and George 1990, 119). In this respect, the Middle East, one region among several which had become increasingly important to American foreign policy during the post war era--was suddenly thrust to the fore. The October War of 1973 was really only the latest in a series of conflicts in the Middle East; it posed a challenge to the Nixon administration, but it also presented President Nixon and his staff with an opportunity to make progress toward some form of Arab-Israeli settlement.
Five years later, amid the isolation of Camp David, President Jimmy Carter had the unprecedented opportunity to participate in 13 days of intensive negotiations between Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Menachem Begin of Israel. "By all accounts Carter himself played the decisive role in the negotiating process" (Bradley 1981, 30). In order to do so, he faced several challenges before, during and after the negotiations. Meanwhile, President Carter met the continuing need to fashion a Middle East policy within the context of an ever-changing relationship with the Soviet Union, and against the backdrop of a nation which was being consumed by an expanding energy crisis.

**Purpose**

This thesis will examine the Nixon Administration's policies and objectives toward the Middle East, particularly its handling of the October 1973 War, and contrast them to the Carter Administration's policies, which culminated in the peace talks at Camp David. Nixon's basic challenge was to assure the continued security of Israel and to maintain U.S. access to oil, while avoiding potential confrontations with the Soviet Union. Carter sought to reconcile Arab-Israeli differences in an enduring manner which would compromise neither Israeli security nor American oil interests.
The coordinated Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel in 1973 created an immediate challenge that required an immediate response. Carter's challenge was much less urgent, but nonetheless extremely important. This analysis will explore the similarities and differences in the challenges facing these two very different presidents to determine what lessons can be drawn for future Middle Eastern policy. Similarly, this examination will focus on the methods each president used in dealing with this vital area of the world. Most importantly, after establishing the nature of the challenge posed to Nixon and Carter, and determining how each chose to respond to Middle Eastern issues, this thesis will turn to outcomes, the end results of each president's respective policies, to determine how and why they differed.

This study has benefitted from a well developed and extremely varied body of literature. Each of the administrations in question has provided fertile grounds for scholars studying a number of issues, running the gamut from general foreign policy orientations to the decision making styles of the presidents themselves. Both Nixon and Carter, as well as several prominent members of their administrations, have proven to be prolific authors, particularly with respect to foreign policy issues. American foreign policy toward the Middle East is itself a
very broad subject, as the plethora of books and articles devoted to it demonstrates. The goal of this thesis has been to lift out from each of these broad subject areas the key facets needed to establish a valid basis of comparison for Nixon and Carter's policies toward the Middle East.

Several general features of American foreign policy development provide a broader understanding of specific approaches taken toward the Middle East. Much of the recent literature devoted to the study of foreign policy is inexorably linked by a haunting question; is it possible for the United States to fashion and maintain a coherent foreign policy (Kegley and Wittkopf 1988, 1)? The post World War II era, particularly the years following the Vietnam conflict, has been characterized by an expanding body of literature which asserts that in order to solve this dilemma, we must develop a more extensive knowledge of how domestic stimuli interact with each other and with external factors resulting in specific foreign policy outcomes (Kegley and Wittkopf 1988, 2). The traditional boundaries separating domestic and foreign policy agendas are no longer distinct. Groups within the private sector as well as domestically oriented government agencies have become increasingly involved in attempts to shape foreign policy (Keohane and Nye 1977).
This interplay between domestic and external factors results in the specific foreign policy context in which individual decision makers must operate. American scholars and policy makers have become increasingly aware of the fact that foreign policy cannot be successfully crafted in a vacuum; context—whether shaped primarily by domestic factors such as public opinion, interest groups and the media, or external factors, such as relations with third-party states—has become a vital consideration. This is particularly evident in the case of the Middle East. The creation of Israel was facilitated by President Truman's support, brought about by strong pressure from American Jewry. For years, Truman's decisions regarding Palestine vacillated from side to side, according to the prevailing political climate. Eventually he and his aides perceived that the domestic political consequences associated with alienating the Jewish vote were too much for Truman to ignore (Snetsinger 1974, 139).

The precedent set during the Truman administration has continued to the point that today both Arab and Israeli interests are well represented by organized, active lobbying groups. Of the two, the Israeli lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), clearly wields more resources. Mitchell Bard points out that American Jews, fearful of the consequences for Israel
and within the United States if they do not have political power, "have devoted themselves to politics with almost religious fervor" (Bard 1988, 58). His study revealed that Jews have a higher voter turnout than any other ethnic group. Although a very small percentage of the total American population, Bard found that Jews were concentrated in twelve key electoral college states (Bard 1988, 59).

The formal Arab lobby, the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), also possesses considerable resources, but lacks the unity and organization of its Jewish counterpart. Like AIPAC, the Arab lobby bases requests for pro-Arab programs on the grounds that such programs are in line with U.S. national interests. Bard suggests that framing issues in terms of national interest is a key facet of AIPAC's strategy because it allows the Jewish lobby to generate broader support than could ever be possible if it were perceived to represent only Israeli interests (Bard 1988, 60). For its part, the NAAA argues that aid to Israel is a waste of the American taxpayer's money and emphasizes the potential benefits of closer ties between the United States and the Arab states.

Studies conducted to determine the relationship between the Israeli and Arab lobbies' activities and U.S. policy indicate that neither lobby has proven to be
particularly capable of directly influencing policy (Bard 1988; Quandt 1977). Rather, their significance lies in their ability to generate congressional support for their respective agendas (Bard 1988, 64), and in their ability to couple this support with "informative" campaigns directed at the American public, campaigns which often influence and define the context in which decisions are made (Quandt 1977, 20). Furthermore, their consistent attempts to convince decision makers that U.S. interests are inextricably linked to their own agendas takes advantage of, and exacerbates, the United States' apparent inability to consistently reconcile a set of highly competitive interests in the Middle East.

The interests themselves have not only been clearly defined, but have actually become quite well accepted, the result of years of policy development that will be briefly outlined in Chapter 2. Tillman suggests that the United States has sought to promote four fundamental goals in the Middle East, "the most important single region in the world from the standpoint of American interests--and the most dangerous." First, policymakers have sought to maintain reliable access, at a reasonable cost, to the region's oil. Second, they have taken steps to ensure the continued survival and security of Israel. Third, the United States, throughout the post World War II era, has
sought to build a relationship with the Soviet Union which avoids confrontation and enhances cooperation. Finally, American foreign policy has been aimed at fulfilling, to the greatest extent possible, specific principles such as the peaceful settlement of international disputes, intolerance for the forceful seizure of territory, and the rights of the various peoples in the region to self-determination (Tillman 1982, 51).

In many respects, the first two goals represent not only competing, but diametrically opposed, interests. The desire to maintain reliable access to oil requires some degree of friendly relations with the oil-producing countries of the Arab world; yet, the American commitment to Israel, at times "more the result of affiliation than of specific strategy to promote American interests" (Tillman 1982, 52), has often left the United States at odds with the Arab community.

It is indeed difficult to determine which interest should take precedence over the others. Economic necessity in the form of the growing need for oil has certainly given more weight to arguments that the United States must maintain viable relationships with the oil-producing Arab nations. Conversely, it has opened the door to fears that frustrated Arab leaders might try to use coercive diplomacy, or "economic blackmail," to force
the United States to abandon its support for Israel (Quandt 1977, 2). In fact, both Nixon and Carter were forced to deal with the threat of potentially disrupted oil supplies during their presidencies. Moreover, many scholars argue that reasoning which links Israel's survival to American interests is faulty, that it was not necessarily in the United States' interest to support the creation of Israel (Snetsinger 1974). While this point still generates debate, it has in essence been made moot by the years of cooperation that have punctuated U.S.-Israeli relations; Israel has received financial and military support and the United States has received a very strategic ally in the region, an ally which has proven to be quite adept at providing exceptional intelligence information as well as advice on how to improve the capability of U.S. military hardware, field tested through years of conflict (Quandt 1977, 9).

American policy toward the Middle East has proven to involve much more than simply choosing one side over the other in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The resulting dilemma has led to repeated diplomatic attempts by many presidents, most notably Carter, to find a solution to the "seemingly intractable" Arab-Israeli conflict, a solution which is also in line with American regional interests (Bradley 1981, 1). Meanwhile, the process of maintaining
American Middle East policy has been one of trying to reevaluate and, more importantly, to prioritize American interests in the region. The relative weight afforded to each interest will therefore serve as a major basis of comparison for Nixon and Carter's policies.

Because of the very nature of these American interests, a combination of ideological and pragmatic concerns, the strategic, or national interests approach to explaining foreign policy toward the Middle East falls short of providing a complete understanding of why decision makers may have chosen specific options under given circumstances. The national interest perspective is largely "based on the assumption that foreign policy is essentially a rational adaptation of means (resources) to ends (national interests). Nation-states seek security, well-being and prestige, and to attain these goals, they employ power, whether in its military or economic form" (Quandt 1977, 4). Policy making is viewed as a process in which the costs and benefits of potential courses of action are compared. Barring irrationality or error, decision makers are expected to select the course of action that best promotes the national interest at an acceptable cost. Quandt argues that the decision making process is not nearly so clear-cut. While the interests themselves may be completely tangible to the foreign
policy analyst who is seeking after-the-fact to explain why a particular decision was made, this may or may not have been the case during the decision making process itself. Therefore, policy does not necessarily flow directly from interests, nor do those interests necessarily remain constant (Quandt 1977, 14).

Thus, while their respective prioritization of national interests in the Middle East should reveal a great deal about Nixon and Carter's policies, Quandt's reasoning suggests that to stop there would amount to barely scratching the surface. Policy makers must operate in a subjective environment, where the perception of national interests is what matters; moreover, the manner in which conflicting interests are resolved and policies devised can have a decisive impact on the decisions themselves (Quandt 1977, 15).

**The Level of Analysis of the Study**

Quandt's emphasis on looking beyond national interests to see how other factors affect foreign policy formulation highlights the fact that one of the first hurdles which must be overcome in the study of international relations, as with any area of scholarly inquiry, is the selection of a viable level of analysis for the phenomena in question. To many who study
international relations, the most appropriate level of analysis has been the systemic level. Often, the international system has been likened to a billiard table, and:

the units of the system--states--are likened to billiard balls whose reactions are determined exclusively by the impact of each unit on the others as they collide in an endless action-reaction sequence of events. What occurs inside the balls, and how that might propel them in one direction or another is beyond the purview of the ‘billiard ball’ model of international politics (Kegley and Wittkopf 1988, 2).

While this approach may provide the means to develop a better understanding of the system as a whole, a growing number of scholars, like Quandt, contend that foreign policy depends not only on the interactive processes among nations, but on those within the various nations themselves. This has led several researchers to focus on the level of the national state, yet, the vastness of the subject area has left room for several interpretations regarding how to further break it down for study. Jervis proposes four levels which deserve attention--the level of decision-making, the level of the bureaucracy, the nature of the state and the workings of domestic politics, and the international environment. (Jervis 1976, 15) Jervis’ inclusion of the fourth category, the international
environment, is significant because it displays a keen awareness of the interplay which occurs between the domestic and international environments in the formulation of foreign policy. Various elements from each of these environments can affect decision-makers, depending upon the specific circumstances in question. To ignore the international environment in a study of domestic influences over foreign policy would equate, perhaps somewhat loosely, but equate nonetheless, to ignoring the processes which occur inside the billiard balls when taking a systemic approach.

Kegley and Wittkopf group "perceptions about the multitude of influences on foreign policy-making" into three basic categories which they depict as forming separate, yet interrelated layers of influence. The broadest level consists of the societal environment, which is impacted primarily by the political culture of the United States, "the basic needs, values, beliefs and self-images widely shared by Americans about their political system." Below this level rests the institutional setting, the various branches of the government, as well as the departments and agencies responsible for decision making and management. Finally, foreign policy must pass through the level comprised by decision makers and their policy-making positions. The personalities, psychological
predispositions, perceptions and role responsibilities of decision makers can have a decided impact on the policy-making process and, ultimately on foreign policy outcomes themselves (Kegley and Wittkopf 1988, 5).

Kegley and Wittkopf’s model suggests that a specific policy outcome may be affected by elements from each of these three layers of influence. The third layer, that comprised by decision-makers and their policy-making positions, will serve as the "stable point of focus" (Singer 1961, 78) for this thesis, which after all is a comparative analysis of how two different presidents chose to approach a vital area of the world. Yet, in order to fully appreciate why each of them chose to pursue particular options, how they established their respective priorities and what caused them to form specific perceptions, it is necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the context in which these decision makers operated.

As alluded to previously, two elements make up the broad contours of this context: the domestic environment and the international environment.

The Domestic Environment

While it may have once been a widely held belief that "politics stop at the water's edge," that national
interests are considered before personal and partisan interests when it comes to foreign policy, Kegley and Wittkopf, like Quandt, suggest that this is no longer the case. Domestic considerations, which are themselves affected by the political culture of the United States, have begun to play at least as prominent a role in foreign policy formulation as the international strategic situation (Kegley and Wittkopf 1988, 11). Public opinion has become the litmus test by which a president's foreign policies are judged (Craig and George 1990, 60).

Throughout the post war era, presidential authority, once nearly unquestioned in the realm of foreign policy, has waned considerably. Hans Morgenthau's insistence that statesmen should never allow their decisions to be influenced by public opinion (Morgenthau 1973), has proven to be an elusive goal. Politics have intruded into the decision making process, decreasing the ability of presidents to make foreign policy decisions without considering the impact those decisions may have on their political future (Destler, Gelb, and Lake 1984, 18). Destler, Gelb and Lake assert that the resulting "breakdown" in foreign policy has led to the very inconsistency and incoherence that has come to typify the American approach to world affairs since Vietnam. Over time, the United States has lost the ability to frame "a
coherent sense of national interests, the enduring purposes that flow from values, geography, and our place in the hierarchy of world power" (Destler, Gelb, and Lake 1984, 18). Whereas in most nations, it takes a revolution to redefine the overarching perception of what constitutes the national interest, in the United States, significant change can, and often does, result from a presidential election (Destler, Gelb, and Lake 1984, 18).

Richard Nixon's presidency was pivotal in terms of domestic influences over foreign policy. It began and ended with significant events, Vietnam and Watergate, both of which led to increased congressional and popular involvement in the foreign policy decision making process. Holsti and Rosenau point out that from 1945 to 1965, before the foreign policy consensus was shattered by the Vietnam War, the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy Administrations could count on support from Congress, the media, other leaders and the informed public, as long as they pursued policies based on an accepted set of principles about foreign affairs and the role of the United States in the world. After Vietnam, the near consensus between elite and public opinion regarding the direction which should be taken in foreign affairs began to erode; in the absence of this consensus, Congress and the Executive Branch each became less sure of the other's
position. Meanwhile, the prevailing anti-communist ideology, since World War II the defining characteristic of American foreign policy, began to dissipate, decreasing the willingness among policy makers to make deals that fit both national and party interests (Destler, Gelb, and Lake 1984, 18).

Presidential authority reached its apex, and even began to diminish, during the aftermath of the Vietnam War. The period since has been characterized by a continual fluctuation in presidential authority. In spite of this trend, Richard Nixon, like many of his predecessors, enjoyed a nearly complete freedom to maneuver in foreign affairs. In fact, it was after Nixon's presidency, and to a large extent because of it, that the authority of the executive branch became the subject of broad scrutiny in the face of a growing accusation that abuses had occurred which threatened the very system of checks and balances envisioned by the Founders (Schlesinger 1973). Critics charged that several presidents, Nixon among them, had abused their right to secrecy as a means to protect and preserve their national security power (Cronin 1988, 151). Thus, successive presidents, particularly Ford and Carter who came into office at the height of this critical period, were forced to operate in an environment punctuated by a popular and
congressional impulse to restrict presidential authority, even in foreign affairs. The degree to which additional constraints affected Carter's freedom to maneuver in foreign affairs will serve as an interesting basis of comparison to Nixon's presidency.

Holsti and Rosenau's study demonstrates the depths of the chasms which divided opinion over the directions foreign policy should take in the 1970s and 1980s. Their findings also underscore the fact that domestic issues and foreign policy are often viewed as competing interests. Public opinion surveys conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) indicate that the pendulum has swung back and forth several times, favoring one broad category of interests, then the other. Three studies, conducted in 1974, 1978 and 1982, demonstrated a preoccupation with domestic issues, reversing the public opinion trend which had held from 1940 to 1973 (Reilly 1987, 45). A fourth poll, taken in 1986, indicated a swing back toward greater sensitivity in foreign affairs (Reilly 1987, 46). This was accompanied by a significant shift in the way that both the public and leaders perceived the United States' role in world affairs. Reilly attributes these changing attitudes to the drop in inflation which took place from 1978 to 1986, the easing of unemployment from 1982 to 1986, and increased
confidence among Americans with respect to the U.S.-Soviet military balance (Reilly 1987, 48).

The "pendulum effect" exhibited in these successive surveys would seem to indicate an unwillingness on the part of the American people to support active involvement in world affairs during periods of domestic uncertainties. This limits a president's ability to enact and sustain far-reaching policies; domestic, particularly economic, upheaval can lead the public to reel in any slack it may have given the administration in the foreign policy arena, expecting attention to be diverted from politics among nations back toward problems at home. This competition can exact a heavy toll on the president (Destler, Gelb and Lake 1984, 20). In fact, Quandt suggests that Jimmy Carter pulled back on his efforts toward a Middle East peace initiative in the fall of 1977 because the domestic political price he was paying had become too high (Quandt 1988, 94).

The structure of the electoral cycle compounds this problem. Quandt builds an extremely convincing case in which he asserts that the present electoral cycle is preventing the United States from realizing the full potential of the presidency, and therefore from establishing a consistent and effective foreign policy. Because most newly elected presidents have very little
foreign policy experience, they spend the first year of their first term simply gaining that experience. During the third and fourth years, the administration is apt to become increasingly preoccupied with re-election, placing foreign policy on the back burner. In essence, then, the only opportunities for first term in-roads into foreign policy occur during the second year. The first year and a half of the second term are the best for foreign policy initiatives. Late in the second year, however, domestic issues are likely to again take precedence over foreign policy concerns. Midterm congressional elections become an increasingly important determinant of how much power the president will have during his last two years (Quandt 1988, 93-94).

Quandt's argument highlights a fundamental difference between the Nixon and Carter presidencies. Unlike Carter, Nixon brought a wealth of foreign policy experience to the office. Therefore, one would expect Richard Nixon to have made more headway in the Middle East during the earlier stages of his administration. As Chapter 3 will demonstrate, however, this was not necessarily the case. To understand why Nixon's extra foreign policy experience did not translate into an early proactive involvement in the Middle East requires a move out of the domestic contextual environment into the international; the first
several years of President Nixon's first term were overshadowed by the American involvement in Vietnam.

**The International Environment**

The second broad component of the foreign policy decision-making context in which presidents must operate is comprised by the international environment. For years, American leaders sought to conduct affairs as if the United States were not affected by circumstances in the world around it. Following World War II, however, several prominent leaders, Franklin Roosevelt among them, became convinced that the United States had to move away from its isolationist tendencies toward a more active foreign policy directed at helping to establish and strengthen an effective international system which would, in turn, avoid breakdowns such as those which had caused both world wars. Although his "Great Design," a variation of the balance-of-power system based on cooperation between the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China, was not adopted, Roosevelt was instrumental in terms of placing American foreign policy on a new track, a path which would allow successive presidents to remain heavily involved in world affairs (Graig and George 1990, 103-106).

After World War II, American leaders began to perceive that a solid European recovery was in the United
States' best interests. During this period, Soviet actions in Eastern Europe were viewed with a wary eye. The initial belief that the Soviets were pursuing limited objectives which could be justified in terms of their security needs eventually gave way to concern as more and more territory came under Soviet influence (Craig and George 1990, 117). By the time American leaders had become alarmed, however, a great deal of territory was controlled by Stalin. Under the auspices of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Russians had already annexed Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and sizeable portions of Poland and Romania by 1939. After the war, Stalin installed Communist puppet governments in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania. Soviet expansion continued with the annexation of four Japanese islands and a series of attempts to establish Communist regimes in several countries throughout the world (Nixon 1990, 16-17). The view of Soviet intentions steadily darkened as they brought strong pressure against several governments in the Middle East, while pursuing their own set of occupation policies in Germany (Craig and George 1990, 117).

Against this backdrop of perceived Soviet expansion, anti-communism became one of the most persistent driving forces in post-war American foreign policy. In fact,
several presidents were heavily influenced by the desire to prevent the spread of Communism throughout the world. A bipolar relationship developed between the United States and the Soviet Union, a relationship which eventually became known as the "Cold War" (Craig and George 1990, 119).

The ensuing U.S.-Soviet rivalry unquestionably exerted a determining influence over world affairs and became a defining characteristic of American foreign policy. More importantly, however, it gave a very distinct complexion to American Middle East policy. When the new dimension of Soviet-American competition was added to the equation, a very complex situation became even more difficult. Attempts to fashion a cohesive, enduring Middle East policy became even more problematic.

Interestingly, Nixon and Carter gave different emphasis to this Soviet-American competition, in general, and particularly with respect to the Middle East. Thus, each president's respective prioritization of Middle East affairs, as applied to the Soviet-American competition, stands out as another interesting basis of comparison.

Although Soviet-American competition is the most prominent feature of the international context in which American decision-makers operated under Nixon and Carter, the international environment also influenced Middle East
policy formulation in other, more subtle ways. First, crises in other areas of the world, depending on their scope and intensity, diverted attention away from the Middle East for extended periods of time. Such was the case with the Vietnam conflict under Johnson and Nixon. Second, and perhaps just as important, changes in the dynamics of the situation within the Middle East itself, when recognized, may have caused leaders to re-evaluate their policies.

These three facets of the international environment: the Soviet-American competition, crises which developed in other areas of the world, and changes in the dynamics of the Middle East, particularly with respect to the Arab-Israeli dispute, will be examined in the chapters which follow in order to determine their impact on Nixon and Carter's Middle East policies.

**Framework of the Study**

As the preceding indicates, the basic framework of this study is challenge and response, determining what faced each administration and how each chose to act given a particular set of circumstances.

Because context has often proven to be a determining factor in how the United States has approached the Middle East, this examination will compare the contexts in which
Nixon and Carter operated. Specifically, it will focus on the domestic political pressures faced by each, the effectiveness of information and advice available to each, and the individual outlooks of the decision-makers themselves. Moreover, this examination will consider how external factors, such as U.S.-Soviet relations, affected decisions made vis-a-vis the Middle East.

This exploration of context will form the most basic layer of the study, establishing a backdrop against which we can then determine the nature of the challenges posed to Nixon and Carter during their administrations. This will in turn provide a foundation to support an analysis of each administration’s policy objectives, both in terms of overarching foreign policy and with respect to the Middle East. The former, overarching policy, will serve as a bridge to link the analysis of context to the discussions of specific Middle Eastern policy. After all, each president dealt with the Middle East as one portion of a broader canvas. To the extent that circumstances allowed, Nixon approached his policy in terms of his overarching detente goals, Carter within the framework of human rights.

Once this foundation has been built and the undergirding supports added, analysis will focus on the actual methods employed by each president in attempts to
achieve specific objectives in the Middle East. How much did each rely on the use of force, economic coercion and other tools of statecraft? Which tools, if any, proved to be more effective than others? To what extent did specific contextual elements impact the effectiveness of the methods employed? This line of questioning will prove particularly instructive, facilitating an analysis of the relationship between the methods employed and the end results. If the outcomes of the presidents' policies prove to be significantly different, our task will be to determine what caused this difference—the methods employed, the contextual elements, or some unexpected factor? If the differences prove to be negligible, the question that will remain is whether or not, in the case of the Middle East, context is such a complicating factor that it simply interferes with the impact of traditional tools of statecraft.

For the sake of simplicity, this study will address each of the major areas of interest: the context, the nature of the challenge, the methods used, and the policy outcomes, of each administration separately, in Chapters 3 and 4. These separate analyses will be followed by a chapter devoted to strict comparison in order to draw conclusions to the many questions outlined above. In order to fully appreciate the scope of the issues that
were dealt with by Nixon and Carter, however, it is necessary to begin with an overview of the Arab-Israeli dilemma itself, and with a brief survey of the development of U.S. Middle Eastern policy. Certain aspects of their inheritance proved to be critical to the development of policy by both Nixon and Carter. Chapter 2 will address these issues.
Chapter Notes


2. Ibid., 61. The Arab lobby must compete with several other politically oriented groups which act on their own; for example, the Middle East Research and Information Project, the Middle East Affairs Council, and the American Palestine Committee.

3. This interest will need to be re-examined in light of the recent collapse of the Soviet Union.

4. The "level-of-analysis problem" is particularly intriguing in international relations because the field lends itself to such a vast array of alternative approaches. See, for example, David J. Singer, "The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations," World Politics 24 (October, 1961): 77-92; and Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976).

5. See, for example, Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, "A Leadership Divided: the Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Leaders, 1976-1984," in The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence, eds. Charles W. Kegley and Eugene R. Wittkopf (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988), 30-44. Holsti and Rosenau found these principles to include: active involvement in efforts to create a just and stable world order; involvement in a broad range of international organizations; support for the creation of peacetime alliances; liberalization of foreign trade; foreign aid programs; and containment, as the most effective means to counter Soviet expansion.

6. Holsti and Rosenau categorized American leaders as: Cold War internationalists, who perceived a world of conflict with the primary challenges linked to the division of the United States and the Soviet Union; Post Cold War internationalists, who were more strongly oriented to those issues dividing the world along a north-south line; or, semi-isolationists, primarily concerned with domestic issues.
CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The historical context of the Middle East provides a rich and vivid backdrop against which policy makers must make contemporary decisions. Failure to understand the depths of the chasms which divide Arabs and Israelis can lead to policy decisions which fail to garner sufficient support from regional actors. Failure to appreciate how American Middle Eastern policy has evolved to its present stage of development can lead to unrealistic expectations among contemporary decision makers, who are often forced to channel the momentum of past decisions into their own foreign policy agendas.

The Arab-Israeli Dilemma

The state of Israel arose out of a conflict between two peoples—Arab and Jewish—occupying the same general territory and unable to satisfy their differences within it. Following WWII, the British passed the Palestine problem to the United Nations, which partitioned it into separate Arab and Jewish states. The inequitable distribution of lands
and resources provoked the Palestinian Arabs to war, but they were no match for the well-organized force of Jewish WWII veterans. The remnants of Arab lands were annexed by bordering Arab states who came to suffer the destabilizing effects of over one million Arab refugees. Israel was thus born in conflict and it has ever since had to remain on the alert because of oft-repeated threats that she would be annihilated (Aker 1985, 4).

When it began, the October 1973 War, known to Israelis as "the Yom Kippur War," and to Arabs as "the War of Ramadan," was merely the latest explosion between two peoples with a history of volatile relations (O’Ballance 1978, 7). A basic knowledge of the historical context is vital to understanding the war because it, like each of the clashes which came before, was brought about as the result of a deep-rooted dispute between Israel and its Arab neighbors, a dispute that began long before the state of Israel was established. Frank Aker’s description of Israel’s origins is brief, yet it captures the essence of the perpetual conflict which has pitted Arab and Jew against one another for decades.

The major impetus for the establishment of the Jewish state was provided by the Zionist Movement, "the strongest unifying force among world Jewry" (Peretz 1983, 21). During the late 1800s, several different Zionist movements coalesced into a single, World Zionist Organization, which
held the first World Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland in 1897. Among the chief accomplishments of the congress was the formal establishment of an overriding goal for the movement: "to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law" (Peretz 1983, 19). Particularly in its infancy, the movement suffered from internal division and external criticism; however, support for the Zionists eventually grew as the extent of the atrocities committed against Jews during the Holocaust became clear.

Peretz (1983) traces the historical evolution of Israel from its earliest stages, when the Yishuv (Jewish community) constituted a very small percentage of the population in Palestine, up through the present era. His description illustrates a crucial point that should not be overlooked when considering the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since the beginning, when Arab and Jew first came into contact with one another, external forces have exerted a determining influence over Palestine. During the first World War, the predominant influence was British. In 1917, the British publicly demonstrated support for the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine by issuing the Balfour Declaration. After the war, the League of Nations adopted a policy known as the British Mandate for Palestine. The Mandate formally
recognized the Zionist Movement; however, during the mandatory era, the region was handled as if it were a British crown colony. Efforts were made to create self-governing institutions in the region, but these were defeated by the conflicting objectives of the three major communities that occupied the area: the Yishuv, with their Zionist nationalism; the Arabs, who were striving for self-determination following the break up of the Ottoman Empire; and the British, who sought to protect their own imperial interests while somehow maintaining a balance between their obligations to both Jews and Arabs (Peretz 1983, 45).

The end of World War II brought an end to the British Mandate in Palestine. Great Britain, exhausted by the war, suffered from tremendous financial pressures and began to pull out of its most expensive imperial outposts, especially those which had become troublesome to maintain. In Palestine, Jewish nationalism intensified as the Zionist movement began to lean toward militant activism. The Yishuv demanded that restrictions imposed on immigration and expansion of the Jewish homeland be lifted. Clashes between the Yishuv and British forces became more frequent. "In desperation, Great Britain turned the problem over to the new United Nations (UN) Organization in 1946" (Peretz 1983, 46).
At the same time, Arab opposition to a Jewish homeland occupying all of Palestine was very strong. To accommodate this opposition, the UN General Assembly put forth a compromise partition resolution. It divided the country into a Jewish state, an Arab state and an international enclave around Jerusalem. Intense emotional reactions to the partition resolution led to civil war in Palestine. While Jews fought Arabs, the British resolved to leave the region by the last official day of the Mandate with as little trouble as possible. As soon as the UN adopted the partition resolution, Arab leaders began organizing local militia forces to prevent the establishment of the Jewish state. The state of Israel itself was actually established during the ensuing conflict, on May 14, 1948. The war ended in 1949, with separate armistice agreements between Israel and each of the Arab countries involved. Thus, Israel emerged "in a land that Arabs insist belongs wholly to Arabs" (Sobel and Koset 1974, 1).

The second Arab-Israeli war took place in 1956 after President Nasser nationalized, then closed, the Suez Canal leading to an Anglo-French invasion of Egypt (O'Ballance 1978, 1). Israel took advantage of Egypt's preoccupation and moved troops accross the Sinai desert. These Israeli columns met light opposition and were able to press almost
as far as the canal itself, gaining control of virtually the entire Sinai Peninsula. Months later, however, the Israelis grudgingly withdrew to their former boundaries, bowing to pressure from the UN and the United States in particular.

The "Six Day War" was fought in June 1967. Unable to remain idle in the face of increasing Arab threats and military preparedness, the Israelis opted to launch a preemptive strike on Arab airfields (Aker 1985, 5). Within six days, the military capabilities of the Arab states had been effectively neutralized. "The Israelis managed to destroy the air force of Jordan, almost destroy that of Egypt, and badly maul those of Syria and Iraq. Left without air cover, the Arabs were disastrously defeated" (O'Ballance 1978, 2). In fact, the victory was so decisive that it raised serious doubts about the war-fighting capability of Arab military personnel, "no matter how well armed or trained" (Aker 1985, 5).

In addition to their military defeat, the Arabs suffered crucial territorial losses as a result of the war. In the north, Syria lost the Golan Heights, with its commanding view of the valleys in northern Israel and of the road to the Syrian capital, Damascus. Jordan lost the West Bank, including the Christian and Islamic temples of Jerusalem. Egypt, in spite of its 90,000-man army, lost
over 20,000 square miles of land east of the Suez Canal, the Sinai Peninsula. "Arab humiliation was so great that the Arab states refused to negotiate any kind of settlement. The stage was irrevocably set for another clash" (Aker 1985, 5).

The Egyptian armed forces wasted little time. Regrouped and resupplied with Soviet material, they launched President Nasser's "War of Attrition" later the same year. The resulting battles were fought across the Suez Canal, which now served as the dividing line between Egyptians and Israelis. On the ground, the battles included heavy artillery duels, mortar barrages and commando raids. In the skies above, aircraft were used for strategic bombing and close air support of ground troops. Soviet supplied surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) increased the effectiveness of Egyptian air defenses. Since the June defeat in the Six Day War, when most of Egypt's planes had been destroyed on the ground within a matter of hours, the Israelis had been enjoying virtual freedom of action in the skies above Egypt. The introduction of the Soviet SAMs severely limited that freedom, and forced the Israelis to install electronic countermeasure (ECM) pods on their aircraft to warn pilots of incoming missiles, thereby enabling them to take evasive action. Technological advances, in the form of
electronics that could potentially give one side the edge over the other, soon became a coveted prize. Edgar O'Ballance describes a "mad scientists' war" which escalated "as on the ground, radar-directional, searching and tracking equipment improved, and in the air, more advanced ECM pods enabled the pilot to jam, counterjam and even deflect missiles aimed at him" (O'Ballance 1978, 2).

When the War of Attrition ended on August 7, 1970, neither side had gained a clear advantage over the other. Israeli aircraft had, however, lost control of the skies over Egypt and their activities were confined to the Suez Canal Zone.

Opinion is divided as to whether or not the battles fought from 1967 to 1970 actually constituted a "war." Nonetheless, this period of repeated confrontations, sometimes referred to as "No Peace, No War" (Aker 1985, 9), had a decisive impact on the ensuing conflict, which began on Saturday, October 6, 1973 when six Syrian jets attacked Israeli defensive positions along the Golan Heights (Aker 1985, 20).

By nightfall, the Israelis had lost the southern Golan. Meanwhile, the Egyptians launched a coordinated, all-out attack against Israeli positions in the Sinai, striking airfields and mounting an artillery barrage involving two thousand guns. Using available broad, flat
terrain as a staging area, the Egyptians mounted a "blitzkrieg-like attack" (Shazly 1980, 222). The Israelis were caught off guard by the simultaneous offensives, especially in the Sinai.

How could Israel, a "geopolitical island" (Aker 1985, 17) in the midst of antagonistic neighbors, allow itself to be caught off guard? What led the Egyptians and Syrians to launch their coordinated attacks? The answers to these questions may be found in a closer examination of the foreign policy context in which the Nixon administration operated. Before turning to this subject, however, it is important to mention some of the milestones of American Middle Eastern policy that are relevant for later discussions.

**U.S. Middle East Policy Development**

The literature concerning American foreign policy is imbued with the sense that it, like so many other facets of the American political system, has undergone an evolutionary process. The United States was able to remain distanced from foreign affairs for quite some time, following a tradition of isolationism articulated by George Washington who urged in his farewell address that the new state’s interests would best be served by never taking part in the internal quarrels of Europe, and by steering clear of "permanent alliances with any portion of
the foreign world." This tradition prevailed even after victory in the Spanish-American War resulted in new overseas interests and responsibilities, and even after the pivotal role the country played in World War I.

The precept which guided American political thought and foreign policy at the beginning of the twentieth century held that the United States should restrict its involvement to a well-defined area in the Western Hemisphere. Of course, the nation would protect its citizens and interests in these areas, but these interests were primarily commercial, philanthropic and cultural (De Novo 1963, 3-4). In the case of the Middle East, this pattern of development is particularly apparent. For years the United States remained "politically disinterested" (De Novo 1963, 7) in the region, content to concentrate efforts in Central America. The six European powers (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Russia), on the other hand, were deeply interested in the Middle East, primarily because of its strategic location. American leaders sought to avoid the international competition among the European powers and chose to fashion a policy based on the traditional guidelines of non-intervention (Bryson 1977, 45).

This non-intervention, although it was the norm in the case of the Middle East, was by no means absolute.
The necessity of establishing an expanded market place, vital to the survival of the new republic, prompted the United States to begin efforts at Middle East diplomacy as early as 1784, when Congress appointed a special commission consisting of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson to negotiate treaties with the Barbary States (Bryson 1977, 2-3). In a sense, it was in the national interest of the new nation to pursue economic expansion. In March 1815, for example, the United States declared war on Algiers for the protection of American economic interests in the Middle East (Bryson 1977, 6). Furthermore, it was the need for economic expansion which drove early efforts at diplomacy and which eventually led to the establishment of American naval power, developed to safeguard vital shipping routes (Bryson 1977, 7). The continued assurance of "freedom of the seas" thus became another guiding principle used by American diplomats when dealing with the Middle East.

The full evolution of American Middle Eastern policy can be traced through several stages. From 1784-1920, although there were a number of commercial interests in the area, U.S. diplomats devoted most of their attention toward protecting the various missionary and educational interests which had penetrated into many parts of the region (Bryson 1977, vii; De Novo 1963, 19).
Over time, the missionary lobby wielded considerable influence not only in the Department of State, but in the White House and the halls of Congress as well. The lobby actually became so powerful that in 1900 diplomat Lloyd Griscom declared that "the missionaries had been among the first to learn how to exert pressure in politics—even the head of our State Department used to quake when the head of a Bible society walked in" (Griscom 1940, 134). De Novo points out that the national support of missionary activities serves as a reminder that American isolation did not extend to cultural endeavors. By 1900, American missionaries were operating in Anatolia and European Turkey, Syria, Persia, Egypt and the Persian Gulf region (De Novo 1963, 8).

The missionaries were at the height of their power during the Wilson administration. Woodrow Wilson, the son of a Presbyterian minister, was raised amid clergy and missionaries; as president, he maintained personal contact with several missionary lobbyists. Needless to say, this direct contact with Wilson, coupled with contacts with influential members of Congress and the State Department, afforded the missionaries considerable access to official Washington. They used this access to promote various agendas; most notably, they were actively involved in pressuring the United States government to act
on behalf of Armenia. In fact, although they failed to make it a reality, "their all-consuming goal was to realize American acceptance of a mandate for Armenia" (Bryson 1981, 4).

When the American missionaries first arrived in the Levant in 1820, they discovered that the Muslim population was not at all receptive to Christianity (Bryson 1981, 3). Finding little success in evangelizing the Muslims, they directed their religious efforts primarily toward the native Christians in the region, the Armenians, Greeks, Nestorians, Copts, and the Christians in Lebanon (Bryson 1981, 2). At the same time, they redirected much of their remaining energy and resources toward education and medicine. As educators, they emphasized the importance of cultural traditions and native languages, thereby fanning the embers of what has since become the flame of modern Arab nationalism, and stimulating the emergence of nationalism among the peoples of Armenia (Bryson 1981, 3). Through institutions such as Robert College, founded in 1863, Syrian Protestant College, founded in 1866, and Constantinople Women's College, founded in 1871, the missionaries trained many of those who would eventually become leaders in the modern Middle Eastern nation-state.

Exposure to western political theory, the writings of Locke, Jefferson, and Hume for example, strengthened
nationalist sentiments and actually awoke in the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the Arabs, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Cretans, the desire to pursue unique national destinies (Bryson 1981, 3). The United States served as an example for those who sought to achieve self-determination. However, as various movements got underway, requests for actual assistance were denied on the basis of the long-standing policy of non-intervention and the Monroe Doctrine, first put forth in 1823. In spite of this official stance, the missionaries were committed to assisting these national movements in their struggles for self-determination.

Early American involvement in the Middle East highlights the often conflicting duality of American foreign policy, the realistic, pragmatic desire to further the national interest, and the idealistic, crusading zeal to spread democracy throughout the world. In the case of early Middle Eastern diplomacy, the former was typified by the pragmatic decision to resist becoming involved in the various struggles for self-determination which began to take root. The latter was promoted primarily via the missionary influence in terms of the short-term gains the lobby was able to bring about by pressuring the American government.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, commercial
interests began to compete in earnest with the missionaries for a voice in the shaping of U.S. Middle Eastern policy (Bryson 1977, 44). Prior to World War I, however, the missionaries remained the strongest interest group in the region (Bryson 1977, 45). During this period, Great Britain devoted a great deal of effort toward securing Middle Eastern oil, whereas the United States did not. In fact, the State Department did not exert any pressure during the pre-war years to support those Americans who were seeking oil concessions in the Middle East (Bryson 1977, 56-57). By the 1920's, this had changed somewhat as U.S. diplomats began to employ the Open Door policy\(^2\) to secure American access to Middle Eastern oil reserves.

The preceding decade was also crucial in terms of economic endeavors in the Middle East. President Taft, an avid proponent of Dollar Diplomacy, placed the pursuit of economic interests at the top of his list of priorities. The desire to find new commercial opportunities was so great during this time frame that officials within the administration were willing to violate the traditional guidelines of non-intervention in order to pursue economic interests\(^3\) (Bryson 1977, 49-50).

Although the basic desire to gain access to Middle East oil had existed for quite some time prior to World
War I, U.S. diplomats tended to defer to British supremacy in the region. This began to change during the inter-war period as competition developed over oil in the Middle East. From 1919 to 1939, with the support of the U.S. government, American oil companies successfully challenged British control of Middle East oil. By World War II, American oil interests had gained substantial holdings in Kuwait, a monopoly in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, and approximately one-fourth of the Iraq Petroleum Company (Bryson 1977, 96). By 1939, approximately 15 percent of the oil produced in the region was for American oil companies. American participation in Middle East oil production not only promised enormous profits, but eventually led to a reliance on the importation of Middle East oil (Bryson 1977, 109).

The pre-and inter-war periods were crucial in Middle Eastern diplomacy in the sense that the American government became increasingly responsive to another very influential group, American oil interests. U.S. oil companies were not content to stand idly by, while the British cornered the oil market. They pressured American officials for assistance in the name of the Open Door, and of Free Trade. World War II served as a point of departure for US-Middle East relations as American policy makers began to perceive the importance of maintaining
access to the region's rich oil supplies. After the war, this oil was also perceived as vital to the recovery of Europe which was, in turn, viewed as vital to American interests, especially in the face of the growing threat posed by Communist expansion. Protection of private interests was replaced by considerations of the national interest (Bryson 1981, 1). President Truman was faced with the unenviable task of not only defining the broad outlines of US national interests in the Middle East, but of determining how to promote them within a highly unstable context.

Truman's presidency served as a turning point in U.S.-Middle East relations; he made an actual commitment to the region that has been passed on to every administration since. While it is true that several presidents before Truman expressed interest in the Middle East, little of this interest was manifested into actual policy. During the first World War, for example, Great Britain approached President Woodrow Wilson, seeking American support for an official pro-Zionist statement. Great Britain saw in such a statement an opportunity to encourage Jewish support for the Allies; however, by making a pro-Zionist statement, the government would be running the risk of alienating recently cultivated friendships with Arab nations. This gave Great Britain
cause for concern, and led British diplomats to seek official support from the United States. "A declaration of sympathy with Zionism by President Woodrow Wilson would dispel the British concern of becoming diplomatically isolated on the Palestine issue" (Snetsinger 1974, 2).

In September 1917, Great Britain informally approached Wilson on the subject. Wilson, with advice from Colonel Edward House, replied that any Allied announcement concerning the future disposition of lands within the Ottoman Empire would be inappropriate, especially at a time when the Allies hoped to persuade the Empire to drop out of the war (Snetsinger 1974, 2). The State Department, headed by Secretary of State Robert Lansing, also advised against any pro-Zionist statements (Adler 1948, 305-8; 334).

American Zionists, united under one of their most influential members, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, launched a campaign to convince Wilson of the need to support the Zionist cause. Soon thereafter, the British again approached Wilson regarding the pro-Zionist statement. This time, the President offered his support. Snetsinger suggests that had Wilson's second response been similar to his first, the British might have decided against issuing a statement on Zionism. Furthermore, by using direct personal intervention to move President
Wilson from flat disapproval to endorsement of the proposed declaration, the Zionists laid the groundwork for taking similar steps during the Truman administration, "with even more striking results" (Snetsinger 1974, 2-3).

In November 1917, the following statement was issued in a letter from Great Britain's Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, to Lord Rothschild:

His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this objective, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

The Balfour declaration, although it contained imprecise language, had a profound impact within the Zionist ranks; it came to be viewed as the "emancipation proclamation" of the movement (Tillman 1982, 10). Furthermore, President Wilson's endorsement of the Balfour Declaration was interpreted by many as a moral commitment to the Zionist cause. Needless to say, this placed Wilson in an awkward position, because support for Zionist aspirations conflicted with the president's commitment to the principle of self-determination. While Wilson was
sympathetic to the Zionist cause, his peace program was based largely on the notion that lasting peace must be built upon the self-determination of existing populations (Tillman 1982, 11). In fact, Point Twelve of Wilson's Fourteen Points called for an "absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development" for the peoples of the Ottoman Empire.

In light of the fact that Arabs had inhabited Palestine for centuries and that, by the end of World War I, Jews comprised no more than 10 percent of the area's population, Wilson's apparent support for the Zionist cause was inconsistent with his foreign policy initiatives. The chances that he would be able to make gains in the latter while remaining true to the former were very remote. British Foreign Secretary Balfour noted "the ambivalence of American foreign policy" toward the Middle East at a meeting with Felix Frankfurter and Justice Brandeis, held in Paris on June 24, 1919. Balfour told both men that "he could not understand how President Wilson reconciled his advocacy of Zionism with his commitment to the principle of self-determination."

This inclination of trying to satisfy both sides in the developing Arab-Israeli conflict, but satisfying neither, would become an all too common characteristic of subsequent American Middle East policy.
After World War I, American Zionists pressured the U.S. government to use diplomatic means to persuade Britain to implement the Balfour Declaration. British forces occupied Palestine, and in April 1920, the Supreme Allied Council awarded Britain a mandate for the region at the San Remo Conference. The League of Nations approved the mandate in July 1922, on the condition that Britain create a national Jewish home. The American government resisted the pressure to become involved in the situation. During the 1920's, in fact, the State Department continued to follow the guidelines of non-intervention and sought only to protect American interests. For the most part Palestine was considered to be a British concern (Bryson 1977, 90-91).

One of the most controversial issues facing the British during the mandatory era concerned Jewish immigration. By the 1930's, Arab fears that Jews would overrun Palestine had just begun to subside. These fears were renewed, however, when Adolf Hitler’s rise to power in Germany, and the resulting persecution of European Jews, caused a rapid upsurge in Jewish migration to the United States, Britain and Palestine. A violent Arab uprising in 1936 led the British to appoint an official investigative body, known as the Peel Commission, to determine the causes of unrest. In 1937, the commission
recommended that Palestine be divided into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. This proposal found little support from either side. After further violence in 1938, British forces found it necessary to restore peace and the British government was compelled to re-evaluate its position in Palestine (Bryson 1977, 91). To assuage Arab concerns, the Foreign Office issued a White Paper in 1939. This document extended British rule over the region, limited the sale of land to Jews, and most importantly, restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 over a five year period. Furthermore, immigration after the designated five year period would be subject to Arab approval (Tillman 1982, 13).

American Zionists, who had been weakened by factionalism during the 1920's (Bryson 1977, 91), began to coalesce in the face of the threat to European Jews. In 1938, they launched a campaign urging the Roosevelt Administration to persuade Britain to fulfill the promise of the Balfour Declaration. Meanwhile, American oil interests insisted that support for the Zionist movement would endanger American oil holdings. Resisting pressure from both groups, the Roosevelt Administration continued to regard Palestine as a British sphere (De Novo 1963, 342-344).

Events that took place during, and to a greater
extent after, the second World War led to pronounced changes in U.S. Middle East policy. During the war, Allied interest in the region intensified and is perhaps best illustrated by the struggle which took place between the British, the United States, and the Soviets over the sovereignty of Iran. In 1941, the Soviets occupied Northern Iran as a means to ensure an open supply route into Russia. Meanwhile, the British moved into southern and central Iran, also as a strategic measure. In January 1942, a Tripartite Treaty was concluded, declaring that the presence of foreign troops on Iranian soil was not intended as an occupation and that these troops would be withdrawn within six months of the war’s conclusion (Lenczowski 1990, 9).

In the years that followed, Roosevelt was particularly interested in preserving allied unity, despite the increasingly apparent post-war ambitions of the Russians. This was not the case during the Truman Administration, however. As the war came to a close, the desire to project an appearance of allied unity was replaced by concern over the evolving relationship between the two emergent superpowers (Lenczowski 1990, 8). At the Potsdam Conference, held from July to August, 1945, Stalin objected to Churchill’s proposal that allied troops withdraw from Iran ahead of schedule (Truman 1955, 380).
After Japan surrendered in September, American and British forces began to pull out of Iran in accordance with the guidelines of the Tripartite Treaty. The Soviets, on the other hand, remained in the area past the deadline, set up two pro-Soviet separatist regimes in northwestern Iran—the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan in Tabriz, and the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad—and actually began to move their troops southward (Lenczowski 1990, 9-10).

For President Truman the impending threat of a Communist coup in Greece, coupled with Soviet actions in Iran, "began to look like a giant pincers movement against the oil-rich areas of the Near East and the warm-water ports of the Mediterranean" (Truman 1955, 523). Truman foresaw the potential for grave danger to American interests in the Middle East and diplomatic measures were taken to discourage Soviet actions and to bolster the Iranian position. Once the Soviets had actually left Iran, the American government encouraged the Shah to send Iranian troops to the north to remove the last vestiges of the pro-Soviet regimes in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

Thus, in the face of a growing perception of a Soviet threat, President Truman took the first steps toward what would become a substantial commitment to the security and well-being of Iran, a strategically important ally because of its location and its rich oil supplies. In time, the
policies toward Iran would expand to include economic and technical assistance, strengthening the country's military capabilities, and incorporating Iran into a regional security system comprised of the northern tier of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf (Lenczowski 1990, 13).

The threat of Soviet expansion into Iran was the first of several successive episodes which challenged the Truman Administration. While issues were still being resolved in connection with the Azerbaijan and Kurdish republics, situations developed in both Turkey and Greece which caused additional concern over Soviet aggressive tendencies. To complicate matters, on February 21, 1947, the British ambassador in Washington, Lord Inverchapel, informed Secretary of State George C. Marshall that Britain would no longer be able to ensure the security of Greece and Turkey (Lenczowski 1990, 15). This gave the administration a very compelling reason to increase American involvement in the region.

Truman felt the need for a quick and decisive response from the United States (Truman 1955, 98-101). Before any action could be taken, however, he had to gain congressional and public support for a tougher stance toward the Soviets. On March 12, 1947, the president delivered a message, since referred to as the Truman Doctrine, to Congress. This message outlined the
deteriorating situations in Greece and Turkey, requested military advisory aid and economic assistance in the amount of $400 million for both countries, and emphasized the fact that a global contest had begun pitting the United States against the forces of Communist subversion (Lenczowski 1990, 17). On May 22, 1947, Congress authorized the military and financial aid that the president had requested. During the crucial period immediately following World War II, the policy of containment began to solidify as the primary American response to Soviet expansion (Craig and George 1990, 118). The episodes in Iran, Greece and Turkey proved to be early applications of containment. In time, the policy would lead to increased American involvement in the Middle East and other areas of the world.

Within days of having been sworn in as president on April 12, 1945, Truman was under pressure to take action in the Zionist matter. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, approached Truman for help in resettling Jewish refugees and in establishing the proposed Jewish homeland in Palestine. Since 1939, when the White Paper limited Jewish immigration into Palestine, British-Zionist relations had become very strained. In 1942, a Zionist Conference held in New York established the Biltmore Program with the goal of making
all of Palestine into a Jewish state. During this conference, American Jews asserted themselves and assumed leadership of the world Zionist movement, criticizing European Jews for having been weak and indecisive. Meanwhile, concerted efforts were made to help persecuted Jews immigrate into Palestine, in spite of the newly imposed restrictions. In the latter stages of the war, extremist groups, such as the Irgun Zvai Leumi led by Menachim Begin, launched campaigns of terror against the British in order to force them to leave Palestine (Lenczowski 1990, 22).

Lenczowski suggests that in the initial phase of the Palestine problem, Truman was primarily concerned with the humanitarian aspects of the issue. Although he was aware of the goal to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, he was not prepared to support it. On August 31, 1945, following the victory of the Labour Party in Great Britain, Truman broached the subject of Jewish refugees with Premier Attlee, urging him to immediately allow 100,000 Jewish immigrants into Palestine. The British were not prepared to do so and instead proposed to set up an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to review the Palestine issue and to make recommendations. The resulting proposals called for the continuation of the British mandate pending the establishment of a United
Nations trusteeship; immediate approval for 100,000 Jewish refugees to enter Palestine; and repudiation of the limitations on land transfers (Tillman 1982, 15).

Once these proposals were made, a second committee was set up to consider how they would best be implemented. The resulting report, the Grady-Morrison plan, proposed the establishment of a federalized Jewish-Arab state in Palestine. In addition, it put forth a requirement that Jews and Arabs both consent to further Jewish immigration. Naturally, the Zionists were displeased with this plan, and President Truman rejected it. On October 4, 1946, he sent a new message to Attlee renewing his request that 100,000 Jews be allowed to enter Palestine immediately (Lenczowski 1990, 23).

Soon, joint U.S.-British efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the problems in Palestine broke down. Lenczowski suggests that it was at this point that the issue of statehood became the primary focus of international diplomacy. In April 1947, the British submitted the Palestinian question to a special session of the United Nations General Assembly. Throughout the rest of the year, the assembly and the Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) deliberated. In the meantime, Truman came to terms with his own position on the issue of Jewish statehood (Lenczowski 1990, 24).
This was not an easy task, primarily because Truman found himself at the center of a virtual tug-of-war. On the one hand, representatives of the State Department, the Department of Defense and the military were vehemently opposed to the adoption of pro-Zionist policies, which they believed would cause immeasurable damage to the national interest by alienating oil-rich Arab nations (Snetsinger 1974, 139). On the other hand, Truman was the focus of a "relentless" Zionist campaign, designed to pressure him into adopting a pro-Zionist stance. This pressure became particularly intense after the Palestine question had been brought before the United Nations (Lenczowski 1990, 28).

Interestingly enough, the pressure came not only from well-known Zionist leaders, but from other directions as well. Mobilizing non-Jewish leaders and the groups they represented was a major goal of the Zionist campaign. Advocates included several White House officials, such as David K. Niles, adviser on national minorities, and Clark Clifford, an assistant to the president. In March 1948, his former partner in the haberdashery business, Eddie Jacobson, convinced Truman to meet with the head of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Chaim Weizmann (Lenczowski 1990, 29).

With an election on the horizon, these influential
presidential aides "convinced Truman of the political necessity of catering to American Jews by supporting the cause of Israel" (Snetsinger 1974, 11). When the UN Special Committee on Palestine proposed that the disputed territory be partitioned into a Jewish and an Arab state, with Jerusalem established as an international enclave, Truman directed the State Department to support the plan. Similarly, on November 29, 1947, the U.S. delegate to the UN General Assembly cast the American vote in favor of the partition plan. On May 14, 1948, when Israel was proclaimed a state during the conflict that followed UN acceptance of the partition plan, Truman did not hesitate to recognize the newly formed government. He gave de facto recognition to Israel within eleven minutes of the proclamation. On January 31, 1949, de jure recognition was extended to the Jewish state (Lenczowski 1990, 25-26).

Truman's decision to extend diplomatic recognition to Israel marked a turning point in his approach to Palestine. It was followed by a series of decisions designed to support the Jewish state (Snetsinger 1974, 116), thus committing the United States to the idea of the Jewish state's legitimacy. This left the tremendous responsibility of actually defining the exact nature of U.S.-Israeli and U.S.-Arab relations to successive American presidents. Although he bore the brunt of
relentless pressure from several groups which tried to influence his policy toward Palestine, and in spite of the critical Arab response to his eventual decisions, Truman did not have to contend with any major crises in which American Middle East interests were seriously threatened. Such crises would, however, occur during later presidencies. Dealing with these critical situations would shape the subsequent evolution of U.S. relations with Israel and with the Arab states (Lenzowski 1990, 30).

During the Eisenhower Administration, the Middle East continued to receive a great deal of attention, particularly in terms of the threat of Soviet penetration into the area, the security of oil supplies and the tense relationship between Arabs and Israelis. Within the context of this broader framework, Eisenhower had to contend with four major crises: the Iranian oil crisis; the Suez crisis, which resulted in the second Arab-Israeli war; the civil war in Lebanon; and the revolution in Iraq (Lenzowski 1990, 31).

In order to address potential Soviet incursions into the region, in 1955 the United States sponsored the Baghdad Pact, which combined the efforts of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Britain and Iraq in a defensive alliance against the Soviet threat. In spite of this, Soviet penetration into the region continued to be a grave concern for the
Eisenhower administration. In fact, Bryson suggests that the theme of anti-Communism dominated the thinking of the administration, especially after President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt established closer ties with the Soviet Union in the wake of the Suez crisis (Bryson 1977, 204; Lenczowski 1990, 40-41).

In dealing with the Suez crisis, and throughout his presidency, Eisenhower insisted on an impartial approach to the Arab-Israeli dispute. This was demonstrated by his refusal to provide arms to Egypt, which ironically drove the Egyptians toward their arms agreement with the Soviets in 1955, and by his denial of arms to Israel even after it became apparent that the Soviet-Egyptian deal threatened the balance of power in the region (Alteras 1993, 85; 137-140). Whenever possible, Eisenhower sought to use the peacemaking apparatus of the United Nations to resolve disputes involving the Middle East.

In January 1957, following the Suez crisis, Eisenhower's concern over Soviet penetration in the region had become so great that he requested congressional authority to grant military and economic assistance to any state that requested it. Furthermore, he requested authorization to use military force as required to prevent aggression or subversion within the region. After a great deal of debate, Congress approved these requests on March
9, 1957, in what came to be known as the Eisenhower Doctrine. This doctrine was intended to complement the earlier Truman Doctrine, but was more specifically directed toward protecting the Arab states in the core of the Middle East (Bryson 1977, 204). In order to be truly effective, it required, but did not completely receive, a positive response from the Middle Eastern states it was intended to protect\textsuperscript{14}.

In addition to these specific crises, Eisenhower had to deal with a growing inter-Arab dispute which eventually resulted in two diametrically opposed Arab camps, a radical camp that consisted of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Algeria, and a conservative camp comprised of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya and Morocco. From 1957 to 1967, inter-Arab relations were characterized by repeated attempts at subversion, assassinations, and several coups d'etat. During this period of strained relations, known as the Arab Cold War, the United States found itself drawing closer to the conservative bloc\textsuperscript{15}.

During his presidency, John F. Kennedy sought to change the basic flavor of American foreign policy in general, and with specific regard to the Middle East. In terms of the latter, Kennedy believed that American policy should view the various Arab nationalist movements sympathetically. Moreover, stability in the region should
not be equated with protection of the status quo. In fact, he believed that rigid attempts to contain the forces which sought change could only lead to violence and unrest. In essence, Kennedy linked the achievement of stability in the Middle East with accommodating the forces of change (Lenczowski 1990, 76).

In particular, Kennedy sought to restore friendly relations with all the states in the region, radical and conservative alike. In his view, it would be detrimental to American policy for the United States to be continually identified with the forces seeking to preserve tradition. Instead, he hoped to establish more viable ties with progressive Arab leaders, believing that they represented the future. To this end, Kennedy viewed American policy toward the Arabs in terms of the same general principles that were to guide his approach to other parts of the Third World: a sympathetic understanding of nationalism as a driving force of ex-colonial peoples; acceptance of neutralism professed by the emerging nation-states; and advocacy of American support for development, reform and modernization as the best means to avoid extremism and assure stability in less developed societies (Lenczowski 1990, 68).

Ironically, Kennedy's attempts to restore friendly ties with the so-called radical Arab states, and Egypt in
particular, met only moderate initial success and eventually led to further distrust and irritation. Furthermore, attempts to encourage the radical camp to draw closer to the United States and to distance American policy from traditionalist regimes tested the limits of America’s close identification with many of the conservative countries.

The Yemen crisis dealt a severe blow to Kennedy’s optimistic belief that supporting the forces of change would lead to greater stability in the Middle East. On September 26, 1962, a coup d'état led by Colonel Abdullah al-Sallal brought down the Yemen monarchy, forcing the new king, Imam Ahmed, to flee to the north, where he joined loyal tribesmen and launched a guerilla warfare against the newly declared republic. Nasser, who at the time was trying to export Egypt’s revolution as a means to promote political unity among the Arab nations, felt that Egypt could not stand idly by while events unfolded in Yemen. He sent troops to join forces with Sallal, causing the royalist governments in Saudi Arabia and Jordan to become concerned over their own security. Soon, the Saudi government was assisting the deposed king by offering refuge, supplies, money, arms and medicine. The Arab Cold War had developed to such a degree that major players from each side, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, were engaging in a form
of conflict by proxy, the primary battlefield being Yemen. On occasion, however, the conflict manifested itself into direct fighting between Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Lenczowski 1990, 80).

When it became apparent that the war and subsequent foreign intervention threatened to engulf a larger area, the United States, through its own diplomatic channels as well as those of the United Nations, sought an end to the conflict (Lenczowski 1990, 87). Ironically, the tide of events in Yemen widened the existing chasm in U.S.-Egyptian relations. Much to Kennedy's dismay, Nasser intensified his military involvement. By November 22, 1963, when Kennedy was assassinated, little progress had been made toward disengagement. In fact, the fighting had actually gotten worse. Under Lyndon B. Johnson, the United States stopped diplomatic efforts to find a resolution to the civil war in Yemen. Soon UN efforts also subsided, leaving the matter to be handled by the Arab governments, whose efforts to find a peaceful solution also met with limited success (Lenczowski 1990, 87-88).

During Johnson's presidency, foreign affairs became increasingly dominated by the United States' growing involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Other important areas of the world, including the Middle East, competed
unsuccessfully with Southeast Asia for the Johnson Administration's attention. America's position in the Middle East, already tenuous because of the contrasting signals sent by the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations, began to deteriorate rapidly in the face of two new crises, the dispute over Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 (Lenczowski 1990, 90).

President Johnson, who was not particularly experienced in foreign affairs in spite of having been Vice President for over two years, did not undertake any programs in the Middle East that differed significantly from Kennedy's policies. In general, his policies were characterized by attempts to cultivate relationships with the Northern tier (Iran, Turkey, Greece and Pakistan), fairly close relations with oil-producing Saudi Arabia and pro-Western Jordan; and continued attempts to improve relations with the so-called radical Arab regimes of Egypt, Syria and Iraq (Lenczowski 1990, 91). More significantly, Johnson's policies exhibited a very protective attitude toward Israel. In fact, the concept of using Israel as a strategic asset within the region was developed under Johnson (Lenczowski 1990, 115).

While the country was being drawn deeper into the quagmire of Vietnam, Johnson's attention was also heavily directed toward his ambitious domestic program, the Great
Society. This left him largely unprepared to deal with the crisis which developed over the island of Cyprus. On December 21, 1963, Greek Cypriots attacked a Turkish sector in the island's capital, Nicosia. Soon, the island was embroiled in a bitter civil war between the better armed Greek majority and the weaker Turkish minority. Concerned over the threat to the island's Turkish population, Turkey reacted swiftly, using both diplomatic and military measures (Lenczowski 1990, 93).

As the situation escalated during the following months, the challenge for American policy makers was to find a peaceful solution to the island's conflict while preventing a potential spillover of hostilities to Turkey and Greece. Moreover, the Johnson Administration sought to prevent the island of Cyprus, under its president, Archbishop Makarios, from aligning itself with the Soviet Union. The Cyprus crisis persisted for several years and tested the relationship between the United States and Turkey. By 1967, after several rounds of diplomatic efforts involving the guarantor powers, the United States, NATO, and eventually the United Nations, Cyrus Vance, acting as Johnson's special emissary, succeeded in "patching up" the conflict during a mediating mission (Lenczowski 1990, 104).

As events in the Cyprus crisis were unfolding, the
dynamics of the Arab-Israeli dispute were leading toward a new outbreak in hostilities. During Johnson's presidency, the United States moved from a policy of supplying Israel with strictly defensive weapons to one of providing highly sophisticated offensive equipment (Rabin 1979, 64-5). The Arab-Israeli War of 1967 came about as a result of long-standing disputes which by the early 1960s were manifested by a disagreement over the use of water from the Jordan River. The inter-Arab dispute, or the "Arab Cold War," was also a contributing factor. In order to defend themselves against Nasser's aggressiveness, the moderate Arab regimes launched a campaign directed toward discrediting the Egyptian leader by emphasizing his hypocrisy and cowardice in permitting the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) to be stationed in Egypt since 1957 while Israel vehemently refused to allow UNEF on Israeli soil. This prompted Nasser, on May 16, 1967, to insist that the UN withdraw its forces from the Egyptian-Israeli borders.

UN Secretary General U Thant decided to remove the entire UN force from the area. As the UN force departed from the Gulf of Aqaba in the Sinai Peninsula, Nasser proclaimed a blockade of the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping on May 22. Israeli leaders interpreted the blockade as an aggressive act that justified an armed
Israeli response. Serious considerations were given to launching preemptive strikes against key Arab targets.

The duality of U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East under Johnson is particularly apparent in the American approach to the 1967 war. Lenczowski cites four broad features of this dualism. First, although they officially tried to dissuade Israel from launching a preemptive campaign against the Arab states, neither the president nor his cabinet members demonstrated clear resistance to Israeli intentions. Second, the American delegate to the United Nations, Ambassador Arthur Goldberg, took a position that was, if not pro-Israeli, at the very least ambivalent toward the evolving situation. Third, the United States never officially condemned the Israeli strikes once they did occur; instead, President Johnson labelled Nasser's insistence on the removal of UN forces from the Egyptian-Israeli border "illegal." Moreover, after the war, the President and Ambassador Goldberg adopted the position that a new peace settlement was required in lieu of a simple return to the conditions established in 1957 which were not "conducive to peace." This position can be interpreted as the prelude to support for Israel maintaining the territories occupied as a result of the war. Fourth, and perhaps most significant, in spite of having made a public declaration of an embargo
against arms shipments to the Middle East, Johnson authorized the shipment to Israel of weapons systems along with associated parts and equipment in the days immediately preceding the war (Lenczowski 1990, 109-115).

Summary

Several key facets of the Arab-Israeli dispute in particular, and of the development of American foreign policy toward the Middle East, provide the context for a more incisive comparison of Nixon and Carter's policies.

By the time Richard Nixon took office, the Arab-Israeli dispute had been simmering for decades, periodically reaching the boiling point. Several wars had been fought, including one precipitated by the creation of the state of Israel itself. In fact, after the war in 1967, the "status quo" had become one of repeated clashes punctuating a state of neither peace nor war. The issues separating the two sides were not simply geopolitical or economic, but highly emotionally charged. The devastating losses incurred by the Arabs in June 1967 had a tremendous psychological impact on the Arab people who began to incorporate the desire to remove the stigma of cowardice and failure associated with these losses into their own collective sense of identity. The Israeli collective identity revolved around a staunch instinct for survival, which after 1967 became linked to the notion that loss of
the occupied territories would place Israel in grave
danger.

Initial American involvement in the Middle East was
somewhat distanced from the Arab-Israeli dispute and was
based largely on the principles of non-intervention,
protection of private interests, and freedom of trade.
During the inter-war period, religious and cultural
interests began to carry less influence in the face of a
growing competition between the United States and Britain
for Middle East oil. Soon protection of private
interests, including economic concerns, gave way to the
belief that Middle East oil was vital to American national
interests.

Meanwhile, the worldwide Zionist Movement was gaining
momentum. Increasing pressure was directed toward the
United States and Britain to support the creation of a
Jewish homeland in Palestine. Under Wilson, the United
States was perceived as having made a moral commitment to
the Jewish homeland in the form of support for the Balfour
declaration. As U.S. policy moved toward more specific
commitments to the Jewish state, conflicting interests
fostered the development of a Middle Eastern policy that,
lacking clear direction and focus, suffered from a
distinct identity crisis. Under Wilson, this crisis
manifested itself in the desire to support the creation of
Israel but the inability to clearly reconcile this desire with moral commitments to support the self-determination of the Arab people.

World War II served as a turning point for U.S. Middle Eastern policy. Great Britain, exhausted by the war, began to decrease its involvement in the region. As the extent of the atrocities committed by Hitler against Jews became more apparent, the Zionists gained the sympathy of the world community. American Zionists coalesced into a stronger, more focused organization and began an intensive campaign designed to compel the United States to support the creation of Israel. In spite of growing pressure, President Roosevelt emerged from World War II determined to shape a more internationalist policy for the United States. His chief concern was to protect American interests while preserving Allied unity.

Under President Truman, concern over Soviet expansion led to the increased application of the policy of containment in the Middle East as well as in other areas of the world. Pressure from American Zionists led Truman's advisers to urge the President to support the creation of Israel in order to avoid the potentially devastating political implications of alienating American Jews. During this period, a growing disagreement between the White House and the State Department became more
apparent. While the former seemed to lean more toward satisfying Jewish interests, the latter worried about the implications for American interests if the country were to lose access to Arab oil. Truman eventually decided to support the creation of Israel and, by recognizing the newly formed state, committed the United States to the notion of Israel's legitimacy.

This commitment placed successive presidents in the position of having to deal with any immediate crises that developed in the region while at the same time trying to reconcile two diametrically opposed interests, the well-being of Israel and American access to oil. The pendulum that had been swinging back and forth between conflicting impulses continued to swing erratically, without the predictability or cadence that might enable American Middle East policy to stabilize and grow.

President Eisenhower remained committed to the protection of national interests in the region, particularly oil interests. Above all, he was deeply concerned over the threat of Soviet expansion into what he perceived as a vital area of the world. When the Suez Crisis erupted and during the diplomacy that followed, Eisenhower attempted to maintain an impartial approach to the Arab-Israeli dispute. In fact, his impartiality often angered both sides. During his presidency, a chasm
developed which separated the Arab states into two major camps, one with a radical orientation, the other more conservative.

John F. Kennedy sought to change the basic flavor of U.S. Middle Eastern policy. In particular, he hoped to decrease the tendency for the United States to be identified with efforts to maintain the status quo in the region. Instead, he believed that by accommodating the forces of change, very often associated with the so-called radical regimes, he would be able to foster the stability necessary to help the region grow. To this end, he hoped to improve diplomatic relations with Egypt which, in the wake of the Suez crisis, had been drawing visibly closer to the Soviet Union. In spite of President Kennedy's efforts, relations with Egypt and other radical Arab states did not improve. Moreover, relations with conservative countries such as Saudi Arabia became strained by Kennedy's attempts to distance American foreign policy from the traditional powers.

To a large extent, Lyndon B. Johnson continued the policies of his predecessor. Under Johnson, however, a more protective attitude toward Israel emerged, along with the concept of using the country as a strategic ally in the region. Accordingly, American policy moved away from shipping purely defensive weapons toward one of supplying
Israel with more offensive systems. Meanwhile, Johnson pursued a policy which outwardly appeared to encourage military restraint, while covertly supporting the Israeli decision to launch a preemptive strike against the Arab states in what would become known as the Six Day War of June 1967. American prestige among the Arab countries declined considerably during Johnson's presidency while Soviet influence reached new heights, especially among the Egyptians and Syrians who began collecting Soviet military equipment in preparation for the opportunity remove the taint of their soiled military reputations.

Thus, the legacy left for Nixon and Carter by their predecessors was a Middle East policy that was increasingly complex, yet poorly defined; that was expected to cope with long standing disputes, yet was continually plagued by immediate crisis; and that was subject to pressures from domestic sources, yet increasingly crucial in terms of international, geopolitical considerations.
Chapter Notes


2. See Brockway, 47-50, for a statement of the Open Door Policy.

3. Thomas A. Bryson, American Diplomatic Relations With the Middle East 1784-1975: A Survey (Metuchen: New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1977), 49-50. Bryson cites two instances that illustrate this point. First, the U.S. government negotiated better conditions for American religious and commercial interests in Turkey when the Turkish government sought to increase tariffs on goods from abroad. Second, the government gave diplomatic support to Rear Admiral Colby M. Chester, head of the Chester Syndicate, in his efforts to receive economic concessions in Turkey, including the right to exploit minerals and to build railroad lines.

4. Historians credit the highly regarded Brandeis, who had a decisive impact on the American Zionist movement, with persuading Colonel House and Wilson to change their position on the Zionist issue. After meeting separately with Brandeis on September 23, 1917, both men were receptive to the proposed declaration. See, Selig Adler, "The Palestine Question in the Wilson Era," Jewish Social Studies 10 (Oct 1948), quoted in John Snetsinger, Truman, the Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel (Stanford, California: Hoover Institute Press, 1974), 2.

5. For a description of the events surrounding Wilson's acceptance of the Balfour Declaration, see Snetsinger, 142.

6. Brockway, 71-73 contains the text of Wilson's address to Congress in which he outlined his Fourteen Points.

7. Seth P. Tillman, The United States in the Middle East: Interests and Obstacles (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 11. Tillman is quoting a memorandum from Frankfurter which details the meeting in Paris on June 24, 1919.

9. In 1947, the Iranian Majlis (parliament) was reluctant to ratify an oil agreement that had been negotiated under pressure from the Soviet government. The agreement gave the Soviets 51 percent ownership of the assets in question. Through George V. Allen, the American Ambassador in Tehran, the U.S. pledged to support Iran in its desire to determine the disposition of its own natural resources. The Majlis chose not to ratify the agreement. See Lenczowski, 12-13.

10. Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of our Time*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 10. After the war, friendly inclinations toward the Russians persisted, in part based on admiration for their resistance to the Nazis. Moreover, many Americans feared that Truman was pushing the U.S. toward an unnecessary conflict with the Soviet Union.

11. As a basic philosophy, containment was first articulated by George Kennan in Moscow in February 1946. He sent a telegram to Washington from the embassy in Moscow highlighting the fact that Soviet leaders had begun probing apparent "soft spots" in neighboring countries to identify areas where they could enlarge their sphere of influence. Kennan suggested that Soviet expansion could be "contained" by Western emphasis on reducing potential soft spots in strategic areas.

12. Lenczowski, 26-27. This support was primarily financial. During Israeli President Chaim Weizman's official visit to Washington on May 25, 1948, Truman offered a $100 million loan. However, he opposed military assistance, and actually decided to declare an embargo of arms to all the combatants, including Israel.

13. In January, 1946, for example, the U.S. supported a UN resolution censuring Israel for excessive use of force in retaliating against Palestinian fedayeen attacks, in spite of potential UN sanctions against Israel. See Lenczowski, 52-64.
14. Ibid. Lenczowski points out that the Eisenhower Doctrine would be tested in a number of successive crises in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

15. Ibid., 72. American officials drew closer to the conservative Arab countries to protect vital oil interests and because the radical camp tended to engage in more aggressive activities. Furthermore, many of the radical states, including Egypt, Syria and Iraq, were drawing visibly closer to Moscow.

16. Pending an actual resolution, the primary American objectives were to prevent the conflict from spilling over into neighboring countries, to prevent Egypt and Saudi Arabia from engaging in sustained direct fighting, to provide for Saudi Arabia's safety, and to protect U.S. access to oil.

17. The situation remained unresolved until 1967 when Nasser, reeling from Israel's preemptive strike in the Six Day War, withdrew his troops. In August of that year, an Arab summit meeting yielded a settlement based on the evacuation of Nasser’s troops and recognition of the republican regime in Yemen. Thus, although the conflict ended during his presidency, under Johnson, the United States remained distant from Yemeni affairs.

18. Once a British Crown Colony, the island, whose population consisted of a Greek majority and a Turkish minority, was proclaimed a separate state by the London-Zurich Accords in 1959. As part of this agreement, Britain, Turkey, and Greece were to guarantee the island’s constitution, which explicitly rejected enosis (union with Greece), a highly coveted objective of the Greek majority. Should any constitutional provision be violated, the constitution granted the guarantor powers the right to intercede.

19. Lenczowski, 108 suggests that Nasser's actions were legal, but politically costly because they gave Israel an opportunity to justify preemptive strikes.
CHAPTER 3

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

As I anticipated becoming President, I found that I was awed by the prospect but not fearful of it. I felt prepared. I had the advantage of experience and of the detachment that comes from being out of office. The ‘wilderness years’ had been years of education and growth...I had no illusions about either the difficulty of the challenge or about my ability to meet it. I felt I knew what would not work. On the other hand, I was less sure what would work. I did not have all the answers. But I did have definite ideas about the changes I felt were needed (Nixon 1978, 361).

Richard Nixon’s journey to the White House was long and arduous, yet it was also replete with opportunities to gain valuable foreign policy experience. As a young congressman in 1947, he travelled to Europe with the Herter Committee to prepare a report in connection with Secretary of State George C. Marshall’s foreign aid plan. The committee found a continent "tottering on the brink of starvation and chaos." Without American aid, the committee believed that "Europe would very likely fall into a state of anarchy and revolution, ultimately moving closer to communism" (Nixon 1978, 49).
In his memoirs, Nixon credits his work on the Herter Committee with having taught him valuable lessons about why communism became such a powerful force in postwar Europe. First, the communist leaders were strong, vigorous and intelligent, whereas most of democratic Europe was lacking in strong leadership. Second, they understood the power of nationalism and knew how to channel it to their advantage. Third, the European communist parties were well financed by the Soviets (Nixon 1978, 52).

As was the case with many of his contemporaries, anti-communism became the motif of Nixon's early political career. In 1950, he was elected to the Senate, after a heated contest with Helen Gahagan Douglass. The key issues of the campaign dealt with foreign policy and internal security. Each candidate asserted that the other's voting record in the House demonstrated more support for Communist policies (Nixon 1978, 76-7).

In the spring of 1953, then Vice President Nixon and his wife, Pat, embarked on a major diplomatic trip through Asia and the Far East, including New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Malaya, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Formosa, Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Burma, and Pakistan. This trip was followed by several others, as President Eisenhower relied heavily on his Vice President to help
establish and maintain an active foreign policy. This extensive foreign travel allowed Nixon to become familiar with vital regions throughout the world, while establishing contacts with major world leaders. More importantly, the Vice President formulated very specific opinions regarding the role the United States should play in world affairs.

Context

...I was determined to avoid the trap Johnson had fallen into, of devoting virtually all my foreign policy time and energy to Vietnam, which was really a short-term problem. I felt that failing to deal with the longer-term problems could be devastating to America's security and survival, and in this regard, I talked about restoring the vitality of the NATO alliance, and about the Middle East, the Soviet Union and Japan. Finally, I mentioned my concern about the need to re-evaluate our policy toward Communist China... (Nixon 1978, 340-1).

Nixon's perception of American foreign policy during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations was that it had been "held hostage," first to the Cold War and then to the conflict in Vietnam. American policy-makers had succumbed to the trap of allowing themselves to become preoccupied with only one or two problems at a time. This, according to Nixon, had led to a deterioration of policy on all levels. To remedy the situation, he sought to use a
different approach. Instead of identifying any single foreign policy priority, he sought to fashion his policy around several priorities, "moving in tandem, each affecting the others" (Nixon 1978, 343).

Since he would have to start somewhere, however, he placed Europe at the top of his list. By bolstering NATO, he hoped to establish a position of strength from which meaningful dialogue could then be opened with the Soviets. In the Far East, relations with Japan, a nation well on its way to becoming an economic force to reckon with, had become strained. Nixon attributed this primarily to doubts about the credibility of America's defense commitments. American control of the island of Okinawa exacerbated the growing problem. As for China, Nixon was disturbed by the "gulf of twenty years of noncommunication that had separated the world's most populous nation from the world's most powerful nation" (Nixon 1978, 343). Thus, he intended to re-evaluate America's policy toward China, with the goal of establishing meaningful diplomatic relations.

The situation in the Middle East had become particularly volatile by the end of the Johnson Administration. As Nixon waited to take office, he noted that the "already explosive area" had been transformed into "an international powder keg, that, when it exploded,
might lead not only to another war between Israel and its neighbors, but also to a direct confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union" (Nixon 1978, 343). Israel's preemptive strikes during the Six Day War of June 1967 had led to an uneasy truce with her Arab neighbors, a peace which was continually interrupted by intermittent fighting carried out under Nasser's "War of Attrition." In order to assure the continued survival of Israel, the United States seemed committed to providing the country with a continued supply of arms. Meanwhile, Egypt and Syria, Israel's main antagonists, had begun receiving Soviet arms. This superpower rivalry in the bitter Arab-Israeli dispute was cause for grave concern.

To better deal with potential crises in the Middle East, as well as in other regions throughout the world, Nixon announced his plan to overhaul the country's foreign policy machinery, primarily by reviving the power of the National Security Council (NSC). In his view, the council had been forced to remain dormant for too long. Nixon intended to make it the central decision-making instrument of his administration, using a modified version of the staff system used by Eisenhower. Through regularly conducted meetings, the council would discuss major foreign policy issues, anticipating potential crises and developing a full range of options for each contingency.
Henry A. Kissinger, as Nixon's National Security Adviser, would be charged with preparing the agenda for these meetings. Kissinger and his staff would also be expected to maintain effective lines of communication between major governmental officials and the White House, providing the President with a carefully structured forum in which to deliberate foreign policy issues with access to top advisers. Many analysts regard the foreign policy-making apparatus that Kissinger designed to fulfill these functions as "by far the most centralized and highly structured model yet employed by any president" (George 1980, 114).

Nixon came to office determined to exert his control over the vast foreign policy bureaucracy. The NSC gave Nixon an effective means of educating the bureaucracy concerning the new themes of his foreign policy, and of keeping himself abreast of developments throughout the world. Shortly after assuming office, President Nixon requested an unprecedented number of policy studies. These came primarily in the form of National Security Study Memoranda (NSSM), that were first discussed by the Interdepartmental Group (later called the Senior Review Group), then referred to the entire NSC for deliberation. Once a decision was made, a National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) would be issued (Quandt 1977, 73).
Kissinger designed a novel system containing six committees that operated out of the NSC. These included the Senior Review Group (responsible for general policy issues), the Vietnam Special Studies Group, The Washington Special Actions Group (responsible for dealing with international crises), the Defense Programs Review Committee, the Verification Committee (responsible for strategic arms talks), and the 40 Committee (responsible for covert action). Each of these committees was chaired by Kissinger. The Senior Review Group was further compartmentalized into six lower-level departmental groups organized on a regional basis and headed by an assistant secretary of state. Thus, Kissinger's span of control reached not only into the realm of his own staff, but into key departments and agencies, including the State Department itself (George 1980, 114).

Those within Kissinger's staff who dealt with Middle Eastern policy included his deputy, Alexander Haig, two special assistants, Peter Rodman and Winston Lord, and his senior Middle East specialist, Harold H. Saunders. Joseph Sisco served as the Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and South Asia. A Democrat, Sisco had developed his knowledge of Middle East affairs while serving in Washington. In fact, he had never been assigned overseas. Alfred "Roy" Atherton worked closely with Sisco, first as
office director for Israel and Arab-Israeli affairs, and later as deputy assistant secretary for the Near East. Nixon appointed a close personal friend, William P. Rogers, to be his Secretary of State. A lawyer, Rogers had been Eisenhower’s attorney general, and was not particularly experienced in foreign affairs (Quandt 1977, 73-74).

In spite of his desire to conduct foreign affairs from the standpoint of a more global orientation, with a catalogue of priorities that would necessarily be adjusted according to the prevailing circumstances, Nixon himself was forced to admit that the "most pressing problem [he] would face as soon as [he] became President was the war in Vietnam" (Nixon 1978, 347). The seemingly hopeless entanglement in southeast Asia had seriously damaged American confidence, destroyed consensus over the direction that foreign policy should pursue, and threatened to erode American resolve concerning the importance of playing an active leadership role in world affairs. Each of these outcomes, especially the last, could potentially cripple Nixon’s foreign policy before he was able to make the fresh start that he envisioned. Moreover, Vietnam had been a major issue during the election campaign. Disentanglement was, in many respects, a vital pre-condition to generating and maintaining the
degree of support he would need to carry out his foreign policy agenda.

To this end, secret negotiations were initiated in Paris between Kissinger and representatives from North Vietnam. Simultaneously, a reduction in American forces in Vietnam was begun, with the eventual goal of a complete military withdrawal. Nixon justified this new policy of restraint and withdrawal on July 25, 1969 in a speech given on the island of Guam during a tour of Asia. In what has become known as the Nixon Doctrine, the President stated:

I believe the time has come when the United States, in our relations with all of our Asian friends, [should] be quite emphatic on two points: one, that we will keep our treaty commitments, for example, with Thailand under SEATO; but two, that as far as the problems of internal security are concerned, as far as the problem of military defense, except for the threat of a major power, involving nuclear weapons, that the United States is going to encourage and has the right to expect that this problem will be increasingly handled by, and the responsibility for it taken by, the Asian nations themselves.

The Nixon Doctrine was specifically directed toward Vietnam, but it was applicable to other regions, including the Persian Gulf, which since the middle of the nineteenth century, had been traditionally defended by Great Britain. Like the Suez Canal, the Gulf was considered important as
a means of gaining access from Britain to India. The region consisted of three larger countries, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and several smaller countries including Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the Sultanate of Oman, who were too weak to protect themselves from a "determined aggressive power" (Lenczowski 1990, 118).

In 1968, Great Britain formally announced its intention to withdraw from the Gulf, granting independence to the smaller states in the region. This generated concern over potential tribal disputes and, more importantly, over the "power vacuum" that was likely to develop, making the smaller states more susceptible to potential Soviet infiltration. Russia might be tempted to expand its influence in the Gulf by conquering several of the weaker states, or by simply forming alliances in the hopes of establishing bases within close proximity to pro-Western and oil-producing countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. While Britain prepared to relinquish its imperial status in the region and to withdraw its military forces by the end of 1971, the question arose as to who would be both willing and able to replace Britain as the "guardian of the Gulf" (Lenczowski 1990, 118).

American policy-makers faced a dilemma. Although not completely dependent upon Persian Gulf oil, American interests would best be served by preventing the region
from falling under Soviet control, if only to ensure that allies in Western Europe and Japan, who did depend heavily upon Persian Gulf oil, would not lose access to the region’s reserves. However, caught in the process of trying to extricate American manpower and resources from Vietnam, officials were leary of involving the United States militarily in another region. Under the guidelines of the Nixon Doctrine, a more palatable solution was to find a country within the Persian Gulf which would assume responsibility for the area’s defense.

Iran, with adequate manpower and a vested interest in preventing Soviet domination in the region, fit the bill. However, officials in the State Department feared that the Soviets would become alarmed, and perhaps even provoked to action, if a neighboring country such as Iran were to begin a considerable military build-up. For his part, the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, had come to regard "the Gulf as a natural sphere of influence." During a March 19, 1969, interview with the New York Times, he announced his opposition to United States retention of the naval facilities on Bahrein Island after the British withdrawal. Moreover, he insisted that the Persian Gulf states be permitted to handle their own problems without any attempts by the great powers to fill the vacuum created by the British withdrawal. Determined to assume
the role of protector within the Gulf, the Shah pressed Washington to provide the arms needed to bolster his military capability, announcing that if he could not get the desired military equipment from the United States, he would turn to the Soviet Union.

Defense Department officials were reluctant to provide Iran with technologically advanced weapons because they could potentially be captured and exploited. After initial hesitation, however, the decision was made to support Iran in its move to take on the guardian role in the Persian Gulf (Lenczowski 1990, 118). Iran's military capability was steadily built up "under a billion-dollar defense program quietly underwritten by the United States and Britain." In July 1971, negotiations were underway between Tehran and Washington for $140-million more in 1971 credits. This was in addition to $220-million worth of aircraft purchases during the preceding two years.

By 1975, when the build-up was expected to be completed, Iran would be a major Middle East power, and, American officials hoped, a source of stability in the region. The modernization and expansion of the country's air, land and sea forces would include 135 F-4 Phantoms to complement existing F-3 and F-86 squadrons, 1,500 American and British made tanks, over 200 helicopters, four 1,200-ton frigates, eight 10-ton armored hovercraft,
four 50-ton armored hovercraft, and several new air and naval bases\textsuperscript{11}.

The Shah reportedly believed that the key to ensuring stability in the region depended on developing a highly mobile modern force. In spite of American and British assistance, this military build-up proved to be a major drain on Iran's foreign currency reserves. Between 1965 and 1970, Iranian arms purchases on credit totaled $1.6-billion, with $1-billion more expected in 1971 and 1972\textsuperscript{12}.

Concern over Soviet intentions in the Middle East heightened as the British prepared to pull out of the area\textsuperscript{13}. Soviet intentions toward the Middle East during this time frame, particularly just prior to the October War of 1973, have been subjected to close scrutiny. While western scholars are largely in agreement that the Soviets did not want another war to break out in the Middle East, the literature is divided over whether Soviet leaders genuinely tried to foster peace in the region (Breslauer 1983, 65). In fact, a broad range of interpretations has emerged, running the gamut from one position which contends that the Soviets preferred to perpetuate the status quo of "no war, no peace," to the contrasting view that Soviet diplomats sincerely hoped to establish a superpower collaborative effort directed toward ending the Arab-Israeli conflict\textsuperscript{14} (Breslauer 1983, 65).
What is particularly interesting about these interpretations is the fact that they are so markedly different. Moreover, as Breslauer points out, they do not address one another; one author rejects the argument of another without even examining the premises upon which the argument is based. Breslauer's interpretation not only considers other views, but actually incorporates them. In essence, he proposes a synthesis of the "no war, no peace" hypothesis and the view that the Soviets were committed to a peace settlement. He suggests that the Soviet Union was a collaborative competitor, "seeking to play the competitive game in the Middle East while simultaneously attempting to collaborate with the United States in ways that would nudge the local actors toward an armed peace" (Breslauer 1983, 69). Thus, the Soviets were interested in promoting a peace settlement, but not at the expense of their own influence in the region. Breslauer develops an insightful case study in which he demonstrates that the Soviets were willing to pursue a Middle East peace settlement "based on superpower collaboration, that would simultaneously reduce the probability of military confrontation with the United States...advance the cause of detente, and create a more stable base of influence for the USSR in Middle Eastern affairs." Soviet actions between 1967 and 1972 indicate their belief that such
terms would work to the advantage of their interests, regionally and globally (Breslauer 1983, 96).

Breslauer's argument is not only compelling, it raises the possibility that Soviet actions with regard to the Middle East have been misinterpreted by the scholars who have since studied this critical time period, and more importantly, by key players within the Nixon Administration, particularly the president and Kissinger. An examination of Nixon and Kissinger's perception of Soviet intentions toward the region provides a great deal of insight into the foreign policy choices they made.

A recurring theme, interwoven within the pages of Nixon's memoirs, reveals his unwavering belief that an Arab-Israeli war would inevitably lead to confrontation with the Soviet Union. Yet, as Lenczowski suggests, "nowhere in his writings or public statements did Nixon subject [this likelihood] to careful scrutiny or analysis." Furthermore, Nixon tended to oversimplify, or perhaps even to distort, the actual origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict by accepting the premise that the Soviets were directly causing Middle East tensions. Yet, as Chapter 2 demonstrated, the roots of the Arab-Israeli dilemma had a much deeper history, reaching back at least to the establishment of Israel, after years of uneasy relations between Arabs and Jews, the subsequent
displacement of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, and the series of bitter wars that had been fought since.

The Soviets were indeed making inroads into the region, thereby potentially complicating the task of finding a Middle East peace settlement, but they were not the root cause of the conflict. In fact, Lenczowski further suggests that Nixon's view simply "reflected his uncritical acceptance of Israel's political line."

Israel's leaders found that by emphasizing the theme of Soviet mischief as the underlying cause of the seemingly endless conflict, they could count more readily on Nixon's support (Lenczowski 1990, 120-21). In time, Nixon became convinced that the United States had "an absolute commitment...to prevent Israel from being driven into the sea" (Nixon 1978, 481; 483).

Nixon's acceptance of Israel's "political line" highlights a very interesting aspect of US-Soviet competition in the Middle East. The regional actors were well aware of it, and perfectly willing to use it to their advantage. This was the case when the Shah of Iran indicated he would turn to the Soviets if the United States proved unwilling to meet his weapons requirements, and when Nasser "struck a sensitive chord in Soviet leaders by threatening to resign in favor of a pro-United States government" in January 197017 (Breslauer 1983, 81).
While decision-makers were struggling with the issue of who would fill the void left by the withdrawal of British forces from the Persian Gulf, the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli dispute were undergoing critical changes that ultimately led to another conflict. The devastating losses incurred by Arabs in June 1967 had had a tremendous psychological impact on the Arab people (Aker 1985, 20). When Anwar Sadat became the Egyptian president in 1970, the mood of his people "reflected a desire to remove the stigma of cowardice and military ineptness left over from the Six Day War" (Shazly, 1980: 222). Clashes along the Suez Canal were becoming commonplace. Arab deployments were regularly mounted to fulfill three purposes. First, as harassment in order to prevent or delay the construction of military installations on land taken by the Israelis in 1967; second, to repeatedly frighten Israel into full scale alerts—taking people away from their regular jobs, forcing extra defense expenditures and causing Israeli leaders to lose credibility; finally, these measures were employed to generate a false sense of confidence in Israelis' defenses, while the Arabs quietly prepared to attack. (Aker 1985, 9)

Equipment that had been lost in 1967 was replaced with more modern Soviet armament, and integrated air defense systems were installed in both Egypt and Syria to
prevent ground troops from ever again having to be at the mercy of Israeli aircraft, as they had been in 1967. Regularly scheduled maneuvers were conducted, well within view of Israeli observers, and designed to appear as completely defensive tactics. Meanwhile, offensive maneuvers were practiced at designated hidden locations with simulated Israeli targets, "including a mock-up of the Suez Canal itself" (Aker 1985, 10). Egyptian aircraft were placed in Soviet-designed hangarettes to prevent heavy losses from air strikes. These miniature hangars were fortified to lessen the effects of bomb blasts, and camouflaged to look like hills, complicating visual acquisition from the air as well as intelligence gathering activities (Katz 1973, 10). Advanced Soviet bridging vehicles were assembled to facilitate the impending assault across the Suez. Specific plans had not yet been made, however, Arab preparations continued in the fervid belief that it was just a matter of time before their offensive began. These preparations reflected an intense desire to profit from the costly lessons of the Six Day War. As time passed, the Arab people became increasingly impatient, to wipe the taint off their soiled collective military reputation, and to test the effectiveness of the improved armament they had been receiving from the Soviets.
As in the Arab case, psychological factors were a strong motivating force for the Israelis. Virtually surrounded by belligerent nations, Israel had been fighting the Arabs, in formal conflicts and in border skirmishes, for more than two decades. Whereas the Arab identity had become heavily tied to regaining the territory and self-esteem lost in 1967, the Israeli identity revolved around the instinct for survival. Loss of any given conflict carried high stakes, perhaps the very destruction of the Jewish state. The desire for collective security thus became the steel band which held the nation together, and had a marked influence on the official posture of Israel. Because of what they perceived as Arab "obstinacy," the Israelis believed they must establish and maintain completely defensible borders, a goal which was better served by retaining the territories under dispute.

Relations with Jordan were considered to be relatively secure. This made the extensive deployment of Israeli forces and the construction of defensive installations along the Jordanian border a low priority. In fact, it was deemed unnecessary. The situation along the Syrian border was another matter. The loss of the Golan Heights had deprived Syria of one of its best locations for shelling northern Israeli settlements.
Several measures were taken to prevent this strategic area from being retaken. Small villages which had once been inhabited by Arabs were left deserted. Fortified Jewish settlements were established to serve as a deterrent to guerillas. Finally, a collection of antitank obstacles was built, consisting of mine fields, a line of reinforced concrete bunkers, and fixed tank emplacements with overlapping fields of fire. There were only four roads from this area into Israel (Aker 1985, 6).

In the Sinai, terrain characteristics were used to augment man-made deterrents. Massive sand ramparts, which were high enough to stop armored vehicles, were built along the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. A series of fortifications was then built a short distance from these ramparts to enable the Israelis to maintain a constant surveillance of the Egyptian side with minimal exposure to the artillery barrages which had become quite frequent. This line of fortifications was rebuilt three times, becoming stronger and larger with each reconstruction. It became known as the Bar-Lev Line, after its creator, General Bar-Lev (Aker 1985, 7).

The cost of building and maintaining the defenses adjacent to the canal was over $90 million. An additional $150 million was spent constructing roads to protect and supply these installations. There were two major roads
which paralleled the canal, running north and south. The rest of the road complex was sparse, but vital, since "whoever controlled the roads would dominate the entire peninsula" (Aker 1985, 8). In spite of the extensive measures and enormous expenditures devoted to defense, Israel still sustained significant casualties along the Egyptian border, especially after 1969. In that year, construction of an electronic distant-early warning system was begun in the Sinai's central mountain ridges. The intent was to use this sophisticated equipment (heat sensors, infrared photo scopes, seismic detectors and magnetic sensors) to scan the desert for hostile activity.

The state of Israel was a virtual fortress. Safe and secure inside strong defensive "walls," the country developed a strategic concept of attack. Any Arab state that became too arrogant faced the threat of an air attack from Israel's powerful air force. On the ground, punitive campaigns were launched into adjacent territories to subdue Arab governments that threatened to get out of hand. The Israelis knew that Egypt and Syria had been successful in securing Soviet arms, but when Russian and Czech advisers were ejected from Egypt in July 1972, Israeli analysts determined that Egypt would be unable to handle newly acquired sophisticated equipment without
Soviet assistance\textsuperscript{20}. This led to estimates that attack from Egypt would be highly improbable before late 1975. Intelligence reports further indicated that increased military activity that had been observed was of a defensive rather than an offensive nature. The Israelis developed a self-image of invulnerability which was closely linked to the belief that the territory gained in 1967 provided secure borders.

Michael Brecher's account of the 1967 and 1973 wars provides further insight into why Israel let its guard down, leaving itself vulnerable to surprise attack. He attributes this largely to a "shared psychological setting among Israel's decision-makers and advisers during the 1973 pre-crisis period." Two factors combined to make up this setting. The first was a pervasive general definition of the situation, which Brecher calls the "Conception." Two "pillars" formed the foundation of the Conception: (1) Egypt would not launch an attack against Israel unless it had superior air power, that is, sufficient to attack Israel in depth and dislocate its Air Force and principal air fields; (2) Syria would not initiate a war against Israel unless Egypt were actively involved. Therefore, the Arabs would not attack Israel. Misperceptions underlying these assumptions, about Arab capabilities, the regional balance of power and the
security provided by the occupied territories, increased the Israeli propensity to discount the possibility of attack (Brecher 1980, 55).

In time, the belief that Egypt would not launch an attack until it had the capability to project its air power well into Israel became transformed into an Israeli dogma, a "truth" which was reinforced considerably when Sadat's "Year of Decision" (1971) came and went without Egyptian action. Sadat's failure to follow through with his announcement that Egypt would resort to war if diplomatic channels continued to yield little progress convinced Israel's military and political officials that future verbal threats need not be taken seriously. Moreover, the Israeli intelligence community failed to distinguish between all-out war and war conducted for limited political objectives. This eventually diminished their capability to discriminate genuine signals, clues that indicated an adversary's intentions, from background noise. In fact, Chief of Staff David Elazar wrote in May 1975 that the Israeli Defense Force's (IDF) Intelligence Branch had received over 400 significant items pointing to the possibility of war. Most of these were not brought to his attention, however, until after hostilities had begun.

Like Israel, Washington was caught off guard by the
outbreak of hostilities on October 6, 1973. Officials did have some advance notice, however. At approximately 6:00 A.M. Washington time, a flash cable arrived from the American Embassy in Tel Aviv indicating that Israel had conclusive evidence that the Egyptians and Syrians planned to attack by Noon (Washington time). The message included Prime Minister Meir's assurance that Israel would restrain from launching a preemptive strike, along with a request that American diplomacy be directed toward avoiding war. Last minute attempts to avoid hostilities proved fruitless. The first indications of fighting were received at approximately 8:00 A.M., four hours before Israel's estimate (Quandt 1977, 166).

Interestingly, American officials were also privy to several earlier indications that the Arabs were moving closer to war, including information regarding Egyptian military training maneuvers, and a warning from Soviet General Secretary Breshnev in June that the Arabs were determined to fight. In spite of these indications, intelligence estimates continued to report that "there were no clear signs of impending hostilities" (Quandt 1977, 168). Kissinger did, however, become sufficiently concerned to request the development of a new contingency plan for coping with the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the plan was not completed when war broke out (Quandt
The October War of 1973 marked a critical turning point in the Nixon Administration's approach to the Middle East. In fact, several aspects of American policy prior to 1973 may have actually fueled Arab frustrations and indirectly reinforced the Arab decision to resort to war. Thus, it is important to understand Nixon and Kissinger's foreign policy goals, in general, and with respect to the Middle East.

**Foreign Policy Objectives**

As they worked for disengagement in Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger focused their foreign policy toward relations with the other major powers, particularly the Soviet Union. The possibility of nuclear war uppermost in their minds, both men were drawn toward developing a policy they felt would help to ensure global stability and minimize the potential for superpower confrontation by establishing a new relationship with the Soviet Union (Quandt 1977, 76-77). During the Nixon Administration, the relatively tight bipolar structure which had characterized the 1950s and 1960s began to give way to a looser multipolar arrangement. It was within this context that Nixon and Kissinger fashioned far-reaching objectives for American foreign policy.
Although their program is often referred to as "detente," their goal went far beyond the traditional meaning, "a relaxation of tensions," to encompass an even more ambitious objective. Nixon and Kissinger "wanted to build the foundation—or at least an important part of the foundation—for a new international system" (Craig and George 1990, 135). They believed that the only countries who could realistically be expected to participate were the United States, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Japan was a major industrial state, but its emergence as a potential military power was neither desirable nor feasible. Western Europe already possessed considerable military capabilities, but relied heavily on the United States for military support. Furthermore, Western European political integration remained an obstacle that would have to be overcome before the region could take the part of a unitary actor in an international system. In light of these assessments, Nixon and Kissinger sought an alternative to the classic five-power balance-of-power system.

The foundation upon which this alternative was to be built involved engaging the Soviet Union and the PRC, two "archrivals," in a process of detente and accommodation in order to moderate the threat to the United States' world position posed by either states' policies. More than just
establishing a triangular relationship, Nixon and Kissinger hoped to secure a unique middle position which would allow the United States to play the two communist countries against one another, gaining the leverage needed to protect American interests and to actually induce the Soviet Union and the PRC to cooperate with American policies. If one appeared reluctant to go along, the United States would simply appear to "tilt" its position in favor of the other (Craig and George 1990, 135).

In fact, the major impetus behind Nixon's efforts to improve relations with China was the desire to gain the leverage needed to enable the United States to cultivate a more productive relationship with the Soviet Union, which was considered to pose the greater potential threat. The strategy used by Nixon and Kissinger to draw the Soviet Union into a more amicable relationship consisted of four major components. First, President Nixon formally recognized, in several symbolic ways, that the Soviet Union was entitled to the same superpower status as the United States. The Russians had been trying to gain this sort of prestige since the end of World War II. By elevating the Soviet Union to a level of political equality, Nixon and Kissinger hoped to foster a relationship that would be more conducive to productive relations between the two countries.
Second, the plan included a conditional willingness to accede to the Soviet Union's desire for formal recognition of divided Europe. Third, Nixon's detente strategy sought to promote further mutual cooperation between the two superpowers via a series of formal agreements offering economic and technical assistance to the Soviet Union. Nixon and Kissinger were actually willing to make concessions to the Soviets in the economic sphere because they believed these agreements would eventually create a "web of incentives" that would motivate Soviet leaders to exercise constraint in their efforts to gain influence in other areas at the expense of the United States (Craig and George 1990, 138).

Fourth, Nixon and Kissinger hoped detente would yield the long-term benefit of "a new set of norms and rules for competition between the two superpowers" (Craig and George 1990, 138). Crisis prevention was one of the most important objectives of the detente policy. In May 1972, Nixon and Breshnev signed the Basic Principles Agreement during their first summit meeting in Moscow. This document presented basic "rules of conduct" that were intended to regulate the global competition of the two superpowers. The vague language used in the agreement, however, coupled with differing perceptions of detente's overarching purpose, actually widened the rift between the
two countries. Soviet leaders tended to associate detente primarily with avoiding conflicts that increased the danger of war between the two superpowers. Nixon and Kissinger's conception went beyond this to include emphasis on crisis prevention in those instances when Soviet assertiveness in other areas conflicted with U.S. interests, even when these crises did not necessarily carry the threat of potential U.S.-Soviet military confrontation (George 1983, 2-3).

Based on Nixon and Kissinger's definition, American leaders and the general public began to expect detente to show signs of tempering the Soviet Union's aggressive foreign policy. The Russians on the other hand, saw no reason why they could not continue to pursue progressive policies in the Third World, while continuing to strive for peaceful coexistence, as they often referred to detente, with the United States (Craig and George 1990, 139). In light of detente's inability to meet what they viewed as a fundamental expectation, many Americans began to have serious doubts about the entire strategy. The gist of American concern centered around the fear that although Nixon and Kissinger were making concessions to the Soviets in order to try and draw them into a more constructive relationship, the Soviets were taking advantage of economic agreements while continuing to
pursue their own agenda in the Third World and in weapons development. Nixon and Kissinger's ambitious detente program fell victim to public impatience, failing to pass the critical "acid test," of obtaining and maintaining domestic support (Craig and George 1990, 140).

The basic problem was that, as a long term investment, detente required a great deal of time and effort. A by-product of detente was that it tended to draw Nixon and Kissinger's attention away from foreign policy issues that were not directly related to the program. Particularly during Nixon's first term in office, relations with the Soviet Union and China, coupled with efforts to deal with the Vietnam commitment, were the priority concerns to his administration. Each of these foreign policy areas was managed almost exclusively from the White House, with Nixon providing basic guidance and Kissinger working out the specific details of implementation (Quandt 1977, 77).

Although Nixon's preoccupation with the Soviet Union, in the form of efforts to get detente on track, coupled with the lingering situation in Vietnam, left little time for him to devote to Middle East issues, the region was by no means ignored. It became the chief area of interest for the State Department, headed by Secretary of State William P. Rogers. While Nixon and Kissinger thought of
the region primarily in terms of how it might affect the superpower relationship, State Department officials perceived greater potential threats to U.S. interests due to the erosion of American influence in the area and the increased activity of the militant Palestinian fedayeen movement (Quandt 1977, 80).

The Middle Eastern policy that grew out of these circumstances can perhaps best be visualized as a large tree with a solid base supporting two very strong branches, each with its own set of smaller branches. The solid base represents those aspects of policy on which there was general agreement between the White House and the State Department. The separate branches, however, represent the areas where their respective approaches were markedly different, leading to specific decisions that, in some cases, remained completely distinct from one another; while others were hopelessly entangled, never quite meshing.

The common ground shared by the White House and the State Department was characterized by several features. The possibility that Israel might acquire nuclear weapons worried White House and State Department officials alike, and added to a growing perception that mishandling U.S.-Israeli affairs might push Israel toward pursuing nuclear options. From early 1969 until August 1970, American
policy toward the Middle East was shaped by the belief that the United States should play an active role in promoting a settlement based on the guidelines put forth in UN Resolution 242. Working with the other major powers, particularly the Soviet Union, the United States worked to establish negotiations between the regional parties to define the basic principles of a settlement that could then be worked out during talks between the two superpowers (Quandt 1977, 80).

Beyond this, however, the White House and the State Department held widely disparate views regarding the best approach toward the Middle East. For years, State Department officials had insisted that the United States should remain "even-handed" toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. This approach urged restraint in supplying arms to Israel and tended to favor a US statement opposing the Israeli acquisition of territory in June 1967 (Lenczowski 1990, 123; Quandt 1977, 81).

Nixon and Kissinger, on the other hand, were convinced that the military balance of power should be maintained in Israel's favor. Only a strong Israel would deter the Arabs from resorting to war. Soviet arms deliveries to Arab countries were therefore closely monitored and met or exceeded by arms aid to Israel. Israeli officials, who perceived that the even-handed
approach demanded a great deal from them yet promised little in return, were well aware of the divergent perspectives of the White House and the State Department. Soon, they began to avoid dealing with the latter, preferring to deal directly with Nixon and Kissinger whenever possible (Quandt 1977, 81).

The Nixon Administration's first in-depth review of Middle East policy took place on February 1, 1969. The National Security Council met and formalized the decision to pursue a more active diplomatic role leading to superpower talks. Furthermore, should attempts to pursue a settlement prove futile, the United States would fall back to an option of pursuing objectives which fell short of an actual settlement. The basic principles that would guide U.S. Middle East Policy included:

1. The parties to the dispute must participate in the negotiations at some point in the process; the United States would not hesitate to move somewhat ahead of Israel, but any final agreement would be reached only with Israel's participation and consent.

2. The objective of a settlement would be a binding agreement, not necessarily in the form of a peace treaty, but involving some form of contractual commitments.

3. Withdrawal of Israeli forces should take place back to the international frontier between Israel and Egypt, with a special arrangement for Gaza. There should be Israeli evacuation of the West Bank of Jordan, with only minor border changes.
4. Some critical areas should be demilitarized.

5. Jordan should have a civilian and religious role within a unified city of Jerusalem.

6. There should be a settlement of the refugee problem.

In general, the diplomatic strategy which would be used to achieve the basic objectives outlined above would be a "step-by-step" approach. Instead of focusing on the entire set of goals at once, different aspects would be successively added to the negotiation process. This approach would hopefully reduce the potential for stalemates that might occur if negotiations were directed toward the comprehensive settlement. The framework within which this strategy would be pursued would begin with US-Soviet talks designed to produce a joint document that, after being approved by the Four Powers, would be given to Gunnar Jarring to be presented to the concerned parties in the Middle East (Quandt 1977, 83).

Soon, several different rounds of negotiations were begun. Although US-Israeli talks were frequent, in order to assuage the Israeli government's fears, the U.S.-Soviet negotiations remained the centerpiece of American efforts. The objective of this first round of negotiations, conducted from March 18 to April 22, was simply to determine if sufficient common ground existed on general principles to support pursuing a joint proposal (Quandt
These negotiations were carried out against the backdrop of mounting tensions in the Middle East. Fedayeen attacks, and the subsequent Israeli retaliation, became more severe. In April, the same month that President Nasser declared his "War of Attrition," Lebanon declared a state of emergency after repeated clashes with the fedayeen left the government in a complete state of disarray (Quandt 1977, 85).

In early May, Joseph Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and Asia, presented the basics of the American proposal to Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. The Soviets replied with a counterproposal in June. In July, Sisco returned to Moscow with a new document that incorporated several of the Soviet points in June. With their respective positions developed, the United States and the Soviet Union each began to insist that further progress would depend upon the other superpower’s willingness to make concessions. In particular, the Soviets sought a more specific delineation of the final border between Egypt and Israel. The United States countered with the claim that such details depended upon more specific information regarding the Egyptian commitment to be peace and should not be dealt with until the process included direct negotiations.
The United States and the Soviet Union had reached a major roadblock. Each remained firm in its position. Meanwhile, clashes along the Suez Canal had become more frequent. Israel began to turn increasingly toward the United States, requesting fighter aircraft and related equipment, particularly since France had decided to cut off deliveries of all military equipment and spare parts to Israel in January 1969. In early September, King Idris of Libya was overthrown by a coup led by radical young army officers, causing many within the administration to suspect that Arab frustration over the lack of progress in the peace talks was leading to extremism. The first American F-4 Phantoms reached Israel during this time. Although their delivery had been agreed upon eight months earlier, the timing of their arrival exacerbated Arab frustrations and came to symbolize American support for Israel. The Arabs launched a concerted effort to prevent further weapons deliveries (Quandt 1977, 88).

By October 28, 1969, the American position had evolved into a proposal, referred to as the Rogers Plan. Its preamble called "for the conclusion of a final and reciprocally binding accord between Egypt and Israel, to be negotiated under the auspices of UN Ambassador Jarring following procedures used at Rhodes in 1949" (Quandt 1977,
89). The rest of the plan consisted of several points calling for Israel and the United Arab Republic to agree to officially end their state of war, to set a timetable for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territory, to establish secure and recognized borders specified on maps, to identify demilitarized zones such as Sharm al-Shaykh and the Gulf of Tiran, to guarantee freedom of navigation to all states through these waterways and through the Suez Canal, and to recognize each other's sovereignty. Furthermore, the plan stipulated that the final agreement would be detailed in a document signed by both sides and ratified by the UN Security Council which would assume a certain amount of responsibility for insuring that both sides adhered to the provisions of the agreement. The final agreement would then be filed with the UN.

Although the Soviets helped to negotiate the terms of the Rogers Plan, they declined to cosponsor it, preferring to allow the United States to offer it to the local actors as a U.S.-sponsored initiative. The plan failed to generate support from any of the relevant parties. Nasser rejected it on November 6; Israel on December 21. Two days later, the Soviet government also formally rejected the Rogers Plan. The Soviet's apparent "diplomatic backtracking," viewed within the context of their growing military involvement in the Middle East, led some American
officials, particularly Kissinger, to look for ways to deemphasize the superpower collaborative approach and to look for ways to negotiate with Egypt unilaterally (Breslauer 1983, 84). Thus, the Nixon Administration's first Middle East peace initiative ended abruptly, an apparent failure.

Throughout the negotiation process, relations between the White House and State Department became more distant. Their respective views regarding the Middle East came into direct conflict over one issue, arms to Israel (Quandt 1977, 104). Israeli leaders continued to exert tremendous pressure on Washington to provide them with the caliber of weapons required to maintain a military advantage in spite of the Soviet weapons being supplied to Egypt and Syria. Interestingly, President Nixon decided to postpone delivery of twenty-five F-4s and eighty Skyhawk fighters to Israel in March 1970 because he feared that conducting major arms deals with Israel might jeopardize the peace process. This decision elicited strong protests from the American Jewish community and several members of Congress (Nixon 1978, 481). Nixon's resolve concerning arms deliveries was tested several months later by a crisis in Jordan (Lenczowski 1990, 125).

The underlying causes of the Jordan crisis stemmed from the increasing division of the Arab world into
radical and conservative camps, and the growth of increasingly militant factions of Palestinian Arabs seeking to regain their lost homeland. These Palestinians operated mainly out of Jordan, where they defied King Hussein's rule and established a virtual "state within a state." In early September 1970, one of these groups hijacked four airliners, brought them to Jordan and eventually blew them up. This incident sparked a civil war in Jordan between the Palestinian guerillas and King Hussein's government forces. Syria saw the conflict as an opportunity to depose King Hussein and establish in Jordan a more radical government. Soon, approximately one hundred Syrian tanks entered Jordan, heading directly toward the center of the country. At least two hundred more tanks followed (Lenczowski 1990, 125).

Kissinger's description of the situation reveals a great deal about the administration's perception of American interests in the Middle East: "It looks like the Soviets are pushing the Syrians and the Syrians are pushing the Palestinians. The Palestinians don't need much pushing" (Nixon 1978, 483). Nixon felt compelled to prevent what he perceived as a Soviet inspired rebellion from overthrowing King Hussein. On September 18, the Soviet government sent a message to Washington stating its intention to refrain from intervention and requesting the
same of the United States. However, as new information revealed Syria's growing military involvement, Nixon faced the dilemma of determining an appropriate American response (Lenczowski 1990, 126).

In lieu of direct American involvement, Nixon chose to turn to a regional actor. Through Kissinger, Nixon informed Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Ambassador, that the United States "would be fully in support of Israeli strikes on Syrian forces in Jordan if this became necessary to avoid a Jordanian defeat" (Nixon 1978, 485). Ambassador Rabin responded that Israeli officials believed air strikes would not suffice, suggesting ground action instead. After initial hesitation, Nixon decided to approve the use of ground troops, provided King Hussein were consulted in advance (Lenczowski 1990, 126).

Two Israeli brigades advanced into the Golan Heights, where they would be in a good position to deter Syrian troops heading toward Jordan. Meanwhile, President Nixon placed 20,000 American troops on alert and ordered additional American naval assets into the Mediterranean. With the stakes rising dramatically, Soviet leaders exerted pressure on Syria to avoid becoming entangled in a risky military operation. Hafiz Assad, then commander of the Syrian Air Force, refused to provide air support to the advancing Syrian tanks, leaving them vulnerable to
attack from Jordanian fighters. Syrian losses were sufficient to compel them to withdraw, making the use of foreign intervention to protect King Hussein's government unnecessary (Lenczowski 1990, 127).

Although neither American nor Israeli intervention proved necessary, the Jordanian crisis was a significant milestone in the Nixon Administration's Middle Eastern policy for several reasons. First, the crisis prompted the beginning of a new strategic relationship between the U.S. and Israel (Quandt 1977, 119), that would actually surpass the relationship established during the Johnson Administration. This new closeness ended a period of particularly strained relations caused by Nixon's continued restraint in responding to Israeli arms requests and by the U.S. negotiated August 7 cease-fire, which the Israelis believed should have included qualified terms based on indications that Egypt was not abiding by the standstill provisions of the agreement (Quandt 1977, 106). During the crisis, Nixon authorized $500 million in military aid to Israel and agreed to accelerate delivery of eighteen F-4s (Quandt 1977, 114).

As the relationship between the White House and Israel grew closer, the State Department was moved increasingly toward the periphery of American Middle East policy formulation. Quandt suggests that Nixon and
Kissinger were angry with the State Department for not anticipating the need to identify potential violations of the cease-fire agreement. Israeli intelligence produced evidence of the violations which the United States had no means to verify. "Israel's credibility at the White House was by now greater than State's, and soon Nixon and Kissinger were beginning to alter the thrust of United States policy" (Quandt 1977, 107).

In a manner reminiscent of Eisenhower, the Jordanian crisis demonstrates the fact that Nixon and Kissinger allowed the U.S.-Soviet perspective to dominate their thinking (Quandt 1977, 106). This reduced their ability to separate a regional dispute from the confines of their Cold War framework. Both men were convinced that the Soviet Union was behind Syria's attempt to overthrow King Hussein. This perception persisted in spite of the Soviets' insistence that they did not intend to intervene.

Finally, the administration's apparent success in handling such a dramatic international crisis could not have come at a better time. Congressional elections were less than two months away and Nixon's popularity had been sagging due to the deteriorating situation in Vietnam and lack of clear progress in building a constructive relationship with the Soviet Union (Quandt 1977, 105). Jordan became the first of several "foreign policy
spectaculars," including the opening to China, the SALT agreement and eventually the Vietnam War negotiations, that boosted the President's prestige and Kissinger's reputation as a skilled negotiator. These achievements placed them on the crest of a wave of popularity that helped carry them toward reelection in 1972 (Quandt 1977, 120).

The period between the Jordanian crisis and the October War of 1973, although it appeared relatively stable, was not especially productive in terms of American foreign policy toward the Middle East. Based on their apparent success, Nixon and Kissinger allowed themselves to become caught "in a perceptual trap" forged out of a series of misinterpretations: of Syria's motives in entering Jordan, of the reasons for their subsequent withdrawal, of the global dimension of the crisis, and finally, of the degree to which the crisis was averted due to United States action (Litwak 1984, 156-158; Quandt 1977, 124-125). After the Jordanian crisis, the perceived "key" to stability in the Middle East, maintenance of the balance of power, became an even more vital component to Nixon and Kissinger's strategy. Jordan, which would be relied upon to help promote stability in the small oil producing Gulf states once the British departed in 1971, and Israel joined Iran as
"regional peacekeepers." By providing arms to these countries, the United States hoped to deter aggression by Soviet supported states, while reducing the potential necessity for United States direct intervention (Quandt 1977, 123). Upon reaching this conclusion, Nixon and Kissinger's willingness to provide any amount of support to the logic of the "even-handed" approach evaporated (Quandt 1977, 121). The relative stability that followed the Jordanian crisis contributed to the shared sense of complacency between the United States and Israel.

Lacking any sense of urgency, U.S. support of diplomatic efforts to promote a peace settlement appeared to cool considerably. The U.S. sponsored cease-fire was due to expire in November, 1970. Sadat agreed to a three month extension, expecting the Jarring talks to resume. On December 28, Prime Minister Meir announced Israel's return to the talks, but meaningful progress between the two sides remained elusive. In February, Sadat agreed to an additional one month extension. The prospects for reaching a settlement continued to look bleak however. On February 8, Jarring presented both sides with a document calling for "parallel and simultaneous commitments." The issue of territory proved insurmountable. Israel balked at the stipulation that it agree in principle to withdraw to the former boundary between Egypt and the British
Mandate for Palestine, refusing to establish such a withdrawal as a prior condition for negotiations. Upon hearing this, Egypt declared that Israel's unwillingness to accept the principle of full withdrawal was itself an unacceptable prior condition. Under these circumstances, the Jarring talks collapsed in February 1971 (Quandt 1977, 135-136).

Perhaps because he suspected that the latest round of Jarring talks might lead to yet another diplomatic impasse, Sadat launched his own peace initiative by announcing on February 5, 1971 that in return for a partial Israeli withdrawal, the Egyptians would clear and reopen the Suez Canal, which Egypt had closed to all traffic, in part to attract world attention to the situation (Aker 1985, 15; O'Ballance 1978, 3-4). Golda Meir, not especially interested in a partial agreement such as this, responded that she was unwilling to pull Israeli troops back from existing cease-fire lines until an overall settlement had been reached (Quandt 1977, 136-137). Sadat launched a diplomatic campaign to get the United States to support the initiative. One month later, President Nixon instructed the State Department to begin working out the details of an interim agreement (Quandt 1977, 138). To encourage Israel's earnest consideration of the agreement, the United States used arms as an
inducement. On April 19, officials announced that twelve more F-4s would be sent to Israel (Quandt 1977, 139).

Rogers and Sisco, acting as intermediaries, encountered difficulties in keeping each side focused on the areas covered by the canal settlement. In negotiations, each wanted to know the other's position on a wider range of issues. When these were discussed, as past experiences had proven, the distance between the two sides became even more vast, particularly when the subject of territory was broached. Rogers and Sisco were unable to bridge the gap between the evolving Egyptian and Israeli positions. In fact, by portraying each side's position in the most favorable light, hoping to coax more flexibility out of the other party, Rogers and Sisco lost credibility, leaving the Egyptians and the Israelis feeling as though they had been deceived. White House support for Rogers dried up (Quandt 1977, 139-141).

The failure of the interim canal-settlement agreement effectively signalled the end of Rogers and Sisco's control over the directions of Middle East policy (Quandt 1977, 143). If there were any new initiatives, Nixon and Kissinger would provide direction. Yet this was a remote possibility. With the American election looming just over the horizon, secret negotiations with North Vietnam underway in Paris, and the dramatic opening to China about
to become a reality, the Middle East, where success seemed to continually elude negotiators, was allowed to fade into the background. This "process of deferral had a net effect of transforming policy into the very kind of shallow exercise which Kissinger had scorned as an academic--that is the projection of the future as an extrapolation of the past" (Litwak 1984, 157).

In April 1972, three months before announcing the expulsion of Soviet advisers from Egypt, Sadat opened a secret channel to Washington. Kissinger suggests that this was due, at least in part, to Sadat's growing dissatisfaction with Soviet support. In spite of the steady supply of arms, Kissinger's sources revealed that Egypt was pressuring Moscow for more support. Kissinger believed, however, that the "Soviets were holding Sadat at arm's length, fearful of the risks of all-out support," and hoping to avoid "going to the brink" with the United States over the challenge to Israel's survival (Kissinger 1979, 1293). Sadat proposed that Kissinger meet confidentially with his own national security adviser, Hafiz Ismail, to discuss "mechanisms for shifting the peace process off dead center." Kissinger's heavy involvement in the Paris negotiations during the latter half of 1972 caused this meeting to be postponed until February 1973, however (Litwak 1984, 158).
The sense of urgency that had steadily decreased regarding the Nixon Administration's Middle Eastern policy would return in early October 1973. Beyond fundamental concerns for Israel's survival, however, the main thrusts of this urgency centered around the possibility that this regional conflict might cause a superpower confrontation. Sadat astutely recognized the relationship that had developed between the United States and the Soviet Union. He was well aware that a conflict between the Arabs and Israelis would have ramifications which extended well beyond the region. In fact, one of his primary objectives in launching the October War was to "spark" an international crisis. He reasoned that increased superpower involvement, which would most assuredly result, would help him bring about some of the changes he envisioned. He hoped that their mutual desire to avoid a nuclear confrontation would lead the superpowers to force Israel into "reasonable" concessions (O'Ballance 1978, 15).

Soon after the coordinated offensives began, while non-Arabs struggled to recover from the initial shock, the attention of the world community began to focus on the United States and the Soviet Union. Basic American policy focused on two goals, announced at a United Nations Security Council meeting convened on October 8 at the United States' request. First, hostilities should be
brought to an end as quickly as possible. Second, the U.S. called for restoring conditions in the area which would be conducive to settling longstanding differences (Rugh 1976, 1-2).

By adopting this basic posture, calling for a ceasefire but nothing else, American policymakers hoped to give quiet diplomacy a chance at success. They did not want to raise controversial issues in an open public forum. This might lead to complications, making it more difficult for Washington to fulfill its mediating role. Even the statement of U.S. policy made before the United Nations was kept as general as possible to avoid generating public debate. American representatives chose not to call for a vote in the Security Council because, as Kissinger later explained in a press conference, they "realized that no majority was available and [they] did not want sides to be chosen prematurely" (Rugh 1976, 4).

The first order of business was to get the fighting to stop. This would not be possible, however, until the overwhelming momentum gained by the Arabs in the initial stages of the conflict could be slowed. On the day the war began, Kissinger convened the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG), the Administration's official crisis-management body. One of the first issues discussed was whether or not the United States should supply
additional arms to Israel. Surprisingly, the issue sparked a great deal of debate within the administration, delaying the much-needed resupply. Meanwhile, the Arabs benefited from a nearly continuous supply of Soviet equipment (Alroy 1975, 73).

Foreign policy analysts are divided over whether or not arms were withheld from Israel for several days as part of a larger political strategy. Alroy suggests that Kissinger orchestrated the pretense of disagreement among key administration officials as a delaying tactic. This pretense was allegedly motivated by the belief that a long-range political settlement would be facilitated if the Arabs and Israelis made each other suffer (Alroy 1975, 77). Lenczowski, on the other hand, contends that Kissinger genuinely and actively supported sending arms to Israel, insisting that if the United States refused aid, Israel would no longer have any incentive to conform to American views in postwar diplomacy (Lenczowski 1990, 130).

Each of these positions has a certain degree of merit. There is little doubt that the United States could not afford to let the Arabs prevail in the conflict. The American commitment to Israeli security could not simply be put aside. However, a decisive Israeli victory could perpetuate, and perhaps even intensify, Arab resentment
Moreover, it would very likely cause Israel to become even more entrenched, both politically and physically, within the relative security offered by the status quo. In short, the war presented an opportunity to make progress through diplomatic channels, an avenue that up to this point had led nowhere. The situation could not be allowed to get out of hand, however. Thus, when Golda Meir sent appeals to Washington for American aid, indicating that Israel would use every means at its disposal to ensure its national survival, a potential reference to the use of nuclear weapons, the administration moved quickly to establish an "air bridge" between the United States and Israel (Litwak 1984, 160).

Putting aside the issue of why the United States delayed the airlift, the fact remains that this resupply gave Israel a vital boost, turning the tide of the war. Once the order for the airlift was given, the amount of aid was quite substantial. Within days, the United States was supplying Israel with over one thousand tons of weapons and equipment per day (Litwak 1984, 160; Nixon 1978, 927). A total of 550 American missions to Israel carried out the task of supply and resupply, an operation that surpassed the Berlin airlift of 1948-9 (Lenczowski 1990, 130; Nixon 1978, 927-929).

Thus, during the second week of the war, the United
States became more directly involved in the conflict by providing arms to Israel. Arab accusations that the U.S. was otherwise intervening in the conflict were denied. Nonetheless, on 17 October, the ministers of 11 nations of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) met in Kuwait, announcing that they had agreed to cut oil production by 5% per month until Israel withdrew from the occupied territories and agreed to respect the rights of Palestinian refugees. Over the next few days, oil cuts would become progressively higher, and would target the United States directly in an attempt to force it to change its pro-Israeli policies (Rugh 1976, 31-34).

Bolstered by the resupply, Israel launched counteroffensives on both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. On October 15-16, Israeli troops crossed into "African" Egypt. Meanwhile, Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin consulted with Sadat in Cairo, urging him to accept a Soviet proposal that linked a standstill ceasefire to an Israeli agreement to withdraw to its pre-1967 borders. When Kosygin departed from Cairo on 18 October, he had Sadat's commitment to work for an immediate ceasefire. Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin quickly informed Kissinger of the proposal39. Kissinger agreed to pass the terms on to Tel Aviv (Litwak 1984, 160-161).

On 19 October, in a move that surprised many within
the Nixon Administration, Brezhnev invoked the newly established consultative mechanisms created by the June 1973 accords to invite Kissinger to Moscow to discuss the situation in the Middle East (Golan 1977, 112-115; Nixon 1978, 931). While en route to Moscow on October 20, 1973, Kissinger was advised that Saudi Arabia had joined the other OAPEC states in declaring a total oil embargo against the United States. This embargo coincided with President Nixon's decision to request $2.2 billion in emergency military aid for Israel (Litwak 1984, 161).

During the Moscow talks, the Soviets reiterated their proposal for an immediate ceasefire accompanied by a return to the provisions of UN Resolution 242. Kissinger sought to fashion an agreement that also included peace negotiations. By October 21, both the Soviets and the Egyptians had accepted Kissinger's formulation. The following day, a UN cease-fire resolution was drafted and adopted as UN Resolution 338. Meanwhile, the Israelis launched a counteroffensive that elicited an angry protest from Ambassador Dobrynin on October 23. Over the next 24 hours, the Israelis continued to advance, managing to press forward to the outskirts of Suez City and to encircle the Egyptian Third Army, comprised of approximately 20,000 troops, east of the Suez Canal. Sadat responded by sending urgent requests to the United
States and the Soviet Union, asking for armed troops to enforce the second ceasefire, negotiated on October 24 (Lenczowski 1990, 130-131; Litwak 1984, 162; Nixon 1978, 937).

The period that followed was characterized by tense diplomatic efforts by the United States and the Soviet Union to balance their respective interests while meeting the immediate needs of the situation. Within hours of Sadat's request, Dobrynin conveyed a message from Brezhnev denouncing Israel for violating the cease-fire and reiterating Sadat's request for a joint peace-keeping force. Brezhnev's message ended with an indication, which many U.S. officials perceived as a threat, that if the United States did not support the joint effort, the Soviet Union would be forced to act unilaterally to prevent cease-fire violations.

On October 25, a group of government officials described by Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger as the "abbreviated" National Security Council met in the Situation Room of the White House to determine the United States' next course of action. They decided unanimously to place all American conventional and nuclear forces on military alert. Nixon, who was not present at the meeting, approved the plan. He then sent a message to Brezhnev in which he denied that Israel had violated the cease-fire.
agreement. Furthermore, he cautioned Brezhnev against taking any sort of unilateral action (Lenczowski 1990, 131).

At a press conference on October 25, Kissinger explained the administration’s decision to place American troops at a higher state of readiness by emphasizing the United States’ opposition to the use of a joint Soviet-United States force in the Middle East, a move which Kissinger and Nixon believed might risk "transplanting" the great-power rivalry into the region. Moreover, he pointed out that the United States was even more opposed to the unilateral deployment of troops by any great power, particularly any power possessing nuclear capability45.

While fighting continued between Egypt and Israel, American officials pursued a new cease-fire agreement that would ultimately lead to a lasting disengagement. Providing relief to the beleaguered Egyptian Third Army was also a high priority (Lenczowski 1990, 131). On October 26, the crisis fueled by Soviet-American disagreement over the placement of troops in the Middle East abated. The Soviet Ambassador stopped insisting on superpower participation in the Sinai peace-keeping force, and President Nixon announced that American troops had returned to their normal state of readiness46.

On November 5, 1973, Kissinger initiated what has
since been labeled "shuttle diplomacy" by traveling to Egypt, Israel, Syria, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Russia to serve as an intermediary among the interested parties. During this period, he facilitated an agreement concerning the resupply of the Egyptian Third Army and, on November 11, an agreement between Egypt and Israel calling for an end to hostilities. This agreement, signed on "Kilometer 101" of the Cairo-Suez road, also stipulated an interim disposition of forces (Lenczowski 1990, 131-132).

The next phase of diplomacy took place on December 21-22 at an international conference convened in Geneva in response to a formal request by the UN Secretary General. The conference was cochaired by the United States and the Soviet Union. Egypt, Israel and Jordan attended, while Syria chose to boycott the meeting. The Geneva Conference consisted of a ceremonial dinner and one inaugural session of negotiations. As such, it was not expected to serve as a forum for dealing with the full range of substantive disagreements between the belligerents; rather, it served as a springboard for successive rounds of negotiations that took place first between Egypt and Israel, and later, between Israel and Syria, with the United States acting as intermediary. These negotiations eventually led to separate disengagement agreements on January 18, 1974 and
The final months of the Nixon Administration were characterized by Kissinger’s increasing involvement in American foreign policy toward the Middle East. President Nixon, on the other hand, was forced to devote more and more attention to domestic concerns, particularly the cancerous effects of the Watergate break-in on his administration, his popularity, and his status as president. On August 8, 1974, Nixon announced his resignation as President of the United States, effective noon the following day (Nixon 1978, 1083).

Summary

The Soviet-American approach that literally dominated Nixon and Kissinger’s thought processes casts a very interesting complexion over American Middle Eastern policy during the Nixon Administration. When Nixon first entered office, in spite of his announcement that the Middle East would be among his chief concerns, he was not particularly interested in devoting a great deal of time to the region, which did not appear to hold the promise of any real progress. The president's desire to revitalize the National Security Council and to play a significant personal role in foreign policy formulation led him to reserve the more "dramatic" foreign policy arenas for the
White House. Working to extricate the country from its involvement in Vietnam, establishing a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union, and opening relations with China were much more appealing projects to Nixon and Kissinger.

Meanwhile, Nixon allowed his Secretary of State, at least officially, to take the lead in Middle Eastern policy formulation for several years. Under State Department influence, at the beginning of the Nixon Administration, the desire to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute emerged as a very high priority. As such, efforts to launch two-power and four-power talks to establish the framework of a potential settlement were begun in earnest. During this period, however, the conflicting goals of promoting Israeli security and maintaining reliable access to oil vied with one another for preeminence, often thwarting attempts to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli dilemma. The evolving struggle between the State Department, which generally favored protecting U.S. access to oil, and the White House, which favored supporting Israel militarily to maintain the balance of power in the region, complicated matters even more. Israel in particular perceived the growing divergence between these regionally and globally oriented approaches, and began to deal increasingly with
the White House. In Nixon and Kissinger's view, meanwhile, the highest priority for American foreign policy, the Middle East included, was to prevent the expansion of Soviet influence. This outlook colored Nixon and Kissinger's perceptions of significant events in the Middle East, often causing them to misinterpret critical regional developments such as those which precipitated the Jordan crisis in 1970.

Soon, circumstances caused Nixon and Kissinger to perceive that the Middle East was taking on increased importance in the Soviet-American competition. Secretary Rogers, meanwhile, did not seem to be having much success in getting the parties any closer to a settlement. President Nixon allowed the support he had been giving to his Secretary of State to gradually dissipate, until it was eventually depleted after the futile attempt to sponsor an interim canal settlement in early 1971. This period saw little meaningful diplomatic activity and led the Arabs, particularly Sadat, to become increasingly frustrated.

In addition to the Soviet-American competition, one of the most interesting contextual features of the Nixon Administration's Middle Eastern policy centered around Arab and Israeli self-perceptions. The Arabs became increasingly impatient to regain self-esteem lost in 1967,
while the Israelis became overconfident because of their
decisive victory in the Six Day War. Arab frustrations at
the lack of diplomatic progress were fueled by the
increasingly apparent pro-Israeli stance of the Nixon
Administration. The situation culminated in the
coordinated Egyptian-Syrian attacks of October 1973, which
cought both Israel and Washington off-guard. More
importantly, however, the war provided Kissinger with the
opportunity to seek gains in the diplomatic arena because
it changed a vital component of the contextual
environment. The Arabs no longer felt powerless and the
Israelis no longer felt invulnerable. Finally,
Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy," although primarily
directed toward establishing an end to hostilities, was
very important in terms of setting the stage for later
developments in the Middle East, particularly those that
led to the agreements at Camp David during President
Carter's Administration.
Chapter Notes

1. Nasser formally announced the abrogation of the cease fire in April, 1969.


3. This was questioned during a presidential press conference on February 6, 1969. Nixon responded by indicating that the State Department and the National Security Council both exist to advise the president, who must then make decisions concerning foreign policy. See The Nixon Presidential Press Conferences (New York: Earl M. Coleman Enterprises, Inc., 1978) 16-17.

4. Nixon clarified the main points of his doctrine in his Foreign Policy Report of February 18, 1970, indicating that the United States would keep its treaty commitments and provide a shield if a nuclear power were to threaten any ally or nation considered to be vital to U.S. security. The main thrust of his doctrine centered around the new position the United States would take in situations involving other forms of aggression. Military and economic assistance would be provided when requested, if deemed appropriate. However, the nation directly threatened would be expected to provide the manpower for its own defense. See also Lenczowski, 117.


7. Ibid. Bahrein had served as headquarters for the U.S. Navy’s Middle East Command, consisting of two destroyers, (although four were authorized) and a converted seaplane tender. After the British pullout, Bahrein was to be granted full independence. Yet, citing Iran’s historical claim to Bahrein, dating back almost 200 years, the Shah intended to present a claim to the island before the United Nations.

8. Ibid.

10. Ibid. Several of these F-86s were slated for conversion to F-5s.

11. Ibid. These airbases were to be built at Jask and Bushire, with an expansion of the naval base at Khurramshahar and a new naval base at Bandar Abbas.

12. Ibid.


14. Still another interpretation contends that the Soviet Union had objective (strategic, political, or economic) interests in maintaining a condition of controlled tension, while other authors claim that the Soviets felt that the best means to promote these interests was by creating flexibility in the Middle East. See George W. Breslauer, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1967-1972: Unalterable Antagonism or Collaborative Competition?" chap. in *Soviet Strategy in the Middle East* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1983), 65.

15. The Soviet Union’s involvement in the peace process was not readily accepted by everyone within the administration. Two broad interpretations developed. The first view held that the exigencies of global strategies would compel the Soviets to cooperate with the United States on the Middle East, in spite of the potential weakening of relations with Egypt. Those who held the second view found it difficult to believe that the Soviets would sacrifice regional interests to improve relations with the United States. They argued that the Soviet position depended upon its role as arms supplier, and would therefore benefit from perpetual fighting. See William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1977), 86.

17. This occurred during a period when the Soviets were becoming increasingly concerned that the United States was moving away from collaboration toward unilateralism. See Breslauer, 81.

18. This "line" consisted of three components incorporated into a single defense strategy. The fortresses, bunkers reinforced with stone and sand, were intended to provide a vantage point from which to observe the enemy and slow down any substantial attack. Large oil tanks were buried nearby and connected to a series of nozzles that could spray a wall of flame at anyone attempting to cross the canal. The third component consisted of armor and artillery, whose mission was to delay and disrupt any Egyptian advance for as long as possible. See Frank Aker, October 1973: The Arab-Israeli War (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1985), 6-7.

19. This system was not yet in operation by 1973.

20. This action was misinterpreted by Israeli and American intelligence officials. See Edgar O'Ballance, No Victor. No Vanquished: The Yom Kippur War (San Raphael, California: Presidio Press, 1978), 50.


22. Craig and George, 140. Craig and George point out that it was Kissinger who wrote about the importance of obtaining domestic support as the "acid test" of a policy.

23. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, 77. Quandt suggests that, due to the seemingly hopeless complexity of the situation in the Middle East, Nixon preferred to avoid dealing with the region, in favor of devoting his energy to areas where success was more likely.

24. Palestinian nationalism became particularly militant after the 1967 war.

25. This resolution was passed on November 22, 1967, after the Six Day War.
26. Prior to his inauguration, Nixon sent former Pennsylvania governor William Scranton to the Middle East on a fact-finding mission. While in Israel, Scranton indicated to a group of newspapermen that the United States would do well by pursuing a more "even-handed" policy toward the Middle East. Lenczowski suggests that Nixon quickly learned that any reference to "even-handedness could prove politically costly. See Lenczowski, 120.

27. American efforts to maintain the balance of power in Israel's favor often created tensions with Arab states, most notably Egypt. See, for example, Raymond W. Anderson, "Sadat is Assured on U.S. Missiles," New York Times, 28 November 1971, p. 27.

28. The outcomes of this meeting were discussed during a presidential press conference on February 6, 1969. See The Nixon Presidential Press Conferences, 12.

29. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, 82-83.


32. Washington's concern that Israel was being asked to make tangible concessions in return for intangible promises of peace was a recurring theme throughout the negotiations. See, for example, Kissinger, American Foreign Policy, 290.


35. Quandt, Decade of Decisions, 135-139. Sadat was responding in part to Israeli Defense Minister Dayan's public announcements suggesting a "mutual thinning out" of forces along the canal to reopen it to international trade.
36. Gil Carl Alroy, The Kissinger Experience: American Foreign Policy in the Middle East (New York: Horizon Press, 1975). Alroy asserts that this delay was part of a "game" in which Kissinger appeared to energetically seek relief for Israel only to be blocked by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger. Kissinger addresses this sort of criticism in Henry A. Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 478. Nixon discusses the issue in Memoirs, 922; 926.

37. See also Nixon, Memoirs, 921. Nixon believed that "only a battlefield stalemate could provide the foundation on which fruitful negotiations might begin."


39. Nixon, Memoirs, 930. Nixon learned of the proposal at 8:45 p.m. on October 18.

40. Ibid., 931. Nixon suggests that the Arab announcement of the embargo actually came before his request to Congress.

41. Ibid., 936. Israel claimed to be responding to Egyptian cease-fire violations.

42. Litwak, 162.

43. Additional Soviet troop carriers were moved into the Mediterranean and seven airborne divisions in southern Russia and Hungary were reportedly placed on alert. See Litwak, 162; Nixon, Memoirs, 937.

44. Schlesinger Press Conference of 26 October, 1973 in Department of State Bulletin LXIX, No. 1795 (19 November, 1973), 620, quoted in Litwak, 162. In attendance were: Kissinger, Schlesinger, General Haig, General Scowcroft, Admiral Moorer, and CIA Director Colby. See also Nixon, Memoirs, 939.
45. Kissinger Press Conference of October 25, 1973 in Department of State Bulletin LXIX, No. 1794 (12 November, 1973), 587, quoted in Litwak, 163. See also Nixon, Memoirs, 940, where Nixon addresses the fact that several of the questions during the press conference implied that the decision was motivated by domestic considerations rather than the international situation.


47. These agreements were quite similar. Both provided for a separation of forces, with UN supervised disengagement zones.
CHAPTER 4

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION

We were sure that ours was a nation of the ballot, not the bullet, until the murders of John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. We were taught that our armies were always invincible and our causes always just, only to suffer the agony of Vietnam. We respected the Presidency as a place of honor until the shock of Watergate. We remember when the phrase "sound as a dollar" was an expression of absolute dependability, until ten years of inflation began to shrink our dollar and our savings. We believed that our nation's resources were limitless until 1973, when we had to face a growing dependence on foreign oil. These wounds are still very deep. They have never been healed (Carter 1982, 120).

On Sunday, July 15, 1979, Jimmy Carter addressed the nation from the Oval Office after having spent an intense week at Camp David meeting small groups of key advisers reassessing his administration in light of reports that his popularity had "dropped to a new low" (Carter 1982, 114). He believed, among other things, that the people of America had lost faith in themselves and in their country. This lost confidence could be restored if Americans were willing to work together to solve major problems (Carter 1982, 121). Although his announcement was prompted by
Carter's "reassessment" of his administration, it did not reflect a significant change in his personal beliefs.

Carter came to the presidency seeking to promote a revival of American support for the government by convincing "the people that the barriers between them and the top officials in Washington were being broken down" (Carter 1982, 26). He was well aware of the damage to the public's perception of the presidency caused by Watergate, and was determined to regain the American trust (Carter 1982, 22). Thus, Carter's presidency was, in many respects, a departure from previous administrations. In Carter's view, it was more accurately a return to the basic values that had been conspicuously lacking in previous administrations (Carter 1977, 196).

The need to foster a renewed sense of morality in domestic and foreign affairs served as the basic motif of Carter's presidency. It translated into several fundamental concerns, which he believed embodied the most important American values—"human rights, environmental quality, nuclear arms control, and the search for justice and peace" (Carter 1982, 20). In his memoirs, Carter stresses his admiration for two past presidents, Wilson and Truman. In Wilson, Carter admired the quality of idealism, a characteristic which he believed had been absent from American foreign policy for far too long.
(Carter 1982, 142). He dismissed the notion that foreign policy was largely a choice between the realist and idealist approaches, insisting that "the demonstration of American idealism was a practical and realistic approach to foreign affairs, and moral principles were the best foundation for the exertion of American power and influence" (Carter 1982, 143).

Ironically, the quality Carter most admired in Truman was his willingness "to be unpopular if he believed his actions were best for the country" (Carter 1982, 66). This image embodied Carter's view of an elected official's role, that once citizens make their opinions known, public officials must ultimately "decide what actions to take for the public good" (Carter 1982, 80). This view, which is reminiscent of Morgenthau's belief that statesmen should not be too responsive to the forces exerted by public opinion, is particularly interesting in light of the potential inherent contradictions between it and the idealistic approach described above. In essence, President Carter's image of his role as a statesman, and of the role the United States should play in world affairs, were directly responsive to both of the conflicting impulses that had driven American foreign policy during the post war era.

Carter believed that he could achieve a balance
between these two impulses. In practice, however, this goal would prove elusive. As he undertook specific foreign policy initiatives, Carter found that circumstances inevitably drove him to choose one approach over the other. This is not particularly surprising. Even Truman, whom Carter admired for making choices based on the nation’s interests, eventually bowed to political pressure in supporting the creation of Israel. Moreover, Wilson, who typified the idealistic approach, made several pragmatic decisions that would later prove difficult to reconcile with his own desire to promote the self-determination of the Arab people.

What is interesting, however, is the impact that Carter’s personal impressions of the United States’ responsibilities had on foreign policy in general and particularly on the situation in the Middle East.

**Context**

I am proud to meet with a group of men and women with whom I share a total commitment to the preservation of human rights, individual liberty, and freedom of conscience...I would like to talk to you about my view of how our nation should encourage and support those priceless qualities throughout the world. This is, as you know a difficult question. It requires a great deal of balancing between idealism and realism, of our understanding of the world as it is and our understanding the the world as it ought to be...The question, I think, is whether in recent years officials have not been too pragmatic, even cynical, and as a consequence
have ignored those moral values that have often distinguished our own country from other nations around the world (Carter 1977, 166).

Carter's perception of American foreign policy during the Nixon-Ford years was that it had been allowed to become too narrowly defined in terms of the Soviet-American competition in the Cold War. In dealing with other governments, this led policy makers to place too much emphasis on whether a particular country "espoused the anti-communist line," without regard for the nature of that country's own government. In effect, oppressive governments might receive U.S. support and protection from internal political movements as long as they were willing to side against the "evildoers" (Carter 1982, 142-143).

In Carter's view, the United States had a basic responsibility to promote freedom and democratic principles. In fact, the nation had been "strongest and most effective" during those periods when freedom and democracy were most clearly emphasized in its foreign policy (Carter 1982, 142). Thus, in choosing the priorities for his foreign policy, Carter was determined to focus on those countries where people were imprisoned, tortured, or otherwise deprived of human rights (Carter 1982, 146). Opportunities for such emphasis abounded.

The situation in the Middle East was not nearly as volatile as it had been when Nixon entered office, yet
unresolved issues still caused perpetual tensions. The prospects for a lasting peace still seemed remote after the 1973 war, but there were several contextual changes that indicated that progress might be possible at last. Once the fighting had ended and the peace process was renewed, many within the United States and the world community began to wonder if, perhaps, the high costs of the war would lead Arabs and Israelis alike to recognize their mutual interest in a compromise peace.\(^2\)

As for the Arab side of the equation, several encouraging signs of a "changing Arab attitude" fueled hopes that meaningful negotiations could begin in earnest. In fact, the Arabs' willingness to begin direct peace negotiations with Israel at Geneva was heralded as the most fundamental manifestation of their evolving attitude. This newfound willingness to negotiate was largely an outgrowth of the Arabs' military performance in the October War, which had lessened the sense of shame and defeat that had permeated the Arab atmosphere since 1967. Moreover, the realization during the war that oil could be used as a "weapon" for coercive diplomacy, or at least as leverage in bargaining, eliminated the Arabs' long-standing fears that they would be negotiating from a position of weakness in direct talks. This renewed sense of honor and the discovery of a certain amount of
bargaining power, coupled with the recognition that, in spite of initial setbacks in the recent war, Israel still possessed formidable military capabilities, led Sadat, King Hussein and other Arab leaders to announce their willingness to formally acknowledge the existence of Israel, within its 1967 borders.

The events of 1973 forced the Israelis to grapple with realizations about their Arab neighbors and, more importantly, their own growing isolation within the world community. The high number of casualties sustained, and their failure to win a decisive victory in the conflict severely damaged the Israelis' self-image of invulnerability. Furthermore, the heavy economic burden of constant preparedness for war, the recognition of the potential power of the Arab oil weapon, and the increasing sense of dependence on the United States, led to a sinking impression that even another military victory would do little to bring the country closer to peace. Mounting dissatisfaction and criticisms of the Israeli military's performance in the early stages of the war quickly led to a governmental crisis, which undoubtedly amplified the general perception of instability within the country. The Labor Party lost several critical seats in the parliamentary elections on December 31, 1973. After repeated attempts to form a new government, Golda Meir
relinquished premiership. She was succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin, the army chief of staff responsible for planning the highly successful preemptive strikes in 1967. As Prime Minister, Rabin continued to maintain an Israeli "hard line" in peace negotiations.

In spite of this official posturing, several prominent Israelis were compelled to reassess their Arab neighbors in the period following the 1973 war. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, for example, contrasted the recent war with previous conflicts:

This time they marshalled all their resources, including oil, to achieve their purpose. They took the international climate into account, the role the Russians would play, the importance of detente between Americans and the Russians. They realized it was a changed world in 1973, and we have to realize it too.

One of the most compelling aspects of the "changed world" facing Israel after 1973 was the country's growing isolation within the world community. The threat of an Arab oil boycott had forced countries such as Japan, dependent on Arab countries for 45 per cent of its oil, and several western European governments, also heavily reliant on Arab oil imports, to adopt a decidedly pro-Arab stance during the war. In fact, on November 6, 1973, the European Economic Community issued a resolution calling on
Israel to "end the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict in 1967".

Israel's increasing isolation became a trend which continued for several years, setting the stage for the circumstances under which the Carter Administration would have to operate. Interestingly, the trend expanded beyond admonitions expressed by individual governments to include increasing pressure from the United Nations. On January 12, 1976, for example, the UN Security Council opened its Middle East debate by voting 11 to 1 with 3 abstentions to allow the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate with speaking rights as a member. On May 26, 1976, the Security Council closed its debate on the Middle East with a majority statement deploiring Israeli measures to alter the demographic character of the occupied territories. The United States disassociated itself from this statement. On November 11, the Security Council, in a consensus statement, denounced the establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and declared the annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel to be "invalid." On November 24, the General Assembly approved by a vote of 90 to 16 with 30 abstentions, the report of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People proclaiming the right of Palestinian refugees to establish their own state and to reclaim former properties
in Israel.

Prior to becoming president, Jimmy Carter's exposure to the Middle East had been quite limited. In fact, in his own estimation, his perspective needed broadening. Most of what he knew stemmed from religious studies, which led Carter to feel a certain bond with the Jews in the region. These feelings were strengthened by his belief that prior to 1967 many of the holy places in the Middle East had been closed to visits by Christians. Furthermore, Carter felt that Jewish survivors of the holocaust "deserved their own nation" and the right to live peacefully among their neighbors.

Carter had an opportunity to learn more about the "land of the Bible" and to see Israeli defense requirements first-hand in May 1973 when, as Governor of Georgia, he and his wife were invited by Golda Meir to take an extended visit to Israel. This visit strengthened Carter's sense of responsibility toward Israel to such a degree that he made a special point of mentioning his support when he announced his candidacy. In essence, Carter's "moral and religious beliefs made [his] commitment to the security of Israel unshakable" (Carter 1982, 274).

While many of his initial impressions of Israel grew out of his own religious convictions, Carter's early
perceptions of the Arab states were colored by his reactions to Arab oil policy. Carter viewed the denial of oil as "political blackmail" that had enabled the Arab states to force vulnerable consumer nations to change their foreign policies during the critical period from 1973 to 1974. Carter was determined, therefore, to develop a comprehensive energy policy that would reduce the United States' susceptibility to coercion and, in fact, much of his domestic policy revolved around his efforts to increase public and congressional awareness of the "energy problem" (Carter 1982, 92; Lenczowski 1990, 159).

Carter's comprehensive energy program, which he described as the "moral equivalent of war" (Carter 1982, 91), consumed a great deal of the president's time and efforts. In fact, Carter felt that he struggled with Congress in "bloody legislative battles" over energy legislation throughout his entire term. Carter's objectives included energy conservation, more domestic fuel production, development of alternative sources of energy, and reduction of oil imports. To meet these goals, he proposed deregulation of oil prices, a windfall profits tax on oil companies and the establishment of a government owned "Synthetic Fuels Corporation" (Lenczowski 1990, 159).
Carter divided his time between this ambitious energy program and major foreign policy initiatives. This is evident in his description of a brief working vacation to the Grand Tetons in August 1978 during a temporary lull in congressional activity. While there, Carter hoped to study the complicated dynamics of the Middle East in preparation for the upcoming Camp David talks. However, he was "forced to return early to Washington because of the imminent threat of losing the natural-gas bill" (Carter 1982, 106; 320).

Carter eventually succeeded in getting the bulk of his energy program through Congress, but his success was not without a price. The president had to work very hard to achieve his own objectives while maintaining an effective working relationship with Congress. Ironically, he was not particularly successful. Many of his fellow Democrats failed to support him because they felt his programs did not adhere clearly to partisan lines (Carter 1982, 68-73). In addition to the energy program, one of the biggest "legislative battles" Carter fought with Congress centered around the Panama Canal Treaty. The President eventually emerged victorious, but lost a good deal of public and congressional support in the process.

Along with his repeated efforts to establish a viable working relationship with Congress, the Soviet-American
aspect is one of the most interesting features of the context in which Carter operated. Detente, bereft of real support from Congress and the public, had virtually faded into the foreign policy background. What would now become the defining characteristic of the Soviet-American relationship? This question was uppermost in the minds of many American and Soviet leaders. The Soviets were especially uncertain about how Carter's human rights emphasis would affect the superpower relationship.

Within the Carter Administration, this question was open to a great deal of interpretation and, in fact, the source of a certain amount of dissension. Carter felt the need to move away from allowing the Soviet-American Cold War competition to be the defining characteristic of American foreign policy. Human rights dictated a more diffuse approach, one that focused on areas such as Africa and Latin America, for example. Decisions to support governments would be based on how their leaders dealt with social, economic and other developmental aspects within their society. Ideally, this determination would be made without consideration for how these governments stood in relation to the Soviet-American competition, yet, Carter was aware of the fact that American involvement in these areas could lead to superpower confrontation. In discussing the Middle east, for example, Carter wrote:
I recognized the legitimate needs of the Israelis to protect themselves against terrorism. But we needed to resolve the underlying problems rather than see continued violence, which threatened to spread beyond the Middle East and involve the superpowers (Carter 1982, 277).

This "duality" in Carter's approach toward the Soviets, the notion that their actions were an important consideration in crafting his foreign policy, yet not to be afforded the same emphasis as in the past, established an atmosphere of uncertainty in the administration which was most readily apparent in the context of the State Department-National Security Council competition for preeminence in foreign affairs. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski had several substantive disagreements over foreign policy, especially regarding matters that required an assessment of Soviet intentions to determine the best strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union. Eventually, when "jockeying" and competing with one another to sway Carter's position on the issues failed to yield a clear winner, the controversy spilled out into the open. (George 1980, 118). Brzezinski, who favored a less optimistic view of the Soviets, began to make public statements that, intentionally or not, had the net effect of undermining Vance's position.

In spite of his desire to change the basic tone of
the Soviet-American relationship, or to at least reduce its effects on American policy toward third countries, Carter found it necessary to deal with the Soviets on several critical issues, most notably SALT. Carter viewed these strategic arms talks as a means to "reduce the nuclear threat to human survival" while also stabilizing the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Vance agreed with the president and encouraged him to make SALT a high priority in the administration because it offered an opportunity to establish more "cordial" relations with the Soviet Union. Brzezinski, on the other hand, supported SALT as a means of "publicly testing Soviet intentions and, if the Soviets responded favorably, for halting the momentum of the Soviet buildup."  

To deal with the Middle East as well as other foreign policy issues, Carter designed a foreign policy machinery combined elements of a "collegial approach," based on teamwork and shared responsibility among talented advisers, and a "formalistic approach," characterized by an orderly policy-making structure with well-defined procedures and hierarchical lines of communication (George 1980, 109). Carter sought to avoid the extreme centralization of power acquired by Kissinger as special assistant for national security affairs during Nixon's first term, yet he sought to "restore the power and
prestige of the NSC staff following the brief eclipse that occurred during the Ford years (1974-1977) when Kissinger was Secretary of State" (George 1980, 117). In fact, at his first Cabinet meeting, Carter gave his National Security Adviser Cabinet status, setting a precedent that was not followed by later administrations (Brzezinski 1983, 60).

There is little doubt that Carter intended to rely heavily on the NSC in formulating foreign policy. Responding to warnings that Brzezinski "might not be adequately deferential to a Secretary of State," Carter wrote in his memoirs:

Knowing Zbig, I realized that some of these assessments were accurate, but they were in accord with what I wanted: the final decisions on basic foreign policy would be made by me in the Oval Office, not in the State Department (Carter 1982, 52).

As his Secretary of State, Carter chose Vance, who had been Secretary of the Army under Kennedy and Deputy Secretary of Defense under Johnson, for his extensive background in military affairs and his equally impressive experience in foreign affairs. Vance had served as a "troubleshooter" for various presidents during crises in Cyprus, Korea and Vietnam (Carter 1982, 50). Warren Christopher, a Los Angeles attorney, was selected to be Vance's Deputy Secretary of State.

Brzezinski designed his NSC staff to be lean and
efficient, "not a small state department" (Brzezinski 1983, 4). David L. Aaron was chosen to serve as his deputy assistant for National Security Affairs. In addition to several administrative positions, the rest of the staff was divided into "geographical clusters," focusing on West Europe, East Europe and the Soviet Union, the Middle East and North Africa, East Asia and China, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America (including the Caribbean). Six "functional clusters" dealt with defense coordination, intelligence coordination, international economics, global issues, science, and freedom of information issues. Three men comprised the staff of the cluster responsible for the Middle East: William Quandt, Robert Hunter and Gary Sick10.

Carter was well aware of the fact that he was coming to Washington as an outsider. He brought with him several close friends to serve as advisers, most notably Hamilton Jordan, who would eventually be named White House Chief of Staff, and Jody Powell, who served as Press Secretary. To "provide some balance of experience" to the administration, Carter had chosen Walter Mondale, a member of Congress, as his running mate. He determined to rely on his Vice President as his "second in command, involved in every aspect of governing" (Carter 1982, 35-39).
Carter began each day as president with Brzezinski, who would provide him with the Presidential Daily Briefing (PDB), an update on current intelligence (Carter 1982, 51).

**Foreign Policy Objectives**

The Carter Administration has often been criticized as having lacked a central strategy to tie the various strands of its foreign policy together. From the beginning, however, the administration did have a set of clearly defined objectives that actually emerged during the transition phase when Brzezinski, Henry Owen and Richard Gardner developed a memorandum outlining the goals the new administration should pursue in foreign policy (Brzezinski 1983, 50). These goals were refined during the first informal NSC meeting conducted on January 5, 1977. With the help of Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington, Brzezinski prepared a forty-three page document designed to give the Carter Administration a sense of strategic priorities.

The document outlined ten basic goals. First, the new administration hoped to promote wider macroeconomic coordination between the United States, Western Europe, Japan and other advanced democracies to facilitate the move toward a stable and open monetary trade system. The
second and third goals were directed at improving political and economic relations with "emerging regional 'influentials,'" and developing North-South relations to promote greater economic stability in the Third World. Fourth, the administration would push for strategic arms reduction talks with the Soviets while working to cultivate a more stable relationship between the two superpowers. This relationship would be based on a "more comprehensive and reciprocal" application of detente. Furthermore, Soviet ideological expansion would be countered by "a more affirmative American posture on human rights" (Brzezinski 1983, 52-54).

The fifth goal addressed normalization of U.S.-Chinese relations as a key stabilizing element in the administration's global strategy. Sixth, a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement would be pursued as a means of preventing further radicalization in the Arab world and Soviet re-entry into the region. The seventh goal sought to facilitate the peaceful transformation of South Africa toward a biracial democracy and, by establishing a coalition of moderate black African leaders, to eliminate the Soviet-Cuban presence in Africa while lessening trends toward radicalization. The administration's eighth objective was to restrict the level of global armaments, both unilaterally and through international agreements.
The ninth was directed toward increasing U.S. sensitivity to human rights and influencing other countries to observe these rights through various multilateral and bilateral incentives. Finally, the administration sought to maintain a defense posture sufficient to deter the Soviet Union from using strategic, conventional or political force against the United States or its allies (Brzezinski 1983, 54-55).

Collectively, these ten goals comprised an ambitious foreign policy agenda. In fact, Brzezinski suggests that a more appropriate criticism of the Carter Administration's foreign policy is that it was "overly ambitious" and that officials failed to demonstrate effectively to the public the degree to which they "were motivated by a coherent and well-thought-out viewpoint" (Brzezinski 1983, 57).

The Middle East, along with the future disposition of the Panama Canal, emerged as one of the highest foreign policy priorities of the Carter Administration. In fact, the Middle East dominated foreign policy during all four years of the Carter presidency (Carter 1982, 429) largely because Carter believed that conditions in the region held important ramifications for United States interests. In spite of the disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Syria that had been concluded during
the Ford Administration, the Middle East situation remained tense (Lenczowski 1990, 160). Carter noted that many of his predecessors, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Ford among them, had avoided becoming actively involved in Middle Eastern disputes until circumstances, in the form of some sort of crisis, forced them to take action. He resolved to break the perpetual stalemate, which he believed would inevitably lead to another conflict, perhaps with even greater U.S.-Soviet involvement (Brzezinski 1983, 83). In broad terms, Carter sought a means to provide peace and stability to the region while preventing the expansion of Soviet influence. In this regard, he viewed Israel as a strategic asset (Carter 1982, 274-275).

Carter was well aware of the potential difficulties in trying to forge a Middle East peace settlement. In his memoirs, he notes the hard work and effort that culminated in the Rogers Plan during the Nixon Administration, only to have the proposal rejected by virtually all of the interested negotiating parties. Many of his security advisers urged him to avoid the Middle East, where it "seemed that all the proposed solutions had been tried and failed" (Carter 1982, 279). He determined to approach the region "with great caution" lest failure to bring about tangible results create an "image of fumbling
incompetence." Yet, his commitment to human rights, his sense of responsibility toward Israel, his desire to protect American interests by promoting stability in the region...all of these factors compelled Carter to forge ahead toward some form of Arab-Israeli peace settlement (Carter, 1982, 275-277).

Largely due to domestic considerations, Brzezinski urged Carter to move as rapidly as possible, taking advantage of the greater leverage he would enjoy during his first year in office to strive toward a Middle East breakthrough (Brzezinski 1983, 87). As such, Carter and his key advisers decided to pursue an "activist" approach toward the Middle East, which was actually a reflection of their ambitious larger foreign policy. With the possible exception of the president himself, the individual who "took the lead on the Middle East" was Secretary of State Cyrus Vance (Brzezinski 1983, 38). During the informal NSC meeting conducted on January 5, 1977, the decision was made to send Vance to the Middle East as early as February. Vance believed it was important to meet with the key players in the region as early as possible (Brzezinski 1983, 51).

The basic approach the Carter administration would take toward the Middle East was formulated during three meetings: an informal session on January 30, attended by
Carter, Brzezinski, Vance, and Andrew Young; a formal Policy Review Committee meeting chaired by Vance on February 4; and a formal NSC meeting held on February 23, following Vance’s return from a week long Middle East fact-finding visit. President Carter chaired this third meeting, during which a target date was set for convening the Geneva Conference in September of 1977. (Brzezinski 1983, 86-87)

In a departure from the two previous administrations, Carter and his top advisers believed that American policy should be directed toward achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. Any agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors should simultaneously address all of the major problems affecting the region. As such, the settlement should not be limited to separate agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan or Syria (Lenczowski 1990, 160). Similarly, the Carter Administration believed that the idea of pursuing small, interim steps as a means of drawing the parties closer to an eventual agreement had lost its usefulness. In short, there were no more "small steps" left to be taken (Brzezinski 1983, 83).

In Carter’s view, the extremely complex issues surrounding the Arab-Israeli dispute "seemed to boil down" to three major points of contention: Israeli security,
ownership of territory, and Palestinian rights (Carter 1982, 279). At least two legacies from the Nixon-Ford years posed potential problems, however. First, Carter believed that the Geneva Conference forum, established under the auspices of the United Nations during Nixon's presidency, was burdened by a cumbersome format. "If ever convened, it was to be headed jointly by the United States and the Soviet Union, with participation by the Israelis and their Arab neighbors--and the Palestinians." This arrangement lent itself to its own unique set of problems which not only "defied solution," but prevented negotiators from dealing with more substantive issues.

Second, Carter's freedom to maneuver with regard to the Palestinian question, which he believed to be the "central, unresolved, human rights issue of the Middle East" (Vance 1983, 64), was greatly restricted by Secretary of State Kissinger's promise to Israel on September 1, 1975 that the United States would not recognize or negotiate with the PLO until it acknowledged Israel's right to exist and had accepted UN Resolution 242 as the basis for resolving Middle East disputes. The issue of communicating with the PLO remained so sensitive throughout Carter's presidency that in March 1977, when Carter decided to stand in the receiving line and to shake hands with the PLO representative after having given an
address to the United Nations, it caused "quite a flap" (Carter 1982, 281).

Carter's desire to try a new and innovative approach to break the Middle East stalemate was translated into the rough outlines of a settlement plan by March 1977. His plan called for Israeli withdrawal to approximately the 1967 borders, creation of a Palestinian homeland," and the establishment of real, lasting, permanent peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Carter believed that the peace process should be based on UN Resolution 242, which emphasized the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, and that it should include a broad definition of peace, including open borders and free trade (Carter 1982, 290). His decision to include the concept of a Palestinian "homeland," later referred to as an "entity," was a first among American presidents that led to shocked protests from Israelis and prominent Jewish Americans.

Having established the basic outlines of a proposal, Carter "plunged heavily into the negotiating process himself" with an intense schedule of meetings with Middle Eastern heads of state. He was visited first by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on March 7-8, followed on April 4-5 by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Carter then met with King Hussein of Jordan on April 25-26, President
Assad of Syria on May 9, and Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia on May 24 (Brzezinski 1983, 89). During these meetings, Carter adopted what would become a customary habit of conducting frank, private discussions upstairs at the White House with his visitors to urge them to consider his proposal. Carter found his discussions with Sadat, King Hussein, Crown Prince Fahd and Assad particularly encouraging, but he would soon discover that peer pressure led many of the Arab leaders to give private assurances which were widely disparate from their public comments. Only one Arab leader, Anwar Sadat, seemed willing to publicly admit that he was willing to deal with Israel (Carter 1982, 286).

Shortly after Carter concluded his first round of meetings with Middle East leaders, Yitzhak Rabin announced his resignation, leading to the surprise victory of Menachem Begin, leader of the conservative Likud coalition. Carter’s meetings with Rabin had not been especially promising, but Begin’s revisionist program, which called for territorial annexations and intransigence toward the Arabs, added a new dimension of uncertainty to the peace process (Lenczowski 1990, 164). Begin’s statements during an "Issues and Answers" interview to the effect that the West Bank was an integral part of Israel’s sovereignty which had been "liberated" during the 1967 Six
Day War, and that a Jewish majority with an Arab minority would be established there caused Carter concern. The new Prime Minister's views did not bode well for the upcoming peace talks (Carter 1982, 288). Meanwhile, Begin's election caused increased anxiety within the American Jewish community, leading to more pronounced public and congressional criticism of Carter's policies. Carter eventually became so concerned about damage to his "political base among Israel's friends" that he solicited and received public support from Senator Hubert Humphrey, the "one man who was trusted by everyone as a friend of Israel." Carter also held sessions with Jewish and congressional leaders from around the United States to explain his policies (Carter 1982, 288-290).

President Carter met with Prime Minister Begin on July 19, 1977 to outline his proposals. Begin indicated that he could agree to all of them except for the establishment of a Palestinian "entity." During private discussions, Carter felt he might have made some headway in getting the Prime Minister to consider changing his position, but his hopes were literally dashed when Begin returned to Israel and immediately recognized as permanent several settlements on the West Bank (Carter 1982, 291).

The weeks following Begin's election were characterized by meetings and statements that appeared to
constitute diplomatic steps forward, but which tended to elicit reactions that increased the distance between the negotiating parties, keeping the Geneva Conference perpetually out of reach. Israel's establishment of new settlements in the West Bank posed a serious threat to the peace process, as did disagreement over Palestinian participation in the Geneva talks (Lenczowski 1990, 165).

While diplomatic progress with Middle Eastern leaders remained somewhat elusive, the United States and the Soviet Union took what administration officials hoped would be a significant step forward. On October 1, in their capacities as co-chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference, the two countries issued a joint statement calling for: a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute based on Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories; ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; ending the state of war and establishing normal relations; respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence; ensuring the security of borders by using demilitarized zones, UN personnel, and international guarantee; and Soviet-American agreement to guarantee the peace settlement (Vance 1983, 463). The joint statement caused great concern among the American Jewish community, congressional leaders and, of course, the Israelis.
On October 4, Carter met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan to convince each of them of the necessity of compromise. By mid-October, in spite of reports that Dayan had prevailed over strong opposition when he presented the American proposals to the Israeli cabinet, Carter began to see indications that the peace process was breaking down. He was not convinced that the disputing parties would agree to come together. On October 21, Carter thus decided to play his "only hole card" by sending a direct personal appeal to Sadat urging him to publicly endorse the Soviet-American proposal. Sadat responded on November 9, by announcing to the Egyptian Parliament that he was willing to go to Jerusalem to further the peace process. His announcement was followed on November 15 by an invitation from Begin, sent through Carter, to address the Israeli Knesset. On November 19-21, Sadat visited Jerusalem, where he addressed the Knesset, offering Israel recognition and permanent peace based on an agreement that would lead to the return of Arab occupied territories including Arab Jerusalem, recognition of the Palestinian right to statehood, and secure borders subject to the necessary safeguards and international guarantees (Sadat 1977, 330).

In short, Sadat took the unprecedented step of
agreeing to Israel's requests "in one fell swoop" (Carter 1982, 307). Sadat's unexpected announcement created both uncertainty and excitement in Washington. Although the announcement carried the prospects for peace, officials were unsure how to proceed (Carter 1982, 298). These doubts were soon exacerbated by the realization that Sadat and Begin were still far apart on several substantive issues. This disparity was particularly apparent after Begin's visit to Ismailia in late December. He proposed a plan that seemed almost diametrically opposed to Sadat's position. As the relationship between Begin and Sadat became increasingly strained, Carter and Sadat reached nearly complete agreement concerning the substance of the peace agreement.

By March of 1978, the Geneva Conference seemed more distant than ever. Begin had shown little evidence that he was willing to change his position, particularly concerning the West Bank, which he referred to by the Biblical names "Judea and Samaria" (Carter 1982, 334). The Israelis were continuing the policy of building up settlements in the occupied territories, causing Arabs to become more frustrated, and leaving Sadat increasingly vulnerable to attacks from other Arab leaders. Repeated Israeli incursions into Lebanon to retaliate against terrorist attacks made matters even worse, prompting
Carter to send "a stream of fairly harsh messages" to Begin in Israel (Carter 1982, 304-305). The situation reached a critical point on March 14, when Israel invaded Lebanon as a reprisal against a PLO attack on the Israeli coast in which thirty-five people were killed.

Sadat's position within the Arab community had already been severely damaged by his decision to visit Israel. Carter was so worried about the Egyptian leader's growing isolation from the rest of the Arab community that he repeatedly tried to generate public support from other Arab leaders. These attempts were unsuccessful, in spite of the fact that several leaders were privately willing to express support (Carter 1982, 300-301). By May, 1978, Sadat's frustration caused him to pull back from the peace effort, and he "even spoke publicly of going to war" (Carter 1982, 315).

Democratic leaders urged Carter to back out of the Middle East situation and to "repair the damage" he had done to the Democratic party and to United States-Israeli relations. Instead, Carter decided to "go all out" by inviting Sadat and Begin together for an extensive negotiating session at Camp David. Both leaders "enthusiastically" agreed to attend (Carter 1982, 316).

The official announcement that there would be a trilateral summit meeting at Camp David between Egypt,
Israel and the United States was made on Tuesday, August 8. For the most part, the administration was able to keep the meeting a secret, so the "news took the public completely by surprise" (Brzezinski 1983, 252). Carter was determined to establish an atmosphere at Camp David which would encourage the negotiating teams to work with one another freely, without concern over public reactions. This meant that there had to be a "minimum of posturing by Egyptians or Israelis." Public statements had to be avoided because, once made, they would very likely become "frozen positions that could not subsequently be changed." For this reason, Carter decided to exclude the press during the Camp David negotiations (Carter 1982, 317-318), choosing to rely on Press Secretary Jody Powell to update the media on developments.

To prepare for the upcoming meetings, Carter not only reviewed the relevant issues, he also studied psychological analyses of Sadat and Begin, the two protagonists in the on-going diplomatic struggle. He recalled the American Ambassadors to Egypt, Herman Eilts, and Israel, Sam Lewis, to provide him with added insight (Carter 1982, 320-321). The American negotiating team also included Brzezinski, Vance, Jordan, Powell, Harold Saunders, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, Alfred Atherton, Ambassador at large, and William
Quandt from the NSC Staff. Walter Mondale and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown remained in Washington, but travelled to Camp David as their schedules permitted.

Although he deliberately tried to play down expectations, Carter hoped to emerge from the Camp David negotiations with a written agreement for peace between Egypt and Israel, including a timetable for implementation (Carter 1982, 321). From the beginning, however, it was apparent that Sadat and Begin sharply differed on several key issues which would transform the Camp David process from the planned three day meeting into "thirteen intense and discouraging days." (Carter 1982, 322). The negotiating teams arrived on September 5, 1978 and remained until September 17, despite repeated threats by Sadat that lack of progress compelled him to leave.

The Egyptian team consisted of President Sadat, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali, Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs Osama el-Baz, Ambassador to the United States Ashraf Ghorbal, Director of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet Ahmed Maher, and three members of the Foreign Ministry including Legal Director Nahib el-Araby (Carter 1982, 326). Throughout the negotiations, Sadat seemed willing to compromise on several issues in order to facilitate a larger agreement, while the members of his
staff were less willing to do so. In fact, the differences between Sadat and his advisers became so great that at one point, on the ninth day, Carter became worried about his friend's safety, "and directed that the security around Sadat's cottage be strengthened and kept alert" (Carter 1982, 389).

During his first full meeting with Carter, on September 6, Sadat presented the Egyptians' opening proposal, which was "extremely harsh and full of all the unacceptable Arab rhetoric." After discussion, however, Sadat revealed that he was willing to make concessions on all but two issues. The first was land, the second was sovereignty (Carter 1982, 339-340). Like Carter, Sadat wanted a firm framework for establishing peace. He insisted, however, that he was not interested in concluding a separate Egyptian-Israeli treaty. Thus, he insisted on addressing the issues of Palestinian self-determination and the West Bank (Lenczowski 1990, 173).

Begin, on the other hand, came to Camp David seeking to outline general principles to serve as the basis for future negotiations (Carter 1982, 330). If an agreement were to be made, however, the Prime Minister preferred that it address Egyptian-Israeli relations first, leaving the issue of the Palestinians and the West Bank for later discussions (Carter 1982, 334). The Israeli team
consisted of nine members, including Begin, Foreign
Minister Moshe Dayan, Defense Minister Ezer Weizman,
Attorney General Aharon Barak, Major General Avraham
Tamir, Ambassador to the United States Simcha Dinitz,
Legal Adviser Meir Rosene, Public Affairs Adviser Dan
Pattir, and Elyakim Rubenstein, Assistant Director,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As with the Egyptian team,
it became apparent that there were sharp disagreements
among the Israelis. In this case, however, Begin tended
to take the hard line, while other members, such as Dayan
and Weizman, tended to be more flexible (Carter 1982,
395).

Carter began the Camp David process by meeting
individually with Sadat and Begin to develop a sense for
their respective positions and to encourage them to
compromise as much as possible. By the third day,
Carter’s hopes of simply observing while Sadat and Begin
conducted negotiations had evaporated and he found himself
playing “referee” to keep the discussions on track (Carter
1982, 353). Eventually, he realized that meetings of all
three leaders were counterproductive. The negotiating
process evolved into Carter meeting separately on issues
with the two Middle Eastern leaders (or their designated
representatives), until the “best possible compromise” had
been reached. At this point, the three leaders and their
advisers met together (Carter 1982, 368).

When neither the Israelis nor the Arabs appeared to be able to produce proposals that satisfied the other party, Carter put forth compromise proposals. In the process, he complied with President Ford's promise, contained in a presidential letter of December 1975, that the Israelis be allowed to see any American proposal before it was offered to the other parties concerned. From the outset, Begin insisted on this procedure (Carter 1982, 333; 373).

Several issues caused a great deal of debate between the negotiating teams, but the most divisive issue by far concerned Israeli settlement policy. In the Sinai, Sadat insisted that the settlements must be abandoned by the Israelis. He viewed this as an issue of sovereignty and could not allow the Israelis to stay. On a related point, Sadat would not allow any form of military control over Egyptian territory by Israel, the United States, or any other nation (Carter 1982, 357). For his part, throughout the entire negotiations process, Begin argued that he could not agree to remove the Israeli settlements in the Sinai because of the potential threat to Israeli security, particularly in the Gaza (Carter 1982, 347; 359).

The deadlock over how to deal with the Sinai was complicated by disagreements over Jerusalem, Palestinian
rights and settlement policies in the West Bank and Gaza. At several points in the negotiating process, Carter believed that the talks had broken completely down (Carter 1982, 360; 365; 391). Eventually, however, as the president was preparing to go back to Washington, contemplating how he would minimize the damage of Camp David's inability to generate any sort of substantial agreement, Prime Minister Begin created a "breakthrough" by announcing his willingness to submit the Sinai settlements issue to the Israeli Knesset. Believing this concession to be enough for Sadat, Carter hastily put his staff to work finalizing the agreements (Carter 1982, 396-398). Two agreements, the Framework for Peace in the Middle East and the Framework for Conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel were signed at approximately 10:15 p.m. on September 17, 1978 (Carter 1982, 403).

The Framework for Peace in the Middle East included a preamble which specified that UN Resolution 242 would serve as the basis for peace between Israel and its neighbors. In Part A, the signatories agreed that Egypt, Israel, Jordan and "the representatives of the Palestinian people" should work together to resolve the Palestinian problem. Furthermore, it outlined provisions for Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza, accompanied by a
transitional period of not more than five years (Lenczowski 1990, 175). In Part B, Egypt and Israel agreed not to use force against one another, and to work toward a peace treaty which would serve to govern future Egyptian-Israeli relations. Part C addressed the rules that were to be applied to Israel’s relations with each of its neighbors, under the aegis of the United Nations Security Council (Lenczowski 1990, 176).

The second document, the Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel stipulated that a peace treaty should be concluded within three months. Furthermore, it contained provisions regarding the following: implementation of the treaty after its signing; Israeli military withdrawal from the Sinai; the future disposition of airfields left in the Sinai, that would be used for civilian purposes only; freedom of navigation and overflight for Israel through the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Suez, the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba; construction of a highway linking the Sinai and Jordan through Israeli territory; and specific military dispositions regarding the placement of Egyptian, Israeli and UN troops in high interest areas. The agreement also stipulated that following the conclusion of the peace treaty, normal diplomatic relations would be established between Egypt and Israel (Lenczowski 1990, 176-177).
The signing of the Camp David agreements marked a significant turning point in Egyptian-Israeli relations. Yet it also placed Egypt, Israel and the United States at the beginning of a new journey, to make the envisioned treaty a reality. Both Begin and Sadat came under heavy pressure from other players on their respective sides of the diplomatic fence. In one incident, Israeli right-wing extremists demonstrated their opposition to the proposed treaty by throwing eggs and tomatoes at Begin's automobile. Sadat faced even greater pressures that would eventually lead to Egypt's isolation from the rest of the Arab community. Arab moderate states joined the "rejectionists" in condemning the Camp David Accords (Carter 1982, 410). Carter appealed to the Soviet Union to urge the Syrians and Palestinians to participate in future talks. The Soviets, however, responded that this was not likely because "the Israelis had gained everything and Sadat had gained nothing" in the Camp David talks (Carter 1982, 406-407).

As the presidential election grew closer, Carter felt increasing pressure to bring the Egyptian-Israeli treaty to fruition. Begin, by his words and deeds, however, seemed to be moving further away from agreement with Sadat, causing Carter to speculate that he was trying to delay the process until after 1980, when a new
administration might be at the helm of United States foreign policy (Carter 1982, 418). As he had several times during the Camp David negotiations, Carter decided to intervene personally to help bring the two parties closer to agreement. In early March 1979, he traveled to the Middle East with a draft treaty, shuttling between Egypt and Israel until the provisions were deemed satisfactory. On March 26, 1979, Begin and Sadat signed the Egyptian-Israeli treaty during a ceremony in Washington (Carter 1982, 427). Five days later, Egypt was formally suspended from the Arab League26 (Lenczowski 1990, 182).

While President Carter's attention was almost completely devoted to the Camp David agreements and subsequent treaty negotiations, events in Iran had already begun to build toward the Islamic Revolution and the American "hostage crisis." From the moment he took office, Iran presented Carter with a moral, ethical and political dilemma that defied easy solution. In order to fully appreciate the scope of this dilemma, certain key facets of the historical context must be kept in mind.

The Shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, had a long-standing relationship with the United States. In fact, in November 1977, during the Shah's first visit to the Carter White House, the new president noted that Iran's leader
had personally known the seven previous U.S. presidents (Carter 1982, 434). This is not particularly surprising since the growth of American political involvement in Iran coincided with the beginning of Mohammed Reza Pahlevi's rule. During the British-Russian occupation of Iran during World War II, Reza Shah, the former Persian Army officer who had founded the Pahlevi dynasty in 1926, was sent into permanent exile. His son, Mohammed Reza Shah, became the new sovereign. After the war, President Roosevelt exerted American influence to compel the British and Russians to remove their forces. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the British complied, while the Soviets initially refused to withdraw their forces. Soviet activities in the Middle East soon became a matter of grave concern to the United States, making Iran "the first battlefield" of the Cold War (Rubin 1980, 28). These concerns were amplified, and perhaps appeared to be justified, by the emergence in Iran of a nationally based and highly ideological communist movement, the Tudeh Party, formed in 1941 (Farhi 1989, 93).

The Iranian-American relationship that evolved over the next few decades was therefore primarily affected by two factors: Iran's valuable oil supply and Soviet involvement in the region. The Shah quickly learned that either of these two interests, particularly the latter,
afforded him a certain amount of leverage in negotiations with the United States. Meanwhile, the post-World War II period was one of the most agitated periods in Iran's political history. Members of the intelligensia and the emerging middle class found the Tudeh Party attractive, not necessarily because of its communist underpinnings, but as a means of challenging the central government. In 1949, after an attempted assassination of the Shah, the Tudeh Party was declared illegal. The Shah declared martial law, and began to consolidate his power. This set the stage for a new movement to challenge the Shah's authority, the National Front, led by Mohammed Mossadeq (Farhi 1989, 93-94).

Among other things, the National Front objected to the growing level of foreign intervention in Iran, typified by the heavily slanted oil concessions Iran had given to the British. Internally, Mohammed Reza Shah continued to consolidate his power, yet he was reluctant to challenge the British over the oil issue. Mossadeq gained popularity, became Prime Minister in 1951, and promptly challenged the Shah's authority. A few months later, the Iranian oil industry was nationalized and Mossadeq learned a costly fiscal lesson when Iran was forced to suffer the consequences of "an almost universal shipping boycott of Iranian oil" (Farhi 1989, 95).
The events of this tumultuous period were brought to an abrupt end in August 1953, when the United States, fearing that instability in Iran would open the door to the insidious spread of communism, helped the Shah and his supporters overthrow Mossadeq. This CIA-sponsored military coup placed the Shah firmly back in power (Rubin 1980, 55-58), allowing him to continue consolidating his authority while eliminating opposition. In 1957, a new secret police, SAVAK (the National Security and Information Organization), was established under CIA supervision. The Shah used this instrument to move decisively against the working class and intellectuals, effectively neutralizing the Tudeh Party in the process (Farhi 1989, 96). Meanwhile, with the exception of a package of reform programs dubbed the "White Revolution," which were enacted largely to placate progressive modernizers within Iran (Farhi 1989, 97), and to keep up appearances with the United States (Rubin 1980, 108-112). Little substantial progress was made toward resolving the "underlying problems of political legitimacy and economic crisis that had plagued Iran for many decades" (Rubin 1980, 191).

While serious social and political problems were left to fester, American military aid to Iran, approximately $500 million between 1953 and 1963, coupled with
substantial oil revenues, allowed the Shah to expand his armed forces from 120,000 to over 200,000 men by 1963. During this time frame, annual military expenditures grew from $80 million to nearly $183 million \(^{30}\) (Farhi 1989, 96). U.S. military aid and arms sales grew even more substantially during the Nixon Administration, when the Shah was essentially given "a blank check for arms," establishing a trend that would become consistent U.S. policy (Lenczowski 1990, 184).

When Carter became president, his outspokenness in favor of human rights and arms reductions engendered expectations among Americans and Iranian secular-liberal opposition leaders that he would immediately change the direction and substance of American relations with Iran. Carter was aware of the dissension in Iran caused by dissatisfaction among the country's growing middle class, well-educated students and strong religious community \(^{31}\). In fact, Carter felt enough concern that, during the Shah's November 1977 visit, he broached the subject of human rights in Iran, suggesting that the Shah consider changing some of his more restrictive policies. The Shah simply replied that Iranian laws were necessary to combat communism and could not be changed (Carter 1982, 436).

While cautiously raising the issue of human rights in private (Iaonnides 1984, 25), Carter publicly reaffirmed
the United States' support for the Shah in remarks made at a dinner given by the Shah in Iran on December 31, 1977. Carter effectively commended the Shah for his leadership, calling Iran "an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world" (Carter 1982, 437). His glowing comments were made in spite of the fact that the Shah had already been condemned by Amnesty International for repressive policies that included the use of torture (Salinger 1981, 3-5).

In tandem with his aggressive military build-up, the Shah sought to promote rapid modernization in Iran. In time, however, the country could no longer support the heavy burden of military expenditures and the costs of modernization. In 1975-1976, a recession began that quickly stripped the veneer from the apparently "stable" structure of the Shah's regime. Widespread poverty, unsanitary conditions and corruption involving members of the royal family were among the negative aspects of the Shah's rule that became more visible during the period of economic strain. Resentment toward the Shah continued to build and now expanded to include the large numbers of foreign technicians brought into Iran during the modernization period. Within a year, several opposition groups, including elements of the National Front liberal-democratic intelligentsia, the bazaar merchants, Leftist
groups and the Shiite clerical strata began to channel their efforts toward a common goal, removing the Shah from power (Lenczowski 1990, 186-187).

In January 1978, incited by an article in the Teheran daily newspaper Etelaat which criticized Iran’s religious leadership, a group of theological students in Qom launched a demonstration. Several of the demonstrators were killed, leading to a chain reaction of violence. Violence erupted every forty days, coinciding with the Shiite custom of mourning the dead at forty day intervals. The cycle of violence continued throughout 1978, reaching a fevered pitch. In August, a suspicious fire in a movie theater in Abadan claimed over 500 lives (Lenczowski 1990, 189-190). On September 7, following the Shah’s declaration of martial law, several hundred people were killed by bursts of machine-gun fire during a deadly clash between security forces and a crowd of demonstrators in Tehran (Carter 1982, 438).

In a move that has been characterized as too little, too late, the Shah tried to satisfy his people’s demands for a greater voice in governing, but instead of reducing unrest, his actions aroused more dissatisfaction. In one attempt to pacify the dissidents, the Shah granted amnesty to several opposition leaders, including Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini, who had spent the past fifteen years in exile.
(Carter 1982, 438). Meanwhile, he tried to avoid confrontation with his more radical opponents by reconciling with moderate opposition leaders including Karim Sanjabi and Gholam Hossein Sadeghi of the National Front. This attempt proved unsuccessful. (Lenczowski 1990, 190).

Attempts to satisfy anti-Shah forces by changing the nature of the government also met with little success. At one point, the Shah created a "military government," to be headed by General Gholam Reza Azhari. However, because the Shah distrusted his military leaders, he retained tight control over their activities (Lenczowski 1990, 190). Carter observed that the Shah "seemed unwilling to grant anyone else enough real authority to govern." By the end of the year, however, he appointed a Prime Minister, Shahpour Bakhtiar. The new Prime Minister quickly called for the Shah to leave Iran, the secret police to be abolished, those responsible for shooting demonstrators to be tried, and for civilians to be put in charge of foreign affairs (Carter 1982, 442).

During this tumultuous period, Ayatollah Khomeini emerged as an identifiable leader of the heretofore fragmented opposition movement. While in Paris, he sent taped messages to the Iranian people calling for general strikes, overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of an
Islamic republic. A general strike began in Iran during the latter two months of 1978 (Carter 1982, 440). Ayatollah Khomeini clearly had the support of the people, and he refused to give his support to Bakhtiar.

On January 16, 1979, Bakhtiar announced that the Shah would leave Iran. On February 1, Khomeini flew to Tehran and was welcomed by thousands of supporters. In the brief power struggle that ensued, Bakhtiar had the support of the military, but it fell apart in the face of sustained opposition. On February 11, Bakhtiar and the members of the Iranian parliament resigned, leaving Khomeini to place his choice for Prime Minister, Mehdi Bazargan, in power (Carter 1982, 446-450).

While the members of the Carter Administration did their best to keep up with the rapidly changing developments in Iran, Carter received conflicting advice from his top-level officials. The administration became divided into two camps. The first was composed of Cyrus Vance and members of the State Department, which was noted for its opposition to the Shah. The second camp, which included National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, viewed the Shah as an important ally in the Middle East. As such, they believed preservation of his rule was vital to U.S. national interest. Carter remained torn between Iran’s strategic
importance and his commitment to human rights. As the political situation deteriorated in Iran, however, he adopted Brzezinski's view and expressed his support for the Shah (Lenczowski 1990, 192-193).

As events changed, a more pronounced rift developed between the White House and the U.S. Ambassador to Iran, William Sullivan. Carter asserts that on October 28, 1978, Sullivan sent a cable to Washington advocating U.S. support for the Shah as the best means of maintaining stability in the region. In line with this, Carter chose to pledge to the Shah "all the support the United States could properly give him, short of direct intervention" (Carter 1982, 439). By January 1979, Ambassador Sullivan had begun to recommend that the United States insist on the Shah's immediate departure and try to establish some form of relations with Khomeini. Carter, however, preferred to maintain the policy of supporting the Shah. Moreover, he sent General Robert Huyser, Deputy Commander of United States Forces in Europe, to Iran, ostensibly to strengthen the resolve of the Iranian military, but also to provide him with updates on the situation independent of Sullivan (Carter 1982, 443-444).

Once the Khomeini regime took power, efforts were made to establish a semblance of normalcy in Iranian-American relations. This process met with moderate
initial success and culminated in a meeting between Brzezinski, Premier Bazargan and two other Iranian ministers on November 1, 1979. Serious complications arose several days later, however, when the Shah was admitted to the United States to undergo medical treatment. Up to this point, the Shah had been living in various other countries including Egypt, Morocco, the Bahamas and Mexico. Iranian revolutionary leaders suspected that the United States was planning to restore the Shah to power. His entry into the United States heightened this concern. On November 4, a group of demonstrators took control of the American embassy, capturing sixty-six people (Lenczowski 1990, 199).

The ensuing hostage crisis quickly revealed that the Bazargan government, which was taken by surprise by the hostage seizure, was only a facade, and that the real power lay in the hands of Khomeini and the clergy. Khomeini praised the captors for their deed and used the embassy take over as a means to mobilize the population by stirring up anti-American sentiments (Darius 1984, 104). Attempts by the Bazargan government to guarantee the hostages' release proved futile. Bazargan resigned, virtually eliminating the secular influence on Iran's political processes (Lenczowski 1990, 200).

The hostage crisis cast a shadow over the final year
of Carter's presidency. The growing division between Vance on the one hand and the president and Brzezinski on the other became even more apparent, and was resolved only when Vance resigned after abortive hostage rescue attempt in April 1980.

While American efforts were heavily directed toward resolving the situation in Iran, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan, touching off yet another crisis in the Middle East. The Soviets entered Afghanistan in the winter of 1979, during a period of domestic upheaval. The republican government headed by Daoud Khan since 1973 had recently been overthrown in favor of a communist regime led by Mohammed Taraki. Taraki's successor, Hafizulla Amin, inspired opposition among religious and tribal elements, who soon began to fight against the revolutionary government. Known as mujahadeen (warriors for the faith), this group of fighters took control of large areas in the countryside and waged war against the regime and its Soviet supporters (Lenczowski 1990, 205). President Amin was assassinated shortly after the Soviet invasion, and replaced by a rival member of the Communist Party, Babrak Karmal.

In response to the Soviet entry into Afghanistan, President Carter sent a message to Brezhnev labeling the Soviet action as "a clear threat to the peace," adding
that it "could mark a fundamental and long-lasting turning point" in Soviet-American relations. Brezhnev replied two days later, indicating that the Soviet presence had been requested by Afghan leaders (Brzezinski 1983, 429-430). Carter interpreted the Soviet action as an aggressive attempt to expand their sphere of influence. The strategic implications of a potential Soviet take-over were disturbing. From their new vantage point, the Soviets posed an immediate threat to the rich oil fields and vital waterways in the Persian Gulf region.

While the Soviets became embroiled in a conflict that has since been compared to Vietnam, Carter pledged that the United States would defend the Persian Gulf region:

Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force (Carter 1982, 483).

Carter chose from among his military, economic and political means to respond to the situation in Afghanistan, "the most serious international development" that had occurred since he became president (Carter 1982, 473). Direct military action was ruled out unless it became absolutely necessary. Instead, the administration initiated support to the Afghan "freedom fighters" (Carter 1982, 475). Moreover, a special military command, the
Rapid Deployment Force, was developed in case American intervention in the Persian Gulf region did become necessary (Brzezinski 1983, 457; Lenczowski 1990, 207). Economic actions against the Soviet Union were also taken, including a highly controversial grain embargo, denial of fishing rights and an interruption of high technology equipment transfers (Carter 1982, 475).

With the exception of the grain embargo, which critics argued placed an unfair burden on American farmers, Carter's most controversial response to the Afghanistan crisis was his decision to boycott the 1980 Olympics, scheduled to be held in Moscow. Carter believed that pulling out of the games, which were "much more than a sporting event" for the Soviets, would have a serious psychological and economic impact on the Soviet Union (Carter 1982, 474-475). While this may have been true, it is undeniable that his decision held similar ramifications for the United States.

In the political realm, while messages were sent back and forth between Carter and Breshnev, the United States pushed hard to obtain a vote of condemnation in the United Nations. These efforts were eventually successful. "This was," Carter wrote, "the first time such action had ever been taken against one of the leading nations of the world" (Carter 1982, 475). The crisis in Afghanistan also
gave the Carter Administration an opportunity to improve relations with the Pakistani government, headed by President Zia ul-Haq. These relations would eventually be used as a means of channeling supplies to the mujahadeen.

The crisis in Afghanistan was not solved before Carter's presidency ended. The lack of resolution in this area, coupled with the burden of the hostage crisis that lasted well over a year, caused Carter to leave the White House on a very low note. As he prepared for the transition, he learned a crucial lesson that would become even more clear in the weeks to come. His "power as a defeated president was not equal to that of one who is expected to remain in office." Ironically, he reached this conclusion after a meeting on November 13, 1980, during which he and Prime Minister Begin were to discuss remaining Middle East issues. The discussions yielded little substance and it was apparent that the Israelis preferred to wait until the new administration entered office before continuing top-level negotiations (Carter 1982, 575-576).

Summary

The Carter Administration entered the White House determined to help America regain the sense of direction that had been lost during the Vietnam War and Watergate
periods. In Carter’s view, this could best be accomplished by returning to basic values and moral principles, not only within the United States, but in relations with other nations as well. This, coupled with the president’s own religious and moral convictions, led Carter to attempt to build his foreign policy around the guiding principle of promoting human rights.

Within the general framework of this ideal, Carter and his staff fashioned an ambitious foreign policy agenda that was complemented by equally ambitious domestic programs. The Middle East, more specifically the Arab-Israeli conflict, served as the centerpiece of Carter’s foreign policy, at times to the exclusion of other regions. Carter was the first president to break the cycle of waiting until a crisis had erupted before trying to effect some sort of change in the Arab-Israeli conflict. He felt compelled to meet the situation head-on because of strategic concerns, human rights issues, and his own personal beliefs.

Carter’s motives in dealing with the Middle East epitomize a very important aspect of his administration’s foreign policy. It was driven by inclinations toward several conflicting impulses, trying to satisfy many of them simultaneously. Carter believed that he could reconcile the realistic demands of statecraft with the
idealistic spirit of American democracy. His National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski believed ideals were important, but if a conflict should ever develop between power and principles, strategic concerns should prevail (Brzezinski 1983, 49). Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, on the other hand, was typically more inclined to urge restraint when dealing with other nations, including the Soviet Union. Vance’s belief that diplomatic means should be fully explored before resorting to force eventually compelled him to resign after the abortive rescue attempt in Iran.

The differences of opinion within the Carter Administration became highly publicized and detracted from its ability to establish a sense of cohesiveness and direction in its larger foreign policy. As various crises developed, particularly the hostage crisis in Iran and the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan, Carter began to make decisions that were more in accordance with Brzezinski’s views, but an overarching sense of direction was still conspicuously absent from Carter’s foreign policy.

More than this, however, the administration lacked an effective policy planning and coordinating mechanism to prevent the foreign policy machinery from becoming overloaded, or to prevent fragmentation of foreign policy. In essence, such a mechanism would have helped Carter
identify potential problems and assisted him with the difficult task of choosing among conflicting policy initiatives by determining which were higher priorities (George 1980, 118). The fact that their goals were too ambitious notwithstanding, the Carter Administration's primary deficiency was that it lacked the means to execute its plans and, once various initiatives were underway, to ensure its efforts were channeled in the same direction.

Foreign policy did become fragmented during the first year of Carter's presidency. Furthermore, it was characterized by overactivism, a tendency to initiate policies without having given full consideration to their feasibility, poor conceptualization of overarching strategy, and a failure to recognize when individual policies ran counter to one another (George 1980, 118). Carter's habit of intervening personally in important policy matters emerged as another characteristic of his administration.

Ironically, it was within the context of this larger framework and, one has to admit, largely due to the personal intervention of Carter, that an extremely significant change occurred in the complexion of the Middle East. The Camp David agreements and subsequent negotiations, while they may have fallen short in terms of resolving the critical issues of Palestinian rights, and
the West Bank and Gaza, established an unprecedented degree of relations between Egypt, the United States and Israel. Moreover, Arab reactions to these negotiations, namely the isolation of Egypt, caused the dynamics of the equation to be dramatically altered, pushing Arab-Israeli relations past the perpetual stalemate that had lasted for decades, into a new stage of development.
Chapter Notes


3. Ibid., 7.


5. Ibid.


9. Ibid., 50. These descriptions are Brzezinski's, but they demonstrate the differing perspectives of the president and his two top foreign policy advisers in terms of the Soviet Union.

10. Ibid., 570-573. Brzezinski provides a detailed depiction of his NSC staff.

11. Carter, Keeping Faith, 55. The PDB is a highly secret document distributed to five people: the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State and National Security Adviser.

12. Brzezinski, 87. Brzezinski did not favor calling for a meeting in Geneva until the substance of an agreement had been worked out. This reflected his stark view of Soviet intentions. He felt they would impede progress if brought in too early.


15. The meeting with Syrian President Assad was held in Geneva while Carter was returning from an economic summit.

16. Carter, Keeping Faith, 286-287. Carter found a similar public/private disparity among members of the American Jewish community.

17. Vance's statement is quoted in Lenczowski, 165. Lenczowski suggests that Israel's violent rejection caused the joint U.S.-Soviet proposal to be quickly replaced by an American-Israeli statement that the Geneva Conference should be based on UN resolutions 242 and 338. This apparent retreat under Israeli pressure upset Arab leaders.

18. Sadat's description of his address to the Israeli Knesset is quoted in Lenczowski, 166.


20. Ibid., 300-303. Carter met briefly with Sadat while returning from a trip to Poland, Iran, India, and Saudi Arabia. The two leaders found that there were "no differences" between them.

21. Ibid., 297. After Sadat's symbolic gesture of peace, Syria broke diplomatic relations with Egypt and officials there as well as in Libya and Iraq called for Sadat's assassination.

22. See also Brzezinski, 237 where he asserts that the Israelis had done little to mask their mutual dislike for one another in previous negotiations.

23. See also Carter, Keeping Faith, 378. Begin was so insistent on the subject of settlements in the Sinai that by the sixth day, Carter felt that over half his time with Begin, "whether Sadat was present or not, had been spent discussing them."
24. This had been the subject of a great deal of debate during the Camp David meetings due to Begin's unwillingness to accept the resolution's applicability to the West Bank and other territories gained in 1967. See, for example, Carter, Keeping Faith, 375.

25. Critics assert that Sadat made too many concessions to the Israelis in return for a concession that Begin was readily willing to make. See, for example, Lenczowski, 183.

26. Many Arab leaders viewed American support of the treaty as an attempt to create a rift in the Arab world.

27. Farideh Farhi, "Class Struggles, the State, and Revolution in Iran," in Power and Stability in the Middle East, ed. Berch Berberoglu (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1989), 94. Prior to 1933, for example, the Iranian government received only 16% of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's (later to become the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) net profits. An agreement concluded by Reza Shah for a flat royalty rate after 1933 was not much better.

28. The Tudeh party was revived in 1950, but due to sharp ideological differences, failed to support the Nationalist Movement.

29. Farhi, 97. The so-called "White revolution" was promulgated by Dr. Ali Amini, head of a strong reform cabinet appointed by the Shah. It included expansion of social services and education, extension of suffrage to women and, its centerpiece, land reform.

30. Farhi is citing figures in E. Abrahamian, Iran: Between Two Revolutions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 420.

31. Carter, Keeping Faith, 435. Carter had received intelligence reports indicating that the Shah's "single-minded pursuit of his own goals" created widespread opposition among those who desired more political participation.

32. Lenczowski, 190. The Shah introduced several measures, including open parliamentary debates and a ban on the business dealings of the royal family.

33. Khomeini spent the majority of his fifteen year exile in Iraq, but moved to Paris shortly before returning to Iran.
34. For a detailed account of the efforts to secure the hostages release, see Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America’s Tragic Encounter With Iran* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

35. Brzezinski, 454-459. In conjunction with the RDF, a series of Presidential Directives was developed, designed to move the strategic emphasis of the military toward more flexible, mobile use of command and control throughout a sustained conflict.
Chapter 5

THE ESSENCE OF A DILEMMA

Recent events, such as the Gulf War and the historic negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization demonstrate that the Middle East continues to be one of the most important regions in the world from the standpoint of American foreign policy. A brief survey of the development of American Middle Eastern policy illustrates the difficult nature of dealing with the competing interests that have arisen in the region.

Initially, when American involvement was driven primarily by philanthropic and commercial interests, the United States was able to remain distanced from the internal affairs of the Middle East. After two world wars, however, the previous discovery of large oil reserves in the region precipitated a shift in American involvement from protecting commercial concerns toward considerations of national interest. Although not yet heavily involved politically in the Middle East, the United States began to develop a vested interest in maintaining stability in the region.
It was precisely at this critical juncture that President Truman was compelled to carry Wilson's moral commitment to the Zionist cause a step further by supporting the creation of Israel. Ironically, this very development had a pronounced de-stabilizing effect on the region, and placed future presidents on the horns of a dilemma that has since plagued American foreign policy toward the Middle East. How can the United States reconcile its need to maintain vital access to the region's oil with commitments to the security of Israel?

What makes this dilemma particularly intriguing is that it has served as a major battlefield for the conflicting impulses that have driven American foreign policy for over 200 years, the Jeffersonian ideal of promoting democracy throughout the world, and the Hamiltonian perspective, which asserts that foreign policy should promote the national interest. Experience has shown, however, that even taking a strict national interests approach creates problems in terms of prioritization. Few policy makers would dispute that American policy must be directed toward maintaining reliable access to oil, ensuring the security of Israel, addressing strategic issues, and attempting to promote peace. Determining which of these objectives is most important, however, has proven to be quite difficult.
Successive presidents have approached the Middle Eastern dilemma differently, each leaving his own unique imprint. The Nixon Administration serves as an example of the application of a realist-oriented approach, whereas the Carter Administration was strongly motivated by idealistic impulses. The preceding case studies highlight three basic themes which merit specific attention: the differences in Nixon and Carter’s ability to discern vital regional developments while reconciling them with geopolitical considerations; the effects of crises on foreign policy formulation, and the potentially debilitating effects of bureaucratic rivalries on American foreign policy.

**Comparative Analysis**

In a broad sense, this comparative analysis reaffirms the importance of contextual factors in foreign policy formulation. Policy-makers need mechanisms to identify the salient contextual features surrounding an issue, and the means to stay abreast of current developments, of changes in the broad contours of the decision-making environment. The ability to identify changes in context may be the key to recognizing opportunities to achieve important objectives. A program or initiative that might not have been successful under one set of circumstances may prove quite successful under different conditions.
Likewise, the inability to appreciate the historical and contemporary underpinnings associated with a particular event may lead to missed opportunities, or even worse, to unexpected crises.

When President Nixon entered the White House, the most prominent foreign policy issue was Vietnam. The need to repair the domestic consensus and to re-establish support for an active American role in world affairs was so great during this period that Nixon had to make disentanglement from Vietnam his highest priority. His personal experiences on the Herter Committee and as Eisenhower's Vice President caused him to approach his foreign policy from a staunch anti-Soviet perspective. Detente, the desire to establish a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union while capitalizing on a potential triangular relationship with China, was the cornerstone of the Nixon-Kissinger strategy. In essence, it was a new form of balance-of-power politics that eventually gave way to the Cold War international system.

This approach caused Nixon and Kissinger to view the Middle East through lenses that were shaped by a global strategic emphasis. While clearly focusing on the Soviet Union and China, Nixon and Kissinger often had a distorted image of the Middle East. Such was the case in 1970, when Nixon was convinced that events in Jordan were caused by
Soviet intrigue instead of being the result of regional developments. Moreover, Nixon and Kissinger were caught off guard by the Arab offensive in 1973. Had they been more in tune with mounting Arab frustrations, they might have realized that a new crisis was imminent.

Once the war did break out, however, Kissinger recognized the potential to make advances in the diplomatic arena, particularly in light of a direct line of communication that had recently been opened to Egypt. Furthermore, Kissinger's recognition that Arab willingness to negotiate would be severely hampered by a decisive Israeli victory demonstrates at least some understanding of the prevailing Middle Eastern context. If Kissinger had not succeeded in negotiating relief for the encircled Egyptian Third Army, for example, the Arab attitude after the war would have been markedly different.

The Nixon Administration's change in focus after the October War of 1973 suggests that crises, particularly if they occur unexpectedly, can cause decision-makers to re-examine their foreign policy priorities. Prior to the war, Nixon and Kissinger's global focus had several effects on Middle Eastern policy. First, Nixon did not particularly want to become involved in the region, which was a hotbed of emotional nationalism and really appeared to be a "no-win" situation. This led Nixon to reserve more
interesting and dramatic foreign policy areas for the White House, while allowing Secretary of State Rogers to pursue an elusive Middle East peace settlement. Second, however, when Britain announced its intention to withdraw from the Persian Gulf by 1971, potentially endangering the stability of the region by creating a power vacuum, the Middle East became more important from a global perspective and, thus, received more of Nixon and Kissinger’s attention. Interestingly, the British withdrawal coincided roughly with the Jordanian crisis, leading Nixon and Kissinger to strengthen the American commitment to both Israel and Iran, primarily in the form of arms shipments.

During this period, Israel’s status as the United States’ only strategic ally in the region crystallized. Every effort was made to keep the regional balance-of-power in Israel’s favor, a goal that for several years constituted the heart of Nixon’s Middle East strategy and eventually threatened to undercut the State Department’s efforts. The Arabs meanwhile, were visibly drawn toward the Soviets, making the Middle East appear even more important as a potential arena for superpower confrontation.

In the initial phases of Nixon’s Administration, which for the purposes of this study will be classified as
the period prior to the Jordanian crisis, it is difficult to tell which American interest in the Middle East was considered preeminent. However, once Nixon and Kissinger began to perceive that the region was gaining importance for the United States from a global standpoint, the Nixon Administration's priorities began to develop specific hierarchical guidelines. Their first priority was to prevent the expansion of Soviet influence in the region, thereby preserving Western access to oil. Israel was perceived as vital to this process, complicating the issue of choosing between the American commitment to Israeli security and promoting relations with the oil producing Arab states. After the Jordanian crisis, the belief that Israel was a vital partner in the Soviet-American competition caused Nixon and Kissinger to place Israeli concerns above Arab relations. This made attempts to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict especially problematic and led to a policy of favoring the status quo as the best means of promoting American interests.

This priority scheme persisted until the October War of 1973. When Nixon and Kissinger recognized the potential threat of superpower confrontation inherent in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the issue of promoting a settlement was brought back to the fore. This time, however, the issue received Kissinger's personal attention
with the president's support.

In terms of structure, the Nixon Administration suffered from the ailment that has afflicted many foreign policy bureaucracies since the National Security Act of 1947, the struggle between the State Department and the National Security Adviser for primacy in foreign affairs. During Nixon's first term, Kissinger's span of control reached beyond the National Security Council into several areas of the Department of State. As foreign policy became more centralized in the White House, the State Department's position became even more tenuous. During Nixon's second term, the issue became a moot point when the president appointed Kissinger as his Secretary of State, expecting him to fulfill both functions.

Nixon and Kissinger believed that foreign policy should be developed with minimal constraints on presidential authority. Furthermore, they understood the advantages of well-timed foreign policy initiatives. To a large extent, they were able to use their foreign policy successes to help generate a certain degree of domestic support, in spite of the crisis of conscience caused by Vietnam. The dramatic announcement of an opening to China, the Paris negotiations, and the successful mitigation of the Jordanian crisis, combined to help Nixon win re-election.
Carter, in a departure from the previous two administrations, felt the need to move away from the heavy Soviet-American emphasis that had typically characterized American foreign policy. This desire, coupled with his personal studies of the Middle East, led him to take a more regionally-oriented approach to the area. In spite of his awareness of the strategic importance of the region, he was strongly motivated by a personal desire to create an Arab-Israeli settlement. When Carter became president, the Middle East, because of the October War and subsequent disengagement talks, was among the highest foreign policy concerns of the departing administration. In this respect, it is not surprising that Carter felt compelled to deal with the Arab-Israeli dispute, just as it was understandable that the Nixon Administration felt compelled to deal with Vietnam.

Like Kissinger, Carter recognized the contextual changes in the Arab-Israeli equation brought about by the October War. The Arabs had a newfound sense of honor, while the Israelis had a newfound sense of vulnerability. Unlike Kissinger, who used American diplomacy to deal primarily with the effects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Carter determined to deal with specific causes of the dilemma. In so doing, he was able to take advantage of the diplomatic ties established with Egypt during the Nixon
Administration. Carter genuinely believed that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was possible. Thus, he determined to make the Middle East a priority concern for his administration in spite of warnings from his advisers that it might prove politically costly.

His tight focus on specific issues related to the Arab-Israeli dilemma allowed Carter to be caught off guard by successive crises during the latter stages of his administration. Ironically, these crises occurred in Iran and Afghanistan, within striking distance of the area that received Carter’s primary attention. Carter’s foreign policy, while very proactive in terms of Arab-Israeli issues, was decidedly reactive in many other areas, including other Middle Eastern issues. This had the net effect of causing his policy to be dominated by one major issue after another, without an overarching sense of direction.

Beyond Carter’s desire to promote peace in the Middle East through an Arab-Israeli settlement, it is difficult to determine which of the other three priorities carried more emphasis. Carter was aware of the region’s importance from the standpoint of oil and the Soviet-American competition and he felt a certain sense of commitment toward Israeli security. Yet, his initial approach to the Middle East did not give any indication
that Carter viewed any one of these interests to be more important than the others. After the crisis in Iran, Carter shifted his focus from the Arab-Israeli dispute to considerations of regional stability. After the crisis precipitated by the Soviet deployment into Afghanistan, however, the prevention of Soviet expansion into the Middle East emerged as Carter's highest priority.

The degree of commitment Carter felt toward Israel remains somewhat unclear. The establishment of closer diplomatic ties with Egypt, coupled with Carter's friendship with President Sadat, reduced the perception that Israel was the United States' only potential ally in the Middle East. Because Carter did not appear to attach as much importance to Israeli security as the Nixon Administration, he ran the risk of losing the support of the American Jewish community. Moreover, his conviction that both sides needed to make compromises in the settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute exacerbated this loss of domestic support.

Carter's idealistic support of human rights, which had been so appealing during the election, eventually caused him to suffer widespread criticism. Detente, although it too eventually lost domestic support, had the advantage of being highly structured. Human rights dictated a much more diffuse approach and engendered a
great deal of expectation among various groups who felt their causes were worthy of specific attention. Carter could not possibly address all of these issues. Moreover, at times, situations developed that forced Carter to choose one element of human rights over another or, equally challenging, Carter had to face the dilemma of reconciling his idealistic goals with his perceptions of the national interest. Thus, in much the same way that Wilson found himself torn between support for the Zionist cause and the desire to promote self-determination among the Arab people, Carter faced difficult choices regarding Israeli security and Palestinian rights. As the situation in Iran deteriorated, Carter was forced to choose between a policy of recognizing the Shah's abuses of power and supporting his regime in the name of regional stability.

The impression that his policy was moving several different directions at once was amplified by the bureaucratic dispute that developed between Brzezinski and Vance. Unlike Nixon, Carter did not side clearly with either his National Security Adviser or his Secretary of State until very late in his presidency. Carter's own indecision was at times magnified by conflicting advice from his top-level advisers. As he faced successive crises in short periods of time, however, Carter began to move away from his own basic policy of promoting human
rights toward one of promoting American interests. This gradual transformation is evident in National Security Adviser Brzezinski's observation that the basic directions of Carter's foreign policy were set quite firmly after the crisis in Afghanistan (Brzezinski 1983, 35).

The structural difficulties encountered by the Carter Administration's foreign policy machinery highlights a crucial lesson. Without going into the larger debate of whether it is more appropriate for the State Department or the National Security Adviser to preside over foreign policy formulation, it is absolutely essential that the president provide clear direction through his own initiatives, or by giving primacy to one organization or the other. Furthermore, he must remain consistent in his choice. The rivalry between the State Department and the National Security Adviser was significant, but not debilitating, to the Nixon Administration, because Nixon's views were more clearly in line with Kissinger's. The high degree of centralization that occurred during Nixon's second term, however, represents the other extreme, which must also be avoided.

As the nation's head-of-state, the president must exert firm control over the foreign policy bureaucracy to ensure that specific undertakings are in line with his larger framework. In general terms, this requirement would
also dictate that the president avoid becoming too deeply involved in any one foreign policy matter to the exclusion of others. Thus, Carter's decision to become deeply involved in negotiating a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict should represent the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, any president who does choose to delve into one issue to this degree, must do so consciously, after considering the potential costs in other foreign policy areas. It cannot be denied that Carter's personal involvement helped move the Arab-Israeli conflict to a new stage of development. However, by devoting so many of his resources toward this one purpose, Carter placed his administration in a vulnerable position. Without a long-range perspective, Carter became preoccupied by one issue after another.

**Toward Future Policy**

The findings presented above suggest that American policy toward the Middle East be re-evaluated in light of recent contextual developments. The collapse of the Soviet Union requires a re-definition of basic foreign policy along both geopolitical and ideological lines in order to re-prioritize remaining interests. The Nixon-Kissinger formula of viewing the Middle East as an arena for Soviet-American competition is simply no longer
appropriate. Geopolitical concerns still exist, however, as the Gulf War aptly demonstrated. Now, more than ever, it is essential that the United States devote the resources of its foreign policy machinery toward continually assessing the international context, both regionally and globally. This task, instead of becoming more simple, has actually become much more complicated due to the loss of the tenuous Cold War framework.

With respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict, this development will have far-reaching effects in terms of the Arab countries' willingness to cooperate with the United States, with Israel and with one another. Furthermore, it requires that the United States re-examine its commitment to Israel to insure that it is not simply continuing the Cold War oriented policy of providing unquestioned support. By moving away from the perspective that Israel is the United States' only ally, toward one of continuing to cultivate relations with other countries in the region, American policy may actually help to further progress toward an Arab-Israeli settlement.

The recent negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization are also quite significant because they demonstrate the degree to which contextual changes may have already opened the door to opportunities. The loss of the Cold War rivalry, which
for years allowed the Israelis and Arabs to play their respective sponsors against one another, has forced players on both sides to reassess their own situations, making them more amenable to attempting a settlement. It is also important to note that these negotiations were not conducted under the United States' watchful eye, but took place quietly, under Norwegian sponsorship. This raises the question of the role of the United States in future world affairs.

In dealing with this question, it is going to become increasingly vital that American policy-makers address the issue of how to blend the elements of realism and idealism into a more cohesive, consistent foreign policy. Too much reliance on the realistic aspects of power politics may desensitize policy makers to important regional developments. Too much reliance on the idealistic elements may lead to a foreign policy that lacks a sense of direction. The challenge of future presidents will not only include aspects of those faced by Nixon and Carter, but will include the resurgence of a new dilemma. Policy-makers will not be expected to simply choose between national interests and idealistic endeavors, they will be expected to combine aspects of them, without allowing either impulse to throw American foreign policy off track.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


