

**STRATEGY AND DEFENSE  
IN THE  
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

**An American-Israeli Dialogue**

*Proceedings of a Conference*

*July 7-9, 1986*

*Jerusalem, Israel*

*with*

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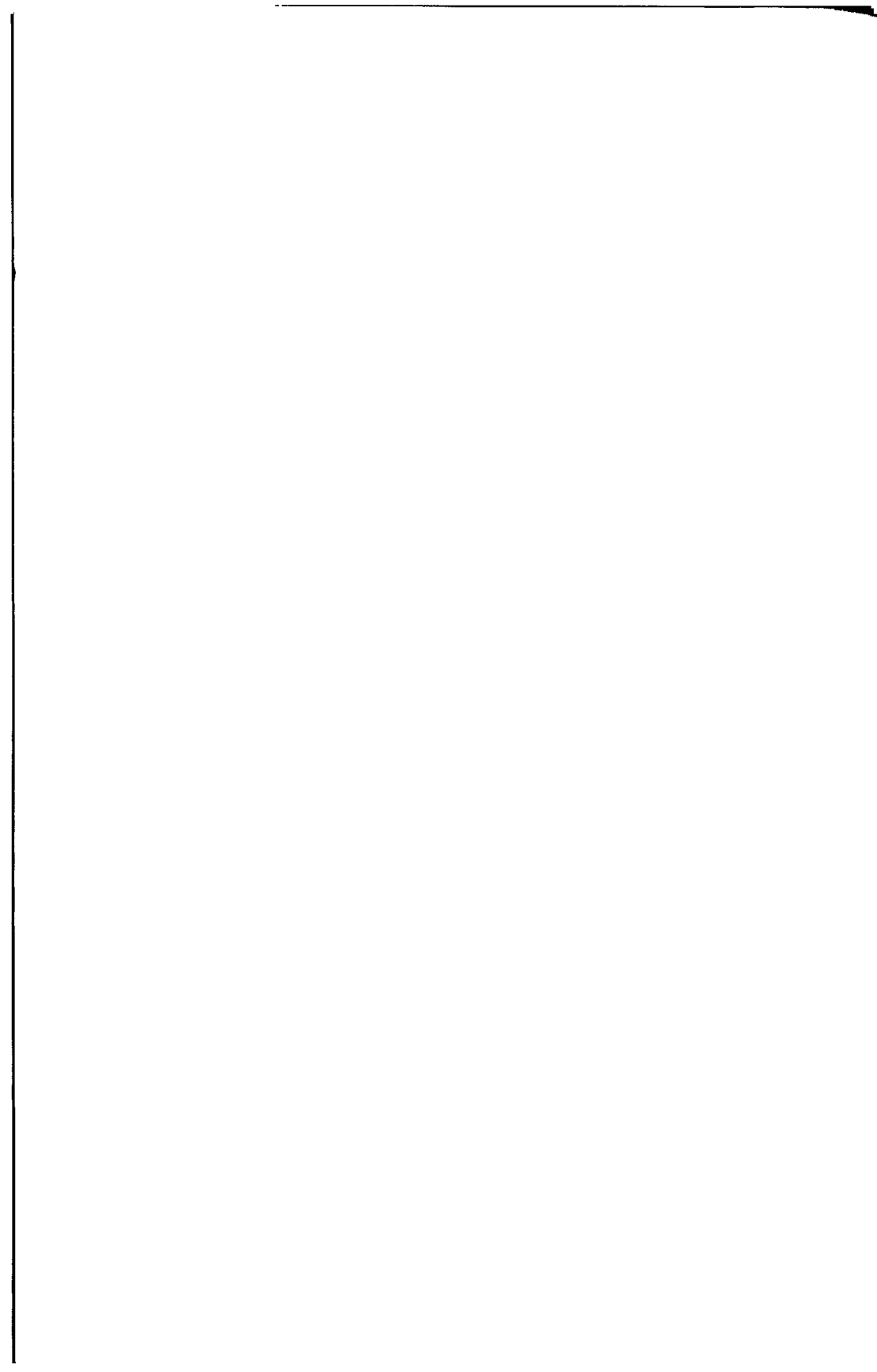
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(positions as of May 1987)

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## PREFACE

During the past four years, the U.S.-Israeli relationship has blossomed into a strategic partnership based on shared aspirations for peace and a common vision on how to achieve it. Building that alliance has not been an easy task, but it is strong today because the nexus of basic values, interests and beliefs has proven more powerful than the transitory crises of confidence that mar even the closest of friendships.

Regional stability is a cornerstone of those mutual interests. Neither Washington nor Jerusalem stands to gain from the spread of revolution, terrorism and radicalism in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. On the contrary, both realize that peace can flourish only in an environment of stability and security.

In order to promote debate on the shared American and Israeli interest in combatting regional instability, The Washington Institute organized a conference on Strategy and Defense in the Eastern Mediterranean, held at the Laromme Hotel in Jerusalem, July 9-11, 1986. The conference explored three themes: externally produced (that is, primarily Soviet-sponsored) instability of the Eastern Mediterranean rim states; internal stability of the region; and U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation, the two countries' joint response to threats to regional security.

As the subtitle of this volume suggests, the conference was conceived of as an American-Israeli dialogue. Participants included several of the most prominent strategic analysts and diplomats from both countries. Moreover, for three days prior to the conference, the American participants, including seven senior American national security correspondents, were provided with an in-depth look at the security situation on all of Israel's land and sea borders. Those journalists who participated in the pre-conference tour were: Robert Cullen (*Newsweek*),

William Beecher (formerly of *The Boston Globe*, now of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*), Leslie Gelb (*New York Times*), Richard Gross (UPI), James Klurfeld (*Newsday*), William Ringle (Gannett News Service) and Joseph Shapiro (*U.S. News and World Report*).

The conference was hosted jointly with the Israel Military Correspondents Association, in cooperation with the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies and the Dayan Center for Middle East and North African Studies.

Several individuals deserve our special gratitude. Hirsh Goodman, defense correspondent of the *Jerusalem Post*, and Ze'ev Schiff, military editor of *Ha'aretz*, took the idea for the conference off the blackboard and translated it into reality. Minette Warnick of American Associates was of invaluable assistance in all aspects of conference preparation. Special thanks should be extended to Eitan Haber, Assistant to Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and Brigadier General Ephraim Lapid, the IDF Spokesman, and his staff, for organizing an exemplary and highly professional military tour.

This volume contains an edited record of the American-Israeli dialogue.

The U.S.-Israeli relationship can only be strengthened by sober debate over strategy and policy. We hope this volume is the first of many such bilateral exchanges.

Barbi Weinberg  
President  
May 1987

## Introduction

by *Martin Indyk*

In 1982 the United States deployed the Sixth Fleet off the shores of Lebanon in support of the Marines' ill-fated peacekeeping mission in that nation. In October 1985, carrier-based aircraft intercepted the hijackers of the *Achille Lauro* over the Eastern Mediterranean. In September 1986, the U.S. bombed Muammar Qaddafi's headquarters in Tripoli with the help of carrier-based aircraft and naval units in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Until recently, the Eastern Mediterranean and its Middle Eastern littoral tended to be viewed by American military planners as compartmentalized regions requiring separate strategies for the protection of American interests. But as this record of the deployment of forces by the United States in recent years suggests, countering terrorism and radicalism in the Middle East depends in significant part on American capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The same is increasingly true of the relationship between the balance of power in the Middle East and the defense of American interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly the protection of NATO's southern flank. Soviet access in wartime to Syrian and Libyan ports and air bases, for example, would significantly increase the threat posed to the Sixth Fleet. Conversely, American access to similar facilities in Morocco, Egypt and Israel would do much to counter such a threat. And beyond access to facilities is the role that the military capabilities of these Middle Eastern powers themselves might play in Eastern Mediterranean contingencies.

In the past, little attention has been given to this idea that the capabilities of Middle Eastern powers must be taken into account when planning for the defense of the

Eastern Mediterranean. U.S. military planners tended to rely instead on the increasingly unstable arrangements with the NATO allies – Turkey and Greece. In particular, little attention appears to have been given to Israel's role as an Eastern Mediterranean power capable of contributing to NATO's defense of that region.

Since November 1983, however, when President Reagan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir announced the establishment of the U.S.-Israel Joint Political Military Group, a serious effort has been undertaken to define areas of common interest where Israel can assist the United States. This new relationship, dubbed "strategic cooperation," has focussed on the Eastern Mediterranean because it was here that the U.S. perceived a growing vulnerability and need.

The idea that Israel's formidable air and naval power – to which the United States had made a substantial contribution – could be utilized in the Eastern Mediterranean seems obvious. The fact that it was not seriously considered until 1983 is testimony to the compartmentalization that had developed in U.S. strategic planning. Put simply, Israel was perceived as a power capable of deterring conflict in the Middle East. Beyond that role, however, cooperation with Israel on the strategic level was regarded as something which might jeopardize already fragile strategic arrangements with friendly Arab states.

Indeed, even now, four years after the formal announcement of U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation, there is little public understanding of Israel's contribution to the defense of the Eastern Mediterranean. Commentators in the press and analysts in the defense and foreign policy journals still tend to dismiss the development as something the United States is doing for Israel in response to domestic political pressures. The fact that the Sixth Fleet now makes regular port visits to Haifa, that carrier-based aircraft practice on Israeli firing ranges in the Negev

desert, that joint anti-submarine warfare exercises have become a matter of routine, that U.S. and Israeli military planners meet every six months, and that U.S. material is now being prepositioned in Israel, all this seems to have gone unnoticed.

Ironically, it has not gone unnoticed by the Soviet Union and Syria. They are closely monitoring the development of strategic cooperation and their press commentators regularly express alarm and concern. In the rest of the Arab world, however, strategic cooperation has been greeted with silence. Indeed, our strategic relations with Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Oman have been solidified at precisely the time that strategic cooperation with Israel was burgeoning.

The absence of protest from friendly Arab countries provides one explanation for the lack of public attention and understanding in the United States; the other explanation lies in the secrecy which surrounds the new relationship. Because both sides place a high value on strategic cooperation, neither has an interest in publicizing or politicizing it.

However, there is a need for greater public understanding, particularly in Washington, of the potential U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation holds for developments both in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. For this reason, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy decided to help establish a strategic dialogue between the policy-making communities in Israel and the United States – a public dialogue to reinforce the private dialogue already under way between the military planners of both countries.

This book is the result of that endeavor. It represents the proceedings of a Conference held in Jerusalem in July 1986 in which American and Israeli policy-makers, defense intellectuals, and national security correspondents discussed the threat environment in the Eastern

Mediterranean and the Middle East and the possibilities for U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation to meet the challenges to their common interest in stability.

It is an historic document, not only because it details the development of strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel, but also because it records the assessments of the American and Israeli defense communities of the strategic balance in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in 1986.

In Part One, three American defense intellectuals provide a net assessment of Soviet capabilities and NATO vulnerabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Jim Roche – a former senior policy planner for the Pentagon and the State Department – emphasizes the way in which the Middle Eastern littoral must impact on the thinking of U.S. military planners. Soviet involvement in Syria and Libya, for example, raises the distinct possibility that facilities in these client states could be used by the Soviet Union to threaten the sea lines of communication to Greece, Turkey and Italy, and to force the Turks to fight a four front war.

Moreover, Soviet access to air bases in these client states and to naval bases and "friendly shores" for its submarines, could severely hamper the operations of the Sixth Fleet and divert its scarce resources from other priority tasks. Roche's conclusion is clear: given NATO's limited resources, the United States can only counter these threats by depending upon "active" allies in the Middle East region.

Edward Luttwak – a defense intellectual and adviser to the Pentagon – reinforces this point by analysing the particular vulnerabilities of Turkey and Greece and the relative decline in the ability of the Sixth Fleet to compensate for these weaknesses. He argues that Greece will do what it can to undermine NATO's deterrent capability in peacetime, but will fight in a crisis;

whereas Turkey will make whatever contribution it can to deterrence but will quickly abandon NATO in the face of a real Soviet offensive. In these circumstances, Israel's ability to compensate for persistent NATO vulnerabilities on its southern flank becomes increasingly important to the United States.

Frank Fukuyama, a senior Soviet analyst at the Rand Corporation, argues, however, that the Kremlin is now in a stage of consolidation of empire, reflected in a decline in naval activity in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as in Third World activism more generally. This has held true for the Middle East, where an increase in Soviet arms supplies to Syria and Libya has been accompanied by a distancing of Moscow from its clients whenever there has been an increase in tensions and the possibility of a confrontation.

This suggests that the central balance in the Eastern Mediterranean is likely to be stable in the short term while the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Michail Gorbachev, concentrates on economic modernization and an improvement in relations with the United States.

But military planners must have longer-term horizons and, as Edward Luttwak points out: "regardless of the political orientation that may be dominant in Moscow, Soviet military power has been converted from what might be called an inventory of strength to a state of operationalized strength during the last two decades." Given that the trends in NATO's capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean have tended to be in the opposite direction, the continued maintenance of stability there will depend on an enhanced deterrent capability – something which U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation can help to supply.

Much the same conclusion can be reached about trends in the Middle Eastern regional balance considered in Part Two. As Aharon Yariv, head of the Jaffee Center for

Strategic Studies, argues in his strategic overview, the threat of immediate instability is only on the horizon in Lebanon – an instability which is unlikely to spread unless other regional developments provoke a confrontation.

Emmanuel Sivan – Professor of Islamic History at the Hebrew University – is less sanguine about Islamic fundamentalism. He believes it is gaining a new lease on life in the Middle East as the revolution of rising expectations in the Arab world meets the reality of declining oil prices. While this resurgence is unlikely to topple the pro-Western regimes in Egypt or elsewhere, because of their ability to respond with both carrots and sticks, it does constrain them. This in turn reduces the willingness of threatened regimes to be closely identified with the United States or to be openly involved in the peace process with Israel.

If Islamic fundamentalism constrains the ability of pro-Western Arab regimes to contribute to stability, Syrian efforts to achieve "strategic parity" with Israel threaten to disrupt the Middle East balance altogether. Briefings for the conference participants by Israel's top political-military echelon revealed a serious concern that war with Syria was only a matter of time.

This assessment, however, was not entirely shared by three of Israel's most astute observers of Syria. Itamar Rabinovich, head of the Dayan Center for Middle East Studies at Tel Aviv University, explains in his presentation that Syria's President Hafiz al-Asad is only likely to launch war if he has considerable confidence in the outcome. He cannot have such confidence while Egypt remains at peace with Israel and the United States is engaged in strengthening its strategic relationship with the Jewish state.

But Amos Gilboa, former Deputy Chief Of Israeli Military Intelligence, argues that Asad's long term



strategy is war and that diplomacy is only a means for preparing the best possible condition for that war while preventing any other Arab state from making peace. He agrees with Rabinovitch, however, that war is not a top Syrian priority at the moment. But, he asks, how long can a fundamentally weak country bear the burden of such a huge military buildup without launching a war?

Ze'ev Schiff, the military editor of Ha'aretz, explains just how serious the Syrian military buildup has become: four new army divisions, increased firepower, deployment of strategic missiles (with an alarming chemical warfare capability), the densest air defense system in the world, and an emphasis on airborne and commando units.

In weighing the Israel-Syria military balance and deciding whether to go to war, however, Syria's Asad must also take into account developments on the Israeli side and the attitude of the United States. Will the U.S. prevent Israel from preempting his military buildup? Will Washington impose a ceasefire on Israel if he launches a war? Will the U.S. be willing to deprive Israel of any gains made in such a war? Little wonder, therefore, that commentaries in the Syrian press express great alarm at the visible dimensions of U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation: the six-monthly joint military planning talks; the joint exercises; and Israel's participation in the Strategic Defense Initiative.

At a minimum, these developments must produce a great deal of uncertainty in the mind of Hafiz al-Asad when he contemplates whether he has achieved "strategic parity" with Israel and whether the circumstances are propitious for war. U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation may have been developed because of American needs in the Eastern Mediterranean, but in this way, it has also served Israeli needs in terms of deterring Syria. It sends a signal to Damascus that Israel's qualitative edge in the military balance will not only be maintained but also enhanced by

Israeli participation in the development of the next generation of American weapons systems. And it lets Asad know that if he starts a war, the United States will be standing behind its Israeli ally. Thus strategic cooperation enhances not only NATO's deterrence of the Soviet Union in the Eastern Mediterranean, but it also reinforces Israel's deterrence of Syria.

Preserving stability through deterrence in this volatile region of the world is the common interest upon which U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation has been based. In the final section of this book, three of the principle architects of this relationship explain the way in which this common interest was recognized and operationalized. This unique historical account, by policy-makers who participated in the process, serves to emphasize that strategic cooperation was not just developed as a new way to grant favors to Israel but was rather based on mutual needs and shared aspirations.

According to Israel's Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a common strategy for achieving peace in the Middle East developed in the wake of the 1967 Six Day War: the United States would only expect Israel to yield territory gained in that war in return for political accommodations with its neighbors. Military cooperation was first undertaken in 1970, when Washington, acting at King Hussein's request, sought Israel's assistance in overcoming a Syrian invasion of his kingdom. This established a second foundation for the strategic relationship: joint support for viable Arab regimes in the face of threats from subversive elements and radical states backed by the Soviet Union.

A third strategic foundation was established when Israel began providing the United States with intelligence data about the performance of Soviet weapons systems it was encountering on the Middle East battlefield. This too served mutual interests: the United States gained valuable intelligence not available elsewhere and Israel benefited

from the consequent improvements in American weapons systems.

Yet these positive developments in strategic relations were essentially ad hoc in nature: born of a reaction to regional events rather than in anticipation of them. They served to demonstrate the mutuality of American and Israeli interests but did little to prepare the way for joint action.

This framework was established by President Reagan and Prime Minister Shamir in November 1983 in the form of the Joint Political Military Group (JPMG), whose assigned task was to examine ways to enhance cooperation through "combined planning, joint exercises, and...prepositioning of U.S. equipment in Israel."

Sam Lewis, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel at the time this announcement was made, and Mendi Meron, the Israeli military attache in Washington and subsequently the director general of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, provide an American and Israeli perspective on what lay behind this simple statement announcing the establishment of the JPMG.

Lewis explains that the first attempt to establish a formal framework – the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1981 – failed because Washington, at the time, tended to regard strategic cooperation as a gift for Israel rather than something from which both sides would benefit, while at the same time, Israel's plans for cooperation were far more extensive than anything the U.S. military establishment had begun to consider.

Lewis and Meron explain that two years later the United States—tied down and vulnerable in Lebanon and disappointed by the lack of support from friendly Arab regimes—had changed its attitude, while Israel had decided to concentrate only on areas where the United States felt it needed help. Both sides agreed to start the

process without mandated goals and without trying to spell out ahead of time the parameters of the strategic relationship; and the military participants in the JPMG persuaded their political masters that the issue was too important to be publicized or politicized.

Three years later, the approach adopted by both sides has been vindicated. As the chronology in the Appendix shows, the United States and Israel have managed to identify many areas of mutual benefit in the strategic arena. Strategic cooperation, moreover, has helped stabilize both the regional military balance in the Middle East and the central balance between East and West in the Eastern Mediterranean. And while it is certain that the long term trends are less reassuring, what emerges from these deliberations is that by working together on the strategic level, Israel and the United States can do much to protect each other from the deleterious effects of these trends. Indeed, in the short time since this conference was held, both Syria and the Soviet Union appear to have changed their strategic policies and adopted, at least for the moment, less belligerent attitudes; U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation has played a crucial role in these changes.

To convert such changes into more lasting arrangements of peace and stability is a much more difficult task, as Prime Minister Shimon Peres shows in his concluding remarks. But without a stable deterrent balance, such peacemaking efforts would not be possible. That is the most important contribution that U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation can make to the interests of both countries and the world...

*PART I*

*Superpower Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean*

James C. Roche

*Soviet Strategic Capabilities in the Eastern  
Mediterranean*

Francis Fukuyama

*Growth and Decline of Soviet Activism*

Edward Luttwak

*NATO and the Eastern Mediterranean*



## Soviet Strategic Capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean

by *James C. Roche*

There are several ways to address the issue of "strategy and defense in the Eastern Mediterranean." One could look at the Soviet threat and the potential for Soviet adventurism in the region, or one could examine the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on U.S. strategic concerns. From the American perspective, however, the Eastern Mediterranean is critically important for another reason: NATO and the defense of the West. My remarks, therefore, will focus on the strategic competition in the Eastern Mediterranean and in broad terms, the existing and potential capabilities of the Soviet Union and its clients, Libya and Syria, seriously to threaten the southern flank of NATO.

### *The Southern Flank of NATO*

The viability of the southern flank of NATO has been a major interest of the United States' since the beginning of the organization. The purpose of the Sixth Fleet and the other elements of NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean was, and remains, to deter the Soviet Union from attacking Europe.

To make this deterrence real, NATO must be able to demonstrate that two of its members, Turkey and Greece, can be reinforced during hostilities. Both countries are vulnerable. Lines of communication to each of them are limited to narrow sea and air routes through which all reinforcements and supplies must transit. Given, the geographical position of Syria, NATO planners cannot afford to overlook the possibilities of the Soviet Union exploiting its relationship with Damascus in time of a major war.

Two other major members of the NATO alliance are also dependent on a secure Mediterranean Sea – France and Italy. For their security the geographical location of Libya assumes vital significance. From the point of an Italian war planner, a secure southern flank is necessary for Italy to focus its military power on dealing with the Warsaw Pact threat to central Europe. To a lesser extent, the French planner would have some of the same concerns.

The Eastern Mediterranean, however, is not just a theater in which NATO does its best to hold territory. Rather, a strong NATO force in Turkey and Greece could serve to pin down a large body of Soviet ground and air forces that otherwise might be employed against the center region. Moreover, when it makes sense to do so, NATO could open a second front against the Warsaw Pact through Thrace. In this context, the United States has stationed nuclear missiles in Turkey, deployed Polaris-missile-equipped submarines in the Eastern Mediterranean, and is now adding nuclear-tipped Tomahawk cruise missiles to its attack submarines.

Consequently, the Soviets have long feared NATO's ability to attack from the south. In a conventional conflict in Europe, a thrust up through Thrace by NATO would force them to spread their forces across a huge front starting in Central Europe. The Soviets are also concerned with the defense of their Black Sea fleet from seaborne attack from Turkey and recognize the importance of the NATO airfields in Eastern Turkey. Finally, the Soviets recognize that the Eastern Mediterranean is an air route leading to the industrial heartland of the Soviet Union.

For all of these reasons, the Soviet Union has upgraded its force posture in this theater. Ground forces have been given modern equipment; the air forces have the newest aircraft; and the navy maintains a significant presence in the Eastern Mediterranean.



### *Control and Denial*

For the Soviets, control of the Eastern Mediterranean would be ideal. However, even if they were only able to deny NATO the use of the Eastern Mediterranean, the gains would be enormous. NATO needs to be able to control the sea and air space of the Mediterranean Sea, including the Eastern Mediterranean, and to conduct an effective defense of Europe. Control of the Eastern Mediterranean is far more necessary to NATO than to the Warsaw Pact. Mutual denial, therefore, greatly favors the Soviet Union.

Moreover, the Soviets, by exploiting the southern flank of NATO, would force NATO to defend on more than one front. And if they were able to prevent the United States from reinforcing and supplying Turkish and Greek forces, the Soviets might cause NATO's disintegration.

From both a military and a political perspective, the Russians would like to be able to make a decisive move as early as possible. Given the operational difficulties of such a move in the center region and NATO's northern flank, they may attempt it on the southern flank. While this may remain an elusive goal, the Soviets have every reason to seek control of the Eastern Mediterranean.

During the "Great Patriotic War," the Soviet Union invaded northern Iran. It is difficult to believe that it would not be even more motivated to do so the next time. From such a position, or even from a position of strength in northern Iran, the Soviets could easily deny the West access to much of the oil of the Middle East.

Finally, the Soviets would want to control the Eastern Mediterranean and access to the Suez Canal in order to enhance their ability to supply their forces in Eastern Russia.

### *Mainline Soviet forces in the Eastern Mediterranean*

Much has been written about the mainline Soviet forces that pose the primary threat to NATO and other Western forces in the Eastern Mediterranean. They include the Soviet naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean (the Fifth Eskadra), the BACKFIRE, BISON, and BEAR bombers stationed in the Southwestern TVD (theater of military operations) against Turkey and, in Eastern Europe, against Greece. It is also important to mention the Soviet merchant fleet, including the extensive number of "Ro/Ro" ships (roll-on/roll-off ships) could be used to assist in the deployment of elements of the Soviet Naval Infantry.

### *Local Allies*

The Soviets have the potential to impose considerable costs on NATO in times of major war by virtue of their ability to exploit two regional allies/clients: Libya and Syria. If Syria provided a friendly welcome to Soviet forces deployed just at the moment when hostilities built up in Europe, the entire reinforcement and resupply effort for Turkey and Greece would be put at risk. The danger would be compounded if the Soviets were able to exploit Libyan territory in a similar manner. In this case, the sea lines of communication to Italy would also be put at risk.

These local Soviet allies need not provide the Soviets with fighting forces. Rather, it is the use of infrastructure with which the Soviet forces are familiar in these countries that is most important. If the local forces provided base protection to Soviet facilities, as well, the benefit would be even greater.

NATO could certainly mount a counter-attack against Soviet forces deployed in Syria and Libya, as well as mount attacks against the host countries themselves. But if a major European war is underway the forces needed to defeat Soviet units deployed in either Syria or Libya are many of the same forces vitally needed in the wider war. Also, as long as the Soviets are on territory that is non-hostile, they can devote the vast majority of their units to offense, rather than defense.

If local forces are competent to aid the Soviets directly, then forward deployment would hold an even bigger payoff for the Soviet Union. Also, if the Soviets, in conjunction with these local allies, were able to deny the use of the Eastern Mediterranean to NATO, then they would have gained an important military advantage in the war.

What do Libya and Syria bring to the Soviets? Since Syria is on the "southern flank" of Turkey, a major Soviet presence in Syria would force the Turks to contend with Soviet forces (not, in all cases, ground forces) on four fronts: Thrace, the Black Sea, eastern Turkey, and along their southern border. Essentially, Turkey would be surrounded, albeit by forces of differing capabilities.

The Soviets currently use Syrian military infrastructure. Soviet advisors in Syria number in the thousands, supervising the most sophisticated Soviet air defense network outside of the Warsaw Pact. Soviet reconnaissance aircraft routinely operate from Syrian airfields; Syria has some of the most modern Soviet tactical aircraft in its inventory, accompanied by a Soviet spare parts and maintenance system; and the Russians use Syrian ports to replenish their Mediterranean Sea fleet and conduct voyage repairs of their submarines. They also know who's who, what's what, and where everything important is located. Finally, they have gained a great deal in coordinated joint exercises with Syrian forces.

While the Libyan comparison is not exact, there are many similarities. Muammar Qaddafi's buying binge of Soviet military equipment, leads one to suspect that the Russians have prestocked equipment and supplies for themselves. Even if the desire for hard currency was, in fact, the driving force behind Soviet arms sales to Libya, Moscow cannot but gain from having its war machinery in place with its attendant test and maintenance equipment. While the number of advisors in Libya is far lower than in Syria, the Soviets are gaining increasing knowledge of the territory, especially of Libyan ports and airfields. Moreover, there is the "Maltese Connection." If the Soviets could capitalize on the very warm relations between Malta and Libya, they might be able to gain the use of Malta to support their operations. Such a move would dramatically affect NATO, especially Italy.

All these factors constitute a multiplier on the effectiveness of military forces that can be deployed or staged out of these countries.

#### *Rapidly deployable forces*

The Soviets have seven on-line airborne divisions with enough lift to quickly deploy and sustain one or two of them, assuming that their deployment is unopposed. On the other hand, if the Soviets can stage from the territory of a local ally, then they may have the capability to grab a North African airfield or seize key points along the Suez Canal. Such seizures would be designed to deny the use of these facilities to NATO or as part of their larger campaign to control the Eastern Mediterranean.

While the Soviet amphibious force is modest in its capabilities, and would have a considerably difficult time conducting an opposed landing, it could easily be used to assume control of key ports and facilities in a weakly defended country. Contingencies of this type are even

more believable given the Soviets' use of *Spetsnaz* (Special) forces, a brigade of which is assigned to each Soviet fleet. If the Russians deployed their forces when tensions were building, the move would have the further effect of making clear the intention of the Soviet Union to fight unless concessions were made by NATO.

### *Submarines*

If one assumes that the only hostile submarines NATO would face in the Mediterranean Sea in time of major war were those previously deployed from the Northern Naval Command (transiting from either the Norwegian or Baltic Seas), then one might be complacent. At any given time, there are seven to nine Soviet submarines deployed in the Mediterranean Sea. Currently, however, there are also six newly constructed, Foxtrot-class, ocean-going submarines flying the Libyan flag, and two old, Romeo-class submarines flying the Syrian flag.

Analysts have argued over the extent to which Libyan and Syrian submarines threaten NATO forces. In my experience, naval officers will discount only those submarines they know are inoperative. More important, analysts have tended to overlook the effect of having friendly infrastructure available nearby to replenish and repair submarines.

Consider the case of the Soviet submarines which threaten NATO in the Norwegian Sea. Without any friendly coasts to hug, they must transit through hostile waters. Once they have expended their weapon loads on shipping bound for Europe from the United States, they must transit for many days in order to replenish their weapon loads. In the Mediterranean Sea, the case may be dramatically different. There Soviet submarines could hide near friendly coasts and run into friendly ports to

replenish after transits of as little as one or two days. Assuming Soviet access to Libyan submarines, Russian submarine crews could be flown to Libya much faster than it would take to send a few more Soviet submarines to the Mediterranean Sea.

If one assumes that the Soviets make use of only two-thirds of the Libyan submarine potential, then NATO begins hostilities with a Sixth Fleet that, for the most part, must be replenished from the United States, facing eleven to thirteen modern Soviet submarines with supporting infrastructure relatively close at hand. Those Soviet submarines cannot defeat the Sixth Fleet, but they certainly could keep it occupied for a while.

Two points need to be kept in mind throughout the discussion of the impact of Soviet client-states on the Mediterranean competition. First, while NATO -- especially the Sixth Fleet -- could attack this infrastructure, it would require the use of the finite resources of aircraft carriers and their aircraft.

Second, if the Russians exploit their clients' infrastructure before hostilities begin, then the Sixth Fleet will be forced to operate against Soviet forces which have had time to dig in. There will be a high "opportunity cost" associated with any contemplated NATO attack against this infrastructure, especially since the attention of top leaders in NATO will almost certainly be focused on the conditions in the center region.

#### *Land-based Airpower*

Clearly, the Russians would want to operate maritime patrol aircraft (including the MAY and BEAR) at least over the Eastern Mediterranean. To do so, they would need to be able to operate from friendly bases. Libya and Syria could provide such facilities in time of war, just as they

have for the Soviet Union in time of peace. While such aircraft cannot defend themselves, they would be effective if operated within the range of Soviet land-based combat aircraft. Thus, another major area of advantage would be in basing combat aircraft there. Bombers based in Syria could, moreover, seriously threaten Turkey and Greece, as well as U.S. battle groups and logistics forces also would be threatened. Air lines of communication to the Eastern Mediterranean would also be put at risk under such circumstances.

If Libyan facilities were also used, the scenario would be even worse for NATO. Long range bombers based in Libya could jeopardize Italian and French forces and facilities, thereby tying down forces, especially aircraft, that NATO might prefer to use in defense of the center region. Lastly, should the Soviet Union choose to predeploy nuclear attack missiles in Libya, an entirely new dimension of threat would be posed to Italy and France.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

My comments have focused on the concerns of a NATO planner, especially an American NATO planner. We should keep in mind that this region of the world has intrinsic importance to the West beyond the specific military conditions within the area. While focusing on NATO, I have tried to assert three propositions that should provoke further analysis among those who study the U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation relationship.

*First: "Mutual denial favors the Soviet Union."*

If NATO is to be successful in the defense of Europe, NATO needs to be able to *control* the Mediterranean Sea. A

situation in which neither NATO nor the Soviet Union can gain military control greatly favors the Soviets. Turkey and Greece must remain in the NATO alliance if NATO is to maintain deterrence. There are already more than sufficient political problems concerning the management of the alliance; a situation cannot be allowed to develop in which either Turkey or Greece feels that the rest of NATO may be powerless to reinforce and resupply in time of war.

*Second: "If they can, expect the Soviets to move early."*

While NATO has the capabilities to defeat the Soviet Mediterranean Sea fleet, and destroy the Libyan and/or Syrian facilities, the Soviets are not foolish. If these clients were augmented by Soviet units deployed during the period prior to hostilities, then the prudent NATO planner would have a more difficult case to consider, especially since every Western military asset would be a precious one if he thought war in the center region likely. In a "phony war" scenario, the Soviets would be able to register extensive psychological gains by posing sudden, unexpected threats to four of NATO's members.

A major question, therefore, is how the West should deal with this contingency. NATO must come to grips with the problem of deterring the Soviet Union from thinking it could exercise such options.

*Third: "The U.S. (that is, NATO) needs active regional allies."*

In the contingencies discussed above, the Soviet allies need only be "passive" -- allies who would accept temporary deployment of Soviet forces (probably under the pretext that the Soviet forces were being deployed to protect



the host country from some imperialist preemptive strike). NATO, on the other hand, and the United States in particular, need "active" allies. The West is not blessed with an overabundance of military forces. NATO lacks the resources to cover all contingencies. Clearly, NATO is going to have to get some help from its regional allies.

It is my view that a significant part of the deterrent necessary to keep the Soviets from exploiting the infrastructure of their regional allies must reside in the region itself. That is an issue all of us should spend time thinking through.

## Growth and Decline of Soviet Activism

by *Francis Fukuyama*

In order to assess the threat to stability and security in the Eastern Mediterranean, it is necessary to gauge the willingness of the Soviet Union to project its military power away from its main theaters of conflict. It is important to know where on the Soviets' list of strategic priorities the Third World – and in this case, the Middle East – ranks and what costs the Soviets are willing to bear to preserve their interests there.

During the first half of the 1970s and even up to the invasion of Afghanistan, most analysts, including myself, accepted the idea of the Soviets' steadily increasing willingness to extend military commitments throughout the world. But that has changed. Over the past half a dozen years, there has been a clear Soviet preference for consolidation of gains over expansion, a hesitance to take on new risks in order to expand the Soviet empire. As a result, the nature of the threat in the Eastern Mediterranean has shifted markedly.

### *Origins of the Interventionist Doctrine*

Soviet activism in the Third World evolved from naval theories first enunciated by Admiral Sergey Gorshkov, father of the modern Soviet Navy. Gorshkov crafted a theory of the seapower of the state, from which grew the Soviet doctrine of force projection. His arguments were first outlined in a series of articles he wrote in the early 1970s called "Navies in War and Peace," published in the official navy journal. In 1976, much of that material was gathered together in a book called *Seapower of the State*.

An important, though not preeminent, argument Gorshkov made in that book is one in favor of using navies in peacetime as a demonstration of Soviet support of national liberation movements and of radical Third World regimes. The book has been somewhat misunderstood, because Gorshkov's central thesis does not deal with Third World power projection at all. He advocated building a powerful surface navy whose primary mission would be the defense of Soviet missile-carrying submarines. What Gorshkov said was that Third World power projection was "icing on the cake." Once a large surface navy is built for the defense of submarines, he argued, there is an extra political payoff if it is used in Third World power projection. In *Seapower and the State*, he stated it baldly: primitive, Third World peoples are very impressed when big ships sail into ports.

Gorshkov never actually advocated actual power projection – that is, use of the Soviet navy in combat situations against the Sixth Fleet or some local forces. Rather, to be more precise, he was interested in a kind of "presence projection," simply using the navy to show that the Soviet Union was interested in how a local crisis was developing.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, that is exactly the way in which the Soviet navy was used, a policy called by some observers "coercive diplomacy." Beginning in 1965, ships of the Fifth Eskadra began surging into the Mediterranean during Middle Eastern crises, putting what were called "tattletales" on American carrier battle groups operating in the region and indicating to Moscow's Arab clients that the Soviets were very interested in what was going on. These sorts of tattletales occurred during the 1967 June War, the 1970 Jordan crisis, the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, and the 1973 October War.. But on no occasion was there any sign that the Soviets were interested in engaging U.S. forces directly.

### *The "Liberating Mission"*

Andrey Grechko, Soviet Defense Minister 1966-1976, was chiefly responsible for expanding Gorshkov's naval theory into a much broader doctrine, which he called "the liberating mission of the Soviet armed forces." Throughout the early 1970s, Grechko promoted the navy heavily, by doing such things as increasing the allotment for naval reactors and by supervising the publication and wide dissemination of Gorshkov's writings. By 1974, Grechko himself had developed a theory which conceived of the mission of the Soviet armed forces as no longer simply the protection of Soviet territory. Rather, according to Grechko, that mission also included the protection of all socialist countries – that is to say, Eastern Europe – plus the active support for national liberation movements and Marxist/Leninist radical regimes around the world. In analyzing Soviet activity in South Yemen, Egypt, Angola, and the Horn of Africa, virtually every observer has quoted from various Grechko speeches of the mid-1970s.

### *Shelving the "Liberating Mission"*

While the "liberating mission" of the Soviet armed forces may have been the driving force behind Soviet adventurism throughout the early 1970s, much has changed in recent years. Since the passing of Grechko from the Soviet political scene in 1976, the trend in Soviet power projection has been, for the most part, downward.

That year – 1976 – was critical. First, the party leadership took a deliberate political decision to cut the rate of growth of the defense budget. In the Tenth Five-Year Plan, covering 1975-1980, the rate of growth fell from approximately 4-5 percent to about 2-3 percent. Moreover, the procurement budget for new weapons was virtually

frozen; there was zero percent growth for a period of about seven or eight years following 1975.

Second, a new military leadership was installed. Dmitriy Ustinov replaced Grechko as Defense Minister and Nikolay Ogarkov replaced Viktor Kulikov as Armed Forces Chief of Staff. These new leaders brought with them a set of priorities different from their predecessors'. Whereas Grechko expounded the theory of the global role of the armed forces, Ustinov's agenda was focused much more on modernization of the main theaters of conflict and on asserting more political control over the military. For example, speaking in Vietnam in 1982, Ustinov bluntly told his hosts that "the Soviet armed forces were formed to defend...the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Soviet Union..." The direct implication of his remarks was that the mission of the armed forces did not extend to the defense of any other country. Compared to Grechko, Ustinov's comments reflected a clear scaling back of Soviet willingness to commit force anywhere outside the main arenas of conflict.

Similarly, Marshal Ogarkov took little interest in Third World issues. He will be remembered in military history as the great modernizer of the two main theaters in Europe and the Far East. All of the major military innovations undertaken in the Soviet army in that period – including the creation of the operational maneuver group, the establishment of a Far East High Command, reorganization of all the military districts, and the reorganization of the air defense forces – were directed towards modernization on those two fronts.

With severe limitations on the procurement budget and a declared desire to upgrade European and Far Eastern forces, it was only natural that the power projection mission would assume a much lower priority. The most obvious and significant way in which this shift manifested itself in actual Soviet behavior was in the

downgrading of the importance of the navy in the late 1970s.

In doctrinal terms, the clearest reflection of the conceptual shift in use of power projection was that the second edition of Gorshkov's *The Seapower of the State*, which appeared in 1979, was profoundly different from the original. Earlier, Gorshkov had argued that naval power was itself a major determinant of the power of the state, regardless of whether the state was a Marxist-Leninist state or Czarist Russia or Napoleonic France. In doing so, he was implicitly criticizing the Soviet leadership for not developing naval power to its fullest potential. In the second edition, that assertion was expunged and Gorshkov was forced to repudiate the concept of independent navalism.

The downgrading of the navy, reflective of the new Soviet unwillingness to assert itself militarily, can also be seen in terms of actual Soviet deployments. Ship days in the Mediterranean by the Soviet Fifth Eskadra actually peaked during the 1973 October War and dropped 20 percent over the next four years. Since 1977, they have stabilized at that level. The number of amphibious ships and various surface combatants that the Soviets have sent into the Mediterranean have all declined in recent years. Most interesting was the absence of a surge of Soviet ship deployment into the Mediterranean during the 1982 Lebanon War.

#### *Related Trends in Soviet Thinking*

In my view, the decline in Soviet naval deployments is also reflective of a more significant trend -- the declining strategic significance of the Mediterranean. As submarine-launched missiles acquired much longer ranges, the need for the United States to deploy ships in the Mediterranean declined. Now, those ships can be

deployed in patrol areas in the Atlantic or Pacific oceans, much closer to American home waters. As a result, the Soviets no longer need to patrol U.S. ships in the Mediterranean. Moreover, for their part, the Soviets began moving their own submarines back into near-ocean deployments such as the Barents Sea.

This shift in military attitude was paralleled by what is probably an even more important shift in the attitudes of the political leadership, which I will only touch on tangentially. There is a tremendous amount of Kremlinological evidence that suggests that the post-Brezhnev leadership reacted strongly against his activist Third World policy and that they generally want to avoid risks and reduce exposure in weak Marxist-Leninist states (such as South Yemen). There is evidence that both Andropov and Gorbachev have taken very different positions on this issue from Brezhnev.

Another manifestation of these new trends in Soviet policy toward the Third World is reflected in the major personnel changes in the Central Committee bureaucracy that oversees Third World affairs. Boris Ponomarev, chief of the International Department, the traditional home of Stalinist hard-line ideologues, was replaced by Anatoliy Dobrynin, longtime Soviet ambassador to Washington. His chief deputy responsible for Third World affairs is Karen Brutents, who has a strong interest in the capitalist-oriented Third World. These and other personnel changes indicate that a concerted effort is underway to undercut bureaucratic support for the old policies of Third World activism.

### *Implications for the Middle East*

On both the political and military sides, there has been a clear reduction of Soviet interest in projecting power in the Third World. But when viewed in a purely

Middle Eastern context, that analysis seems flawed. Throughout the early 1980s, there has been a steady increase in the volume of Soviet arms sales to each of the Soviets' Arab clients – Syria, Iraq, Libya, and South Yemen.

In my view, though, there is no fundamental contradiction. Soviet interest in these countries was driven largely by factors that had little to do with Third World activism and power projection. Throughout this period, Moscow has been under intense pressure to earn hard currency. Arms sales are a very important component of overall Soviet hard currency earnings, amounting to about 15-20 percent of the total. With the exception of South Yemen, every one of those four countries paid cash for the weapons it received. And given the decline in the price of oil – exports of which normally constituted 70-75 percent of total Soviet hard currency earnings – arms sales are likely to play an even more prominent role in the future. But for the most part, they have an economic, not a political, significance.

In addition, support for Arab client-states must be viewed in terms of great power prestige. Regardless of its long-term strategic inclinations, a great power like the Soviet Union must maintain its prestige at all times. The Soviet Union must show that it is capable of supporting Syria in the face of an Israeli challenge, therefore Moscow was quick to re-equip the Syrian armed forces after the 1982 Lebanon War. Prestige and credibility are particularly important for a new leader like Gorbachev, who many viewed as lacking experience in foreign policy.

Lastly, when seen in a historical framework, it is clear that Soviet behavior in the region today is following a very familiar pattern, differing very little from the kinds of risks Moscow has been willing to take on behalf of its Arab clients in the past. The pattern of Soviet risk-avoidance in the Middle East that was established in the early 1970s is fundamentally unchanged.



### *The Soviet Commitment to Syria*

Soviet risk-avoidance extends to scenarios of a potential Israeli-Syrian war. There are often rumors, usually emanating from the Arab world, that the Soviets have decided to raise their level of commitment to Syria in response to some incident or mini-crisis. But that is not likely to happen in the near future. It is difficult to see any enhanced Soviet commitment to Syria or any Soviet encouragement for Syrian adventurism. For all the reasons outlined above, it is clear that the Soviets' institutional interest in offering strong support to their Arab clients is on the decline.

There was nothing surprising, for example, about the Soviet shipment to Syria of SA-5 missiles. The SA-5 transfer was an attempt to compensate for having done virtually nothing to help either Syria or the PLO during the Lebanon War, when Soviet clients were being defeated by the Israelis. In that it involved the deployment of about 6,000-8,000 Soviet personnel to Syria, the SA-5 transfer can be considered a risky operation. But it is certainly not comparable in risk to the deployment of 20,000 air defense troops to Egypt during the War of Attrition.

In my opinion, Soviet behavior vis-a-vis potential Israeli-Syrian conflict has been fairly consistent: every time there has been a flare up of tensions and a possibility of war, Moscow has distanced itself from Damascus.

### *The Soviet Commitment to Libya*

Compared to Syria, Libya is a much less important client for the Soviets. Moreover, given its geographical distance, it is far more difficult to support. Therefore, the transfer of SA-5 missiles to Libya in December 1985 should

not be seen as a strategic move by Gorbachev, but rather as only a signal that he is not without some cards in the Middle East game. When the Soviets were face-to-face in actual confrontation with the Americans during the Sixth Fleet exercises in the Gulf of Sidra and during the airstrikes against Tripoli, they were extremely cautious. As far as I am aware, the Soviets had no responsibility for the actual launching of the SA-5s against the American aircraft. They did not even leave their cantonment areas. In terms of electronic intelligence and communications, the Soviets didn't do much at all for the Libyans. They clearly wanted to stay out of that conflict and that attitude is not likely to change.

### *Conclusion*

In the end, the message is mixed. On the one hand, the Soviets are preoccupied with important domestic issues, chief of which is the modernization of their economy. As a result, they will probably not seek new opportunities to use military power and will avoid those areas where risk of conflict is high. On the other hand, the Soviet Union remains a great power with a great power's interest in prestige and credibility. As such, the Soviets will not abdicate their role in the global competition with the U.S. The most probable conclusion is that Soviet behavior over at least the next five year period is likely to fall within familiar parameters. It is highly doubtful that any precedents will be broken in their use of force in the Third World in general, and the Middle East in particular.

## NATO and the Eastern Mediterranean

by *Edward Luttwak*

The responsibility of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is to protect the territories of its member countries. Therefore, in the confrontation with the Soviet Union, the focus has always been on territorial defense, even if the means were, in part, non-territorial.

In that respect, the Eastern Mediterranean area is a case of obvious and acute vulnerability for the Alliance. NATO's border in Greek Thrace delimits a long and narrow panhandle extending from Greece to Turkey and below Bulgaria, having no strategic depth. Bulgaria controls the hills; Greece holds the coastal plain. There are very few lines of communication sideways, and those that exist can easily be interrupted by airpower or ground incursions. As a result, a ground defense of Thrace against a Soviet attack has always been considered impossible unless a great deal of additional force were introduced. In the 1950s, much American planning was focused on landing marine forces in Thrace in order to form enclave defenses. Of course, there was a great deal of reliance in those days on airpower coming from the Sixth Fleet.

### *Greece and Turkey*

For reasons which have very little to do with NATO, the Greeks have been spending a fair amount of money on defense. In fact, Greek military expenditure is the highest in NATO as a percentage of the gross national product. Greek GNP fared fairly well until recently, and as a result, the Greek armed forces have been rather well funded. But they still have not been able to overcome a fundamental geographic disadvantage.

In contrast to Greece, Turkey has not kept up steady growth in its military expenditures. Although the Turkish army remains very large, it became increasingly obsolete during the 1960s and 1970s; modernization has been slow since. For example, it was only quite recently that the Mauser bolt-action rifle ceased to be Turkey's first-line infantry weapon. The effects of the lack of funding, either from domestic sources or from U.S. assistance, have been felt most acutely in the air force. The Turkish air force is now receiving new aircraft, namely F16s. The only previous modernization over the last 20 years was the transfer from Italy of F-104s Starfighters – an obsolescent, 1950s aircraft with some upgraded avionics.

#### *Declining Power of the Sixth Fleet*

From the start, the Sixth Fleet was meant to serve as compensation for these weaknesses. But there too, power trends have been very negative over the last two decades. In absolute terms, the Sixth Fleet's power has increased. As before, two aircraft carriers are normally on station. But they are larger, on average, than before, and the aircraft on them are much more powerful. However, because more aircraft on those carrier decks are now needed to protect the aircraft carrier itself, the net capacity of the Sixth Fleet to provide airpower for land combat has, in fact, declined.

The *USS Nimitz*, for example, has 90-plus aircraft. Of these, 24 F-14s are needed for air defense; 10 S-10s are needed to protect the carrier from medium-range submarine attack; 10 helicopters are needed for close-in ASW self-protection; other aircraft, including helicopters, are reserved for tasks such as picking pilots out of water; and the EA-6B electronic warfare aircraft are employed to support the anti-bomber defense and are not freely available for offensive tasks. In the final analysis, a huge 90,000-ton aircraft carrier today yields only about 34 attack

aircraft; of these, usually, only 26-28 are operational. So while the absolute power of aircraft carriers have increased, their net power has declined.

Viewed in context of the other sorts of airpower operating in the Eastern Mediterranean today, the real decline of the aircraft carrier has been even more severe. The relative increase in the airpower of the littoral states of the Mediterranean has been significant. Thirty years ago, the airpower on the deck of a single aircraft carrier could absolutely dominate the airpower of a country like Syria. Today, it could be said that *two aircraft carriers* were deemed inadequate to carry out a minor reprisal raid against Libya.

The current situation, therefore, is one in which the global phenomenon of the expansion of third-party military power is manifest in the Eastern Mediterranean in a very acute way. At the same time, the special importance of the Sixth Fleet for the defense of Greece and Turkey – due to the geographic vulnerability of Thrace and the historic inadequacy of Turkish air and naval power – remains undiminished.

### *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Central Front*

Permit me to underline one aspect of a theme which both Frank Fukuyama and Jim Roche argued in different ways: regardless of the political orientation that may be dominant in Moscow, Soviet military power has been converted from what might be called an inventory of strength to a state of operationalized strength during the last two decades. This is manifest, for example, in the creation of the TVD theater-scale war headquarters. Today, the Soviets maintain an operational war headquarters for the Southwest Theater Command in Vinnitsa, in the

Ukraine.\* Those headquarters are run by staff officers who spend their days planning offensives against Turkey and beyond. Regardless of the political reality that might obtain, they are busily engaged in working out operational scenarios (such as, "How do we penetrate to Salonika?"). Historically, this sort of reality has at least conditioned political decisions, if not, in fact, driven them.

NATO's acute military vulnerability in the southern region looks much less frightening when viewed in light of the broader NATO defense against the Eastern bloc. That is due to the fact that the main front is in the center, from the Baltic to the Austrian border, with Greece and Turkey forming only secondary fronts. From a strictly military point of view, Soviet efforts against the flank would not make sense because a victory on the central front would give them the southeast front for free. In contrast, whatever happens on the southeast front does not really affect the central front. The front on which they have to win is the central front and a victory on the southeast front cannot change that.

But this is a purely military analysis, one that excludes the dominant dimension of any such confrontation, which is, of course, political. A full analysis of the relationship between the two fronts must take into account the impact that events in Greece and Turkey in the first phases of a conflict would have on a political decision in the central front.

If the West German government faced an imminent Soviet invasion following a devastating defeat of NATO forces in Greece and Turkey, what would it do? It might say, "Well, Bismarck already taught us that these areas are not worth a single grenadier, so who cares, the

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\* Interestingly, Vinnitsa was also the site of the German Army Group South until late 1943.

Americans will still fight and die for us. Therefore, we should stand and fight." Or, depending on the scenario, they might say, "Gee, this is serious. We were in this game for deterrence. Deterrence broke down. Now we have to make new arrangements. Americans, please, take your troops elsewhere, or at least do not use nuclear weapons." In other words, from a strictly military point of view, Soviet efforts against the Greece/Turkey sector should not contribute to an overall victory. From a political point of view, however, the situation on the southeast front might have a great impact on the overall conflict.

We are now dealing, of course, with the sort of meta-reality of "great wars" which have only become possible because we are unconsciously and inadvertently stumbling into what is an emerging postnuclear world. When it becomes almost an accepted notion that nobody is actually going to use nuclear weapons, old-fashioned military realities will slowly manifest themselves once again in day-to-day political life.

### *Greek and Turkish Strategy*

Moving from a regional analysis to the individual players, the first observation one makes is that the Turks differ from the Greeks because of their imperial past. The Turks have inherited from their imperial experience a cultural predisposition for strategic statecraft, evident in the fact that they virtually invented NATO. All kinds of people claim paternity for NATO, but the Turkish claim has a special validity. Turkish conduct between 1944 and 1946 is an example of the maximum that diplomacy can ever achieve. Turkey had not been unfriendly to the Allies, but it had done its main business with the Germans during the war. As a result, by 1944 the State Department was after Turkey in a very hard way because of its trade with Germany.

By 1946, Turkish diplomacy in the United States had succeeded in bringing about such a turnaround in U.S. policy that the protection of Turkey had become a very high priority in Washington. The Turkish ambassador then culminated his wonderful diplomatic achievement by dying at the most propitious moment. His body was delivered to Istanbul on an American warship, the *USS Missouri*, a huge battleship built for, but not used in, World War II. The origins of the Sixth Fleet lie in the arrival of the *Missouri* in Istanbul in 1946, carrying the coffin of the Turkish ambassador.

What is Turkish strategy? In spite of Islamic pressures at home, the Cypriot issue and other frictions, the Turks will do their utmost to support and maintain NATO deterrence. But if deterrence fails, they will make other arrangements. It is not part of Turkey's plan for the Turks to die for the defense of the allies. They were willing to die in Korea, for example, to further the process of building up a strategic relationship with America, but they are not going to fight in Turkey for the alliance. Therefore, the Turks are very good about helping maintain deterrence in spite of their own serious problems, but if deterrence were to fail, they would quickly fall out of the NATO alliance.

Greek conduct is just the opposite. As a result of their tradition of being a dominated, not a dominating, state, they are incapable of strategic statecraft. They are now bent on demoralizing, subverting and undermining deterrence in every way possible. Three years ago, for example, the NATO Defense College had an exercise in which NATO officers were asked to examine political scenarios involving a coup. Those officers decided to use Greece as their test case because actual data was available from a Greek coup. The Greek government replied by withdrawing its officers from participating in the NATO Defense College. Greek senior officers, who were reaping great benefit from attending the Defense College, no longer do so. Similarly, the famous Aegean air defense issue remains unresolved. Because of symbolic issues that



do not in fact define sovereignty, NATO's Aegean air defense control zone simply does not function.

But, conversely, if Greece were threatened, the Greeks would fight to defend their land *and* the NATO alliance. Having tried to undermine and sabotage deterrence, Greece would fight.

### *U.S.-Soviet Conflict and the Israeli Factor*

Questions about how the Greeks and Turks would actually participate in war are only relevant in the context of the possible, but improbable, "great war." A more salient context is that of a U.S.-Soviet bilateral crisis. Frank Fukuyama's analysis suggests that the likelihood of that sort of crisis is diminishing. I certainly concur with what he says, with one modification: in my opinion, there has been an abandonment of Soviet *ideological* interest in the Third World just for the sake of the worldwide success of socialism, as they call it. Rather, the Soviets have decided to switch their priorities to the pursuit of *businesslike* relationships.

The Soviets are certainly very interested in Nicaragua, for example, because of the tremendous strategic payoff of that relationship. And the Soviets maintain an interest wherever they can still sell weapons. Where it is practical to have a relationship – in India, for example – they will pursue it.

The U.S.-Israel relationship is very important in the context of a U.S.-Soviet bilateral crisis. It is not necessary to catalog all the different ways in which the reality of Israeli military power, with or without any active or overt cooperation with the United States, would influence a U.S.-Soviet bilateral conflict. The implicit aspects are clear; the extent of possible active cooperation can be visualized.

There have already been some minor episodes. There could be more.

But to the extent that U.S.-Soviet bilateral conflicts arise because of Israel-caused or Israel-related crises, Washington does not look at the relationship as a plus. To say that Israel is a big help to the United States doesn't impress anybody in Washington if the only reason why the United States needs help is because of Israel in the first place.

### *The Soviet Army and the Mediterranean*

It is important to keep in mind the fact that even a retrenching Soviet Union is never going to retrench from its primary sphere of European interests. And even a retrenching Soviet Union will still be interested in access to the Mediterranean. We all laugh when people cite Catherine the Great or Peter the Great saying something about the need for access to the Mediterranean. The fact remains that that Soviet interest persists and we cannot forget about the fundamental problem of the vulnerability of NATO's southern flank.

In that context, neither the Soviet Navy nor the Soviet Air Force, despite its transformation into a very capable strike air force, is the main threat. Rather, we are dealing primarily with the Soviet Army, the single greatest factor in the worldwide military balance. So please don't laugh when NATO generals worry about the Vinnitsa headquarters directing tank mechanized divisions across Bulgaria to attack Thrace, for example.

The fundamental reality of the Soviet threat is not really a naval problem but rather the ground problem, and it affects not specifically this corner of the Eastern Mediterranean but its northern shore. That is where

NATO was born; that is where its problems really began;  
and that is where they remain unsolved till now.



*PART II*

*Instability in the Eastern Mediterranean Rim*

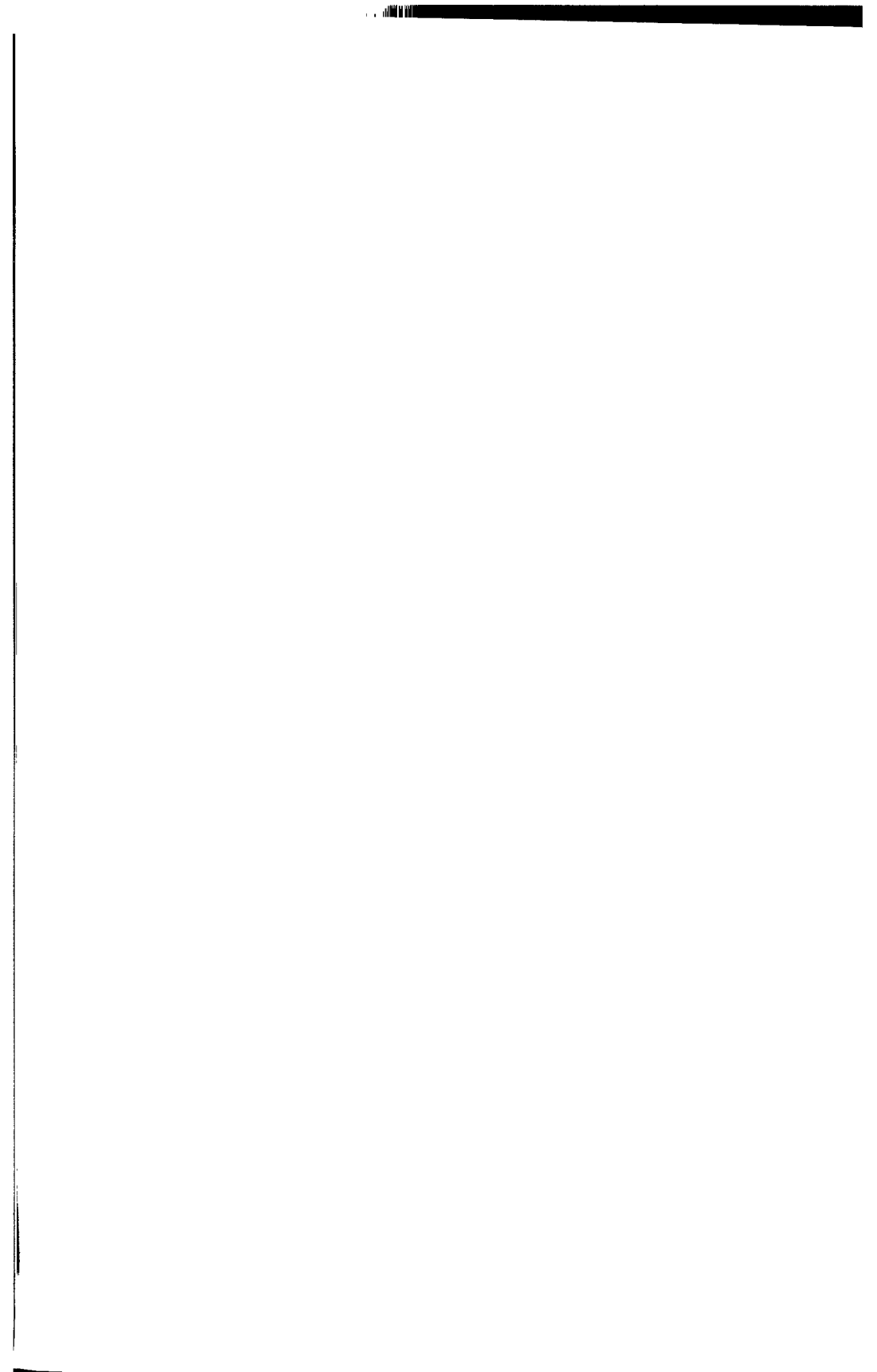
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## A Regional Overview

by Aharon Yariv

To assess the strategic threats to stability in the Eastern Mediterranean rim, it is best to divide the region into three parts: those countries with which the United States maintains strategic ties: Egypt, Israel and Jordan; the Soviet Union's main client, Syria; and, lastly, Lebanon, which cannot even be called a state at present.

Except for Lebanon, there are no immediate threats of instability facing the other rim countries. Certainly, problems remain, such as the fundamental socioeconomic crisis in Egypt, the Palestinian-Jordanian tension in the Hashemite Kingdom and the internal divisions inside Israel. But in strategic terms, at least, immediate instability seems on the horizon only in Lebanon.

At the same time, however, a *potential* for internal and external instability exists as a portent throughout the region.

### *Internal Situations*

#### *Lebanon*

Lebanon stands out from the rest because it lacks any effective government. Somehow, many government tasks are being fulfilled. Salaries are paid, for example, and the currency is maintained. But these functions are accomplished in spite of the absence of a government able to exercise any executive authority.

The Lebanese Army is divided among the various ethnic communities, with individual brigades belonging to different ethnic groups. This is the peculiarly Lebanese answer to the problem of maintaining a national army

while at the same time assigning that army the task of combatting ethnic militias. Another fact which must be recalled in any discussion of Lebanon is that it also plays host to the largest Palestinian community in the world.

In this unhappy country, there is no end in sight to the decade-old pattern of people killing each other. Though Syria is the predominant influence, it does not exercise full control. Syria's traditional policy has been to influence internal politics by pitting ethnic community against ethnic community, in the hope of achieving as much balance as possible. But until a balance is found in which each of the communities considers itself relatively safe in both a political and a physical sense, fighting will continue. And no such balance appears in sight.

### *Syria*

While there are many problems facing Hafiz al-Asad, there are two fundamental threats to the stability of the Syrian regime. First, Syria is in the throes of a critical economic situation, which may even force the government to re-examine its military build-up policy. Second, the absence of an orderly process of succession inside Syria may prove to be the greatest danger to the continued maintenance of the regime. The scramble for power that surrounded Asad's serious illness in 1983 shows not only that there is no agreed-upon successor to Asad but also that there is no accepted process by which to choose one. In those circumstances, the regime established by Asad over his 16-year rule could well collapse with his passing.



## *Egypt*

Egypt faces only one major threat to its internal stability in the long-run -- a demographic and socioeconomic problem. Basically, the danger lies in Egypt's increasing inability to feed, clothe, educate, and employ an ever-increasing population. Egypt's population grows by about one million persons every nine months; by the late 1990s, that period will be cut to about one million every five months. Egypt has to make great strides just to maintain the current level of maintenance for its huge population. Against this framework, there are any number of potential scenarios for internal instability.

## *Jordan*

During my long tenure as Director of Military Intelligence, each year we would report in the Annual Intelligence Estimate that "one of the threats to Israel's security is a deterioration in the Jordanian situation that might lead to war." That has not happened. Despite all his difficulties and opponents, the King has survived.

Nevertheless, it would be an error to overlook the serious problems that do face the Kingdom. First, Jordan is undergoing a worsening economic situation, largely as a repercussion of plummeting oil prices. Second, the tensions created by Palestinian consciousness within a Jordanian political entity still exist. Although it is said that many of the Palestinians identify with the Jordanian regime, the extent of that identification must, in my view, depend on certain circumstances and cannot be considered a constant. Therefore, the potential for instability inside Jordan cannot be ruled out.

## *Israel*

Despite the internal crises, political divisions and economic problems facing Israel, none of them – either at this time or in the foreseeable future – present a major threat to the internal stability of the state.

### *The West Bank and Gaza*

Despite nearly 20 years of Israeli control, in which there have been numerous incidents, clashes and collisions between Palestinians and Israelis, the administered territories have never witnessed the major crisis that many feared would occur. This relative calm has not come to pass by accident. Rather, it stems from the fact that the Palestinians in the administered territories adhere to their belief in the importance of steadfastness, *sumud*, because they assume that what the Israelis want is enough instability to legitimize Israel's expulsion of the Palestinians from the land. In that case, the tragedy of 1947, as they view it, will reoccur. Therefore, in order to forestall such a calamity, the Palestinians have decided to reject violent confrontation and adhere to a strategy of survival on the land until the day comes when the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians will be recognized.

Nevertheless, it would be myopic to contend that no potential for instability exists at all. The mere fact that Israel controls more than one million Palestinians, who lack Israeli citizenship and who resent Israeli control, creates a ready potential for instability, especially should *sumud* cease to be the operative strategy for the majority of the residents of the territories.

## *External Relationships*

### *Egypt-Israel*

Egypt is still the only Arab state with which Israel has signed a peace treaty. It is a "cold" peace that resembles nonbelligerence more than peace. The Egyptian media, for example, are very bitter and vitriolic toward Israel, sometimes printing blatantly antisemitic articles and cartoons. But what is beyond doubt is that Egypt is not in a state of war with Israel, and that situation should remain stable in the near future. Not only are the Egyptians tired of war, but the country's economic problems, its close relationship with the United States, and the nature of its relations with other Arab countries militate against Egypt's rejoining the war camp. At the same time, it is in Israel's best interests to do all in its power not only to prevent a deterioration of relations with Egypt, but also to ensure that everything be done to improve them.

### *Jordan-Israel*

The difficulties in proceeding down the diplomatic route with Jordan are well-known, and were played out in full view during the 1985 "peace process" effort. In the current circumstances, Israel is only left with the option of continuing its current policy of improving the situation in the territories in concert with Jordan. But in terms of our bilateral relationship with Jordan, there is no chance that the failure to engage Jordan in direct negotiations will result in any confrontation between our two states.

### *Jordan-Syria*

There is a long history of instability and conflict that marks the Jordanian-Syrian relationship. At the moment,

however, mutual animosity has subsided and there appears to be no special problem causing friction between them. In fact, a rapprochement has been achieved, just five years after the two countries massed their armed forces on the border and were on the brink of war.

That rapprochement, however, lacks any real strategic proportions, with each side pursuing an improved bilateral relationship for its own tactical reasons. Should either party decide to pursue its strategic interests via a different tactical route, Jordanian-Syrian instability could flare up once again. For example, there is a strong potential for confrontation between the two states if Jordan, in concert with Israel, were to attempt a political solution to the West Bank situation (with or without the Gaza Strip). That would invite a forceful Syrian reaction to upset the Jordanian-Israeli understanding.

### *Israel-Syria*

Although much has been written about the Israeli-Syrian relationship, it is useful to underscore a handful of factors on the military plane that promote the potential for instability and armed conflict.

- \* Israel controls the Golan Heights – a fact that Syria does not accept as unalterable.

- \* Syria has built up huge armed forces, with about 500,000 men under arms.

- \* Most of Syria's army is a standing force that relies only to a limited degree on the mobilization of reserves.

- \* Having evacuated the bulk of their forces from Lebanon, the Syrians can concentrate their *corps de bataille* between the Golan Heights and Damascus.

\* With the acquisition of surface-to-surface missiles, including the SCUD-B, the more accurate SS-21s and FROG rockets, Syria now has the ability to strike Israel in depth. Missile attacks in Israel's rear will be a serious blow to our population centers and will interfere with the process of military mobilization and deployment, striking at the heart of Israel's strategy of reliance upon a speedy call-up of reserves.

Taken together, all these factors create the potential for armed conflict between Israel and Syria. And an additional concern for those analyzing the possible arenas of conflict is terrorism emanating from southern Lebanon. A potential Syrian move into southern Lebanon might clash with Israel's interests there, raising the possibility of tensions between the two adversarial states. In my opinion, both Damascus and Jerusalem are well aware of this problem.

Assessing the chances for confrontation between Syria and Israel must take into account the wild card factor of Hafiz al-Asad. Syria will only embark on a war against Israel if Asad decides that the long-sought for objective of "strategic parity" has been achieved and that the time is propitious for war. But because Asad has often defined "strategic parity" as the search for political, economic, cultural as well as military balance with Israel, it is impossible to predict when such parity will be reached and, in Asad's mind, when war will become a viable option.

### *Israel-Palestinians*

The question of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship is bitterly debated within each community. At the moment, however, there is little prospect for any substantive progress on this issue.

Both the Israeli position and the PLO position have clear and well-defined limits and constraints. If one accepts the contention that Yasser Arafat was sincere in his attempt to rally the PLO to endorse UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, he was still unable to succeed in constructing a supporting coalition even from within that segment of the PLO still loyal to him. On the Israeli side, there is no political party – including the Labor Alignment – strong enough to make a statement declaring its approval of the Palestinian people's right for self-determination. Therefore, neither Israel nor the predominant Palestinian leadership is capable of taking the giant prerequisite step of recognition toward negotiations demanded by the opposing party. There is little likelihood of change in the foreseeable future.

### *Conclusion*

Except for Lebanon, the Eastern Mediterranean rim is in a state of relative stability. But there are factors – such as various internal problems of the region's countries and Syria's adherence to the principle of "strategic parity" with Israel – that may upset the current quiet.

## Islamic Fundamentalism: The Next Phase

by *Emmanuel Sivan*

Most analysts and journalists missed the mark in their coverage of Islamic fundamentalism. Over the past five years, when media coverage of Islamic fundamentalism grew into a cottage industry, fundamentalism itself was on the decline. In Egypt, for example, Anwar Sadat's assassination did not lead to the collapse of the regime. In Syria, the effort to establish a fundamentalist underground was crushed in Hama in February 1982. The list of failures also includes unsuccessful attempts to organize underground opposition inside Israel and within the West Bank and Gaza.

Today, after a long period of decline, in which virtually none of the fundamentalists' political aspirations were achieved, fundamentalism is once again on the rise.

### *Roots of Fundamentalism*

In order to understand the new resurgence of fundamentalism, it is important to understand why there was a resurgence a decade ago and why fundamentalism fell into relative decline. Most Western observers tend to overlook the banal fact that fundamentalism is a religious phenomenon. Most of them prefer to conceive of fundamentalism as some sort of social protest movement in disguise or some political movement operating under something called "political Islam." That is incorrect. First and foremost, fundamentalism should be taken at face value. "What you see is what you get" – at least you get what you see if you deal with the phenomenon in its own vocabulary, not in the translations and other variations of fundamentalist texts available in the West.

To begin with, fundamentalism is a cultural iceberg, with violence only at the tip. The much larger part of that iceberg is an effort to return major sectors of society (primarily urban society) to religion. Because Islam is a social religion that governs both public and personal behavior, it is only inevitable that fundamentalists would move into what we in the West call "politics".

That move was all the more inevitable given the new concept of "state" facing most Muslims today. Today's state is a highly interventionist, highly efficient (by Middle Eastern standards) nation-state, which is capable not only of repression but also of brainwashing an entire population in the name of its ideas, which are intrinsically secular. The state has assumed the role of principal agent of societal change, supplanting the voluntary religious organizations which once reigned supreme. Fundamentalism is a reaction against this phenomenon.

Some fundamentalists chose the path of violence, because they found their abilities to affect public life through traditional means very limited. They only chose violence because they thought that the situation was extreme, that it was "five minutes to midnight." The same story has been retold and reenacted in almost 30 Islamic states, in which there are about 400 various Islamic movements.

Fundamentalism's relative success in the mid-1970s, highlighted by the Islamic revolution in Iran, was helped by other phenomena. The economic structures of most populous, Islamic states could not absorb the huge rural-to-urban migrations of that period. Islamic movements not only offered socially dislocated migrants a sense of purpose, but they also offered a social infrastructure able to absorb them.

Very tightly linked to internal migration was the phenomenon of "the revolution of rising expectations" – a direct effect of the oil bonanza. Moving from the



countryside to the cities, with the necessary exposure to mass media and better education, the people's expectations of their own standard of living were raised. Similarly, Muslim dreams of Islamic solidarity fostered the belief that wealth would spill over from the rich to the poor.

These two phenomena are basically in the realm of perceptions: on the one hand, perceptions of people who moved from countryside to town or from provincial town to metropolis, and on the other hand, perceptions of the sense of strength and immense wealth of the Arab world. Together, it is not difficult to see why so many people had more grievances than in the past, at a time when in absolute terms the economic situation had improved.

To argue that the Islamic resurgence failed just because fundamentalist movements failed to seize power outside Iran is to judge fundamentalism by too limited a yardstick. This is an especially important point when examining policy implications of the fundamentalist trend in the Islamic world. Even though no additional fundamentalist movements control governments, they did force regimes to react to them – to choose between repression and cooptation; between the stick and the carrot. Despite political failure, in the absolute sense, fundamentalist movements have been remarkably successful at gaining cultural hegemony. That is, fundamentalists now shape the agenda of social debate.

If we speak about perhaps the most banal phenomenon, in almost every country that underwent an Islamic resurgence, the birthrate eventually increased. This even occurred in those three Islamic countries which had had very successful family planning campaigns – Indonesia, Pakistan, and Tunisia. A rising birthrate itself is not related to social or political protest, but as a long-term effect, it is something that the regimes must take into consideration.

Of more immediate concern is the role of fundamentalists in giving social grievances a religious connotation that could lead to political mobilization. The January 1977 food riots in Egypt are a good example. In short, the importance of the resurgence of Islam is that it limits the policy options of governments. When policy options are already limited, primarily due to economic reasons, then the further limitation imposed by the fundamentalists could render the situation acute.

### *Combatting Fundamentalism*

It is important to explain how some regimes have succeeded in dealing with the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. At a time when everybody was worried that regimes would be toppled, the regimes resolutely, resiliently and ingeniously succeeded in containing the threat. As mentioned above, they used both the carrot and the stick. The carrot does not refer just to refraining from draconian cost-cutting measures, which would have been exploited by the fundamentalists against the governments. Rather, the carrot also refers to launching propaganda campaigns in order to counteract the influence of these movements. These campaigns were targeted against educated youth – the most alienated part of the society, the part of the society in which the revolution of rising expectations hits worst.

The impact of government propaganda has been very significant. Coopting members of the fundamentalist movements by offering avenues of reform, especially in the cultural field, slowly succeeded in taking the wind out of at least some of the fundamentalists' sails.

As for the stick, governments were ready to use power – resolutely and ruthlessly – in order to quash every movement attaining violent proportions. Each state pursued its own style. The Hama style of Syrian President

Hafiz al-Asad is not the style used four years later by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak against the rioting, fueled in large part by pro-fundamentalist sentiment, of the Central Security Forces. That was evident in terms of the number of people killed in those two incidents - 20,000 in Syria but only 100 in Egypt. The difference in numbers is indicative of the degree of ruthlessness permitted in each society. Yet, even though the numbers in Egypt were relatively low, in Mubarak's mind the message was driven home.

Repression alone does not ensure success. Good intelligence is essential and many of these fundamentalist movements have been successfully infiltrated by government agents. Over the past five years, about 25 plots or underground groups have been exposed per year in Egypt, with about eight exposed per year in Tunisia. Those figures offer a glimpse of how active the relevant security services must be. Yet, there remain groups they do not uncover.

### *Immediate Prospects*

The current situation is marked foremost by the impact of declining oil prices. Most analysts would agree that the main effects of that decline are felt not in the rich countries, but rather among the poor countries, and especially among the more densely populated poor countries. Those countries are going to become fertile ground for the sort of grievances on which fundamentalist movements thrive.

Whether or not these conflicts degenerate into violence depends on the degree of misery in society and on the regime's success in coopting the fundamentalists. Simply banning all pornographic films and raiding "blue movie" video clubs will not be enough to take the steam out of a fundamentalist movement.

There is bound to be terrorism, primarily internal violence. For the most part, it will be Americans and Europeans that will suffer. Only in a place like Syria will Soviets be a target for fundamentalist terrorism, but they will only be minor targets. On the list of fundamentalist "Great Satans," the Soviets are a distant second to the Americans.

At this point, most analysts ask two questions which are far too facile and simplistic: "Can the fundamentalists elect a president? Where might they take power?"

The answer to the first question is obvious: fundamentalists cannot elect a president; they will take the presidency. As for the second question, the most likely spot for fundamentalist successes are in countries in which there is a solid base of resurgence already in existence and in which there is a rapidly worsening economic situation.

In order to safeguard against the revolution of rising expectations, Arab regimes have done a remarkably good job over the past year in explaining the economic situation to their subjects. In contrast to the flamboyant speeches of Fatah or the Shah about reaching the summit of world power via oil wealth, today's rulers are cutting popular expectations down to size.

But Arab economies may continue to worsen and begin to affect the individual to the extent that rulers are not able to simply explain it away. If compounded by a succession crisis at the top of the political order, then the internal situation would be ripe for a seizure of power by the fundamentalists.

This is the sort of situation that exists today in Tunisia, the most secularized of Arab countries. There is a succession crisis, together with a strong cultural resurgence movement, plus a rapidly declining economy. Syria is another case in which all the factors exist, but in

terms of a seizure of power by the fundamentalists, the Syrian case is much less likely.

To end on a somewhat more optimistic note, Egypt is one of the countries about which there can be less worry. The resilience of the Egyptian state is one of the most underestimated factors in Middle East politics. Not only is Egypt's resilience a millennial phenomenon, but it is a fact confirmed by recent history. Given the potential for instability that has plagued Egypt since the revolution, the new nation-state established by Nasser has a very impressive record in controlling the fundamentalist threat. So far Mubarak's record is only average, but unless he fails miserably, his leadership should be sufficient for Egyptian society.

## Political Aspects of Syrian Strategy

by *Itamar Rabinovich*

In late 1967, the well-known Swiss journalist Arnold Hottinger published an illuminating article called "War Psychosis as an Instrument of Policy." In that piece, Hottinger presented the strongest argument for Syrian domestic politics being a major reason behind the outbreak of the June 1967 war. At that time, the Ba'ath Party was already in power, but it had not yet consolidated itself. In those early years of Ba'ath rule, it was very difficult to differentiate between the domestic politics of Syria and the country's foreign or national security policy.

In 1970, the situation changed. For the first time in the modern history of Syria or in the history of independent Syria, a durable and effective regime was introduced. (Notice that I purposely refrain from using the word "stable.") For at least the period from November 1970-November 1983, one could depend upon the effectiveness of the Syrian regime. Decisions were taken by a very small group, often by just one person. One did not have to worry whether orders were being given by the headquarters in Damascus or by a rebellious officer at the front; one could always assume that the regime was acting in unison and implementing a well-conceived and centralized policy.

### *Effects of Asad's Illness*

In November 1983 the situation changed abruptly. For the first time in many years, domestic political elements became key factors in determining Syrian national security. Specifically, domestic factors became important ingredients in the decision of whether or not to launch war – either limited or full-scale – against Israel.

My thesis is that it would be an obvious error to consider just the domestic political element. Rather, there is a configuration of elements which affect a Syrian decision to wage war or to refrain from war. The three components of this configuration are: domestic factors; the regional policies of the Ba'ath regime, directed at both the inter-Arab rivalry and the conflict with Israel; and international dimensions.

The November 1983 change in internal circumstances was triggered by the serious illness and temporary incapacitation of President Hafiz al-Asad. As a result of Asad's absence from the political scene, internecine squabbling erupted among his chief lieutenants, reaching a stage at which shots were fired between two well-armed camps. Finally, in the spring of 1984, Asad recovered physically and gradually reconsolidated his political control.

November 1983 was not the first time that Asad's Syria suffered regime instability. As mentioned above, it would be an error to have regarded the Syrian regime between 1970-1983 as stable. A regime that was forced to face the onslaught of the Muslim Brotherhood and other fundamentalist groups for five years (1977-82), and that had to contend with an open rebellion in the major cities of Syria in 1973, could hardly be called stable. What was new were the new elements that were introduced into the process of state decision-making during the period of Asad's incapacitation. Among those was the new issue of factionalism.

One of the major reasons for the durability and effectiveness of the regime between 1970-83 was the almost complete lack of factionalism. Of course, there were occasional struggles for power; individuals had their "day in court" and then disappeared. Naji Jamil would be an excellent example. For a while, he ranked second only to Asad in the regime. But Asad probably does not like

people marked as "number two," and, like other fallen stars, Naji Jamil had to go.

Yet through all those years, no factions arose, a situation that prevailed until 1983. Today, however, political factions do exist, and Asad himself has no longer been successful in remaining above the fray. A perfect illustration of Asad's contamination by factionalism is the September 1986 *Der Spiegel* interview with Mustafa Tlas and the question of the return of Rifa'at Asad to Syria soon thereafter. When Tlas declared "we will not tolerate" Rifa'at's return, he was targeting his words not just at Rifa'at but, at least by implication, at Hafiz as well. That situation was indicative of the new kind of domestic politics that began to operate inside Syria after November 1983.

### *Regional Issues*

On the inter-Arab level, Syria's aim is to establish its position as a senior Arab state on a par with Egypt and Iraq. Those who attribute to Asad a desire to be the new Nasser, the leader of the Arabs, misread him. Asad is a very shrewd and realistic man. He knows that Syria cannot be the preeminent state of the Arab world; he cannot be the leader of all the Arabs; he cannot be what Nasser had been. But he certainly wants Syria to be *among* the leaders of the Arab world.

The 1973 October War was a traumatic experience for Asad. Syria was treated as a second-rate state both by the superpowers and by Egypt, and Asad vowed that he would never permit that to happen again. Since then, Asad has gone a long way toward his goal.

Syria's seniority in the Arab world is based on its military superiority over weaker Arab neighbors, namely, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. In this context,



Asad seeks hegemony. Therefore, any challenges to that hegemonic position – either in Lebanon, in Jordanian-Israeli negotiations or in the conduct or personality of Yasser Arafat – are unacceptable. Asad would be willing to go to great lengths in order to assert and maintain the hegemony and supremacy that he has already achieved.

With regard to Israel, Asad does not totally reject the notion of a settlement. In theory, the Ba'ath Party in 1975 accepted the idea of a phased settlement in the context of the Kissinger negotiations. That policy statement has never been repudiated. But Asad must know that his concept of a settlement is not feasible, that it is acceptable to neither the United States nor Israel, and that it is not going to be the basis for negotiations. Therefore, if Asad wants to regain the Golan Heights, he will have to do so by force, either by liberating the whole territory or by launching a limited operation that would lead to something akin to his concept of negotiations.

Asad maintains a strong element of personal commitment toward the Golan. As Minister of Defense in 1967, he was nominally in charge of the war effort. After the war, he was accused, in internal Syrian debates, of being responsible for the loss of the Golan, and he is denigrated by Arab enemies and critics for this. Most recently, at the March 1986 funeral of Nablus Mayor Zafir al-Masri, the mourners ridiculed him by chanting (in Arabic) *Asad fi-al-Lubnan, Arnab fi-al-Golan*, which, translated loosely, labels him "the Lion of Lebanon and the Chicken of the Golan." Asad is haunted by those chants and does not want to go down in history as a man who has not paid his dues to Arab history in this respect.

At the same time, however, the Golan Heights do not constitute a national problem for Syria to the same degree that the Sinai constituted a national problem for Egypt. From 1967 through the mid-1970s, regaining the Sinai was Egypt's number one priority. One could not turn a page and move to other items on the national agenda before the

question of Sinai had been dealt with. This is not the case with the Golan; regaining the Golan is not a problem of similar magnitude. It only becomes an issue of paramount proportions when other Arab states make progress with regard to their own lost territories. When Sadat was regaining Sinai, it was an asset for Asad to show that he was doing something equally successful with regard to the Golan. If King Hussein negotiates for the West Bank, the onus is on Asad to do something regarding the Golan. But if there is no movement on other fronts, then there is less pressure on him to act. Similarly, if another problem in Syria's foreign or national security policy takes precedence, then the Golan Heights is relegated to a secondary role, as happened in 1976 when Lebanon was at the forefront.

### *International Issues*

"Enemy" is not the proper word to characterize the Syrian concept of the U.S. relationship. "Antagonist" or "adversary" is more appropriate. There is a sense within the relationship that talking with each other is not only possible, but preferable. This perception is not just on the American side, but also on the Syrian side. Asad is determined to avoid total dependence on the Soviet Union. He knows that he must maintain open bridges with Washington if he is to maintain some independence of his own.

### *Examining Syrian Strategy*

Three examples – from 1973, 1976 and 1981 – illustrate how these various factors have worked in practice.

The decision to go to war in 1973 was determined primarily by considerations that concerned the bilateral

relationship with Israel. Namely, if Egypt was going to war in order to liberate part of the Sinai and asked Syria to join in the war effort, Syria had no choice but to agree. It is true that if Syria looked at the situation on the ground at the start of the war, it stood to reason that within 48 hours the Golan (or much of the Golan) could be taken by force. For the Syrians, the subsequent political negotiations seemed at the time to be of secondary importance. Regionally, the alliance with Egypt was very important in leading Syria to take its decision. International considerations were of secondary importance, and domestic factors were not relevant.

The 1976 case centers around the "Red Line Agreement" with Israel, a tacit and indirect understanding reached with the assistance of the United States. It was determined primarily by the regional situation, a feeling that the problem in Lebanon was so important that the Golan problem or the larger Israeli problem had to be relegated to a secondary position. Also, there was a feeling within the Syrian leadership that Syria could not win a war with Israel in 1976, nor could it emerge from a conflict with any measure of success.

International factors – namely, Syria's attitude toward the United States – were critical to the "Red Line Agreement." This was during the period of the famous Kissinger dialogue with Syria. At the time, Asad was determined to demonstrate to Washington that he was the effective power in Lebanon. For this, he was willing to risk his relationship with the Soviet Union. In fact, he ended up with an open rift with Moscow in the summer of 1976.

The third case concerns the period from the 1981 missile crisis to the onset of the Lebanon War in June 1982. Embarking on that war was not so much a Syrian decision as it was an Israeli decision. But what is especially interesting was Asad's miscalculation. Because of his later successes in 1983-84, the large number of newspaper articles on Asad has led to the growth of a

belief that he is a sort of superstatesman. Yet, there are many questions about his policies in 1981-82 that point toward a series of miscalculations on his part.

The 1981 missile crisis illustrates the meaning of strategic parity in the defensive sense of the term. After the sustained crisis of the years 1977-1980, Asad reached a point in early 1981 in which he felt confident about the strength of his rule. He had broken the backbone of the fundamentalists in Aleppo and concluded the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in October 1980. His military power had reached the level at which he felt that he had at least a defensive capacity vis-a-vis Israel. At that point, Asad decided that the Israeli challenge to him in Lebanon could no longer be tolerated. His response was the missile crisis. At the time, his calculation must have been: "if the Israelis decide to react, I have the capacity and the will to absorb their response." In my opinion, this demonstrates the meaning of strategic parity in the defensive sense.

### *Syria's War Option*

In dealing with the present situation, let me first consider the often-heard argument that the domestic situation in Syria has deteriorated so badly that Asad may resort to war just to offset the internal difficulties.

There are three elements to this assessment. First, proponents of this thesis point to the dire economic straits of the Syrian regime. While it is true that the regime does suffer from serious economic difficulties, I would argue that most states I know of do not go to war because of economic problems – and especially not Asad's Syria. The economic crisis may be important but it is only a background factor. Namely, the economic situation contributes to a domestic situation that may, at some point,

acquire an ominous configuration. But it is only a contributing factor, not a primary one.

Second, some argue that ill health has forced Asad to contemplate his possible disappearance from the stage of history and that he may want to complete his mission to regain the Golan Heights. He has two options, so the argument goes, to win back the Golan -- either by diplomacy or by war. Given current circumstances, only the war option is feasible.

Though this argument cannot be brushed away totally, too much weight should not be attributed to it because Asad must take into account the fact while he has control over how a war begins, he has no control over how it ends. The 1973 October War, which was his formative experience in many ways, taught him that it is virtually impossible to calculate how events will shape up after a war starts. At that time, Asad calculated he could launch an attack and achieve an impressive territorial gain in the first 48 hours, after which a ceasefire would go into effect. But there was no ceasefire and, as it turned out, the Soviets chose to support renegade Egypt rather than Syria. So if he thinks about his legacy, he also has to take into account the possibility that his legacy may be completely demolished by an ill-calculated war with Israel.

It is the third argument about the war option that must be taken most seriously, and that concerns that gradual loss of control and effectiveness with which the regime is increasingly being characterized. The abortive effort to blow up an El Al plane in London, which can clearly be tied to Syria, raises the question of a lack of control at the top. It has been argued persistently that it was Muhammad Khouli of Air Force Intelligence, or some other members of the intelligence community, that organized and implemented the El Al bombing attempt without Asad's knowledge. Asad has made no great effort to deny this version of events. This suggests that control may be lost.

### *Current Prospects*

If one looks at the other dimensions of the political configuration – the bilateral Syrian-Israeli relationship, the regional situation and the international setup – none of them leads us to the conclusion that war is imminent. The main variable is the domestic one, but there has yet to be a crisis inside Syria of such proportions to alter this assessment of the outlook for war.

Despite everything that has been said about the domestic dimension, it is my belief that the clue to the riddle is found in the bilateral Syrian-Israeli relationship. Namely, the decision to launch a war or refrain from a war rests first and foremost with Asad's own assessment of Syria's military standing against Israel and the prospects for success.

## Syria's Strategic Concept

by *Amos Gilboa*

Seven factors shape Syria's strategic security concept:

\* Syria is lacking in any coherent sense of "state," despite forty years of independence.

\* Syria is governed by a military elite.

\* Syria is engaged in a constant quest for leadership in the Arab world, with Egypt its foremost rival.

\* Syria is surrounded by strong and (from its point of view) hostile countries – Israel, Iraq, Turkey, plus the two weak flanks of Lebanon and Jordan.

\* Syria's principal adversary, Israel, has deployed its troops in forward positions just 60-70 kilometers from the Syrian capital. In my opinion, this is a very significant factor in Syrian thinking that is sometimes neglected by analysts both in Israel and elsewhere.

\* Syria is comfortable with the notion that national goals can be promoted by force, violence and/or the threat of the use of force.

\* Syria is ruled by a single man, President Hafiz al-Asad, whose personality combines a vision of grandeur on the one hand, with pragmatism on the other hand, marked by a mix of awesome manipulative power, wisdom and astuteness.

### *Fundamental Strategy*

Given these basic factors, Syria's strategy toward Israel is founded on the following two principles:

\* First, the main contest with Israel should be played out in the military sphere. Decisions on whether the contest takes the form of a single attack, a war of attrition or a war with many stages, for example, are only tactical and operational details that flow from the fundamental principle.

\* Second, diplomacy plays a subordinate role to the military effort and will always be secondary to it. Syrian strategy, therefore, is in sharp contrast to Egypt's strategy in 1973. For Sadat, the Suez crossing was a means to energize diplomacy; for Asad, diplomacy is only a means to prepare the best possible conditions for war.

In principle, Syria's overall objective vis-a-vis Israel is either to regain all of the Golan Heights in one military move or to achieve such military gains on the ground that Israel will be compelled to give up the Golan Heights without any peace agreement or, in other words, without any Syrian political concession to Israel. This is also the exact opposite of the Egyptian concept.

But while regaining the Golan is a Syrian national goal, it is not an immediately pressing goal. It is not at the top of the list of Syrian national priorities, at least not for the moment. Syria is able to maintain a constant state of belligerence without actually going to war, because it is an ideological state that has no sense of urgency about fulfilling its long-term goals. In Syrian thinking, time – including the time necessary to prepare for the military confrontation with Israel – should be measured in the long term. What symbolizes this most vividly is the picture in Asad's office of the Battle of Hittin, in which the Caliph Saladin defeated the Crusaders. Asad views himself as the contemporary Saladin and the Zionists as the modern-day Crusaders. In Asad's mind, time is on his side.

While not pressing for a military conflict with Israel, it is still Syria's objective to torpedo any diplomatic moves initiated by Israel or by other Arabs. Syria's absolute



rejection of any political conciliation with Israel is necessary to legitimize the overall strategy of confrontation and to delegitimize Egypt's strategy of negotiations and coexistence. This is at the root of the well-known Syrian obstructive approach, which manifests itself in Syria's "no" policy: "no" to the 1975 Second Israel-Egypt Disengagement Agreement, "no" to the 1978 Camp David Accords, "no" to the 1983 Israel-Lebanon Peace Treaty, "no" to the Reagan Plan and "no" to the 1985 Hussein-Arafat Confederation Accord. In light of this pattern, one could argue that Syria's obstructive approach is reactive, not active.

### *Dealing with Moscow and Washington*

Another corollary of Syria's basic strategy is its reliance on the superpower that can best assist it to promote the war effort. This superpower, of course, is the Soviet Union. On this point, too, there is a huge difference between Syria and Egypt. When Sadat decided to opt for the political effort, he shifted strategic orientation from the Soviet Union to the United States. It was almost a prerequisite to pursuing the political/diplomatic route, because only the United States is capable of brokering a political process.

With Syria, this is not the case, because a military prize – not a political one – is Damascus' top priority. It is self-delusion to believe that Syria will shift orientation from the Soviet Union to the United States. In Syrian thinking, the United States is regarded as an enemy, but the sort of enemy with which relationships should be developed. Syria believes that it should offer all sorts of temptations and blandishments to the United States in order to weaken U.S. military assistance to Israel and to neutralize Israel from taking the military initiative against Syria.

### *Strategy in Operation*

Despite Syria's belief in the use of force, actual Syrian behavior has proven to be very pragmatic and cautious. These are features which fit well with Asad's own character. In practice, direct force is used only under three conditions: when vital national interests are at stake, when no other reasonable alternative exists, or when success is virtually assured.

In 1973, for example, Syria joined in the coalition with Egypt because Asad believed he could take the Golan Heights. In 1976, Syria invaded Lebanon because Asad believed there were no options left with which to solve the Lebanese problem. At the time, Asad also deluded himself into believing that success was assured, which he also believed when he decided to introduce missiles in the Beka'a Valley in 1981.

As long as the Syrians can employ proxies with no major risk, they will employ them. With respect to using force, Syria is ready to go to brinkmanship, but whenever a counterforce is posed against them, they refrain from crossing that line.

In the early 1970s, for example, Israel and Syria were engaged in a kind of war of attrition. The moment Israel reacted harshly and forcefully to some Syrian action, Damascus immediately put a halt to operations. And in early 1977, after the Red Line Agreement between Israel and Syria was established in Lebanon, the Syrians violated one of the red lines by dispatching a force deep to the south of Lebanon. It was a very small force yet it was a test nonetheless, and the situation was very tense. Prime Minister Rabin threatened Syria with war, and they backed off. When Jordan posed a counterforce to Syria in December 1980, by deploying almost all the Jordanian

army along the border to confront the more than two divisions that Syria had placed there, Asad backed down.

### *Strategic Parity*

After the 1973 war, Syria changed its strategic concept. Asad's rift with Sadat in the wake of the battle led him to reconsider the coalition strategy. And when the Eastern Front idea collapsed under the weight of bilateral problems with Jordan, an alternative framework for Syria's confrontation with Israel had to be found. That framework is summed up in the concept of "strategic parity" – in essence, Syria's effort to "go it alone" in preparing for the inevitable confrontation with Israel. While Syria would certainly welcome the assistance of other Arab states, "strategic parity" no longer requires it.

But Syria faces severe constraints on its ability to pose a legitimate threat to Israel on its own. It is a poor country, politically and diplomatically isolated, suffering from sharp internal cleavages, limited financial resources and a poor technological infrastructure. The picture of Syria is that it is a country bearing a huge sword – the military – with an arm that is weak and slender.

Here is the crux of the problem: how long will this weak arm be able to bear the burden of such a heavy sword – an army of half a million people? How long can Syria and Asad sustain the constant tension between radicalism and pragmatism, the tension between the desire to initiate and provoke and the need to constrain and restrain? It is impossible to answer these questions, but Asad himself probably has no answers either.

So far, the tension has not exploded, largely due to Asad's own personality. Over the past 10-12 years, he has been successful in balancing the conflicting and competing elements in Syrian strategy. But that in itself

begs a separate question – namely, what happens inside Syria when Asad departs from the scene. Like the previous questions, that one is impossible to answer.

## In the Wake of Lebanon: Israel-Syria Military Balance

by *Ze'ev Schiff*

The reverberations of the 1982 Lebanon War extend far beyond tiny Lebanon. Although all battles were confined to Lebanese territory and air space, the war greatly affected the larger Middle East military balance.

The Israel-Syria component of the war had a profound impact on Damascus' outlook toward military planning, military aggrandizement, and policy toward achieving "strategic parity" with Israel. The war also influenced the Soviet response to Syrian requests for arms.

Specifically, Syria learned several lessons from the war that have since been incorporated into Syrian military plans and doctrine. When the war began in June 1982, the Syrians found themselves at a military disadvantage. Although it was convinced that Israel would act sooner or later against the PLO presence in Lebanon, Damascus had no clue as to the timing of the Israeli offensive. Consequently, the Syrians were caught totally by surprise when Israel did move and were completely incapable of coping with the IDF massed on both the Golan and Lebanese fronts.

Faced with this, the Syrians drew their first lesson: expand and strengthen the army. To that end, Damascus has, in four years, doubled its armored power, increased the number of maneuvering units, and built two corps headquarters, one for Lebanon and a second for the Golan Heights. In terms of armored units, the Syrian army has grown by almost 100 percent since the war.

The second lesson concerns Syria's defeat in the air at the hands of the Israel Air Force and the failure of Syria's air defense in the Bek'a Valley. In the wake of the war, Syria started a determined search for ways to deter Israel from extensive use of its air force. In order to achieve such

deterrence, the Syrians opted to balance Israel's air superiority with their own ability to pose a threat to Israel's rear through the use of long-range missiles.

For the first time, the Soviet Union agreed to add a strategic dimension to the Syrian missile capability. Syrians had missiles in their arsenal before 1982, when, in the wake of the war, Moscow provided Damascus with SAM-5s. SAM-5s gave Syria the capability to threaten Israeli aircraft taking off from most of the airfields in northern and central Israel. In addition, the SAM-5 is quite capable of coping with the electronic warfare features of Israeli aircraft, a problem which the Syrians have repeatedly cited in their war lessons. The Soviets have also furnished Syria with sea-to-sea missiles, including a version with range to reach several Israeli ports. These missiles are all in addition to the infamous SS-21s which Damascus has recently deployed.

Another aspect to the acquisition of long-range missiles that is especially disconcerting is in the area of unconventional weapons. For at least several years the Syrians have been producing poison gas. They have been able to proceed with their chemical warfare production program with the assistance of a number of Western countries, or at the least with the assistance of technology imported from Western countries. In light of the indifference of international public opinion to the massive use of poison gas in the Gulf War, the Syrians seem to have no compunction about their chemical warfare program. The chemical warfare danger assumes grave proportions when complemented by Syria's acquisition of strategic missiles, which provide the necessary delivery system to make chemical weapons operational.

Syria's third lesson derived from the Lebanon War was the decision to increase firepower. On land, the Syrians incorporated numerous modern tanks into their tank corps and added more units to their divisions. In the air, they added new aircraft, and they have already

signed an agreement to purchase the Soviet MiG-29. As for the Syrian navy, it is important to note that they have for the first time acquired two submarines.

### *Assessing the Balance*

It is necessary to place these changes in Syria's military posture in proper perspective when assessing their effect on the overall balance with Israel. Israel has learned from experience that weapons alone do not maintain the balance of power. There are other ingredients as well, specifically that the Syrians have to deal with sophisticated weapons system with a manpower pool that barely meets the demand for highly qualified technicians. Syria's military growth, therefore, is not limited by economic constraints alone, but manpower constraints, as well.

Syria's capacity to strike at Israel's depth should also not be overestimated. While Syria's ability to hit Israel's rear has certainly increased, it does not belong at the top of the list of threats that Israel faces. Missiles are painful and may cause problems early in a war, but missiles cannot win wars.

Rather than focus on the missile capability, Israeli planners should accord top priority to Syria's ability to surprise the IDF with a lightning strike on the Golan Heights. To take a slice out of the Golan, Syrian need only take Israel by surprise and then disrupt mobilization of the IDF's reserve units for 24-36 hours.

When discussing the possibility of a surprise in the Golan Heights, one also must take into account how the Syrian forces will operate in their opening moves. Judging from the structure of the Syrian army, there is no doubt that the Syrians attach special importance to airborne and commando units. With the recent purchase of about 300

helicopters, it is clear that the Syrians are working very hard to increase their lift power.

Another cause for Israeli concern is the defensive placement of land obstacles on both sides of the Golan Heights. One can conclude that difficulties in mobility and maneuver will be coupled with an unprecedented attrition of men and equipment. Any military move on that front will take its toll in blood and equipment.

How do these changes affect the balance of power between Israel and Syria? From the Syrian point of view, it is clear that both Syria's defensive and offensive capacities have grown since 1982. But it is also clear that Syria cannot be confident of victory if it engaged in war with Israel. With its new offensive capacity, Syria is now able to capture a part of the Golan Heights, provided that the IDF is taken by surprise. But the quality gap between the two armies still exists.

In short, four years after the start of the Lebanon War, neither Syria nor Israel is in the optimum strategic posture. For Damascus, the objective of strategic parity is still unfulfilled and Israel's supremacy has not been eliminated. For Jerusalem, the IDF's traditional military advantage has been reduced and its freedom of action has been constrained.



*PART III*

*U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation*

Yitzhak Rabin

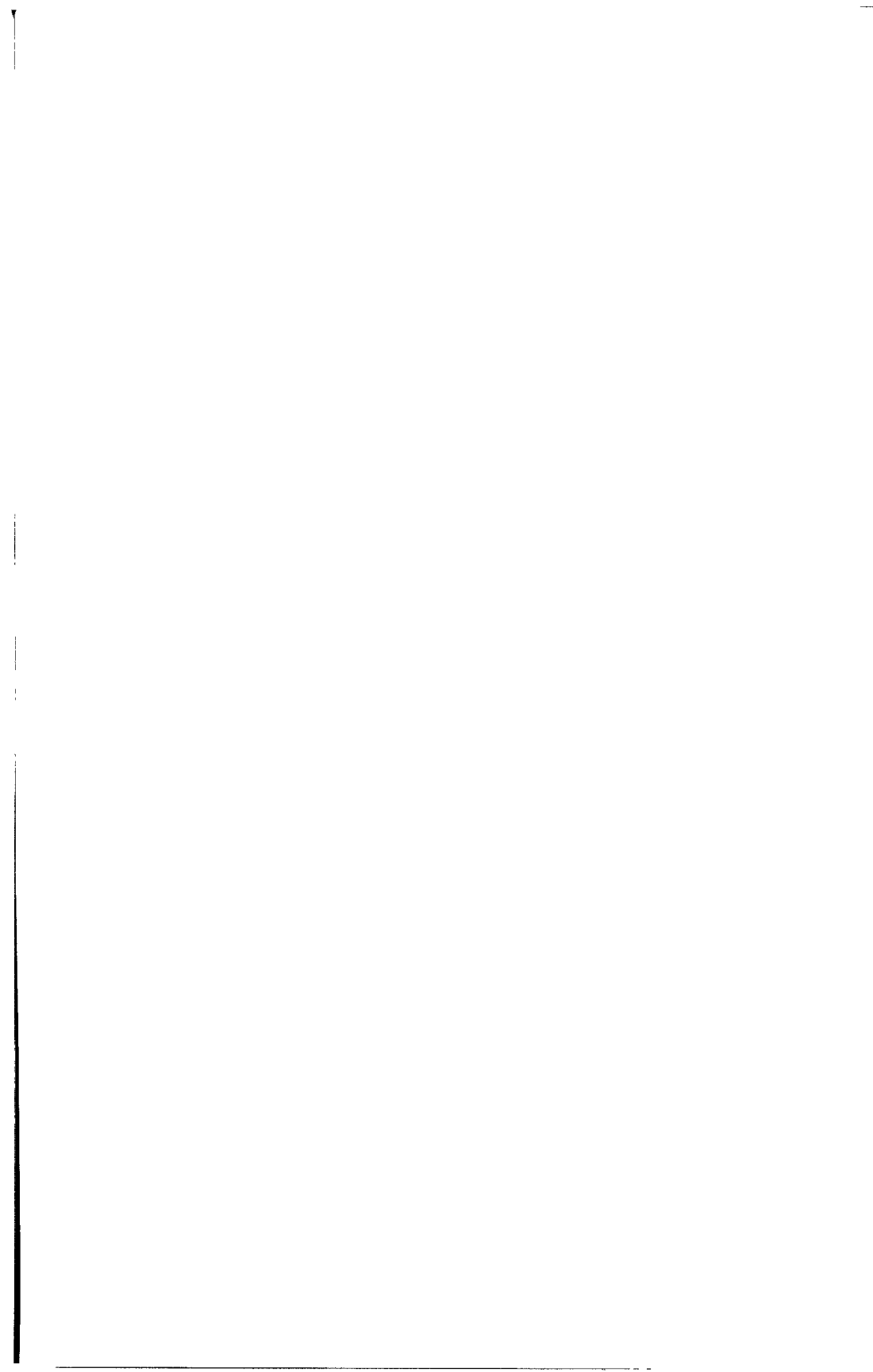
*The Principles of the U.S.-Israel Relationship*

Samuel Lewis

*An American Perspective on Strategic Cooperation*

Menachem Meron

*An Israeli Perspective on Strategic Cooperation*



## The Principles of the U.S.-Israel Relationship

by *Yitzhak Rabin*

The relationship between the United States and Israel is a unique story. I do not believe that there are many stories of relationships between two countries that are geographically so distant and so different in size, population and character. Israel is a small country that is concerned with its own region; America, of course, is a superpower. The story of this relationship, which has grown so far in the last 38 years, is a story that should serve as a lesson for countries the world over.

No one can relate our relationship with the United States just to coincidence of temporary interests. There is much deeper meaning in the relationship between our two peoples and two countries. Indeed, the more time passes, the stronger our relations grow. Improving U.S.-Israel relations has been the policy of every American administration over the last 38 years, and it is a bipartisan policy on which there is no disagreement among the American people. I have to pay tribute to the present administration – to President Reagan, Secretary of State Shultz, and Congress – for the way that they have supported and strengthened the relationship.

### *Roots of the Relationship*

The basis for the strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel cannot be explained in a simple way. A series of layers have together created a solid basis for a prolonged common strategy and for a fundamental understanding between the superpower, the United States, and the small country, Israel.

The first layer is not related to governments, but deals instead with what is common between the two peoples –

the belief in freedom, democracy and peace. Though it might sound strange, I believe that shared values between two peoples are the strongest and most solid basis for cooperation in this troubled world.

Having served Israel for five years as ambassador to the United States, I learned a great deal about the American people. I will never forget traveling all over the United States and finding, in various places, different ways of identification with Israel. In 1969, I was invited to a Southern Baptist church in New Orleans to deliver a speech in front of about 13,000 people. The only three non-Christians there were the Israeli consul-general, a representative of the Jewish National Fund and myself. The occasion was the contribution of a quarter of a million dollars for the planting of the Southern Baptist Church forest near Nazareth. For me, as an Israeli, to find such support – albeit from their own religious perception – was overwhelming.

The second layer concerns the superpower rivalry in the Middle East, which is today a major scene of regional competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Among the goals of the United States is an effort to end the Arab-Israeli conflict, and thus bring about a new era in the region. When Arab countries turn to the Soviets, however, they do not think in terms of economic and social progress. Those that turn to the Soviets are in search of weapons to support extremist positions.

Who turns to the Soviet Union today? There is Syria, Libya, Southern Yemen and Iraq. Iraq today seeks Soviet help because of its war with Iran; in the past, Iraq sought Soviet help because of its war with Israel. After the end of the war with Iran, it will again direct its efforts against Israel. All those countries maintain a philosophy of nonacceptance and nonreconciliation with the very existence of Israel as an independent Jewish state, regardless of its boundaries.

The more moderate Arab countries would like to see an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict so they can then focus on the real problems facing their people. President Sadat realized that Egypt's real enemy was not Israel but the domestic problems of the Egyptian people. In order to fight those problems, he turned his political orientation from the Soviet Union to the United States. Those who wish to put an end to war and establish peace with Israel must turn from a pro-Soviet policy to a pro-American one. This is because the Soviets' main interest is to maintain tension in the region, to fish in the troubled waters of the Middle East.

### *A Common Strategy for Peace*

Real strategic understanding between the United States and Israel was achieved in the aftermath of the Six Day War. The same principles have been followed by our two countries since, constantly adapting to changing situations.

First and foremost, we reached an agreement not to withdraw from the lines that were reached as a result of our military victory without a *political* solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since 1967, never has any American administration – Republican or Democratic – asked Israel to budge one inch for nothing. Translated into policy, the United States promised to assist Israel through selling military hardware, providing financial support, and using its veto power to prevent the United Nations Security Council from taking any decisions that could harm Israel. For its part, Israel has taken upon itself all the risks of war and terror.

This strategy has worked, though unfortunately, we had to experience another war – the Yom Kippur War – to prove it correct. In coordination with Syria, President Sadat succeeded to surprise us. But without the assistance of the

United States, he would have failed to achieve his ultimate goal of embarking on a course of political negotiations.

During my term in Washington as ambassador, I remember Henry Kissinger saying, "Together we have to prove to the Arabs that the way to achieve a political solution is via Washington and not via Moscow." The fruits of our policy – starting with the disengagement agreement immediately after the Yom Kippur War, with the subsequent interim agreement, and later with the Camp David Accords – proved that strategy right.

I still believe that this strategy is right. If our two countries continue to stick to this strategy of not budging one inch without a political solution, and if both sides continue to take upon themselves the same division of responsibilities as during the past 18 years, then we will achieve more than just the current peace with Egypt. Therefore, let us use the achievement of the Six Day War to bring about peace. This should be the common strategy. Of course, I would not deny there were, and still are, differences over how much to give in return for what kind of a political solution. But we have succeeded among ourselves in living with these differences and in reaching positive results.

### *Bilateral Military Cooperation*

Regarding the military aspect of our relationship with the United States, I believe that strategic cooperation between our two countries was undertaken in the proper manner. Both our countries have realized that any attempt to formalize that relationship in writing will serve neither U.S. interests among the Arab countries, nor Israel's aspiration for real independence. We are a proud people, unlike the Europeans that live under the U.S. umbrella and keep nearly 300,000 American soldiers as their hostages. We are proud of the fact that we have never asked one

American GI to shed one drop of his blood for the defense of Israel.

I believe it is both essential to us and vital for your interests that there should be no doubts about the extent of our bilateral relationship. First, there are military threats that we have to meet together, primarily the threat of war from Arab countries that are supplied, equipped, and guided by their relationship with the Soviet Union. Second, of course, there is the question of terror that our countries unfortunately face together.

In the past, we found ways to cooperate strategically to face these threats. In September 1970, Kissinger phoned me in New York from the White House and said, "King Hussein is in real danger. It is a showdown with the PLO. The Syrian armored brigades have invaded Jordan, and King Hussein is asking that you attack the advancing Syrian forces with the Israeli Air Force."

I asked him, "Dr. Kissinger, is the United States just a mailman? Don't you have any position about it? Do you expect Israel to react to this demand without knowing what is the U.S. position?"

Together, Israel and the United States succeeded in working out an overall strategy to cope with the Syrian threat and to send warning signals to the Soviet Union. That strategy included more than just sending planes to attack Syrian tanks. Rather, it created a real threat to the Syrian invasion of Jordan. And it succeeded. It brought about the withdrawal of the Syrians, after the Soviets realized that all the squadron leaders of the U.S. Sixth Fleet had landed in Israel to coordinate whatever might happen. Those squadron leaders told us that the Israeli Air Force might have to participate in actual fighting against Syrians in Jordan. The Jordan crisis was a successful cooperation, because it paid the dividends that both our countries expected.

Lebanon, in a way, was another example of strategic cooperation, but an example that did not work. If the purpose of our joint efforts could be defined in terms of the peace treaty that was signed between Lebanon and Israel under the auspices of the United States on May 17, 1983, then our efforts failed. That treaty remained a dead paper, and nothing positive resulted from that effort at cooperation.

Jordan was a success, because the Arab element was viable and reliable; in Lebanon, the Arab element was unreliable and was clearly unable to perform its part, regardless of Israeli-American assistance. We should draw lessons from these two examples.

Neither party should aspire to achieve the unattainable. On the contrary, we must know exactly what should and should not be considered a goal of strategic cooperation. Therefore, an attempt to cooperate together to bring down certain Arab regimes and replace them with other regimes is a very dangerous goal to set. Conversely, cooperation to support viable Arab regimes against subversive elements supported by a radical Arab country backed by the Soviet Union *can* be a goal for strategic cooperation.

In these days of so much talk about Israel smuggling technical know-how, I cannot but refer to the unique Israeli contributions to the American people and its armed forces. Israel, unfortunately, is the only country that has had combat experience with the most advanced American weaponry against the most advanced Russian weaponry.

Where else have there been contacts between F-15s and F-16s against MIG-23s, MIG-21s, SAM-3s, SAM-4s, SAM-6s, SAM-8s, and SAM-9s? (Israel has not had the experience of the SAM-5s.) Where else could the United States collect Russian weaponry the way that it has with the cooperation of Israel?



Unfortunately, Israel has paid for the collection of this information with the blood of its airmen, soldiers and sailors. We have passed this information to the United States as part of our partnership. Moreover, Israel wants to ensure that its primary arms producer has the best possible data about Russian weaponry. The same principle applies to terrorists who attack, or might attack, U.S. targets. They are precisely the same terrorists who attack us.

There are many ways to build strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel without one side committing itself to future constraints. There is much groundwork to be laid. It is needed so that once the political echelons render a decision, it will be easy and quick to implement. These steps include enhanced intelligence cooperation and better modalities of action on both the military side and the intelligence side.

President Reagan's 1983 decision to lay this groundwork through intelligence exchanges, periodic reviews, joint military exercises at sea, on land, in air, and between the special forces that have to deal with terror, created better understandings between those who will have to carry out these activities when the need arises.

Israel is not trying to drag the United States into signing a defense pact. Rather, Israel prefers close, intimate relations based on the three layers of commonality:

- \* identity of views, values and ways of life;
- \* shared aspirations to maintain tranquility, prevent war and work toward the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- \* our mutual understanding of strategic cooperation, the essence of which is the effort to build the modalities, framework, and capability in the intelligence field,

within the military services and between the other security forces.

We have made real progress in the past two years toward creating a solid basis between the armed forces of our two countries. Now we can look to the future. Whatever happens in the region, we now have better tools to cope with it. Do not expect me to tell you what we have done together. I believe that when that story is told, many people will be amazed.

## An American Perspective on Strategic Cooperation

by Samuel Lewis

To discuss strategic cooperation between Israel and the United States, one must first realize how new the idea of strategic cooperation between our two countries actually is. In terms of American military and strategic thinking, the basic concept that strategic cooperation with Israel plays a role in deterrence has only been recently accepted. While America has long viewed strategic cooperation in NATO as being a major element in deterrence vis-a-vis the Soviets, it is only in the very recent past that either the Pentagon or the State Department has accepted the proposition that strategic cooperation with Israel can also play a role in deterrence.

### *From Truman through Johnson: The Importance of Symbols*

America's attitude toward military cooperation with Israel from 1948 to 1969 was governed by several themes. The first of these was "friendly evenhandedness." Though "evenhandedness" may be a "dirty word" in Israel, it is a term that accurately characterized the attitudes of the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and even Johnson Administrations. There was a certain emotional bias in favor of Israel, but yet there always remained a determination to try to keep America's interests in the Arab world well-protected by staying out of the conflict, encouraging its solution by United Nations mediators, and agreeing with the British and French on arms embargoes. When Israel joined in its own special version of strategic cooperation with the French and the British in 1956, the United States showed a significant lack of enthusiasm.

Another theme that ran through those years can be labeled "let the French do it." We understood that Israel

had threats and needed weapons, and we were sympathetic with the Israelis. But we also understood that we had other concerns in the region as well. U.S. policy was to allow the French, and perhaps the Germans, to supply the weapons while avoiding getting caught any further in the interminable argument between Arabs and Israelis. Our interests required that we remain on good terms, at least, with both sides.

An obvious corollary to these propositions was the need to avoid any appearance of alliances. The United States consistently maintained that position, because it was always accused of being a special friend of the Zionist state. America immediately recognized Israel diplomatically and we were widely sympathetic to Israel's fight for independence. Both the State Department and White House in those years leaned over backwards to avoid giving any symbolic recognition to a special relationship between the two countries.

In fact, the first official visit of an Israeli Prime Minister to Washington did not occur until Levi Eshkol's visit during the Johnson Administration. Despite all of President Kennedy's admiration and sympathy for David Ben Gurion, the best Ben Gurion could get out of him was a quiet meeting in New York. While that may be an exaggerated case, there were many other examples of the avoidance of symbolic acts which could be used as ammunition to argue that we had some special alliance with Israel.

Only during the administration of Lyndon Johnson, a man given to emotion as well as symbolism, were Israeli Prime Ministers able "to come out of the closet," if you will. Much of the new emphasis on symbolism was the product of Johnson's own personal empathy with Eshkol. During the Eshkol era, the key breakthrough was made also in the arms supply field, and for the first time weapons that could be called "offensive" – airplanes – were authorized for sale by the United States.

During the entire 1948-1969 period, therefore, U.S.-Israel relations were marked by anything but obvious strategic cooperation. One should not infer, however, that there were no useful, quiet interchanges between our governments, particularly in the intelligence field. Indeed, the story of cooperation is a good deal richer than the public record would suggest.

#### *Nixon-Ford-Kissinger Era: Impromptu Coordination*

After 1969, America graduated from preoccupation with symbolism to an era in U.S. policy that may be characterized as *realpolitik*. During this period, there was a genuine appreciation for the military might which Israel by now had assembled and for the political power Israel wielded throughout the Middle East. For example, in the 1970 Jordan crisis, the Nixon Administration had only momentary hesitation about entering into quiet, but very significant, coordination of strategy with the Israeli Prime Minister. That episode was a successful example of strategic coordination serving the interests of both countries.

But that coordination was implemented without any significant preparation of an institutional nature. An ad hoc, crisis-management atmosphere predominated; decisions were taken at the top political level without much staff work by the two bureaucracies charged with national security matters. Therefore, the Jordan crisis may have been an indication of both what could be achieved and what was lacking in strategic cooperation.

Kissinger's strategy for negotiating peaceful arrangements between Arabs and Israelis was very much a step-by-step strategy, a strategy which involved using the supply of weapons to Israel as a legitimate carrot and stick in the negotiating process. His weapons supply policy must be viewed as a dimension of strategic cooperation,

though it is sometimes treated apart from it. Neither Nixon nor Kissinger ever believed that decisions at various stages to slow up on approvals or deliveries of key weapons would put Israel's security in any real jeopardy, but they saw nothing wrong in the use of the arms supply relationship to enhance their diplomatic tactics aimed at achieving at least the beginnings of peace.

Though Machiavellian at times and hard-boiled and pragmatic throughout, Nixon and Kissinger were also careful to avoid accentuating the symbolic acts, including the high-visibility visits of American generals, port calls by American vessels, and other kinds of obvious military-to-military actions which would dramatize for the Arabs the fact that Israel was a special kind of participant in the peace process.

Another part of Kissinger's strategy, reinforced by his approach towards strategic cooperation, was to guarantee that if war broke out, as it did in 1973, Israel would emerge the victor. At the same time, America had to ensure that its newly courted friends on the Arab side – the Egyptians – would not be so totally destroyed politically and militarily as to be unable later to engage in active peace negotiations.

Kissinger was engaged in a tricky balancing act. It was an ingenious strategy which has been often criticized, but in the light of history it must be given fairly high marks for realism and success. The fundamental tenet of that strategy was to play the strategic, military and diplomatic game in such a way with all parties so that the United States remained in control of the diplomatic process. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was sufficiently stroked to keep it from making too much trouble. Unfortunately, the Soviets remember this experience well and are not as easy to flimflam today as they were in 1973.

*The Carter Era: Comprehensive Peacemaking*

Compared with previous administrations, Jimmy Carter's policy toward the Middle East initially appeared to be a total reversal in terms of psychology and, to some extent, action. When Carter assumed office, he did not seek steady, step-by-step pragmatic progress on various aspects of Israel's problems of war and peace. Rather, he was intent on working towards a comprehensive settlement involving all the Arab adversaries, Israel, the Soviet Union and the United Nations. At the same time, Carter was ideologically and conceptually opposed to the use of weapons sales as an element of U.S. foreign policy. In fact, one of his first major actions was to try to limit the amount of global weapons sales in a way that severely cut back commitments in the Middle East and throughout the world.

Carter also did something very significant of a declaratory nature in the first months of his administration. With a kind of evangelical approach toward diplomacy, Carter promised never to use military aid to try to influence the outcome of diplomatic negotiations. He seemed to feel that there was something immoral in linking, in any way, the supply of weapons to his peace diplomacy.

To his credit, Carter stuck to that policy. That consistency places him in stark contrast with the Nixon and Reagan Administrations, which never made much bones about their readiness to be a little slow to approve new weapons sales if it were important to get a point across towards a somewhat recalcitrant Israeli prime minister. Carter, to his credit or his discredit, stuck to his promise. Though there were many difficult arguments over peacemaking between Menachem Begin and Jimmy Carter, there were never, to my knowledge, any efforts made to use military aid or weapons sales as diplomatic leverage in the peace process.

The Carter Administration also followed the practice of keeping a very low profile about those areas of

cooperation which had slowly begun to grow in the intervening two decades, such as intelligence exchanges, visits by officers of the two military services, and consultations between defense ministers. Under Carter, these kinds of symbolic demonstrations of a special strategic relationship were viewed, oddly enough, as rewards for good behavior, or sometimes as the alternative – attempts to assuage bad behavior.

The State Department, Pentagon and White House, for example, refused to accept the idea that the Sixth Fleet could benefit from regular port calls in Haifa and Ashdod. Similarly, they refused to accept the notion that shore leave in Haifa posed no strategic threat to the Arab world. As a result, not until the spring of 1978 were any port calls authorized on a regular basis.

The dam was broken with the arrival in Haifa of the *USS Nimitz*, one of the largest nuclear carriers in the U.S. fleet. That visit was authorized only after a long struggle, and it was not conceived as a carrot, but as a way of pacifying Israel and Israel's friends in the United States after a particularly acrimonious series of meetings in Washington between Begin and Carter.

Conversely, the triumphal and highly ceremonial visit of the aircraft carrier *USS Eisenhower* one year later was the product of success in the U.S.-Israel relationship. The peace treaty between Israel and Egypt had just been signed, and the *Eisenhower's* visit was geared towards celebrating the new trilateral relationship symbolized in that treaty. Gradually, and with great difficulty, a process of scheduling regular port calls was established.

During the Lebanon war, however, when U.S.-Israel relations got very frosty indeed, strangely the Sixth Fleet no longer needed shore leave, and there was quite a period in which the frequency of ship visits was at a minimum. Along this pattern, the Carter Administration and to a lesser extent, the Reagan Administration as well, used



symbolic acts to demonstrate either the cooling or the warming of the bilateral political relationship.

As a whole, the Carter Administration did not perceive strategic cooperation with Israel in terms of deterrence. The Carter approach towards the Middle East focused on achieving reconciliation and peace between Arabs and Israelis. Only at the very end of the administration did the impact of the Iranian revolution begin to change some of the perception about the utility of an Israeli partner in the *realpolitik* of the region.

Toward the end of the Carter years, the administration was beginning to think of the complications that Lebanon was putting on our relationship as friends. The word "friends" must be used advisedly, for never during the Carter era did the President or any of his high officials use the word "ally," except perhaps by mistake. The view that the U.S.-Israel relationship comprised an alliance was seen as contradictory to the administration's entire approach toward concentrating on practical ways to achieve peace. In the eyes of the Carter White House, highlighting the alliance nature of that relationship, even implicitly, would have tarnished America's credentials as an "honest broker" in the peace process.

Americans and Israelis did discuss treaties of alliance on a few occasions, but only in a symbolic manner and only as a way of discussing what sort of final building block might have to be put into place if Israel were to make the sort of very difficult concessions necessary to achieve a final peace involving the occupied territories. Although there were on two occasions to my knowledge some serious discussions regarding drafts of treaties, these were always viewed as part of the peace process, not part of a strategic cooperation/deterrence syndrome. In both cases, it was the Israeli government that did not wish to pursue the discussion very far.

Yet, despite the diffidence with which the Carter Administration approached the topic, the strategic relationship between our two governments did grow – slowly, to be sure – throughout those four years. As time passed, there was less and less worry about the impact symbolic acts would have on U.S. interests in the Arab world, although that factor has not yet been eliminated. The proposition that the United States and Israel are specially linked has steadily grown throughout the past decade. The fact that America and Israel are going to be doing things together in a military way has not become happily accepted, but it has become understood in the moderate Arab capitals. As a result, U.S. ambassadors in Arab capitals do not spend quite as much of the U.S. taxpayers' money as they used to in sending nasty telegrams complaining about the impact of the latest U.S. ship visits in Haifa.

Why? Clearly, from the American point of view, the growth of strategic cooperation was not by design. But there remain several explanations for that growth nonetheless.

First, the United States occasionally felt the need to reinforce the peace process with military support for Israel, the party to the peace process which had the most to lose and which was most at risk. Concrete moves in the field of military cooperation were viewed as ways to reinforce Israel's readiness to make the difficult choices necessary for peace.

Second, the personality of Defense Minister Ezer Weizmann played a significant role in helping to foster the practical growth of relationships between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and the U.S. military. Although he always wanted to keep the Americans as far away as possible from his negotiations with Egypt until he needed U.S. help – for which I respected him, incidentally – Weizmann came across to U.S. officials as a man genuinely committed to a healthy bilateral relationship.

He was a sympathetic partner for enterprises when the politics of both sides permitted joint enterprises to be undertaken. Weizmann charmed many Americans, and his charm had a great impact on our foreign policy.

Third, Washington's "evenhanded" effort to have credibility with both sides – Arab and Israeli – actually aided the growth of strategic cooperation. One of the major events of the Carter era was the decision in 1979 to sell F-15s to Saudi Arabia, which triggered an enormously divisive and unnecessary political debate. In order to gain Congressional approval for the arms sale, it was necessary to link it with some important Israeli weapons sales decisions. As a result, the fight over that F-15 sale led the Carter Administration to look more sympathetically on other aspects of the U.S.-Israeli military equation.

Finally, toward the end of the Carter Administration, disillusionment with Syria, with the PLO, and with terrorism in general was growing. The Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis brought home for the first time to many Americans the validity of some of the arguments they had been hearing from Begin, perhaps more frequently than they wished, about the state of perennial terror imposed on Israel by its neighbors.

One could argue that some of the emotional and psychological hangups with which the Carter Administration began its approach toward cooperation with Israel were dispelled by events and by a growing similarity of experience by the end of 1980.

### *The Reagan Years: Building the Structure of Strategic Cooperation*

When Ronald Reagan took office, there was a sharp ideological shift in the American view of the Middle East. No longer was the emphasis of U.S. foreign policy on

ways to resolve the regional issue of peace in the Arab-Israeli dispute. Rather, the larger emphasis was on the global struggle with the Soviets, and an East-West orientation to Middle East policy grew much more apparent.

Reagan had long articulated his personal view that not only was Israel a nice little country with a very good army, but it was unambiguously democratic and on the right side of the Soviet-U.S. world conflict. He expressed that view throughout the campaign, and he used the word "ally" without embarrassment over and over again.

Bureaucracies respond to political leaders, often slowly and with great difficulty, but they do respond. The language that a new boss uses about a problem affects the attitudes and the reactions of the bureaucrats down the line, and it did not take very long for others to start thinking of Israel in an alliance framework. Of course, one must remember that it's a long way from talking about an ally and erecting the structure of an alliance, something which has taken us a generation to do in Europe.

In their first year in office, President Reagan and Secretary of State Alexander Haig espoused a philosophy towards the Middle East of attempting to build parallel structures of strategic cooperation with Israel and with several Arab states. On one hand, they wanted to make greater reality out of the alliance concept with Israel, free from any inhibition about the transfer of military supplies. At the same time, the Reagan Administration adopted a parallel view of what was needed to be done in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and elsewhere in order to build positions of strength against Soviet-sponsored threats in the Persian Gulf. To that end, the administration sought access to Arab bases and cooperation with Arab armies.

These parallel tracks of strategic cooperation were, to say the least, less than a massive success. However, I

would argue that by a strange series of events, we have returned to that concept more successfully in the last two years. But certainly, in 1981-1982, it was a big flop.

### *Strategic Cooperation: Phase I*

Prime Minister Begin, recently reelected in June 1981, welcomed what he knew of Ronald Reagan's view of allies and strategic cooperation in the East-West conflict. At the start of the Reagan Administration, Begin saw his long-awaited chance to demonstrate, in at least symbolic fashion, a sense of equality between the two parties in the U.S.-Israel relationship. Begin never had any illusions that Israel was equal militarily to the United States, but he was very proud – perhaps extraordinarily proud – of what he conceived to be Israel's unique contributions to the alliance. He wanted the public recognition that a formal agreement would give to that sense of pride.

When Begin traveled to Washington with new Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to meet President Reagan in September 1981, he went with the hope of reaching an understanding on Israel's rightful place in the U.S.-Israel alliance. Begin believed that he was finally dealing with a president who understood Israel's strategic value in ways that Jimmy Carter never did. But Begin also went to Washington in the wake of rather dramatic events in the Middle East – the bombing of the Osiraq nuclear reactor in Baghdad three months earlier, a mini-war and uneasy ceasefire with the PLO reached two months earlier, and the Syrian "missile crisis" of the previous spring.

After they entered the Cabinet Room and proceeded with the amenities, the American and Israeli delegations got on very nicely. Begin then immediately launched his proposal for a formal document to symbolize and specify the sort of strategic cooperation on which two countries with the same view of the world and of the Middle East

should easily agree. His depiction of Israel was such that Reagan, given his own background, could easily accept. Reagan agreed with Begin's opening statement and suggested turning the discussion over to the respective ministers of defense for elaboration. At this point Begin proposed that Sharon describe in greater detail the Israeli conception of strategic cooperation. Up until this point everything had gone very nicely. This is where it went off the track.

Sharon described the scope of future strategic cooperation in grandiose, far-reaching terms. He suggested potential roles that Israel might play in a mutually beneficial alliance that sent cold shivers down the backs of most of the people on the American side of the table – and maybe even some on the Israeli side. And considering that this conversation was held just three months after the bombing of the Osiraq nuclear reactor, there was significant credibility attached to it.

Caspar Weinberger, who is nothing if not loyal to President Reagan, swallowed hard and took on the task of negotiating the details of this agreement. That process stretched out over a couple of months and required periodic travel by subordinates as well as principals. Thanks to the hordes of U.S. lawyers and the many time-honored U.S. techniques for negotiating empty agreements, America finally achieved its goal of working out a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) for strategic cooperation. The agreement had no official name, much less any content, but it was an agreement nonetheless.

One of the great ironies of history is that Sharon was forced to vigorously defend the agreement before the Knesset and the Cabinet, though it was a far cry from what he had originally sought. Since Begin wanted the symbolism of proving that Israel and the United States were now equal partners in this relationship of strategic cooperation, it was Sharon's job to convince everyone that the MOU was Israel's greatest achievement since

independence. Sharon did not like what he had signed in Washington, nor did he like having to submit to American demands that no press or photographers be present at the signing ceremony with Weinberger. That entire episode demonstrated Sharon's determined self-discipline, and he surely carried out his duty as a good soldier.

Two sets of assumptions underlay the signing of the MOU. On the American side, the assumption was that this was largely a formal exercise. Washington understood that whatever substance might be added to the agreement over time would be added very slowly. Moreover, the Reagan Administration believed it was now assured that it would not again be surprised in the way that the Osiraq raid has caught it by surprise just a few months earlier. On the Israeli side, the assumptions are not as clear, but one of them surely was that Begin firmly believed that the two countries were now truly allies.

The affair ended in a sad denouement – the Golan Law, passed after a weekend of cogitation, with just a few hours' discussion to reflect Begin's conviction that it was time to annex the Golan and give Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad a punch in the nose. The White House was shocked and surprised at that decision, another surprise which Washington believed affected its interests as well as Israel's. Reagan opted to suspend the MOU signed just two weeks earlier until he had clarification about further surprises. Begin's gentle admonitions to me, in what has come to be known as the "Banana Republic" discourse, and other reactions that same morning, have been well-documented by several journalists. Strategic cooperation was, to say the least, stillborn.

Why was it such a flop?

First, Americans and Israelis did not share the same goals. There was considerable overreaching on the part of Israelis at a moment when the American military

establishment had not even begun to consider seriously the relevance of strategic cooperation for deterrence.

Second, the Lebanon war had a chilling effect on the concept of strategic cooperation, with all the bitter disagreements between our governments and military services that accompanied that unhappy period.

### *Strategic Cooperation: Phase II*

Ironically, however, the groundwork for the sort of strategic relationship we have been able to build today began to be built during that debacle in Lebanon. Only during the Lebanon war did the need for a more serious, professional look at strategic cooperation become clear. That realization was underscored by the ridiculous things which had happened during the Lebanon war and which neither the Israelis nor the Americans could defend, such as the famous American captain "stopping the IDF tank with his pistol." Surely our two countries were not at war with each other, whomever else we happened to be at war with, yet that was the image projected around the world.

Two other aspects of the Lebanon experience bolstered the realization that Israel and the United States shared strategic concerns and had to find better ways to coordinate their approach to them. By late 1983, both our countries were in military trouble in Lebanon, and the need to create some level of coordination between our two militaries had become obvious. Also, by late 1983, the U.S. embassy in Beirut had been blown up and within weeks, the U.S. Marine barracks was destroyed. Terrorism in Lebanon was clearly taking its toll on Americans as it had on Israelis, fostering a deep and genuine motivation to find ways to work more closely together on problems that affected both our interests.



While on-the-ground events in Lebanon were contributing to the framework for enhanced cooperation between our two countries, personnel changes within the Israeli leadership were making the process of constructing that cooperation an easier task. Begin had suddenly withdrawn from office, and soon thereafter Washington witnessed a change in the Israeli style of approaching American leaders. The new team of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Moshe Arens differed markedly from their predecessors, Begin and Sharon. Those differences in style helped translate a general conception of strategic cooperation into practical reality when Shamir and Arens came to Washington in late 1983.

At that time, Shamir and Reagan announced the establishment of the Joint Political-Military Group (JPMG) to elaborate practical areas of bilateral cooperation, giving special attention to the Soviet threat to our mutual interests. A key decision was taken at that time about the establishment of this group, based on the lessons drawn from the unhappy experience of the previous round of strategic cooperation. Many of us, including Menachem Meron, director-general of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, and Hanan Bar-On, deputy director-general of the Foreign Ministry, contributed to this decision.

In contrast to the first Sharon-Weinberger episode, it was decided that there would be no effort to spell out ahead of time the exact parameters of strategic cooperation. While it was clear to all that the United States and Israel shared overlapping interests, we also understood that, at least on some issues, our interests divided. Therefore, we agreed that the next important step was to start the practical process of interaction between our professional military establishments and to let it proceed in an orderly, modest fashion without mandated goals.

Our expectations were quite low at the beginning. But given the turbulent history of the previous attempt at

coordination, they were realistically low. All parties understood that time was needed to heal wounds. Moreover, we understood that only the professionals could deal with professional problems, and therefore it was necessary to limit the role of political leaders and political rhetoric.

Two and a half years after those principles were laid down for the second attempt at U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation, I believe that all who were have been involved can be justly proud of the results. We have witnessed a series of quiet successes. Confidence between military bureaucracies has been bolstered and practical problems have been addressed. Importantly, details have been kept quiet, because both sides realized from the beginning that each had peculiar sensitivities -- Israel is sensitive in dealing with the Soviet Union and the United States is sensitive to its relationship with Arab states. We both need to understand and accommodate each other's sensitivities, and we and our leaders have done so.

Our two establishments are now interacting in a way to engender habits of cooperation. If and when a crisis occurs and our political leaders decide they want to cooperate in dealing with it, the bureaucratic undergrowth will have been chopped away ahead of time for maximum efficiency and minimal time of decisionmaking. Public symbolism, which had been a focus of concern in earlier eras of U.S.-Israel relations, was avoided and we concentrated on the business of the professionals.

As a result, since 1983, the second phase of strategic cooperation has permitted the United States to carry forward at least some of the "strategic consensus" that Secretary of State Haig was trying to engender in early 1981, for we have implemented elements of cooperation simultaneously with Arab states and with Israel with remarkably little static.

## **An Israeli Perspective on Strategic Cooperation**

*by Menachem Meron*

From the very beginning of the establishment of the State of Israel, Israeli governments sought alliances, guarantees and cooperation with other countries. This desire had both a security and a political rationale. Israel realized that in the post-World War II era, the world was shaped by alliances. Given Israel's severe defense problems, Israel understood that to survive without some form of alliances would be a very difficult task. At the beginning, we sought to build alliances within Europe, but the United States was always regarded as being the most important power with which to seek cooperation.

Not all elements within the Israeli public shared this understanding of the need for alliances. For extreme leftists and communists, politics led them to oppose strategic cooperation with the United States. Many others have been fearful that close identification with the United States would draw Israel into a superpower confrontation or would adversely affect the fate of Soviet Jewry. Still others have been concerned about the extent to which a close relationship with the United States would impinge upon Israeli sovereignty.

In short, there do exist voices that are against deep strategic cooperation with the United States, but they are in the small minority. The great majority of the Israeli public – certainly the political leadership and all governments – has always supported and continues to support cooperation with the United States in one form or another.

We do not forget, and we should not forget, the multidimensional aspect of Middle East politics. First, there is the superpower competition for influence. Second, there is the political conflict between Israel and the Arab states. Third, there are deep-seated religious antagonisms.

Fourth, there are long-standing historical enmities between many of the region's countries and ethnic groups.

Therefore, the issue of U.S.-Israeli relations should not be approached in a simplistic way. We must take into account the many real differences between us and the United States. These are not only differences of size and wealth. Rather, these are the fundamental differences between a global superpower with worldwide commitments and a regional power with local commitments.

### *Unsuccessful Strategic Cooperation*

In the past, our two countries suffered a misunderstanding, a failure to communicate the proper perception of what strategic cooperation ought to be. I first came to Washington at the end of the Carter Administration, after three years of commanding Israel's National Defense College and after a long period of studying the problems of the Middle East. That experience prepared me for understanding what should be done – and could be done – in terms of bilateral cooperation. But when I began to discuss the problems of strategic cooperation with various officials in the administration, I remember the polite nods that I received in return. Many said, "Yes, you are right. That is very interesting. I see your point." But I also saw in their eyes that they thought I was talking nonsense.

We were talking past each other. While I was focusing on the mutual benefit that both Israel and the United States could derive from such cooperation, the Americans spoke only in terms of rewards in the event of a comprehensive regional peace agreement. The strategic relationship was regarded more as a U.S. guarantee than as shared cooperation, more as a one-sided gift toward Israel rather than as a necessity from which both would

benefit. At the end of my first year in Washington, I felt disappointed, though not completely discouraged.

That was the situation at the signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on November 30, 1981. I participated in the preparations and negotiations for that paper, and I had many discussions with some of the participants from the American side.

I could not understand why America's professional military men were opposed to the MOU. I remember the deputy J-5, which is the planning department of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, telling me very candidly that he did not see the need for the agreement. "We don't need it," he said. "The threat is not there, and we don't need it." The agreement was viewed by many Americans as an imposed agreement. Those of us who were involved in negotiating the terms of the agreement understood it from the very beginning. We sensed and felt the opposition. We also sensed and felt the loyalty of the U.S. negotiators charged with carrying out President Reagan's policy, and we knew that nothing went beyond that loyalty to the president. As a result, the MOU was a very shallow and almost useless piece of paper.

It was obvious that there were differences of perceptions of what the MOU actually meant. Washington believed that because of the MOU, there would be no more "surprises" or unilateral moves on Israel's part. That was very far from the Israeli perception. On the contrary, the Soviet Union was mentioned seven times and the entire agreement was oriented towards dealing with external threats that are initiated by the Soviet Union or its proxies coming from outside the region into the region. The agreement itself had nothing to do with our local problem in the area.

In Israeli minds, there was a clear understanding that the first MOU did not mean that we were going to coordinate all our activities in the area, especially if they

were related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. So there was a difference of understanding or, perhaps, an erroneous perception regarding what the agreement actually entailed.

Considering that the United States believed that it had no need for the agreement, it was little wonder that the MOU was placed in abeyance by the Reagan Administration just two weeks later, a punitive measure against Israel's passage of the Golan Heights law. At first, I did not know the meaning of "abeyance," so I checked the definition in the dictionary. According to the dictionary, "abeyance" means "temporarily suspended." I remember saying to myself that the word "temporary" could be removed from the definition.

The obvious lesson to be drawn from the experience of the MOU was that Israel should not press for a goal that the Americans do not share. At the same time, Israel should continue to try to convince our American friends that such cooperation is needed, feasible, and advisable. We realized that until the United States concurred with our goal of creating a strategic relationship, we would stop lobbying for its implementation.

### *A Second Attempt*

Two years later, two years that seemed like two decades, we reached a new understanding on strategic cooperation. Indeed, it was two years to the day – the first MOU was signed November 30, 1981, and President Reagan's declaration regarding strategic cooperation was made in the wake of the visit of Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens on November 30, 1983. As President Reagan said:

We have agreed on the need to increase our cooperation in areas where our interests coincide,

particularly in the political-military arena. I am pleased to announce that we have agreed to establish a Joint Political-Military Group to examine ways in which we can enhance U.S.-Israel cooperation. This group will give priority attention to the threats to our mutual interests posed by increased Soviet involvement in the Middle East. Among the specific areas to be considered are combined planning, joint exercises, and requirements for prepositioning of U.S. equipment in Israel.

There were clearly very distinct differences -- a radical change, in fact -- between the 1983 Reagan announcement and the 1981 MOU. Why?

During those two years, we faced the Lebanese episode. Part of that experience was the realization that even a superpower -- or, perhaps, especially a superpower -- can face deficiencies when confronted with a local problem. Moreover, there was the realization that local powers can, in some cases, possess inherent advantages over a superpower.

Also, the American conception of strategic cooperation was affected by the disappointment that many felt regarding the performance of some moderate Arab countries. During the discussions to solve the Lebanese crisis, those countries failed to deliver what was expected of them, maybe even what they had promised to deliver. As a result, American sensitivity to Arab reaction to enhanced strategic cooperation with Israel shrank.

In addition, there were several other factors, not the least of which was the change in personalities on the Israeli side, that facilitated the shift in Washington's view of the strategic relationship.

After the decision to form the Joint Political-Military Group, I headed the Israeli team. The American team was

led by Admiral Jonathan Howe, then director of the political-military department at the State Department. From the very beginning, in January 1984, we were suspicious that the fate of the second MOU would be similar to the first one. Therefore, the first decision we made was that we were not going to take the lead during the meetings. We were not going to press our case. Rather, we decided to wait and see what the American side presented and then offer our reaction to it.

Although we Israelis had become masters at surprising others, this time the American side surprised us. Their presentation was a very real one. Not only was it deep and practical, but it was much deeper and more practical than what we ever considered presenting. At that point, I was glad that we were not the first to make a presentation because ours was much more cautious than the American conception of the scope of potential cooperation between our two countries. The American vision of cooperation was real and sincere. It reflected the lessons learned from the failed first agreement.

In my opening remarks to the JPMG, I stressed the fact that Israel was willing to cooperate with the United States on strategic matters and that efforts at cooperation would only concentrate on subjects perceived by both sides to be of common interest. Anything which did not fall under that category would not be a legitimate subject for discussion. Second, we also decided to keep everything "sacred" – that is, maintaining the utmost secrecy in our talks. The only way to carry on substantive negotiations is to be free of the concern of how it will look tomorrow morning on the front page of one of the two *Posts* – the *Jerusalem Post* and the *Washington Post*.

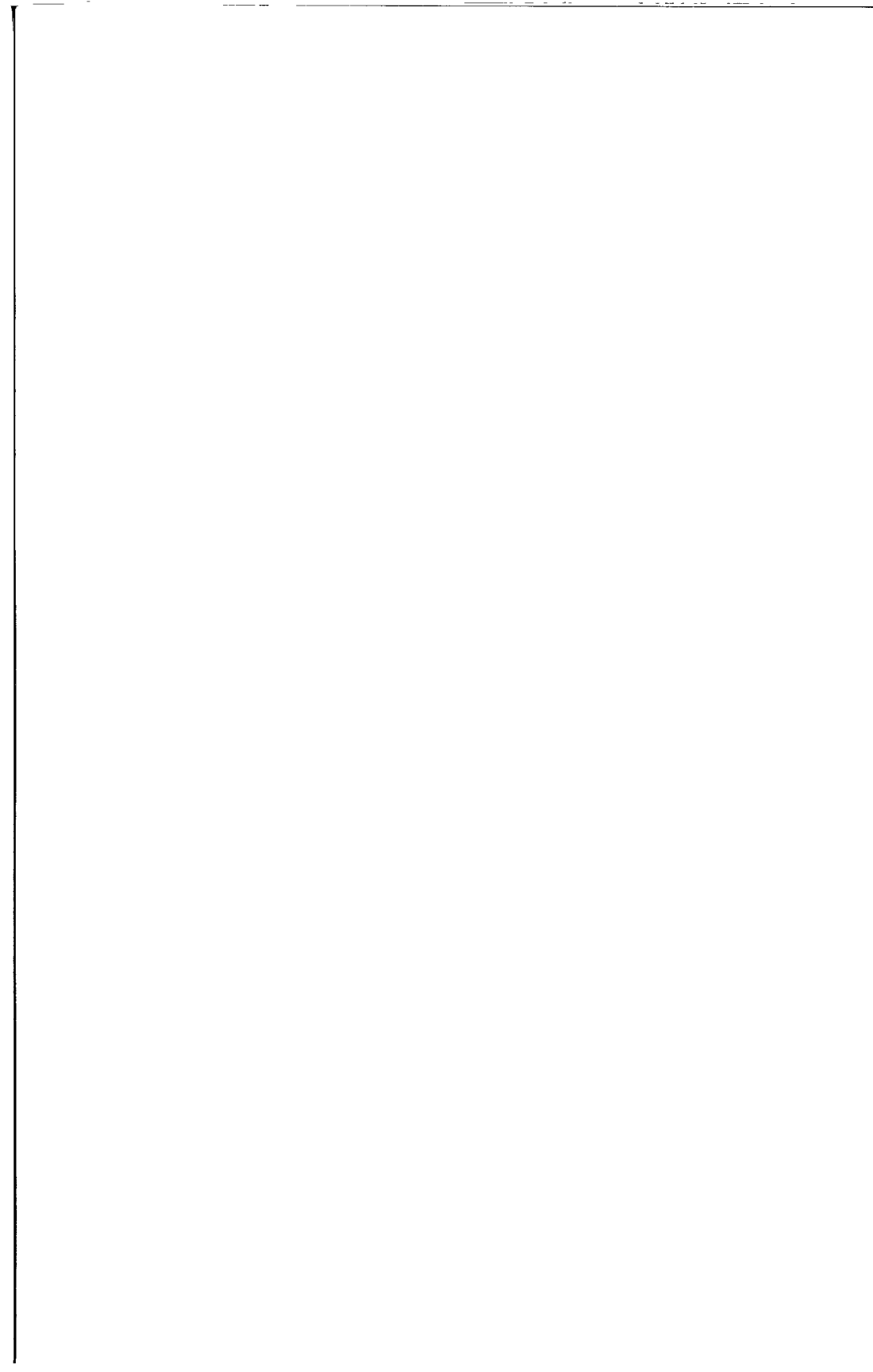
That sense of sincerity and pragmatism has continued for two-and-a-half years, and I thank God that the contents are not published – well, not yet published. There is always a "yet." Both our countries survived major election campaigns in which there was a strong



temptation to use strategic cooperation as a political weapon. But in the end, it was not used. Both the Americans and the Israelis successfully persuaded their respective political masters that the contents of the discussions must be kept confidential for the sake of the healthy continuation of our relations. That policy remains in place today and it is not going to change.

The lesson to be drawn from the great change in outlook toward strategic cooperation from 1981 to 1983 was that our original position was vindicated. All that time we were trying to persuade our American friends that cooperation with a country like Israel is beneficial to deterrence and that such a relationship does not run counter to American strategic interests in the region. In fact, cooperation between our two countries did not raise major opposition from among the United States' other friends in the Middle East.

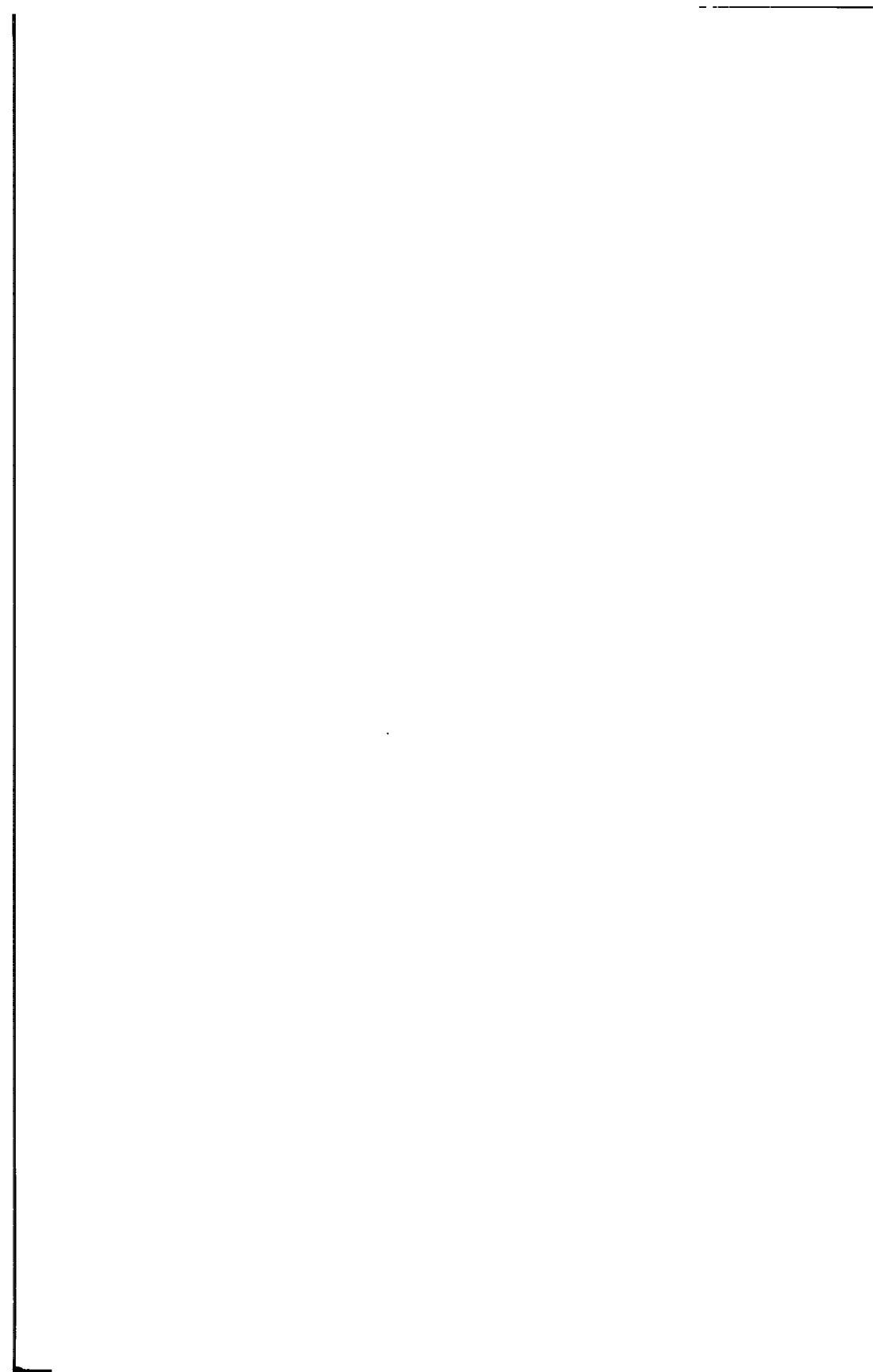
One of the cornerstones of the second go-around was the understanding that we would not start from a comprehensive agreement on strategic cooperation, because the lawyers would still to this day be arguing over each comma. This time we decided to start from the other end – the details. Our aim was to determine what was feasible and work towards the time at which a formal agreement would be necessary. Only at that point, we would know exactly what that agreement would contain. That is how we did it, and that is the way that I think it should be done.



***CONCLUDING REMARKS***

Shimon Peres  
*Peace as an Alternative Strategy*

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## Peace as an Alternative Strategy

by Shimon Peres

*(The following remarks are excerpted from a question and answer period held at the close of the conference on Strategy and Defense in the Eastern Mediterranean.)*

### *On Palestinians, Jordan and Peace*

There are really two important groups of Palestinians. One is under the rule of King Hussein, numbering about a million and a half. The second lives under the control of Israel in the West Bank and Gaza. On the West Bank today, there are about 850,000 Palestinians. In Gaza, there are about 450,000. All the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza are – without exception – Jordanian citizens.

The first question is: Can you negotiate without Jordan? Jordan has asked the same question in the past: Can they negotiate without the Palestinians?

If Israelis or Americans are forced to choose between Hussein and Arafat, they should without doubt choose Hussein – for his stability, for his seriousness, and for his strategic orientation.

There is a second question, which is no less important: is the PLO a party with which you can negotiate? I don't recall in history another situation when an organization residing outside the place it wants to redeem has organized a framework of a state without having a state. They have embassies, but they don't have land. They have money, but they don't spend it on supporting the local Palestinians.

I am not saying this to criticize them. I am saying it because, as often happens in history, you build an

organization to achieve a goal, and then the organization becomes the goal – or sometimes even more important than the goal itself. I think most of the efforts and energies of Arafat these past 20 years were spent keeping his organization intact. It's a coalition within a coalition within a coalition...

Who prevents the Palestinians from negotiating? Did we ask any of them to change their minds? Did we impose a condition that they cannot ask for a Palestinian state or they cannot ask for Palestinian independence? The only thing we have asked is that they talk and not shoot or kill. We cannot meet any person who talks in the morning and kills in the afternoon. We are a democratic country. So if they would really like to negotiate, who prevents them..?

They say that all of the people on the West Bank are pro-PLO. So, if the PLO will not give up their rifles, why don't they permit people without rifles, of the very same mind, to negotiate?

Let us not forget history. In 1948, they had an option to found a state of their own. Israel and the Palestinians were given an equal chance, though not an equality of land. Most of West Palestine was supposed to become an Arab state – a Palestinian state. We didn't prevent it. But instead of accepting it, they declared war, and we were in danger of extinction... Between 1948 and 1967, Jerusalem was under Jordanian-Palestinian control, but they never made it a capital. They never created the Palestinian state, even when the Arabs controlled the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem...

The proposal of a Palestinian state endangers King Hussein more than anything else. I believe it to be the greatest mistake to invite Yasser Arafat here and have him threaten the King. In 1970, the PLO tried to topple the King. If they are here they may incite the Palestinians

who live in Jordan. The King, therefore, would be under a permanent threat.

*The Ingredients for Peace*

My strategy of peace in the Middle East begins with an end to the war in Lebanon and a change in our settlement policy on the West Bank. Both of these goals have been accomplished.

The third goal is to reach an agreement with Egypt on Taba, have the Egyptian ambassador return to Israel, and add new dimensions to the Israeli-Egyptian relationship.

As a fourth measure, we should move with Jordan. But we must be very careful neither to identify ourselves nor to appear as supporters of the Jordanian policy toward the Palestinians in the territories. As a matter of fact, we shouldn't even appear as the deciding factor in the relations between the Jordanians and the Palestinians. What we can do is offer them options. We have offered a list of options to both the Palestinians and the Jordanians simultaneously – by changing the settlements policy on the West Bank and by continuing the Arabization of the cities and the villages on the West Bank. We are ready to allow and encourage economic development and growth of social infrastructure, but we will not impose anything. We are just opening options.

The fifth factor may, in my judgment, be the most important factor – regional economic recovery. The economies of Egypt and Jordan are nearing a dramatic situation. For Egypt to sink economically is not just a tragedy for the Egyptian people, it is a tragedy for all peace-loving people. It is in our interest to see a stable Egypt, able to meet its own challenges, not falling under the bitterness of economic failure and not opening its doors and avenues to fundamentalists and extremists. Egypt, for example, has the double problem of a rapidly

increasing population and rapidly declining revenues. The same goes for Jordan – when an oil-producing country suffers the change in the price of oil, it still has a lot of money but its neighbors, who were enjoying the by-products of oil, are in a terrible shape.

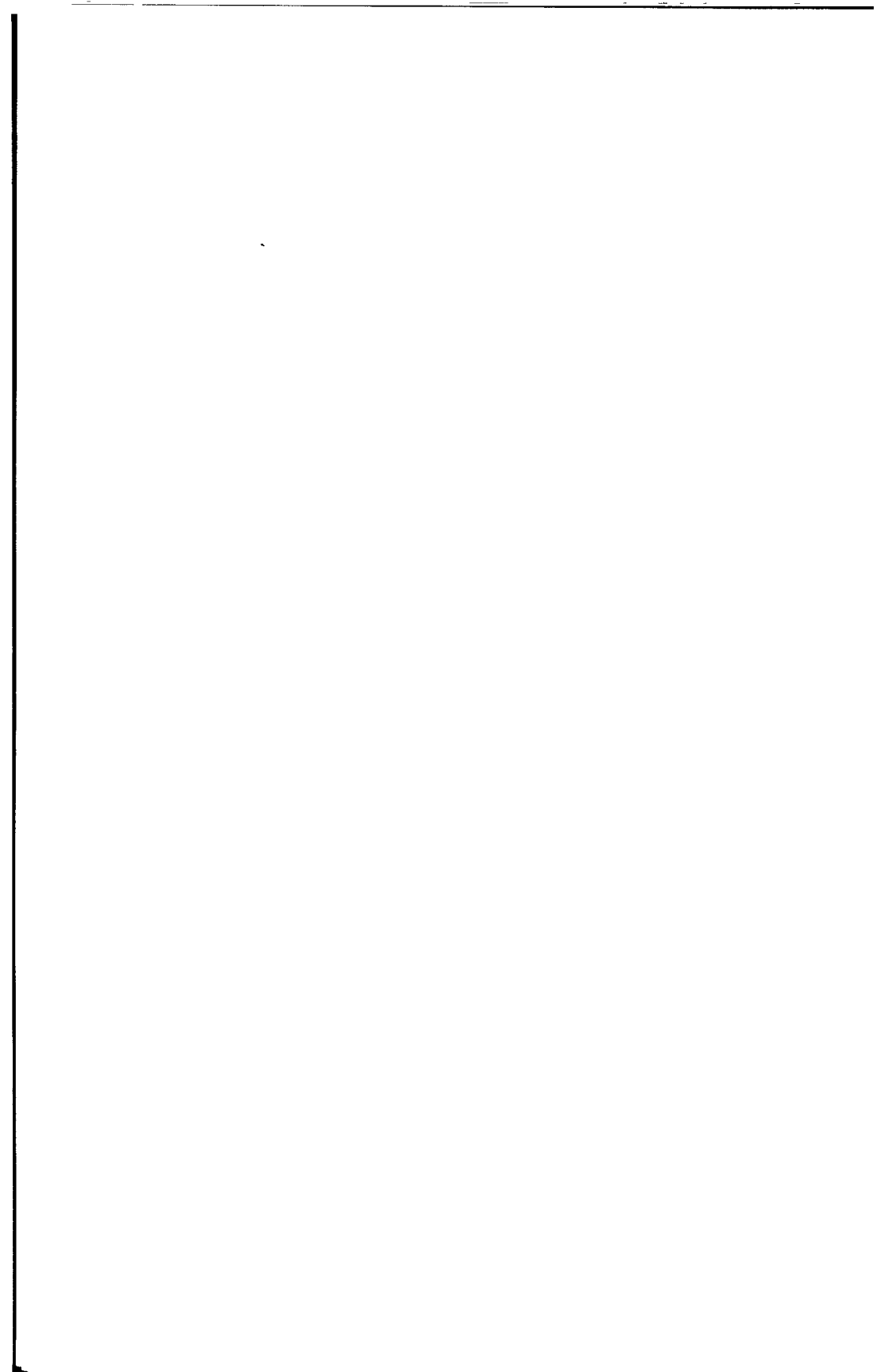
We feel very strongly that economic dimensions must be added to the overall picture of peace and war in the Middle East. This year, Japan gained \$20 billion because of the drop in the price of oil; Germany gained \$15 billion. Why can't those countries reinvest \$1 billion or \$2 billion for the economic recovery of those countries suffering from the drop in the price of oil? Why not reinvest \$1 a barrel to prevent the Middle East from going up in flames? And when that happens, there would be no chance for peace. Therefore, we are trying to introduce a long-term economic development plan. I don't know if it will solve the problem, but it will certainly introduce a ray of hope in a situation which is otherwise completely clouded and bleak.

Without these moves that I have described, peace will die. And I do believe that with this climate for peace, there is a chance for peace. It's not yet a breakthrough. But if we can collect the goodwill of these different opportunities, one morning we may have somebody from Jerusalem visiting Amman.



***APPENDIX***

**Chronology of U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation**  
*October 1983-August 1986*



## Chronology of U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation

*(The following chronology, prepared by Bart Aronson, records the publicly documented history of U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation from October 1983 through August 1986.)*

**1983**

**October 29:** President Reagan signs National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 111, calling for closer strategic cooperation with Israel. (*New York Times Magazine*, November 27, 1983)

**November 29:** At the conclusion of meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, President Reagan outlines the agreed scope of U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation in a formal announcement on the White House lawn.

*We have agreed on the need to increase our cooperation in areas where our interest coincide, especially in the political-military arena. I am pleased to announce that we have agreed to establish a Joint Political-Military Group to examine ways to enhance U.S.-Israel cooperation. This group will give priority to our mutual interests posed by increased Soviet involvement in the Middle East. Among the specific areas to be considered are combined planning, joint exercises, and requirements for prepositioning of U.S. equipment in Israel.*

The two leaders also agreed that the U.S. would use Israeli facilities for emergency medical treatment and evacuation in case of U.S. involvement in hostilities in the region. (*New York Times*, November 30, 1983)

1984

**January:** JPMG meets for the first time in Washington. Leading the respective delegations were Admiral Jonathan Howe, Director of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs in the State Department, and Major General Menachem Meron, Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defense. (*New York Times*, January 15, 1984)

The JPMG has met twice a year since then, alternating between Israel and Washington.

**January-April:** Three American naval vessels make port calls at Haifa: the battleship *USS New Jersey*, the amphibious transport dock *USS Trenton*, and the helicopter carrier *USS Guam*. (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, May 6-13, 1984)

Since then, the U.S. Navy has made regular port calls at Haifa.

**June:** First joint emergency medical evacuation exercise conducted by the U.S. Sixth Fleet and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) using Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital, Tel Aviv's Sheba Hospital and Beersheba's Soroka Hospital. (*New York Times*, June 22, 1984; *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, June 24 - August 1, 1984)

**August:** U.S. announces agreement with Israel to lease 12 Israeli Kfir C-1 aircraft to be used to simulate Soviet MiGs in flight training. (AP, August 31, 1984)

**December 11:** U.S. and Israel conduct joint anti-submarine warfare (ASW) maneuvers in the Eastern Mediterranean. (*Washington Post*, Dec. 12, 1984)

## 1985

**January 7:** Israel agrees to open negotiations for the installation of transmitters to beam Voice of America radio programming into the Eastern Bloc. (*New York Times*, January 8, 1985)

**November:** U.S. and Israel conduct joint medical exercises. (Jerusalem Domestic Service in English, November 6, 1985)

## 1986

**January 6:** U.S. announces purchase of Israeli-made RPVs, pilotless reconnaissance aircraft. (UPI, January 6, 1986)

**February:** *Newsweek* reports U.S. Sixth Fleet fighter pilots have been practicing precision attacks at a site in the Negev desert since at least late 1985. (*Newsweek*, February 10, 1986)

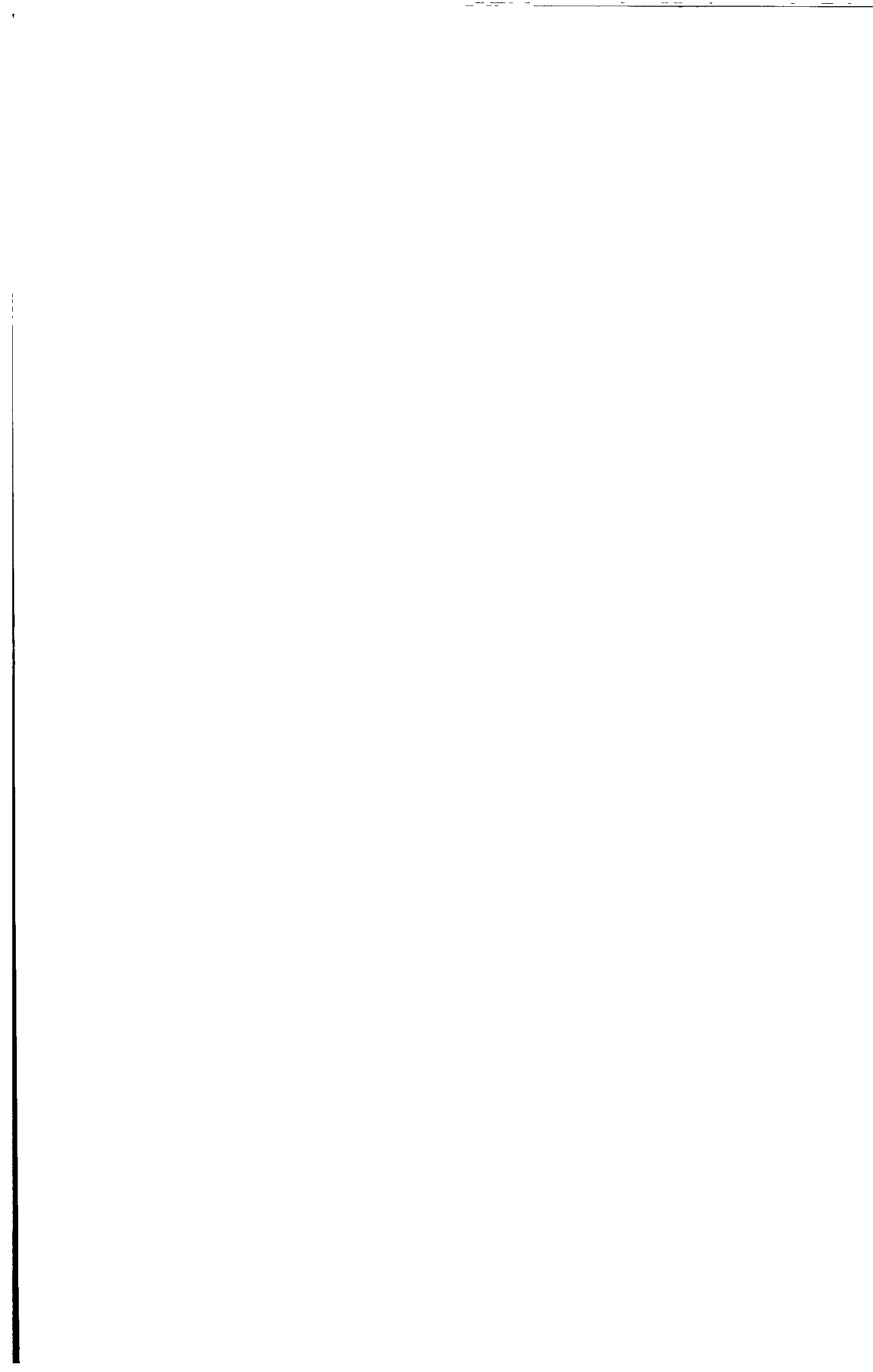
**May:** Israel becomes the third nation, after Great Britain and West Germany, to enter into the research and development programs of President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Israeli companies specializing in lasers, railguns and holography are expected to make a significant contribution to the research effort. (*Washington Post*, May 5, 1986)

**July 9:** Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin discloses that U.S.-Israeli military cooperation has included cooperation between special anti-terrorist forces. (Conference on Strategy and Defense in the Eastern Mediterranean, July 9, 1986)

Israeli newspaper *Davar* reports that the 1987 U.S. Military Construction Bill authorizes approximately \$70 million for prepositioning war materiel in Israel for use by U.S. armed forces in times of crisis. (*Davar*, July 9, 1986)

**July 30:** Vice President George Bush, on a visit to Jerusalem, initials agreement to build Voice of America transmitter in Israel. (*New York Times*, July 31, 1986)

**August:** U.S. agrees to lease a second batch of 12 Kfir C-1 aircraft. (*Jerusalem Post* International Edition, August 16, 1986)



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