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THE US-ISRAELI CONNECTION



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THE US-ISRAELI CONNECTION

by

Major Howard L. Chambers


30 December 1976

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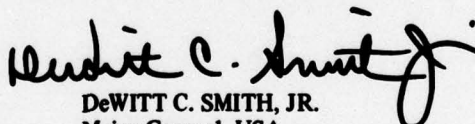
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FOREWORD

The US-Israeli "special relationship" has drawn the United States into a closer and more direct involvement in the Middle East. This memorandum analyzes the basis for the US-Israeli connection and various plausible options for the form and structure of future US-Israeli relations. The author indicates that, in the absence of a comprehensive peace settlement, formalization of the relationship is unlikely in order to retain US flexibility with both Arabs and Israelis. However, ultimately, some form of formal US bilateral alliance may evolve, possibly involving US military forces in conjunction with a final peace settlement. Such a bilateral arrangement would be supplemental to a multilateral guarantee involving both "superpowers" and perhaps UN peace observers. In any case, he concludes unless Israel undermines its American public support, the US-Israeli connection will continue to be very close, and perhaps even grow stronger.

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.



DeWITT C. SMITH, JR.
Major General, USA
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

MAJOR HOWARD L. CHAMBERS has been assigned to the Strategic Studies Institute since 1974. He is a graduate of Florida State University and holds a bachelor's degree in government, and master's degrees in international relations and in public administration. Major Chambers has been assigned to various command and staff positions in air defense units in the United States, Greece, and Korea, and served on the Army Staff in South Vietnam. He is a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College. Major Chambers is a specialist in the Middle Eastern affairs and his work has been published in a compendium of articles on national security and detente.

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THE US-ISRAELI CONNECTION

Steadfast US support for the State of Israel, a keystone of US Middle East policy for over 30 years, seems inconsistent and contradictory when considered in the context of overall US interests and objectives in the region. The basis of the US-Israeli relationship is extralegal, not found in formal bilateral treaties or documents, and only surfaces in the public and private statements of Presidents and other government officials and in the platforms of competing political parties. The nature of the relationship is ambiguous, lacking precise definition and explicit parameters. In the words of one analyst, Israel is "... not quite an ally; in some respects it is a client, but it is in no sense a puppet of the United States."¹ Nonetheless, the ties that bind these two states are strong and durable—possibly unbreakable—having withstood the strains of four wars, domestic political and economic pressures, and strong international criticism. To many observers, the US-Israeli connection appears to possess its own dynamism which seems to be drawing the United States almost inexorably into an increasingly direct involvement in the complexities of the volatile Middle East and the attendant dangers of future oil embargoes and possible superpower confrontations.

In recent years, especially since 1973, with Israel's increasing

diplomatic isolation and dependence on the United States, Americans have begun to take a more pragmatic and analytic view of US policy in support of Israel. Prior to 1973, unquestioning US support was practically axiomatic. However, the oil embargo awakened the public to the direct costs of continuing such a policy, and there is a growing realization in the United States and Israel of the constraints operating on their relationship. Some analysts have noted indications that US support for Israel is eroding. Although the course of US-Israeli relations has seldom run smoothly, to some they seem "rockier than usual these days." Because the United States has been unable to sufficiently influence Israeli policies and actions and Israel fears that the United States may sacrifice its interests in Israel for its need for Arab oil, a mutual distrust between the two states exists. One analyst has characterized their association as "a contradictory relationship of two close friends who don't quite trust each other yet don't want, or can't afford, to part."²

Despite increasing critical analyses of the US-Israeli connection, the "special relationship" continues essentially as former Secretary of State William P. Rogers succinctly summarized in 1970:

It is in our best interest to be sure that Israel survives as a nation. That has been our policy, and that will continue to be our policy. So we have to take whatever action we think is necessary to give them the assurance they need that their independence and sovereignty is going to continue.³

President Gerald R. Ford reiterated this policy shortly after taking office in 1974 when he assured Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin that "... we shall continue to stand by Israel. We are committed to Israel's survival and security."⁴ He thereby joined virtually every President since Harry Truman in firmly committing the United States to Israel's survival, and the Congress has consistently underwritten that pledge with large amounts of economic and military assistance.

The future direction of US-Israeli relations has been the subject of considerable speculation. While some have suggested the need to weaken or sever the connection, others have advocated strengthening, even formalizing, the relationship as a means of achieving peace in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The subject elicits strong emotions and biases which makes dispassionate and objective analyses difficult. The emotive nature of the subject notwithstanding, this paper will trace the evolution of the US-Israeli connection, examine the nature of the relationship, and project the most likely course it will take in the future.

EVOLUTION OF US MIDDLE EAST INTERESTS

Prior to World War II, the United States had little interest in the affairs of the Middle East, except for the nurturing of a rapidly developing oil industry. The Middle East and the problems of Palestine were considered the responsibility of the British. However, during the war, especially from 1942, the US Government came increasingly under the pressure of a well-organized worldwide Zionist organization operating through the American Jewish community. The Zionists sought US support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. The 1944 election campaign witnessed sympathetic expressions of support for Zionist objectives (by both political parties), the growth of public support for the Jews, and President Roosevelt's endorsement of the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. These events created considerable concern in the US oil industry and in the State and Defense Departments where US economic and strategic interests were feared jeopardized. Thus were sown the seeds of the domestic political and economic conflict over US interests in the Middle East which grew to create the internal trauma associated with US Middle East policy for over 30 years.⁵

Although support for the Jewish state grew in US public and political circles, the United States resisted British attempts, following World War II, to be drawn into a more active and responsible role in the Middle East. President Harry Truman believed that "the long-term fate of Palestine was the kind of problem we have the UN for."⁶ Early US policy, therefore, was to work through the United Nations or to serve as mediator in the Palestine problems but to avoid direct involvement. However, with the postwar collapse of British Middle East policy and diminishing British influence in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East in 1947, a power vacuum was created into which the Soviet Union attempted to expand.⁷ The United States responded to Soviet expansionism with the Truman Doctrine which embodied the US determination to contain the spread of communism. This determination led the United States to assume its first direct and large-scale responsibility for events in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Thus, superimposed upon US regional interests in oil and the establishment of the Jewish state was a third competing interest—the containment of Soviet expansionism. This desire to keep the Soviet Union out of the Middle East has remained a major touch-stone of overall American foreign policy.⁸ However, the realization of this

objective was complicated by the advent of the nuclear era, which increased the risk of pursuing superpower policies in the region and concomitantly increased the desire of both to avoid direct confrontations.

On May 14, 1948, the establishment of the State of Israel was proclaimed and the United States became the first state to extend de facto recognition to the provisional government. Almost immediately the Arab armies moved against Israel with the avowed goal of exterminating the new state and, simultaneously, the US interest was transformed from establishing the Jewish state to that of preserving it and ensuring its survival. The de facto recognition of Israel established the formal beginnings of the US-Israeli connection, and the 1948 conflict marked the formal commencement of the Arab-Israeli disputes which have been the central focus of US and Soviet Middle East policies for over 30 years.

The Soviet Union has built its political and military position in the Middle East since the mid-1950's through a diplomacy of polarization developed around the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States, on the other hand, has pursued the reactive diplomacy of antipolarization, frequently called the policy of "evenhandedness." The United States backed Israel without formal guarantee, but with implied assurance that it would not allow the destruction of the state, while continuing its policy of attempting to maintain friendly relations with the Arab states through economic and technical assistance programs.⁹ A recent Brookings Institution study reiterated this duplex approach in US policy: "The United States has a strong interest in the security, independence, and well-being of Israel and the Arab states of the area and in the friendship of both."¹⁰ Although evenhandedness is not meant to indicate absolute equality in quantities of assistance, the Arab states tend to view it in terms of absolute balance, and have difficulty understanding the policy when US economic assistance to Israel from 1948 to 1974 totaled \$1,292 million and tax-exempt private contributions from American Jews averaged \$72 million per year. During the same period, US economic assistance to the Arab states totaled \$2,002 million.¹¹ On a per capita and a per state basis, the level of US support provided to Israel and the Arabs has clearly favored Israel in an effort to establish military parity and its economic self-sufficiency.

For over three decades, the primary US objective has been the establishment of a stable peace in the region. President Ford stated that

the United States has two primary Middle East objectives: "First, we seek peace... Second, we desire a strong mutually beneficial relationship with every nation in the Middle East."¹² The US interest in achieving a stable peace has been described as a "vital interest" by the Brookings Institution,¹³ and Henry Kissinger has said that "There is no alternative to the full and active engagement of the United States in the diplomacy of peace in the Middle East."¹⁴ The United States has been involved in a variety of programs seeking to achieve peace in the region since 1948, including the Palestine Conciliation Commission, the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, various UN peace initiatives, two-nation and four-nation peace efforts, the Rogers plans, and the Kissinger step-by-step diplomacy. Throughout these three decades, the steadfastness of the US-Israeli connection has endured. Kissinger has said that:

... one of the principal ingredients of peace must be the steadfastness that contributed decisively to the creation of the State of Israel, a steadfastness which has helped protect Israel's security for over a quarter of a century, a steadfastness on which Israel can rely in the future.¹⁵

RECONCILING US MIDDLE EAST INTERESTS—THE DILEMMA

The following are generally agreed to constitute the catalog of US interests in the Middle East:

- Avoiding confrontation with the Soviet Union.
- Preventing the establishment of Soviet regional hegemony.
- Continuing access to oil at reasonable prices for the United States, West Europe, and Japan.
- The survival of Israel.
- Preventing polarization of regional powers along ideological lines thus inviting external intervention.
- Assisting regional states to move forward on national development.
- Establishing a stable and durable peace in the region. While essential agreement exists on what American interests are in the Middle East, there is a lack of agreement as to "the priority of these interests and the appropriate means of reconciling them where they conflict."¹⁶

National interests are usually prioritized according to the categories of "vital," "major," and "other." Here again, no precise definition of these terms exists. Former Senator J. W. Fulbright has suggested that a vital interest is "anything which pertains directly to our national

survival, or short of that, something materially discernible pertinent to the security and well-being of the people.”¹⁷ The difficulties in operationalizing this broad definition are apparent. A better definition is offered by Bernard Brodie, who considers a vital interest one which directly affects the continued existence of the nation and its institutions as perceived by its leadership and represents their subjective judgments about important foreign policy issues.¹⁸ While this definition is also difficult to operationalize, it suggests some important characteristics of a vital interest:

- It directly involves life and death of the society and its institutions.
- It is subjective.
- It is established by the nation’s leadership.
- Its perception may be affected by the existing domestic and international environment. Therefore, perceptions of vital interests, and indeed of all national interests, are subject to change, not capriciously, but responsively, as significant changes occur in the domestic and international environment over time.

From World War II through October 1973, the United States generally afforded to its interest in Israel a higher priority than to its other interests in the Middle East. It was implicitly, but not officially, a vital interest. A small minority of dissenting voices was faintly discernible in this period, but it was not until the effects of the Arab oil embargo were experienced by the American public and pressure from allies was brought to bear that serious and very audible challenges to the traditional priority of interests became evident and indications of an “erosion” of US support for Israel became apparent. The Arab employment of the oil weapon struck at what may well be the basic dilemma in US Middle East interests—the inherent dilemma between idealism and pragmatism. Professor Eugene Rostow of Yale believes that the problem of our policy priorities in the region requires “a national, and not a sentimental or a partisan, approach. What is at stake for us . . . should be examined in the perspective of the national interest, not of sympathy for either the Arabs or the Israelis.”¹⁹ Henry Kissinger also subscribes to this view as is apparent from a conversation he had with the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia:

... Our best argument is not to say that we’re anti-Israeli or pro-Arab, but that we want peace in the Middle East and that we’re pursuing the interests of the United States. If we try to put it on the basis of the merits of the

Arab-Israeli dispute, there will always be more people defending Israel than the Arab side. So we have to put it in terms of American national interests.²⁰

J. W. Fulbright considers the US interest in Israel "emotional and ideological"²¹ and contends that "access to oil is the greater of our interests in the Middle East, a vital interest, whereas our commitment to Israel is a less-than-vital interest."²² While stating that it is not necessary to sacrifice one interest for the other, he believes that, because of the growing US dependency on Arab oil, the practical approach is to give priority to access to oil while endeavoring to reconcile both interests. Others also subscribe to this thesis and even suggest that the United States divorce itself from its de facto commitment to Israel as a practical matter of economics and in the interest of world peace and stability.

Another aspect of the dilemma of US interests in the Middle East involves the paradoxical relationship between the US support for Israel and its desire to prevent expansion of Soviet influence and to avoid superpower confrontation situations in the region. The principal basis of Soviet influence in the region has been the Arab-Israeli conflict. The conflict has presented the opportunity for expanding Soviet influence which has been compounded by US steadfast support for Israel. A peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli disputes would significantly diminish Soviet influence in the Middle East. On the other hand, continued US political and military support for Israel significantly contributes to continued Soviet presence and influence in the Middle East, arms buildups, and potential for superpower confrontation.

Despite these apparent conflicts in US interests and increasing calls for a more pragmatic approach to US policy in the Middle East, the US-Israeli connection remains strong, viable, and a principal element in US Middle East policies. What accounts for the strength and durability of this special relationship? Upon what is the American commitment to Israel based?

THE NATURE OF THE US-ISRAELI CONNECTION

The unique historical relationship that exists between the United States and Israel is not easily understood or explained in terms of tangible linkages. Rather, the ties that bind these two states are founded on more abstruse factors. For purposes of this discussion, the various aspects of this relationship will be examined under the

categories of ideological, political, economic, military, cultural, and moral.

Ideological aspects. Many Americans believe that the US-Israeli relationship is based on mutual ideological affinities. According to Franz Shurmann, "No United States commitment more exemplifies democratic imperialism than that to Israel."²³ Until the early 1970's, Shurmann asserts the commitment to Israel "was clearly ideological." He suggests that "Israel was a democratic experiment in a feudal backwater which would someday spread light and progress to the entire Middle East" and that it exemplified the Democratic Party's consistent ideology "that a progressive, socialist, pro-American and non-Communist state could arise."²⁴ It is also frequently asserted in American academic and political circles that Israel is the most democratically-styled state in the Middle East and that a commonality of ideological purposes exists between the United States and Israel. On June 11, 1975, President Ford stated that the basis of the fundamental US-Israeli relationship was the sharing of a desire for the fundamental human values of freedom, independence, and the right of each individual to live in peace.²⁵ It has been reiterated on numerous occasions by US and Israeli leaders that the two countries share a deep devotion to democratic ideals. Furthermore, Henry Kissinger has asserted that "Israel and the United States are bound together in common purposes—a world envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations, a world in which the resort to force becomes unnecessary and disputes are resolved by peaceful means."²⁶ It seems clear that the United States perceives an ideological linkage with the State of Israel.

Political aspects. Probably the single most significant element of the US-Israeli connection is the US domestic political factor. The connection to Israel is particularly strong in domestic US politics due to the high level of political activism characteristic of the American Jewish Community. John C. Campbell has stated:

The organized Jewish Community exerts a potential influence not primarily in votes . . . but rather in its financial contributions to political causes and in prominence of its members in the media of communication and other fields of public and private life. Its voice comes through loud and clear at the White House and in the Congress. This is a political reality.²⁷

The American Jewish Community is a very powerful "political reality" in US domestic politics. The Jewish population constitutes slightly less

than 3 percent of the total American population or about six million people. Dr. Alfred Lilienthal, editor of *Middle East Perspective*, observes that 85 percent of the Jewish population is concentrated in 16 cities in 5 states—New York, California, Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, which collectively cast a total of 164 of the 270 electoral votes required to elect a President.²⁸ While the inference that the Jewish vote is the major element in electing Presidents is ludicrous, American Jews do tend to be very politically active and have very high voting participation percentages. For this reason, the Jewish vote, which comprises only 4 percent of the total national vote, is actively sought by both parties. However, the Jewish Community is not politically monolithic and is not unanimous in its support of US political candidates, Israel, or Zionism. Nonetheless, every Presidential campaign since 1948 has found both parties' platforms solidly behind Israel and, in the 1976 campaign, no candidate declared or implied opposition to Israel. Jews have also served in senior positions of the administrations of both parties and provide a large number of Capitol Hill staffers. Presently, Jews serving in high positions include Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; Attorney General Edward Levi; Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, Alan Greenspan; and Arthur Burns, Chairman of the Federal Reserve. There have also been several Jewish Justices of the Supreme Court—Brandeis, Cardozo, Frankfurter, and Goldberg. Although they do not run for political office in large numbers, there are 3 Jewish Senators, 20 Representatives in the House, and 2 State Governors.²⁹

Perhaps a more important political influence of the American Jewish Community is the financial contribution it makes to political candidates. In the last two Presidential elections, according to I. L. Kenan, Chairman of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Jewish contributors donated more than half of the contributions of \$10,000 and larger to Democratic candidates.³⁰ Individuals, neighborhood groups, and local Jewish organizations contribute heavily to political campaigns. It is not only the Jewish vote, but also the Jewish money that political parties seek.

Finally, a very strong political force influencing the US domestic political scene in favor of Israel is the AIPAC, an umbrella group for Jewish lobbying for Israel.³¹ The lobby blends a well-staffed and articulate professional group in Washington with the normally undirected articulation of Jewish sentiment nationwide. According to Rowland Evans and Robert Novak of *The Washington Post*, its efforts

are covertly directed from Israel.³² AIPAC is generally considered a strong and persuasive political influence and its success is generally attributed to a combination of US national interests, widespread public support, Jewish community activism, and an effective Washington operation.³³ The pervasive support of the general American populace, however, is critical to the effectiveness of the operation. Without this base of support, the Israeli case would be considerably weaker in Congress. In recent years much has been heard about the "erosion" of popular support for Israel. However, Leslie Gelb of *The New York Times* surveyed Congress extensively in 1974 and found that it was "not less pro-Israel" and that there was no apparent threat to traditional congressional support for Israel.³⁴ A Harris poll completed in January 1975 indicated that, rather than slipping, support for Israel was at 52 percent, a record peak.³⁵ Admittedly, polls, are not always the most accurate measures of true public opinion and their results frequently conflict. However, polls taken over the years have tended to confirm the support of the American public for Israel. Kissinger, when asked about eroding public support, remarked "... Abba Eban once told me that Israel considered objectivity 100 percent agreement with their point of view." Kissinger went on to say that "although there has been a deterioration of general US willingness to give foreign aid, I think Israel has suffered less from that deterioration than almost any other country."³⁶ Generally, public and congressional support for Israel has not "eroded," but reflects an evolving awareness of the broader issues involved and a greater appreciation of the Arab perspective.

The strength of US political support for Israel is reflected in the actions of the Congress in recent years. On May 26, 1970, 71 Senators wrote to Secretary of State Rogers urging shipment of jets to Israel and, in 1973, 70 Senators and 264 Representatives cosponsored resolutions calling for additional jets for Israel.³⁷ On May 22, 1975, 76 Senators sent a letter to President Ford urging him to "make it clear" that the United States "stands firmly with Israel" by, among other things, supporting "a level of military and economic support adequate to deter a renewal of war by Israel's neighbors."³⁸ In 1946, President Harry Truman stated very succinctly the essence of US political support for Israel past and present when, in opposition to State Department advisors on the issue of supporting the creation of a Jewish state, he said, "I'm sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism: I do not have

hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents.”³⁹ The domestic political influence available to Israel in the United States is a major element in the strength and durability of the US-Israeli connection. It also has significant impact on the making of US policy. Edward Sheehan, in stating to a Kissinger aide that Israel’s American constituency is the greatest constraint upon US policy, reports that the aide replied, “Of course. And the constraint becomes the determinant.”⁴⁰

Israel has become increasingly diplomatically isolated in the international community which has increased her political and economic dependence on the United States. This situation has given the United States considerable political leverage over Israel and that leverage was employed during the October 1973 War, the 1974 disengagement talks, and in the 1975 Sinai discussions. However, that leverage is complicated by Israeli national pride and a distrust of US motives.

Economic aspects. The Israeli economy, since 1973, has been in serious trouble with inflation running at 20-30 percent; a balance of payments deficit of about \$4 billion; and diminished growth in the GNP, though it is still increasing at a rate of about 5 percent.⁴¹ The United States is the principal external source of funds for Israel. The 1973 oil embargo and the Arab trade blacklist reduced Israel’s foreign trade receipts and increased its economic dependence on the United States. The United States has provided \$2.8 billion in economic assistance including about \$650 million in Food for Peace (Public Law 480) to Israel since 1948,⁴² and plans to provide \$819 million, including \$9 million in food imports and \$25 million for housing loan guarantees for fiscal year 1977.⁴³ Although US-Israeli trade is not significant in the overall context of US trade, it is very important to Israel. The United States in 1974 remained Israel’s largest supplier with a market share of 18 percent. With the signing of the 1975 Sinai agreement, Israel has become increasingly dependent on the United States for economic support—especially in the area of petroleum.

In addition to US economic assistance and trade, the American Jewish Community is also a significant source of additional funds for Israel. A strong empathetic connection between Jews in the United States, and elsewhere in the world, exists with the state of Israel. The desire to help is strong and, facilitated by a tax exemption granted to US charities, the Jewish Community funnels large amounts of money to Israel through the United Jewish Appeal (UJA). Between 1948 and

1971, the UJA provided almost \$1,654 million to Israel. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Center also invested over \$200 million in its programs in Israel for the same period. Another valuable source of funds has been the five State of Israel Bond issues floated world-wide since 1951, of which American Jews bought \$1,588 million. Philanthropic programs by American Jewish agencies have also been an important source of funds for Israel's economy.⁴⁴ The magnitude of the US Government investment and that of the American Jewish Community are important aspects of the US-Israeli connection.

Military aspects. The US military commitment to Israel's security has been expensive in terms of cost, risk, and US readiness. Until 1962, Britain, West Germany, and France were the principal suppliers of military equipment to Israel. However, with the sale of HAWK air defense missiles in 1962, the United States entered the market and, after the 1967 war, was the only major source of arms to which Israel could turn. From 1962 until 1975, the United States provided Israel with a total of \$4.2 billion in military assistance⁴⁵ and will provide \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 1976 and probably another \$1 billion will be requested for 1977. Therefore, by 1977, the total US military investment will be almost \$7 billion. Of this total, \$1.5 billion are grants and \$750 million of the fiscal year 1977 request will be forgiven.

In becoming the principal supplier of arms to Israel, the United States risked confrontation with the Soviet Union and possible nuclear war twice—in 1967 and 1973. To a Soviet threat of military intervention in 1967, President Johnson moved the US Sixth Fleet to within 50 miles of the Syrian coast and, in October 1973, a worldwide alert of US forces was ordered in response to a similar Soviet threat. Thus, history records at least two instances where the United States demonstrated an intention to come to the active military assistance of Israel even to point of confrontation with the USSR. In addition, the Israeli requirements following the 1973 war were so great that, in order to meet them, the United States drew equipment from military stocks in Europe and from reserve units thus risking degradation of its own readiness posture. These events demonstrate the intensity of the US commitment to Israeli security. Furthermore, US support for Israel has also created conflict with the European Allies and Japan and an increasing US isolation in the United Nations. The conflict between the essentiality of oil for the NATO Allies and the US commitment to Israel has created tensions within the Alliance that have been divisive and disintegrative. The United Nations vote on the issues of Zionism

and Israeli membership typifies the increasing strength of anti-Israeli forces and the increasing isolation of the United States because of its support for Israel.

Cultural aspects. The US-Israeli connection is also influenced by a cultural-psychological web established between the American public and Israel. President Ford said, "The United States and Israel share . . . a special opportunity as two kindred peoples, and common moral and political values that flow from the great Judeo-Christian heritage."⁴⁶ American Jews feel an ethnic and religious affinity for the Jews of Israel and their attachment has, in various ways, worked to draw the two countries closer to each other. Many American Jews have friends and family living in Israel. Their massive financial support, emigration, and frequent pilgrimages have strengthened the cultural and economic linkage through direct infusion of funds into the Israeli economy. Indirectly they have been instrumental in strengthening the cultural linkage by the importation of American movies, books, and music, which have also contributed to the Israeli economy and to making Israel one of the most "Americanized" and America-conscious countries in the world. The American Jewish cultural aspect of the US-Israeli relationship has also had impact on Israeli political decisions. The Israeli Government has been careful not to take, except under extreme circumstances, any action which would alienate the support of the American Jewish Community.

The American public, in general, identifies with the Israeli pioneering spirit, which is reminiscent of their own historical frontier experience. Americans also have a natural tendency to support the underdog wherever found—in sports or politics. Prime Minister Rabin was undoubtedly aware of this American cultural trait when, on a recent US visit, he said, "And if there is something that symbolizes Israel today, it is the spirit of David facing Goliath . . . I believe that this is what is significant in Israel today, the spirit of David seeking peace and, at the same time, being ready and capable to meet some Goliath."⁴⁷

Aside from the obvious religious association between American Jews and Israel, there is also an awareness among American Christians, engendered by a common Judeo-Christian heritage, that a religious linkage with Israel exists. Many in the American Christian Community see a close religious connection between the present State of Israel and the Israel of the Old Testament and Biblical prophecy. They believe that the words of the Prophet Ezekial were fulfilled in 1948, "Behold, I

will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone . . . and bring them to their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel . . ."⁴⁸ Furthermore, they believe that events since 1948 have fulfilled the message of Obadiah, "Behold, I will make you small among nations, you shall be utterly despised."⁴⁹ Some also believe that failure to support Israel by any nation will bring divine punishment as recorded in the apocalyptic writing of Zechariah, "And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."⁵⁰ The messianic tradition fundamental to the Christian faith also accounts for the close affinity that the Christian Community feels for Israel and its concern for the future of the Israeli state.

A final cultural aspect of the US-Israeli relationship involves the tendency of Americans to categorize or group people according to the force of kinship between them—along such lines as culture, religion, and ethnicity. *The New Yorker* magazine observed that: "The true reason we are loyal to Israel—and the reason our involvement with her is different from that of Vietnam—may be that Israel is a member of our extended family, of our tribe. . ."⁵¹ Perhaps this is what Henry Kissinger had in mind when he said ". . . given the special relationship and affection that exists between us and Israel, our disagreements . . . are in nature of family quarrels."⁵² Few Americans would admit to this kindred relationship because it seems irrational and smacks of "Archie Bunkerism," but those who have travelled to disparate cultural areas of the world are aware of the existence of this trait.

Moral aspects. The United States has recognized an "historical and moral" commitment to Israel which has roots in the Nazi holocaust of World War II. All Western states felt a degree of guilt and moral obligation following the war, which culminated in the establishment of the State of Israel. This was especially true of the United States, which stands as a bulwark of democracy, a refuge from persecution, and the most humanitarian nation in history. As J. W. Fulbright has said, "Israel is a creation of the conscience of the West, particularly that of the United States."⁵³ Henry Kissinger has declared that the United States is "convinced that Israel's survival is inseparable from the future of human dignity, and we shall never forget that Israel's security has a special claim on the conscience of mankind." Furthermore, Kissinger says that the United States and Israel are bound together, not by legal documents, but by "a moral connection which cannot be severed."⁵⁴

It is clear that the nature of the US-Israeli relationship and the basis upon which it rests is the result of the interaction of diverse domestic factors in both countries. This examination reveals that the US-Israeli linkage is a strong connection, and it is built upon intangible, often unexplainable, but very durable foundations. The key factors accounting for the strength of the connection appear to be the specific support of the American Jewish Community and the general support of the American public. Will it continue to endure in the future? In the final analysis, how far is the United States willing to go in supporting the security and survival of Israel?

THE FUTURE OF THE CONNECTION

Normative studies of possible futures for the US-Israeli relationship have been a popular pastime in recent years. The central focus of these analyses is normally the role the United States should play in a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement and how that role will relate to Israeli security and survival. The purpose of this discussion is not normative, but, rather, it is to project the most likely future based upon the previous analysis of the nature of the US-Israeli relationship and objective factors which may be operating in the future environment.

A final peace settlement is the pivotal issue around which revolves the future direction of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the US Israeli connection.

US-Israeli relations prior to or in the absence of a peace settlement. Prior to the achievement of a final peace settlement, little change can be expected in the current US role in the Middle East or its relationship with Israel. Of all the external states involved in the region, the United States probably has the most influence with the Arabs and Israel and, according to Egypt's Anwar Sadat, "holds all the cards" in the Middle East. A formal US bilateral treaty with Israel in conjunction with a multilateral guarantee of peace terms has been suggested by many, including J. W. Fulbright.⁵⁵ Going still further, Richard Ullman has suggested a formal US-Israeli treaty which would include the stationing of US troops in Israel as a credible guarantee of peace.⁵⁶ However, formalizing the relationship with Israel by an explicit treaty of guarantee in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories as inducement for peace negotiations would clearly limit US diplomatic freedom of maneuver and remove the trust the Arabs have

in her. In addition, as Stanley Hoffman has observed, such a treaty of guarantee could become a substitute for a settlement and would give Israel a lien on US Middle East policy.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a very likely Arab response to such a treaty would be to seek formal commitments from the Soviet Union, possibly including military forces, which would then place the superpowers in a confrontation situation which both seek to avoid. However, the current situation of "no war, no peace" cannot exist indefinitely. The political, economic, and military dependence of Israel on the United States is undesirable and unpopular in both countries. In fact, the alleged possession of nuclear weapons can be viewed as an attempt by Israel to establish its independence in the final analysis, and Robert Tucker has suggested that the United States should encourage and assist the development of an Israeli nuclear deterrent as an effective means of reducing dependence on the United States.⁵⁸ The Israelis pride themselves on their independence and seek to stand alone. The role of dependent is detrimental to their national pride and is likely, if prolonged, to create increased domestic political conflict and instability. In the United States, Israeli dependence over a prolonged period will also have detrimental impact on the special relationship. The economic burden can and probably will be sustained as long as the American public discerns an Israeli interest in reaching a peace settlement. Intransigence, however, would seriously undermine Israeli support even in the American Jewish Community. Therefore, over a prolonged period of no peace and no war, US support would probably decline dramatically unless the Israelis were successful in convincing the American public that the lack of peace was no fault of Israel.

There is growing evidence that a fifth round of the Arab-Israeli conflict is becoming increasingly possible, despite an apparent interest by all parties concerned in resuming the Geneva peace conference. If another war occurs, the US-Israeli relationship will be severely strained because of the likely increase in the economic and military burden on the United States. Further drawdowns from war reserve stockpiles would be required thus creating an increased risk for US military readiness. Most polls support the conclusion of the January 1975 Harris poll that the US public favors economic and military equipment support but does not favor use of US military forces to protect Israel.⁵⁹ US public opinion polls, however, usually reflect emotional rather than rational, reasoned responses and they are highly dependent upon the prevailing situation. In addition, they can be influenced by

the national leadership. Therefore, a poll taken with Israel under attack in a conflict in which they were not the perpetrators would probably reflect a public willingness to send troops. If Israel's survival were deemed by the United States to be in jeopardy, US air and naval power would probably be considered immediately by the President. US ground forces would be introduced only as a last resort. In view of the dynamic factors operating on the US-Israeli relationship, congressional consent would very possibly be afforded.

US-Israeli relations and a final peace settlement. A final peace settlement will most likely involve significant readjustment of the present Israeli borders and the establishment of a Palestinian political entity. No attempt will be made here to suggest the details of such a settlement. However, a major consideration in the achievement of this settlement will, of necessity, involve provisions for the security and legitimization of the State of Israel and the new Palestinian entity. Because the credibility of any signed treaty between the Arabs and Israel is likely to be low, credible external guarantees of its provisions will be necessary. Henry Kissinger acknowledged this fact when he stated that any final peace settlement "will undoubtedly require for its enforcement some international and—in my view, very probably—some American guarantees."⁶⁰ The inherent instability of hostile states with traditional and deeply-rooted animosities living as neighbors; the insecurity of Israel; and the strong US desire for peace in the region will drive the United States into a more direct involvement with Israel and the Arab states in the region. The need to extend guarantees as part of or as supplements to the settlement will probably strengthen the US-Israeli connection and the nature of the foundation of the relationship discussed previously will serve to support the establishment of US guarantees.

Alan Dowty and N. A. Pelcovits have done extensive studies of the possibilities for implementing security guarantees in the Middle East. While Pelcovits believes that bilateral and international assurances could reinforce a settlement at the proper time, Dowty suggests that multilateral guarantees offer the best option as opposed to unilateral or joint guarantees by the superpowers.⁶¹ Others have recommended the unilateral introduction of US military forces or joint US-USSR military forces to serve in peace-keeping or peace-enforcing roles as part of a guarantee for final settlement.⁶² However, the introduction of forces by the great powers would have the effect of localizing their global rivalry and increasing the threat of confrontation and conflict.

Furthermore, a joint superpower guarantee would give each the power to veto or obstruct action, which would, in effect, negate the guarantee. The necessity to involve the superpowers, especially the United States, is generally acknowledged by all parties involved. Although the United States exercises the greatest influence with both Arabs and Israelis, at least minimal participation in the final settlement by the Soviet Union is required in order to secure a stable agreement. While both superpowers must be involved, to some extent, in the creation of the final agreement, the recognized limitations and risks of unilateral and joint superpower guarantees require that the implementation of guarantees be multilateral. Such multilateral guarantees must be supported by a broad variety of states which have a direct interest in the maintenance of the peace treaty. Although international guarantees of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the states involved will probably be a part of the settlement, Israeli distrust of external powers, fostered by her historical experience in the international community, will cause her to turn to the only power she trusts (the United States) for explicit supplemental guarantees for her security and sovereignty. While the United States will probably continue to resist formalizing its commitment to Israel, explicit guarantees for continued military assistance, to include limited use of US military forces in the event of the failure of multilateral guarantees, will probably be made at the Executive level. To preclude reciprocal Soviet action, the United States could also offer similar guarantees to the involved Arab states. If this step is unsuccessful and the Soviets succeed in establishing bilateral guarantees, formal or informal, with the Arab states, the situation would become unstable and the risk of superpower confrontation could escalate.

A peace settlement will not be immediately stable. Arms transfers will probably continue to both sides and, until control of this complex issue can be implemented, the threat to regional peace will continue to require US military assistance to Israel to ensure her capability for self-defense. In addition, the animosities existing between Arabs and Israelis will only subside over an extended period of peace. Therefore, regional political and economic cooperation between the Arabs and Israelis will probably not be effective for a considerable period and Israeli economic dependency on the United States will probably continue for the foreseeable future.

CONCLUSION

The US-Israeli connection has been an open-ended, informal, and

contradictory association which has proven to be increasingly strong and durable—possibly unbreakable—for the past three decades. Based upon strong ideological, political, economic, military, cultural, and moral linkages, the relationship has created a basic US foreign policy dilemma—that of reconciling conflicting US national interests in the Middle East. That dilemma has consistently been resolved in favor of preserving the “special relationship” between the two states and the foreseeable trend in US-Israeli relations is for a continued and perhaps closer association in the future.

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possibly involving US military forces in conjunction with a final peace settlement. Such a bilateral arrangement would be supplemental to a multilateral guarantee involving both "superpowers" and perhaps UN peace observers. In any case, he concludes unless Israel undermines its American public support, the US-Israeli connection will continue to be very close, and perhaps even grow stronger.

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