MIDDLE EAST CONTEMPORARY SURVEY

Volume X: 1986
MIDDLE EAST CONTEMPORARY SURVEY

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Volume V, 1980-81
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Volume VIII, 1983-84
Volume IX, 1984-85
About the Book and Editors

Established in 1977, the *Middle East Contemporary Survey (MECS)*, a unique annual record of political developments in the Middle East, is acknowledged as the standard reference work on events and trends in the region. Designed to be a continuing, up-to-date reference for scholars, researchers and analysts, policymakers, students, and journalists, it examines in considerable detail the rapidly changing Middle Eastern scene in all its complexity.

In each volume, the material is arranged in two parts. The first contains a series of essays on broad regional issues and on the overall relations of the region with other parts of the world. The second consists of country-by-country surveys of all the Arab states, as well as Turkey, Israel, and Iran. The accent in the second part is on elucidating the inner dynamics of each country’s polity and society.

In a work of this kind, the events of the past year inevitably dictate the major themes of each volume. The topics discussed in Volume X, which covers the year 1986, include:

- The breakdown of the Husayn-'Arafat Agreement;
- Iranian successes on land against Iraq in the Gulf War;
- The rebellion of a police force in Cairo;
- The implementation of the rotation agreement in Israeli politics.

While surveying and analyzing these and other developments, this volume also explains why they did not amount and lead to substantive change in the patterns of Middle Eastern politics.

Maps, tables and a detailed index accompany the text.

Itamar Rabinovich is Professor of Middle Eastern and African History and Head of the Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University. Haim Shaked is Professor of Middle Eastern and African History and Senior Research Fellow at the Dayan Center. They are coeditors of *The Middle East and the United States: Perceptions and Policies*. 
Preface

The Middle East Contemporary Survey (MECS) is an annual record and analysis of political, economic, military and international developments in the Middle East. The present volume is the tenth in a series which provides scholars, diplomats, students and informed laymen with a continuing, up-to-date reference work recording the rapidly changing events in an exceptionally complex part of the world. Every attempt has again been made to use the widest range of source material and maintain the highest possible academic standards.

Most of the essays in this volume have been researched and written by the members of the Shiloah Institute of the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Other contributions have been made by distinguished academics and experts from abroad.

The material in this volume is arranged in two parts. The first comprises a series of essays which study developments relating to internal and external issues, both regionally and internationally. Subjects explored in detail include Israeli-Arab and inter-Arab relations, as well as the international dimensions of the contending forces in the region. The second part comprises a country-by-country survey of each of the Middle Eastern entities, excluding the three North African states of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

The period surveyed in this volume, unless otherwise indicated, is from January to December 1986. In order to avoid excessive repetition while at the same time achieving a comprehensive survey of the affairs of each country individually, extensive cross-references have been used.

In this volume, as in the previous one, the sections on economic affairs and the armed forces which, in previous volumes, were appended to each country survey, have been discontinued. This is due to the appearance, in recent years, of other surveys which are fully devoted to these two themes, and therefore provide much more data on them.

I.R. & H.S.
Acknowledgments

As editors we are grateful to a large number of contributors who have made this volume possible. First and foremost we recognize the work of the staff of the Dayan Center and its Shiloah Institute for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, whose individual contributions are acknowledged separately.

In the process of preparing this volume we were given much help by Alec Israel. Barbara Newson’s role as executive editor has been indispensable. The exacting work of indexing has been carried out by Ronald Watson.

At the Dayan Center, Edna Liftman and Amira Margalith, assistants to the Head of the Center, were responsible for the complicated coordination of the production of the volume, and fulfilled a variety of other executive tasks with accuracy, skill and unflagging care. Others at the Center who must be singled out for special thanks are Lydia Gareh, Margaret Mahlab and Eleonora Segal, and the Dayan Documentation System team. Ruth Beit-Or prepared the maps for publication and David Levinson proofread large parts of the volume.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Frederick A. Praeger, Barbara Ellington, and the staff of Westview Press for their help in the production and distribution of this volume of MECS. The first seven volumes of MECS were published by Holmes & Meier. The contribution made by Max Holmes and by Colin Legum to the launching of this project and to setting its standards remain invaluable and much appreciated.

I.R. & H.S.
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Transliteration

The Arabic language has been transliterated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>for</td>
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<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>for</td>
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<tr>
<td>dh</td>
<td>for</td>
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<td>for</td>
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<td>kh</td>
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<td>l</td>
<td>for</td>
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<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the following should be noted:
Long vowels are not marked for distinction from short ones. Thus قتنظر = nazir, but also نظر = nazir.
The hamza is used only in the middle of a word.
The shadda is rendered by doubling the consonant containing it.
The ta marbuta is not shown, except in construct phrases. Thus madina, madinat Nasr.
The definite article is always shown as “al-”, regardless of the kind of letter following it.
Exceptions to the above are names of Lebanese and North African personalities who have adopted a French spelling for their names.
### List of Initials and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>Arab-African Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALF</td>
<td>Arab Liberation Front</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aramco</td>
<td>Arabian-American Oil Company (now Saudi-nationalized company)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUB</td>
<td>American University in Beirut</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWACS</td>
<td>airborne warning and control system (radar)</td>
<td>barrels per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP</td>
<td>British Petroleum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Chamber of Deputies (Lebanon)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>US Central Command</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency (US)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Citizen's Party (Turkey)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSU</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Soviet Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECA</td>
<td>Defense and Economic Agreement (Turkey and US)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dev-Yol</td>
<td>Devrimci Yol — “Revolutionary Path” (Turkey)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DISK</td>
<td>Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation, Turkey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DLP</td>
<td>Democratic Left Party (Turkey)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DMI</td>
<td>Dar al-Maal al-Islami (Islamic Finance House)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democrat Party (Turkey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTU</td>
<td>Dar Tadine al-Umma (finance company)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUP</td>
<td>Democratic Unionist Party (Sudan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EOKA</td>
<td>Ethniki Organosis Kyriion Aganiston (National Organization of Cypriot Combatants)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation (US)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>Free Democratic Party (Turkey)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de la Libération Nationale (Algeria)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>gross national product</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPC</td>
<td>General People’s Congress (Libya, YAR)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPCom</td>
<td>General People’s Committee (Libya)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPO</td>
<td>Government Press Office (Israel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSS</td>
<td>General Secret Services (Israel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUNT</td>
<td>Gouvernement d’Union Nationale de Transition (Chad)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>His Highness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAF</td>
<td>Israel Air Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICO</td>
<td>Islamic Conference Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>Iraqi Communist Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Islamic Development Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDF</td>
<td>Israel Defense Forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA</td>
<td>Iranian Medical Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
<td>international edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRGC</td>
<td>Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IRP Islamic Republican Party
JP Justice Party (Turkey)
KCP Kurdish Communist Party
KD Kuwaiti dinars
KDP Kurdish Democratic Party
KOTC Kuwait Oil Tanker Company
LCP Lebanese Communist Party
LF Lebanese Forces
ME Middle East
MERIP Middle East Research and Information Project
MIDEAST- FOR Middle East Air Force (US Navy)
MK Member of Knesset (Israel)
MP Motherland Party (Turkey)
MWL Muslim World League
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NC National Command (Iraq)
nd no date
NDP National Democratic Party (Egypt, Turkey)
NIF National Islamic Front
NLP National Liberal Party (Lebanon)
np no publisher
NPUG National Progressive Unionist Grouping (Egypt)
NPF National Progressive Front (Syria)
NRP National Religious Party (Israel)
NSC National Security Council (US)
NSP National Salvation Party (Turkey)
OAPEC Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
OAU Organization of African Unity
OPEC Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCP Palestinian Communist Party
PDFLP Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PDRY People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen
Petromin General Petroleum and Mineral Organization (Saudi Arabia)
PFLP Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP-GC Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command
PLA Palestine Liberation Army
PLF Palestine Liberation Front
PLO Palestine Liberation Organization
PNC Palestine National Council
PNSF Palestinian National Salvation Front
Polisario Front for the Liberation of Al-Saqiyya al-Hamra and Rio de Oro
PPNF Patriotic and Progressive National Front (Iraq)
PPP People's Progressive Party (Sudan)
PPSF Palestine Popular Struggle Front
PSP Progressive Socialist Party
PUK Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RC Regional Command (Iraq)
RCC Revolutionary Command Council (Iraq)
RG Revolutionary Guards
RPG rocket-propelled grenade
RPP Republican People's Party (Turkey)
SAC  Sudan African Congress
SADR  Saharan Arab Democratic Republic
SAIRI Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SALT  Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SAMA  Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency
SANU  Sudanese African National Union
SAVAK State Intelligence and Security Organization (Iran)
SCP  Syrian Communist Party
SDI  Strategic Defense Initiative
SDPP  Social Democratic Populist Party
SEB  Supreme Education Board (Turkey)
SEEs State Economic Enterprises (Turkey)
SFP  Sudan Federal Party
SIPRI Stockholm Internal Peace Research Institute
SISC Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council
SLA  South Lebanese Army
SNP Sudan National Party
SPLA Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SPLM Sudanese People's Liberation Movement
SSNP Syrian Social Nationalist Party
SSPA Southern Sudanese Political Association
TMC Transitional Military Council (Sudan)
TPP True Path Party (Turkey)
TRNC Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Türk-İş Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Trade Union Confederation of Turkey)
TWA Trans-World Airlines
UAE United Arab Emirates
UAEDh UAE dirham
UK United Kingdom
UN United Nations
UNESCO UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF UN (International) Children's (Emergency) Fund
UNIDO UN Industrial Development Organization
UNIFIL UN Interim Force In Lebanon
UNSC UN Security Council
UP Umma Party (Sudan)
WAMY World Assembly of Muslim Youth
WP Welfare Party (Turkey)
YAR Yemeni Arab Republic
YSP Yemeni Socialist Party
# List of Sources

**Newspapers, Periodicals, Irregular and Single Publications**

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<td>Africa Research Bulletin</td>
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<td>Al-Ahram</td>
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<td>Published by al-Ahram, deals mainly with economic issues</td>
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<td>Akhbar al-'Alam al-Islami</td>
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<td>(Baghdad, weekly)</td>
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American-Arab Affairs
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American Metal Market
(New York, daily)
Al-Anba’
(Kuwait, daily)

Al-Anwar
(Beirut, daily)
Arab Press Service APS
(Nicosia, weekly)
Arab News
(London, daily)
Arab Studies Quarterly
(Belmont, MA, quarterly)
Arab Times
(Kuwait, daily)
Arabia, The Islamic World Review
(London, weekly)
Al-‘Awda
(East Jerusalem, fortnightly)
Al-Ayyam
(Khartoum, daily)
Baltimore Sun
(Baltimore, daily)
Al-Ba’th
(Damascus, daily)
Al-Bayadir al-Siyasi
(East Jerusalem, bi-weekly)
Al-Bayan
(Dubai, daily)
Al-Bayraq
(Beirut, daily)
Al-Bilad
(Jidda, daily)
Boston Globe
(Boston, daily)
Briefing
(Ankara, weekly)
Chicago Tribune
(Chicago, daily)
Christian Science Monitor CSM
(Boston, daily)
Commentary
(New York, monthly)

Counterpoint
(Darlinghurst, NSW, monthly)
Country Reports CR
(London, quarterly)
Current Digest of the Soviet Press CDSP
(Chicago, weekly)

Pro-establishment but critical of specific government policies and of US attitudes toward the Middle East Rightist

Published by Saudi Research and Marketing Company

Published by the Association of Arab-American University graduates

Published by the Islamic Press Agency

Organ of the Syrian Ba’th Party

Sympathetic to al-Fath

Journal of significant thought and opinion on contemporary issues; published by the American Jewish Committee

Published by Business Press International

Published by Economist Publications Ltd. Formerly Quarterly Economic Review (until No 2 1986)

Translation from the Soviet Press. Published by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Chicago
Current Turkish Thought
(Istanbul, quarterly)

Daily Telegraph
(London, daily)

Davar
(Tel Aviv, daily)

Defense News
(Springfield, VA, weekly)

Defense Week
(Washington, DC, weekly)

Democratic Palestine
(Cyprus, monthly)

Department of State Bulletin
(Washington, DC, weekly)

Al-Difa’ al-’Arabi
(Beirut, monthly)

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(London, weekly)

Emirates News
(Abu Dhabi, daily)

Facts on File
(New York, weekly)

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(East Jerusalem, daily)

Al-Fajr
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Filastin al-Thawra
(Nicosia, weekly)

The Financial Times
(London, daily)

Foreign Affairs
(New York, quarterly)

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(London, weekly)

Fourteenth October
(Aden, daily)

Glasgow Herald
(Glasgow, daily)

Grassroots
(Cape Town, monthly)

The Guardian
(London, daily)

Guardian Weekly
(Manchester, weekly)

Published by Redhouse Yayinevi

Organ of the Israeli Trade Union Federation (Histadrut)

English-language organ of the PFLP

Deals mainly with military affairs

Pro-Iraqi. Originally a Beirut weekly reflecting the Iraqi Ba’th views. Closed down by the Syrians (December 1976). Published in Paris until July 1977 and then in London

Sympathetic to the PLO

English- and Hebrew-language weekly editions of al-Fajr

Organ of the PLO. Ceased publication during the war in Lebanon. Resumed publication in Nicosia in October 1982

Published by The Economist

Organ of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP)

Newsletter for Black communities of the Western Cape

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The Guiding Star
(Khartoum, monthly)
Gulf Daily News
(Bahrain, daily)
Günaydın
(Istanbul, daily)
Günes
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Al-Guraba
(London, monthly)
Ha'aretz
(Tel Aviv, daily)
Al-Hadaf
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Al-Hadaf
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Hadashot
(Tel Aviv, daily)
Al-Halij
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Hatsofeh
(Tel Aviv, daily)
Al-Hawadih
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Hürriyet
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Al-Hurriyya
(Nicosia, weekly)

IIA Research Reports
(London, 20 per year)
Impact International
(London, twice monthly)
Insight
(Washington, bi-monthly)
International Defense Industries
(weekly)
International Financial Statistics
(Washington, monthly)
International Herald Tribune
(Paris and Zurich, daily)
Iran Press Digest
(Tehran, weekly)
Iran Times
(London, weekly)
Al-'Iraq
(Baghdad, daily)
Israel Statistical Abstract
(Jerusalem, annually)
Al-Ittihad
(Abu Dhabi, daily)
Al-Ittihad al-'Usbu'i
(Abu Dhabi, weekly)

Independent. Supported by several businessmen. Began publication in February 1982

Organ of the PFLP. Transferred from Beirut after the war in Lebanon

Began publication in March 1984

Organ of the National Religious Party (Mafdal; NRP) A Beirut weekly, reflecting pro-Phalangist tendencies. Published in London since November 1978

Organ of the PDFLP. Ceased publication during the war in Lebanon. Resumed publication in Nicosia in February 1983 Published by the Institute of Jewish Affairs

Published in the US by DMS

Published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

English-language summary of Iranian Press

Published by the Central Bureau of Statistics
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Monthly Petroleum Statistics Reports
(Washington, monthly)

Al-Moudjahid
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Al-Mujtama
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Al-Mukhtar al-Islami
(Cairo, monthly)

Al-Musawwar
(Cairo, weekly)

Muslim World League Journal
(Mecca, monthly)

Al-Mustaqbal
(Paris, weekly)

Al-Nahar
(Paris and Zurich, weekly)

Al-Nahar Arab Report and Memo
(Beirut and Zurich, weekly)

Al-Nashra
(Nicosia, weekly)

National Interest
(Washington, DC, quarterly)

Near East Report
(Washington, weekly)

New African
(London, monthly)

Newark Star-Ledger
(Newark, New Jersey, daily)

New Leader
(New York, bi-weekly)

Newspot
(Ankara, weekly)

New Statesman
(London, weekly)

Newsweek
(New York, weekly)

New Times
(Moscow, weekly)

New York Post
(New York, daily)

The New York Review of Books
(New York, fortnightly)

The New York Times
(New York, daily)

Nidal al-Sha'b
(Beirut, weekly)

Le Nouvel Observateur
(Paris, weekly)

Al-Nur
(Cairo, weekly)

The Observer
(London, weekly)

October

Published by the US Department of Energy

French-language journal of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)

Organ of the Social Reform Associations. Sympathetic to Muslim Brotherhood views

Published by MWL Press and Publications Department

Pro-Saudi

Rightist

Weekly international edition of al-Nahar

English-language political and economic report of al-Nahar Deals with opposition movements in various Arab countries

News and opinion

Turkish digest, published by Directorate-General of Press and Information

English-language edition of Novoe Vremia
(Cairo, weekly)
L’Opinion
(Paris, weekly)
Orbis
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Orient
(Hamburg, quarterly)
L’Orient le Jour
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El Pais
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Pasdar-e Eslam
(Qum, monthly)
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(Maidstone, Kent, fortnightly)
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(Paris, quarterly)
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Le Point
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Pravda
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Problems of Communism
(Washington, DC, bi-monthly)
Pulse
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Quarterly Economic Review
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Al-Ra’y al’Amm
(Kuwait, daily)
La Revue du Liban et de l’Orient Arabe
(Beirut, weekly)
Risalat al’Iraq
 MONTHLY)

Al-Riyad
(Riyadh, daily)
Ruz al-Yusuf
(Cairo, weekly)

Published by Foreign Policy Research Institute

Publication of the Revolutionary Guards

Organ of the Central Committee of the CPSU

English-language summary of Turkish Press
Kuwaiti nationalist; sympathetic to the Palestinian cause

Published by The Economist Intelligence Unit. At No 2 1986, ceased publication under this title to become Country Report (CR)
Known for favorable views toward Jordan

Kuwaiti nationalist; conservative

Organ of the Iraqi Communist Party. Began publication in 1981. Place of publication not indicated

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(Cyprus, weekly)  
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Al-Sayyad  
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(Algiers, daily)  
Al-Sha'b  
(Cairo, weekly)  
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Al-Sharq  
(Beirut, daily)  
Al-Sharq al-Awsat  
(London, Jidda and Riyadh, daily)  
Al-Sharq al-Jadid  
(London, monthly)  
Al-Shira'  
(Beirut, weekly)  
Al-Siyasal  
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Al-Siyasa  
(Kuwait, daily)  
Der Spiegel  
(Hamburg, weekly)  
La Stampa  
(Milan, daily)  
Der Stern  
(Hamburg, weekly)  
Strategic Review  
(Waltham, MA, quarterly)  
Al-Sudani  
(Khartoum, daily)  
Sudanow  
(Khartoum, monthly)  
Sudan Times  
(Khartoum, daily)  
Sunday Telegraph  
(London, weekly)  
Survival  
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Svenska Dagbladet  
(Stockholm, daily)  
Al-Tadamun  
(London, monthly)  
Al-Tadamun al-Islami  
(Mecca, monthly)  
Al-Tali'a al-'Arabiyya  

Reflects Libyan views  
Published by the Iraqi Islamic opposition  
Started publication in early 1983  
Organ of the Socialist Labor Party  
Sympathetic to the PLO  
Pro-Syrian  
Reflects the views of the Umma Party  
Moderate; pro-Government  
Published by the US Strategic Institute  
Published by the Ministry of Culture and Information  
Published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies  
Pro-Iraqi
(Paris, weekly)  
*Al-Tawhid*  
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*Al-Thawra*  
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(London and Washington, monthly)  
*Time*  
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*The Times of India*  
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‘Uman  
(Muscat, twice a week)  
*Al-Urdunn al-Dimuqrati*  
(Nicosia)  
*Al-Usbu’ al-‘Arabi*  
(Paris, weekly)  
*US News and World Report*  
(Washington, DC, weekly)  
*La Vanguardia*  
(Barcelona, daily)  
*Al-Wafd*  
(Cairo, weekly)  
*Al-Wahda*  
(Cairo, monthly)  
*The Wall Street Journal*  
(New York, daily)  
*The Washington Post*  
(Washington, daily)  
*The Washington Quarterly*  
(Washington, quarterly)  
*The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*  
(Washington, weekly)  
*The Washington Times*  
(Washington, daily)  
*Al-Watan*  
(Kuwait, daily)  
*Al-Watan al-‘Arabi*  
(Paris, weekly)  
*Al-Yamama*  
(Riyadh, weekly)  

Conservative  
Clandestine magazine published by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)  
Organ of the Iraqi Ba’th Party  
Semi-official  
Organ of the Islamic Revolutionary Movement in the Arabian Peninsula  
Published by the Ministry of Information  
Organ of the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan  
Organ of the New Wafd Party  
Critical of Kuwait's Government; pro-Syrian  
Pro-Iraqi
**Al-Yarmuk**  
(Baghdad, weekly)

**Al-Yawm**  
(Amman, daily)

**Al-Yawm al-Sab'i**  
(Paris, weekly)

**Yedd'ot Aharonot**  
(Tel Aviv, daily)

**Al-Zahf al-Akhdar**  
(Tripoli, weekly)

Military magazine, issued by the Iraqi Defense Ministry

Affiliated to the PLO. Started publication in 1984

Ideological weekly of the Revolutionary Committees; appears in both Arabic and English editions

## News Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agence France Presse (Paris)</td>
<td>AFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algérie Presse Service (Algiers)</td>
<td>APS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatolia (Ankara)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Associated Press (New York)</td>
<td>AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associazione Nazionale Stampa Associata (Rome)</td>
<td>ANSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deutsche Presse Agentur (Bonn)</td>
<td>DPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emirates News Agency (Abu Dhabi)</td>
<td>ENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf News Agency (Manama)</td>
<td>GNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Islamic News Agency (Jidda)</td>
<td>IINA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi News Agency (Baghdad)</td>
<td>INA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Revolution News Agency (Tehran)</td>
<td>IRNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamahiriyya Arab News Agency (Tripoli)</td>
<td>JANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Telegraphic Agency (New York)</td>
<td>JTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordanian News Agency (PETRA; Amman)</td>
<td>JNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwaiti News Agency (Kuwait)</td>
<td>KUNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maghreb Arabe Presse (Rabat)</td>
<td>MAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East News Agency (Cairo)</td>
<td>MENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novinska Agencija Tanjug (Belgrade)</td>
<td>Tanjug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-African News Agency (Dakar)</td>
<td>PANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatari News Agency (Doha)</td>
<td>QNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuters (London)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Press Agency (Riyadh)</td>
<td>SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese News Agency (Khartoum)</td>
<td>SUNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Arab News Agency (Damascus)</td>
<td>SANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraphnoe Agentstvo Sovetskovo Soiuza (Moscow)</td>
<td>Tass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunis Afrique Presse (Tunis)</td>
<td>TAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Press International (New York)</td>
<td>UPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikalat al-Anba al-Filastiniyya (Palestinian News Agency; Damascus)</td>
<td>WAFA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Radio and Television Stations, and Monitoring Services

(Radio stations known by the location of their principal transmitter are not listed — their names being self-explanatory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associated Broadcasting TV</td>
<td>ABC TV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
<td>BBC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation, Summary of World Broadcasting: the ME and Africa</td>
<td>SWB</td>
<td>Monitoring reports published in English translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable News Network</td>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Report: Middle East and Africa</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>Monitoring reports published in English translation by the US Foreign Broadcasting Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Report: Soviet Union</td>
<td>DR:SU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Defense Forces Radio</td>
<td>R.IDF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Publication Research Services: Near East and North Africa</td>
<td>JPRS</td>
<td>English-language translation from foreign Press. Occasionally includes monitoring reports as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>West Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Free Voice of Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese Forces TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clandestine station apparently broadcasting from Iraq, reflecting views of expatriate Gen Gholam 'Ali Oveysi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Ihdin of Free and Unified Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Liberty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part of Radio Free Europe/ R. Liberty, a US Government-sponsored part of the international communication agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. SPLA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the Sudanese Revolutionary Armed Struggle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Information Agency</td>
<td>USIA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Free Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military station of the Lebanese Phalanges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the Great Arab Homeland</td>
<td>R. Tripoli, VoGAH</td>
<td>Libyan transmitter to Arab audiences outside Libya, previously known as Voice of the Arab Homeland (VoAH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the Homeland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Hope</td>
<td>VoH</td>
<td>Muslim leftist radio in West Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Israel</td>
<td>VoI</td>
<td>Israeli national radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Lebanon</td>
<td>VoL</td>
<td>Radio station operated by the Lebanese Phalanges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the Masses</td>
<td>R. Baghdad, VoM</td>
<td>A series of special programs in Arabic, Kurdish and Farsi; broadcast over R. Baghdad for a few hours each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the Mountain</td>
<td></td>
<td>Radio station of the PSP, operating from the Shuf mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the National Alliance for the Liberation of Syria</td>
<td>VoP (Algiers)</td>
<td>Syrian opposition radio station, based in Baghdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Palestine (Algiers)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PLO daily program over R. Algiers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xxx
Voice of Palestine (Baghdad)  VoP (Baghdad)  PLO main radio station transferred from Beirut after the war in Lebanon. Began transmitting in November 1982 PLO daily program over R. San'a

Voice of Palestine (San'a)  VoP (San'a)  Published by the USIA Library, Washington

Wireless File  WF  

Note: Radio and news agency material not otherwise attributed is available in Hebrew translation at the Dayan Center archives.
Notes on Contributors

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PART ONE:
CURRENT ISSUES
THE MIDDLE EAST
IN PERSPECTIVE
The Middle East in 1986

ITAMAR RABINOVICH

Last year, when he wrote the introductory essay to *Middle East Contemporary Survey* IX, Gabriel Ben-Dor defined 1985 as a year of "incremental change" in the Middle East. A year earlier he had characterized ME politics as "the politics of fragmentation," and in 1983 he had viewed it as "the politics of uncertainty." This terminology indicates that, like several other students of current Middle Eastern affairs, Professor Ben-Dor has been hard put to identify a pattern or "an organizing principle" with which to impose at least a semblance of order on the confused reality of the Middle East during the early 1980s.

In earlier periods, if a dominant pattern or theme was not readily discernible, it was a major event — the Iranian Revolution, Egyptian-Israeli peace, or the war in Lebanon — around which much of the year's political chronology seemed to evolve. But in the early 1980s the Middle Eastern political scene seemed to have been shaped by several divergent and apparently unrelated processes and developments — the lingering war between Iran and Iraq, the stalemated Arab-Israeli peace process, the decline of the Arab oil economy, the Soviet-American competition (ever present, but ever changing), the disintegration of the system of inter-Arab relations, the domestic difficulties faced by several Middle Eastern regimes.

This configuration did not change in 1986. It was another year when much happened but little was altered in the general scheme of things in the Middle East.

America's policies and position in the Middle East were affected most significantly by developments that occurred in the final months of the year. In October, it was discovered that the Reagan Administration had misled its allies and the American media through a "disinformation campaign" directed at Libya, and that, more important, it had been negotiating with the Islamic Republic of Iran over hostages, going so far as to provide it directly and indirectly with arms. This was disconcerting to Washington's conservative Arab allies; but the ensuing scandal's more important ramifications lay in the enfeeblement of an Administration with two years in office ahead of it. President Reagan's failure in the November congressional elections and the more serious challenge presented by Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union further reinforced this trend.

Earlier in the year the Administration's main efforts in the Middle East were invested in attempting to revive the Arab-Israeli peace process through Israeli-Jordanian negotiations, and in launching a campaign against terrorism. This culminated in the 14 April aerial raid on Libya, whose Government was perceived and presented as the main source of inspiration and support for anti-American terrorism. But in the latter part of 1986 the campaign abated as the Administration displayed a hesitant position toward Syria and subsequently was embarrassed by the disclosures of October.
These developments, the failure to formulate a satisfactory policy to deal with the new phase in the war between Iran and Iraq, and the strain in several bilateral relationships with Middle Eastern allies cast a shadow over Washington's position in the region but did not erode its primacy. The US was still the senior superpower in the Middle East, defending a position that the Soviet Union was seeking to diminish.

For the Soviet Union, 1986 in the Middle East began with a series of problems and threats. Domestic upheaval jeopardized its ascendancy in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The escalating tension between the US and Libya presented a familiar dilemma. In case of an actual armed conflict, the Soviet Union would either have to intervene or be humiliated. As it happened, Moscow's passive attitude in April was embarrassing. This raised the more serious threat of an American-Syrian clash. However, Moscow was not presented with another dilemma, partly because Washington realized that the USSR's commitment to Syria was far more serious than its commitment to Libya.

The silver lining for the Soviets in the Middle East during these months came in February when King Husayn abrogated the agreement he had signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) a year earlier. In Soviet eyes, this marked an American failure to orchestrate the revival of the Arab-Israeli peace process and to appear as the one superpower that could effectively conduct the process and shape the regional politics of the Middle East.

The Soviet Union's effort to change its own posture and image as a power identified with one side in the Arab-Israeli conflict and not having any contact with the other proceeded very slowly. In August, the first official diplomatic contacts with Israel since 1967 took place in Helsinki but were kept at the consular level.

In the regional politics of the Middle East it was the lingering war between Iran and Iraq that remained the most salient factor. A military decision could not be imposed and a political accommodation was still not feasible, but the balance tilted further toward Iran. In political terms, the fact that the Reagan Administration had been willing to deal with Iran and supply it with arms clearly had current and future significance. It indicated that the US continued to view Iran as the main prize in the Gulf struggle. In military terms, the capture of the Faw Peninsula, further attacks on Basra and the opening of yet another front in the Kurdish area in the North raised the specter of a decisive military victory with far-reaching ramifications.

The Gulf war and the support extended by Syria and Libya to Iran and by most of the other Arab states to Iraq remained the single most divisive issue in inter-Arab relations. King Husayn's efforts to use his improved relations with Syria's Hafiz al-Asad in order to draw the latter away from Iran and to effect a Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement proved futile. Husayn's efforts were calculated as the first phase of an attempt to restore at least a measure of unity to Arab ranks. The most glaring evidence of Arab disunity had been the failure of all efforts since September 1982 to convene an Arab summit conference. A summit manqué was convened in 1985 in Casablanca; the desire to improve on it and to convene a full-fledged summit in 1986 was not realized. Also unsuccessful were the efforts to normalize Egypt's relations with the rest of the Arab world. Some progress was made, but Egypt's position vis-à-vis the divided Arab system remained awkward.

The persistent divisiveness against the already familiar backdrop of declining oil power and oil revenues, Iran's menacing posture, Israel's continuing control of Arab
territories and the inability to solve the Lebanese crisis nourished the sense of weakness and the malaise felt by many Arabs and expressed by their writers.

As previously mentioned, the main effort to revive the Arab-Israeli peace process was seriously undermined in February 1986 when King Husayn abrogated the 11 February 1985 agreement between Jordan and the PLO. What had begun in late 1984 as a combined venture by the US, Israel, Jordan and Egypt, was premised on the PLO's weakness and dependence on Jordan following the events of 1982–83 and on Shimon Peres' Premiership. The venture sought to revive the peace process through Jordanian-Israeli negotiations, with Palestinian participation and PLO endorsement. By October 1985 it had become evident that the venture was stalled. In February 1986, Husayn concluded that the PLO had taken advantage of him to bolster its position vis-à-vis Syria and abrogated the agreement. In a long speech delivered on 24 February, he explained his action and settled his scores with Yasir ‘Arafat and the PLO. He said, among other things, that:

On 6 February, Yasir ‘Arafat had a meeting with our Prime Minister at his residence. The meeting was attended by the head of the Royal Court and by ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Yahya and Hani al-Hasan from the Palestinian side. ‘Arafat informed the Prime Minister that despite the positive development of the American position, recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people did not encompass the right to self-determination to which, the PLO insisted, the US ought to give its prior approval.

On 7 February, Yasir ‘Arafat left Amman still insisting on his position and on the reason why the PLO was unable to accept Resolution 242. Hinging on this agreement, of course, was an immediate opening of an American-Palestinian dialogue on the basis of which we would have continued our efforts to convene an international peace conference to which the PLO would be invited to participate as a representative of the Palestinian people.

Thus came to an end another chapter in the search for peace. Another extremely important and significant round of Jordanian-Palestinian action was terminated — after a full year of serious and persistent effort to transform the PLO role, referred to in the Arab peace plan, into a significant reality that would go beyond a mere statement of positions. It would have led to a presence and participation by the PLO in an international conference at the invitation of the United Nations Secretary-General, to represent its people and speak on their behalf with their adversary under the eyes of the world, side by side with the other parties concerned and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Yes, brothers and sisters: we have gone through a grueling year of intensive effort and faced a host of obstacles, in many instances exceeding the limits of our endurance. But we succeeded in achieving what had been felt to be impossible. We opened up avenues that had been considered closed to us and to our Arab and Palestinian brothers. We were able to carry the Fez Resolution to a point just preceding the international peace conference, for which it called. Buoyed on the one hand by progress achieved in providing a real opportunity for peace, and pained on the other by impediments when we were so close to the finishing line, we have felt it imperative to give a full public account of the
situation and once again turn the matter over to the Palestinian forums in the occupied territories and the diaspora as well as Arab capitals and organizations.

'Arafat, for his part, despite pressure from his radical partners, refused to reciprocate by abrogating the agreement. Nor was the effort to bring about a Jordanian-Israeli agreement totally abandoned.

More fruitful was the US attempt to improve the Israeli-Egyptian relationship. A fundamental improvement was not feasible, but a partial improvement through an agreement on arbitration in the Taba dispute and the return of an Egyptian Ambassador to Tel Aviv was within reach. Israel and Egypt failed to reach such an agreement through bilateral contacts, and US intervention and mediation were required to effect it.

The violent dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict manifested itself on several fronts: (a) in Shi'i and Palestinian conflict with Israeli and South Lebanese Army (SLA) forces; (b) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which manifested itself primarily in the West Bank and Gaza; (c) in terrorist activity; and (d) in the Syrian-Israeli conflict. In 1986, talk and fear of a Syrian-Israeli war reached a peak. Ironically, both sides acted on the basis of growing misperceptions. Many Israelis attributed to the Syrian doctrine of "strategic parity" an offensive edge and anticipated a full-blown or limited Syrian attack. In the same vein, Asad's speeches of late February and early March 1986, in which he explained that "strategic parity" was a long term goal, were perceived ominously in Israel where emphasis was placed on Asad's assertion on 27 February that "12 million Syrian citizens are capable of regaining the Golan...If the Israelis work to put the Golan within their borders, we will work to put the Golan in the middle of Syria."

In Syria, the frequent claims by Israeli leaders and spokesmen that Syria was preparing an attack were seen as political preparations for an attack. These fears were inflamed in the spring by the American raid on Libya. As Asad's efforts to dissociate himself from "international terrorism" clearly indicated, he was worried, in the aftermath of the raid on Libya, about the possibility of an attack by the US or both. In this respect the Syrian attempt to blow up an El Al plane in London remains an intriguing enigma. In any event, by the end of 1986, Syria appeared weak and isolated and the fear of a Syrian-Israeli war was largely dissipated.

An examination of domestic developments in Middle Eastern states in 1986 yields a generally gloomy picture.

Thus Ami Ayalon writes in this volume:

During 1986 the Egyptian Government faced increasing socio-economic and political pressures that presented a serious challenge and at times jeopardized the stability of the State. By and large, however, the regime continued to control the political game, and the political institutions functioned effectively even in the face of mounting difficulties. Under the shadow of the oil crisis and diminishing resources, the Government's exchanges with its critics grew sharper. The regime had to contend with attacks in the opposition Press, strikes and demonstrations by students and workers, threats by underground groups of Muslim radicals, and, for the first time, an open revolt by units of the security forces in Cairo.

This last incident, in February, was the most remarkable event of the year in
Egypt. It showed up, if only briefly, the curious phenomenon of a regime surviving in relative stability despite highly adverse material conditions. Faced with an unusually dangerous threat, the country's leadership responded with equally unusual severity by deploying large army units in the capital and imposing a curfew until the rebellion was quelled. Although the uprising was exceptionally violent and costly, it was also typical in its causes and consequences: the severe material and spiritual distress that erupted in desperate protest; the firm hand of the army-backed Government in suppressing it; and the eventual spectacle, by now all too familiar, of hundreds of men in iron cages on collective trial. By spring, the crisis was over and life in Egypt returned to its often tense routine as both the Government and the people braced themselves for future crises and possible confrontations.

Syria's domestic difficulties in 1986 can be viewed in two different ways. One would be a detailed examination of the regime's problems and their origins. It would point to four main areas: (1) The lingering uncertainty about the President's health and the unresolved question of his eventual succession. In this respect Rif' at Asad's continued stay in Europe was the single most important manifestation of an otherwise barely perceptible conflict. (2) The economic crisis which affected the system as a whole and the citizens individually and resulted in malaise, criticism and acrimonious debate in the regime's upper echelons. (3) Renewal of anti-regime terrorist attacks, apparently by radical Islamic elements. (4) A series of foreign policy failures which affected the domestic position of a regime whose legitimacy has traditionally depended to a considerable degree on its external successes.

But these developments can also be seen in a more general way as manifestations of the regime's failure to cope with the ambitious scheme it had undertaken several years earlier. Asad personally and the system he had built could not cope simultaneously with the tasks of maintaining power, developing Syria, guaranteeing a high standard of living for a large number of Syrians, maintaining strategic parity with Israel, managing Lebanon, seeking regional influence and dealing with the two superpowers. By the end of 1986 it was clear that some of the regime's most important policies had to be reassessed.

It was hardly surprising that the Iraqi-Iranian war had negative effects on the political systems of the protagonists; 1986 bore witness both to the cumulative effects of seven years of fighting and to the specific consequences of the year's events.

Saddam Husayn's regime was taxed by the political costs of its military setbacks. The Iraqi leader had to respond to criticism and pressure and his regime became less centralized and personalized. Senior military commanders were mentioned by name and quoted in the Iraqi media. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Information and the Director of Internal Security became regular participants in General Staff meetings. And in an effort to placate the larger public, the pace of economic liberalization was expedited and criticism of a "non-political" nature was allowed in the Iraqi Press.

In Iran a similar dynamic was at work based on the interplay between the conduct of the war, the economic situation and the factional conflict within the regime. For Iran, 1986 was a year of military success on the ground — but the dramatic breakthrough did not occur, losses were heavy and Iraq's superiority in the air exacted
a heavy toll. The direct and indirect economic cost of the war remained very high and generated disaffection and criticism. There were manifestations of opposition to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni’s regime but, on the whole, it remained sterile and insignificant. The important friction occurred within the regime’s ranks and revolved around three issues:

(1) The struggle for Khomeyni’s succession. His disciples realized that the designated successor, Ayatollah Husayn ‘Ali Montazeri, was not really qualified for the task.

(2) A factional conflict for power between such figures as President ‘Ali Khameneh’i and the Speaker of the Majlis, Ayatollah ‘Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who were posturing for the post-Khomeyni era.

(3) The dissatisfaction displayed by radicals within the regime who did not belong to its “mainstream” or “establishment.”

In 1986, more than 11 years after the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war, more than four years after Amin Jumayyil’s election to the Presidency, and more than two and a half years after Syria’s victory over its rivals in the Lebanese arena, the Lebanese crisis seemed no nearer to resolution.

In December 1985, Syria tried to break the deadlock by persuading the leaders of the three principal militias in Lebanon — Nabih Barri of the Shi’i Amal, Walid Junblat, the leader of the Druze, and Elie Hobeika of the Maronite Lebanese Forces — to sign the “Damascus Accord.” The agreement included a list of Maronite Christian concessions that were to lead to a new national consensus and greater institutionalization of Syria’s influence. But the agreement collapsed within a month when the concessions made by Hobeika were used by his Maronite rivals to topple him. It was very significant that after a decade of hegemony in Lebanon, Syria’s position there was still very tenuous and the authors of its policy were capable of such a gross error of judgment.

Indeed, Syria faced increasingly severe challenges in Lebanon in 1986 — the PLO’s gradual return and entrenchment; the PLO’s cooperation with Hizballah against Syria’s mainstay, Amal; and Iran’s growing influence.

In the absence of normal Lebanese political life most meaningful political activity took place within Lebanon’s major communities. As has been mentioned, yet another coup took place within the Lebanese Forces when Samir Ja’ja’ deposed Hobeika. The latter went to Damascus to plot his comeback, but his main effort was aborted in June. This was accomplished primarily by the Christian brigades of the Lebanese Army and was indicative of the cardinal role these units and the Army’s commander, Michel ‘Awun, had come to play in Christian-Maronite politics. It was not long before he was mentioned as a leading candidate for the Presidency in 1988.

In the Shi’i community the position of al-Amal and its leader, Barri, was eroded by several developments: internal opposition, criticism and assault by Iran and Hizballah, the onus of dealing with Israel and the SLA in the South, and the inability to cope with the PLO in southwest Beirut as well as in the Sidon-Tyre area.

The decline of oil revenues has already been mentioned above as an important factor shaping regional politics in the Middle East. Its repercussions on the economy and politics of such states as Egypt and Syria have also been noted. However, the conservative oil producing states of the Arabian Peninsula cushioned the domestic
political effects of declining revenues by spending part of their huge financial reserves and by cutting projects devoid of direct political ramifications. Like the previous year, 1986 was for the conservative oil producers a time of political weakness and defensiveness — caused as much by the Iranian threat as by the retreat of the oil economy. But they did not go through serious domestic crises.

Israeli politics were governed by the question of the “rotation” of power agreement. The Government formed in September 1984 in the aftermath of the indecisive July elections was predicated on a unique power-sharing arrangement. The Labor Party’s leader, Shimon Peres, was to be Prime Minister for just over two years and then exchange positions with Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud’s leader, who became Foreign Minister. For two years the question of whether the rotation would actually take place hovered over Israeli politics. In October 1986, it did take place, but the uncertainty regarding the future of the National Unity Government persisted.

Before and after the rotation the stability of the Israeli Government was intimately linked to the issue of negotiations with Jordan over the West Bank and the Palestinian question. It was generally assumed in Israel and elsewhere that Peres believed in and sought a settlement with Jordan, but Shamir and his party were opposed to it. There was speculation that an impressive tentative agreement with King Husayn would be the one issue over which Peres was willing to break his arrangement with Shamir and call for new elections. For Husayn, this should have served as an inducement to take a bold initiative. But, as we have noted, the breakthrough that had not occurred in 1985 failed also to occur in 1986. The National Unity Government was considered a success during its first two years. It was credited with ending Israel’s massive involvement in Lebanon, rehabilitating the country’s economy, and calming the heated political atmosphere. But inherent in the power-sharing arrangement and in the undecided vote that underlay it was the inability to carry both Israel and its reluctant external partner through the threshold of negotiations.
THE MIDDLE EAST
AND WORLD AFFAIRS
The United States and the Middle East in 1986

SHAI FELDMAN

The year began with an intense American effort to move the Middle East peace process forward, and ended with disappointment, despair, and inaction. It started with a quest for immediate results to be achieved through Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian negotiations; it ended with escapism covered with much talk about a long-term effort to improve the quality of life in the West Bank and to alter the conflict's "atmospherics." All this in the hope of producing a social, political, and economic environment more conducive to future negotiations. When the year began, Washington's efforts to win support for its anti-terrorism policy were gaining ground; as the year ended, the credibility of this policy was shattered by the Iran arms fiasco. In early 1986, the region perceived the US as committed to the forces opposing Iranian Fundamentalism; it ended with great confusion in the minds of America's regional allies regarding Washington's priorities in the Middle East. Early in the year, President Ronald Reagan enjoyed a high standing and much leverage in the American political system; but as the year closed, it was diminished by Irangate-related questioning of his personal capacities, as well as by his party's earlier poor performance in the November elections, and particularly by its loss of control over the Senate. The year began as a high point in US-Israeli relations; as it ended, the cumulative effect of the Pollard spy case and Israel's involvement in the Iran arms affair had taken their toll: Israel's closest supporters in Washington were particularly hurt.

THE PEACE PROCESS

Very early in 1986, the US had been engaged in a serious effort to see whether Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian negotiations could be launched. The investigation began after King Husayn's visit to Washington in May 1985, and had gained momentum by the end of the year. During his visit, the King acknowledged his willingness to enter into direct negotiations with Israel for the first time. Based on his talks with the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and his February 1985 accord with Yasir 'Arafat, Husayn also indicated that the PLO was willing to enter such negotiations based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.1

Husayn's statements moved an Administration which for the previous two years had been reluctant to engage itself actively in efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute. By mid-1983, Reagan's September 1982 Middle East initiative had been rejected by both Israel and Jordan. Thus, clear partners for Middle East peace negotiations seemed non-existent.2 Meanwhile, the US became another victim of the quagmire which was Lebanon. Syria refused to follow the script written for it in Washington and would not withdraw its forces from Lebanon; and contrary to America's expectations, Saudi Arabia would not, or could not, exert its pressure on
Syria to execute such a withdrawal. Also, Egypt refused to return its Ambassador to Israel despite the May 1983 Israel-Lebanon accord and despite what Secretary of State George Shultz regarded as a personal commitment to do so given him by President Husni Mubarak.

This series of disappointments led key members of the Reagan Administration to conclude that there was little to be gained by trying to push the Middle East peace process forward. American inaction was further influenced by the absence of perceived urgency: a new Arab-Israeli war did not seem imminent as no Arab state or combination of states seemed able or willing to challenge Israel militarily. As Israel was still mired in Lebanon, with its Army’s morale undermined and its people demonstrating cumulative fatigue, an Israeli-initiated war also did not seem likely. Moreover, from the American point of view, the international oil picture had much improved by 1983-84, with surpluses promising to prevent any disruptions in supply. By 1983 the Iraqi-Iranian war had entered its fourth year, and it was argued that if a war at the heart of the oil region had not seriously affected supplies, there was little reason to worry that another Arab-Israeli war would have that effect. As of late 1984, the Reagan Administration preferred to allow Israel’s new Government of National Unity to put its economic house in order, and to complete its withdrawal from Lebanon, before engaging it in a taxing peace process. The combined effect of these developments resulted in a passive American approach to Middle East peace.

More than any other factor, the reduced importance of Middle East oil accounted for the diminished importance of the Middle East on America’s national agenda. While the region competed with US-Soviet relations for top priority when President Carter took office, after 1981 Washington attached far more importance to its domestic economic policies, to attempts to strengthen its armed forces, and to containing revolutionaries in Central America, as well as to efforts in the war against global terrorism. As Reagan’s second term began, his Administration also invested much effort in attempts to reach arms-control agreements with the Soviets. The Middle East thus slid to sixth place on the agenda, and considerably more importance was attached to the first five items than to the sixth.

Relative positions on the national agenda determine the willingness of the President and the Secretary of State to invest time, intellectual effort, and political ammunition on each issue and problem. Thus, the lower priority given to the Middle East, coupled with the assessment that the region’s political environment would make any effort to resolve the dispute extremely difficult and costly, caused Washington to refrain from such efforts until conditions improved.

In the Administration’s view, Husayn’s May 1985 visit justified at least a reassessment of its prior premises. For the first time, an Arab leader appeared to be willing to negotiate Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian peace, based on Resolutions 242 and 338. The King nevertheless presented three preconditions: that negotiations be conducted in the framework of an international conference; that all five permanent members of the Security Council be invited to cosponsor the conference; and that the conference be preceded by a meeting between an American delegation and a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation.

These conditions notwithstanding, the Administration decided that Husayn’s positive statement of intent justified a more serious investigation of the possibility of producing Jordan as a partner for direct negotiations. Thus, in the months following
Husayn's visit, there were frequent visits to the Middle East by American diplomats, including Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy, and endless discussions between America's Ambassadors in Israel and Jordan and the leaders of both countries. These visits and discussions focused on two issues: first, Palestinian representation: the production of Palestinians who might be acceptable for membership in a Palestinian-Jordanian delegation; and second, direct negotiations: ensuring that the American-Jordanian-Palestinian meeting, and the subsequent international conference, would indeed lead to direct Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian talks. The issue of Soviet participation in such a conference was never discussed seriously, as the US expressed a series of preconditions which stood little chance of being met.

As 1985 came to a close, America's efforts focused increasingly on the issue of Palestinian representation in the proposed international conference, as interest in a pre-conference American-Jordanian-Palestinian meeting diminished. In this framework, the Administration attempted simultaneously to help Husayn gain the PLO's approval of Palestinians who might be acceptable to Israel as their nation's representatives; and to make the PLO itself a legitimate partner for future negotiations. In its efforts to gain both objectives, the Administration made a number of concessions: first, it altered one of its preconditions for negotiations with the PLO, substituting its long-standing demand that it recognize Israel's right to exist with a more modest demand that it express its willingness to negotiate with Israel; second, it hinted that if the PLO were to accept Resolutions 242 and 338, declare an end to terrorism, and express its willingness to negotiate with Israel, the US would not object to inviting the PLO to the proposed international conference; finally, although the US continued to reject the PLO's demand that it recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination, it now provided the contingent that if the PLO were to meet America's preconditions and come to the conference, the US would not regard the making of such a demand as illegitimate. Within the framework of these efforts, State Department spokesman Charles Redman said on 10 February 1986: "The Palestinian problem is more than a refugee question." Redman indicated that the US did not believe that Resolutions 242 and 338 provided a complete response to the Palestinian problem: "There should be no confusion between Resolution 242 and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. They deal with different issues and are in fact complementary."

At the same time, Assistant Secretary of State Murphy continued to shuttle between Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Jordan's King Husayn, attempting to reach an agreement on modalities for the proposed conference. Murphy's task was to ensure conference procedures that would allow the conduct of direct negotiations. In his speech of 22 February 1986, Husayn analyzed his failure to gain 'Arafat's support for negotiations and announced the suspension of his efforts to coordinate a policy jointly with the PLO. Unwilling or unable to proceed without the PLO's support, Husayn removed himself — at least for the duration of 1986 — as a viable Arab partner for negotiations. His speech brought the brief period of American activism in the Middle East peace process to an end. Subsequent to the speech, the US reverted to its pre-May 1985 low profile in Arab Israeli peacemaking.

Preferring to avoid being seen as having entirely abandoned its interest in Middle East peace, the Administration returned to a previous theme: the need to improve the
quality of life in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The purpose was to alter the
distribution of power in the West Bank between the PLO and the King's supporters, in
the latter's favor and in the hope that this would allow Husayn sufficient backing for
direct negotiations in the future. But even on this more limited front, America's
conduct was merely tentative. Unable or unwilling to commit the resources required
for Husayn's $150m West Bank Development Plan, the US seemed increasingly
disengaged. During his July trip to the Middle East, Vice-President George Bush
inquired whether some progress in the peace process could be made. Murphy traveled
to the area again in early September, but both efforts seemed largely like pro-forma
demonstrations that the US remained interested in Middle East peace. Attempts by
public figures, such as Senator Charles Mathias, following his March trip to the
Middle East, as well as by then Prime Minister Peres, during a September trip to
Washington, to persuade the Administration to reengage itself in the peace process,
left it unmoved. Instead, the Administration preferred to revert to its mid-1985
passive approach.

By year's end, US-Jordanian relations suffered new strains: against the background
of the Administration's continuous refusal to supply Husayn with sophisticated
weapons, end-November news about the sale of American arms to Iran, to be used
against Jordan's Iraqi allies, left Amman bewildered and frustrated about
Washington's priorities in the Middle East.

And yet, one development in the peace process carried unexpected side benefits for
the US in 1986: considerable improvement in its ties with Morocco. This occurred
after two years of coolness in Washington's relations with Rabat, resulting from the
Morocco-Libya "treaty of union" announced in August 1984. Following the late
August meeting between King Hasan II and Prime Minister Peres, Mu'ammar
Qadhdhafi canceled the "union" with Morocco. In the immediate aftermath of the
meeting, the King did not respond to signals sent by Vice-President Bush, indicating
his desire to visit Morocco. But the combined effect of the Hasan-Peres summit, and
the subsequent cancellation of the Morocco-Libya treaty, was to enable the
Administration to provide Rabat with $150m in aid. Washington's assistance had
been threatened by the continued anger of Congress over the 1984 treaty. Subsequently,
expanded lending to Morocco through

The improvement in US-Morocco relations took place despite a simultaneous
improvement in Washington's ties with Algeria. The latter resulted from President
Chedli Benjedid's decision to cultivate friendlier relations with the US.

UNITED STATES-LIBYAN RELATIONS

Efforts to contain and deter international terrorism comprised a second focus of
America's Middle East policy in 1986. During the year, much of the Administration's
attitude and behavior toward Libya and Syria resulted from the two countries' conduct or support of terrorism. The first half of the year saw the peak in American
efforts to establish a tough and effective anti-terrorism policy; as the year closed,
much of the policy's credibility lay in ruins.

The military involvement in Lebanon between late 1982 and early 1984 had resulted
in greater American sensitivity to the implications of international terrorism. A
debate as to the best means of addressing the problem developed in 1984, with Shultz
advocating the adoption of strong preemptive and preventive measures. Bush and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger called for the exercise of great caution, with the latter declaring a long list of preconditions for America's use of force. During the 1984 presidential election campaign, Reagan seemed indecisive regarding which course to follow.

The intensified direct experience with terrorism, arising from America's presence in Lebanon, created a strong predisposition to deal seriously with the problem. Washington's further observation, in late 1985, of the extent to which its strategic objectives in the region could be derailed by terrorist actions, contributed to a greater willingness to act. In the late fall, the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* — an Italian pleasure ship docked off the port of Alexandria — and the on-board murder of an American citizen, Leon Klinghoffer, contributed to the halting of efforts to launch an Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian peace process. The murderous terrorist attacks on the airports of Rome and Vienna had the same effect. Thus, by early 1986, the realities of international terrorism had created a political environment more conducive to the tough policies urged by Shultz.

These developments coincided with the Administration's particularly negative predisposition toward the Qadhdhafi regime. Soon after Reagan's inauguration in early 1981, his Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, sought to establish a new record of constancy and credibility in the Middle East. Libya appeared to provide an ideal testing ground: Qadhdhafi's behavior as well as his association with the Soviet Union caused him to be intensely disliked in the US. This meant that anti-Libyan action was not likely to result in excessive domestic criticism; and the limited extent of Moscow's commitment to Qadhdhafi meant that tough measures might be adopted without risking a confrontation with the Soviets. Libya was also relatively weak, hence a costly Libyan response also seemed unlikely. Finally, Qadhdhafi appeared to be relatively isolated in the Arab world, which diminished the possibility that actions against him might result in a negative all-Arab response.

In May 1981, the US closed its embassy in Tripoli, and in August of that year, in response to Libyan involvement in efforts to overthrow the Numayri regime in Sudan, the Administration moved an aircraft carrier to the northern outskirts of the Gulf of Sidra. An air battle took place, and two Libyan fighter aircraft were downed. In December 1981-January 1982, Reagan claimed that Qadhdhafi had dispatched assassination squads to the US; the claim was never confirmed by substantive evidence. In early August 1983, in response to Libya's military involvement in Chad, the Administration repositioned US navy units in proximity to the Libyan coast. Two Libyan MiG-23s, having flown too close to the aircraft carrier *Eisenhower*, were chased off by navy fighters. Thus Libya became a demonstration ground for America's willingness to back up its Middle East policy with the use of force.

Washington's propensity to confront Qadhdhafi, coupled with the Administration's belief that Libya had orchestrated the December 1985 terrorist attacks in the airports of Rome and Vienna, made a tough American response almost inevitable. On 7 January 1986, by Presidential Executive Order, the US banned virtually all economic activity with Libya. The sanctions forced all US firms, including those engaged in the production of oil, to cease all transactions with and operations in Libya, and to leave the country. Then, in late March, Sixth Fleet units moved southward into the Gulf of Sidra, formally challenging what the US considered an unacceptable claim by
Libya that its territorial waters included a 160 km-wide zone. On 24 March, Libya's air-defense units launched a number of long-range SA-5 missiles, as well as one SA-2 missile, against US fighters flying over the northern edges of the Gulf, and Libyan missile boats were dispatched in the direction of America's naval units. The US responded by bombing the SA-5 missile batteries and radar installations at the Ghurablīya air base, and by sinking one Libyan missile boat and damaging another.35

The first US-Libyan military confrontation of 1986 did not result in enhanced American deterrence of Qadhdhafari-inspired terrorism. On the contrary, the US soon found itself compelled to address new evidence of such terrorism, this time aimed directly at American targets. On 4 April 1986, a bomb exploded in a West Berlin discotheque, “La Belle,” a regular meeting place of American soldiers in the city. An American serviceman and a Turkish woman were killed, and 230 people, 79 of them Americans, were injured. US intelligence soon retrieved and deciphered messages sent from Tripoli to Libya's People's Bureau in East Berlin, ordering the attack. Once again, Qadhdhafari had tipped the scales within the Reagan Administration in favor of those advocating the use of force.36

Thus, on 10 April, Reagan was reported to have authorized military retaliation against Libya.37 Not much room was left for surprise as the American media discussed possible targets for attack in great detail. On 14 April, the complex “Operation El Dorado Canyon” was implemented, involving 150 aircraft. Libyan airfields in Tripoli and Benghazi, the Sidi Bilal radar installations, and Qadhdhafari's headquarters in the Bab al-'Aziziyya barracks, were the targets of the combined US navy and air force attack.38 The extent of America's displeasure with Qadhdhafari was reflected in the two public-opinion polls conducted after the operation: in contrast to their post-Vietnam reservations about the use of force, 71-76 per cent of the respondents expressed their approval of the attack.39

“Operation El Dorado Canyon” was the peak of America's anti-terrorism policy. Indeed, the attack established the policy's credibility: during the following months, Qadhdhafari would avoid being linked to acts of international terrorism. Indeed, the success of the operation allowed the Reagan Administration to apply its policy to a second target of its anti-terrorism policy: namely, Syria.

The above developments were accompanied by intense US diplomatic activity in Europe throughout the first half of 1986 to encourage its allies to adopt similar measures of their own vis-à-vis Libya and Syria. By midyear, these efforts had reached their peak: Britain's reaction to evidence of Syrian-orchestrated terrorism (see below), and supportive statements issued in other European capitals, indicated that Washington had at least been successful in creating wide opposition to terrorism. America's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies finally seemed persuaded that an uncompromising approach should be adopted toward such supporters of terrorism as Libya, Syria, and Iran. Moreover, Washington's conduct could now also be counted as successful in affecting the behavior of Libya and Syria: Libyan support of terrorism declined dramatically during the second half of 1986, and Syria made considerable efforts, at least at the declaratory level, to disassociate itself from international terrorism.

But these successes were only temporary. A series of events soon brought about a dramatic deterioration of America's anti-terrorism policy. The first negative development occurred in early October, when The Washington Post revealed that
news reports circulated two months earlier, to the effect that Qadhdhafi was about to launch a new wave of terrorism, were the product of a “disinformation” campaign orchestrated by the National Security Council headed by John Poindexter. The purpose of the campaign had been to unnerve Qadhdhafi by having him believe that the US was about to launch a preemptive strike against him. This was reportedly done in the hope of enhancing the prospects of a coup against him.\textsuperscript{40} The American news media, having discovered that they had been made a tool of the Administration’s schemes, raised an uproar, and one result was the resignation of State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb. More important, the credibility of Washington’s anti-terrorism policy was eroded: America’s NATO allies could no longer be sure that information provided by the US regarding Libya’s terrorist activities were not falsehoods distributed solely for the purpose of gaining their support.

Then, in late October, it was leaked that for over a year the Administration had been engaged in an arms-for-hostages trade with the Khomeyni regime. Within that framework, hundreds of \textit{TOW} anti-tank missiles, as well as some \textit{HAWK} anti-aircraft missiles, were delivered by Israel to Iran in late 1985. During 1986, additional anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, as well as spare parts for other weapons systems, were sent by the US to Iran.\textsuperscript{41} Washington’s newly revealed behavior, contradicting its stated general policy as well as the specific arms embargo it had imposed against Iran, shattered the credibility of its anti-terrorism policy. The political storm that developed in Washington underscored the policy’s bankruptcy.\textsuperscript{42} By the year’s end, America’s approach to combating terrorism had of necessity become increasingly defensive and apologetic.

Grave setbacks to its anti-terrorism effort notwithstanding, the US continued to exert continuous pressure on Qadhdhafi. In early December, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger held extensive talks with the French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and Defense Minister André Giraud, to coordinate attempts to beat back Libyan forces that had been occupying areas in northern Chad since 1983.\textsuperscript{43} On 16 December, Reagan determined, under the terms of the Foreign Assistance Act, that “an unforeseen emergency situation exists” in northern Chad, requiring the delivery of up to $15m in military assistance to that country.\textsuperscript{44} A few days later, US cargo planes were already airlifting weapons to the Chad armed forces in the north.\textsuperscript{45} America’s military assistance would contribute to Libya’s defeat in Chad in 1987.

\textbf{UNITED STATES-ISRAELI RELATIONS}

A number of issues caused considerable strains in US-Israeli relations during 1986. Yet these strains did not significantly damage the general intimacy that characterized relations between the two countries, particularly since late 1983.

One source of difficulty was the Pollard affair. Following the arrest in November 1985 of Jonathan Jay Pollard, a young employee of US Naval Intelligence caught spying for Israel, the two Governments conducted extensive talks to defuse the situation. Having apologized for what they characterized as a “rogue operation,” Israel’s leaders announced the abolition of the intelligence unit responsible for the unauthorized operation. They also promised to return the documents stolen and to make the Israeli officials involved available for questioning. After these commitments were made, the terms of their implementation became the subject of prolonged negotiation and considerable tension between Washington and Jerusalem.
While Reagan and Shultz attempted to limit the damage caused by the affair, the agencies in charge of investigating and prosecuting such affairs, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US Attorney's Office, worked hard to convict Pollard and his wife, Ann Henderson Pollard. Their efforts, which included the use of documents returned by Israel in the framework of the post-arrest understanding, resulted in cooperation from Pollard. However, the information he provided exacerbated the tension: the American authorities described Israel's "candor" as less than total, and accused Jerusalem of trying to conceal key participants in the affair and of failing to return most of the stolen documents. Discussion of these points became an important part of US-Israeli relations throughout 1986.46

A second source of strain was Israel's development of the Lavi fighter jet. While Israel's production of a state-of-the-art combat aircraft continued to enjoy support in Congress, key elements of the Administration opposed the project for various reasons. Within the Department of State and the Department of Defense, officials were worried that the enormous costs entailed would leave insufficient funds for Israel's other defense requirements. They were further concerned that such deficits would compel Israel to request ever greater sums from the US, and that given the mood prevailing on Capitol Hill, Congress would respond affirmatively at the expense of other foreign aid programs, thereby jeopardizing America's policy in other key regions of the world. Secretary of State Shultz seemed to oppose the program on economic grounds; the budget deficits likely to be caused by excessive costs were bound to threaten the economic recovery program which Israel adopted in late 1985 and early 1986.47 Secretary of Defense Weinberger based his opposition on both of the aforementioned grounds, but was probably also critical of financing the development and production of a foreign competitor to the products of America's aircraft industries.48

By 1986, the US-Israeli debate on the Lavi focused on comparing the costs of producing the Israeli plane with the costs of purchasing an American alternative. Meanwhile, an increasing number of Israelis, including ranking officers of the Israel Defense Forces, had become extremely critical of the project, and their reservations were used by the Pentagon in its arguments against the Lavi. Deputy Under-Secretary of Defense Dov Zackheim, who had conducted a number of studies of the Lavi's expected cost, argued that the plane was far too expensive for Israel. An extremely unpleasant discussion took place between Weinberger and Defense Minister Rabin, during the latter's visit to Weinberger's office in early May 1986. There were also heated debates on the subject between Rabin and visiting delegations headed by Zackheim in early June 1986.49 The Lavi debate continued on and off throughout the year.

Added to the Pollard and the Lavi issues were others that involved the transfer of sensitive technologies. In a number of instances in 1986, Israel was accused by the Justice Department and US customs officials of having violated American restrictions on technology transfers. Israel was said to have illegally purchased technologies for the production of cluster bombs and tank guns.50 Israelis were also reportedly caught attempting to break into a high-tech company in Illinois.51 Most of the accusations proved to be without foundation, but the media reports received considerable attention and damaged Israel's reputation in the US.

By the end of the year, with the revelation of the Iran arms deal, a new source of
strain emerged: Israel's involvement in the affair. In this case Israel had merely responded to an appeal made by Reagan's National Security Council (NSC). But questions about the precise nature of Israel's involvement, and the extent to which Israelis encouraged their American counterparts to overcome their hesitations, were to remain open. More important, in cooperating with the relevant NSC officials, Israel had become a cosponsor of policies pursued against the wishes of its closest friends in the Administration, notably Shultz. Israel had also helped to circumvent the spirit, if not the letter, of laws passed by Congress, a critically important source of support. Such conduct could not but leave some of Israel's closest supporters in America puzzled.

And yet, despite these sources of strain, the US and Israel drew closer together in 1986. Economic and military aid was provided at the highest level ever of $3 bn. Israel eventually accepted a $120m cut from this sum, but that was due to the automatic reductions imposed by the Gramm-Rudman deficit-reduction amendment, and had nothing to do with America's attitude toward Israel. During 1986, the US also provided Israel with $750m in additional emergency economic aid, and legislated another $3 bn aid package to be provided during fiscal year 1987. The US continued to be involved in efforts to ensure Israel's economic recovery: the joint US-Israel economic team, formed in 1985, met twice during 1986 to review the progress made.

Strategic cooperation between the two countries, which had reached unprecedented dimensions since late 1983, remained extensive in 1986, despite a slight, temporary post-Pollard coolness at the beginning of the year. By the second half of 1986, such cooperation seemed to have reached new levels: the Administration and Congress gave both declaratory and legal expressions of their willingness to allow Israel many of the privileges provided to America's NATO allies and to declare Israel a major non-NATO ally. Arrangements allowing reciprocal no-cost leasing of weapons and cooperation in the research and development of conventional weapons — particularly in the realm of anti-tactical-missile systems — were all legislated in the fall of 1986. On 6 May, an agreement outlining the framework of Israel's participation in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was signed by Weinberger and Rabin, and, on 5 November, the first major contract within that framework was signed by the US Department of Defense and the Israeli Defense Ministry. On 30 July, the US and Israel concluded the framework for the construction of a Voice of America transmitter in Israel. The 1987 Department of Defense budget, legislated in 1986, included for the first time a $64m appropriation for the construction in Israel of storage depots for the pre-positioning of ammunition.

These developments amounted to the institutionalization of US-Israeli strategic cooperation, which was encouraged by Shultz, who said privately "that he felt so strongly about Israel's strategic importance" that he wanted to "build institutional arrangements so that... if there is a [future] Secretary of State who is not positive about Israel, he will not be able to overcome the bureaucratic relationship between Israel and the US that we have established." Moreover, the configuration of forces in the US seemed to promise Washington's continued positive predisposition toward Israel: the November 1986 elections resulted in an even more friendly Congress. Positive sentiments continued to be expressed by the general public: a midyear Washington Post-ABC News poll found Americans more sympathetic to Israel than to the Arab nations by 62 per cent to 13 per cent.
UNITED STATES-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

Considerable tension characterized America's relations with Egypt in early 1986, following the October 1985 Achille Lauro affair. Egypt's decision to allow safe exit to the responsible Palestinian terrorists and to their leader, Abu al-'Abbas, was severely and extensively criticized. President Mubarak claimed that the release had occurred without his "knowledge and authorization," but there was information to the contrary. Concurrently, Egypt took strong exception to the interception by US navy fighters of the Egypt Air plane carrying the escaping terrorists. Although these events took place in late 1985, they affected the atmosphere of US-Egyptian relations in early 1986.

During the middle of the year, the US facilitated Egyptian and Israeli efforts to reach an agreement on the terms of arbitrating their dispute over Taba, a small strip of land south of Eilat. Ownership of this microterritory had not been settled prior to Israel's complete withdrawal from Sinai and had remained unresolved ever since. With and without America's mediation, Egyptian and Israeli officials had attempted since mid-1982 to agree on the modalities for arbitrating the dispute. Much of the discussion focused on formulating the questions the arbitrators were to be asked. When Vice President Bush visited Egypt and Israel in late July and early August, he and his staff attempted to resolve the procedural obstacles. However, their hope that an agreement on the terms of arbitration would be signed in the Vice President's presence did not come to fruition. More progress was achieved by Assistant Secretary Murphy during his early September visit to Cairo. Indeed, his talks facilitated the agreement that was later reached.59

Cairo's subsequent nomination of an Ambassador to Tel Aviv somewhat eased US-Egyptian tensions. Washington had been urging the normalization of Egyptian-Israeli relations since mid-1983. Egypt's compliance suppressed questions that had been previously raised in some Washington quarters, and particularly in Congress, regarding Cairo's commitment to peace. It paved the way for closer US relations with Egypt by reducing fears that the latter's strengthening might pose a future threat to Israel. America's ties with Egypt and Israel again became less mutually exclusive.

During the second half of 1986, much of the discourse between Washington and Cairo focused on the former's effort to ease the burden of Egypt's debt to the US. The Reagan Administration, fearing that the deterioration of Egypt's economy would result in a rise of Fundamentalism and the destabilization of the pro-Western regime, attached much importance to the effort. Egypt's yearly repayments were extremely high, due to the high fixed interest rates charged on the loans it took to finance its arms purchases. The rates were twice as high as those current in 1986. One way of easing Egypt's burden would have been to refinance its loans through the commercial banking system at the prevailing rates. However, due to Egypt's poor financial standing, commercial banks would not refinance its loans without a US guarantee of the loans. In turn, such a guarantee would have required a special congressional appropriation, which was unfeasible given the budgetary crunch in Washington throughout 1986. An alternative entertained by the Administration was to enable Egypt to repay its debt at the ongoing commercial rate, and to require that it pay the difference between the commercial rate and the original rates at the time of the loan's maturity.60 Mubarak found that the plan would mean being presented with a prohibitively high bill in 10-15 years' time, and rejected it. At the end of 1986, Washington was still searching for ways to resolve the problem.
As the year came to a close, new strains in US-Egyptian relations developed. Allied with Iraq and concerned about the possible regional ramifications of any evidence of Iranian fundamentalist success, Cairo was shocked by the news about the sale of American arms to Khomeyni's regime. Such tension merely added to the long list of previous difficulties in US-Egypt relations. These difficulties evolved from Egypt's conduct in the *Achille Lauro* affair; from America's inability to meet Egypt's expectations in the economic spheres; and from Washington's continuing frustration over aspects of its strategic cooperation with Egypt, especially with the latter's reluctance — because it feared the domestic consequences — to provide the US with permanent facilities along the Red Sea. But these problems did not affect Washington's basically close ties with Cairo. Thus, in 1986, Congress passed legislation leading to the Administration's declaration, early in 1987, that Egypt was a major non-NATO ally. This declaration not only institutionalized Egypt's elevated political standing in Washington, it also created new possibilities for future strategic cooperation.

**THE UNITED STATES AND SYRIA**

As noted earlier, much of US-Syrian relations were dominated in 1986 by the issue of Syria's involvement in, and support of, international terrorism. Nothing exemplifies this better than Reagan's late-April statement, following his use of force against Libya, that the US would also employ military measures against Syria should it have clear evidence linking it with terrorism against Americans.

The Administration has maintained an open account with the Damascus regime since 1983. In America's eyes, President Hafiz al-Asad supported the Shi'ite Fundamentalists who launched the October 1983 attack on the Marines' barracks in Beirut, killing 241 US servicemen. Syria later refused to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, thus undermining the US-mediated May 1983 Israel-Lebanon accord. On 2 April 1986, a bomb exploded on a Trans-World Airlines flight from Athens. Four persons were killed in the operation executed by the Abu Nidal group headquartered in Damascus. On 18 April 1986, Scotland Yard arrested Nizar Hindawi, a Palestinian who a day earlier had placed a bomb in the suitcase of his Irish girl friend, Ann Murphy, whom he had instructed to board an El Al plane for Tel Aviv at Heathrow Airport. Hindawi was arrested when he left a safehouse provided by the Syrian embassy in London. Reagan's statement was largely a reaction to Syria's reported attempt to blow up the El Al plane.

Yet America's approach toward Syria's involvement in international terrorism was based on a number of contradictory considerations. First, establishing a credible anti-terrorism policy required that the measures adopted against Libya be applied to other states involved in terrorism in order to avoid the appearance of being inconsistent. Second, the fact that Syria was a much more potent regional power meant that its ability to resist American measures was much greater. Syria's likely responses to these measures also meant that the costs of applying force would be much greater. Indeed, the unwillingness of Congress to withstand the costs of standing up to Syria were demonstrated during America's 1982–84 involvement in Lebanon. Third, Syria's potential role in the Middle East peace process, either positive or negative, required that ramifications on the process be taken into account when considering any anti-Syrian action. Fourth, Syria's denials of its role in international terror,
unlike Qadhdhafi's explicit admissions, meant greater difficulties in mobilizing domestic support for anti-Syrian measures.

Hence, despite Reagan's April statement and much incoming information about Syria's role in a number of terrorist incidents, in late May Shultz was still saying that he did not want to "prejudge" the Damascus regime. He also refused to say how the US would respond once all the facts were known:

These are investigations. There are several being conducted by different European governments and we are cooperating with the investigations. When the investigations are complete, we will, of course, be very interested to know what the results are. We don't want to prejudge the results. We want to go about this properly. However, we have the same attitude toward terrorism from whatever source it comes and we have tried to make this plain.64

The constraints on US action that arose from Syria's other roles in the Middle East were felt in mid-1986. Following increased tension in South Lebanon when Syria attempted to stabilize and entrench its military presence there, the US mediated between Jerusalem and Damascus to prevent escalation. Technically, the mediation included talks by US Ambassadors in Damascus and Tel Aviv with government officials in Israel and Syria, and at least one trip to Damascus by Assistant Secretary Murphy.65 In mid-July, the Administration went so far as to contemplate a visit to Damascus by Bush. Such a visit was urged by King Husayn, reportedly in the hope that it would lead to reduced Syrian resistance to the Middle East peace process.66 The visit did not take place, but the fact that it was seriously considered so soon after Reagan had threatened the use of military forces against Syria was indicative of Washington's dilemma.

The extent to which America's conflicting considerations, and developments in the international arena, forced constant changes in its attitude toward Asad's regime, was soon to be demonstrated. On 24 October, when a British court found Nizar Hindawi guilty and said Syria was directly responsible for the attempt to bomb the El Al airliner, the US followed Britain's example and broke off diplomatic relations with Syria, recalling Ambassador William L. Eagleton Jr from Damascus. Shultz now said that the available evidence showed "clearly and unambiguously...that the Government of Syria takes part in terrorism...When a country does that it isolates itself from the international community...I can promise you we are prepared to take [further] action. We want it to be action that works."67

Indeed, by mid-November, the Administration imposed a number of political and economic sanctions against Syria. This followed an earlier trip to Europe by the head of the State Department's anti-terrorism unit, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, in an attempt to mobilize the NATO allies' support for such moves.68 Like Britain, the US found little European support for joint steps, with Greece, Spain, Italy, and France particularly reluctant to antagonize Damascus.69 But on 14 November, the Administration decided to go ahead and reduce the size of its embassy staff in Damascus; to bar high-level visits between US and Syrian officials; to further restrict its exports to Damascus, forbidding any export credits to Syria; and to terminate the air transport agreement between the two countries, forbidding the sale of tickets in the US for travel on Syrian Arab Airlines.70 On 4 December, the State Department spokesman announced that the US would no longer issue visas on Syrian government
service passports. These steps were taken following revelations that Syria had granted such passports to individuals who were subsequently found to have been involved in terrorist activities in Europe.71

THE PERSIAN GULF

America's approach to the Persian Gulf is traditionally affected by its ongoing interests in the area: ensuring free access to the oil producers and preventing the expansion of the military presence and political influence of the Soviets in the region. Following Khomeyni's revolution and the Iraqi-Iranian war, more specific objectives were added: the prevention of an escalation of the war and of a surge of Fundamentalism in the Gulf region at large. An early termination of the fighting and the prevention of an Iranian military victory thus became of prime interest to the US. Washington declared a position of neutrality in the Gulf war; pledged to pursue all possible means to end it honorably; embargoed the export of arms to both Iran and Iraq; and promised to stem the flow of arms to Iran from other countries as well.72

During the year under review, America's conduct in the Gulf region was affected by its alarm regarding Iran's military advances in the war and evidence of increased Soviet political presence in the Gulf states. An example of the latter was the Omani announcement in October 1985 concerning the planned establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, soon to be followed by a similar move by the United Arab Emirates.73

In January 1986, the Iranian Navy detained and boarded the American cargo ship President Taylor for inspection. The ship was reportedly outside the Persian Gulf when the interception occurred. The Administration's reaction was relatively mild: while the White House announced "serious concern" about the incident, the State Department stated that there were circumstances under which inspection of neutral ships by a belligerent party was legitimate.74

In February, Iran achieved a major breakthrough in the war when it invaded Faw Island at the southern tip of the Shatt-al-'Arab, cutting off the commercial port of Basra — Iraq's second largest city — from the Persian Gulf. The battle of Faw reflected Iran's ability to throw large numbers of highly motivated soldiers into the war, and to exploit the marsh areas where Iraq found it difficult to fully utilize its tank-dominant land forces, superior air power, and advanced chemical capability.

Alarmed by these developments, the Administration sent Bush to the area, with the purpose of recommitting America to its regional allies' defense. Visiting Saudi Arabia, Bush stated: "The greatest danger now is that the war will spread beyond its current boundaries... that there might be an attempt to close the Straits of Hormuz or that Iran might break through Iraqi lines and attack neighboring countries, something it has threatened to do...The US is fundamentally, irrevocably committed to maintaining the free flow of oil through the Gulf." Bush further said that the earlier decision to deploy the Sixth Fleet in the Gulf of Sidra, and the resulting clashes with Qadhdhafi, demonstrated America's resolve to keep the navigation lanes open.75

America's options for dealing with threats in the Gulf were limited, however, by both regional and domestic constraints. While the Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, continued to oppose a greater US military presence on their soil, Congress restricted the further sale of sophisticated arms to Saudi Arabia.76 Only a month after the Vice President's visit to Riyadh, both Houses of Congress rejected a $354m missile
sale to the Saudis. In early June, the Senate approved by the narrowest possible margin a more limited $265m missile sale to Riyadh.

Congressional opposition to the sale of arms to Iraq was so strong that the Administration refrained completely from proposing it. Instead, it limited itself to supplying Iraq with battlefield intelligence, particularly satellite data vital to its conduct of the war. In October and November, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), William J. Casey, reportedly met with Iraqi intelligence officials to coordinate the intelligence exchange.

By mid-November, Washington's Gulf policy had suffered an enormous blow with the revelations regarding its orchestration of the sale of arms to Iran. The sale contradicted everything the US seemed to be signaling to the Gulf region. A top Administration official admitted the problem immediately: "The Arabs and everyone else are demanding to know what our policy is... on sending arms to Iran... We've been so holier-than-thou on... not aiding Iran's war effort that we're going to have a tough time for a while explaining what happened." Indeed, Iraq's Ambassador to Washington was quick to express his shock concerning the discrepancy between America's declared policy and actual conduct, as revealed in the arms affair. Thus, 1986 ended with US policy in the region raising "serious concern in Iraq and among its Arab allies, such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the rest of the Gulf states."

UNITED STATES-SUDANESE RELATIONS

The considerable strains that developed in America's relations with Sudan in 1985 continued in early 1986. The US reacted to the severe famine in the Horn of Africa in 1985 by providing $500m of emergency aid to the countries of the Horn, including Sudan. During that year, Sudan was the largest African recipient of US aid: $450m of economic and military aid and famine relief. However, following the April 1985 revolution that ended the rule of Ja'far al-Numayri, US-Sudanese relations deteriorated. The new regime strengthened ties with Libya and adopted a cool approach toward the US and Egypt, both associated with Numayri's rule. It also put on trial government officials who had participated in the US-orchestrated exodus of Jews from Ethiopia to Israel via Sudan.

Washington reacted to these events by cutting off all military assistance to Khartoum. Nevertheless, the US continued to provide Sudan with economic aid; and it did this despite the fact that Sudan had lagged behind more than a year on repayments of its American debt.

Relations with Sudan continued to deteriorate in early 1986: in March, an employee of the US embassy in Khartoum was shot; and in April, thousands of Sudanese demonstrated against the US following the attack on Libya. Washington reacted by evacuating some 300 Americans from Khartoum. Paradoxically, other events in April actually laid the basis for improved US-Sudanese ties: the 1-2 April elections to the Sudanese Assembly resulted in the election as Prime Minister of Umma leader al-Sadiq al-Mahdi. By October, Mahdi had traveled to Washington for talks with Reagan; and by year's end, Sudan had taken steps to distance itself from Libya. As a result, US financial aid to Sudan was restored, and US diplomats returned to Khartoum.
SUMMARY

While America's relations with Sudan and Morocco improved during 1986, this was not the case with respect to Washington's ties with other regimes in the Middle East. The US-sponsored peace process appeared to be permanently stalled, following the failure of all efforts to convene a peace conference. The Administration's unwillingness to increase its involvement in the process, because of the risks and uncertainties entailed, left both King Husayn and then-Prime Minister Peres disappointed. Jordan continued to be dismayed by the refusal of Congress to allow the supply of sophisticated arms to Amman, while US relations with Israel suffered from the Pollard affair, the debate over the Lavi, and Irangate. Early in the year, Washington showed its disappointment over Egypt's refusal to return its Ambassador to Israel; later in the year, Cairo demonstrated increasing signs of dismay over the sale of American arms to Iran and over Washington's failure to help alleviate Egypt's economic difficulties. America's ties with Syria and Libya, while far from friendly when the year began, became increasingly confrontational — sometimes violently so — as the year proceeded.

And yet America's overall standing in the Middle East remained surprisingly unaffected by its difficulties and disappointments in 1986. One possible reason for this was the enduring effect of previous American gains in the region, the result of wise conduct in the 1970s. The gains resulted from America's willingness to employ a wide variety of foreign policy tools and to compete with the Soviet Union, rather than merely oppose its designs. Consequently, most Middle East states have come to depend on Washington's commitment to their defense, and/or willingness to provide them with economic and/or military aid. Moreover, although America's interests in the Middle East remained numerous and varied, thus guaranteeing inevitable contradictions, Washington demonstrated an impressive capacity for maneuver in the face of such contradictions. Consequently, it continued to enjoy close ties with Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Gulf states, and Morocco, as well as improved relations with Iraq and Sudan, while the Soviet Union's strongholds in the region remained restricted to Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Measuring its achievements by the extent to which Soviet influence in the region remained contained, the US could still see 1986 as a successful year for its diplomacy in the Middle East.

NOTES

For the place and frequency of publications cited here, and for the full name of the publication, news agency, radio station or monitoring service where an abbreviation is used, please see "List of Sources." Only in the case of more than one publication bearing the same name is the place of publication noted here.


33. "Transcript of President Reagan's News Conference," WP, 1 August 1986. In the press conference, Reagan stated: "The Rome and Vienna murders are only the latest in a series of brutal terrorist acts committed with Qadhdhafi's backing. Qadhdhafi and other Libyan officials have publicly admitted that the Libyan Government has abetted and supported the notorious Abu Nidal terrorist group which was directly responsible for the Rome and Vienna attacks."
38. Time, 28 April 1986.
43. Middle East Insider, 8 December 1986.
82. Sheila Rule, “In Sudan, Tide Turns Against the US,” NYT, 29 April 1986.
83. SUNA English service, 30 March 1986 — SWB, 1 April 1986.
84. SUNA, 1 April 1986 — SWB, 3 April 1986.
85. Sheila Rule, ibid.
The Soviet Union and the Middle East in 1986

ROBERT O. FREEDMAN

Nineteen eighty-six was a mixed year for the Soviet Union in the Middle East. It began with a number of crises facing the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, including a power struggle in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), that led to the decimation of its Communist leadership, and an ongoing conflict between the US and Libya over Libyan support for international terrorism. As the year went on, however, the USSR's position improved, partly because the US-mediated peace process floundered after the split between Jordan's King Husayn and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasir 'Arafat, and partly because of the Iran-Contra scandal which was a major blow to the US position in the Middle East.

The year began with Gorbachev facing a number of problems. The first was a serious crisis between the US and Libya; the Reagan Administration blamed Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi for a series of terrorist acts, including attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports in December 1985 that killed 19 people (16 in Rome and three in Vienna). Exacerbating the problem for Moscow was the fact that just before the airport attacks, Moscow had sent SAM-5 missiles to Libya, and this appeared to encourage Qadhdhafi, who justified the attacks as part of the "holy struggle" of the Palestinians, and threatened to "declare war in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean zone" and "follow and harass Americans in their own streets, if there was American or Israeli retaliation for the airport attacks." The dilemma posed to Moscow by this situation was that if a confrontation took place, Moscow would have to decide whether to back Libya and thereby risk a confrontation with the US. For Gorbachev, a month before the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), this posed a very difficult choice. On the one hand, he was seeking to introduce a program of economic and political reform and a foreign policy aimed at easing world tension wherever possible. As part of this policy, Moscow was seeking major arms control agreements with the US as well as an overall improvement in bilateral US-Soviet relations. Clearly, a major confrontation over Libya would risk undermining Gorbachev's policy. However, not supporting Libya also had its risks. In 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon, the USSR, led by Leonid Brezhnev, limited itself essentially to proforma protests to Israel during the invasion, and to the US when it deployed Marines in Beirut. In 1983, when the US and Syria came into open conflict over Lebanon, Moscow, then led by Yuri Andropov, also maintained a low profile. In both cases, Moscow lost credibility in the Arab world for not resisting the US actions. Thus the USSR again risked losing credibility among Arabs if it did not take action in a conflict between the US and Libya.

As the January crisis proceeded, Gorbachev chose to maintain a low profile. Following a pro forma condemnation of US policy by the Soviet Afro-Asian People's
Solidarity Organization, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Vladimir Lomeiko, replying to a question at a press conference on 6 January on how the USSR would react to a US-Libyan confrontation, stressed that Soviet actions were aimed at preventing conflicts, not at constructing "scenarios of its actions for their escalation." Meanwhile tension appeared to ease somewhat when Libya's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ali 'Abd al-Salam al-Turayki, condemned the airport attacks and denied Libyan involvement in them, and President Reagan on 7 January decided to limit the US response to alleged Libyan involvement in the attacks to economic sanctions. These measures included the freezing of all Libyan assets in the US and a ban on trade between the two countries, and were aimed at ending the participation of US oil firms in the Libyan economy. Perhaps believing that the imposition of economic sanctions meant that the US would not use military force against Libya, Moscow sharpened its tone; an Izvestiia editorial on 8 January 1986, after citing a Libyan Foreign Ministry statement condemning terrorism, warned:

The state of the international situation in the Mediterranean region is by no means a matter of indifference for the Soviet Union. And it is not just that the relations which exist between the USSR and Libya are of a close and lasting nature and are based on long-standing traditions and on the manifestation of profound liking and mutual respect between the Soviet and Libyan peoples. Our country's course toward this region is also determined by the fact that the USSR, as a Mediterranean power, has a vital interest in the preservation of peace in the Mediterranean basin. Our country proceeds from the conviction that in this particular region, just as anywhere on earth, all problems and all situations that are fraught with conflict must be overcome solely by peaceful means and solely by political means.

The situation can still be controlled and still allows one to stop before the danger mark is passed. There is still time to curtail the military preparations, to renounce plans for inflicting strikes against Libya, and to rebuff Israel which is itching for adventures... The question is simply whether Washington will manage to make a definitive decision from positions of restraint, conscious of all its responsibility for the morrow.

As the USSR was counseling restraint, and asserting that Libya opposed terrorism, it could only have been embarrassed by the remarks of Salim Huwaydi, Libyan Cultural Attaché to the USSR, who said at a Moscow press conference that Libya supported the attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports because they were "actions of a partisan war, committed by revolutionaries." While claiming "we are not for terrorism, we are resolutely against it," Huwaydi stated "we are in support of the acts perpetrated in Rome and Vienna because we support the people's struggle...."

Meanwhile, as the January crisis unfolded, Moscow made limited military moves in the Mediterranean. It stationed a submarine tender in Tripoli harbor and established a picket line of ships north of the Gulf of Sidra, long an area of contention between Libya and the US, which does not recognize Libya's claims to sovereignty over the Gulf and which shot down two Libyan planes there in 1981. At the minimum, these ships could provide advance warning to Libya in case of a US attack; Moscow may have also felt that the presence of a Soviet vessel in Tripoli harbor would deter such an attack. In any case, the January crisis ended without any US military action against
Libya, and Moscow could only have been happy about that. Nonetheless, there were a number of people in the US, including Secretary of State George Shultz, who were advocating tougher measures toward Libya, and some American columnists were beginning to wonder if Reagan, because of his unwillingness to use force, was becoming another Jimmy Carter. Perhaps emboldened by the lack of US military action, Qadhdhafi on 15 January publicly pledged to train and equip Arab guerrillas for “terrorist and suicide” missions. But Moscow could only have been concerned that a Libyan-American military confrontation remained a real possibility.

In mid-January, however, Soviet attention was diverted from the Libyan crisis to the PDRY where an internecine leadership clash threatened the existence of the pro-Soviet Party that ruled the country. For many years Moscow had endeavored to create a set of Marxist institutions for this backward State, which it hoped would become a model of Soviet-style Socialism. The crisis, however, was to reveal the thinness of the Marxist patina. Essentially, it involved a power struggle between PDRY President ‘Ali Nasir Muhammad and the man he had deposed in February 1980, ‘Abd al-Fattah Isma’il. For reasons that are not yet fully clear, someone in the Soviet leadership permitted Isma’il, then in exile in the USSR, to return to Aden in March 1985, just as Gorbachev was taking power. Following major disagreements at the PDRY Party Congress in October 1985, when Muhammad saw his position weakened (Muhammad was in favor of improved ties with the PDRY’s Arab neighbors, and of increasing private initiative, especially in agriculture), the PDRY President evidently decided to eliminate Isma’il once and for all by taking steps to murder him and his supporters at a cabinet meeting on January 1986. While Isma’il was killed, along with ‘Ali Antar, Vice-Chairman of the Government Presidium, Salih Muslih Qasim, the PDRY Defense Minister, and ‘Ali Fadi, Chairman of the Party Control Commission, the fighting between factions loyal to Isma’il and Muhammad spread throughout the PDRY and Soviet advisers and dependents were hastily evacuated. Ultimately, a pro-Soviet official, the Prime Minister, Haydar al-‘Attas, who was touring India at the time of the crisis, was installed by the USSR as President; and Soviet warnings against outside intervention and its own involvement in the fighting tipped the balance against Muhammad, who was forced into exile. Nonetheless, while Moscow was able to regain control of the situation, the crisis had several negative consequences for the USSR. First, with at least 4,000 members of the Yemeni Communist Party killed, and a very pronounced degree of tribalism evident in the Muhammad-Isma’il conflict, the Marxist structure of the PDRY, which Moscow was seeking to establish as a model for other Arab states, suffered a major blow. Second, the vaunted security infrastructure that Moscow provided the PDRY proved faulty as both the USSR and East Germany seemed to have been taken by surprise by the January events. (This was evident in Moscow’s confused reporting at the start of the crisis.) Finally, the ouster of ‘Ali Nasir Muhammad, who had sought to improve the PDRY’s relations with its conservative Arab neighbors, and his replacement by more hard-line elements served to slow Soviet efforts to improve relations with the conservative Arab states of the Gulf.

That the last factor was of considerable concern to Moscow was evident in its reporting of post-crisis meetings between Soviet and PDRY officials. Thus, when Moscow’s Number Two leader, Yegor Ligachev, met the PDRY delegation to the 27th CPSU Congress, headed by ‘Ali Salim al-Bayd, the new First Secretary of the
PDRY Communist Party in early March, Pravda emphasized that Moscow had reminded the PDRY leadership of the necessity "of continuing a peace-loving foreign policy and strengthening good neighbor relations with the countries of the region." Similarly, when the new PDRY Prime Minister, Yasin Numan, visited Moscow in early June, Pravda emphasized his efforts "to develop and strengthen relations with Arab states and with neighboring countries of the region." Finally, one month later, when Soviet Middle East trouble-shooter Karen Brutents, who had been promoted to deputy head of the International Department of the CPSU's Central Committee, visited Aden, Pravda cited the PDRY leaders as declaring their "steadfast desire to maintain and develop good relations with all countries of the region, including bordering states." Moscow had cause for its concern. Only a few months before the crisis in the PDRY, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, both of which had been targeted for PDRY-supported guerrilla attacks in the past, established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and both states were now worried about the possibility of a more radical regime in Aden resuming its pressure. Such a development, particularly when Moscow had repeatedly pledged its support for the new PDRY regime, would most likely chill relations between the USSR and the two Gulf states. To be sure, in his first interview with Western reporters, the new PDRY President, al-'Attas, stated: "We will make our best efforts to consolidate our relations with our brothers in North Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council." Nonetheless, North Yemen, to which 'Ali Nasir Muhammad had fled, signaled its wariness about developments in the PDRY when, during a visit by Vice President George Bush in April, the North Yemeni President, 'Ali Abdallah Salih, told Bush his Government was eager to improve relations with the US. The US position had already been strengthened as a result of a US company, Hunt Oil, finding oil in the impoverished country; and Bush, who was warmly applauded by crowds lining the streets (despite a US military confrontation with Libya two weeks earlier), promised Salih a $5m increase in economic aid and passed on an invitation from President Reagan for him to visit Washington.

Although Moscow had ensured that a pro-Soviet regime would retain control in a country of great geopolitical importance to it (the PDRY serves as the base for Soviet reconnaissance flights over the Indian Ocean, provides the main facilities for resupply and repair of the Soviet Indian Ocean fleet, and has the most extensive port accessible to the Soviet Navy between Camranh Bay and the Black Sea), the foreign-policy consequences of events in the PDRY presented potential problems for Moscow. While one could expect that reconstruction would be the main priority of the new PDRY regime in the immediate future, its neighbors were clearly suspicious of its future foreign policy and this very suspicion contained problems for Moscow.

While the January 1986 Libyan-American and PDRY crises posed problems for the Soviet Union, Moscow was to benefit from a subsequent Middle Eastern development, which took place on the eve of the CPSU Congress. On 19 February, about a month after meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy in London, and following two weeks of negotiations with PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat in late January and early February, King Husayn of Jordan publicly broke with 'Arafat and thus ended their year-long joint peace effort. In a major speech giving his view of what had happened, Husayn first noted that he had obtained a major concession from the US by getting it to agree to have the PLO invited to an international peace conference on
the Middle East, along with the Soviet Union and other permanent members of the Security Council, if the PLO clearly stated "on the public record that it had accepted [UN Security Council] Resolutions 242 and 338, is prepared to negotiate peace with Israel and has renounced terrorism." The next day, State Department spokesman Charles E. Redman confirmed the accuracy of Husayn's remarks — a development that caused both surprise and consternation in Israel. 'Arafat, however, according to Husayn, wanted the US to go further by publicly agreeing to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination within the context of a confederation between Jordan and Palestine. Husayn then reportedly told 'Arafat that "the subject of self-determination within the context of a confederation was a matter for the Jordanians and Palestinians and that no other party had anything to do with it," and intimated that such a response from the PLO indicated that the organization might be "dealing with us on a basis of lack of confidence." Husayn was probably correct, given PLO suspicions that the King would try to dominate any Palestinian-Jordanian confederation. Husayn concluded his speech by stating that he was "unable to continue to coordinate politically with the PLO leadership until such time as their word becomes their bond, characterized by commitment, credibility and constancy."

The split between Husayn and 'Arafat was welcome to Moscow for several reasons. In the first place it appeared to put a final stop to the US attempt to organize talks between a joint PLO-Jordanian delegation and Israel (a possibility that had concerned Moscow following the Husayn-'Arafat agreement of February 1985), although 'Arafat, despite considerable pressure from within al-Fath, was not to confirm the formal break with Husayn until the Palestine National Council meeting of April 1987. Second, with the Jordanian option now apparently closed to 'Arafat, Moscow may well have felt that the PLO leader would move to reunify his organization and move closer to the pro-Soviet Palestine Democratic Alliance of George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Na'if Hawatima's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Palestine Communist Party, if not yet to the Syrian-controlled elements of the PLO. Indeed, with relations between the PLO and Husayn already chilling in the latter part of 1985, 'Arafat evidently decided to mend his fences with the Soviet Union and sent Faruq Qaddumi to Moscow in early January 1986, where he met with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. However, Pravda's description of the talks as having taken place in a "businesslike atmosphere" indicated considerable disagreement between the two sides, although they both called for Palestinian unity on an "anti-imperialist basis" and for an international conference on the Middle East with the participation "of all interested sides, including the PLO." Three months later, Soviet Middle East specialist Vladimir Polyakov held meetings in Damascus with the Syrians and with Habash and Hawatima in another Soviet effort to encourage Palestinian unity.

While on balance the break between Husayn and 'Arafat was a positive development for Moscow, the Soviets were still concerned that Husayn, despite the US Congress's opposition to selling him arms until he made peace with Israel, might make a separate deal with Israel (and, presumably be rewarded with arms afterwards, much as Egypt had been), something that was regularly rumored in the Press. Husayn's subsequent closure of PLO offices in Jordan, his arrest of Jordanian Communists, and his effort to forge an alternative Palestinian leadership on the West Bank (with Israel's tacit