MIDDLE EAST
CONTEMPORARY SURVEY

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MIDDLE EAST CONTEMPORARY SURVEY

Volume XI: 1987
MIDDLE EAST CONTEMPORARY SURVEY
Published for
The Moshe Dayan Center
for Middle Eastern and African Studies
The Shiloah Institute
Tel Aviv University

Other volumes in this series:

Volume I, 1976-77
Volume II, 1977-78
Volume III, 1978-79
Volume IV, 1979-80
Volume V, 1980-81
Volume VI, 1981-82
Volume VII, 1982-83
Volume VIII, 1983-84
Volume IX, 1984-85
Volume X, 1986
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 XI, which covers the year 1987, include:

- The collapse of the Israeli-Jordanian "London agreement";
- The outbreak of the Palestinian uprising;
- The complications of *glasnost* for the Middle East;
- The continuation of the Gulf War;
- The lingering stalemate in Lebanon.

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 Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University. *Haim Shaked* is Professor of Middle Eastern and African History and Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center. They are coeditors of *The Middle East and the United States: Perceptions and Policies*. *Ami Ayalon* is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History and Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University.
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 eleventh 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 Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Other contributions have been made by 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 Arab-Israeli 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 1987. 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 Moshe 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. A novel aspect of the editorial work on this volume was Ami Ayalon’s important contribution made in his capacity as Associate Editor, and the fruits of his work are readily discernible in the following pages.

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 Ilana Grinberg, and the Moshe 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 remains 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>Arabic Letter</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
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<td>س</td>
<td>t</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the following should be noted:

Long vowels are not marked for distinction from short ones. Thus ناظر = nazir, but also ناظر = 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.

In transcribing Persian, frequent allowance is made for pronunciation; thus Khomeyni (not Khumayni). Names appearing in both Arabic and Persian texts are transcribed according to the language of the relevant text, thus Hizballah (Arabic) or Hizbollah (Persian).
List of Initials and Acronyms

Adm. Admiral
Aipac America-Israel Public Affairs Committee
ALF Arab Liberation Front
Aramco Arabian-American Oil Company
AWACS airborne warning and control system (radar)
b. born
BBC British Broadcasting Corporation
BD Bahraini dinar(s)
b/d barrels per day
BMW Bayerische Motoren Werke (Bavarian Motor Works)
bn. billion
BP British Petroleum
Brig. Gen. Brigadier General
CAPMS Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CC Central Council
CD Chamber of Deputies (Lebanon)
CIA Central Intelligence Agency (US)
Col. Colonel
CPSU Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CRM Citizens' Rights Movement (Israel)
cu. cubic
DECA Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (Turkey and US)
DFLP Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DLP Democratic Left Party (Turkey)
DUP Democratic Unionist Party (Sudan)
EC Executive Committee
ed. edition
EEC European Economic Community
EIU The Economist Intelligence Unit
ETA Euzkadi ta Azka Asuna (Basque Separatist Organization)
Exxon Standard Oil (formerly ESSO)
f.o.b. free on board
Fr. Father
FRG Federal Republic of Germany
GCC Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP gross domestic product
Gen. General
GNP gross national product
GPC General People's Congress (Libya, YAR)
GPO General People's Committee (Libya)
GPO Government Press Office (Israel)
GSS General Secret Services (Israel)
GUNT Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition (Chad)
hy. heavy
IAF Israeli Air Force
IAI Israel Aircraft Industries
IBA Israeli Broadcasting Authority
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICO</td>
<td>Islamic Conference Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>Iraqi Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDF</td>
<td>Israel Defense Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFLB</td>
<td>Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IISS</td>
<td>International Institute for Strategic Studies (London)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Office (UN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILP</td>
<td>Islamic Liberation Party (Jordan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INLA</td>
<td>Iranian National Liberation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>Iranian riyal(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRA</td>
<td>Irish Republican Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRGC</td>
<td>Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Iran)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRP</td>
<td>Islamic Republican Party (Iran)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISF</td>
<td>Islamic Solidarity Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD</td>
<td>Jordanian dinar(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KD</td>
<td>Kuwaiti dinar(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDP</td>
<td>Kurdish Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>km.</td>
<td>kilometer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPC</td>
<td>Kuwait Petroleum Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCP</td>
<td>Lebanese Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>Libyan dinar(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>least developed country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF</td>
<td>Lebanese Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNM</td>
<td>Lebanese National Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNRF</td>
<td>Lebanese National Resistance Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>lt.</td>
<td>light</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lt. Gen.</td>
<td>Lieutenant General</td>
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<td>m.</td>
<td>million(s), meter(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj. Gen.</td>
<td>Major General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Middle East(ern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDEAST-</td>
<td>Middle East Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MK</td>
<td>Member of Knesset (Israel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Motherland Party (Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTI</td>
<td>French acronym for the Islamic Tendency Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MWL</td>
<td>Muslim World League</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPC</td>
<td>North Aegean Petroleum Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nato</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDF</td>
<td>National Democratic Front (YAR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>National Democratic Party (Egypt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEP</td>
<td>Nationalist Endeavor Party (Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIF</td>
<td>National Islamic Front (Sudan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIS</td>
<td>new Israeli shekel(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLP</td>
<td>National Liberal Party (Lebanon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPUG</td>
<td>National Progressive Unionist Grouping (Egypt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRP</td>
<td>National Religious Party (Israel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council (US)</td>
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<td>NSP</td>
<td>National Salvation Party (Turkey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
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<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Officer Commanding</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Omani riyal(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTA</td>
<td>Office of Technology Assessment (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.a.</td>
<td>per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCP</td>
<td>Palestine Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDRY</td>
<td>People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFLP-GC</td>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKK</td>
<td>Parti-ye Karkaran-i Kurdistan (Kurdish Workers’ Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLF</td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>Palestine National Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNSF</td>
<td>Palestinian National Salvation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polisario</td>
<td>Front for the Liberation of Al-Saqqiyah al-Hamra and Rio de Oro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£L</td>
<td>Lebanese pound(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£S</td>
<td>Syrian pound(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>£Sd</td>
<td>Sudanese pound(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoW</td>
<td>prisoner of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>People’s Progressive Party (Sudan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPSF</td>
<td>Palestine Popular Struggle Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>Progressive Socialist Party (Lebanon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUK</td>
<td>Patriotic Union of Kurdistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QR</td>
<td>Qatari riyal(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Regional Command (Iraq)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Revolutionary Command Council (Iraq)</td>
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<tr>
<td>res.</td>
<td>reserve</td>
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<td>retd.</td>
<td>retired</td>
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<td>Revd.</td>
<td>Reverend</td>
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<td>RG</td>
<td>Revolutionary Guards (Iran)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADR</td>
<td>Saharan Arab Democratic Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAIRI</td>
<td>Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMA</td>
<td>Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAVAK</td>
<td>State Intelligence and Security Organization (Iran)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDPP</td>
<td>Social Democratic Populist Party (Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFP</td>
<td>Sudan Federal Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SISC</td>
<td>Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council</td>
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<td>SLA</td>
<td>South Lebanese Army</td>
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<td>SLP</td>
<td>Socialist Labor Party (Egypt)</td>
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<td>SPLA</td>
<td>Sudanese People's Liberation Army</td>
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<td>SR</td>
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<td>SSNP</td>
<td>Syrian Social Nationalist Party</td>
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<td>SSPA</td>
<td>Southern Sudanese Political Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>SYD</td>
<td>South Yemeni dinar(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texaco</td>
<td>The Texas Company</td>
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<td>TL</td>
<td>Turkish lira(s)</td>
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<td>TNT</td>
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<td>TPP</td>
<td>True Path Party (Turkey)</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAEDh</td>
<td>UAE dirham(s)</td>
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</table>
UK  United Kingdom
UN  United Nations
Unicef  United Nations (International) Children's (Emergency) Fund
Unifil  United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
Unita  União nacional para a independência total de Angola
UP  Umma Party (Sudan)
US  United States
USS  United States' ship
USSR  Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT  value added tax
VEVAK  Vezarate Ettela'at va Amniate Kishvar (Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Internal Security)
vs.  versus
WICS  World Islamic Call Society
WP  Welfare Party (Turkey)
WTI  West Texas Intermediate
YAR  Yemeni Arab Republic (North Yemen)
YSP  Yemeni Socialist Party (South Yemen)
## List of Sources

Newspapers, Periodicals, Irregular and Single Publications

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica</td>
<td></td>
<td>In English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Copenhagen, 12 per year)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adelphi Papers</td>
<td>AC</td>
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<tr>
<td>(London, 10 per year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afq 'Alamiyya</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Amman, twice per month)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Afkar</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Beirut, weekly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa Confidential</td>
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<tr>
<td>(London, fortnightly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>(London, monthly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>(New York, monthly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa Research Bulletin</td>
<td>ARB</td>
<td>English-language edition of</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Exeter, England, monthly)</td>
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<td>Afrique-Asie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africasia</td>
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<td>Organ of the National Progressive Unionist Grouping</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Paris, fortnightly)</td>
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<td>Al-Ahali</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Cairo, weekly)</td>
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<td>Al-'Ahd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Ahram</td>
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<td>(Cairo, daily)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Ahram International</td>
<td></td>
<td>Published by al-Ahram; deals mainly with economic issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>(London, daily)</td>
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<td>Organ of the Liberal Socialist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Ahram al-Iqtsadi</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Cairo, weekly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Ahrar</td>
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<td>(Cairo, weekly)</td>
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<td>Al-Akhbar</td>
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<td>Published by the Muslim World League</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Akhbar al-'Alam al-Islami</td>
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<td>(Mecca, weekly)</td>
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<td>Akhbar al-Khalij</td>
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<td>(Manama, daily)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akhbar al-Usbu'</td>
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<td>(Amman, weekly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akhbar al-Yawm</td>
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<td>Al-'Alam</td>
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<td>(London, weekly)</td>
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Al-'Alam
(Rabat, daily)
'Al-Hamishmar
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Alif Ba
(Baghdad, weekly)
Al-Alim
(London, weekly)
Alwan
(Khartoum, daily)
Al-'Amal
(Beirut, daily)
American-Arab Affairs
(Washington, quarterly)
AI-Anba
(Kuwait, daily)
AI-Anwar
(Beirut, daily)
Arab-Asian Affairs
(New York, monthly)
Arab Gulf Journal
(London, twice annually)
Arab News
(London, daily)
Arab Oil and Gas
(Paris and Beirut, fortnightly)
Arab Press Service
(Nicosia, weekly)
Arab Times
(Kuwait, daily)
Arabia, The Islamic World Review
(London, weekly)
Asian and African Studies
(Haifa, Israel, three times a year)
Al-Ayyam
(Khartoum, daily)
Al-Badil al-Islami
(Beirut, fortnightly)
Baltimore Sun
(Baltimore, daily)
Barron's
(Ann Arbor, Mich. weekly)
Al-Ba'th
(Damascus, daily)
Al-Bayadir al-Siyasi
(East Jerusalem, fortnightly)
Al-Bayan
(Casablanca, daily)
Al-Bayan
(Dubai, daily)
Al-Bilad
(Jidda, daily)
Boston Globe
(Boston, daily)
Briefing
(Ankara, weekly)

Organ of the Istiqlal Party
Organ of the United Workers' Party
(Mapam)
Organ of the Lebanese Phalanges
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 Arab Petroleum Research Center
Published by the Islamic Press Agency
Iraqi Shi'i al-Da'wa newspaper; began publication in 1987
Organ of the Syrian Ba'th Party
Sympathetic to al-Fath
British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin (St. Anthony's College, Oxford, two per year)
Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (Chicago, monthly)
Christian Science Monitor (Boston, daily)
Conflict (New York, quarterly)
Country Profile (London, annually)
Country Reports (London, quarterly)
Cumhuriyet (Istanbul, daily)
Current Digest of the Soviet Press (Chicago, weekly)
Current History (Philadelphia, monthly)
Daily Telegraph (London, daily)
Danas (Zagreb, weekly)
Davar (Tel Aviv, daily)
Al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya (Tripoli, Libya, bi-monthly)
Defense and Foreign Affairs Weekly (Washington, D.C., weekly)
Democratic Palestine (Cyprus, monthly)
Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C., weekly)
Al-Difa' al-'Arabi (Beirut, monthly)
Al-Dustur (Amman, daily)
Al-Dustur (London, weekly)
The Economist (London, weekly)
Egyptian Gazette (Cairo, daily)
L'Espresso (Rome, weekly)
Etela'a't (Tehran, daily)
Euromoney (London, annually)

Reports on "all warfare short of war"
Published by Economist Publications Ltd.
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
News magazine
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 US Technical Information Service

Published by Business Press International Ltd.

Published by Economist Publications Ltd.

Organ of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP)

Organ of the PFLP. Transferred from Beirut after the war in Lebanon. Began publication in March 1984

Organ of the National Religious Party (Mafdal)

A Beirut weekly, reflecting pro-Phalangist tendencies. Published in London since November 1978
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<td><strong>AI-Hurriyya</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Al-Idha'a wa'Tilifizyun</strong></td>
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<td><strong>IEA Oil Market Report</strong></td>
<td>(Paris, monthly)</td>
<td>Published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IFS Yearbook</strong></td>
<td>(Washington, annually)</td>
<td>Published by the Institute of Jewish Affairs</td>
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<td><strong>IIA Research Reports</strong></td>
<td>(London, 20 per year)</td>
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<td><strong>Ila al-Amam</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Independent</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Insight</strong></td>
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<td><strong>International Crude Oil and Product Prices</strong></td>
<td>(Nicosia, Cyprus, twice annually)</td>
<td>Published by Middle East Petroleum and Economic Publications</td>
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<td><strong>Internationales Asienforum</strong></td>
<td>(Cologne, West Germany, quarterly)</td>
<td>Published by the Europäisches Institut für Politische, Wirtschaftliche und Sociale Fragen Published by IMF</td>
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<td><strong>International Financial Statistics</strong></td>
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<td><strong>International Herald Tribune</strong></td>
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<td><strong>International Migration</strong></td>
<td>(Geneva, Switzerland, quarterly)</td>
<td>Published by the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration Published by the Center for Migration Studies, Staten Island Organ of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, opposing the regime. Started publication in early 1983. Place of publication not indicated</td>
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Izvestia
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*Al-Jamahiriyya*
(Villette, daily)
Jane's Defence Weekly
(London, weekly)
*Al-Jazira*
(Riyadh, daily)
The Jerusalem Post
(Jerusalem, daily)
The Jerusalem Star
(Amman, daily)
Jeune Afrique
(Paris, weekly)
Jordan Times
(Amman, daily)
*Journal of Palestine Studies*
(Washington, quarterly)
*Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*
(Villanov, Pa., quarterly)
*Al-Jumhuriyya*
(Baghdad, daily)
*Al-Jumhuriyya*
(Cairo, daily)
*Al-Jumhuriyya*
(Tripoli, weekly)
*Jumhuriyye Islami*
(Tehran, daily)
Kayhan
(London, weekly)
Kayhan
(Tehran, daily)
Kayhan al-'Arabi
(Tehran, daily)
Kayhan Hava'i
(Tehran, weekly)
Keesing's Contemporary Archives
(Harlow, Essex, monthly)
Khaleej Times
(Dubai, daily)
Al-Khaliij
(Abu Dhabi, daily)
*Al-Kifah al-'Arabi*
(Beirut, weekly)
Koteret Rashii
(Jerusalem, weekly)
*Kull al-'Arab*
(Paris, weekly)
Libération
(Paris, daily)
*Litaraturnaya Gazeta*
(Moscow, weekly)
Organ of the Government of the USSR
Organ of the Islamic Republican Party
Published by the Institute of Palestine Studies and Kuwait University
Organ of the Union of Writers of the USSR
Reflects views of Tunisian expatriates
Al-Liwa’
( Beirut, daily)

Al-Liwa al-Islami
( Cairo, weekly)

Los Angeles Times
( Los Angeles, daily)

Ma’ariv
( Tel Aviv, daily)

Al-Madina
( Jidda, daily)

Maghreb-Machrek, Monde Arabe
( Paris, quarterly).

Al-Majalis
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Al-Majalla
( London, weekly)

Majallat al-Azhar
( Cairo, monthly)

Al-Masa
( Cairo, weekly)

Al-Masar
( London, weekly)

Al-Masira
( Beirut, weekly)

Le Matin
( Paris, daily)

Al-Mawqif al-‘Arabi
( Nicosia, weekly)

Al-Mawqif al-‘Arabi
( Cairo, monthly)

May
( Cairo, weekly)

Maydan
( Khartoum, daily)

Memo
( Cyprus, bi-weekly)

MEN Economic Weekly
( Cairo, weekly)

The Middle East
( London, monthly)

Middle East Economic Digest
( London, weekly)

Middle East Economic Survey
( Nicosia, weekly)

Middle Eastern Studies
( London, quarterly)

Middle East Insight
( Washington, bi-monthly)

Middle East International
( London, monthly)

Middle East Journal
( Washington, quarterly)

Middle East Newsletter
( London, fortnightly)

Middle East Review
( New Brunswick, N.J., quarterly)

Al-Liwa’
Islamic publication of the ruling
National Democratic Party

Cairo, weekly)

Los Angeles Times
LAT

National Democratic Party

Tel Aviv, daily)

Maghreb-Machrek, Monde Arabe

Paris, quarterly).

London, weekly)

London, weekly)

Cairo, monthly)

Cairo, weekly)

London, weekly)

Beirut, weekly)

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Nicosia, weekly)

Cairo, monthly)

London, weekly)

London, weekly)

London, weekly)

London, weekly)

London, weekly)

London, weekly)

London, weekly)

London, monthly)

Published by the Middle East
News Agency

Published by the Middle East
Research and Publishing Center,
Beirut

Published by the Middle East
Institute

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Middle East Times (Nicosia, weekly)
Mideast Markets (London, fortnightly)
Milliyet (Istanbul, daily)
Monday Morning (Beirut, weekly)
Le Monde (Paris, daily)
Al-Musawwar (Cairo, weekly)
Al-Mustaqbal (Paris, weekly)
Al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi (Beirut, quarterly)
Al-Nadwa (Jidda, daily)
Al-Nahar (Beirut, daily)
Al-Nahar al-'Arabi wal-Duwali (Paris and Zurich, weekly)
Al-Nahar Arab Report and Memo (Beirut and Zurich, weekly)
Namehe Mardom (Stockholm, weekly)
Al-Nashra (Athens, bi-weekly)
Al-Nashra (Nicosia, weekly)
Al-Nashra al-Istratijiyya (London, fortnightly)
National Journal (Washington, D.C., weekly)
Near East Report (Washington, weekly)
Neue Kronen-Zeitung (Vienna, daily)
Neuer Zürcher Zeitung (Zurich, daily)
New Outlook (Tel Aviv, monthly)
Newday (New York, daily)
Newspot (Ankara, weekly)

New Statesman (London, weekly)
Newsweek (New York, weekly)
New Times (Moscow, weekly)
New Yorker (New York, weekly)
The New York Review of Books (New York, fortnightly)

Published by FT Business Information Ltd.

Right of center

Pro-Saudi

Rightist

Weekly international edition of al-Nahar

English-language political and economic report of al-Nahar

Organ of the Tudeh Party

Deals with opposition movements in various Arab countries

Published in English by the Jewish-Arab Institute

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

English-language edition of Novoe Vremia
The New York Times  
(New York, daily)  
Al-Nidaa’  
(Beirut, daily)  
Nidal al-Sha'b  
(Beirut, weekly)  
Nouveau Magazine  
(Beirut, weekly)  
Al-Nur  
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The Observer  
(London, weekly)  
October  
(Cairo, weekly)  
L’Opinion  
(Rabat, daily)  
Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs  
(Philadelphia, quarterly)  
Orient  
(Hamburg, quarterly)  
L’Orient le Jour  
(Beirut, daily)  
El Pais  
(Madrid, daily)  
Petroleum Economist  
(London, monthly)  
Petroleum Intelligence Weekly  
(New York, weekly)  
Le Point  
(Paris, weekly)  
Policy Papers  
(Washington, irregular)  
Politique Internationale  
(Paris, quarterly)  
Population and Development Review  
(New York, quarterly)  
Pravda  
(Moscow, daily)  
Profil  
(Vienna, weekly)  
Al-Qabas  
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Al-Qabas International  
(London, daily)  
Al-Qadisiyya  
(Baghdad, daily)  
Al-Quds  
(East Jerusalem, daily)  
Le Quotidien de Paris  
(Paris, daily)  
Al-Quwait al-Musallaha  
(Khartoum, weekly)  
Al-Ra’id al-‘Arabi  
(Amman, twice per week)  

Published by Foreign Policy Research Institute  
Occasional papers published by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy  
Published by the Population Council, Center for Policy Studies  
Organ of the Central Committee of the CPSU  
Kuwaiti nationalist; sympathetic to the Palestinian cause  
Known for favorable views toward Jordan
Al-Ra'y
(Amman, daily)
Al-Raya
(Doha, daily)
Al-Raya
(Khartoum, daily)
Al-Ra'y al-'Amm
(Kuwait, daily)
La Repubblica
(Rome, daily)
Resmi Gazete
(Ankara, irregular)
Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales
(Villanova, Pa., quarterly)
La Revue du Liban et de l'Orient Arabe
(Beirut, weekly)
Al-Riyad
(Riyadh, daily)
Ruz al-Yusuf
(Cairo, weekly)
Al-Sabah
(Tunis, daily)
Sabah al-Khayr
(Beat, weekly)
Al-Safir
(Beat, daily)
Al-Sahafa
(Khartoum, daily)
Al-Sakhir
(Kuwait, weekly)
Saudi Economic Survey
(Jidda, weekly)
Saudi Gazette
(Jidda, daily)
Sawt al-'Arab
(Cairo, daily)
Sawt al-Bilad
(Cyprus, weekly)
Sawt al-Sha'b
(Almman, daily)
Sawt al-Umma
(Tehran, fortnightly)
Al-Sayyad
(Beat, weekly)
Al-Sha'b
(Algiers, daily)
Al-Sha'b
(Cairo, weekly)
Al-Sha'b
(East Jerusalem, daily)
Al-Sharq
(Beat, daily)
Al-Sharq al-Awsat
(London, Jidda, and Riyadh, daily)

Organ of the National Islamic Front
Kuwaiti nationalist; conservative
Official gazette
Reflects Libyan views
Organ of al-Fath
Started publication in early 1983
The Arabic publication of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance
Organ of the Socialist Labor Party
Sympathetic to the PLO
Pro-Syrian
Al-Sharq al-Jadid  
(London, monthly)  
Al-Shira'  
(Beirut, weekly)  
Shu'un Filastiniyya  
(Nicosia, monthly)  
Sid Svenska Dagbladet  
(Stockholm, daily)  
Al-Siyasa  
(Khartoum, daily)  
Al-Siyasa  
(Kuwait, daily)  
Le Soir  
(Brussels, daily)  
South: the Third World Magazine  
(London, monthly)  
Der Spiegel  
(Hamburg, weekly)  
Al-Sudani  
(Khartoum, daily)  
Sudan Times  
(Khartoum, daily)  
Sunday Telegraph  
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Sunday Times  
(London, weekly)  
Al-Surush li'l-'Alam al-'Arabi  
(Tehran)  
Survival  
(London, bi-monthly)  
Al-Tadamun  
(London, monthly)  
Al-Tadamun al-Islami  
(Mecca, monthly)  
Al-Tali'a  
(East Jerusalem, weekly)  
Al-Tali'a al-'Arabiyya  
(Paris, weekly)  
Al-Tali'a al-Islamiyya  
(Paris, monthly)  
Al-Tawhid  
(Tehran, bi-monthly)  
Tercüman  
(Istanbul, daily)  
Tehran Times  
(Tehran, weekly)  
Al-Thaqafa al-Jadida  
(Iraq, monthly)  
Al-Thawra  
(Baghdad, daily)  
Al-Thawra  
(Damascus, daily)  

Published by the PLO Research Center  
Reflects the views of the Umma Party  
Moderate; pro-Government  
Arabic-language version of the Surush magazine; frequency of publication unknown  
Published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies  
Pro-Iraqi  
Radical Islamic  
Conservative  
Clandestine magazine published by the Iraqi Communist Party  
Organ of the Iraqi Ba'th Party
Al-Thawra
(San'a, daily)
Al-Thawra al-Islamiyya
(London and Washington, monthly)
Al-Thawri
(Aden, weekly)
Time
(New York, weekly)
The Times
(London, daily)
The Times of Oman
(Muscat, daily)
Tishrin
(Damascus, daily)
‘Ukaz
(Jidda, daily)
‘Uman
(Muscat, twice a week)
Al-Ushbu'
(Khartoum, daily)
Al-Urdun al-Jadid
(Nicosia, quarterly)
Al-Ushbu' al-'Arabi
(Beirut, weekly)
USIS News Report
(Tel Aviv, irregular)
USIS Report
(Tel Aviv, irregular)
US News and World Report
(Washington, D.C., weekly)
De Volkskrant
(Amsterdam, daily)
Al-Wafd
(Cairo, weekly)
Al-Wahda al-Islamiyya
(Beirut, monthly)
The Wall Street Journal
WSJ
(New York, daily)
Al-Waqt al-Iraqiyya
(Baghdad, weekly)
The Washington Post
WP
(Washington, daily)
The Washington Quarterly
(Washington, quarterly)
The Washington Times
(Washington, daily)
Al-Watan
(Kuwait, daily)
Al-Watan al-'Arabi
(Paris, weekly)
Weekly Petroleum Argus
(WPA)
(London, weekly)
World Marxist Review
(London, monthly)
Al-Yamama
(Riyadh, weekly)

Semi-official
Organ of the Islamic Revolutionary Movement in the Arabian Peninsula
Organ of the central committee of the YSP
Published by USIS, US Embassy, Tel Aviv
Published by USIS, US Embassy, Tel Aviv
Organ of the New Wafd Party
Islamic, pro-Iranian
Official gazette of the Republic of Iraq
Critical of Kuwait's Government; pro-Syrian
Pro-Iraqi
Al-Yaqza  
(Kuwait, weekly)  
Reflects pan-Arab tendencies  

Al-Yawm  
(Amman, daily)  

Al-Yawm al-Sabi'  
(Paris, weekly)  
Affiliated to the PLO; started publication in 1984  

Yedi'ot Aharonot  
(Tel Aviv, daily)  
Ideological weekly of the Revolutionary Committees; appears in both Arabic and English editions  

Al-Zahf al-Akhdar  
(Tripoli, weekly)  

Zo Haderech  
(Tel Aviv, weekly)  

News Agencies  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aden News Agency (Aden)</td>
<td>ANA</td>
</tr>
<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>AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Press (New York)</td>
<td>AP</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>Iraqi News Agency (Baghdad)</td>
<td>INA</td>
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<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>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>SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Press Agency (Riyadh)</td>
<td>SUNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudanese News Agency (Khartoum)</td>
<td>SANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Arab News Agency (Damascus)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraphnoe Agentstvo Sovetskovo Soiuza (Moscow)</td>
<td>Tass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikalat al-Anba al-Filastiniyya (Palestinian News Agency; Damascus)</td>
<td>WAFA</td>
</tr>
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</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>American Broadcasting Company</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Headquarters in New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>Monitoring reports published in English translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation, Summary of World Broadcasting: The ME and Africa</td>
<td>SWB</td>
<td></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>Europe One Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Defense Forces Radio</td>
<td>R.IDF</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Publication Research Services:</td>
<td>JPRS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Near East and North Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Europe</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East Television</td>
<td>METV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Broadcasting Company Television</td>
<td>NBC TV</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Bardai, Voice of the Chadian GUNT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Ihdin of Free and Unified Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R. L'Orient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R. of the Toilers of Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R. Peace and Progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R. SPLA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Channel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Information Agency</td>
<td>USIA</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Information Service</td>
<td>USIS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the Arabs</td>
<td>VoA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice of Free Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice of the Homeland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice of Hope</td>
<td>VoH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Islam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Israel</td>
<td>VoL</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice of Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of National Resistance</td>
<td>VoP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Palestine (Algiers)</td>
<td>(Algiers)</td>
<td>Radio station connected with al-Amal PLO daily program over R. Algiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Palestine (Baghdad)</td>
<td>VoP (Baghdad)</td>
<td>PLO main radio station, transferred from Beirut after the war in Lebanon. Began transmitting in November 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Palestine (San'a)</td>
<td>VoP (San'a)</td>
<td>PLO daily program over R. San'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Peace</td>
<td></td>
<td>Operated by Abie Nathan outside Israel's territorial waters. Carrying a clear pacifist message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the People</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communist Party radio station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless File</td>
<td>WF</td>
<td>Published by the USIA Library, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldnet</td>
<td></td>
<td>USIS global television satellite network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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YAEL YISHAI, PhD (Hebrew University, 1976). Professor of Political Science, University of Haifa. Author of Israel: The Peaceful Belligerent 1967–1979 (with A. Sella); Land or Peace: Whither Israel (1987); and Interest Groups in Israeli Politics (1981). Has published numerous articles on Israeli domestic politics.

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PART ONE:
CURRENT ISSUES
THE MIDDLE EAST IN PERSPECTIVE
The Middle East in 1987: 
A Year of Kaleidoscopic Change 

HAIM SHAKED

Unlike 1986, defined by Itamar Rabinovich in the previous volume of MECS as "another year when much happened but little was altered in the general scheme of things in the Middle East," the year 1987 was witness to a rearrangement of the regional kaleidoscope. No new pieces could be discerned in the Middle Eastern "tube," but by the end of the year the aggregate regional picture was significantly different from what it had been at the end of 1986. "Constants," or elements of continuity, which had been shaped well before 1987, continued to provide the warp and woof of the ME texture, but its overall pattern was undergoing gradual change — with some major implications for the whole region.

The main elements of constancy were formidable. The region continued attracting the worldwide attention of policymakers as well as the general public. The region's sensitive geopolitical position relative to other parts of the world, and its centrality as a major oil supplier (and an even greater oil depository), helped maintain its high place on the international agenda. Its volatility and numerous domestic, local and regional hot spots of open warfare, violence and conflict, accentuated the inherent risks for the international community and enhanced its high profile in the world arena.

As before, the ME continued to be plagued by a number of major problems: national identity crises; competing ideological and spiritual policies, and the challenge of religious militancy; ethnic tensions; economic hardship and frustrations aggravated by conspicuous consumption and uneven distribution of wealth; festering conflicts and warfare; regional fragmentation; and international intrigue.

The year under review saw no significant breakthrough in any of the following issues, each of major importance in its own right: the establishment of clear-cut and stable demarcation lines of the superpowers' influence in the region; the resolution of major — local or regional — violent conflicts (the Iraqi-Iranian War; the Arab-Israeli conflict; the internecine violence in Lebanon; the civil war in Sudan); the development of an economic master plan to alleviate local or regional hardship and reduce frustrations; and the formulation of a positive, constructive, and comprehensive vision for the ME or, at least, most of it member nations.

By the end of 1987, the aggregate picture of the ME was problematic and gloomy. During the greater part of the year there had been much motion, or even commotion, but very little movement towards the resolution, or even the major improvement, of the main ailments of the region. For the most part, 1987 seemed to be devoid of the kind of landmark events that had highlighted ME chronology in previous years.
Much like 1986, 1985, 1984, and 1983 — 1987 lacked occurrences that could be immediately discerned as being of exceptional magnitude or as exerting regional impact. Dramas such as the Iranian Revolution (1978–79); the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty (1979); the outbreak of the Iraqi-Iranian War (1980); and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (1982), which punctuated the turn of the 1970s and early 1980s, did not recur in mid-decade.

By the same token, 1987 was even devoid of smaller-scale, albeit significant events which would highlight the spring and summer of 1988: the surprise Iranian move towards the acceptance of a cease-fire in the Gulf War; the stubborn Palestinian intifada; and King Husayn's disengagement from the West Bank gambit, with the ensuing expectations that the Palestinians might announce independence of some sort. Other developments of 1988 which were indirectly connected with the ME, such as the ever warming and engaging US-Soviet dialogue, buttressed by the full-scale Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the progress made in negotiations on Angola, and the fourth summit between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, which was held in Moscow in December 1987. The actual beginnings of some of these developments in 1988 could be traced to 1987, or even earlier, but they were accelerated during the year under review.

The focus of regional dynamics remained in the Gulf region and its immediate environment in 1987, which itself was the continuation of the pattern established in 1986: the overwhelming salience of the Iraqi-Iranian War and the relative marginality of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the other major regional dispute. In terms of superpower commitment and involvement, the configuration of regional foreign policies, and inherent dangers to immediate and more distant political environment, the Gulf War significantly outweighed all other open and latent ME hostilities and conflicts. As Gideon Gera points out in his essay on the Iraqi-Iranian War, there were two important developments in 1987, one static and the other dynamic. The static aspect was the "strategic stalemate" between the warring parties. The dynamic dimension was the "internationalization" of the conflict, as Kuwait and the US were drawn directly into the war while Saudi Arabia, other Gulf states, and the People's Republic of China — a major supplier of weaponry to Iran — became indirectly involved.

Locked into the eighth year of their war, Iran and Iraq fought each other fiercely in the "battle of the cities" (January-February) and in the "tanker war," which was stepped up in 1987. While the land and sea battles were interrelated in the eyes of Iraq, Iran considered them unrelated. The land battle culminated with a major Iranian attack on Basra in January-February — the most important military thrust since the Iranian occupation of the Faw peninsula in February 1986.

In mid-1987, the Iranians also opened a major front in the north, reigniting violent Kurdish opposition on a scale unequaled since the height of the Kurdish war in 1974. The Iraqis responded with a ruthless combination of executions and poison-gas attacks, destroying entire villages in attempting to "de-Kurdize" Kurdistan. The sea battle, which was launched by Iran in 1984 in retaliation against Iraqi attacks on Iranian oil installations, brought about in 1987 an unparalleled American military involvement through the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers (January-April), and the provision of a naval escort (as of July). In May an Iraqi plane accidentally attacked a US frigate, the Stark, causing the death of 37 servicemen. To Iran's dismay, the US, which hitherto had tilted towards Iraq in the Gulf conflict, refrained from "punishing"
the Iraqis and instead adopted a more aggressive anti-Iranian stance. By mid-1987 the main focus of the Iraqi-Iranian War seemed to have shifted from land to sea, and before long Kuwaiti oil installations became the target of Iranian missile attacks (September-October). The war thus expanded, in 1987, not only in scope but also in substance: a formidable American armada, backed up by diplomatic and naval support systems on the part of several European countries, became the symbol of this shift.

In July 1987, however, a turning point occurred with the UN Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 598, which called for an immediate cease-fire; the military withdrawal of Iranian and Iraqi forces to their respective territories; an exchange of prisoners; direct peace talks; and the setting up of an impartial body to determine who had been responsible for starting the war. (Iran claimed that the war had begun with Iraq’s aggression on 22 September 1980, while Iraq argued that the conflict had commenced with Iranian border provocations on 4 September 1980.) Iraq immediately accepted the resolution. Iran did not, demanding that Iraq first be identified as the aggressor.

By the end of 1987, there was still no indication that the cessation of hostilities was imminent. However, Resolution 598, perhaps like Resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), was to assume a more lasting importance than a host of other Security Council resolutions that attempted to replace war by negotiations and, eventually, by peace. Following the passage of 598, Iraq stepped up its military pressure on Iran, and hoping to coerce Tehran into acceptance of a cease-fire, tried to exploit its supremacy in the air by extensive activation of its Air Force against Iranian cities, as well as oil targets on land and sea. Iran, for its part, resorted to intensive use of Scud-B missiles, mainly in January-February and October-November, hitting Iraqi civilian targets.

By year’s end Iran seemed to have maintained the relative military superiority it had established in 1986. But, as Gera states, “the concluding wisdom of 1986, that Iran had not won but could not lose the war, and that Iraq had not lost but could not win it” — had been reaffirmed in spite of the escalation. If 1987 was “a year of decision” for Iran and “a year of steadfastness for Iraq,” events in 1988 introduced significant change, engendered a reduction in Iran’s rigidity which was caused, inter alia, by a number of major military setbacks, and brought about a cease-fire in the summer.

Whereas the volatile situation in the Gulf riveted international attention to ME developments for most of 1987, toward the very end of the year riots in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank injected a new dynamic into the Arab-Israeli conflict. World attention, alerted by persistent media interest in the violence and the forceful way it was handled by Israel, rapidly shifted from the eastern edge of the region to its western parts. A much-heralded, major Iranian thrust towards Basra, which never materialized, and Israel’s inability to quell the violence in the territories under its control since 1967, strengthened this shift in attention.

The intifada — as the persistent popular Palestinian uprising in the territories came to be known in Arabic — accentuated the dangers inherent in the stalemated Israeli-Arab peace process.

Prompted by a number of factors — the perceived low priority the November Arab summit in Amman ascribed to the Palestinian question (as compared with the high priority accorded the Iraqi-Iranian War and Iran’s threat to Arab countries); the minor role of the Palestine issue on the Reagan-Gorbachev agenda at their third
(Washington) summit; and the euphoric Palestinian reaction to the successful hang-glider attack by a Palestinian on a military camp in the north of Israel, where six soldiers were killed and several wounded — the intifada forced a flurry of evaluations and reevaluations, as well as hectic diplomatic activities well into the middle of 1988. These concentrated on the question that had become a bone of contention in Israeli-Arab relations: the holding of an international peace conference. As Mordechai Gazit points out, “the peace process in 1987 was hardly more fertile than in the preceding years.” The US continued making available its “good offices to the parties, but most of the time the level and intensity of its exertions showed no expectation of quick results. US diplomats, as had become their habit, claimed that their quiet diplomatic work was laying the foundations for future progress. They were, so they explained, engaged in a patient and incremental diplomacy.”

The four parties directly involved — Israel, Jordan, the Palestinians and the PLO, and the US — developed stances that made it clear that a breakthrough was highly improbable. In Israel, the rotation from a Labor-controlled premiership to one dominated by the Likud, which was effected in October 1986 — according to the terms of the 1984 agreement to set up a National Unity Government — put Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in a strong enough position to outmaneuver Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Shamir felt that an international conference, as defined by Jordan and cautiously promoted by the US, was tantamount to a trap. On the other hand, the Peres-Husayn agreement, worked out in April in London, did not develop enough leverage to introduce the necessary momentum.

While Israel’s prime ministerial position came to dominate Israeli action (notwithstanding all attempts to neutralize it by Peres and his entourage), Jordan did not really come forward with a move bold enough to dislodge the situation from its downward spiral. Jordan did increase its involvement in, and contribution to, the West Bank, but did not “cross the Jordan” all the way to assuming full responsibility for the resolution of the Palestine problem. The PLO, which in 1986 had broken away from a joint PLO-Jordanian frame of action, was concerned that the Husayn-Peres format and procedure for an international conference “would make it impossible for their friends, notably the Soviet Union, to lend them effective support.” They were therefore equally uncooperative, and the 18th Palestine National Council (PNC), held in Algiers in April, “passed resolutions which ran counter to what Israel, the US and even Jordan could accept.”

One of the resolutions was the formal abrogation of the February 1985 Amman agreement between ‘Arafat and Husayn (which the king had annulled in February 1986). Another resolution reiterated the demand for Palestinian self-determination and rejected alternative proposals — the Reagan plan, the Camp David autonomy plan, etc. A third resolution insisted on the PLO’s right to represent the Palestinians in all negotiations on an equal footing with all other parties. Under the circumstances, the US was, naturally, unwilling or unable to launch a major initiative, and, until December, there seemed to be no special urgency to introduce significant momentum into the peace process. Therefore, the US maintained a low diplomatic profile on this matter throughout 1987.

Outside the Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian-American quadrilateral, Arab-Israeli relations were imbued more by tension than by relaxation. Egypt, formally at peace with Israel, meticulously kept to the letter of its 1979 peace treaty — as far as
substance was concerned — but maintained a cold, at times unpleasant, dialogue with Israel, in which indications of estrangement were far more frequent than signs of cordiality, particularly after the rotation of power in Israel. Egypt denied that its “cold peace” with Israel was linked to its persistent diplomatic efforts — rewarded at the Amman summit — to rejoin the Arab fold. Symbolically, when the 10th anniversary of Anwar al-Sadat's trip to Jerusalem was celebrated in November 1987, Israel played up the event, whereas Egypt played it down.

As long as Iraq was tied down in open warfare with Iran, the only remaining major Arab country directly relevant to the Arab-Israeli conflict was Syria. This “confrontation state,” strongly attached to its self-image as the center and upholder of Arabism, continued — despite serious economic, financial, and political difficulties — to adhere to its notion of achieving “strategic parity” as the necessary base from which to confront Israel. Expanding the concept of strategic parity to include the cultural as well as the military dimension, and clarifying that Syria should not be expected to be the sole bearer of Arab responsibilities in this regard, “Asad committed himself, again, not to concede a single inch of the Golan Heights, even if it meant fighting a hundred wars.” He also rejected “all solutions that did not recognize Palestinian national rights.” By the same token, it was due to Syria’s condition for its participation in the Amman summit conference that the Arab-Israeli conflict was added to the agenda of the summit, originally scheduled to confine its deliberations to the Gulf War.

If in 1987 Egypt commemorated 10 years of Sadat’s peace visit to Jerusalem, Syria celebrated the 800th anniversary of the battle of Hittin, in which Saladin routed the Crusaders near the Sea of Galilee. While the Syrian proclivity to make ominous statements did not subside in 1987, prevailing evaluations during the year predicted lower chances of a military confrontation between Israel and Syria.

Other manifestations of violence, however, continued to punctuate the diplomatic efforts to revive the peace process. While terrorist operations against non-Jewish, Jewish, and Israeli targets internationally were, during 1987, “few and far between,” there were Israeli-Palestinian-Arab-related armed operations on three fronts: in Lebanon, in Israel proper, and in the territories. The decline in ME-sponsored international terrorism in 1987 could perhaps be attributed to the severe Western reaction to Syria’s and Libya’s support of terrorist acts in 1986.

On the other hand, the “war of the camps” in Lebanon launched in 1985, continued unabated. Primarily pitting the Syrian-backed Shi'i Amal militia against pro-'Arafat factions of the PLO which were trying to regain control of Palestinian refugee camps, mainly in South Lebanon, this war wrought added devastation without major benefits for either side. Lebanon was also used more frequently and boldly in 1987 as a base for attacks against the South Lebanese Army and against Israel, culminating with the aforementioned hang-glider attack on 25 November.

In Israel proper and the territories, a significant intensification of armed operations manifested itself around the time of the PNC meeting in Algiers in April and the Arab summit in Amman in November. It was in stark contrast to the ineffectiveness of these operations, that the demonstrations, stone throwing, tire burning and so on by youths, and strikes by merchants — the hallmarks of the Palestinian intifada — had such a tremendous impact on the Israeli-Palestinian equation.

On another level, military analysts in various ME capitals, particularly those
apprehensive about the eruption of major wars in the future, could not ignore the implications of the intensification, in 1987, of the use of surface-to-surface Russian-made Scud-B, and Chinese-made Silkworm missiles in the Iran-Iraq war of the cities, as well as the heavy damage inflicted on commercial civilian targets in the ongoing tanker war. Iraq’s seemingly uninhibited use of poison gas against Iran and Kurdish villages, denounced but not curtailed by the free world, added trepidation to thoughts about the “future battleground” and what it might look like.

No annual overview of the ME can be complete without reference to six additional dimensions: (a) superpower competition; (b) the impact of Islamic militancy; (c) inter-Arab relations; (d) economic conditions; (e) domestic stability and instability; and (f) the overall map of violent conflicts.

As was the case in 1986, during the year under review the US retained its lead in the superpower competition for exerting influence in the region. This supremacy was, however, relative to the other superpower’s position rather than an absolute, solid posture. For about two thirds of 1987, American presidential policy towards the ME labored under the shadow of the “Irangate” scandal, which had erupted in October 1986 and quickly snowballed into one of the most serious crises with which the Reagan Administration had to contend. Yet, despite America’s preoccupation with the investigations, and the widely televised congressional hearings of the Iran-Contra affair, the embarrassment caused by the revelations and the serious damage done to the credibility of the US as a consistent superpower on important policy matters such as counterterrorism and arms embargoes against its foes, the US expanded and increased its military commitment in the Persian Gulf in 1987.

“America’s regional objectives,” as Barry Rubin points out, continued to be defined by four principles: (a) limiting Soviet influence while maximizing its own; (b) encouraging regional stability against the danger of war or radical revolutions; (c) supporting and strengthening allies; and (d) seeking the continued supply of oil at reasonable prices. “While, as always, there were numerous points of danger and tension in the Middle East in 1987, the overall picture in terms of these four concerns was reasonably positive.” For the most part in 1987, American strategic action in the ME concentrated primarily on Iran-Iraq-related issues, and focused on the Persian Gulf subregion.

Irangate demonstrated that the US ascribed great strategic value to Iran in the long run. It was clear, however, that in the short run the US continued its tilt towards Iraq. Thus, while in the mid-1970s the US was Iran’s main ally in the subregion and Iraq spearheaded opposition to the American presence in the Gulf, by the mid-1980s this situation was completely reversed, and Iraqi and American interests converged against Iran due to its revolution, its vehemence against the US, and its war with Iraq. Paradoxically, and to Iran’s chagrin, within three months of the attack on the US Stark the US signed a commercial, economic and technical agreement with Iraq.

In the Gulf itself, the US’s reflagging and escorting of 11 of Kuwait’s oil tankers lent credence to its resolve to maintain the Persian Gulf as an American-protected body of water, rather than a Russian or American-Russian one. The Gulf Cooperation Council and Saudi Arabia responded in kind; and while some American allies opted to maintain low-key support of the US, during the second half of 1987 Saudi Arabia raised the level of its publicly admitted collaboration with the US over military fueling and landing facilities.
Increasing US involvement in the Gulf was further accentuated when the US military set up a special command (the Joint Task Force — Middle East). Thus, despite the collapse of a complex stratagem designed by a senior official of the US National Security Council to rebuild US-Iran relations, to release American hostages (held by pro-Iranian terrorists in Lebanon), and to serve as a feather in the cap of the Reagan Administration — and the resultant controversial public scandal that undermined the president at the pinnacle of his power — American activity in the Gulf was not seriously curtailed.

By the same token, while the US was unable to breathe new life into the Arab-Israeli peace process, America's position in the western part of the ME had not been eroded by the end of 1987. American relations with Turkey, somewhat strained over questions of military and economic support, remained positive. Similarly, despite tension over the repayment of Egypt's military debt of $4.5bn., and the fact that President Husni Mubarak postponed until 1988 a trip to Washington that had been scheduled for February 1987, the special relationship between the two countries remained strong. US-Egyptian military cooperation was not affected, and in August another “Bright Star” joint military exercise was conducted in Egypt's Western Desert. The US also resumed diplomatic relations with Syria, in September.

The Soviet Union tried to capitalize on the perceived US weakness in the Gulf area due to the Iran-Contra scandal, and to make gains in the western part of the region as a result of the stalemated peace process. In the Persian Gulf, the USSR made some headway. Several Arab countries, appalled by revelations of American double-dealing, indicated their interest in improving relations with the Soviet Union. The Kuwaitis asked the Soviets to lease them three oil tankers and provide a military escort; the United Arab Emirates opened an embassy in Moscow in April; and Oman, which had begun a policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union in late 1985, followed it through to an exchange of ambassadors between Muscat and Moscow in December 1987. At the same time, however, the USSR showed hesitation about its continuing support of Iraq, despite the five-year extension in April of the Iraqi-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation they had originally signed in 1972. In 1987, this turned out to be of academic value because of the warming up of Iraqi-American relations and the decisive American action in reflagging the Kuwaiti tankers, not to mention the mid-1987 Soviet tilt towards Iran. But this last did not yield significant results. On the one hand, it caused a cooling down of Soviet-Saudi relations, which had warmed up since the early 1980s. On the other hand, in Robert Freedman's words: “The pro-Iranian tilt...did not appear to gain the Soviet Union any substantive influence in Iran while it proved increasingly counterproductive to Moscow’s efforts to improve its position in the Arab world.”

Even with Syria the Soviet Union did not enjoy quite the same cordiality that had previously marked their relations, as became evident during President Hafiz al-Asad's visit to Moscow in April. Relations with Libya, too, left a lot to be desired. On the other hand, the USSR, eager to exploit the US's inability to generate momentum in the peace process, signaled that it might improve its relations — albeit very cautiously — with Israel. Relations with Egypt, too, were so improved that Mubarak was forced to deny that Egypt was considering a reversal of its American orientation to the pre-1972/73 Russian orientation. An indicator of the friendlier Russian-Egyptian atmosphere was the Russian agreement to reschedule Egypt's military debt.
The USSR also scored an important success with the PLO during the PNC meeting in Algiers. The PLO's abrogation of the February 1985 Husayn-'Arafat agreement removed, or at least postponed, the danger of the US mediating a deal between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The partial reunification of the PLO under ‘Arafat, which the Soviets helped structure, also acted in their favor.

As 1987 began, the USSR was faced with a number of acute problems in the ME. The Islamic conference which met in Kuwait in January called for a total, unconditional Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Ethnic rioting in Kazakhstan, in Soviet Central Asia, in mid-December 1986, served as a reminder of the potency of Islam in the non-Russian Central Asian republics and the vulnerability of the Soviet system there. Continued instability in the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), still reeling from the 1986 bloody upheavals, threatened to undermine Soviet influence in that country.

Another Arab country, Libya, a close ally and client of the Soviet Union, was still shocked by Russia’s reaction in the face of the US bombing of Tripoli in 1986. In 1987 Libya suffered a series of defeats in Chad (which was supported in its anti-Libyan stance by France and the US).

The sharp drop in oil prices, given the Soviet dependence on sales of oil and natural gas for 50% of their hard currency, constituted yet another problem. By the end of the year, some of these problems had become less acute than they had been 12 months previously. The bottom line, however, did not provide cause for much joy in Moscow. While its arch rival, the US, was able to extricate itself, albeit not completely, from the corner into which the Iran-Contra scandal had forced it, the Soviet Union had not been able to take full advantage of the situation in the Gulf area. Also, as far as the Arab-Israeli conflict was concerned, by the end of the year it was still only the US that was in a position to broker peace, while the USSR was on full speaking terms only with some, but by no means all, of the relevant parties.

Summarizing the Islamic dimension of developments in the region, Martin Kramer points out that “the events of 1987 demonstrated the tenacious hold of sectarian hatred upon the imagination of contemporary Islam.” Battle lines were still drawn along ancient or medieval divisions, marked by combinations of religious, ethnic, socioeconomic, communal and political factors fomenting distrust, competition, conflict and violence. “The most virulent form of their distrust affects the mutual perceptions of Sunnis and Shi’is,” Kramer goes on to say, but “on both sides of the divide, none dare speak the name of this bigotry...and the mere enumeration of these differences is often denounced as part of an imperialist plot to foment division. This reflects the influence of ecumenism upon the intellectual climate of contemporary Islam, a climate now inhospitable to overt sectarian polemics.”

But beneath the thin intellectual surface, the great traditional religious — or religious-ethnic — rifts continued to take their toll. Shi‘i and Sunni, Jew and Muslim, Christian and Muslim were pitched against each other — each pair with its own focus of tension. Some of these burst forth in various forms during the year. The Islamic Conference Organization (ICO), obligated by its charter to convene an Islamic summit every three years, met in Kuwait in January for a grand conference. Iran’s absence highlighted yet again the impact of the Iraqi-Iranian War on regional configurations. The conference turned into “the most inconsequential Islamic summit held to date,” and became through its preoccupation with Egypt’s “return to the fold”
among other things, "not so much an Islamic summit as an Arab summit attended by 'observers' from non-Arab Islamic states."

The Kuwait convention of the ICO did not serve the original purpose "of lining up non-Arab Muslim support for an Arab consensus on Palestine." Rather, it "functioned as an alternative forum for the thrashing out of Arab differences." Eighteen years after the first Islamic summit in Rabat, the ICO could boast few political accomplishments. Thus, institutionalized Islam had turned into a shell for rather routine matters. States such as Iran and Libya, which claimed to hold the key to the true, eternal message of Islam (each according to its own interpretation), and were dedicated to spreading that truth beyond their own boundaries, were unable, by year's end, to claim to have altered the course of Islam.

Nevertheless, popular Islam, of the radical and militant inclination, continued to show growing vitality in undermining or at least threatening the established state systems directly or indirectly, openly or surreptitiously. In Jordan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, and even Saudi Arabia, as well as in Libya and Iran — the ruling elites faced various forms of challenge. Egypt experienced Muslim-Coptic clashes, great restiveness among university students, and even "a mighty wave of terrorist acts by Muslim radicals." Their magnitude and intensity were sufficient to alarm the regime.

Lebanon and Israel — the two non-Islamic political entities in the ME — were not free of religious challenges. In Lebanon, the changing balance between various denominations of Christians and Muslims continued to alter the very structure of the political system beyond recognition. In Israel, a growing salience of Jewish religious-messianic militancy was discernible, while Islamic sentiments among Arabs under Israeli control continued to cause a degree of unrest.

Even in Turkey, where for decades the government had consistently tried to impose a secular system on an Islamic society, there was some shock at the beginning of 1987, when university female students demanded permission to wear traditional headscarves in class. All things considered, it was the Iranian (Shi'i)-Saudi (Sunni) explosion during the July pilgrimage in Mecca, causing hundreds of deaths, which perhaps signified the most prominent "Islamic event" of the year. The incident itself, and the accusations and counteraccusations it generated, provided testimony of the disruptive potential of politicized religion — a terminological dichotomy which, in itself, is so alien to ME society in general and to Islam in particular. Religious fervor and its political translation into militancy and radicalism thus served, in 1987, either as a potentially disruptive manifestation or as a source of encouragement to existing cleavages and conflicts.

The state of inter-Arab relations in 1987 mirrored yet another dimension of the region's fragmentation, but the divisiveness that was the hallmark of 1986 seemed to give way to a growing Arab solidarity during the year under review. As Bruce Maddy-Weitzman characterized it, while "there were no fundamental shifts in orientation by any of the Arab states," it was evident that "inter-Arab alignments seemed less etched in stone than previously" and, "in many respects, 1987 was a year of an exceptional amount of dialogue among Arab rivals, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels."

As had been the case in previous years, the intensification and expansion of the Gulf War and the growing Iranian menace — as perceived by most Arab states, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula — was the predominant inter-Arab issue. However, in a
departure from the prevailing pattern, 1987 saw significant inter-Arab action. Two important, comprehensive events highlighted this change: the above-mentioned ICO summit in Kuwait in January; and the first all-Arab summit since September 1982, which convened in Jordan in November. While the deliberations at both summits, and particularly in Amman, reflected the preoccupation of the Arab world with the Gulf War and its challenges, an important change occurred with regard to Egypt, and therefore indirectly also with regard to the Arab-Israeli peace process. Mubarak's presence at the Kuwait summit and the warm welcome accorded him there accentuated the gravitation of the Arab world — accelerated by the Iranian threat — toward normalization with Egypt.

While Egypt had been readmitted into the Islamic fold in 1984, it was at the Amman summit that a complementary process of readmission into the Arab fold was all but sealed. In its wake, Arab countries (except Syria, Libya, Algeria and the PDRY) which had not resumed diplomatic relations with Egypt, did so. (Jordan had renewed relations with Egypt in 1984; Sudan, in 1981.) A decade-long Egyptian effort, since Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November 1977, thus came to fruition. Syria’s participation in the November summit and Jordan's major role in convening it were also significant milestones in the evolution of inter-Arab relations in the second half of the 1980s. This could develop into an important factor in the dynamics of the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict, as this conflict inches its way into the region's center stage as a result of the impact of the intifada, and the decline — in mid-1988 — in the imminence and intensity of the Iranian threat.

On a subregional level, too, wars and conflicts determined the pattern of alignments and counteralignments. But, as was the case at the all-Arab level, these were marked by dialogue and attempts at rapprochement rather than rifts. In the Persian Gulf, the Iranian thrust against Basra at the beginning of 1987, the intensification of the tanker war, and Iran's treatment of Kuwait as an enemy at war and therefore a military target, forced “a deep reconsideration of some of the most basic principles that had guided the Gulf Arab countries' collective foreign and defense policies since 1981.” Their security doctrine of “self-reliance” gave way to openness towards military involvement by the US as well as non-Gulf Arab states. This was the main theme of the eighth Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit held on the very last day of 1987. At the same time, however, the GCC also intensified attempts to improve — or at least ease — relations with Iran, in part through the good offices of Syria, Iran's chief ally in the Arab world.

On the other side of the Arab world, in the Maghrib, events in 1987 generally fell into the pattern of dialogue generated by Algeria, Libya and Morocco. Under the personal auspices of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, an Algerian-Moroccan summit was held in May on the Algerian-Moroccan border, in an attempt to resolve the violent conflict over the Western Sahara, where the Algerian-backed Polisario continued its military struggle with Morocco. Libyan-Moroccan relations, chilled by the breakup in 1986 of their short-lived union, remained at a low. In contrast, Libyan-Algerian relations, which had improved as a result of a rapprochement begun in 1986, following the 1985 crisis which had marred their relationship, continued to improve in 1987 to the point where Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi — in his constant search for unity with other Arab countries — announced, prematurely as it turned out, that a framework for Libyan-Algerian unity would be consummated in November.
On the bilateral level, the most significant change was Syria’s effort to break out of the inter-Arab isolation forced on it by an ever solidifying all-Arab coalition because of its close association with Iran. Syria’s move in this direction was not crowned with success. Its participation in the Kuwait ICO summit and in the Arab summit in Amman emphasized its role as a “spoiler,” albeit a relatively tame one. A failed attempt at reconciliation with Iraq (a summit meeting between Presidents Asad and Saddam Husayn took place in Jordan in April but did not produce a breakthrough) was another case in point. So were the strains on the Syrian-Libyan-Iranian alignment, made more severe by Syrian-Iranian disagreements over Lebanon. The thaw in their relations, which brought about a resumption of Iraqi-Libyan diplomatic relations in October, did not help either. Syria’s initiative in the Gulf, launched late in December, which was aimed at the introduction of dialogue into the tense Iran-GCC relations, did not fail altogether, but could not provide enough momentum to ease Syria’s growing isolation. Its troubles in Lebanon and its ailing economy were added burdens that further limited its ability to maneuver within the Arab world.

By year’s end, the “winners” in inter-Arab relations were the anti-Iranian coalition headed by Iraq and Jordan, and the relatively moderate pro-Arab-Israeli peace process coalition led by Egypt and Jordan. Jordan thus emerged as a pivotal point in inter-Arab affairs — a remarkable change from King Husayn’s position 30 years before.

Trends affecting the regional economy in the early 1980s continued to be felt in the ME during 1987. With very few exceptions, ME countries had to contend with serious economic problems. These contributed to the buildup of anti-government sentiment and tension and, in several cases, erupted in open turmoil or even violence (for instance in Sudan).

The catastrophic collapse of the oil price structure in mid-1986, when the price per barrel of crude oil fell to less than $10 (in July), was not truly remedied in 1987, even as oil prices bounced back. Opec’s attempts to stabilize the price at a higher level were only partially successful. This was due to several reasons: non-Opec producers’ competition and unwillingness to cooperate with Opec’s cartel policy, as well as the undisciplined behavior of Opec’s own members. The latter, torn between conflicting interests, could hardly agree on production and price levels, and when they did — at the 81st Opec conference in Vienna at the end of 1986, for instance — they unscrupulously cheated on each other. The vicissitudes of the Iraqi-Iranian War and the violent turbulence in the Gulf, with the concomitant threat to the flow of Gulf oil to Western countries, had a global impact and added to the uncertainty surrounding the oil industry. Oil prices consequently fluctuated throughout the year, more as a result of psychological and political-military anxieties than as a reflection of supply and demand or real economic considerations.

The deliberations of the 82nd Opec conference in Vienna, in December 1987, attested to the great rift within the once powerful organization, with Saudi Arabia and Iran emerging as the main antagonists. Eventually, Opec agreed only to a six-month “roll over” proposal providing for a continuation of the reference price of $18 a barrel which Saudi Arabia fought for, and rejecting Iran’s demand for an increase to $20. Saudi Arabia, which previously had become the “swing producer,” stubbornly and unequivocally refused to play this role throughout the year. By year’s end, oil prices dropped to their lowest levels in 10 months, and the price of West Texas Intermediate hit $15.58 on 18 December (from $18.31 a week earlier).
Under the circumstances, several Opec members adopted the market price for oil. Thus, the Opec crisis, which was triggered when demand for ME oil began to fall at the end of 1981, hitting the bottom in mid-1986, was not resolved in 1987. The specific interests of individual oil producers carried the day and dictated each producer's real actions, as distinct from declarative commitments. It was clear that 1987 did not bring about an acceptable — or imposable — formula or technique which could discipline Opec members' production and prices. Underlying the superficial stabilization of prices accomplished with great difficulty by Opec were real centrifugal forces threatening to further undermine the oil income on which several key ME regimes had come to rely. This had significant consequences for oil producers as well as regional impact on other beneficiaries from the oil bonanza of the 1970s.

All oil-producing countries continued to feel the brunt of these dramatic changes, which brought about recession and a need to profoundly reexamine public spending policies, tighten belts, and reevaluate priorities. Saudi Arabia was a remarkable case in point, as Jacob Goldberg put it: “With the overall revenues of Saudi Arabia ever declining, budgetary expenditures continued to fall by staggering proportions: from close to $90 bn. in 1984-85, to $45.3 bn. in 1987, to a projected $37.65 bn. in 1988. The deficit the Saudis incurred in 1987 was $14 bn., i.e., over 30% of the total budget, and the projected deficit for 1988 was over $10 bn. The Saudis seemed to have second thoughts about their traditional policy of drawing on their financial reserves to fund the deficits....The cumulative deficit of over $65 bn. since 1984 had depleted the kingdom’s financial reserves from $150 bn. down to no more than $50 bn. in liquid assets.”

If such was the case with Opec members that were not involved in open warfare, the situation was much worse in the case of countries whose resources were drained by war. Iran and Iraq continued to hemorrhage. In both, the tremendous war burden aggravated economic problems to an extent that adversely affected their war effort. In both, the economic situation was intertwined with major political power struggles. But while Iraq gained some relief through the support provided by other oil-rich sister states, and through the inauguration in July of a new oil pipeline through Turkey, Iran could rely only on its own rather limited resources. Hence Iraq’s insistence on hitting Iran’s vulnerable economic point — the flow of its oil to markets abroad.

Another oil-rich Arab country that came under economic stress in 1987 was Libya, whose continued military involvement in Chad added pressure to an already stretched economic system. This resulted in the near collapse of Libya’s entire retail system. Syria, seriously drained by an ongoing military commitment in Lebanon, and Sudan, deeply hurt by the rekindling of the rebellion in the south, were two other countries whose economies were overstretched to the point of constituting a threat to the stability of their regimes. In both cases, economic duress reached crisis levels and became the most pressing item on the national agenda, necessitating, in the case of Syria, a 50% devaluation. Lebanon’s protracted self-destruction, inevitably played havoc with the economy, bringing the country to unprecedented economic deprivation, and rendering its currency “cheaper than wallpaper.”

Other countries in the region, which did not have the excuse of immediate war or insurgency, did not fare much better. The PDRY — devastated by the civil war of 1986 — was only slowly stabilizing its economy. By the end of 1987 it “had yet to overcome the economic crisis that had plagued the state for two decades” since
independence. Egypt — the largest Arab country — was no exception. Without the burden of a war effort, but with a domestic population explosion instead, the Egyptian economy was in dire straits, with pressing immediate economic problems overshadowed by an even gloomier long-term trend, as the accretion of problems outpaced the solutions the government could provide. What made matters worse was the fact that the government’s efforts to lighten the economic burden resulted, in Ami Ayalon’s words, in “the bill for economic recovery...being submitted to the country for immediate payment, [while] recovery itself remained a matter for the distant and unforeseeable future.”

All efforts to improve public services and develop the economy through a second five-year plan (1987–92) were dwarfed by the staggering results of the census published in 1987. It showed an increase of 11.5m. people in 10 years, to 50.45m. (including 2.25m. Egyptians working or living abroad). The population was increasing at a rate of 2.8% annually (up from 2.31% a decade earlier); and 34.1% of the populace were in the 0–12-year group (compared with 31.7% in 1976). All other things being equal, the number of Egyptians would reach 70m. by the year 2000, with no commensurate growth of gross national product in sight.

The only two exceptions in this bleak overview were Turkey and Israel. From a state of economic collapse at the end of 1970, which was one of the factors leading to the takeover of the military in the early 1980s, Turkey’s civilian government made impressive economic strides, achieving domestic growth and strengthening its balance of payments through an impressive rise in foreign trade. In April 1987, Turkey formally applied for admission into the European Economic Community.

In Israel, the economic recovery that began in the second half of 1986 continued through 1987. The impressive reduction in the inflation rate without significant layoffs was accomplished by the National Unity Government when Labor’s Peres was prime minister and the Likud’s Yitzhak Modai was finance minister. This provided a positive shock to the economy and led to significant recovery. However, a considerable slowdown in the pace of growth during the last two quarters of 1987 reminded Israelis “that the economy's healthy appearance might not necessarily indicate a healthy body.” The impact of the intifada would be felt only later, well into 1988. Thus, even the two exceptions of Turkey and Israel represented very fragile economic cases.

Throughout the year, there was no positive economic breakthrough anywhere in the ME system. Governmental acts and remedies — such as belt-tightening, economic diversification, restructuring foreign debt, reexamining priorities, and reallocating resources — could hardly cope with the immediate, pressing problems. They amounted to the superficial relief of symptoms rather than a radical treatment of the real ailments of the region.

Except for one abortive coup d’état in Sharja in June, there were no major domestic upheavals in the region throughout the year. Several regimes could have passed a superficial test of stability with flying colors. Closer scrutiny, however, revealed that most governments operated under great strain, resulting from domestic or external stress, or worse — a combination of both.

Turkey and Israel, two out of three functioning Western-type democracies in the ME, continued to enjoy solid political stability. In Turkey, the restrictive political system inherited from the military regime of 1980–83 was gradually, but consistently, becoming more liberal and solidified. In November 1986, martial law was lifted in all
but five of 67 provinces. In September 1987, a referendum “returned full political rights to the former party leaders, who had been kept out of parliament since the coup d'etat of 12 September 1980.” This did cause a regression — as some feared — to the chaotic political conditions of the late 1970s. Early general elections were held in November, in which all parties competed except the ultra-left ones. The result: the ruling Motherland Party stayed in power with an increased majority. Turkey seemed to be assured of reasonable political stability, a necessary condition for continued progress and improvement.

In Israel, the unique system of a rotating National Unity Government, invented in 1984 out of electoral necessity, held against all odds. In October 1986, the Labor Party prime minister and the Likud vice premier exchanged roles. On the surface, all seemed well in 1987; in reality, however, the deep cleavage between the two-headed substructures within the government either paralyzed or sterilized policy-making on most major issues and on all cardinal ones. As Yael Yishai put it: “Fundamental matters of state were pushed to the brink, and then placed on hold without reaching any decision...Beneath the surface...there were undercurrents that threatened to undermine the comfortable status quo. Israel was skating smoothly, but on thin ice, and at the end of the year the ice cracked, forcing the state to take stock and to reconsider its policy of brinkmanship.”

The intifada was about to present the Israeli body politic with a formidable, ongoing challenge. This challenge would further accentuate the deep-seated political and ideological diversity of Israel — and the fact that, since 1984, Israel had been ruled in effect by two subgovernments. Throughout 1987, Israel's parliamentary elections, scheduled for November 1988, were already shaping many top-level considerations and decisions.

The third functioning democracy in the region, Sudan, fared much worse than Turkey and Israel. Its coalition government, which came to power in 1985, following the overthrow of Ja'far Numayri's military dictatorship, was almost totally incapacitated by a combination of devastating economic difficulties and the escalating rebellion in the south. Somehow, the government plodded through the year under review. Its very survival was, of course, a testament to independent Sudan's almost unique political characteristic vacillation between military dictatorship and parliamentary democracy. However, unlike Turkey (the other case of a pendulum-like swing from military to civilian government), by year's end Sudan's economic future seemed bleak, and its political stability appeared to be threatened by major cracks.

Lebanon — the fourth parliamentary democracy in the ME — belonged to this shortlist only technically. There was a further deterioration of the Lebanese political system during the year, aggravated by the death of the veteran Maronite leader, Camille Chamoun, and the assassination of the Sunni prime minister, Rashid Karami. For all intents and purposes, the central government lost more and more power during the year “and partition along communal lines” became an “almost irreversible fact of life.” Syria's military intervention in West Beirut in February and Israel's continuous military involvement in South Lebanon demonstrated yet again that Lebanon had ceased to be a fully independent country. A democracy in form, it was gearing up for the election of a president, due in August-September 1988. It was clear, however, that the presidential elections would underline political weaknesses and communal strife.
Two ME countries which could not boast membership in the small club of Western-style democracies, but which in past years had made significant steps toward the controlled liberalization and democratization of their political systems, were Kuwait and Egypt. Kuwait suspended its parliament in 1986, and in 1987 experienced an upsurge of mostly Shi'i opposition and terrorism, which threatened its political stability. Most of Kuwait's problems were triggered or fueled from the outside, by Iranian pressure related to the Gulf War.

Egypt — a totally different case in terms of size and regional importance — provided another example of pressures generated, paradoxically, through political liberalization. In 1987, the People's Assembly (elected in 1984) was dissolved, following a complicated revision of the electoral law in December 1986. New elections were held in April. In October, Mubarak — the only presidential candidate — was reelected for a second six-year term, with 88.4% of the eligible voters participating and 95.08% of the actual voters supporting him. In Ayalon's evaluation, “the 1987 elections represented an important step on the road to greater democracy. Yet the Egyptian leadership, having committed itself to following such a course, was inclined to proceed as slowly and gradually as possible....It was...in the nature of the process, however, that increasing pressures on the government by its rivals would make it increasingly difficult for the former to curb the latter. The more the opposition consolidated its political position, the more able it would be to maneuver the regime into having to choose between expanding freedom and abandoning democracy: and the choice would be harder each time.”

Broad dissatisfaction — generated by a convergence of numerous, relatively independent grievances among leftist and rightist groups, the secular and the militant religious, Muslims and Copts, restless young students and the establishment, the haves and the have-nots — culminated in mid-1987 with a wave of attempted political assassinations by elements as divergent as radical Muslims and Nasserites. In Ayalon's summation: “As the year drew to a close, the domestic front seemed to be returning to relative quiet — relative, that is, to the mid-year turbulence. But few deluded themselves that the quiet was more than temporary....There was little doubt that, so long as the basic circumstances [incremental economic crisis, frustration of the opposition, the ideological challenge of the ultraleft and radical Islamic militancy, and lack of hope] that encouraged these phenomena remained unchanged, further periods of internal friction and perhaps terror lay ahead for Egypt.”

Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran — four major ME actors with regimes based on the absolute control of a single leader and his close retinue — were all faced with power struggles.

In Libya, Qadhdhafi started the year by annulling Tripoli's status as the capital of the Jamahiriyya, in an abortive attempt to decentralize the government. On the other hand, the return from exile at the beginning of the year of ‘Abd al-Salam Jallud, Qadhdhafi's right-hand man for many years, signified Qadhdhafi's continued ability to hold the reins of power.

In Syria, there was a continuation of the power struggle that began when Asad fell ill in November 1983. Asad's underlings squabbled while jockeying for position. However, opposition to Asad was less intense than in 1986.

In Iraq, Saddam Husayn launched a major shake-up or “administrative revolution” — which lasted throughout the year — in an attempt to weaken the Ba'th Party and
the prevailing concepts and structure of an etatist-socialist economy. Husayn also curtailed the influence of the bureaucracy, the trade unions and the security apparatus. He promoted the military as his main power base and encouraged an “open door” policy (infitah) aimed at strengthening the private sector and capitalist enterprises. The Gulf War — which was particularly difficult for Iraq throughout the first half of 1987 — served, in Ofra Bengio’s words, as “both cause and excuse” for these far-reaching reforms. Husayn “had never lacked in boldness and ingenuity.” Often in the past, when the situation was critical, he went onto the offensive. Faced with great domestic difficulties and tremendous external pressure in the protracted war against Iran, Husayn pursued a bold and hazardous course of action throughout 1987.

Iraq’s archenemy, Iran, experienced an intense power struggle among the clerics, the disciples of the octogenarian Ayatollah Khomeyni. In David Menashri’s words, “compared with their first years in power, the clerics were undoubtedly more firmly entrenched in 1987. As in the last few years it was clearly not the opposition that posed the main challenge for the revolutionary regime, but elements in the situation that they had created themselves”— including the socioeconomic problems and discontent that they generated, and the lack of a decisive breakthrough in the Gulf War. “Growing disillusionment and disaffection within the ranks of the dispossessed...added a new challenge, more serious than anything the regime had faced before. Such challenges, already discernible in the previous two to three years, were further aggravated in 1987... they clearly posed a critical threat. Until 1986, these challenges led the leadership towards greater pragmatism; in 1987 their intensification led to greater radicalism.” Ironically, as the struggle between the ultraradicals and more pragmatic groups intensified, the latter found themselves in no position to implement the relatively moderate positions they had advocated. Rather, they found themselves toeing a radical line, especially in their foreign relations.

The two major traditional monarchies of the region — Jordan and Saudi Arabia — experienced the smallest visible domestic challenges to their stability in 1987. But even there pressures and dissatisfaction were mounting, due to a combination of socioeconomic problems and the lack of safety valves to let off steam.

The only removal of a head of state took place in Tunisia in November, when the 84-year-old Habib Bourguiba was deposed. The act signified a generational change; Bourguiba was the last leader in the region who belonged to the generation that had led the struggle for independence from colonialism.

The overall impression of relative political stability — at the governmental level — across the region was a prominent element in the general ME situation in the year under review. The depth and solidity of this stability could not be fathomed. It was clear, however, that as far as local and subregional conflicts were concerned, the region was as volatile as ever. Violence was not confined to the Iraqi-Iranian War on land and its extension in the Persian Gulf. A bird’s-eye view revealed quite a few points of continuous or intermittent violence which were not as dramatic as the all-out war between Iran and Iraq, but not necessarily of smaller consequence domestically and/or locally.

Aside from political assassinations or domestic terrorism (in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Kuwait, Israel, and the major incident in Mecca in July), various ME countries were embroiled in serious trouble. Communal, ethnic and religious conflicts, expressed in open hostilities, seriously threatened the very future of Lebanon. They also challenged
Sudan, where the war in the south escalated and expanded. In Iraq, the Iranian-backed Kurdish intifada in March-April, and the formation of the United Kurdish Front in July, served as a reminder of fierce Kurdish demands for independence. Polisario forces continued their battle — now in its 13th year — against Morocco over the Western Sahara. In Israel, the Palestinian intifada was about to aggravate an open sore.

Libya and Syria were involved in taxing military intervention in neighboring countries. Libya suffered a series of dramatic defeats in Chad, where it had been involved militarily since the end of 1980, and was forced to evacuate its forces, early in the spring, from all but the Aouzou Strip (claimed by Qadhdhafi and occupied in 1973). A successful Chadian offensive in the summer forced Libya to negotiate a cease-fire in the fall. In contrast, Syria became more actively involved in Lebanon. From the summer of 1985 through the beginning of 1987, Syria's main efforts in Lebanon were concentrated on pacification and consolidation. After 18 months of relative passivity, Syria decided to move in force into West Beirut, which was one step short of full-scale military involvement. As a result, Syria reasserted its role as the dominant outside power in most of Lebanon vis-à-vis Iran, Israel and the PLO. The other side of this coin included Syria's inability completely to swallow up or subdue Lebanon, the limitations this factor imposed on Syria, and the risks it generated.

The only category of volatile conflict which saw some relaxation in 1987 was that of border disputes. Israel and Egypt continued their complex but peaceful negotiations over the Taba dispute. Border wars and subversion between Oman and the PDRY came to a practical standstill, with one accidental incident in October. And Qatar and Bahrain, through Saudi mediation, reached reconciliation in their dispute over the Bahraini-controlled Fasht al-Dibal island, and in December agreed to submit their dispute to the International Court of Justice for arbitration. The long-lasting border dispute between the Yemeni Arab Republic and the PDRY was dormant in 1987. The only exception to this otherwise relaxed state of affairs was the old Turkish-Greek dispute which, in March, saw another "up" in tension. However, it did not deteriorate to the point of violence.

At the end of 1987, the ME scene was thus different in detail, but not in essence, from what it had been at the end of the previous year. However, the incremental dynamics of trends and events that took shape or occurred in 1987 were about to introduce significant changes into the scene in 1988. Missing in 1987, as in previous years, was a visionary breakthrough that might open prospects for a more tranquil ME. Not only was this not accomplished, but it hardly occupied a place on the regional agenda.

NOTE

1. This integrative essay is based on the chapters that follow in this volume of MECS. In many instances, therefore, paraphrases of contributors' writings have been incorporated. Whenever a passage appears in inverted commas without attribution to an author, it has been taken from the chapter on the relevant country. Longer or more meaningful quotations are explicitly attributed.
THE MIDDLE EAST
AND WORLD AFFAIRS
The United States’ Middle East Policy in 1987

BARRY RUBIN

US Middle East policy during 1986–87 was concerned mainly with the Persian Gulf, where new problems were added to old ones to preoccupy the Reagan Administration. A central issue involved the Administration’s 1985-86 secret arms sales to Iran. Ostensibly intended to rebuild US-Iran relations, their principal objective seemed to be to obtain the release of Americans who were held hostage by pro-Iranian terrorists in Lebanon. When these activities were revealed, in November 1986, the result was a major national controversy that seriously damaged the government.

The second important development was the significant escalation of US intervention in the Gulf, when the Administration allowed Kuwait to register 11 tankers under American flags. The US Navy escorted these ships in an attempt to protect them from Iranian attacks. There was an apparently accidental Iraqi attack on a US naval vessel, and there were several small-scale clashes between US and Iranian forces, but no major confrontation.

On the Arab-Israeli peace process, Washington took relatively little action after King Husayn’s abandonment of his 1985–86 initiative (see MECS 1986, essay on the ME peace process). Nonetheless, the attempt to convene an international conference on the issue continued with important implications for future US policy.

THE IRAN ARMS DEAL AND ITS AFTERMATH

The Administration followed a consistent position on the Gulf War from the time it took office in 1981: neutrality modified by a tilt toward Iraq. This posture avoided entanglement in the fighting, kept open the possibility of a future rapprochement with Iran, and reduced the chance that Iran would be pushed into an alliance of convenience with Moscow. Some US allies — including France, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia — aided Iraq, while others — notably Israel, Pakistan, and Turkey — kept channels to Iran open through overt or covert trade and diplomacy.

The pro-Iraqi tilt helped prevent that country’s defeat. Washington gave Baghdad trade credit and intelligence. Large amounts of modern weapons and a great deal of military training were provided throughout the 1970s and 1980s to improve the Gulf Arab states’ defensive capabilities. No attempt was made to prevent US allies from selling arms to Iraq, while Washington made it clear to all its allies — in a campaign called “Operation Staunch” — that it did not want them selling arms to Iran.

As President Ronald Reagan began his second term in January 1985, the question of Iran preoccupied his top advisers. They had an exaggerated fear of a Soviet takeover and more rational concerns that Iran might defeat Iraq and spread Islamic revolt. The White House found particularly frustrating its inability to free American hostages held in Lebanon by Iran-backed terrorists. But the prospect of
rapprochement with Iran or a serious retaliation against it seemed most unlikely. At this unpromising moment in the spring of 1985, Iranian emissaries appeared claiming to represent moderates who wanted to overthrow rivals they accused of being pro-Soviet. Thus began a complex series of talks and arms deals that would shake the Administration and American public opinion when revealed in November 1985.\footnote{1}

Some Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and National Security Council (NSC) officials had developed, in the first half of 1985, an excessive concern that Iran might turn toward the USSR. When Iranians approached Israel claiming to represent moderate factions that sought to press their government toward a stance friendlier to the West, the Israelis pursued these contacts and passed them on to the US. Reagan was informed of these initiatives and sent NSC consultant Michael Ledeen to meet Manouchir Ghorbanifar, an Iranian merchant and intermediary.

Ghorbanifar and other Iranians with whom Ledeen met, mid-level officials linked to Majlis Speaker ‘Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, wanted to buy arms and indicated that American hostages would be released in exchange. The US had placed an arms embargo against Iran in 1979 and had urged other countries not to sell that country arms in order to weaken Tehran’s war effort. Nevertheless, the US Government gave permission to Israel to send 504 TOW anti-tank missiles. These were flown to Iran in August-September 1985. On 14 September, the date of the last shipment, Rev. Benjamin Weir, an American hostage in Lebanon, was released.

Hoping to obtain the release of all the hostages, the US Government now approved a shipment of 120 Hawk antiaircraft missiles to Iran in exchange for the release of all the hostages. The first 18 missiles were sent from Israel in November 1985, but, because they were not the latest model, the Iranians returned them. Meanwhile, however, matters were further complicated as Lt. Col. Oliver North, of the NSC staff, used excess money from Iranian payments to obtain and ship arms for the US-backed Nicaraguan guerrillas, the Contras.

The Administration was now split over whether to try again, with Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger opposing any further sales, and National Security Adviser Adm. John Poindexter and CIA Director William Casey supporting them. Reagan signed a “Finding” authorizing the sale of more arms to Iran and the NSC took over the administration of the program.

In February 1986, the US sold an additional 1,000 TOW missiles to Iran. North also supplied some intelligence designed to convince Tehran of a Soviet threat. Additional funds were generated and used for the Contras and other covert operations around the world. But, again, Iran did not live up to the US expectation that it would help to free all the remaining hostages.

A third round of attempted exchanges with Iran began in May 1986. Hawk missile parts would be offered to Iran, but only on condition that all American hostages in Lebanon were released. Robert McFarlane, the former national security adviser, traveled to Tehran with the first shipment of Hawks. There he met with government officials, albeit at a much lower level than he had expected. Unable to reach any agreement, he considered the mission a failure. However, on 26 July 1986 a second American hostage, Fr. Lawrence Jenco, was released. Although McFarlane had warned the Iranians that no further arms would be sent, the Administration again relented and sent more Hawk parts after Jenco was freed.

In September 1986, the NSC began negotiating with a new group, the “Second
Channel,” apparently members of another Iranian faction linked to Prime Minister Mir-Husayn Musavi. The American negotiators promised to press the Kuwaiti Government to release 17 Shi'ite terrorists, members of the Iranian-backed al-Da'wa group, held for a major series of attacks in December 1983. North and Gen. Richard Secord, the man handling the logistics for the Iran and Contras arms supplies, also told the Iranians that the US would help them remove Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and defend their country against Soviet aggression. (These commitments had not been approved by the president.) In addition, 500 more TOWs were supplied in late October. A third hostage, David Jacobsen, was released on 2 November 1986.

The President's Special Review Board (known as the Tower Commission) that was set up to investigate the affair, published its report in November 1986. According to the report, the motives for all these activities and maneuvers were:

First the US Government anxiously sought the release of seven US citizens abducted in Beirut...held hostage by members of Hizballah, a fundamentalist Shi'ite terrorist group with links to the regime of the Ayatollah Khomeyni.

Second, the US Government had a latent and unresolved interest in establishing ties to Iran. Few in the US Government doubted Iran's strategic importance or the risk of Soviet meddling in the succession crisis that might follow the death of Khomeyni. For this reason, some in the US Government were convinced that efforts should be made to open potential channels to Iran.

Arms transfers ultimately appeared to offer a means to achieve both the release of the hostages and a strategic opening to Iran.

In its critique of the operation, the commission found it to have been “directly at odds” with other important policies, including the Administration's stance over terrorism and the Iraqi-Iranian War. The concern over hostages became the dominating factor, pushing aside and even contradicting any effort to rebuild the strategic relationship between the US and Iran. The arms sales created:

an incentive for further hostage-taking[and] could only remove inhibitions on other nations from selling arms to Iran. This threatened to upset the military balance between Iran and Iraq, with consequent jeopardy to the Gulf states and the interests of the West in that region [and] rewarded a regime that clearly supported terrorism and hostage-taking. They increased the risk that the US would be perceived, especially in the Arab world, as a creature of Israel. They suggested to other US allies and friends in the region that the US had shifted its policy in favor of Iran. They raised questions as to whether US policy statements could be relied upon.

And, in the end, the offer had not even brought the release of the hostages.3

A congressional investigation subsequently made similar points and concluded:

* The US armed Iran, including its most radical elements, but attained neither a new relationship with that hostile regime nor a reduction in the number of American hostages.

* The arms sale[s] did not lead to a moderation of Iranian policies....And Iran to this day sponsors actions directed against the US in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere.
* The US opened itself to blackmail by adversaries who might reveal the secret arms sales and who, according to North, threatened to kill the hostages if the sales stopped.

* The US undermined its credibility with friends and allies, including moderate Arab states, by its public stance of opposing arms sales to Iran while undertaking such arms sales in secret.\(^4\)

The Administration maintained it was acting to gain influence in Iran and to help moderate factions in the country rather than merely to free hostages. Earlier, on 13 November 1986, Reagan explained in a national address that he had sought “to renew a relationship with the nation of Iran, to bring an honorable end to the bloody six-year war between Iran and Iraq, to eliminate state-sponsored terrorism and subversion, and to effect the safe return of all the hostages.... The US has not swapped boatloads or planeloads of American weapons for the return of American hostages.” Instead, he stated, only one planeload of arms had been sent to establish his negotiators’ credentials.\(^5\) Indeed, this argument echoed an NSC memo written by North in December 1985: “Achieving a more moderate Iranian Government depends on [winning] credibility as one who can ‘deliver’ on what the Iranians need.”

There was overwhelming public disapproval and the affair was widely criticized on a number of grounds. The Administration's behavior blatantly contradicted its own stated policies of not negotiating with terrorists and of discouraging other countries from selling arms to Iran. Thus, US credibility on these issues was severely damaged. Terrorists, it was argued, would now be encouraged to take more hostages; allies would be discouraged from taking a tough line against terrorism and could not be asked to refuse to provide Iran with weapons.

On strategic grounds, the policy was criticized for seriously misestimating the Soviet threat to Iran and the state of the Iraqi-Iranian War; moreover, it even misread the US’s own interests. It could also damage American relations with Iraq and the Gulf Arabs. On procedural grounds, it was said to have been amateurishly implemented, having failed to produce results. White House lines of authority and decision-making methods were found to be inadequate.

Constitutional objections were raised over the fact that Congress had been systematically excluded. The president, it was pointed out, had even ordered Casey (in January 1986) not to follow procedures for allowing the intelligence committees to pass judgment on the covert operations. The fact that money had been diverted for the Contras, contrary to congressional decisions to withhold aid from them, also seemed an act of bad faith. On legal grounds, questions were raised about the use of US funds and weapons, the enrichment of private individuals, the destruction of official documents, and the authority assumed by individual officials in their actions.

Poindexter and North were relieved of their duties on 25 November 1986, following the disclosure of the diversion of funds to the Contras. The president’s chief of staff, Donald Regan, resigned a few weeks later.

In addition to the hearings conducted by the Tower Commission and a House-Senate committee, there was an investigation by an independent prosecutor. The congressional committee’s hearings were televised and widely discussed during the summer of 1987.

Even within the executive branch there was dissent. Shultz had opposed the Iran
arms sales policy, though not strenuously, in internal discussions. The open criticism by Under Secretary of State John Whitehead in congressional testimony was virtually unprecedented. "We in the State Department found it difficult to cope with the National Security Council's operational activities. I don't like to have to differ with my president, but I believe there is... evidence of continuing Iranian involvement with terrorists."

The president himself generally rejected the more substantive criticisms. "What is driving me up the wall," he complained, "is that this wasn't a failure until the press...began to play it up. I told them that publicity could destroy this, that it could get people killed. They then went right on."

The number of American hostages held in Lebanon actually increased during the course of the secret US-Iran contacts, despite the release of three people in exchange for arms. This fact reinforced the assertion that concessions to terrorists only encouraged them to carry out more attacks. The following were still held in early 1988 (the date of their abduction is given in parentheses): Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent of the Associated Press, and Thomas Sutherland, an administrator at the American University of Beirut (1985); Frank Reed, head of the Lebanese International School, and Joseph Cicippio, deputy controller of the American University of Beirut (September 1986); Edward Tracey, an itinerant poet (October 1986); and Professors Allen Steen, Jesse Turner, and Robert Polhill (January 1987). The kidnappers of the last three threatened to kill them if Muhammad 'Ali Hamada, who had been detained in West Germany on suspicion of hijacking the TWA airliner to Beirut in 1985 and murdering an American passenger (see MECS 1984–85, pp. 87–99), was extradited to the US.

Many observers felt that the arms-for-hostages deal with Iran made it harder for the US to urge other countries to take a tough line against terrorism. US public opinion, however, changed in the opposite direction. Earlier, sympathy for Americans held in Lebanon produced sentiments favoring active government efforts to obtain their release. But polls indicated that the Iran affair had hardened popular opinion against making concessions to terrorists. It was also generally assessed that the president had not fully understood the issues at stake. The Iran arms deal was broadly regarded as the Administration's greatest single mistake and its most costly error.

DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF:
REFLAGGING

The US policy to keep away from direct involvement in the Gulf was based on the desire to avoid entanglement in the war and the fact that the local Arab states rejected — and might be damaged by — an increased US presence. The US had four basic objectives in the region: (1) blocking Soviet control or influence; (2) deterring Iran from attacking its Arab neighbors or fomenting Islamic fundamentalist revolutions; (3) ensuring the export of oil at levels required by the US and its allies; and (4) preserving US credibility as a power capable of protecting Gulf security and friendly regimes.

By 1987, however, the Administration had come to believe that new developments warranted a change in this basic strategy. High US officials felt that its objectives were critically endangered by Kuwait's request that Moscow lease it three ships. Earlier, Washington had been unenthusiastic about the idea of putting Kuwaiti tankers under
the US flag; but this position was reversed literally overnight in the face of a possible Soviet initiative.

The sequence of events was as follows: on 1 November 1986, Kuwait notified the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that it was seeking international protection for its tankers. The Kuwaitis inquired about the technical requirements for reregistering tankers as US-flag ships on 10 December. The first query about the possibility of reflagging came on 13 January 1987. At about the same time, the US learned that Kuwait was discussing a similar arrangement with the Soviets.

On 23 January, Reagan restated his commitment to maintain the free flow of oil from the Gulf, as the White House informed Congress that it was requesting the sale of a squadron of F-16 fighter planes to Bahrain, and of Bradley fighting vehicles to Saudi Arabia. Six days later the State Department told Kuwait that it could reregister the ships as US vessels, and on 6 February, added that the US would protect them. Kuwait applied for reflagging on 2 March and was offered protection five days later. Kuwait agreed on 10 March and the Administration informed Congress of the offer on 12 March. On 2 April, Kuwait formally accepted the offer. The point of these three rounds of exchanges was first to work out the agreement between the White House and Kuwait before members of Congress or the US public were informed.

The Administration then stated its case boldly. If the US did not act, said National Security Adviser Frank Carlucci, our allies "will be faced with either giving in to Iranian intimidation or accepting Soviet offers of protection, and not just for shipping." Shultz spoke in apocalyptic terms: "The worst thing that can happen to the US is to be sort of pushed out of the Persian Gulf....One of the worst things in the world that could happen would be to find the Soviet Union astride the supplies of oil to the free world." Reagan summed it up: "In a word, if we don't do the job, the Soviets will."8

Attention was also drawn to the Gulf by a dramatic event on the night of 17 May. An Iraqi Mirage fighter plane fired an Exocet missile at the US frigate Stark about 110 km. northeast of Bahrain, resulting in the deaths of 37 crew members (for details see essay on the Iraqi-Iranian War). The Iraqi Government said the attack was a mistake and the US Government accepted the apology, although US Navy investigators were not allowed to interview the pilot.

The reflagging issue produced a controversy which took on both procedural and political aspects. On the procedural level, there was criticism that the Administration did not present Congress with CIA assessments warning that the American naval presence might lead to armed conflict, and chose to present instead the far more optimistic assessment of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

In addition, there were questions about whether congressional approval for reflagging was needed and whether the War Powers Act applied. Many senators and representatives clearly felt uncomfortable with the new Gulf policy. In the colorful words of Representative Toby Roth (Republican-Wisconsin): "At best the Persian Gulf is a snakepit and we're going to be bit again." Senator Dale Bumpers (Democrat-Arkansas) said: "There's not one member of this body that doesn't know we're courting disaster in the Persian Gulf...that a lot of sons aren't going to come back from the Persian Gulf." Even the relatively hawkish Senator Sam Nunn (Democrat-Georgia) said the plan "poses substantial risks" of violent confrontaion with Iran. Nunn concluded that the US had "vital strategic interests" in the Gulf, but they were "not being substantially challenged at this time."9
The Administration denied the jurisdiction of the War Powers Act which required that the president report to Congress within 48 hours of US troops being in danger of hostilities. Unless Congress approved the military operations within 60–90 days, he had to remove the troops. Many Democrats wanted to apply the law to the situation in the Gulf, but a Republican filibuster blocked action for several weeks. The Senate finally refused to invoke the act by a 50–41 vote.

But Congress also had tremendous respect for the president’s role as commander in chief, and a great fear of appearing indifferent to a Soviet advance into such a critical region. Representative Lee Hamilton (Democrat-Indiana), chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, said: “I think the Congress would approve the president’s policy in the Gulf if it was called upon to vote. Part of the reason is that there’s no clear alternative.” Once convoying began, its members largely accepted the argument that the US could not revoke such a public commitment.

The general public took a similar attitude. Asked if they supported a US military presence in the Gulf to protect the free flow of oil, 75% of those polled said yes, and only 24% said no. They were less sure of the US’s ability to defend itself in the Gulf — 46% had “a great deal of confidence,” 42% “some confidence,” and 12% little or none. Asked if the US should take all steps including the use of force, to ensure an adequate supply of oil, those queried agreed by a relatively narrow 57–39 margin. They approved of “US ships escorting those reflagged oil tankers even if the US ships risk being attacked,” but only by 53–44%.

On the substantive plane, many wondered whether the reflagging and convoying were really necessary or beneficial. Even Secretary of the Navy James Webb questioned, in a tough memorandum, whether it was wise to send a force without clear military objectives. Former secretary of state Henry Kissinger wrote:

The odd aspect of the crisis is that nothing significantly new has happened. The rate of attacks continues about at the level of last year, when no Western country — including the US — bothered to protest, and the US was clandestinely shipping arms to Iran. The best evidence that there is no new threat is that ship insurance rates for the Gulf have not changed appreciably in 1987.

Yet despite this lack of urgency, “America thus risks being drawn into an expanded military role that cannot be decisive.”

A Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report in October concluded: “Overall, American policy toward the warring nations has comprised first a tilt toward Iraq, then arms sales to Iran, and now an even stronger involvement on Iraq’s side. This incoherent policy has been confusing to the nations of the region and debilitating to American credibility.”

The Soviet threat was also arguably overstated by the Administration. Kuwait’s strategy, it seemed, was to play off the superpowers against each other, avoiding dependence on either one while trying to align both of them against Iran. As the Kuwaitis had hoped, their small gesture set off alarm bells in Washington. Soviet involvement, ran the Administration’s argument, meant that the US must rush in to prove itself the real defender of Gulf security. Even the Kuwaitis seemed bemused. “The US's problem,” commented Sulayman Majid al-Shahin, undersecretary at the
Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, "is that the mentality of Hollywood tends to influence it sometimes. As for Soviet tankers, these have been quietly sailing in the Gulf for some time. So what has changed?"13

The second main US objective was to bring the war to an end and thus reduce the possibility of it spreading or Iran intimidating the Gulf monarchies. On 7 May, Washington announced its willingness to support sanctions against any country that refused to cooperate to end the war. On 20 July, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 598 calling for a total cease-fire, a withdrawal of troops to the international boundary, and a political settlement to the war. It seemed likely that another resolution, No. 599, would soon be passed to impose sanctions — including an arms embargo — on Iran for refusing to comply.

The Iranians, however, outmaneuvered US diplomacy by pronouncing themselves ready to accept a cease-fire if the UN first found Iraq responsible for starting the war. Yet given the continued domination of Ayatollah Khomeyni's hard line, this might only be a first step. Once negotiations began, Iran would use Iraq's war guilt as justification for its demands to overthrow the Saddam Husayn regime. Tehran also courted Moscow, persuading the Soviets not to back a UN resolution involving sanctions. Although the Administration repeatedly stated its belief that the Soviets would support the resolution, few hopes remained after General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's December visit to Washington.

The third US objective was the continued free flow of oil from the Gulf, which provided about 66% of Japan's imported oil and 40% of the petroleum imported by Western Europe. Despite the numerous attacks, mainly by Iraqi planes and most often against Iranian-flag boats, and despite the dozens of seamen killed, ships suffered relatively minor damage and a surplus of tankers made shipping companies eager to undertake the Gulf run. Oil prices generally fell and there was still so much petroleum available that Opec was hard-pressed to hold down production.

By and large, reflagging Kuwaiti tankers did not greatly contribute to protecting this commerce, as US warships ignored Iranian and Iraqi attacks on non-US-flag ships. The Administration was far more successful, however, in gaining the support of West European allies. Britain, France, Italy, and other countries followed the US lead in sending naval forces to escort tankers.

In addition, the Administration stressed another objective: the need to preserve US credibility. Washington's basic assumption was that the Gulf Arab states would cooperate fully with the US as soon as they were persuaded that it was serious and consistent in protecting them. But the policy of Arab states was a largely independent variable based not on a yearning for US guardianship but on the rulers' domestic and regional political requirements. They wanted the option of enjoying American help in ending the war without the risk of direct involvement in the war or providing too much assistance to the US.

Defending the credibility argument, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy argued in testimony presented to Congress on 19 May 1987 that, "in the light of the Iran-Contra revelations, we had found that the leaders of the Gulf states were questioning the coherence and seriousness of US policy in the Gulf along with our reliability and staying power. We wanted to be sure the countries with which we have friendly relations — Iraq and GCC states — as well as the Soviet Union and Iran, understood the firmness of our commitments."14
Murphy also assessed positively the actual operations in the Gulf:

To date, Iran, has been careful to avoid confrontations with US-flag vessels when US navy vessels have been in the vicinity. US Military Sealift Command and other commercial US-flag vessels have transited the Gulf each month under US navy escort without incident. We believe that our naval presence will continue to have this deterrent effect. Iran lacks the sophisticated aircraft and weaponry used by Iraq in the mistaken attack on the USS Stark. Moreover, we will make sure in advance that Iran knows which ships have been reflagged and are under US protection.¹⁵

This situation essentially continued during the rest of the year. The Iranians went around the Americans instead of attacking them, but this use of guerrilla tactics also created problems for the US and the Gulf states. Thus, Iran mined Kuwait's harbors and the open Gulf waters, and used HY-2 Silkworm missiles to strike at Kuwait, while its Revolutionary Guards used hundreds of small speedboats for stepped-up attacks on tankers flying the flags of countries not participating in the convoys. (See essay on the Iraqi-Iranian War.)

The GCC states also continued to evince great doubt about US credibility in the face of both the superpower conflict and the threat from Iran. For example, al-Wahda (United Arab Emirates) said the war must be ended “to ensure that the Gulf is not converted into a US and Soviet arsenal under the pretext of protecting their military presence and strategic interests.” Kuwait's ambassador to Washington complained that “Iran is now settling its score with America at the expense of Kuwait.” The GCC states were reluctant to offer the US even minimal military facilities even in cases where the US Defense Department said assistance was forthcoming. Kuwait, for example, would not allow minesweeping helicopters to take off from its territory. Nonetheless, the Administration drew comfort from the fact that the Amman summit supported the measure Kuwait was taking in its defense, an implicit endorsement of the US presence.¹⁶

The revision of the traditional GCC position opposing the presence of any US warships in the Gulf was, indeed, a dramatic change brought about by the war and the fear of Iran. AWACS surveillance planes based in Saudi Arabia and P-3 reconnaissance aircraft taking off from Kuwait provided vital intelligence for the convoys. But the need to base US Sea Stallion mine-hunting helicopters on ships made it harder to clear the obstacles, particularly in the upper Gulf. In private conversations, American officials and officers indicated their dissatisfaction with the level of GCC assistance.

The Administration's policy on the military aspect of the reflagging policy was articulated by Weinberger, who promised that the US protection of ships was “not part of an open-ended unilateral American commitment to defend all non-belligerent shipping in the Persian Gulf.” Rather, “we're there to ensure that there will be the free passage of vitally important cargoes in international waters.” As part of “the normal course of patrolling,” US military forces would “make sure of no additional minelaying, no additional concentrations that might be attempting to interfere with the free passage of navigation.” It was most important to ensure “that Iran did not succeed in being dominant in the Persian Gulf by intimidating and bullying the Gulf states, and that the Soviet Union did not become, in a sense, the protector of these vital supply routes.”¹⁷
The 835-km. run from the mouth of the Gulf to Kuwait’s oil terminal took two days. The Strait of Hormuz provided a channel that was only 35 km. across at its widest, bringing ships in sight of Larak Island with its Iranian refinery. Through this chokepoint flowed 7–8m. barrels of oil a day. The first convoy entered the Gulf on 22 July. The US navy force in the Gulf included 11 warships and 17 supply, patrol, and minesweeping craft, involving about 4,000 personnel. An additional 16 ships, including an aircraft carrier and a battleship, comprising about 12,000 personnel, remained outside the Strait. The cost of the operation was estimated at $15m.–$20m. per month.

The failure to bring in minesweepers — intelligence had earlier warned about the danger of Iranian-planted mines — turned out to be an embarrassing military oversight. The reflagged tanker Bridgeton was damaged by a mine on 24 July. Minesweeping ships and helicopters were then dispatched. The convoys continued, each consisting of two to four reflagged ships and two or three warships. In the speech cited above, Weinberger stated that each time ships passed through safely it was a victory.

In his mid-September speech to the UN, Reagan called on Iran to accept a cease-fire “clearly and unequivocally.” But events soon escalated. On 21 September, night-flying US helicopters sighted the Iran Ajr, an amphibious landing ship, dropping mines in the Gulf, 80 km. northeast of Bahrain in international waters. American forces attacked the ship, set it on fire, and took it into custody. Some 26 crew members were captured, three were dead, and two were missing. The mines found on the ship were displayed before the international media and the Iran Ajr was later scuttled by the US and the crewmen returned to Iran. In his UN speech the next day, Iran’s President Muhammad ‘Ali Khameneh’i charged that the attack had created a “grave and immediate danger.” Khameneh’i also “objected to but did not reject” UN Resolution 598, but added that “a principal problem remains punishment of the aggressor before a cease-fire can come into effect.” The US delegation walked out as he spoke. At the 25 September meeting of the Security Council, the Soviet Union blocked an Anglo-American effort to introduce a mandatory arms embargo against Iran.18

A second military incident occurred on 8 October when US helicopters sank three Iranian gunboats after they allegedly fired at a helicopter 24 km. southwest of Iran’s Farsi Island. At least two Iranians were killed. After this, the Iranians were more careful and avoided impinging on the US rules of engagement, even when they attacked foreign-flag tankers very close to US convoys. US ships were permitted to fire if they determined that an approaching ship or plane had “hostile intent.”19

“We do not wish to get into a conflict with the US and we say so explicitly,” explained Rafsanjani. American policymakers concluded that this was indeed Iranian policy. Yet they also had to take into account the continuing fiery rhetoric emerging from Tehran, such as the Iranian statement that alluded to terrorist attacks on the US Marines and Embassy in Beirut: “We are ready to repeat the events of Lebanon which resulted in their flight.”20

One point of controversy within the US was whether armed assistance should be extended to tankers owned by American companies but flying the flags of other nations whose regulations for operating ships were less strict and less expensive. One such tanker, flying a Liberian flag, was struck by an Iranian Silkworm missile in Kuwait’s harbor on 15 October. The Administration repeatedly refused to extend such protection.
It was a different matter, however, on 17 October when the reflagged tanker Sea Isle City was hit off Kuwait by another Iranian Silkworm missile. The American captain was wounded. According to the orders governing the convoys, US protection did not apply within Kuwait's waters. Nevertheless, the attack required some response. US forces warned Iranian personnel to leave one of their oil platforms in the Gulf that was being used as a communications station, and then destroyed it.

The US thus showed its ability to escort the 11 ships and to muster support from European allies. But the wider issues remained unresolved. A GCC leader commented: "The whole issue is out of focus when one talks about accompanying or escorting ships. The issue is the war and how to end it." A Saudi official complained that the US was merely "administering pinpricks." He continued: "Hitting small boats doesn't matter. What matters is that the American military presence, in order to be justified by us, must [ensure] our total security by [ensuring that] Iran [is reduced] to total paralysis." Certainly, the US had entered into a long commitment whose direction and results were still unclear.

ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

The idea of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict was understandably attractive for American policymakers. A success in negotiating peace would bring great honor on the mediator and greatly simplify the problems of the US in the ME.

But the very factors that invited US involvement also made it a complex, frustrating endeavor. In addition to the long, bitter and entangled conflict itself, there were three additional difficulties for US mediation. First, there were conflicting objectives, not only between the Arab states and Israel but also among the Arab states themselves. Syria, for example, seemed determined to sabotage any negotiations that would give control of the West Bank to Jordan and entrench a Jordan-PLO alignment. King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat would compete to dominate any future Jordan-West Bank federation, and so on. The US had to consider whether steps to improve relations or make concessions to one side — Syria or the PLO — might weaken and antagonize American allies who were that side's enemies. Washington was also reluctant to make concessions that might strengthen Soviet allies like Syria or the PLO or encourage a direct Soviet role in the peace process.

Second, there were also problematic points in the bargaining position and goals within each state. Jordan wanted the West Bank back, but without having to pay the price of recognizing Israel. Israel wanted peace, but not at the price of a PLO state that might pose a greater threat than the current situation; and leading parties also sought to retain sizable areas of occupied land. 'Arafat would like to have his own West Bank state but would neither recognize Israel nor designate stand-ins to negotiate because he feared Jordanian domination, Syrian revenge, and a split in his own ranks.

All these difficulties were interlocked. During the year under review, as in previous years, it was difficult to envision a diplomatic solution without Syrian participation, but almost impossible to see any framework or outcome that would please Damascus and still be acceptable to Israel, Jordan and the PLO. Husayn could not step forward to negotiate without 'Arafat and, apparently, could not persuade the PLO leader to make enough concessions to be acceptable to the US or Israel as an interlocutor. Consequently, the US Government tended to focus on other, more pressing — or