MIDDLE EAST CONTEMPORARY SURVEY

Volume XV: 1991
MIDDLE EAST
CONTEMPORARY SURVEY

Volume XV
1991

AMI AYALON
Editor

Barbara Newson, Executive Editor

The Moshe Dayan Center
for Middle Eastern and African Studies
The Shiloah Institute
Tel Aviv University

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON
About the Series and Editor

Established in 1977, the *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (MECS), 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 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. Subjects explored in detail include Arab-Israeli and inter-Arab relations, Islamic affairs, Palestinian issues, economic developments, and the relations between major world powers and the Middle East. The second part consists of country-by-country surveys of the Arab states, as well as Iran, Israel, and Turkey. The North African states of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco are not covered separately. Regional aspects of foreign policies and internal developments that have wider implications are discussed in the chapters on inter-Arab relations and Islamic affairs, respectively. The emphasis in the second part is on elucidating the inner dynamics of each country's policy and society.

Ami Ayalon is Chairman of the Department of Middle Eastern and African History and Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University.
Preface

The present volume of *Middle East Contemporary Survey* is the fifteenth in a series which provides a continuing up-to-date reference work recording the rapidly changing events in an exceptionally complex part of the world. Every effort 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 other institutions in Israel and abroad. An international committee of renowned scholars has assisted the editor with counsel and advice.

The fellows of the Center were deeply grieved by the sudden passing of Prof. Elie Kedourie, who was also a member of this international committee. Prof. Kedourie and his contribution to our field of scholarship will surely be missed.

The volume covers the year 1991, a watershed period in the Middle East in more ways than one, although in the annals of the region's history it will probably be remembered, above all, as the year of the Gulf War. The war, in January-February, pitted regional and international forces of unprecedented might against each other in fierce confrontation. Political developments during the rest of the year revolved mainly around the search for a "new order" in the area, inspired by the US-led victory over Iraq, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and other global changes. Yet again, the relevance of Western political modes to Middle Eastern societies was raised for reexamination, only to highlight the formidable complexities of such options. One form of local response to these changes was a surge of Islamic sentiment, sometimes militant in nature, manifested primarily in Sudan, Algeria, Jordan, Egypt and amongst the Palestinians. In another development, likewise US-inspired and spearheaded, the Middle East peace process entered a more dynamic phase, as a multilateral peace conference in Madrid, in October-November, ushered in a new era of direct Arab-Israeli negotiations. In contradistinction, the Arab system was slow to recover from the painful impact of the Gulf War, and inter-Arab relations continued to be characterized more by mutual vindictiveness than by reconciliation. On the whole, this was a year of considerable flux and uncertainty with some events equally promising the inauguration of a new course of development for the region — or simply passing without a sequel or longtime impact.

The period surveyed in this volume, unless otherwise indicated, is from January to December 1991. In order to avoid excessive repetition while achieving a comprehensive survey of the affairs of each country individually, extensive cross-references have been used.

*The Editor*
Acknowledgments

While MECS, like all collective works, has an editor responsible for its merits and shortcomings, it is — perhaps more than most such publications — a team project. 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, Judy Krausz played a central role, both as a master of style and as a critical reader of the text. Barbara Newson’s help as executive editor has been indispensable. Much help in matters of style was also given by Susan Menashe. The exacting work of indexing has been carried out by Ronald Watson. Ruth Beit-Or prepared the maps for publication, and David Levinson proofread large parts of the volume.

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, whose skillful and devoted work has been an indispensable pillar of the production of MECS, Ilana Greenberg, Sarit Azar, and the Moshe Dayan Documentation System team, headed by Yigal Sheffy. Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Barbara Ellington, Susan L. McEachern, and the staff of Westview Press for their help in the production and distribution of this volume of MECS.

Haim Shaked gave form and purpose to the series as founding editor and has guided its publication for over a decade. The contribution made by the late Max Holmes and by Colin Legum to the launching of this project and to setting its standards, and by Frederick A. Praeger to the shaping of its present format, remains invaluable and much appreciated.

The Editor
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Transliteration

The Arabic language has been transliterated as follows:

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<th>Transliteration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>q</td>
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<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dh</td>
<td>s</td>
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<td>f</td>
<td>sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gh</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>w (or u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>y (or i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kh</td>
<td>z</td>
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<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>g</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 قازر = nazir, but also قازر = 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).
Recommended Method for Citation from MECS

In the interest of accuracy, consistency, and simplicity, the editors of MECS recommend the following method of citation. Based on the classification of MECS as a periodical, published annually, the method conforms to the Chicago Manual of Style.


The accepted abbreviation of the periodical's title is MECS. The year is that covered by the volume as indicated on the volume binding and title page, not the year of publication. No mention need be made of editors or publishers, who have changed several times since the establishment of MECS. Some styles may require mention of place of publication, usually in parentheses following the title of the periodical. For Volumes I through VII, the place of publication was New York; for Volumes VIII and IX, Tel Aviv; since Volume X, Boulder, Colorado.
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<td>ADP</td>
<td>Arab Democratic Party (Israel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALCM</td>
<td>air-launched cruise missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALF</td>
<td>Arab Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMU</td>
<td>Arab Maghrib Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>armored personnel carrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUB</td>
<td>American University of Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWACS</td>
<td>airborne warning and control system (radar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC(E)</td>
<td>Bank of Credit and Commerce Emirates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCCI</td>
<td>Bank of Credit and Commerce International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b/d</td>
<td>barrels per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn.</td>
<td>billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoE</td>
<td>Bank of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brig. Gen.</td>
<td>Brigadier General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>circa (about)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>Central Bureau of Statistics (Jerusalem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>(Palestine) Central Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centcom</td>
<td>US Central Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevron</td>
<td>Standard Oil of California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency (US)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Col.</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Citizens' Rights Movement (Israel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFLP</td>
<td>Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLP</td>
<td>Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi; Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>Department of Defense (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>Defense Support Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUP</td>
<td>Democratic Unionist Party (Sudan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>electromagnetic isotope separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPRDF</td>
<td>Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIS</td>
<td>Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front; Algeria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de Libération Nationale (Algeria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRC</td>
<td>Fath Revolutionary Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>General</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHQ</td>
<td>General Headquarters</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>gross national product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPC</td>
<td>General People's Congress (Yemen)</td>
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<td>G7</td>
<td>the seven great industrial countries</td>
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<td>MK</td>
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<td>MTCR</td>
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<td>YUP</td>
<td>Yemeni Unionist Party</td>
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## List of Sources

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<td>Appeared before the revolution under the name Ayandegan; expresses radical views</td>
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<td>Akhbar al-'Alam al-Islami</td>
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Al-'Alam
(Rabat, daily)

'Al-Hamishmar
(Tel Aviv, daily)

Alif Ba
(Baghdad, weekly)

Al-Anba
(Cairo, weekly)

Al-Anwar
(Beirut, daily)

Al-'Arab
(Qatar, daily)

Arab Oil and Gas
(Paris and Beirut, fortnightly)

Armed Forces Journal
(Washington, DC, monthly)

Armor
(Fort Knox, KY, monthly)

Army
(Arlington, VA, monthly)

Atlanta Constitution
(Atlanta, GA, daily)

Atlanta Journal
(Atlanta, GA, twice weekly)

Aviation Week and Space Technology
(Washington, DC, weekly)

Al-Ayyam
(Khartoum, daily)

Babil
(Baghdad, daily)

Baghdad Observer
(Baghdad, daily)

Al-Balagh
(Kuwait, weekly)

Al-Baith
(Damascus, daily)

Al-Bayadir al-Siyasi
(East Jerusalem, biweekly)

Al-Bayan
(Dubai, daily)

Bayan
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Al-Bayraq
(Beirut, daily)

Berliner Zeitung
(Berlin, daily)

Al-Bilad
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Bild
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Briefing
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Christian Science Monitor
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Commentary
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Comparative Politics
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| **Country Reports** | CR  
| Published by Economist Publications.  
| Formerly *Quarterly Economic Review* |
| **Camhuriyet**      |  
| (Istanbul, daily)   |  |
| **Daily Telegraph** | DT  
| (London, daily)     |  |
| **Davar**           | Organ of the Israeli Trade Union  
| (Tel Aviv, daily)   | Federation (Histadrut) |
| **Al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya** |  
| (Tripoli, Libya, bimonthly) |  |
| **Al-Dawliyya**     |  
| (Paris, weekly)     |  |
| **Dawn**            |  
| (Karachi, daily)    |  |
| **Defense News**    |  
| (Springfield, VA, weekly) |  |
| **Al-Difa'**        |  
| (Cairo, monthly)    |  |
| **Al-Divar**        |  
| (Beirut, daily)     |  |
| **Al-Dunya**        | Supplement of the Lebanese paper,  
| (Beirut, weekly)     | *al-Haqiqa* |
| **Al-Dustur**       |  
| (Amman, daily)      |  |
| **Al-Dustur**       |  
| (London, weekly)    |  |
| **Al-Duwalisyya**   |  
| (Paris, weekly)     |  |
| **Echo of Iran**    |  
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| **The Economist**   |  
| (London, weekly)    |  |
| **Egypt Focus**     |  
| (Wiederweg, Meckenheim,  
<p>| Germany, monthly)    |  |
| <strong>Emirates News</strong>   |<br />
| (Abu Dhabi, daily)  |  |
| <strong>Etela'at</strong>        |<br />
| (Tehran, daily)     |  |
| <strong>L'Express</strong>       |<br />
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| <strong>Facts on File</strong>   |<br />
| (New York, weekly)  |  |
| <strong>Al-Fajr</strong>         |<br />
| (East Jerusalem, daily) |<br />
| <strong>English- and Hebrew-language editions of the daily <em>al-Fajr</em></strong> |  |
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| (East Jerusalem, weekly) |  |
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*Organ of the PLO*

*Published by Economist Publications*

*From 1991 onwards, published in Beirut*

*Organ of the DFLP*
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**Notes:***
- **Iran Focus**: Published since 1991. Radical; edited by Hadi Khamenei
- **Izvestia**: Organ of the Government of the USSR
- **Jahan-e Islam**: Published by Shi'i opposition to Saudi monarchy
- **Journal of Palestine Studies**: Published by Israel Central Bureau of Statistics
- **Jomhuri-ye Islami**: Organ of the Islamic Republican Party
- **Kayhan**: Reflects views of exiled opposition groupings
Kayhan International
(Tehran, daily)

Al-Khalij
(Sharja, daily)

Komsomolskaya Pravda
(Moscow, daily)

Krasnaya Zvezda
(Moscow, daily)

Kull al-'Arab
(Paris, weekly)

Kull al-Nas
(London, weekly)

Kurier
(Vienna, daily)

The Lebanon Report
(Beirut, monthly)

Le Liban du Citoyen
(Paris, monthly)

Al-Liwa
(Beirut, daily)

Liwa al-Islam
(Cairo, monthly)

Al-Liwa al-Islami
(Cairo, weekly)

Liwa al-Sadr
(Tehran, weekly)

London Gazette
(London, five per week)

Los Angeles Times
(Los Angeles, daily)

Ma'ariv
(Tel Aviv, daily)

Al-Madina
(Jidda, daily)

Al-Majalla
(London, weekly)

Al-Maza
(Cairo, daily)

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

May
(Cairo, weekly)

Medina, Mimshal ve-Yahazim
Beisneumiyym
(Jerusalem, three to four per year)

Memo
(Limassol, biweekly)

MERIP Middle East Report
(Washington, DC, bimonthly)

The Middle East
(London, monthly)

Middle East Defense News
(Paris, biweekly)

Middle East Economic Digest
(London, weekly)

KI
English-language paper published by Kayhan; often expresses radical views, mainly on foreign relations

LAT
Published by the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies

ME
Published by the Lebanon citizens' movement

MEED
Islamic publication of the ruling National Democratic Party

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Times</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>The New York Review of Books</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nezavisnai Gazeta</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Nur</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Observer</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oil and Gas Journal</td>
<td>Tulsa</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Muscat</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oman Daily Observer</td>
<td>Ruwi</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orbis</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orient</td>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>L'Orient le Jour</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petroleum Economist</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le Point</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Papers</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pravda</td>
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<td>Profil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publius</td>
<td>Denton</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Qadisiyya</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qarun al-Mu'arada</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Quds al-'Arabi</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<td>Al-Qowai al-Musallaha</td>
<td>Khartoum</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Rabita</td>
<td>Mecca</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Ra'y</td>
<td>Amman</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<td>Al-Ray</td>
<td>Doha</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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</table>

Islamic publication of the Liberal Party

Occasional papers published by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Organ of the Central Committee of the CPSU

Published by the Center for the Study of Federalism (Department of Political Science), University of North Texas
Ray'at al-Istiqlal  
(Nicosia, monthly)  
La Repubblica  
(Rome, daily)  
Resalat  
(Tehran, daily)  
Resmi Gazete  
(Ankara, irregular)  
Al-Ribat  
(Athens, weekly)  
Risalat al-Jihad  
(Tripoli, monthly)  
Al-Riyad  
(Riyadh, daily)  
RUSI Journal  
(London, quarterly)  
Ruz al-Yunuf  
(Cairo, weekly)  
Sabah al-Khayr  
(Cairo, weekly)  
Al-Sabil  
(Oslo, Norway, monthly)  
Al-Safir  
(Beirut, daily)  
SAIS Review  
(Washington, twice yearly)  
Salam  
(Tehran, daily)  
Sawi al-Haqq wa-l-Hurriya  
(Umm al-Fahm, weekly)  
Sawi al-Itihad  
(Ferndale, MI, frequency unknown)  
Sawi al-Kuwait al-Dawali  
(London, daily)  
Sawi al-Sha'b  
(Amman, daily)  
Sawi al-Watan  
(Nicosia, monthly)  
The Seattle Times  
(Seattle, daily)  
Security Studies  
(London, quarterly)  
Al-Sha'b  
(Cairo, weekly)  
Al-Sha'b  
(East Jerusalem, daily)  
Al-Sharq  
(Beirut, daily)  
Al-Sharq al-Awsat  
(London, Jidda, and Riyadh, daily)  
Al-Sharq al-Jadid  
(London, monthly)  
Al-Shihan  
(Amman, weekly)  
Al-Shira'  
(Beirut, weekly)  

Pragmatist, close to Rafsanjani and to Tehran's bazaar circles  
Official gazette  
Publication of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood  
Published by the World Islamic Call Society  
Published by the Royal United Services Institute  
Published by the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington  
First published in 1991, edited by and close to Kho'iniha; radical  
Organ of the Socialist Labor Party  
xxviii
Shu‘un al-‘Arabiyya
(Cairo, quarterly)

Shu‘un Filastiniyya
(Nicosia, monthly)

Al-Sinara
(Nazareth, weekly)

Al-Siyasa
(Kuwait, daily)

Al-Siyasa al-Duwaliya
(Cairo, quarterly)

Al-Siyasi
(Cairo, weekly)

Skirot
(Giv’at Haviva; irregular)

Sourakia
(London, weekly)

Sovetskaia Rossiya
(Moscow, daily)

The Soviet Union and the Middle East
(Jerusalem, monthly)

Der Spiegel
(Hamburg, weekly)

The Star
(Amman, weekly)

Statistical Abstract of Israel
(Jerusalem, annually)

Der Stern
(Hamburg, weekly)

Al-Sudan al-Hadith
(Khartoum, daily)

Sudanow
(Khartoum, monthly)

Sunday Times
(London, weekly)

Survival
(London, bimonthly)

Svenska Dagbladet
(Stockholm, daily)

Al-Tadamun
(London, weekly)

Al-Tadamun al-Islami
(Mecca, monthly)

Al-Ta’ita
(Jerusalem, weekly)

Al-Tasawwuf al-Islami
(Cairo, monthly)

Tehran Times
(Tehran, daily)

Al-Thawra
(Baghdad, daily)

Al-Thawra
(Damascus, daily)

Al-Thawra
(San’a, daily)

Time
(New York, weekly)

Publication of the Arab League
Published by the PLO Research Center

Occasional paper published by the Institute of Arab Studies

Published by the Marjorie Mayrock Center for Soviet and East European Research, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Published by Keterpress for the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics

Published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies

Published by the national forum of Sufi orders

Reflects government’s views; close to Rafsanjani

Organ of the Iraqi Ba’th Party
The Times  
(London, daily)
Tishrin  
(Damascus, daily)
Trud  
(Moscow, daily)
Truppendienst  
(Vienna, bimonthly)
Turkey Confidential  
(London, 10 per year)
'Ukaz  
(Jidda, daily)
Al-Umma al-Islamiyya  
(Jidda, weekly)
Union  
(San Diego, daily)
Al-Ushu' al-'Arabi  
(Beirut, weekly)
Al-Ushu' al-Jadid  
(Jerusalem, biweekly)
US News and World Report  
(Washington, DC, weekly)
Vanity Fair  
(London, monthly)
Verejnost  
(Bratislava, daily)
Al-Wafd  
(Cairo, daily)
The Wall Street Journal  
(WSJ)
(The New York, daily)
The Washington Post  
(WP)
(Washington, DC, daily)
Washington Quarterly  
(Washington, quarterly)
The Washington Times  
(WT)
(Al-Watan  
(Nazareth, weekly)
Al-Watan al-'Arabi  
(Paris, weekly)
Al-Watani  
(Cairo, weekly)
World Policy Journal  
(Rev)
(NEW YORK, quarterly)
Al-Yasar  
(Cairo, monthly)
Al-Yawm al-Sabt  
(Paris, weekly)
Yediot Aharonot  
(Tel Aviv, daily)
Al-Zahra  
(London, daily)
Die Zeit  
(Hamburg, weekly)
Zo Haderech  
(Tel Aviv, weekly)

Organ of the New Wafd Party

Affiliated to the PLO
News Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agence France Presse (Paris)</td>
<td>AFP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algérie Presse Service (Algiers)</td>
<td>APS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst (Berlin)</td>
<td>ADN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Press (New York)</td>
<td>AP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deutsche Presse-Agentur (Hamburg)</td>
<td>DPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf News Agency (Manama)</td>
<td>GNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interfax (Moscow)</td>
<td></td>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Jamahiriyya Arab News Agency (Tripoli)</td>
<td>JANA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordanian News Agency (PETRA; Amman)</td>
<td>JNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuwaiti News Agency (Kuwait)</td>
<td>KUNA</td>
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<td>Kyodo Tsushin (Kyodo News Service; Tokyo)</td>
<td>Kyodo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maghreb Arabe Presse (Rabat)</td>
<td>MAP</td>
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<td>Middle East News Agency (Cairo)</td>
<td>MENA</td>
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<td>Novinska Agencija Tanjug (Belgrade)</td>
<td>TANJUG</td>
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<td>Novosti Press Agency (Moscow)</td>
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<td>Oman News Agency (Muscat)</td>
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<td>Opec News Agency (Vienna)</td>
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<td>Pan-African News Agency (Dakar)</td>
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<td>The Press Association (London)</td>
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<td>Reuters (London)</td>
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<td>Saudi Press Agency (Riyadh)</td>
<td>SPA</td>
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<td>Sudanese News Agency (Khartoum)</td>
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<td>Syrian Arab News Agency (Damascus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskovo Sovieza (Moscow)</td>
<td>TASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Press International (New York)</td>
<td>UPI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wakalat al-Anba al-Filastiniyya (Palestinian</td>
<td>WAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Agency; Damascus)</td>
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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.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Broadcasting Company</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Headquarters in New York City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antenne 2 (Télévision)</td>
<td>Antenne 2</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>Monitoring reports published in</td>
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<td>British Broadcasting Corporation,</td>
<td>SWB</td>
<td>English translation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of World Broadcasting:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ME and Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Cable News Network Inc.</td>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Report: Middle East and Africa</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>Monitoring reports published in</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>English translation by the US Foreign</td>
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<td>Daily Report: Soviet Union</td>
<td>DR:SU</td>
<td>Daily broadcasts from Cairo</td>
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<td>Egyptian Space Channel</td>
<td>ITV</td>
<td>London</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Television</td>
<td>IRIB TV</td>
<td>Tehran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting</td>
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Israel Defense Forces Radio
Joint Publication Research Services:
  Near East and North Africa
  Soviet Union
  Sub-Saharan Africa
  West Europe
Middle East Broadcasting
  Corporation Television
National Broadcasting Company
  Al-Quds — Palestine Arab Radio
Radiodiffusion Télévision
  Marocaine
Radio France Internationale
  R. Peace and Progress
  R.SPLA
  Tiirkiye Radyo Televizyon
  Kumuru
United States Information Agency
  United States Information Service
Voice of Free Iraq
  Voice of Free Lebanon
Voice of the Great Arab Homeland
Voice of Iraq
Voice of Israel
Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Voice of the Iraqi Kurdistan
Voice of the Iraqi People
Voice of the Iraqi Opposition
Voice of Lebanon
Voice of Palestine (Algiers)
Voice of Palestine (Baghdad)
Voice of Palestine (San'a)
Voice of the Masses
Voice of the Mountain
Voice of the Oppressed
Voice of the People
Voice of the People of Kurdistan
Wireless File

R.IDF
JPRS
MBC TV
NBC
Rti TV
RFI
TRT TV
USIA
USIS
VoFI
R. Tripoli,
VoGAH
VoIK
VoIP
VoL
VoP
VoP
VoP
VoM
R. Baghdad,
VoM

English-language translation from foreign press. Occasionally includes monitoring reports as well
Saudia-backed, news television by satellite from London
PFLP-GC radio, broadcasting from Syria
Paris
Official USSR station transmitting from Moscow to the ME
Voice of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army
Turkish Radio-Television Corporation, Ankara
Washington, DC
Washington, DC
Military station of the Lebanese Phalanges
Libyan transmitter to Arab audiences outside Libya, previously known as Voice of the Arab Homeland (VoAH)
Iran's national radio network
Radio station operated by the Kata'ib
A series of special programs in Arabic, Kurdish, and Farsi broadcast over R. Baghdad for a few hours each day
Radio station of the Progressive Socialist Party, operating from the Shuf mountains
A clandestine Hizbollah mouthpiece, Lebanon
PLO daily program over R. Algiers
PLO main radio station
PLO daily program over R. San'a
Communist Party clandestine radio station, based in Lebanon

Published by the USIA Library, Washington

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

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Notes on Contributors

AMI AYALON, PhD (Princeton University, 1980). Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center and Chairman of the Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University. Author of Language and Change in the Arab Middle East (1987), Press and Journalism in the Arab World (forthcoming) and numerous articles on modern Middle Eastern political and cultural history. Editor of Regime and Opposition in Egypt under Sadat (1983, in Hebrew).

GAD BARZILAI, LLB, MA, PhD (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1987). Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Tel Aviv University. Fields of specialization: politics and governments in democratic regimes; Israeli politics; law, social order, war studies, political behavior, and politics. Published articles on Israeli politics, national security crises and democracies, voting behavior, military force and politics. Author of A Democracy in Wartime: Conflict and Consensus in Israel (1992; in Hebrew); The Impact of Intercommunal Conflict: The Intifada and Israeli Public Opinion (1991; in Hebrew); coeditor: The Gulf War and its Global Aftermath (forthcoming); and coeditor of Society and Law: Israeli Public Opinion and the Supreme Court (forthcoming, 1993; in Hebrew).

MORDECHAI GAZIT, MA (Hebrew University). Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University and the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University. Formerly Director-General, Office of the Prime Minister of Israel (1973–75); Director-General, Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs (1972–73); Ambassador to France (1975–79); Minister, Embassy of Israel, Washington, DC (1960–65); Fellow, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University (1980–81).

GIDEON GERA, PhD (Tel Aviv University, 1978). Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center. Fields of specialization: political and strategic problems of the Middle East, on which he has published several articles. Author of Libya under Qadhdhafi (1983; in Hebrew).


GALIA GOLAN, PhD (Hebrew University, 1970). Director of the Mayrock Soviet and East European Research Center and Darwin Professor of Soviet and East...
European Studies in the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Author of eight books on the Soviet Union and on Eastern Europe, the most recent of which are *Soviet Policies in the Middle East from World War Two to Gorbachev* (Cambridge University Press), and *Moscow’s Policy in the Middle East: New Thinking on Regional Conflict* (Royal Institute for International Relations).


WILLIAM W. HARRIS, PhD (University of Durham, 1979). Lecturer in Geography, University of Otago, New Zealand. Fields of specialization: Middle East politics and political geography. Frequent visits and periods of residence in Lebanon from 1983 to the present. Published papers on Lebanese political developments, especially on Syrian interventions. Author of *Taking Root: Israeli Settlement in the West Bank, the Golan, and Gaza-Sinai 1967–1980*.

JOSEPH KOSTINER, PhD (London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, 1982). Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center; Senior Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University. Fields of specialization: history and current affairs of the Arabian Peninsula states. Published several papers on this subject. Author of *The Struggle for South Yemen* (1984), *South Yemen’s Revolutionary Strategy* (1990), and *From Chieftancy to Monarchical State: The Making of Saudi Arabia 1916–1936* (1992). Coeditor (with P.S. Khoury) of *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (1991).


URI M. KUPFERSCHMIDT, PhD (The Hebrew University, 1979). Senior Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa. Author of *The Supreme Muslim Council, Islam under the British Mandate for Palestine* (Leiden, 1987) and articles on Islamic institutions and society in Palestine and Egypt. Coedited with Gabriel R. Warburg the volume *Islam, Nationalism, and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan* (New York, 1983).

MEIR LITVAK, PhD (Harvard University, 1991). Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center, and Instructor in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University. Fields of specialization: Modern Shi'i history and Palestinian politics.

BRUCE MADDY-WEITZMAN, PhD (Tel Aviv University, 1988). Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center, and Lecturer at the Overseas Students Unit, Tel Aviv University. Fields of specialization: contemporary Middle Eastern history, inter-Arab relations, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Published articles on Arab politics, the Iraqi-Iranian conflict, and Maghrib affairs. Forthcoming book entitled *The Crystallization of the Arab State System* (Syracuse University Press).

DAVID MENASHRI, PhD (Tel Aviv University, 1982). Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center and Associate Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University. Field of specialization: the history and politics of Iran. Author of: *Education and the Making of Modern Iran* (1992), *Iran: A Decade of War and Revolution* (1990), and *Iran in Revolution* (1988; in Hebrew). Editor of *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (1990), and published papers on Iranian politics.

UZI RABI, BA (Tel Aviv University, 1986). Researcher at the Moshe Dayan Center and Instructor in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History and in the Preparatory Program, Tel Aviv University. Field of specialization: Persian Gulf states.

DAVID RACHOVICH, PhD (Tel Aviv University, 1990). Instructor in the Department of Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa. Fields of specialization: Industrialization in the Middle East and Middle Eastern oil.

ELIE REKHESS, PhD (Tel Aviv University, 1987). Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center. Fields of specialization: the Israeli Arabs and the Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Published papers and studies on the Arab intelligentsia in Israel and the West Bank; political trends and socioeconomic changes within the Arab population in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza; and on the Communist movement in Israel and the Arab world.

YEHUDIT RONEN, MA (Tel Aviv University, 1991). Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center. Fields of specialization: Sudan and Libya. Published articles and book reviews on the modern political history of Arab countries.

BARRY RUBIN, PhD (Georgetown University, 1978), is a fellow of Johns Hopkins University's Foreign Policy Institute. He is author of *Paved with Good Intentions, Secrets of State, Modern Dictators, Istanbul Intrigues, The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict*, and *The Great Powers in the Middle East*. He is coeditor of *The Israel-Arab Reader* and *The Human Rights Reader*. His most recent book is *Cauldron of Turmoil: America in the Middle East*. 
YIGAL SHEFFY, MA (Tel Aviv University, 1988). Director of the Documentation System, Moshe Dayan Center. Field of specialization: military history of the Middle East. Researching PhD dissertation on “The Intelligence Dimension of the Palestine Campaign, 1914–1918.”

ASHER SUSSER, PhD (Tel Aviv University, 1986). Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center and Head of the Center. Fields of specialization: history and politics of Jordan and the Palestinians. Author of Between Jordan and Palestine: A Political Biography of Wasfi al-Tall (1983, in Hebrew); The PLO after the War in Lebanon (1985; in Hebrew); and On Both Banks of the Jordan (forthcoming 1993); coeditor of At the Core of the Conflict: The Intifada (1992; in Hebrew).

JOSHUA TEITELBAUM, MA (Tel Aviv University, 1988). Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center and Instructor in the Overseas Students Program, Tel Aviv University. Fields of specialization: Palestinian history and politics, modern Islamic movements, and the history of the Arabian Peninsula. Researching PhD dissertation on “State and Society in the Hashimite Kingdom of the Hijaz, 1916–1925.”

ONN WINCKLER, MA (Haifa University, 1992). Instructor in the Department of Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa. Field of specialization: demographic trends in the Middle East.

EYAL ZISSER, PhD (Tel Aviv University). Researcher at the Moshe Dayan Center, and Instructor in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University. Fields of specialization: the history and politics of Syria and Lebanon. Title of thesis: “The Challenge of Independence — Lebanon under Bishara al-Khuri, 1943–1952.”
PART ONE:
CURRENT ISSUES
THE MIDDLE EAST
IN PERSPECTIVE
The dramatic events that had shaken the Middle East during the latter part of 1990 continued into 1991, reflecting, in many ways, the fundamental power shift that was taking place in world politics. This "new world order" had been ushered in by the collapse of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe in 1989, and was attested to by the end of the Cold War in 1990 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in late 1991. With Soviet influence rapidly fading away, this was the moment of the US in the ME (see chapter on the US and the ME). Indeed, the Gulf War of January-February 1991, which ended with the military defeat of Iraq by a US-led coalition, was the first case of major post-Cold War conflict, a conflict which might not have occurred in the previous era: with the USSR as Iraq's ally and posing a constant threat to Europe, the West might have acted less resolutely.

The principal focus of events during the remainder of the year was on American attempts to establish a "new order" in the region. A major problem was the continued rule of Saddam Husayn in Iraq. Militarily defeated but unvanquished and unrepentant, he ruthlessly repressed Kurdish and Shi'i rebellions in his country, revealed Iraq's surprising nuclear-weapons program, only under duress, rebuilt the country's ruins, and nourished his ambitions. No traditional Arab reconciliation took place between Iraq and its Arab adversaries; rather, mutual vindictiveness was the rule. Moreover, the shaken Gulf states, led by liberated Kuwait, soon made it clear that they preferred security arrangements with the US to Arab (i.e., Egyptian-Syrian) ones. However, the pro-US axis comprising Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria remained intact and enabled Washington to initiate direct talks between the Arabs and Israel in the fall. The realities of the postwar situation also led Jordan to resume its pro-Western policies and join the peace process, and, even more importantly, convinced the Palestinians that this process was their only practical option. While there was little domestic instability in the ME during 1991, and no regime was overturned, the gains of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria's elections at year's end evoked widespread apprehension of radical Muslim fundamentalism throughout the region. Iran, one of the major beneficiaries of the war, devoted itself to fence-mending with its Gulf neighbors and with Western Europe, while continuing to pursue its militant aims in Sudan, Algeria and the newly independent and increasingly important central Asian republics of the defunct Soviet Union. By the outset of 1992, then, the viability of long-entrenched, intricate ME patterns and relationships appeared to curtail many of the hopes for a "new order" in the region.
THE GULF WAR AND ITS OUTCOME

THE WAR
Saddam, obdurately misreading US resolve to evict him from Kuwait and ignoring explicit warnings of the grave consequences of war by Secretary of State James Baker in a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq ‘Aziz on 9 January 1991, rejected all the diplomatic opportunities to avoid war proffered to him by the USSR and France among others, even at the last moment.3

The Gulf War was a military rarity, taking place at a moment when the US could bring to bear the full weight of its richly equipped forces against an enemy that did not yet possess nuclear weapons and modern missiles and was maladroit, or strangely passive, in the face of its menacing build-up. Time was available for the US to plan and to prepare its forces; a supportive infrastructure was also in place.4 Moreover, the US used the time to forge a vast international coalition against Iraq comprising 34 countries, including the Gulf states, Egypt, Syria and Morocco (for a list of participants see MECS 1990, p. 89. See also chapter on the Gulf War in this volume). The war began on the night of 16–17 January with an air offensive that lasted over five weeks, followed by a four-day ground offensive launched on 24 February, during which Kuwait was liberated and coalition troops advanced into southern Iraq up to the Euphrates near Nasiriyya. On 28 February, after 100 hours of fighting on the ground, President Bush abruptly ordered a cease-fire. (For details of the campaign, see chapter on the Gulf War.)

Saddam consistently attempted to draw Israel into the confrontation, indeed making Israel a major issue of the crisis (see MECS 1990, chapter on Iraq) and, once the war began, labeling it a “Zionist war” fought “with American blood.” The bombardment of Israel with missiles (c. 40 improved Scuds), therefore, came as no surprise, yet its duration and impact were painful. Saddam later praised the missile units which “made Israel cry” and which thereby enhanced “the image of the Arab nations.”5 The US, anxious to dissuade Israel from retaliating, lest such a move antagonize its Arab allies, deployed antitactical ballistic missile (Patriot) batteries in Israel for protection against the Scuds.

While the coalition’s military losses were astonishingly low, the financial cost of the campaign was high, and the US, unable to carry it by itself without severe economic difficulty, received c. $53 bn. in international contributions. No reliable data on Iraq’s military losses were available, although casualty estimates ranged from 10,000 dead (probably too low) to 100,000. An official US estimate of Iraqis killed during the air war alone was c. 9,000, mainly in frontline infantry divisions that were composed primarily of Shi’i and Kurdish draftees.6 Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq ‘Aziz stated that no official statistics were available due to “confused” data. The Iraqis may have found it difficult or undesirable to separate war casualties from casualties suffered during the subsequent rebellions, which according to Saddam’s son ‘Uday, “were many times” those caused by the air and ground war.7

The coalition air campaign caused enormous damage to Iraq’s industrial facilities, particularly those suspected of manufacturing weapons of mass destruction, and to its infrastructure, including communications facilities, power plants, roads and bridges. The Pentagon stated after the war that heavier damage than intended was inflicted on Iraq’s civilian infrastructure because of faulty communications. An official Iraqi
estimate of material losses to the "industrial sector," including power plants, was $4bn.  

END GAME

The timing of President Bush’s much-criticized decision to halt the ground war after 100 hours (144 hours were planned) may have been influenced by the "fog of war"—by difficulties in assessing Iraq’s military and political position accurately. The bulk of the elite Republican Guard (four divisions) escaped entrapment by the coalition forces near Basra, and their move toward Baghdad was not impeded. Moreover, Iraq salvaged considerably more heavy equipment, especially T-72 battle tanks, than estimated by the US during and immediately after the campaign. These forces and weapons served as the cornerstone of Saddam’s recovery.

American domestic and military considerations involved in the decision to halt the fighting, such as the fear of a protracted campaign and a large number of casualties, are of less concern to this survey than regional ones. What seemed to have weighed most were the US wish to preserve the established territorial order in the region, its fear of Iraq’s disintegration and “Lebanonization” and the immediate impact on the balance of power in the region, and its animosity toward Iran. This thinking may have been reinforced by misgivings on the part of some of the US allies (reportedly Saudi Arabia, Egypt, France and Turkey). The Administration seemed to prefer an Iraq united under a weakened Saddam to an Iraq embroiled in a civil war that would have left it prey to its neighbors.

Whatever the American reasoning, the consequences of the cease-fire decision were momentous. The US adopted a policy of nonintervention in Saddam’s domestic affairs, which was reflected in the terms of the cease-fire dictated to the Iraqis, especially the 26 March decision permitting them to fly helicopters for “administrative” purposes. Although during the war President Bush called on the Iraqi people and the military to force Saddam out, once the cease-fire was declared he refrained from aiding the incipient rebellions in southern and northern Iraq. According to The New York Times, “a bizarre convergence of interests with Saddam” emerged; while the New Republic reasoned that “a [military] coup would never take place while Saddam was fighting off the Kurds and Shi’ites,” whom his loyal supporters perceived as traitorous rebels.

The Shi’i rebels, who took control of major cities in the south and held them for two weeks, were the first to be brutally repressed, with some 1m. rebels fleeing to Iran in early March. The Kurds in the north were then driven out of Kirkuk on 28 March, with 500,000–700,000 Kurds escaping to the mountains on the Turkish border. The chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution (the main Shi’i opposition group), Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, estimated that over half a million died in both rebellions. While very little was done to alleviate the hardships suffered by the Shi’is (with the exception of aid by Iran), by early April pressure by Turkey and West European countries, as well as by domestic public opinion, forced the US to intervene militarily, along with several Nato allies, on 7–8 April. Sanctioned by UN Security Council Resolution 688 of 6 April 1991, a “safe haven” for the Kurds of c. 4,000 sq. km. was established in Iraq north of the 36th parallel, with Allied protection and supplies enabling them to maintain this autonomous region and defy Saddam throughout the rest of the year.
MILITARY IMPLICATIONS
The lessons of the Gulf War were still under study by strategic and military experts everywhere. One of the most significant lessons, with fateful consequences for the region, was that high-tech worked. During both the air and the ground phases of the campaign, high-tech American arms and equipment, such as the F-117A stealth fighter, the Tomahawk cruise missile and the Global Positioning System, which proved essential for orientation and movement in the desert, were used successfully, many of them combat-tested for the first time, while shortcomings and breakdowns that developed were analyzed.

However, American technology was not the only one to work. A persistent technological and tactical problem was Iraq's ability to launch Scud missiles against targets in Saudi Arabia and Israel unimpeded throughout most of the war. The US and Israel attempted to intercept the Scuds with Patriot missiles, but the 159 Patriot missiles fired succeeded in destroying only c. 24 and (possibly as few as 10) of the c. 40 missiles launched against Israel and a similar number against Saudi Arabia. Moreover, in deflecting or breaking up some of the Scuds, the Patriots probably increased damage to urban areas in Israel.

Indeed, the inability to detect the Scuds during the fighting was seen as one of four US failures that had serious consequences for the region. The others were miscalculating Saddam personally, overrating the Iraqi army and ignoring the scope of Iraq's nuclear effort.

AFTERMATH
The most salient feature of the ME in the months following the Gulf War was the unprecedented political and strategic domination of the region by the US. Kuwait was liberated and Iraq was militarily defeated as a result of US efforts. The UN Security Council, urged by the US, regulated and supervised the disarmament of Iraq's nonconventional weapons, the imposition of sanctions against it, and the establishment of a safe area for the Kurds (with possible long-range consequences), through the passage of numerous resolutions. The Arab state system was saved from domination by a single local power. The Gulf states openly concluded bilateral security arrangements with the US. The US also set in motion an Arab-Israeli peace process (see below). At the end of the year, US pressure applied against Libya resulted in Security Council Resolution 731 of January 1992 forcing the trial of two suspected Libyan terrorists responsible for the explosion of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

The other side of this coin was that Saddam still ruled Iraq — defiant, resilient and eager for revenge. Fighting for survival by every means, Saddam first quelled the rebellions in his country and later contained them: the Shi'is were pursued in the southern marshes unabatedly, and the Kurdish enclave was blockaded for all intents and purposes. Concurrently, he consolidated his grip on the regime, relying chiefly on his family and clan. Saddam also purged the ineffective ranks within the Ba'th Party and the Administration, including the prime minister he had appointed after the defeat, and rewarded loyalty. He initiated reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure soon after the cease-fire, and progress was rapid, so that by February 1992, 75% of damaged industrial "projects and installations" were said to have been
rebuilt. Another way that Saddam consolidated his power was by using scarce food and medical supplies to reward loyal or pivotal regions (such as the capital), regulating and even halting the distribution of supplies by international agencies in order to pressure the outside world to lift the sanctions. Part of his strategy for generating popular support was to call for Iraqi steadfastness under foreign pressure and in the face of the UN sanctions. Moreover, he firmly resisted UN efforts to uncover and destroy Iraq’s arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, relenting only when punitive steps became unavoidable. The forcible unveiling of Iraq’s long-term, multibillion dollar covert nuclear weapons program, including the possibility that Iraq could have produced a nuclear weapon in 1992 had the Gulf War not occurred, was a rude shock to the US, which had provided considerable scientific and technological assistance to Iraq for almost a decade in many ways. By January 1992, Saddam, no longer satisfied with calling the war an achievement, termed it a victory: “If anyone viewed the battle from a conventional and material viewpoint, then he would conclude...[But] now that the victory of the believers has been proven to be in accordance with their constant faith...everyone asks...: Who triumphed after one-half year of blockade and after fighting against the gathering of infidelity?”

Pan-Arabism and its advocates suffered a severe setback while state interests triumphed. Some observers concluded that the Arab world “reached the limits of its own contradictions” in 1991. Others perceived “the end of Arab nationalism.” By denying the legitimacy of the Kuwaiti borders (drawn by the British in 1922) and the existence of Kuwait, Saddam had implicitly questioned the legitimacy of virtually all the Arab states. His eventual forced acceptance of the UN Security Council ruling on the Kuwaiti borders reaffirmed that legitimacy. At the first Arab League meeting after the war, the Arab coalition states (the six Gulf states, Egypt and Syria) wasted no time in emphasizing that “each state has sovereignty over its natural and economic resources.”

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had upset traditional norms, patterns, and modalities of inter-Arab political and security relations, causing the emergence of a new alignment in the Arab state system. The split in Arab ranks, accompanied by unrelenting vindictiveness, endured throughout 1991, with supporters of Iraq suffering severe repercussions. The Gulf countries halted their financial assistance to Jordan and the PLO. Later they snubbed them at the Islamic summit in Dakar in December. Moreover, a decade-long trend in labor migration was reversed with the expulsion from Kuwait of c. 400,000 Palestinians (most of them fled to Jordan, aggravating that country’s economic crisis), and the expulsion of several hundreds of thousands of Yemeni workers from Saudi Arabia.

Yet Iraq’s defeat was traumatic for all Arabs, victors included, and was compared by some to the great schism (fitna) in Islam during the seventh century. It was perceived as painfully demonstrating Arab dependence on the West after three generations of Arab nationalist striving to evict the West from the region. It was also perceived as embarrassing: for the first time, major Arab states fought each other, with both governments and masses openly pitted against one another, unmaking years of effort to achieve Arab cooperation. Moreover, it was seen as humiliating in that foreign armies crushed an Arab force recently depicted as defenders of the Eastern gates of the Arab world, while its soldiers were filmed kissing the hands and boots of US troops.
Another development in the region under the impact of the war was the strengthening of radical Islam. After two years in power, Sudan's National Islamic Front regime tightened its hold on the country and continued turning it into an Islamic state. Despite severe economic difficulties and even famine, the regime kept up the war against the rebellious south. Supporting Islamic radicals abroad, Sudan developed close relations with both Iraq and, increasingly, Iran, although its radical policy harmed its neighborly relations with Egypt. In Algeria, an anticipated victory of the Islamic Salvation Front in parliamentary elections (based on its gaining 188 seats out of 231 in the first round of elections on 26 December) was prevented at the last minute by the forced resignation of President Chedli Benjedid on 11 January 1991 and the annulment of the second round of elections scheduled for January 1992, which was followed by a military takeover. The near-victory of fundamentalists in Algeria, however, sent a shudder of fear throughout the region, from Rabat to Riyadh, via Cairo and Amman.

The war did not cause an oil crisis (despite the brief jump in prices in the fall of 1990), as the disappearance of both Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil from the market was offset by increased Saudi and Iranian production and slack demand. During 1991 the price of a barrel of oil barely rose above $21, and at year's end fell to $17, that is, to $4 below the June 1990 reference minimum.

Iran gained considerably from the Gulf War. The stabilization of President Hashemi Rafsanjani's rule led to the adaptation of more pragmatic policies, including normalizing many foreign ties. Among other developments, Iran was instrumental in bringing about the release of Western hostages in Lebanon held by Hizballah and its clandestine offshoots. It accelerated the reconstruction of its economy and its military forces, benefiting from windfall oil profits and from the buyers' market in weapons in the former USSR, as well as from the appropriation of many of the Iraqi military aircraft that had sought asylum during the war. Iran also seemed to be making progress in developing a nuclear option. Reemerging as a regional power, it strove to reassert its role in the Gulf and extended its influence into Africa, in Sudan and Algeria (although the military takeover there in January 1992 was considered a reverse) and south of the Sahara, as well as in central Asia, where it aimed, according to its foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, at creating "a new strategic balance."

Within the ME proper it maintained its relationship with Syria, managing somehow to forgive it for participating in the peace process, and its position in Lebanon through the Hizballah. It demonstrated its unchanged militant stand against Israel by sponsoring the "International Conference to Support the Islamic Revolution of the Palestinian People" (Tehran, 19–22 November 1991), which called for the destruction of Israel.

The war reaffirmed Turkey's role as a ME power. It played a role in the Gulf War, in the regional aspects of the peace process (the water aspect of the multilateral talks) and in the emerging contest over central Asia between itself, as representing the West, and Iran.

THE US "NEW WORLD ORDER" IN THE REGION

The "four key challenges" in building a "framework for peace" in the ME, outlined by President Bush in his victory speech to the US Congress on 6 March 1991, may serve
as a convenient guide to the unfolding of the “new order” in the region. The perceived challenges were: (1) the creation of regional security arrangements, since “our vital national interests depend on a stable and secure Gulf”; (2) control of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them, with “special vigilance” required for Iraq, as a new arms race in the region “would be tragic”; (3) the creation of “new opportunities for peace and stability in the region,” especially regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict; and (4) fostering regional economic development “for the sake of peace and progress.” The Arab-Israeli peace process became a central US effort during 1991. Plans for regional arms control and economic development were to be taken up by its multilateral forum, which met for the first time in Moscow in January 1992.

One additional challenge went unmentioned as such — although it was implied — the elimination of Saddam Husayn, “the villain” who was “accountable” to his own people, to Kuwait “and to the entire world.” In the months following the war, the US Administration increasingly felt that the victory over Iraq was incomplete so long as Saddam remained in power and refused to “play the chastened ... foe ready to preserve a Pax Americana in the Gulf,” in the words of one observer. By the fall, election year concerns, as well as increased Saudi anxiety, intensified the Administration’s uneasiness with Saddam. A covert plan of action to topple him was devised, endorsed by President Bush in November and conveyed to Congress. The existence of the plan was widely publicized in early 1992, possibly to harry Saddam, with US sources describing Saddam’s control of Iraq and support for him by key elements there as “eroding.”

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Although no regional economic development per se took place during 1991, there was a reallocation of economic aid, partly to offset war-related expenditures. The oil states had cut off aid and subsidies to Iraq and its Arab supporters in 1990, and benefited their two Arab supporters, Egypt and Syria, in 1991.

**REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL**

The regional proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the destabilizing impact of ballistic missiles on the region (which had become active since the Iraqi-Iranian War) worried the US increasingly in 1991. According to one observer, this constituted “the greatest single threat to world security for the rest of our lives, [making] a new international order...a matter of the sheerest prudence.” Prewar Iraq was depicted as the prototype of this threat. Moreover, proliferation was expected to accelerate: gone were both the protective and dampening effects of the Cold War on regional “clients,” while more technology (and expert manpower) was available, adding to the growing military capabilities of the Arab countries.

When he urged the necessity of special vigilance regarding Iraq, Bush was probably unaware of the real extent of Iraq’s clandestine nonconventional weapons programs (see above). Even if all materials, equipment and facilities were discovered and destroyed (which was unlikely, since some of them were probably hidden intact), through the dogged efforts of the UN Special Commission, Iraq would not have had to restart from scratch, for the potential inherent in the cadre of up to 15,000 nuclear scientists and technicians (not to mention those employed in the development of
chemical and biological weapons and missiles), and the bulk of the technical
documentation, were still there.38 Clearly, the incentive persisted as well. For Saddam,
a nuclear bomb and other weapons of mass destruction were essential for him to
assume the leadership of the Arab world and to establish Iraq as the regional
superpower. They would be even more essential for his "resurrection," and for his
revenge on Saudi Arabia. One analyst concluded that "as long as Saddam or a
similarly militaristic leader remains in power in Baghdad, secret efforts to rebuild
Iraq's nuclear program will surely continue."39

Nevertheless, a new arms race began in the region right after the war, and, although
called "tragic" by President Bush, it was, in fact, led by the US. Deciding not to limit
sales of "sophisticated conventional weapons" to its allies in the ME, the US sold them
$8.6bn. worth in 1991.40 Other weapons suppliers followed suit, among them Western
and Eastern Europe. With much of the arsenal of the former USSR up for sale, and at
bargain prices, the successor republics sold arms to the region (worth unknown),
allegedly including some nuclear materials.41 China continued to supply arms to the
region, including nuclear materials to Iraq, Iran and Algeria.42 North Korea supplied
improved Scuds to Syria and possibly to other states.

This renewed arms race was attributable to three main factors:
(1) Political: One lesson of the Gulf War, obvious to would-be Saddams, was not to
repeat the latter's mistake of acting before possessing actual nuclear capability. The
military success of the US with conventional arms combined with the disappearance
of USSR protection, may have created a paradox: radical regimes might consider
proliferation an attractive security option, with nuclear arms constraining and/or
offsetting US moves against them and in defense of its local allies.43 An additional
political motive was the shaken self-confidence of the rich Gulf states as a result of
their obvious military weakness.

(2) Technological: The achievements of US high-tech weaponry, as well as the Iraqi
nonconventional weapons programs, elicited enormous interest in sophisticated
technologies such as stealth and counterstealth, thermal imaging, precision-guided
munitions, electronic warfare, and especially technologies making missiles less
interceptable and more effective and accurate.

(3) Economic: Competitive pressures in the international arms market were
intensified by the US recession and by the dire financial need of the former Soviet
states.

REGIONAL SECURITY
Although no regional security agreements were concluded in 1991, foundations for "a
secure Gulf" were laid. The Arab coalition partners, under the impact of the war, at
first wanted to apply the idea of collective security for the Gulf region, and the US,
eager to withdraw the bulk of its forces from the peninsula, concurred. As announced
in the Damascus declaration by Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates,
Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman on 6 March 1991, and endorsed by Secretary of
State James Baker after meeting with the foreign ministers of those countries a few
days later, an Arab peacekeeping force was to be set up with the Egyptian and Syrian
contingents as its nucleus. At the same time, the US would maintain an enhanced
naval presence in the Gulf and conduct regular exercises with the Arab force.44 But the
idea of Egyptian and Syrian troops in Saudi Arabia guaranteeing "the security and
safety of Arab Gulf states," as envisaged in the declaration was soon discarded,
possibly because of exaggerated financial demands by Egypt and Syria, whose contingents left the Gulf by late spring. An argument continued among the “Damascus states,” however, as to the possible role of Egyptian and Syrian troops. It was agreed, in August, that they could be “employed” by any of the Gulf states so desiring; but in November the eight foreign ministers abandoned the idea of an Arab force in the Gulf, entirely because “it stirred up sensitivities” in the Gulf countries and in Iran.45

Kuwait, shocked by its war experience, decided on the previously unthinkable — a bilateral security arrangement with the US — and concluded a 10-year “Defense Cooperation Agreement” in Washington on 19 September. The US committed itself to defending Kuwait, while Kuwait was to provide the major part of the costs and the essential facilities and agreed to preposition US equipment.46 Kuwait signed a similar “Memorandum on Security Understanding” with Britain in early 1992.47 Saudi Arabia decided to double its forces and to procure more modern weapons, while quietly expanding its arrangements for prepositioning US equipment and for holding joint exercises.48 It is probable that Saddam’s vindictiveness, and the revelations about his arsenal, strengthened the resolve of the Gulf states to rely increasingly on the US for their security. At year’s end, the US military presence in the Gulf amounted to 25,000 personnel, 200 combat aircraft and 35 ships.49

THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

The most conspicuous achievement among the challenges outlined by President Bush was creating “new opportunities” for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. Through the sustained involvement of Secretary of State Baker, who made eight visits to the region in seven months, and helped by the responsive mood of its Arab partners, the US put in motion a triple-tiered peace process between Israel and the Arabs. The Madrid conference at the end of October — a meeting of all parties involved, in the presence of the presidents of the US and the USSR — constituted the symbolic opening. It was followed by separate bilateral talks between Israel and a Syrian, a Lebanese and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, where problems were thrashed out face-to-face beginning in December. Finally, a multilateral conference, which convened in Moscow at the end of January 1992, was to deal with regional issues in five subconferences.

One of the major difficulties during the seven-months-long negotiations involved in convening the Madrid conference was the parties’ differing levels of readiness for participation in it.50 Once the ground rules were established, Israeli participation was assured, though friction continued between the Israeli and US governments on the issue of settlements in the territories. Among the Palestinians, there was a growing realization by those under Israeli rule (the “inside”) that the Intifada, despite much hardship and many losses, and despite its obvious political impact, had been unable to rid them of Israel (their outburst of popular adoration for Saddam Hussein practically admitted that). Moreover, they were aware that the political gains of the Intifada were almost completely nullified by the disastrous pro-Iraqi policies of the PLO leadership during the Gulf crisis.51 This awareness, along with US and Egyptian prodding and obvious Saudi impatience, led the PLO to join the peace process, however reluctantly and indirectly. But the Palestinians may have expected too much: by year’s end, grass-roots pressure on the delegation for tangible results mounted in the territories.

For Jordan, which had endured great economic hardship as a result of the war and the ensuing influx of over 300,000 refugees, joining the process was a convenient way
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to modify its pro-Iraqi stand and rebuild its relations with the US. To that end, King Husayn excluded the Muslim Brothers from the government in early October and agreed to a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the talks, thereby easing an important procedural obstacle for the US. The king was frank in telling his people that “every state has limits regarding the freedom of its actions,” that “this world is led and organized in accordance with the balance of power,” and that “each Arab state has its own national priorities.” Still, without Syria’s President Asad dropping his previous insistence on a UN-sponsored conference (a demand included in the Damascus declaration of March 1991) and agreeing to participate, in July, the peace talks would not have taken place. This did not necessarily indicate any perceptible change in Syria’s attitude toward Israel. A consequence of US acquiescence in Syria’s domination over Lebanon in 1990 was that the Syrians controlled Lebanese conduct in the peace talks, including its nonparticipation in the multilateral meetings. Indeed, earlier, on 22 May, a “treaty of brotherhood, cooperation and coordination” was concluded between the two countries.

The USSR (later, Russia), although a cosponsor of the process, played a minor role, described by one journalist as “Waiters at the Table.” Then-president Gorbachev mainly pleaded for help for his country at the Madrid conference.

The great expectations engendered during the war and by the Madrid conference had clearly not been realized by the end of 1991. The talks did not take on a life of their own, the Arab-Israeli chasm was not bridged, and skeptics could say that the process was mostly theater and little substance, with each participant playing to his audience (President Bush, for example, began his campaign for reelection immediately after the Madrid conference). Still, a major achievement was the continuation of the process and a halting but palpable moderation in positions. While not ceding very much, none of the regional parties wanted to endanger its relations with the US by walking away.

CONCLUSION AND OBSERVATIONS

At year’s end, neither the dire predictions of the outcome of the Gulf War nor the bright hopes raised by it had materialized, eliciting considerable criticism and what was termed “postvictory blues.” The main event of 1991 was the undisputed establishment of US preponderance in the ME as a result of a largely successful show of military power in the first post-Cold War conflict. The conflict did not cause an oil crisis, as had been feared, and free access to Arab oil was maintained. Another result of the war was that pro-Western regimes were buttressed. Moreover, a US-initiated Arab-Israeli peace process got under way, however haltingly.

The war institutionalized changes in the Arab world. Not only were the pro-Western regimes (the “Arab coalition members”) not swept out of power by the “Arab masses” as predicted by Saddam, but after the war they claimed the fruits of victory. Dictating the new order in inter-Arab affairs, they reaffirmed the legitimacy and sovereignty of individual states, and neither forgot nor forgave their adversaries, including the PLO. One aspect of this development was a reversal (at least temporarily) of the “new Arab order,” predicted a decade previously under the impact of oil wealth and the subsequent migration of Arab labor. Not only were hundreds of thousands of expatriate workers unceremoniously sent back to their pro-Iraqi home countries in 1990–91, but Saddam’s oft repeated appeal for a redistribution of oil riches appeared
to have had the opposite effect. Some riches were indeed redistributed (e.g., Gulf subsidies to Egypt and Syria), but this was aimed at the political consolidation of friendly regimes rather than at alleviating social pressures. Thus, one unintended effect of the Gulf War was to reinforce the Arab status quo.\footnote{57}

At the same time, threats to both regional and domestic stability persisted as a result of the following factors:

(I) Saddam continued to constitute the uppermost threat for many. Unyielding and vengeful, he was able to conserve a significant portion of his weaponry.\footnote{58} If left alone, it was thought, he could rebuild his nuclear capability in five to 10 years.\footnote{59} His survival in power spurred his neighbors to better protect themselves, be it politically, by security arrangements with the US, or militarily, by building up their armed forces.

(2) Two other, related sources of potential regional turmoil were the possible emergence of a Kurdish political entity, and the reassertion of Iran as a regional power.

(3) There appeared to be growing Arab resentment of US dominance, which could have domestic repercussions in Egypt, Syria and among the Palestinians. This resentment was nourished, for instance, by the US-inspired Security Council resolutions against Libya in December and was fanned by Iraq, on the one hand, and by Islamic militancy, on the other.\footnote{60}

(4) As the Gulf War receded into history and US priorities changed, the slow pace of the peace process was thought to generate the possibility of bitterness and backpedaling, with new tensions possibly developing in Israeli-Palestinian relations or in the context of the ongoing arms race.

(5) There was an incipient regional competition between Turkey (backed by the US), Iran and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia over the future orientation of the newly independent, militarily well equipped but needy Muslim republics of central Asia.

No decisive turning point occurred in the ME in 1991. But, as in other parts of the world, a “new order” had begun to emerge. As in all historical processes, both persistence and change were interwoven in these developments. There was legitimate doubt as to whether an enduring change in Arab outlook and attitudes, in political culture, had taken place. A lucid observer warned early in the year: “We will find, sooner than we expect, yesterday’s evasions and complexities, old friends who can’t deliver, and old foes who will patch up their grievances.” Another observer stated: “Appearances in the Middle East are almost always deceiving....Any expectations that the victory of arms would reverse historical trends, shatter traditional alliances, and bring gains for peace and stability in the region seemed...to have been very premature.”\footnote{61} Nevertheless, processes initiated or accelerated by the Gulf War could be expected to mature. Both promises and risks abounded in the ME in 1991, but their realization or abandonment would be determined in the future.

NOTES

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


5. INA, 25 March — DR, 26 March 1992; *NYT*, 30 January 1991. Israel's great dread was Scuds armed with chemical warheads, but these were not used by the Iraqis, who were probably deterred by Israeli threats of reprisals and/or by technical uncertainties. Iraq's stock of chemical warheads, unverified before the war, was later discovered to have been substantial. Cf. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 20 March — DR, 27 March 1992.


18. Public address by Samuel Lewis, President of the US Institute of Peace and former ambassador to Israel, at University of Toronto, 6 February 1992.


20. A revealing public display of Saddam's family hold on the regime was afforded by the decoration of his two brothers, Watban Ibrahim al-Hasan, minister of interior, and Sab'awi Ibrahim al-Hasan, director of public security, and his two sons Qusay Saddam Husayn, chief of the "Special Security Body" and 'Uday Saddam Husayn, president of the Iraqi National Olympic Committee, a cousin, and Col. 'Abd al-Hasan al-Majid, the minister of defense, was in attendance. R. Baghdad, 11 January — DR, 13 January 1992.


26. Summation by then-Egyptian foreign minister Ismat Abd al-Majid, MENA, 30 March—DR, 1 April. This point was included in the earlier Damascus declaration of these states, R. Damascus, 6 March — DR, 7 March 1991.


33. NYT, 7 March 1991.


44. Text of the declaration, R. Damascus, 6 March — DR, 7 March; NYT, 11 March 1991.

45. IRENA, 29 June; MENA, 6 August, 13 November, R. Tehran, 28 September — DR, 1 July, 7 August, 14 November, 30 September; The Economist, 7 September 1991.


47. Sawt al-Kuwait al-Duwali, 6 February; R. Kuwait, KUNA, 8 February — DR, 12 February 1992.

48. Indyk, p. 76.


51. According to a June 1991 survey, only 37.5% of Kuwaitis agreed that the Palestine question was “the central cause of the Arab nation,” while 42.5% disagreed. However, only 39% were prepared to recognize Israel. Al-Hayat (London), 30 June, reprinted in Journal of Palestine Studies, 21, No. 1 (Autumn 1991), pp. 167–68. I am indebted to Prof. Rex Brynen for this reference.


53. R. Damascus, 22 May — DR, 23 May 1991. This treaty was augmented by a “defense and security” agreement, ratified on 17 August; al-Nahar (Beirut), 7 September — DR, 10 September 1991.


58. Cf. his speeches, R. Baghdad, 6 January, INA, 5 April — DR, 8 January, 6 April 1992.


The United States and the Middle East*

BARRY RUBIN

Nineteen ninety-one was one of the most momentous years in the eventful history of relations between the United States and the Middle East. The year began with the US-led coalition expelling Iraq from Kuwait in the January-February Gulf War (see chapter on the Gulf War). When the war ended, the US Government decided neither to overthrow the regime of Saddam Husayn nor to help antigovernment Kurdish and Shi'i revolts. Although there was some effort to build a security structure in the Gulf and maintain pressure on Iraq, the focus of US attention turned to Arab-Israeli diplomacy (see chapter on the ME peace process), culminating in the October-November Madrid peace conference and direct negotiations in Washington which started in December.

The US role in the region had been important for many decades, and 1991 marked an unprecedented peak in this role. Since the mid-1950s, the US had been engaged in a Cold War with the USSR, with significant consequences for regional politics. In 1991, with the decline of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the US became the world's only superpower. Its wealth, military might, range of alliances, technological superiority, diplomatic indispensability and strategic assets also made it the most powerful force in the region. The US was the sole potential mediator for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the only likely guarantor of security in the Gulf.

Much of US involvement in the ME had developed as a result of the Cold War. Nevertheless, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not put an end to conflict between the US and local extremist countries. The US opposed Iranian and Iraqi aggression in the Gulf; bombed Libya; and sent Marines to Lebanon to block a Syrian takeover. Yet none of these specific issues directly involved the Soviet Union and the local regimes were not acting as Moscow's client in these cases.

Washington's power was further enhanced by its willpower and ability to respond to Iraq's aggression, assembling and preserving such a disparate anti-Iraq alignment, and decisively winning the Gulf War (see MECS 1990, chapters on US policy and on the Gulf crisis). Even if overall US involvement in world affairs was declining, the ME remained a relatively high priority.

The highest levels of the Bush Administration were engaged in ME policy-making. Key decisions on these matters were made by President Bush, Secretary of State James Baker, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft. The National Security Council (NSC), whose chief ME staffer was Richard Haas, worked more closely with White House Chief of Staff John Sununu and was particularly concerned with Arab demands in the peace process.

Within the State Department, Baker worked with a small, trusted group of "outsiders" to the bureaucracy, especially Policy Planning staff director, Ambassador Dennis Ross, and deputy assistant secretary of state Dan Kurtzer. The assistant
secretary of state for Near East and South Asian affairs, John Kelly, and his bureau's staff handled more routine matters and had less influence. Compared with most US administrations, there was a relatively low level of internal conflict in the Bush Administration. Both Bush and Baker took a keen interest in the region. It was mainly because of these two men's personal views that such particular emphasis was placed on identifying Israeli settlements in the West Bank as a chief barrier to peace and putting a high priority on opposing them (see below).

US priorities for the postwar period were named by Bush in his 6 March victory speech to a joint session of Congress. These were a mutual security arrangement in the Gulf; controlling proliferation of unconventional weapons; an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict; and regional economic cooperation and development. The US agreed to help build this regional security network but was not prepared to maintain ground troops there on a permanent basis. Although there was some public and academic debate over the idea of US support for democracy in the ME, there was little or no such sentiment in the Administration.

Some observers felt that little changed during the year because of US errors. The Washington correspondent of the British Financial Times newspaper summarized the case against Bush, and US policy, in June 1991 as follows: "The ME looks as confused and chaotic as ever." There was no peace conference, much less a solution, for the Arab-Israeli conflict. "Plans for a new security system in the Gulf appear to be in disarray." There were "widespread reports of human rights violations" instead of elections in Kuwait. The White House had to concede that much of Iraq's arsenal remained intact, and it was clear that US military claims of destruction had been greatly exaggerated. Furthermore, Washington was obliged to admit that Baghdad was continuing to build missiles. The Administration could only offer wishful thinking that Saddam would fall without being pushed too hard.

US assistant secretary of state John Kelly responded by citing the Administration's achievements, "The assembling of an international coalition that included 28 nations, the passage by the UN of more than a dozen critical resolutions...and the brilliant prosecution of the war itself by American military forces all add up to a resounding success." To this he added breakthroughs in advancing the Arab-Israeli peace process.

US POLICY AND THE GULF WAR

On 29 November 1990, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 678 demanding that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait or face war by 15 January 1991. As a last-ditch effort to avoid war, Bush offered Iraq one more chance: a meeting between Secretary of State James Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz on 7 January. In that seven-hour meeting at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva, Baker tried to warn Iraq but failed to convince Saddam that the US was intent on war if Iraq did not pull out of Kuwait. The US had retreated from Vietnam and Lebanon, and deserted the Shah, and Iraqi officials claimed that this policy would remain consistent. Although the Administration was intent on fulfilling its threat, the US's own past record and domestic dissent over the policy undermined its credibility. "Within six months," said Senator Ernest Hollings, a Democrat from South Carolina, "every fundamentalist mullah, every Arab nationalist, will say, 'the US came here and invaded this Third World country for oil.'...And, face it, they will be speaking the
truth!” Former undersecretary of state George Ball, a veteran “observer of Arab affairs,” commented, “There will be bitter talk of the Crusades and Western colonialism, and all the occasions in history where the Western world has appeared to intervene in what the Arabs regard as [their] own affairs.”

*New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker proclaimed, “Bush stands warned — Congress is unlikely to support a war.” Opposition continued during the last-minute congressional debate in January. Senate Democratic leader George Mitchell cautioned, “There has been no clear rationale, no convincing explanation for shifting American policy from one of sanctions to one of war.” The risks included high casualties, “billions of dollars spent, a greatly disrupted oil supply and oil price increases, a war widened to Israel, Turkey or other allies, long-term American occupation of Iraq, increased instability in the Persian Gulf region, long-lasting Arab enmity against the US, a possible return to isolationism at home.”

In the same vein, Judith Kipper, a Brookings Institution fellow and the ME expert most often appearing on American television predicted: “We will be seen as the big bullies, no matter how many Arabs we have around us.” Prof. Michael Hudson of Georgetown University observed that Saddam was “going over the heads of the Arab leaders and appealing directly to the people. And he seems to be having some success.” Prof. L. Carl Brown of Princeton, who had earlier opined that Europe was replacing the US as the area’s chief power, warned, “A crushing military defeat of Saddam Husayn will convert the bully of Baghdad into a martyr.”

Like Arab support for Saddam, the terrorist factor was also overestimated. Representative Lee Hamilton, a Democrat from Indiana, considered to be the most knowledgeable member of Congress on the ME, said, “If war comes, it will be difficult to imagine where Americans will be safe in the Middle East for some time to come.” Senator John Kerry, a Democrat from Massachusetts, former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, the columnists Evans and Novak and many others agreed that terrorism would be widespread and effective.

Many American politicians and experts still doubted that the coalition would be able to sustain itself in battle as it had in peace. Hamilton said a few days before the war began that “Support for the US from coalition partners will be questionable in the case of hostilities.” War, he added, would “split the coalition; estrange us from our closest allies; make us the object of Arab hostility; endanger friendly governments in the region; and not be easy to end, once started.” Ball claimed, “The coalition would almost fall apart overnight” and the US would be left “with not a single friend except Israel” in the region.

Iraq’s biggest American advocates from the 1980s became the most ardent pessimists on America’s chances. The columnists Evans and Novak claimed that almost all Arab leaders agreed that if one Iraqi soldier were killed, they would all leave the coalition. They insisted that Iraq’s conquest of Kuwait “cannot now be undone from outside” and, further, that Syria and Iran would not act against Saddam. They also claimed that Bush’s policy was losing support at home and abroad.

Former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was the originator of the idea that the US could make Iraq an ally in the 1970s, warned that an attack on Iraq would lead to a split with European allies, Arab anti-American hostility, financial disaster and the loss of any gains from the US victory in the Cold War. He forecast “a global wave of sympathy for Iraq.” He also claimed that Israel might “take advantage
of an expanded war to effect the expulsion of all Palestinians from the West Bank," a notion that reflected the most extreme Arab propaganda.11

But many political leaders and observers supported the necessity of a tough stand to force Iraq's retreat from Kuwait. The Administration refused to back down after sending over 500,000 soldiers to the Gulf and Saddam failed to provide a peaceful alternative. Five days after Baker and 'Aziz met in Geneva on 7 January, Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing Bush to use force. This resolution was only passed after a sharp debate: in the Senate, 52 for and 47 against; and in the House, 250 for and 183 against.

After Bush obtained congressional support to attack, Senator Joseph Biden, Democrat from Delaware, warned the president on the Senate floor, "The Senate and the nation are divided on this issue. You have no mandate for war." Senator Edward Kennedy, Democrat from Massachusetts, added in his speech, "There is still time to save the president from himself — and save thousands of American soldiers in the Persian Gulf from dying in the desert in a war whose cruelty will be exceeded only by the lack of any rational necessity for waging it." These powerful Americans were so firmly against war that it was natural that Saddam did not expect the US to fight.

There were already many stories in the US media about low morale among the soldiers, frictions in the coalition, the problems of repairing equipment and the troops' longing for alcohol. If Bush had retreated, he would have faced the next election as an apparent fool and an appeaser; if he had procrastinated, he would have had to face the rising costs and domestic complaints entailed in keeping several hundred thousand soldiers marooned in the Saudi desert. Bush was so eager to end the crisis that he wanted to attack Iraq sooner rather than wait longer. In the days up to 15 January, this congenital American impatience operated against Iraq.

The US commander, Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, commented on the war's first day, "The Iraqis have no concept of what they were getting involved in." Yet this lack of comprehension was partly due to a failure on the part of US policy to show them better the consequences of their intransigence.12

In one sense, however, Saddam was correct. The US eagerness to bring its troops home and end its foreign responsibility had made it spoil the diplomatic outcome after winning military victories in two world wars. The Vietnam War and Iran hostage crisis had turned into political disasters because, regardless of their outcome, they could not be concluded fast enough. Saddam understood that the US could not fight a war if it could not secure a swift victory, keep casualties low, and get out quickly. His mistake was that he did not think that Bush could defeat Iraq and fulfill these conditions. Nevertheless, this same need to keep the war short, losses to a minimum, and bring the troops home as soon as possible also meant that the US did not have the willpower and staying power to bring down the Iraqi ruler.

Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger came to Israel just before war broke out to urge patience and promise that the US air force would knock out the missile launchers. At the end of December 1990, the US had offered two batteries of Patriot defensive missiles, but Israeli crews were still training at Fort Bliss, Texas. The US then rushed batteries manned by American crews to defend Israeli cities, requesting that Israel wait for the coalition's bombing and secret commando raids to knock out the Scud launchers rather than attack them itself. It argued that any Israeli action might make Arab members drop out of the coalition (see chapter on the Gulf War).
THE UNITED STATES AND THE MIDDLE EAST

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THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR

On 27 February, Bush announced the ceasefire and ordered a suspension of attacks on Iraqi forces, on condition that Iraq comply with all UN resolutions and release prisoners of war and detained Kuwaitis. As the war came to an end, Bush's policy was highly praised in the US. His approval rating in an April poll stood at a phenomenal 80%. Shortly thereafter, however, both Bush's domestic popularity and an expectation for a “New Order” in the ME began to decline.13

The key element in this growing criticism was the fact that the US had not tried harder to topple Saddam or to help the Shi'ite and Kurdish revolts which ensued after the end of the fighting (see chapter on Iraq). Secretary of State James Baker held out an olive branch to Iraq even before the shooting stopped. “The time of reconstruction and recovery should not be the occasion for vengeful actions against a nation forced to war by a dictator's ambition. The secure and prosperous future everyone hopes to see in the Gulf must include Iraq.”14

Within the White House and State Department, a number of arguments were marshaled to justify Bush's decision to stop short of overthrowing the Iraqi leader either directly or indirectly. First, it was asserted that to bring down Saddam would necessitate a US occupation of Baghdad and a commitment to keep troops in the country for an extended period of time. The US would become bogged down in Iraq, Administration officials argued, suffering casualties and becoming increasingly unpopular there. This clearly reflected the bitter lessons learned in Vietnam and Lebanon.

Second, it was suggested by Administration officials that the US destruction of Iraq's government would stir a dangerous anti-American backlash because many in the Arab and Muslim world would be convinced that the US was motivated by aggressive and imperialistic considerations. Third, officials argued that the overthrow of Saddam would lead to a disintegration of Iraq itself, leaving a vacuum which would then be filled by Iran or Syria, so that one of these states would then become the dominant, threatening power in the Gulf.

Fourth, the Bush Administration assessed that such a step would be opposed by US allies, such as Turkey, which feared that a successful Kurdish insurgency would spill over into its own territory, and Saudi Arabia. Finally, it was hoped that the defeat and continued sanctions would bring about Saddam's downfall without any US military or covert action being necessary. It will be recalled that Bush had never considered Saddam's removal from power as an official war aim, although he had indicated that this was what he hoped would happen. “Our policy,” said a member of the White House's NSC staff, “is to get rid of Saddam Husayn, not his regime.”15 Bush, however, overestimated the likelihood that Saddam would be thrown out by his colleagues and generals.

Officials backed the president's decision not to try to remove Saddam. Overthrowing him, claimed one official, “would have meant deploying troops throughout the country, occupying Baghdad, going after helicopters, airplanes, tanks, artillery.” Another official said, “We achieved a military victory, from which a political victory would ensue and for us to redefine our mission would have been trouble with American voters and the armed forces, who had been told for several months, 'You win this and you're out of there.'”16 Former State Department official, James Akins, wrote that the US did not need to eliminate Saddam since he would “soon be dead at
the hands of his own countrymen" or in exile. The US would be seen as the "destroyers" not "the saviors of Arabs or Islam." There would be growing anti-American demonstrations and terrorism; US allies in Egypt, Syria and Morocco "will be shaken and could be overthrown"; and the Saudi regime would last only a few years longer.17

Even without such extremely pessimistic scenarios, the Administration did not want to intervene further militarily in the area. Once a truce with Iraq was signed, the US was not firm in insisting that Iraq should fulfill its conditions. Schwarzkopf told interviewer David Frost that Iraq fooled him by breaking promises it had made at the truce talks. When Iraq's delegates asked to be trusted, Schwarzkopf recalled, "You almost feel like coming back and saying 'Why?'" If Iraq's rulers "broke the rules," he asserted, "they would pay for it."18

But the US did not retaliate when Iraq failed to fulfill its promises. Bush said that Iraq's use of combat helicopters violated the truce and Schwarzkopf warned that Iraqi aircraft flights did the same. The White House then publicly announced in April 1991 that it would not involve itself in Iraq's internal strife. In early April, US troops began withdrawing from southern Iraq.19

When Kurdish and Shi'i Iraqis revolted against the regime in March (see chapter on Iraq), Bush denied that the US had any commitment to help them. This was technically true, but Iraq's Kurds and Shi'is interpreted Bush's clear, oft-voiced wish that Saddam be deposed as a call to action and an offer of help. Bush disclaimed all responsibility for the upheaval and made it clear that he had no intention of helping out. The US let Saddam survive and, consequently, its plan for a postwar new world order was badly subverted though not altogether ruined.

Nevertheless, humanitarian action was taken to help the Kurdish refugees. US troops were sent into northern Iraq to establish a safe haven for them. On 5 April, Operation Provide Comfort (a name indicating its nonpolitical intent) began to transport emergency supplies and food. This was the largest such US relief effort in modern history. In June, US forces were withdrawn from northern Iraq but a 2,500-member multinational contingency force, including US troops, was stationed in southeastern Turkey to protect the refugees from any Iraqi attack.20

"In about two weeks," wrote a New York Times reporter, "Mr. Bush moved from refusing to become involved in Iraq's internal problems, to a small-scale food drop, to a major direct intervention. He went from threatening Mr. Husayn with a war-crimes trial to wondering, almost wistfully, if there were some broker who might arrange for the Iraqi leader to take shelter in another country."21

Similarly, the US criticized Saddam's refusal to cooperate completely with UN inspectors and destroy his unconventional weapons. Yet, other than maintaining the trade embargo, no action was taken. In May, the US ended its air patrols in southern Iraq and began withdrawing its troops from Kuwait.22

From then on, US policy was tough but largely passive toward Iraq. As summarized by Baker, "We respect Iraq's territorial integrity and sovereignty and do not wish to see Iraq fragmented as a state. We have no quarrel with the people of Iraq... We intend to continue to act with others to isolate Saddam Husayn's regime. That means we will never normalize relations with Iraq so long as Saddam Husayn remains in power." Sanctions would also continue until Saddam was no longer ruling Iraq. Bush affirmed that the US opposed lifting the trade embargo completely while Saddam remained in power. The US wanted 50% of any Iraqi oil revenue permitted by a partial
lifting of the embargo to go to Kuwait and other victims of Iraq’s actions as reparations.  

As part of its effort to reward coalition allies and to strengthen its position in the Gulf region, the US gave Turkey $200m. in supplementary aid immediately after the termination of fighting. Bush paid a brief visit to Turkey in July.

US POLICY AND THE GULF SECURITY SYSTEM

Paradoxically, the overwhelming US strategic advantage rendered all the more unnecessary the formal Gulf security structure advocated by Washington, secured by treaties and guarded by the permanent presence of outside troops. The Saudis wanted to keep the arrangement informal since their recent invitation to US troops made them want to show their independence by not having them stay. The Saudis were also not interested in hosting more politically acceptable Egyptian or other Arab troops. After all, the Saudis felt that the US army, which was the best in the world, was on retainer as a guard to be summoned when needed. The new reality in the region was that the US had become the guarantor of Gulf stability and security, even without having troops on the scene or formal defense treaties with the local states. This situation was quite sufficient for US purposes since it did not involve a constant or large-scale American presence.

The US favored an “Arab solution” to Gulf security to the greatest possible extent. Even before the fighting ended, Baker stressed his expectation that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) would take the lead in “building a reinforcing network of new and strengthened security ties.” In March, Baker met with eight Arab foreign ministers from the anti-Iraq coalition — the GCC states, Egypt and Syria. In Damascus, an agreement was reached to station Egyptian and Syrian troops in the Gulf. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney took a trip to the Gulf in early May to discuss pre-positioning and joint exercises. “Responsibility for security in the Gulf ultimately rests with those nations most directly involved — the Gulf states themselves,” said assistant secretary of state Kelly, “We therefore are encouraging close defense cooperation among the states of the region.”

The Saudis themselves rejected the idea of accommodating foreign Arab units, which might prove subversive. Saudi Arabia paid the US about $19.8bn. as reimbursement for the cost of the war. It also wanted to buy large amounts of arms from the US to build up its own armed forces. The Saudis insisted that all US equipment be withdrawn, rather than pre-positioning supplies for a division. The Kuwaitis also preferred US to Arab protection, while, at the same time, keeping the Americans at arm’s length. They did, however, allow some pre-positioning of US equipment in Kuwait, maintained by civilian US contractors.

ARMS CONTROL

In a speech on 29 May, at the US Air Force Academy, Bush made his main statement on arms control. He announced an initiative aimed at, “Halting the proliferation of conventional and unconventional weapons in the Middle East...while supporting the legitimate need of every state to defend itself.” Specific proposals included a verifiable ban on the production or acquisition of weapons-grade nuclear material by ME countries; that the region’s states join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Chemical
Weapons Convention; the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention; and a freeze, and eventually destruction, of surface-to-surface missiles. This plan would have no effect on conventional arms.  

US leaders believed that the war showed the need for greater arms control, especially with regard to unconventional weapons, and demonstrated a change in the strategic situation. Scowcroft and others claimed, for example, that the Gulf War had showed that territory was not important, and hence that Israel should be more willing to give it up. Baker commented, "It does not appear to me that the occupied territories played any part in mitigating the Scud attacks. Some could argue just the reverse — that in this day of weapons of that nature — that ground, the occupied territories as such, does not afford the kind of security that it might have in the past."  

US policy found arms control to be a tougher issue than Gulf security or the Arab-Israeli peace process. After all, explained the British magazine, The Economist, the lessons of the Kuwait crisis point in the other direction. Iraq's neighbors have learnt that it was a mistake to let their own power fall so far behind Saddam Husayn's. Israelis will conclude that, for their country's undeclared nuclear deterrent, Iraq would already have doused them in toxic chemicals. And Mr. Husayn has been taught to acquire nuclear arms, if he has the chance, before next pouncing on a weaker neighbor.  

Nevertheless, there was little progress on any of these fronts. Just as the region preferred American protection to mutual agreements, it had a similar attitude toward arms limitations. In fact, the US victory in the Gulf eased the pressure on the arms race by lessening the risk of local war. Moreover, the Administration's interest in selling more conventional arms to Saudi Arabia and other ME states, so they could better defend themselves, also undermined attempts at limitations.  

The one case where there was an effective consensus and controls on proliferation was in Iraq. In June, a defecting Iraqi scientist gave the US information about how Iraq had hidden its nuclear research installations and equipment. He also warned that the US military had greatly exaggerated its success in destroying Iraq's unconventional weapons during the war and pointed out that much of these arms and materials remained intact.  

Assistant secretary of state Kelly said that the US would continue vigorously to press for implementation of UN Resolution 687, calling for international supervision and elimination of Iraq's remaining weapons of mass destruction and its missiles with ranges of over 150 km., and for a continuing embargo on military equipment to Iraq. In his September speech to the UN, Bush warned, "Saddam continues to rebuild his weapons of mass destruction...[and] continues his contempt for UN resolutions....We must keep sanctions in place as long as he remains in power. We cannot compromise for a moment."  

The only way to counter a threat of proliferating missiles and nuclear arms was by US-led international efforts to limit an influx of them. Since there were enough ambitious companies and indigenous scientists to ensure that such arms could be smuggled or locally produced, US deterrence would have to block their use. US policy did not intend to apply pressure equally: the US sold arms to Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia while trying to block the spread of nuclear arms to Syria, Libya and Iraq, and tacitly accepting Israel's possession of them.
THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, many of the circumstances previously hindering progress on the Arab-Israeli peace process seemed to have altered. Formerly, the Arab states had appeased the most radical forces among them. After the war, however, the Arab countries needed to have good relations with Washington and, therefore, had to show some interest in making peace. This gave the US an opportunity to use its power as leverage. For the Bush Administration and Baker this issue had a high priority. Consequently, it could arguably be considered the most important effort in US foreign policy during the rest of the year. (For further discussion of these and other aspects of Arab-Israeli diplomacy after the war, see chapter on the ME peace process.)

As soon as the war ended, Bush and Baker began working on the peace process. "We have got to find a way for the Arab states and Israel to make peace," said Baker in early March. "And we have got to find a way for Israel and the Palestinians to begin a dialogue. That, therefore, suggests a two-track approach to this problem." Baker seemed firm: "We cannot let this historic opportunity pass," he said, "the time is now" to move forward.33

The Administration did not intend to reestablish the US-PLO dialogue, suspended in June 1990 (see MECS 1990, chapter on the US and the ME). The PLO leaders, Baker said, had "damaged themselves significantly" by siding with Saddam in the Kuwait crisis. In the projected peace process, "It was not contemplated that the Palestinians would be represented by the PLO." Baker added that "the PLO knows what is required if there is to be a reopening of the dialogue." But negotiating with the PLO would be "very difficult with its present leadership." In his own victory speech to Congress on 6 March, Bush said that any diplomatic settlement must be based on trading "territory for peace" and respecting "legitimate Palestinian rights."34 Baker said he had "no illusions" about the difficulty of the task "but I also had a strong sense that the Gulf War might have created some new possibilities for peacemaking in the region and that the US has a unique obligation to help explore the possibilities. It would be very sad, of course, if it turns out that the old obstacles are more formidable than new opportunities. But I think it would be sadder still if the US failed to energetically pursue a chance for peace, because such chances don’t come along very often in the Middle East."35

The effort was based on an attempt to start direct negotiations. The Gulf War, Baker said, was a "grim reminder" of the dangers of conflict and escalating military competition. It was also a reminder that the state-to-state dimension of the Arab-Israeli issue remained important, and that Israel and the Arab states "sometimes find common ground between them." Baker stressed five points: agreement on the need for a comprehensive settlement based on UN resolutions 242 and 338; a two-track process involving simultaneous negotiations between Israel and Arab states and between Israel and the Palestinians; the Camp David formula of an interim arrangement to be followed by an agreement on the permanent status of the territories; Palestinian representation by residents of the territories; and cosponsorship of the conference by the US and USSR as a "launching pad" for direct talks. The US would not try to impose a settlement. Baker argued that the agreement of the GCC to attend regional talks was an important breakthrough.36
In his endeavors to promote negotiations, Baker made eight trips to the Middle East between March and October, each of which included meetings with the leaders of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria, along with talks with a Palestinian delegation in Jerusalem. In his trips in March, April (twice), May, June and July, he tried to remove barriers to initiating talks. Baker also met with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in Washington on 13 June.

During these months, Bush successfully maintained a high level of secrecy about the details of the negotiations. The prospects for achieving success often looked poor. Baker particularly criticized the construction of new Jewish settlements on the West Bank, to which he referred by saying, “It is easier to obstruct peace than to promote it.” While on a visit to the Soviet Caucasus, in April, Baker was asked if he could see his way to peace in the Middle East. “About as clearly as I can see Mount Elbrus,” he replied, gesturing at a fog-shrouded peak in the distance.

Baker and the Administration believed that the US could not impose a settlement, and that to attain it the local forces had to be willing. “It goes without saying,” said Baker on one of his trips, “that you’re not going to have a conference until the countries that are the participants ... make a firm decision that this is what they want.” Both sides often acted as if the US was the party that most needed peace. Syria’s government newspaper *Tishrin* greeted Baker’s visit in May 1991 by claiming that diplomatic failure damaged the countries directly engaged in the conflict less than “it jeopardized American credibility.”

Consequently, the Administration was willing to make concessions to Arab states — as it had done earlier in order to hold together the anti-Iraq coalition — in exchange for their agreement to enter the peace process. Therefore, Bush quickly forgave King Husayn for Jordan’s pro-Iraqi behavior during the Kuwait crisis. Congress voted in 1990 to freeze $55m. aid to Jordan and make it available on condition that Amman helped advance the peace process. Bush released the aid to Jordan in March 1991 in exchange for Amman’s agreement to attend an Arab-Israel peace conference. The Administration gave Syria a free hand in Lebanon and raised no objections when Syria spent $2bn., which had been given by the Saudis as aid, on new military equipment.

Baker said, “In the Gulf War, the US happened to share a common goal with Syria” which fought “alongside US forces.” Moreover, he claimed there had been a “clear reduction in terrorist activity” by groups based in Syria, although not enough to warrant removing it from the US State Department list of countries sponsoring terrorism. He argued that the agreement enhancing Syrian influence in Lebanon was also in line with US policy. Kelly reiterated the US policy of supporting the “independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces, and the disbanding of all militias.”

Nevertheless, while more open toward the idea of peace, both Israel and the Arabs were aware that building a good image in Washington might be done without making real concessions. The Arabs hoped that the US would force Israel to hand them the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan without their giving up anything directly. The US accepted the Saudi and Kuwaiti decision not to participate in bilateral negotiations, though they agreed to join regional talks. Saudi authorities, though, refused to let US Senator Frank Lautenberg (Democrat-New Jersey) enter the country because he had an Israeli stamp on his passport. Rather than protest, the US State Department issued
To encourage Israel to participate in talks, the US also took some steps to improve bilateral relations. In March, Congress agreed to give Israel $650m. to offset costs incurred during the war. In his speech to the UN in September, Bush urged the repeal of the UN “Zionism as racism” resolution. “This body cannot claim to seek peace and at the same time challenge Israel’s right to exist,” he said. The US spearheaded a successful effort to annul the resolution in late 1991.43

At the same time, the Administration also made clear its strong opposition to continued Israeli settlements in the West Bank. When the Israeli housing minister, Ariel Sharon, visited Washington in May, US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp was ordered not to receive his counterpart officially, in order to punish Sharon for his active role in building settlements. Instead, the two men met at Israel’s embassy.44

What seemed to be a key breakthrough in the Arab-Israeli peace process came in June and was confirmed directly during Baker’s sixth trip in July: Syria accepted the US proposal for direct talks at a peace conference. That step, Baker commented, “gives us something to work with.” He then pressed Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians for their agreement to attend. “In our view,” he said, “the Palestinians have the more to gain from a viable and active peace process than do almost anyone else.” Baker also said to Israel, “This is a moment of historic opportunity [since] Israel now has Arab partners willing to engage in direct negotiations.”45

The problems in structuring negotiations were gradually resolved. In October, Baker met in Washington with a delegation of West Bank and Gaza Strip residents and then made his eighth trip to the region. On 18 October, the US and USSR issued a formal invitation to the ME conference, starting on 30 October to be held in Madrid. “The road to peace,” said Baker, “will be extremely difficult, with many problems, many hitches and probably many interruptions along the way.” Nevertheless, the peace conference and the ensuing bilateral meetings were genuine achievements for US diplomacy. The Bush Administration’s thinking, summarized The New York Times, was that “only on the basis of ‘real peace’ and Arab respect for Israel’s ‘reasonable’ security needs does Mr. Bush expect Israel to make concessions. But, he made clear, he does expect concessions, specifically including territorial concessions as well as ‘fairness’ to Palestinians.”46

Bush, in his speech at the Madrid meeting, stressed that the US would be a “catalyst,” but the parties must make their own decisions. “Our objective...is not simply to end the state of war in the Middle East” in exchange for nonbelligerency, but rather to achieve “real peace....Treaties, security, diplomatic relations, trade, investment, cultural exchange, even tourism. What we seek is a Middle East where vast resources are no longer devoted to armaments” and war. “We aim to reach agreement within one year.” Any agreement must be acceptable to all sides and give the “Palestinian people meaningful control over their own lives and fate and provides for the acceptance and security of Israel....And now is the ideal moment for the Arab world to demonstrate that attitudes have changed, that the Arab world is willing to live in peace with Israel and make allowances for Israel’s reasonable security needs.”47

The Administration wanted the peace process to succeed but was also aware that it
could not impose a settlement. The object was to move the parties as close as possible, then try to bridge the remaining gaps. Pressure from the US could move each of the parties marginally, but would not drastically change their stands. The US had no blueprint of its own, but, in line with its traditional policy, opposed both Israeli annexation of the territories and an independent Palestinian state.

The one exception to this general approach was the Administration’s tough line in opposing Israeli settlement in the territories. This was largely due to the personal views of Bush and Baker that such activity was the major stumbling block in the way of peace and a central concern of the Arabs. On 22 May, Baker told Congress that the settlements were the biggest obstacle to peace in region. He had been particularly angered by the establishment of small new settlements, timed to coincide with his visits to Israel.48

The question became the most contentious issue in US-Israel relations when Israel requested a US guarantee of $10bn. in loans that Israel wanted to borrow to build housing for Soviet Jewish immigrants. Apart from US policy’s traditional opposition to Jewish settlements and Bush’s own position, the White House’s hostility to the proposal was heightened by a post-Cold War domestic mood in favor of reducing foreign aid, the US economic recession, and some criticisms of Israel’s economic policy.

In July, Bush said that there “ought to be a quid pro quo” between freezing settlements and receiving the guarantees. On 25 July, Vice President Dan Quayle warned Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens, during a Washington visit, that linkage between the two was possible. Baker asked Israeli Prime Minister Shamir to delay the request for guarantees. Meanwhile, a joint letter was signed by 71 senators urging going ahead with the guarantees.49

In September, Bush met with Senate supporters of Israel and asked them to accept a four-month delay in the consideration of guarantees in order to head off congressional approval of the plan. Bush claimed that immediate action on the issue would threaten prospects for the ME peace conference. “If Congress chooses to press forward now, we stand a very real chance of losing the participation of either our Arab or Israel’s negotiating partners.” He promised not to seek any further delay after January 1992.50

As part of its campaign on the question, the Administration leaked critical reports on the Israeli economy. When pro-Israel citizens came to Washington to urge congressional support for the proposal, Bush spoke at a press conference of “a thousand lobbyists descending on Capitol Hill.” Bush, wrote The New York Times columnist Leslie Gelb, “stepped in front of the cameras...and declared political war on Israel.” He threatened to veto the loan guarantees measure if it was passed by Congress. Congress accepted the requested delay as it did not want a confrontation and wanted to avoid seeming responsible for damaging the peace process. It also lacked the necessary votes to override a veto. Moreover, there was an economic recession in the US and a general public interest in cutting foreign commitments.51

THE END OF THE US HOSTAGE ISSUE

The postwar power of the US was acknowledged even by Iran, which tried to settle old quarrels and economic disputes. All the remaining US hostages held in Lebanon were released unconditionally during 1991.
The US Government reminded Iran that releasing the hostages was a precondition for normalizing bilateral relations. It also urged Syria to help in this effort. "Since the war," said this message, "it has become clear that we're the ones you have to do business with in the Middle East and we've made it clear that for some players — especially Iran — there will be no business while there are American hostages still being held."  

A UN official, Giandomenico Picco, handled the actual negotiations, which also included trying to free British and Israeli hostages. Official US policy opposed making deals with hostage-holders. Consequently, the Administration did not want to ask Israel to release Lebanese prisoners as Hizballah demanded. It did, however, make clear its wish on this matter, and Israel complied. Edward Tracy, a book salesman (kidnapped in November 1986), was released on 11 August. Bush called for an end to hostage-holding in his September UN speech.  

Other releases quickly followed: Jesse Turner, a teacher at Beirut University (kidnapped in January 1987), was released on 21 October; Thomas Sutherland, dean at the American University of Beirut (kidnapped in June 1985), was freed from captivity on 18 November; and a week later, the US and Iran settled their last bilateral financial conflict from the prerevolutionary era. The US paid Iran $278m. in compensation for military equipment ordered by the Shah but never delivered.  

The last three US hostages were set free shortly thereafter: Joseph Cicippio (seized in September 1986), deputy comptroller of the American University of Beirut, was released on 1 December; Alan Steen, a teacher at Beirut University (taken in January 1987), was freed on 3 December; and Terry Anderson, the Associated Press's chief ME correspondent (kidnapped in March 1985), was set free on 4 December. Bush praised Iran and Syria for their assistance.  

Although US policy was in the midst of its effort to implement its postwar policies at the end of 1991, a new series of challenges had clearly begun for the country's role in the region.

**NOTES**

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

* The research on US policy has been assisted by a grant from the US Institute for Peace.
7. 11 October, 13 December 1990, cited in *WT*, 22 March; Weisberg, op. cit.
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18. NYT, 28 February 1991; televised interview with David Frost.
20. NYT, 12, 13 April, 22 June, 13 July 1991.
22. NYT, 20 April, 7, 8 May 1991.
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26. NYT, 7, 8, May 1991. See, for example, assistant secretary of state John Kelly’s testimony to the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, 20 March and 17 June 1991.
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29. IHT, 8 March 1991.
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33. “Meet the Press” and “This Week with David Brinkley,” 3 March; JP, 12 March 1991.
34. Ibid.; JP, 18 February; Madison, op. cit.; IHT, 8 March 1991.
36. Ibid.
40. NYT, 23 March; WP, 24 March 1991.
42. WP, 16 April 1991.
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44. NYT, 2 May 1991.
46. NYT, 31 October; WP, 18, 19, 27 October 1991.
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The Soviet Union and the Middle East

GALIA GOLAN

THE IMPACT OF THE GULF CRISIS ON SOVIET MIDDLE EASTERN RELATIONS

THE SOVIET UNION AND ISRAEL
In the era before Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, a major crisis in the Middle East might have been expected to interfere in, or at least slow down, the growing Soviet-Israeli relationship. Even if the Soviet Union did not blame Israel in some way, or find a connection between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the crisis in the Gulf, a temporary, more cautious approach toward Israel would have been expected, given the sensitivity to Arab or Muslim reaction to Soviet opposition to an Arab-Muslim state. However, during the Gulf crisis this did not occur, and consequently, this strongly suggested that the change in policy toward Israel was the result of a firm decision taken early in the Gorbachev era and pursued virtually regardless of other events, either in Moscow or in the region itself. A further and most surprising asset of this situation was the fact that even after the resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on 20 December, and Gorbachev's temporary retreat from many elements of perestroika in his struggle with conservative opponents, there was no change in the new policy toward Israel.

With the outbreak of the crisis, there were indeed those who likened Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Opponents to the new Soviet policy toward Israel drew a parallel between the two situations, claiming that American military moves against Iraq were designed purely to preserve Israel's position in the region, while others demanded that the same vigorous standard of implementation of UN resolutions against Iraq should also be applied to the resolutions regarding Israel. Furthermore, some argued that, at the very least, the crisis should not be permitted to divert attention from the more serious or deeper Arab-Israeli conflict.1

Much of the discussion about the Gulf crisis and renewed ties with Israel was, in fact, symbolic of the broader questions of perestroika and new thinking. Consequently, in addition to conservative Arabists and nationalists, the negative attitude toward Israel was taken up by military and conservative party elements who had launched a full-scale attack on perestroika and what was called "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy. The cumulative opposition of these conservative party elements was, among other things, to Shevardnadze's foreign policies, and specifically, to the arms agreements with the West and the "loss" of Eastern Europe. To the opposition, Moscow's support of the US in the Gulf crisis was one more intolerable example of the Soviet Union's loss of standing and power (and potential arms buyers). Indeed, for some in the military, such as Warsaw Pact Commander in Chief Gen. Vladimir

DOI: 10.4324/9780429038747-6
Lobov, such support was actually aiding the US in its heinous plans to transplant Nato to the ME, and from there to influence events negatively in the troubled republics of the southern Soviet Union.2

Not all conservative criticism of Gorbachev's Gulf policy focused on Israel. For many, especially in the military, American intervention in Guatemala and Panama were more appropriate analogies than Israeli occupation. Nevertheless, Iraqi leader Saddam Husayn's effort to link the withdrawal from Kuwait to a resolution of the Arab-Israeli (and Lebanese) conflicts was echoed by many of these critics.3 Some even went so far as to use this to justify the Scud attacks on Israel. The conservative Sovietskaia Rossiiya suggested that Saddam was provoked by daily raids of over 1,000 enemy planes, and consequently, "hardly had any other recourse than to play the Israel card and try to stop the allies...as for limited missile strikes at Israel, it would be strange if the main guilty party for complications in the region — Israel — sat in peace during time of war."4 Such critics portrayed Israel as urging the US to war and being desperate to join in the fighting. The conservative press forewarned of dire scenarios of escalation and conflagration in the event that Israel had its way.5 The more conservative papers, such as Pravda, Sovietskaia Rossiiya, and Krasnaia Zvezda, reported various claims that Israel was actually participating in the fighting although they did not make such claims themselves.6

Despite the various reports and criticisms, official Soviet policy and most of the media did not support linkage. When Saddam first raised the idea, Nikolai Shishlin, then central committee adviser (and close to both Gorbachev and Gorbachev's adviser Alexander Yakovlev), told an Arab interviewer that Saddam Husayn's offer to withdraw from Kuwait on condition that Israel withdraw from the occupied territories, was not a "serious initiative," but rather designed "to split the Arab world" and spread "erroneous ideas."7 As clarified by the Foreign Ministry and Shishlin, the Soviet Government did not accept Saddam's idea of "linkage" for Iraqi withdrawal, nor agree that the Arab-Israeli conflict constituted a source of the Gulf crisis.8 Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov explicitly ruled out linkage, explaining that although the Security Council resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict should be implemented, according to TASS, he "was not sure the two situations should be linked. The annexation of Kuwait is now on the agenda and to link the matter with Israeli aggression against occupied territories means putting off the solution of the conflict indefinitely."9 Similarly, Shevardnadze's report to the Supreme Soviet in December ruled out linkage, as did the comments of the new Foreign Ministry's information chief, Vitali Churkin, made around the same time. Both of these were in response to criticism of Soviet support for US positions in the crisis.10

The only type of linkage advocated was sequential linkage, which would be accepted by the US as well. In other words, the Arab-Israeli conflict would be tackled once the Gulf crisis was settled. This was alluded to in the communiqué issued at the close of the summit between Gorbachev and US President Bush in September 1990, which spoke of settling the present crisis and then making subsequent security arrangements, adding that all "remaining conflicts in the Middle East and Gulf" should be resolved.11 It was repeated in the communiqué between US Secretary of State Baker and Shevardnadze's replacement, Alexander Bessmertnykh, at the close of their talks in January 1991.12

Furthermore, the Soviet Government did not accept the anti-Israel sentiments of
the conservative opposition. Although the government paper, like many others, expressed concern over possible Israeli participation in the war in response to the Scud attacks, it also reported Israeli restraint. In fact, the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued the following statement immediately after the first Iraqi missile attack on Israel:

On the night of 17 January, Iraq staged missile attacks on the suburbs of Tel Aviv, Haifa and some other populated localities of Israel.

Obviously, the purpose of that action was to transform the Kuwaiti problem into a regional conflict and to kindle military conflagration throughout the Middle East.

The Soviet Union has firmly opposed this development of events and expressed this view during contacts with the Iraqi leadership. We believe that it is not desirable to resolve one problem by creating another.

The Soviet Union hopes that the Israeli Government will also display the needed restraint and will not take the path leading to further heightening of tension in the Middle East.\footnote{13}

Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh subsequently expressed his support for Israel's policy of restraint when he told the Supreme Soviet in February that: “We are satisfied that, despite systematic missile firing, Israel has refrained from involvement in military actions against Iraq.”\footnote{14} This comment further testified to the extraordinary transformation that had taken place in the Soviet attitude toward Israel in the Gorbachev era.

The new attitude was apparent not only in words, but also in deeds, even during the Gulf crisis. Disregarding Arab dissatisfaction, which was augmented in some circles as a result of the Soviet position on the Gulf, Moscow continued to improve relations with Israel. In the fall, two Israeli government ministers, Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i and Science and Energy Minister Yuval Ne'eman, were received by Gorbachev in Moscow, marking the first such high-level talks since the severing of relations in 1967. In October, Shevardnadze met with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.\footnote{15} Although it was nothing out of the ordinary for the two foreign ministers, their talks marked the announcement of the creation of permanent consular missions between the two countries, the first formal step toward resumption of full diplomatic relations.\footnote{16} Indeed, on 25 December 1990, Aryeh Levin presented his credentials as consul general to Shevardnadze and the consulate was officially reopened at the beginning of January, in Israel's former chancellery. Shevardnadze also held an equally significant meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in Washington in December, when rumors abounded over Soviet agreement finally to implement direct flights between Israel and the Soviet Union, and in March 1991, Shamir met with Soviet Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov in London. In fact, regular direct flights were quietly inaugurated between Tel Aviv and Moscow (followed by Riga, Baku and other Soviet cities), although initially on a charter basis, in other words, round-trip only, so as to exclude their use by emigrants.

At the same time, lower-level ties were established, including commercial and scientific agreements.\footnote{17} Although Moscow gradually assumed an economic interest in these relations, particularly in the area of Israeli agricultural products, machinery and know-how, as well as the high-tech and diamond industries, trade was slow to
Soviet imports from Israel in 1990 totaled roughly $5m. and exports to Israel some $18m. The figures for the first quarter of 1991 showed a significant increase, with $5m. in Soviet imports and $15m. in exports from January to March 1991 alone. Contacts were developed between Israel and various republics, most notably during the visit to Azerbaijan by Israeli Science Minister Yuval Ne'eman in May 1991. Israel did not make clear that it was officially interested in such relations, presumably following the American example of refraining from undermining Gorbachev’s efforts to keep the Union together. This may have been the explanation for the refusal by the Knesset Foreign and Security Affairs Committee to agree to a visit from its counterpart in the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic. Nevertheless, commercial, cultural, scientific and other ties were developed with Estonia, Latvia, Moldavia and other republics.

During the visit to Azerbaijan, Ne’eman held a meeting with the President of the Azerbaijan Republic, Ayaz Mutalibov. Ne’eman claimed that “there is a lot of readiness in the Muslim republics of the Soviet Union to deal with Israel.” This announcement was something of a surprise, since these republics had been developing active bilateral relations with the Muslim countries, including Pakistan, and particularly with Iran. Their commercial and cultural-religious ties with these countries raised the question of the influence of Soviet Muslims over Soviet policy toward the ME and the possibility of their opposing the growing Soviet-Israeli relationship. Indeed, Muslim slogans in a number of the republics, as well as at the opening of a center for Islam in Moscow in June 1991, included a call for the “liberation of Jerusalem” and occupied Palestinian lands. Moreover, the press reported receiving numerous letters from people wishing to volunteer to fight for Saddam. There were many, particularly in the Russian Federation, who feared the growing Islamic sentiment of the Muslim population in Russia (in Moscow alone, there were some 800,000 Muslims). Ne’eman’s trip seemed to suggest that this would not, in fact, influence policies toward Israel. However, the future impact of Islamic identification and ties with ME Muslims remained a potentially important and complex question.

Emigration from the Soviet Union to Israel not only continued but increased significantly, even during the Gulf crisis. The crisis, and the obvious danger of war awaiting Soviet immigrants in Israel, did not outweigh the concerns of Soviet Jews over their safety and future well-being in the USSR, particularly in view of the influence of conservatives in Moscow, which had risen over the winter. In fact, there was a record-breaking influx of Soviet immigrants to Israel just prior to the outbreak of the war in the Gulf due to the increased anti-Semitism and the growing role of the military. This emigration, which eventually brought the total number of emigrants to 265,000 between January 1990 and June 1991, led to the American suspension of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment (which had linked US-Soviet trade to freedom of emigration). This suspension was urged by Shamir during his trip to Washington (and talks with Shevardnadze) in December 1990.

Despite the progress made in bilateral relations, even during the Gulf crisis, there was concern by the end of the war on the part of Israel that the rise in influence of conservatives in Moscow would have a negative effect on postwar policy. Israeli deputy foreign minister Binyamin Netanyahu said that he hoped that the Soviet Union was not showing signs of returning to the days when it “automatically lined up with the most predatory and most radical Arab states, armed them and gave them the
benefit of diplomatic cover." Netanyah responded to Soviet efforts to prevent the ground war through an early cease-fire with Iraq, negotiated primarily by Gorbachev's adviser Evgenii Primakov. It is most likely that Gorbachev condoned the Primakov initiative in February because of the pressures on him from the Soviet military and party conservatives, who were concerned about preserving Soviet positions in the ME. The move was designed to dissociate the USSR from the Americans, in order to preserve some semblance of an independent policy in the region, without, as far as Gorbachev was concerned, actually challenging the anti-Iraq coalition. Gorbachev was treading a fine line between pleasing domestic critics, so as to continue his own plans for perestroika, on the one hand, and maintaining the relationship with the West, so essentially a part of perestroika, on the other.

Gorbachev's intentions notwithstanding, the last minute moves to prevent the ground war increased the skepticism in various quarters, both in Washington and Jerusalem, as to how reliable the Soviet new thinking on the ME was. Moreover, the resignation of Shevardnadze in December 1990, and his replacement with the forward-thinking but nonauthoritative Bessmertnykh, left unanswered questions regarding the direction and personalities to be involved in future Soviet policy in the ME. Primakov appeared to be the most senior official dealing with this region, by virtue of his background as an Arabist, his role during the war, and his membership in the newly created National Security Council of the Soviet Union. Primakov was obviously a new thinker, and indeed was credited with shaping some aspects of new thinking. His efforts during the war, together with the apparent rise of the military and conservatives, added some ambiguity to Soviet policy.

In time, it became apparent that nothing had really changed with regard to Soviet policies, either toward Israel or the Arab-Israeli conflict. The pressures of the conservatives and Primakov's own efforts had each contributed to the complex domestic power struggles. These had been much more concerned with perestroika and the Soviet relationship to (and independence from) the US and preservation of the Soviet Union's status as a great power than with the relationship with Israel or even the Arabs. Indeed, after the war, Gorbachev's conservative opponents appeared to back down even on the Soviet-American question, which was more relevant to the military and party conservatives than the ME issue. It was possible that Gorbachev's warning, at the end of February, about the "fragility" of the Soviet-American relationship may have influenced their change of heart, since the military and military-industrial complex maintained an interest in Western economic assistance, despite their dissatisfaction with Gorbachev's policies. Moreover, by the spring, Gorbachev had managed to reach an accord with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and nine of the republics, which was a most important development toward preserving the Union, thereby greatly strengthening his position domestically, and consequently presumably freeing his hand in foreign policy.

Moscow's announcement, in April, that Bessmertnykh intended to visit Israel, in his May tour of the ME, was another clear indication that Moscow was continuing its pursuit of improved relations with Israel. This announcement came at a time of widespread speculation that shortly full diplomatic relations would finally be resumed. In April, the Soviets may, in fact, have been anticipating a renewal of full diplomatic relations, in view of the fact that a great deal of progress seemed to have been made regarding the convening of a conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict. An Israeli
agreement to negotiations was still a Soviet condition, but it appeared that such an agreement might well be secured by Baker in his shuttle visits to the region. However, by the time Bessmertnykh’s trip actually took place, the chances of an Israeli agreement to negotiations appeared to be much slimmer. Consequently, Moscow did not have a pretext that might justify resuming diplomatic relations. Yet the continued absence of full diplomatic relations was an anomaly, as pointed out by Soviet officials and commentators alike, including Bessmertnykh himself. Indeed, once again there was the appearance of a new, more favorable definition of Zionism in the government press.25 The Soviets even permitted the convocation of a National Zionist Conference in Moscow, and domestic Zionist as well as Jewish activities flourished as never before in the history of Russia or the Soviet Union.26 Nevertheless, full diplomatic relations, which, at this point, were of symbolic rather than practical importance, were still not resumed, presumably because of Soviet domestic considerations.

One of the major results of the Gulf War for the Soviets, however, was that the US agreed to bring the Soviet Union into the peace process as a joint venture with the US (for further discussion of the process leading to the peace conference, see chapter on the ME peace process). This was agreed at the September summit and reaffirmed during Bessmertnykh’s talks in Washington in January. Although Israel continued to push for the resumption of full diplomatic relations as a condition for Soviet participation, the raising of relations to permanent consular level, just after the summit, may well have been a quid pro quo for the American concession. During Baker’s trips to the region following the war, Soviet commentators, in particular those from the conservative Pravda, were to argue that the Soviet Union was in fact vitally necessary to any settlement in the region.27 The Pravda correspondent in Washington claimed that the US viewed Soviet cooperation as a key element in the stabilization of the region and hoped that the Soviet Union would use its influence in the Arab world.28 This was Moscow’s endeavor to show that the Soviet Union was still a great power. According to Bessmertnykh, the two countries had decided to work jointly, with all the different countries, as distinct from the times when the Soviet Union and the US each had its own camp, with which it dealt exclusively.29

The Israeli response to a Soviet role in the peace process was ambivalent: Foreign Minister Levy welcomed the expanded role of the Soviets whereas Shamir appeared to be concerned that Soviet participation would mean an international conference, which Jerusalem continued to oppose.30 The Soviets themselves altered their position about an international conference after the war when the US was seeking a new framework for negotiations. In March 1991, the Soviet foreign minister was asked if Moscow still linked renewal of relations with an Israeli agreement to an international conference. He responded that such a conference was still part of “our vision” of a solution, “but you know we also think of various approaches to that problem. So a conference is part of that many-sided process. It should not rule out other approaches.”31 The other approach turned out to be what Bessmertnykh termed as a compromise: on a lesser scale than an international conference but more than a regional conference. It was to be a “peace conference.”32 The distinction was that not “all the points” would be on the agenda, but the talks would also not be limited to discussing merely bilateral problems. As explained by Bessmertnykh, in addition to “direct talks between the immediate participants,” the conference would include a group working on regional problems such as water resources, security, ecology, and the economy, all of which necessitated more than bilateral talks.33
This interpretation raised two issues — that of outside participants and the issue of stages, which was a critical element in the composition of a conference. The Soviet Union and the US were to cochair a conference, but the UN and Europeans were also to have some role, according to Bessmertnykh, although it had not yet been agreed upon what that role would be. One Soviet account of Bessmertnykh's position explained that the cochairmen and the "world community" could act as a catalyst for getting the process started and possibly also play an important role at "subsequent stages." This interpretation suggested the idea of stages, which the Soviets were apparently willing to accept. Following a meeting with Baker in Kislovodsk, when the term "peace conference" was apparently agreed upon, and just prior to his trip to the ME, Bessmertnykh said that "already before the conference begins, we must all know exactly in which stages the settlement is supposed to take place. It will surely stretch over several years. A comprehensive international conference...could then be the culmination of this process." This also appeared to be Primakov's view; he told an interviewer that he preferred bilateral negotiations between the sides to the conflict first, and then a "permanent peace conference." Bessmertnykh confirmed that the reference was to substantive as well as procedural stages when he explained that a "preliminary variant of the Palestinian problem will have to be worked out and, gradually, a final solution will be found, leading to a general settlement in the region. This means that the solution will be found step by step." That this was viewed by some, including the Arabs, as a Soviet retreat from the idea of a comprehensive settlement was indicated by Pravda commentator, Pavel Demchenko. He said that the tactics of settling the conflict by stages did not represent a "retreat or passiveness" from the Soviets' strategic goal of a comprehensive settlement.

No details were offered as to the parameters of a settlement, neither in the interim nor final agreement. Bessmertnykh, like Baker, said only that Resolutions 242 and 338 were the agreed upon "internationally legal basis" for a settlement. While there were admittedly very different interpretations of these resolutions, certainly in the ME, the Soviet foreign minister claimed that there was Soviet-American agreement on the various issues connected with the peace process. It was not clear if this referred to substantive or only procedural issues. However, from the Soviet point of view it was repeatedly stated that Moscow would accept any agreement reached by the parties concerned, although it refused to offer any blueprint for an accord, beyond the principle of taking into account the interests of all sides involved in the conflict. The only time greater detail could be heard, regarding, for example, Israeli withdrawal or even a Palestinian state (which were characteristic of pre-Gorbachev Soviet positions), was in statements by conservative elements such as those expressed occasionally in Pravda or Sovetskaiia Rossiiia.

If these conservative elements were opposed to the role assumed by Moscow in the peace efforts of the spring of 1991, they did not make this clear. Since conservative objections had been raised over the fact that the Soviet Union had forfeited the international arena in general, and during the Gulf crisis, the ME in particular to the US, Gorbachev could now point to the active Soviet stand. Nevertheless, Bessmertnykh's trip to the region and substantive positions did not completely meet the demand for an independent policy, which was being pressed by many of the Arabists and conservatives at home and in the Arab world. Indeed, one commentator concluded that Bessmertnykh's trip could not dispel sentiments amongst the Arabs
that the Soviets were "weak" and "not opposing the Americans." Yet, the trip was described by the conservative army daily as a "turning point" in Soviet ME policy because it marked an active role being played by Moscow, along with the US, in the regional peace process. Bessmertnykh also described his trip as the Soviet Union's entering into an "active phase," which he claimed was welcomed by all parties concerned, including Israel. He revealed that a special unit had been set up in the Foreign Ministry to tackle all issues connected with this peace process and he favored continued attention to this region of the world.

Despite these comments, there was neither priority given nor independence gained in the Soviet foreign policy with regard to the conflict, as a result of the Soviet Union's active role. Bessmertnykh's historic trip was, in fact, accorded little attention within the Soviet Union, presumably because of the enormous problems and political maneuvering which preoccupied the Soviet leadership, in addition to the issues connected with Western aid and the need to resolve Soviet-US strategic issues prior to a summit. In fact, it was not the conservatives' demands for an independent policy that were being met, but those of outspoken "new thinkers," who had demanded a Soviet ME policy based on Soviet national interests, rather than the interests of their Arab friends in the region. Moreover, this interest appeared to include a new, direct relationship with Israel.

There was an apparent need to explain the first-ever trip by a Soviet foreign minister to Israel, both to domestic and Arab critics. Soviet officials explained that the brief meetings were being held in Jerusalem only because that had been decided as the location by the host country. It did not indicate a change in Moscow's continued refusal to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The importance of the visit itself was similarly played down by Foreign Ministry spokesman Churkin, at least to Arab reporters. He said that the trip was part of the overall effort to achieve a settlement in the region. The Soviet dialogue with Israel — which he said was not new — played a role in this effort. Therefore, he said, there was no element of surprise in the trip. However, the official communiqué on the visit acknowledged the unprecedented significance of Bessmertnykh's "brief working visit" to Israel, saying:

The Soviet Foreign Minister's visit is the first such event in the history of relations between the Soviet Union and Israel. It is apparently an important milestone in the natural development of Soviet-Israeli relations, which will become full-scale diplomatic relations with the passage of time.

From the Soviet point of view, the importance of the visit was more psychological than political; Bessmertnykh repeatedly referred to the outcome as the breaking down of stereotypes and the understanding of each other's positions and viewpoints, which could be achieved only through personal contact. He hailed this achievement as the direct result of new thinking, and predicted not only the development of bilateral Soviet-Israeli relations as the outcome, but also the achievement of a peace accord. Although his optimism on the peace issue was not shared by all Soviet observers, many of whom continued to depict Israel as the main obstacle to peace talks, open interest in and sympathy for Israel increased in the wake of the Gulf War. Moreover, official Soviet treatment of Israel was increasingly "normal" in every aspect, from political to commercial and scientific domains, despite the absence of full diplomatic ties. Israel could and did point to Moscow's continued arming of Arab states, as a
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contradiction of its nascent even-handedness, but it was no longer fantasy to conceive of Israeli purchases of military items from the Soviet Union. Rumors of such offers by Moscow, in June 1991, were subsequently denied. Yet, this was a sign of just how far Soviet-Israeli relations had progressed and the extraordinary transformation occurring in Moscow's perception of the Jewish State. So long as Gorbachev remained in power, this aspect of new thinking appeared to be consistent and secure.

THE GULF CRISIS AND SOVIET-PLO RELATIONS

As a result of the Gulf crisis, there was a definite cooling, and even distancing in Soviet-PLO relations. This trend had already begun under Gorbachev with relations becoming less close, as well as far less important to Soviet ME policy. This cooling off was mutual: the Soviets criticized the PLO's support for Saddam Husayn, and what they viewed as an unwise Palestinian policy; and the PLO resented Moscow's support for the anti-Iraq coalition, and what it viewed as lack of Soviet understanding for the Palestinian position. The relationship was further affected by Saddam Husayn's symbolic use of the Palestinian-Arab-Israeli question and by domestic Soviet opponents to Gorbachev's (and Shevardnadze's) policy during the crisis.

Soviet officials were actually in close contact with the Palestinians throughout the crisis. PLO leaders, such as Abu Mazin and Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, followed by Na'if Hawatima and George Habash, paid frequent visits to Moscow. Contact was also maintained in the course of ME trips by deputy foreign minister Alexander Belonogov and Gorbachev's envoy Primakov. The highest level contact was, apparently, a meeting between Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh and Abu Mazin with Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh a few weeks after the latter replaced Shevardnadze. Thus, on the surface, normal relations were maintained, and official Soviet responses to Intifada-related events in Israel continued to be supportive. For example, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning the October 1990 killings of Palestinians by Israeli police and Border Guard units on the Temple Mount-al-Aqsa area in Jerusalem (see MECS 1990, chapter on Israel), and supported the Palestinian move to have a UN mission investigate the incident. (The US also joined the UN condemnation of Israel.)

Yet, underneath the surface Soviet officials had misgivings, and were reportedly even angry, about PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's demonstrative support for Saddam Husayn. Their differences were often evident from what was not said. For example, press reports issued after various meetings, such as the talks between PLO Political Department Chief Faruq Qaddumi and Shevardnadze in October, the meeting in Tunis of deputy foreign minister Vladimir Petrovsky with 'Arafat, and the 'Abd Rabbuh-Abu Mazin meeting with Bessmertnykh, referred mainly to opinions expressed by the Soviets and the "exchange of views" rather than joint statements or agreement. In his meeting with the PLO officials, Bessmertnykh called for all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and caution to prevent "implementation of plans aimed at an even greater exacerbation of the Arab-Israeli conflict" and the continuation of the war. This comment was interpreted as a warning to the PLO not to engage in terrorist acts, in conjunction with Saddam's war effort, as advocated, for example, by George Habash and Abu al-'Abbas.

The Soviet media accorded the PLO little attention in its coverage of the crisis, often reporting actions or statements by 'Arafat, without making any comment, for
example, on those made in support of Saddam. A few commentators even referred to
"extremists" or, as one journalist put it, "bellicose Palestinians led by 'Arafat," while
others warned that the PLO's support for Saddam would only hurt the movement. Former PLO representative in Moscow, Rami Sha'ir, for example, warned that if the
Palestinians participated in Saddam's forces, it would undermine world sympathy for
the movement and constitute "political suicide." On a more official level, Foreign
Ministry information chief, Churkin, in response to domestic criticism of Moscow's
Gulf policy, explained that Iraq's move had harmed the Palestinian cause by diverting
world attention away from the Arab-Israeli conflict "and doing so at a time when
encouraging signs [presumably the possibility of Israeli-Palestinian talks in Cairo]
had appeared on the diplomatic horizon. Churkin rejected the idea of "linkage"
between the solution of the two problems, thus reflecting official policy.

The Soviet rejection of linkage was not essentially motivated by problems or
dissatisfaction with the Palestinians. It was dictated by Moscow's anti-Iraq position
and Soviet support for the anti-Iraq coalition. However, it was a clear sign of the
change that had taken place in Soviet policy. In pre-Gorbachev days, as pointed out
by various Soviet commentators, Moscow could have been expected to have
championed the battle for linkage, attributing virtually all ME crises to the continued
Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, and so forth. The Soviets had come to reject
linkage, explicitly exposing it as Saddam's futile ploy to avoid withdrawal from
Kuwait, and a ploy which could actually harm the Palestinians. The Soviets were
willing to speak only of sequential linkage, as agreed upon between Bush and
Gorbachev at their summit in September and reiterated in subsequent joint
pronouncements. This sequential linkage promised Soviet-American efforts to settle
the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian issue, once the Gulf crisis was
resolved.

Shevardnadze actually took a defensive stand on the issue, responding to what he
called reproaches for taking Kuwait's side, with tough measures, while "doing nothing
for the Palestinians." He argued that it would hardly help the Palestinians "if we
were to 'forgive' Iraq's aggression....For that undermines the basic principle of a
settlement of the Palestinian question enshrined in the well-known Security Council
Resolution 242 — the principle of the impermissibility of acquiring territory by force.
That point is the main hope of the Palestinians." These comments were part of a
document on Shevardnadze's policy in the Gulf crisis, which he circulated to the
members of the Supreme Soviet. This document was in answer to the criticisms of
Shevardnadze's policy, which, shortly thereafter, prompted his resignation.

The main criticism of Gorbachev's Gulf policy was not, in fact, directly related to
the Palestinian question. The criticism focused more on Moscow's cooperation with
Washington. In fact, the Gulf issue became part and parcel of the domestic power
struggle and disputes over new thinking and perestroika. As a result, support for the
Palestinian issue, and for linkage, were often invoked for purposes which were not
concerned with an interest in Soviet ME policy or the Palestinians. Thus, the criticism
expressed by journalists and academics, which we have already noted with regard to
Soviet ME policy, was expanded by party and military elements, who exploited these
issues in their broader campaign against perestroika. As these forces grew stronger in
the domestic struggle, in the winter of 1990–91, support for linkage and defending the
Palestinians increased somewhat.