

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION
AND THE LOGIC OF COMPREHENSIVE PEACE

A Study of How Middle East Policy Became a Presidential Concern
and the Limits of a Globalist Foreign Policy

by

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INTRODUCTION

"Rationalist" and "Pluralist"
Theories of Foreign Policy

Introduction

During the first year of the Carter administration the energies and talents of the chief executive were invested in an unprecedented endeavor to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Previous administrations had pressed for limited goals such as bilateral interim agreements, and under President Ford there was some movement towards a broader, yet undefined, solution. But it was not until the Carter administration that the United States pushed for a total and comprehensive settlement which would, once and for all, resolve all outstanding issues including the Palestinian problem.

The endeavor was also unprecedented in the degree of presidential involvement in the defining and negotiating of an agreement. During the 1967-1978 period, control over Middle East policy had wavered between the State Department and the White House. But following the 1973 Mideast war, a resolution of the conflict became increasingly identified with the preservation of America's national security interests, a process which led to greater presidential involvement in Mideast policy. Under the Carter administration, the identification of a solution with the protection of America's security interests became complete, and so Carter assumed control over policy. The Arab-Israeli conflict was viewed in terms of a serious crisis whose solution required a quick and global answer to the Arab-Israeli issue, an answer which could only be found with the White House leading the search.

President Carter's bid to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute suggests that his Middle East policy might be best understood

by recourse to the "Realist-Rationalist" view of international relations. Often identified with the views of Hans Morgenthau, it holds that "international politics consists of the more or less purposive acts of unified national governments and that governmental behavior can be understood by analogy with intelligent, coordinated acts of individual human beings."¹ The view focuses attention on the concept of an independent or autonomous "state" pursuing a policy of "national interest," free of the shackles of domestic politics of its characteristic competition and bargaining.² Accordingly, one might interpret the Carter administration's Mideast policies as the outcome of rational decisions made by the executive in pursual of clearly defined goals of national interest.

A second view, what might be called the "Modernist-Pluralist" schools, offers a different means of explaining Carter's policies. Students of bureaucracy such as Graham Allison and Morton Halperin argue, in response to the first view, that it is wrong to assume that policy-making is a rational, calculated endeavor. Rather than treat the foreign policy-making apparatus as a "black-box," they emphasize that "government" consists of a "conglomerate of semi-feudal, loosely allied organizations each with a substantial life of its own."³ Because policy is often the result, or "outcome" as Allison puts it, of "pulling and hauling," or "bargaining,"⁴ policy can be best understood as a "political process" not completely removed from the kinds of pluralistic competition typical of the domestic realm.⁵ From this perspective, we might suggest that the Carter administration's policies were the result of a series of bargaining games among different institutions, each with

its respective outlooks and ideologies. Moreover, the policy should not be seen as a rational decision made in response to some event or change in the international environment, but rather as a political choice made as a result of bureaucratic competition.

An analysis of the Carter administration's policies demonstrates that neither school alone offers a satisfactory explanation. What is in fact needed is some model that integrates the two approaches and shows how international environment affects the bureaucratic issues of policy-making. Broadly speaking, this paper deals with this question by illustrating how a growing sense of crisis following the 1973 Mideast war influenced the bureaucratic competition over policy and eventually led to total presidential control of Mideast policy. Our second theme, which flows from the first, is the inherent problems which a presidentially controlled foreign policy creates. To understand how we will approach these two issues, we must take a closer look at the characteristics of the Realist and Modernist schools, and the theoretical relationship between them.

Bureaucratic-Policy: When Does "Pulling and Hauling" Count?

The bureaucratic-policy perspective emphasizes the lack of rationality found in the inner-workings of the decision-making process in large organizations. Because bureaucracies are large, complex organizations divided into many hierarchical and functional bureaus, much of the effort is invested in coordinating, discussing the negotiating policy. This results in a large degree of policy incrementalism, for "it is easier to avoid conflict among bureaucracies by slicing problems into smaller components and dealing with them in a piecemeal fashion. Such an approach...

avoids...the possibility of offending a large segment of the multiple constituencies involved in the decision."⁶

Related to the above problem is the issue of organizational "mindsets" or "subcultures", which prescribe a certain pattern of belief and behavior and penalize those who do not conform to them."⁷ It has been observed, for example, that the State Department and Foreign Service breed a sense of loyalty to their respective traditional policies. This tendency results both from territorial instincts to hold on to one's own and from an aversion to initiating new policies which, if they "rock the boat," may jeopardize one's own position.⁸ Often the upshot is bureaucratic inertia and lack of creative and responsive thinking.

In addition to an emphasis on role conformity, the bureaucratic view suggests that policy making is on the whole "negotiatory rather than analytical."⁹ The outcome, as Allison and Halperin have stressed, is often an unanticipated compromise-result, an amalgamation of different positions.¹⁰ Once the decision has been made, there is the further question of implementation. "Standard operating procedures," or parochial bureaucratic interests may encourage officials to implement policy in such a way as to alter it substantially from what was originally decided upon.¹¹

Finally, bureaucratic analysis suggests that those organizations with more bargaining advantages may have the upper hand in the negotiating process and hence can make their policy prevail. Although there has been little systematic or theoretical attempt to explain which organizations may have the advantage in which situations, as we shall discuss below, the bureaucratic school does offer some general answers. The National Security Council, for

example, because it has presidential leadership and prestige at its disposal, and a relatively small and cohesive working-group with access to information, has over the past few years often preempted the State Department's role.¹² Indeed the State Department, whose structural characteristics tend towards immobilism, which lacks the White House's advantages of leadership and prestige, and which does not enjoy a constituency's support comparable to that which the Department of Defense enjoys in the Congress, has not been able to compete.¹³ And although there have been some differences over its influence during the last two decades, most presidents have ended up endorsing Kennedy's view that the State Department is "a bowl full of jelly."¹⁴

This plethora of variables has given us a richer and more powerful description of the policy-making process than offered by traditional analysis. But is this very richness, as one critic, Robert Art, has said, which weakens the theoretical value of the approach.¹⁵ For beyond a very general level, bureaucratic policy analysis does not tell us much about "how much difference all the pulling and hauling and bargaining actually makes...under what circumstance and in what issue areas does all the commotion make a significant difference."¹⁶ To this John Campbell adds a related criticism, arguing against an approach which implies: "A Washington centered universe in which foreign events play a subsidiary role to internal Washington bureaucratic considerations."¹⁷

This problem then is how to link the traditional and bureaucratic perspectives, or as Allison and Halperin put it, how to analyze "what factors weigh most heavily for what classes of outcomes."¹⁸ The answer they proposed is that "the actions of other

states matter, if and when they influence domestic struggles."¹⁹ We must know, they suggested, how the actions of other states affect the bargaining positions of various players and in which particular circumstances.²⁰

To some extent, as we have noted above, a general typology was implicitly buried in the bureaucratic literature. As Art observes, this literature acknowledges the advantages the president has over other institutions and the importance of presidential influence.²¹ Presidential wishes have prevailed where the president has been willing to invest his energies -- on matters crucial to national interest such as Soviet-American relations, defense policy and alliance issues. The same is true, Art argues, for the question of implementation, for "slippage between Presidential intent and organizational output is greatest on those issues that the President considers least important."²² The logical outcome of this reasoning is ironical: The bureaucratic approach is more applicable to issues of a less crucial and salient nature, while the traditional view applies most often to areas of major decision-making.

What happens, however, when one issue which has been considered less crucial to basic American interests becomes identified with issues of "high politics"? How do the presidential and bureaucratic realms interact? A more theoretical approach to these questions has been offered by the study of crises, or "circumstances involving the survival of a political system, or an intensive political interaction carrying implications for the stability of some pattern of interactions."²³ In these instances,

as Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph have illustrated,²⁴ "lower-level" issues which might normally be subject to a great deal of debate within lower echelons of the State Department may, because of a sudden change in the international environment, become identified with an issue of national security or "high politics." The result will be a transfer of the locus of decision-making from the lower to the higher levels of the State Department and to the White House and National Security Council. The scope of debate will be reduced and the issue will be handled by the president and his advisors. This pattern of action suggests, furthermore, that there may be at any one time a number of issues and policy alternatives being debated in the lower levels of the State Department. Those alternatives that coincide with the views of senior officials may suddenly become influential, while those that differ may fall to the wayside. The key will be whether the particular issue has become identified with the high politics of national security issues.

The above model is value free, in the sense that it does not address the normative issue of whether presidential attention and monopoly of a given issue in a given instance is desirable or is itself inherently laudable. One might ask whether a reduction in the scope of debate over a particular issue is actually "rational." For those scholars who see the Realist theory of international relations as prescriptive, such as I. M. Destler, issues that are held vital to national security must be decided upon by the president and his advisors. This is so because only the president enjoys the advantages of a small and efficient team, and the prestige of the White House. Added together, these attributes offer

the President the ability to act swiftly in the realm of international affairs. There always is some danger that policy will be too "coherent," admits Destler, but too much debate will make the president ineffective.²⁵ John Campbell, on the other hand, argues that top decision-makers are "generalists," who are insensitive to the complexities of regional politics.²⁶ "Washington centered," or "globalist" views tend to confuse regional and global politics and hence form a weak basis for policy. Regional-specialists are the key to good policy making, he argues, and if the State Department is slow to the mark, it must be reduced in size and made more efficient.²⁷

Each view is informed to some degree by the imperatives of the roles the different players occupy. The State Department offers an environment in which debates, long-term planning and careful policy may be fostered. Far from being a hinderance, this kind of "deliberative coordination," as the Rudolfs call it, results in a more complex view of the world which is sensitive to the nuances of regional politics.²⁸ The "globalist" view reflects the demands and tasks of what the Rudolfs call "imperative coordination." Since policy-makers must synthesize a policy from a broad range of options, and respond quickly to a great number of issues simultaneously, they tend to view international affairs in a more simplistic way, defined by Soviet-American or bi-polar politics.²⁹

Both of these views -- regional and global -- focus on important aspects of the international environment. But because each by itself is narrow or parochial, a well-rounded policy must be a blend of both.³⁰ A president must seek to combine the advantages

of the State Department -- long term planning and deliberation -- with the advantages of the White House -- responsiveness and efficiency. Achieving a proper balance is one of the crucial tests of any foreign policy.

The Dominance of Presidential-Globalist Views

The record of American foreign policy since the post-World War II years suggests that the correct blend of regional and globalist views has generally remained beyond the grasp of foreign policy-makers. All too often, those issues which have been viewed as vital to American national security have come strictly under the domain of the White House, Department of Defense, and higher level officials at the State Department -- where globalist views predominate. The result has been that regionalists have often been excluded from policy decisions in the very areas where their expertise is vital. This has in turn led to policy mishaps such as the Bay of Pigs affair, in which State Department officials whose knowledge was vital to the operation were not even consulted by the White House or Central Intelligence Agency.³¹

We have suggested above that one reason for the dominance of the White House is its small and responsive policy-making apparatus, which is backed by the prestige and influence of the president himself. But it should be emphasized that these advantages are more the result than the cause of presidential dominance over foreign policy-making. They are the logical outcome of the function and role of the presidency as it emerged with the United States' transformation into a great power following the Second World War and the onset of the cold war.

As Franz Schurmann has illustrated in his book, The Logic of World Power,³² the president, charged with the responsibility of maintaining the freedom of the Western block, with negotiating arms limitation agreements and containing Soviet influence, has become the chief protector of world stability. He is understood to be the "man in the most decisive position to influence the public's sense of security."³³ This role, Schurmann argues, sets him above the parochial interests of Washington's lobbies and bureaucracies; for while each may claim to speak for a more narrow interest, it is "security," which "comes from the president;"³⁴ it is the realm of security which the president claims for himself. And furthermore, it is the president who is understood to have the knowledge and information, as well as the awesome power of the executive, to decide those issues of war and peace which effect this country's future. His "monopoly of consciousness," writes Schurmann,³⁵ "is a key factor when it comes to making policy."

To the extent that the office of the presidency has become identified with the preservation of security, both nationally and internationally, so his popularity has become tied to a presidency of activism. By making bold and public gestures in the field of foreign affairs, through his attendance of big power summits and negotiations, the president assures himself a name in history, increases his domestic popularity and reinforces the power of the presidency. As Morton Halperin explains:³⁶

Presidential initiatives in foreign policy are frequently seen as desirable because they show a President in command and seeking solutions to problems...Presidents...often believe that the President's popularity can be increased...by demonstrating that he is a man of peace willing to take whatever steps short of appeasement...to reduce world tensions.

In his capacity as protector of security, and in his search to "reduce world tensions," the president has at his disposal a very potent power. As Franz Schurmann illustrates in reference to the emergence of the United States as a world power, the president, by framing a particular issue in terms of national security, can often manage to rally behind him those groups and bureaucracies whose respective interests might otherwise induce them to oppose his policies. Thus President Truman, in his bid to rebuild Europe and to guarantee a stable international monetary system through the expenditure of American dollars, was able to gain the support of powerful business interests and their allies in Congress and the bureaucracy by casting his policy in terms of "containment" and opposition to "Soviet totalitarianism."³⁷

Schurmann's thesis is important to this study because it suggests that a president, by defining a particular issue in terms of the "high politics" of American national security, can often bring that issue within the domain of presidential-policy. Furthermore, as we have suggested above, a change in the international environment, such as a major crisis, may shift the locus of decision-making from the lower echelons of the bureaucracy to the upper levels of the presidential realm. Or, in a similar vein, a president may take advantage of a change in the international environment to define a particular issue in terms of "high-politics," and thereby bring it under his authority. In each of these cases an issue that might be initially best explained in terms of the "Bureaucratic-Pluralist" model may, by virtue of its changed "identity," be better explained in terms of the Realist-Rationalist approach.

Jimmy Carter's Middle East policy provides an excellent illustration of how a president can seize upon a change in the international environment to define a particular issue in terms of national security interests and thereby bring it into the realm of presidential policy-making. The transformation however, of the Arab-Israeli dispute into a presidential concern however, did not begin under the Carter administration. Rather, it took several years and proceeded in an uneven fashion. Thus in Part One of this paper we will examine this process as it began in the 1970's and developed, particularly after the 1973 Mideast war. Here Henry Kissinger's increased involvement in Mideast policy and his belief that an Arab-Israeli peace would enhance world stability played an important role.

In Part Two we shall look at what can be understood as the culmination of the above process--the complete identification of American national security interests with a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. By defining this conflict in terms of a crisis which posed a significant threat to American interests--in the areas of Soviet-American relations, nuclear war, energy, and especially international economic stability--the administration obtained control over the defining and carrying out of Mideast policy. Of key importance in examining these events will be the Brookings Report, Towards Peace in the Middle East, which served as the basis of Carter's approach; the administration's concept of "Trilateralism" and the related importance of OPEC influence.

The administration's belief that a continuation of the Arab-Israeli dispute would harm American security interests was not contrived in order to assure its control over policy. Its sense of "crisis" was genuine. As we shall see when discussing the implementation of its policy, towards the end of Part Two and throughout Part Three, this perception induced the administration to take certain steps to assure that the perceived threat to American security interests would be met by a coherent

and effective policy. Decision and policy-making was centralized in the White House, devised and carried out by a small group of advisers and restricted to one general plan.

The results of such extreme centralization of policy in the White House were negative and contributed to the failure of Carter's policy. First and foremost, it produced a policy rigidity which precluded the exploration of options and made it difficult to adopt policy to a changing environment. Furthermore, the adoption of a presidentially controlled policy assured the predominance of globalist views and in doing so precluded regional expertise. This in turn produced a policy that did not give enough weight to regional considerations and which ignored the interests and sensitivities of the regional actors. As we shall see, this had the ironic effect of inducing President Anwar Sadat of Egypt to abandon the administration's comprehensive peace initiative. Finally, the centralization of decision-making and the administration's perception of crisis led it to undertake a hurried and simplistic implementation of its comprehensive peace formula. In sum, the policy lacked the proper blend of globalist and regionalist perspectives necessary for the success of foreign policy.

In examining the process which moved the Arab-Israeli conflict from the bureaucratic to the presidential realm, and the policy rigidity this process engendered, a third theme arises from this study--the viability of comprehensive peace formulas. This is an important issue, because there are many who argue today that a return to a comprehensive formula is the only way to achieve an Arab-Israeli peace. In dealing with this question, we shall see that the administration's rushed approach to implementing a comprehensive peace made the success of its policy unlikely. Yet as we shall discuss in the conclusion of this paper, it was not simply the way Carter implemented the elements of a comprehensive peace formula

that doomed the comprehensive approach; for this approach had its own inherent difficulties which Carter, although he managed to aggravate, did not create. Comprehensive formulas are for the most part too simplistic, given an issue as complex as the Arab-Israeli dispute. But it was this very simplicity--its neatness--which suited so well both the style of leadership and the interests of the president. Put another way, the question of the viability of comprehensive peace formulas is closely linked to the role they play in the over-all function of the modern presidency.

Footnotes -- Introduction

1. This is Morton Halperin's description of the Realist view. In "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications." Graham T. Allison and Morton Halperin--In, Theory and Policy in International Relations, Raymond Tanter and Ruchard Ullman (Eds.) Princeton University Press, 1972. For the classic statement of the Realist position see Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964. More recent works by Realists are: Stephen Krasner, Defending the National Interest, Raw Materials and U. S. Foreign Policy (Princeton University Press, 1978) and Robert Gilpin, U.S. Power and the Multi-National Corporation New York: Basic Books, 1975.

2. See Krasner's excellent discussion on the autonomy of the state according to Realist interpretations. Defending the National Interest pp. 20-34.

3. See Graham T. Allison "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," American Political Science Review, Vol. LXIII No. 3 September 1969 p. 698.

4. Ibid. p.707. And Allison and Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics, A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications." (1972) p. 43.

5. Allison and Halperin, (1972) p. 43.

6. Charles W. Kehly, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy, Pattern and Process (New York: St. Martin's Press) 1979. pp. 352-354.

7. I. M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy (Princeton University Press,) 1972 p. 70.

8. Destler cites James Thomson's study, "How Could Vietnam Happen?", (in Manning and Janeway (eds.) Who We Are p. 50), as an example of what Tomson called the "curator mentality" in the State Department. Thomson writes, "At State, the average 'desk officer' inherits from his predecessor our policy toward Country X; he regards it as his function to keep that policy intact." In Destler, (1972) p. 158. Charles Kegley and Eugene Wittkopf discuss the competitive nature of the Foreign Service and the "up-or-out" promotion system. They note that the State Department's own study, Diplomacy for the 70's (1970), complained that the promotion system would, "stifle creativity, discourage risk-taking and reward conformity." See the authors' American Foreign Policy, Pattern and Process (New York: St. Martin's Press) 1979.

9. Robert Art quotes Warner Schilling, "The Politics of National Defense: Fiscal 1950," in Schilling, Mammond, and Snyder (eds) Strategy, Politics and Defense Budgets, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962) p. 22. From Art's "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy, a Critique," Policy Sciences, 4 December 1973 p. 460. Art distinguishes between what he calls the "First Wave" bureaucratic theorists, "Policy via Politics," and the

"Second Wave" theorists, "Policy Via Bureaucratic Politics." The "First Wave" emphasized the dispersed nature of power, the sovereignty of bureaucracies, the bargaining and political nature of policy and the effect of process on outcome or substance. The "Second Wave" put more stress on role theory and the issue of implementation, although Art does not think the "Second Wave" had much more to offer than the first. pp. 467-480.

10. Allison (1969) p. 707.

11. Ibid. p. 700. See Kegley and Wittkopf also (1979) p. 19 and 33.

12. This is generally true, although some presidents have put more trust in State Department than others. See Destler, (1972) pp. 95-153 for a discussion of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon.

13. The emphasis here is on bargaining advantages. For example, Kegley and Wittkopf (1979 p. 277) discuss C. W. Borklund's study of the Department of Defense, which emphasized the fact that Defense was so well integrated into the fabric of "American, social, political and economic life" that its recommendations carried a great deal of weight. Its allies in the Congress, which State lacks, is an important source of its power. See C. W. Borklund, The Department of Defense (New York: Praeger 1968) pp. 95-97.

14. Original quote from Arthur Schlesinger's A Thousand Days (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965) p. 406. Cited in Allison (1969) p. 702.

15. See Art, (1973) p. 473.

16. Ibid. p. 474.

17. John Franklin Campbell, The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory, (New York: Basic Books 1971) p. 35. Halperin and Allison (1972) make a similar observation: "Explanation focuses primarily on processes internal to each nation" p. 57.

18. Halperin and Allison (1972) p. 54. In all fairness to Allison, we must note that he recognized his original study of the Cuban missile crisis was, "simply an initial step. As such it leaves a long list of critical questions unanswered..." Allison, (1969) p. 716. He then went on to ask whether the "relations" between the traditional model and the bureaucratic model might not be "more fully specified? Adequate synthesis would require a typology of decisions and actions, some of which are more amenable to treatment of one model and some to another" p. 717.

19. Halperin and Allison (1972) p. 59.

20. Ibid. p. 62.

21. Art (1973) p. 475-476.

22. Ibid. pp. 477-478. This point seems to contradict the

essence of Allison's study of the Cuban missile crisis, which suggests that even in a crisis situation when decision-making is centralized in the White House, various bureaucratic entities may implement policy in a way that substantially alters it from what was originally planned. This issue is, of course, whether Allison proves his case or not. I agree with Art's criticism that if anything, Allison's study demonstrates the ability of a president to see his will carried out. See Art, p. 478.

23. Edward L. Morse "Crisis Diplomacy, Interdependence and the Politics of International Economic Relations," in Raymond Tanter and Richard Ullman (Eds.) Theory and Policy in International Relations (Princeton University Press 1972) p. 126.

24. Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "The Coordination of Complexity in South Asia," The Regional Imperative (Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, 1980), Appendix V, June 1975. pp. 34-35.

25. Destler writes: "This study tends to understate the degree to which governmental institutions perform useful functions simply by acting as a focal point for the resolution of the various foreign policy-related interests in our society." It is an important question, he says "whether we really want our foreign policy to be entirely coherent." (1974) pp. 5-6.

26. See Campbell (1971) pp. 66 and 92.

27. Size really is the main issue according to Campbell. He also feels that too many departments, such as Defense, the CIA and U.S.I.A., have a say in foreign policy. It is the business, he believes, of a trained elite of Foreign Service officers and diplomats. p. 69.

28. Rudolph, (1975) pp. 23-28.

29. Ibid. pp. 23-28.

30. While "regional parochialism" is often recognized, the Rudolphs point out that the "global" view also concentrates on one view and excludes other issues. (Ibid. p. 24). It must be emphasized that these are theoretical distinctions which are useful for the study of foreign policy. As such, we do not expect them to be true in all cases.

31. See Campbell, (1971) pp. 51-54. Another example of the confusion of regional and global issues is Kissinger's famous "tilt" toward Pakistan in 1971. This is generally speaking the theme of the Rudolph's book, The Regional Imperative, which we have referred to above. As the Rudolphs illustrate, Kissinger incorrectly understood the actions of India during this period as indicative of Soviet "meddling" and of serving Soviet interests.

32. Franz Schurmann, The Logic of World Power (New York: Pantheon Books) 1974.

33. Ibid. p. 12.

34. Ibid. p. 11.

35. Ibid. p. 21.

36. Morton H. Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy, (Washington D.C. The Brookings Institute.) 1974 pp. 67-68. Put another way, it can be said that the president has interests, with reference to foreign policy, other than the "national interest."

37. Franz Schurmann (1974) pp. 32-43 and pp. 100-107. We do not mean to suggest here that presidents merely use such themes in order to establish their authority. They are not contrived. As in the case described by Schurmann, Truman's concern with world stability, with world "chaos" was real, and his belief, which was strongly felt in the general public, that only the president could lead the struggle to maintain world stability, was genuine. However, there have been some cases where presidents have used the theme of "national security" to maintain policy control and secrecy. Nixon is a good example of this case. See David Wise, The Politics of Lying, Government Deception, Secrecy and Power (New York: Vintage Books,) 1973.

PART ONE

Prelude to the Carter
Approach

The Arab Israeli Dispute Becomes a Question of National Security

Often a policy which appears "new" or "innovative" turns out to be the outcome of a progressive series of changes that have taken place over several years. This was the case for the Carter administration, whose policy can be understood as the logical culmination of a process whereby a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was increasingly identified with the protection of American national security interests. To understand how this came about, we will first define these interests, then discuss how "global" and "regional" views, as found in the White House and State Department, competed following the 1967 war, and how ultimately, the 1973 war turned the Arab-Israeli dispute into a presidential-globalist concern.

We have suggested in the introduction that the central theme in American foreign policy since the late forties has been the search for world "stability" or security. This search was marked in the fifties and early sixties by the policy of containment, and later the concepts of detente and nuclear parity became prominent. The formation and maintenance of the Western Alliance, and the preservation of a liberal trading system and stable monetary order also have been part and parcel of this over-all goal of stability.² In the Middle East, we have sought to prevent the outbreak of war, contain Soviet influence, prevent an American-Soviet confrontation, and secure the flow of oil to the west.

Israel's rapid victory during the 1967 war convinced American policy-makers, particularly in the White House, that Israel's military superiority would prevent any Arab-Israeli conflict from escalating to a point where the U. S.'s security interests would

be put in jeopardy. For the quick six day victory made a Soviet-American confrontation unlikely, did not involve Western European interests, and was not the occasion of a successful oil embargo.³ Israel's military might had limited the scope of the war to regional issues. White House officials concluded from this that a strong Israel and the preservation of the status quo would best serve American interests.⁴

This view became intermeshed with the emerging "globalist" school on the Middle East. Its essential element is an emphasis on supporting Israel as a strong deterrent to Soviet influence which requires that Israel not be weakened militarily or forced to make territorial concessions. This school argues that any policy which involves pressuring Israel to relinquish territories, or which calls for selling large quantities of arms to the Arab states, will only encourage the Arabs to make unreasonable demands and the Soviets to support these demands in a bid for influence.⁵ Those in the White House and National Security Council who shared this view saw the outcome of the war as its justification and did not feel pressed to pursue a quick solution to the Arab-Israeli issue.

The "regionalist" view is identified more closely with the State Department and its "Arabist" block in its Near East South Asia Bureau. It is natural, William Quandt observes, that men who have studied and lived in the Middle East have developed an affinity for the Arabs and consequently view the Arab position on issues such as the Arab-Israeli question with sympathy.⁶ Thus the State Department has traditionally favored a more "even-handed policy" which would, it is argued, win the friendship of the Arab world,

weaken Soviet influence, and at the same time gain Israel a fair peace settlement consistent with its security needs.

But beyond the Arab-Israeli question, this school of thought has other important characteristics. John Badeau, a former American diplomat in the Middle East and author on the Arab world, believes that the U. S. should not view every occurrence in the Middle East through the lenses of Soviet-American rivalry. He argues, as do specialists of other regions, that we have often mistaken nationalist for pro-Soviet regimes and thereby ended up supporting unpopular, traditional forces. He writes:

The global objectives have not been sufficient to supply a detailed American foreign policy toward the Arab world. They have often set the mood of the American response to area problems, providing a frame of reference in which judgments on Soviet moves and Arab radical developments are made. One result has been at times to focus American attention and policy too narrowly on containing the Soviets and inhibiting revolutionary movements in the Arab world, without giving due weight to other factors in the situation. What is needed is a more specific definition of American interests in the area, which, while connected with and reflecting global objectives, are the immediate guideposts of a foreign policy.

Because the Nixon administration during its early days did not view the Middle East as a potential source of instability which could effect American interests, and because it was more absorbed in other issues such as Vietnam and strategic arms discussions, it left Mideast policy to the State Department. The department's regionalist views thus predominated, and a policy was soon defined which called for a return to the pre-1967 war borders, with only "minor territorial adjustments," the establishment of a contractual peace, the negotiation over Jerusalem, and the es-

establishment of a framework in which Jordan and Israel would determine the question of compensation or return of Palestinian refugees, subject to an Israeli veto over the number of refugees.⁸

This policy was announced by Secretary of State Rogers in December 1969 and subsequently became known as the "Rogers Plan." It reflected the State Department's interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242, the agreed upon framework for the establishment of an Arab-Israeli peace. It must be noted that the resolution was subject to two interpretations. While proclaiming the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force," and the "need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security," the resolution was intentionally vague on the degree of Israeli withdrawal, calling for "withdrawal...from territories occupied in the recent conflict."⁹ By omitting the word "the" before "territories," the wording permitted the Israelis to claim that they were not required to completely withdraw, while it let the Arabs claim the exact opposite. Furthermore, the resolution did not refer directly to the Palestinians, and spoke instead of the need for a "just settlement of the refugee problem." Later, when the Palestinian issue became more of a political issue, the Palestinians and specifically the P. L. O. would claim that a just basis for peace required the establishment of a Palestinian state and the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel or the West Bank.

Although the Rogers Plan endorsed an interpretation of Resolution 242 which was closer to the Arab understanding of the resolution than the Israeli one, the Arab states rejected peace talks, and the Israelis, as noted, rejected Roger's interpretation out-

right.¹⁰ But Rogers pursued his policy by holding Big-Four talks and bilateral discussions with the Soviets. At the same time he advocated holding off on arms sales to Israel. However, a series of events began to undermine State Department control over policy to the benefit of the White House--events which show how policy can move from the bureaucratic to the presidential realm. They began with President Nasser's "War of Attrition" in March 1969. The increasing Soviet involvement in the war, which rose dramatically between March and June 1970,¹¹ convinced both President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, chairman of the National Security Council, that the Soviet Union was manipulating the war in order to destabilize the region and extend its influence. Kissinger spoke, somewhat dramatically, of the necessity to "expel" the Soviets. He warned that the "Eastern Mediterranean might become a Soviet lake."¹² At the same time, Kissinger began to extend greater White House control over American Mideast policy and suggested, to Roger's chagrin, that the U. S. would consider Israel's request, dating back to January 1970, for some 45 Phantom and eighty Skyhawk planes. Finally, in July 1970 a cease-fire was obtained, a breathing space which Kissinger hoped would reduce or halt Soviet expansionism. The secretary of state by contrast looked forward to reasserting State Department control. By September, clear evidence of Egyptian infringement of the cease-fire terms thrust a suspicious Kissinger back into the process. Roger's desire to get the peace process moving again was thwarted.

The coup de grace came in September 1970 with the onset of the civil war in Jordan between the Palestinians and King Hussein's regime. Israel's willingness to intervene when Syrian tanks crossed

the Syrian-Jordanian border was communicated to King Hussein by the Americans. Israel's general coordination of policies and actions with the U. S. convinced Nixon that, in the words of Nadav Safran, "a strong Israel" had played a major role in the "first successful attempt to call a halt to the Soviet drive" in the Middle East.¹³ It was from this point, as Safran stresses, that White House globalist views began to predominate and Kissinger asserted his authority over Mideast policy.¹⁴ Rogers' peace proposals were relegated to the background and Israel assumed a key role in American Mideast policy. Even Sadat's decision to expel his Soviet advisors in July 1972, and his cancellation of the May 1971 Soviet-Egyptian treaty of "friendship and cooperation," was seen by the White House as confirmation of the globalist view. It held that a strong Israel would deter Soviet influence and compel the Arabs eventually to negotiate.¹⁵

The October 1973 war overturned American assumptions and stood the globalist-view on its head. The central assumption -- that Israel could win a major war in a short time and thus limit its scope to regional issues -- proved wrong. The war, which lasted nearly three weeks, involved several major threats to American national and security interests. First and foremost, the Saudi oil embargo and the subsequent quadrupling of oil prices threatened western economic stability and further aggravated an unstable monetary regime.¹⁶ Second, the war involved the possibility of American-Soviet confrontation and, as was later discovered, posed the danger that Israel might introduce nuclear weapons into the conflict.¹⁷ And third, the war further aggravated problems among the allies, as Western Europe, heavily

dependent on Arab oil, distanced itself from American Mideast policies and refused to assist in the rearming of Israel.¹⁸

Franz Schurmann has written that "policies are...more often ...adopted from a sense of threat to what exists."¹⁹ The October war, by threatening world stability, produced an abrupt change in American Mideast policy. Kissinger, shocked and dismayed by the oil embargo, and shaken by the events of the war, decided it was time to abandon the status quo and begin movement towards Arab-Israeli reconciliation. In the days and months ahead, he pursued a determined effort to bring about several interim withdrawal agreements. The effort began in Geneva on December 21, 1973, where the foreign ministers of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the United States and the Soviet Union gathered under the auspices of the United Nations.

Kissinger initially expected that negotiations would be handled in a comprehensive, "United Nations" framework. But when Sadat invited him to begin more limited "interim" negotiations, he jumped at the opportunity to play "middle man" in a series of negotiations which would permit him to exclude the Russians from a substantive role. The result of his now famous "shuttle diplomacy" was three interim agreements, the first between Egypt and Israel in January 1974, the second between Israel and Syria in May 1974, and the third between Egypt and Israel in September 1975.

To what extent did Kissinger conceive of these negotiations as aimed at a comprehensive peace? The evidence suggests that his goal was some kind of eventual agreement which would "comprehend"

all of the countries which were party to the conflict. By pursuing bilateral interim agreements, he was able to isolate the various issues and deal with each one separately, thereby avoiding a "Geneva" type conference. He explained to the Israelis that at such a conference, the Jewish state would be out-numbered and probably receive an unfavorable agreement. But he was willing to put enormous pressure on Israel to keep up the momentum, as evidenced by the Ford administration's March 1975 "reassessment" of relations with Israel. It was during this period that the administration considered a return to the Geneva framework. Kissinger himself warned the Israelis that if they would not cooperate in achieving another interim agreement with Egypt, he would adopt a less advantageous path. Interim agreements were thus a means towards a comprehensive settlement which in March 1975 remained undefined. Kissinger told the Israelis:

I don't see how there can be another American initiative in the near future. We may have to to Geneva for a multilateral effort with the Soviets -- something which for five years we've felt did not offer the best hope for success...We've attempted to reconcile our support for you with our other interests in the Middle East, so that you wouldn't have to make your decisions all at once. Our strategy was to save you from dealing with all those pressures all at once...We've avoided drawing up an overall plan for a global settlement.²⁰

While Kissinger did not announce publicly any outline of a "global settlement," it became clear the Ford Administration was moving in the direction of a more comprehensive view, one which included a greater emphasis on the Palestinian question. As early as June 1973, at the Washington Summit, President Nixon agreed to issue a joint Soviet-American communique which called

for a recognition of the "legitimate interests" of the Palestinians.²¹ Several months later, Kissinger stated that "some relationship will have to be found between the rights of the Palestinians...and the limitations of absorption in the mandated territory of Palestine."²² Following this, at the Moscow Summit in July 1974, the U. S. and the Soviet Union issued another communique calling for recognition of the "legitimate interests of all people...including the Palestinians."²³ And President Ford three months later indicated at a news conference that the PLO might play a role in the negotiations, although he suggested a preference for Jordan to represent the Palestinians.²⁴ This statement was important, because it came one day after the Rabat Arab Summit declared the PLO the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." One could thus infer that the U. S. might be willing to accept the decisions of the conference.

Over-all, this series of events, particularly the issuing of the two joint Soviet-American communiqués, illustrated the degree to which the Arab-Israeli conflict had become an important issue in global politics. The communiqués demonstrated the willingness of the Soviet Union and the United States to come to some kind of accommodation on the formula of a settlement, an accommodation which might prevent the two powers from being drawn into another Mideast conflict.

While the desire to avoid the danger of another Arab-Israeli war was the broad reason for the Ford administration's increased attention to the Palestinians, there was in late 1975 a more immediate explanation -- the splits in the Arab world that resulted from the Egyptian-Israeli interim agreement of September

1975. Syria and the PLO's bitter attack on Sadat convinced the administration, as Itamar Rabinovich observes, that interim agreements would only divide the Arabs and isolate moderate forces. "The conclusion," he writes, "which seems to have been drawn in Washington during the last quarter of 1975...was that American policy had to be reoriented so as to accommodate Syria and to address the Palestinian issue."²⁵

Accordingly, Kissinger told Arab delegates to the United Nations on September 29, 1975 that he would "begin to refine his thinking on how the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people could be met."²⁶ In a similar vein, he told the UN General Assembly that the U. S. would support not only an Israeli-Syrian interim agreement or a reconvened Geneva conference, but also a "more informal multilateral meeting to assess conditions and to discuss the future."²⁷ That Kissinger was looking for some method of involving the PLO in negotiations became even clearer when he suggested that "if the PLO accepted SC Resolution 242...that would still leave as much room for bargaining as there is between the Arab states that have accepted 242 and Israel."²⁸ It should be noted here that Kissinger's suggestion that the PLO might participate in negotiations subject to its acceptance of SC Resolution 242 was consistent with the agreement he made with the Israelis. Appended to the Sinai Interim Agreement of May 1974, it committed the U. S. not to negotiate with the PLO unless it recognized Israel's right to exist and accepted 242. Nor, Kissinger promised, would the U. S. alter the terms of 242, a matter on which the Israelis were very sensitive.²⁹

By far the most dramatic indication of a change in the ad-

ministration's policy on the Palestinian issue came on December 1, 1975, when Harold Saunders, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, testified before the U. S. House of Representatives. In what later became known as the "Saunders Document," Saunders stressed that the Palestinian issue was the "heart" of the Arab-Israeli conflict, that the issue had to be dealt with, that the Rabat Summit in October 1974 had recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians, and that a way had to be found to represent Palestinian interests.³⁰ Later Kissinger denied ever having seen the document and dismissed it as an "academic exercise."³¹ But as William Quandt, who was then working in the State Department, wrote, Kissinger had indeed gone over the document and had cleared it with the president.³²

The Return of the State Department?

The controversy surrounding the Saunders document would itself make an interesting study of bureaucratic policy-making. For our purposes, it is important to note that the document represented the prevailing view among State Department officials. As Harold Saunders explained to me, the statement that the Palestinian issue was the "heart" of the Arab-Israeli conflict derived its meaning and significance from the belief that a solution to the conflict would have to be found in a return to the general provisions of the United Nation's General Assembly Resolution 181 of November 1947 -- which provided that Palestine was to be partitioned into two states, one Jewish and the other Palestinian.³³ Furthermore, since the Rabat Summit of October 1974 had declared the PLO the representative of the Palestinians,

and since King Hussein of Jordan had accepted this, the U. S. had little choice but to try to bring the PLO into the negotiating process. This view, held by most State Department Arabists, was bolstered by the wide-spread belief in the Near East and South Asia Bureau that the PLO's largest faction, al-Fatah, was essentially pragmatic and nationalist, rather than radical or ideologically committed to the Soviet Union. And this familiar regionalist view had been given scholarly backing by Willian Quandt, who argued in his book, The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism,³⁴ that al-Fatah no longer called for the expulsion of all Jews from Palestine as a precondition of its "liberation" and the establishment of a "democratic, secular Palestinian state." The implication was that slowly, al-Fatah was moderating its stand towards Israel. Quandt, who served as an advisor in the State Department during the Ford Administration, took his analysis one step further when he became the NSC's Mideast expert in 1976. He now argued, along with his colleague Harold Saunders, that al-Fatah was "moderate" and prepared to live in peace with Israel. Furthermore, both believed that with the proper inducements, al-Fatah could be "brought into the American camp."³⁵

None of this was, of course, explicitly spelled out in the Saunders Document, whose language was vague and evasive. But its allusions to the PLO, that it was "the principal organization of the Palestinian groups," that it should state its "readiness to accept the existence of Israel...", that the "Rabat Summit recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," and numerous other similar statements, pro-

vided the State Department with an opportunity to state its case-- however obliquely. Had the Department then reaffirmed its control over policy? The answer is both yes and no. Kissinger's well-known monopoly over decision-making permitted him to pursue the interim agreements-- often to the displeasure of lower echelon State Department officials who favored a more "comprehensive" approach. ³³ And both Kissinger's and the president's statements on the Arab-Israeli issue, as well as the joint Soviet-American communiqués in 1973 and 1974, indicated the degree to which the administration had become involved Mideast policy. But because Kissinger's globalist views now held that a more even-handed approach was necessary to secure American interests, and because these views coincided to a degree with the views of the State Department, the Department was able to exercise a greater degree of influence. And having decided in late 1975 to pursue a more comprehensive policy, the Department's view that the PLO, or a part of it, was "moderate" certainly added some justification and hope for a more global policy. This itself was a good example of how events in the international realm--the 73 war, and the subsequent change in policy at the White House--could reinforce one group in the bureaucracy. However, by 1976 an election was approaching and the Ford Administration was not keen to pursue a more activist policy. Still, the administration had paved the way for a more comprehensive approach by focusing attention on the Palestinians. Furthermore, two of the key players in the State Department, Quandt and Saunders, would play central role when the Carter administration came to office. They were, to an extent, the links between the Ford and Carter administrations.

Footnotes - Part 1 -- Prelude to the Carter Administration

1. See Charles Kegley Jr. and Eugene Wittkopff (1979). The theme of their book, American Foreign Policy, Pattern and Process, is that American foreign policy goals have remained largely the same since the late forties, although the means used to achieve these goals have varied. The overall goal, they argue, has been the maintenance of world stability and American "globalism."
2. Franz Schurmann notes one of the main concerns of U. S. officials during the onset of the Cold War was to maintain world stability and prevent the out-break of another world war. This objective was often pursued at the expense of what many Americans believed was our own economic interest. See The Logic of World Power, (New York: Pantheon Books 2974), p. 42.
3. William Quandt stresses the large effect Israel's victory had on President Johnson and his advisors in his book Decade of Decisions, American Policy Toward the Arab Israeli Conflict 1967-1976 (Berkeley: University of California Press 1977), pp. 61-62.
4. There was some attempt to achieve an oil embargo during the 1967 war, but the effort was not a united one and most importantly the West was not heavily dependent on Arab oil and could buy from other sources. Consequently the embargo had no effect.
5. A rather extreme example of these views may be found in Joseph Churba's The Politics of Defeat, America's Decline in the Middle East. (New York: Cyro Press 1977) Churba, a former Pentagon official, stressed that Israel and Iran were the two pillars of Western power in the Middle East and the main protectors of American interest. (This was written before the fall of the Shah.) His views illustrate one source of support for Israel in the Defense Department, although there is another camp which argues that America's interests may be best served by a closer relationship with the conservative Arab states and less support of Israel.
6. Quandt, (1977) pp. 25-26. Also see Joseph Kraft, "Those Arabists in the State Department," New York Times Magazine, November 7, 1971. He points out that under Joseph Sisco, the Near East bureau brought in a more diverse group of people who were less identified with the State Department's traditional Arabist block. For a critical analysis of Arabist views which is well written yet simplistic and exaggerated, see Gil Carl Alroy's Behind the Middle East Conflict, The Real Impasse Between Arab and Jew (New York: Capricorn Books 1975).
7. John S. Badeau's book is a well written statement of the Arabist view. See The American Approach to the Arab World (New York: Harper and Row 1968) p. 20. A fine theoretical study of the relationship between systems structure and area study of the Middle East is found in Leonard Binder's "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System" in World Politics Volume

X April 1958. He emphasizes that Mideast states pursue their own goals and that it is "unlikely that an extra-area state can compel a Middle Eastern state to serve extra-area interests" p. 419. Although written in 1958, his conclusions are very much valid today.

8. One study that goes into considerable detail over bureaucratic politics and the Middle East in Lawrence Wineman's "American Peace Making in the Middle East 1969-1970." MA Thesis, The University of Chicago, Fall 1977.

9. See "The 'November Resolution' and Middle East Peace - Pitfall or Guidepost?" by Julius Stone, in John Norton Moore, (Ed.) The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Readings and Documents (Princeton University Press 1977) pp. 689-715.

10. Israel's rejection of the proposal was based on its refusal to accept any imposed solution, as Golda Meir explained to Secretary of State Rogers. See her autobiography My Life (New York: Putnum's 1975) pp. 382-383. Israel was also determined to redefine the borders and not return to the June 5, 1967 lines. The Arab states insisted on complete Israeli withdrawal as a precondition for talks.

11. In March 1970 there were 60-80 Soviet pilots in Egypt, 400 military personnel and scores of Soviet SAM missile deployments. By June the number of Soviet pilots had rises to 100-150, 4,000 Soviets manning the missile sights, and an additional 2,500-4,000 other military personnel. See Strategic Survey, 1970, quoted in Weinman p. 109. For a fine study of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship from June 1967 through 1975 see Alvin Z. Rubenstein's Red Star on the Nile (Princeton University Press 1977).

12. See Marvin and Bernard Kalb's Kissinger, (New York: Dell 1975) p. 222 and p. 122. This is the "semi-official" biography of Kissinger. It is to be read with several large grains of salt.

13. Nadav Safran, Israel, The Embattled Ally (Cambridge: Belknap Press 1978) p. 455.

14. Safran calls the 1970-73 period (until the October war) the period of "The Israeli-American Partnership." (1978) pp. 448-475.

15. Ibid. p. 468 and pp. 464-465.

16. The oil question was, as Safran says, the "crucial role in Kissinger's calculations." (1978) p. 486.

17. Kissinger was determined to prevent Israel from attaining such a large victory that it would humiliate the Arab states and make negotiations impossible, as in 1967. He thus stalled on Israeli requests for new arms supplies. But he in fact went overboard and added to a sense of real desperation in Israel. Sometime around October 10, 1973, Golda Meir sent Kissinger a note warning that, "If the U. S. did not begin immediately to resupply (Israel) on a massive scale, it might soon be forced to use every means at its disposal to ensure its national survival." Safran (1978) p. 483. Also see Walter Laqueur, Confrontation: The Middle East War and World Politics (London 1974).

- 17b. Israel broke the cease-fire on October 23 and attempted to destroy or further weaken Egypt's Third Army. The Soviets threatened to intervene and Nixon ordered a world-wide alert.
18. See Safran (1978) p. 497. And Laqueur (1974) pp. 253-266.
19. Schurmann (1975) p. 20.
20. Edward Sheehan, The Arabs, Israelis and Kissinger (New York: Readers Digest Press, 1976) pp. 160-162.
21. See Augustus R. Norton's "Moscow and the Palestinians," in Michael Curtis and Joseph Neyer, (Eds.) The Palestinians (New Jersey: Transaction Books 1975) p. 230.
22. Department of State Bulletin, 1800 LXIX (24 December 1973) pp. 756-8. Quoted in Mohammed Shadid The U. S. and the Palestinians (New York: St. Martin's Press 1981) p. 101.
23. "Joint U. S.-Soviet Communique Dealing with the Middle East, Issued at the End of President Richard Nixon's Visit to Moscow, 3 July 1974" Special Report No. 12 Washington D. C. Department of State p. 17. Quoted in Ran Marom's The Development of U. S. Policy on the Palestine Issue October 1973-November 1976 (Tel Aviv, Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University 1978) p. 5.
24. "The President's News Conference of 19 October 1974," Public Papers of the Presidents of the U. S. Gerald R. Ford, 1974. Washington D. C.: GPO, p. 485. In Maron (1978) p. 5.
25. See Itamar Rabinovich, "The Challenge of Diversity: American Policy and the System of Inter-Arab Relations, 1973-1977," in Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich (Eds.) The Middle East and the United States, Perceptions and Policies. (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1980) p. 189.
26. See Quandt (1977) p. 276. He quotes Kissinger from Press Release, Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, September 29, 1975 p. 276.
27. Quoted in Toward Peace in the Middle East, The Brookings Institution, Washington D. C. 1975.
28. "Secretary Kissinger's News Conference at Pittsburg, 12 November," Bulletin, Vol. 73 No. 1901 (1 December 1975) pp. 795-796. In Mamon (1978) p. 7.
29. See Mamon (1978) pp. 6-7.
30. United States House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Special Subcommittee on Investigations. The Palestinian Issue in the Middle East Peace Efforts. Hearings Before the Special Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on International Relations, 30 September, 1, 3 October and 12

November 1975. in Maron pp. 7-11. Also Quandt (1977) p. 278.

31. See Quandt (1977) p. 278.

32. Ibid. Quandt p. 278.

33. I interviewed Saunders as part of my research for my Bachelors Essay, The United States and the Palestinians (BA Thesis Indiana University, April 1978). The interview was held in December 1977, and part of it was devoted to the perception of the Palestinians and the PLO among State Department officials. I also interviewed William Quandt on the same day. Both officials stressed that the "lower echelon" officials in the State Department had been urging for some time that the U. S. take a more pragmatic attitude toward the PLO and that the PLO's relationship with the Soviet Union did not imply the PLO was at heart pro-Soviet. By 1976, I was told, a more "realistic" attitude towards radical nationalism had been adopted by higher echelon officials.

34. See William B. Quandt, Fuad Jabber, Ann Mosely Lesch, The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1974). See Quandt's chapter, "Ideology and Objectives," pp. 94-111. Especially pages 102-103.

35. Both Quandt and Saunders made it clear to me during our interviews that they believed that al-Fatah was prepared to live in peace with Israel. They believed, furthermore, that al-Fatah could be lured into the American camp through promises of support for a Palestinian state which would receive both Saudi and American economic backing. This view was shared by most of their colleagues in the State Department.

36. Much of the information for Edward Sheehan's original article and his subsequent book The Arabs, Israelis and Kissinger (1976) was furnished by disgruntled State Department officials who were not happy over the "step-by-step" negotiations.

PART TWO

The Carter Approach

The Brookings Report -- A Sound Beginning?

To understand the Carter administration's policy on the Arab-Israeli issue, one must examine the document which served as its foundation. Towards Peace in the Middle East, published in December 1975, was the product of six meetings of some of the country's leading authorities on the Middle East, as well as diplomats, lawyers, and educators concerned with the area.¹ Presumably, the recommendations of this group, which were arrived at in relative seclusion, through the kind of "deliberative coordination" necessary for sound, long-range planning, would provide an intellectual foundation so often lacking in policy analysis. Absent from the group's deliberations was the kind of bureaucratic haggling and bargaining which often plagues decision-making. In addition, the six month period over which the meetings were held offered ample time for reflection. There was of course intellectual bargaining and compromise, but of a less "political" character than found in the bureaucratic realm.

Indeed, several of the report's authors stressed that they did not consider it a "campaign document or a program for a new administration."² They conceived of it as an "academic exercise" whose object was to discover whether a group of 16 men and women with diverse views on the Arab-Israeli issue could come up with a "consensus report" for a peace settlement.³ Yet whatever the original intent, when the report was issued it had a large impact on the political leaders in the United States, the Middle East, and the Soviet Union, where it was read with interest by the Kremlin's Mideast experts.⁴ It therefore "took on a life of its own" which surprised many of its authors, and which provided two

of them, William Quandt and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who took major positions in the Carter White House, with the opportunity to urge its adoption as the administration's plan for a settlement. One assumes -- unlike several of their other colleagues in the study group -- that these two men conceived of the Brookings Report in a more political way and had hoped that it would have an effect on the up-coming administration. Aware that it was an election year, and assuming they were no different from most ambitious policy intellectuals, they more than likely had originally given some thought to the possibility of its adoption as policy.

Before evaluating the report, it would be useful to summarize its recommendations. The report recommends a comprehensive peace treaty to be negotiated at a "general conference or at more informal multilateral meetings."⁵ It should be based on Israeli withdrawal by "agreed stages," to the June 5, 1967 lines with only "such modifications as are mutually accepted."⁶ In return, Israel and the Arab states would establish a contractual peace, which, it is emphasized several times, should provide for "progress toward the development of normal international and regional political and economic relations."⁷ The treaty should provide for the creation of either a Palestinian state on the West Bank, or "entity" tied to Jordan, which would provide for the absorption of Palestinian refugees. The report notes the Rabat summit of 1974 authorized the PLO to represent the Palestinians but that the PLO refuses to recognize Israel. It also notes that Jordan may have a claim to represent the Palestinians on the West Bank and Jordan. Several options are thus suggested: PLO representation, providing it accepts Israel's right to exist and resolution 242; a Jordanian

delegation and/or West Bank-Jordanian delegation; or a combination of the above. On the question of Jerusalem, the report makes no specific final recommendations, although it says that any agreement should provide for open access to all holy places, substantial political autonomy for the various groups and the assurance that no physical barriers would be erected in the city.

As to the issue of Big Power guarantees and the question of Soviet participation at a Geneva conference, the report observes that if the Soviet Union were to be excluded from the conference, it might complicate or obstruct any proceedings by encouraging its clients, Syria and the PLO, to make unreasonable demands.⁸ The better alternative, the report says, is to invite the Soviets to sit as cochairmen in "preparing and conducting negotiations."⁹ This, it is suggested, would force them to act responsibly, while the U. S., because it enjoyed a measure of trust by both sides and had the financial means to back up a settlement, would be the "great power best fitted actively to work" with all the parties.¹⁰ Implicit was the idea, as one author put it, that the "U. S. would gain most politically" while Soviet influence would be minimized. This is an issue to which we will return later.

There are two questions which we must answer in assessing the report. First, did the advantageous conditions in which it was devised actually produce sound recommendations, based on well thought-out premises, or were the report's conclusions based on short-range considerations which might provide too narrow a framework for policy? Second, and flowing from the first, was the report intended to be a detailed plan for policy, or rather was it a very general blue-print meant to be supplemented later by

further in depth analysis?

The answer to the first question must begin with the observation that the report's conclusions were drawn primarily from the results of the October war and the subsequent growth of the oil-producing nations' financial power. "The war," the report says, has "increasingly brought home to the American government...the far reaching U. S. stake in peace in the Middle East."¹¹ "Renewed hostilities," it warns, would have far reaching and perilous consequences which would threaten" American interests (emphasis mine).¹² These interests are listed as follows: First, the prevention of another war in the Middle East and a Soviet-American confrontation which might result from such a war. Second, the maintenance of the security and friendship of both the Arab states and Israel. Third, the "unimpeded flow of Mideast oil." Fourth, the "growing trade, investment, and communication with...the area" (the Persian Gulf states). And fifth, the need to establish "greater global stability and to help manage the growing economic interdependence among nations."

The underlining theme of these five points is oil. But it was not simply the threat of another oil embargo and the harmful effect it would have on a heavily dependent West Europe and Japan that concerned the report's authors. Presumably, the "perilous threat" extended beyond this danger or that of a Soviet-American confrontation, to the problem of how another oil embargo or further oil price hikes would effect the stability of the international monetary system. By 1975 the OPEC nations' huge petrodollar surplus funds were being "recycled" into western banks and into Third World countries in the form of long term loans,

creating a precarious web of international lending and investment. Price hikes would create more world-dollar inflation and thus destabilize a shakey regime of floating exchange rates.¹³ In this sense the West's economic and political stability was tied to the Arab-Israeli question, and could only be assured, it is stressed, by an "early end" to the conflict. The matter, the report states, was one of "urgency" and had to be dealt with quickly,¹⁴ the logical solution being a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.

While fear of another Arab-Israeli war or further oil price hikes was the primary reason for advocating a global settlement, a second reason was the belief that further interim settlements were no longer possible. This conclusion was drawn from recriminations and attacks between Egypt, Syria, and the PLO following the Egyptian-Israeli Interim Agreement of September 1975. They had demonstrated, the report concluded, that interim agreements only provoked "tension and disorder" and "public division" among the Arabs, thus assuring that further interim agreements would be disrupted.¹⁵ Finally, the report notes that Congress was not happy over the large amount of aid promised Egypt and Israel following their September 1975 agreement, and was unsure over the promise Kissinger had made to provide an American civilian peace-keeping force for the Sinai. Congress was unwilling to make such large commitments for "another very limited step," although, the report emphasized, it might be willing to commit further American aid of substantial amounts for a more promising and long-term agreement.¹⁶

The report was thus very much concerned with and influenced

by problems which had arisen during the period of its writing -- the latter half of 1975. The fear of another war or another oil embargo, the growing influence of the OPEC nations, concern over future oil price hikes, and the apparent breakdown of the peace process, all combined to produce a sense of urgency, a sense that time itself was running out. And this mood of crisis encouraged the authors of the report to jump to a series of conclusions without subjecting them to rigorous questioning. The report did, as we shall discuss in a moment, outline briefly some of the problems involved in a comprehensive settlement. But many of the major assumptions guiding the report seem doubtful and do require some minimal evaluation. Was, for example, the oil situation in 1975 a short or long-term problem? As Elie Kedourie asks in a cogent analysis of the report, would the economic problems associated with petrodollars be solved as a result of a peace settlement?¹⁷ Were the divisions among the Arab states simply the result of the interim agreement or were there more basic differences which required consideration? Would a Geneva conference provide the most radical participants with a veto-power over the moderates, thus blocking any progress? Were oil prices in fact linked to a solution of the Arab-Israeli dispute? These and other questions are barely touched, a reflection of the time constraints under which the authors believed they were laboring.

Of all these short-comings, the lack of any detailed analysis of the differences among the Arab states about a peace settlement is the most surprising. Having concluded that Syria and the PLO would obstruct further "step-by-step" agreements, and having placed primary responsibility for the divisions among the Arab

states on the results of the September 1975 Interim Agreement, the report proceeds to treat the Arab world as one monolithic entity. There is some minimal discussion of the respective positions of the PLO and Jordan, but nowhere does the report ask how the different strategic calculations and objectives of each Arab state might effect the peace process. What, if any, were the differences between Egypt and Syria on Palestinian representation and an eventual Palestinian entity? How did the various Arab countries view Soviet participation in the negotiating process? Apparently these differences were expected to disappear or be minimized by the pursuit of a comprehensive settlement.

Several of the authors suggested that such a detailed analysis was not possible given the short length of the report. But then neither were these issues given much attention during the discussions! And certainly a page or two might have been found to examine these questions?

What explains these gaps in analysis? In part they were a reflection of the time constraints under which the authors believed they were laboring. The report, as we noted above, is characterized by a sense of urgency, by a concern that another Mideast war would erupt and damage American security interests. These fears must have been increased by the unstable situation in the Middle East during the writing of the report. Tensions between Israel and her Arab neighbors were high, most dramatically along the Syrian-Israeli cease-fire lines in the Golan Heights, where a mini-war of attrition continued during 1975. This situation most likely sharpened the perception of crisis with which the report's authors viewed the Arab-Israeli issue, narrowed the

perceived alternatives and simplified a complex issue. This simplification excluded some of the complexities of the regional issues and as such created a basically globalist view of the Middle East.

A second explanation flows from the one above. Even though the report's authors met in a private "think-tank" supposedly removed from political pressures which might skew their vision, politics and role playing were present. Meeting in a policy oriented institute such as Brookings, during an election year in which such a report -- to the knowledge of at least some of its authors -- would have a political impact, the authors adopted the role of presidential policy intellectuals concerned with global strategy. As such, they focused not on the complexities of the Middle East, but on a solution which would, they believed, secure American interests and suit a presidential policy.

These considerations suggest that Halperin is not correct when he states that the "character of the alternatives available to a leader...differs significantly from the character of alternatives presented by a team of five disinterested experts."¹⁸ There is no such thing as a purely "disinterested expert." Roles intrude everywhere. Furthermore, even in the more "advantageous" surroundings of Brookings, "deliberative coordination" and long range planning proved elusive. Indeed, many of the group's decisions reflected Rosenau's dictum that policy-makers "select some alternative, clear-cut or confused, as the course of action that seems most likely to cope with the immediate situation."¹⁹

Looking back on the Brookings Report, both Quandt and Brzezinski now feel that its "undifferentiated" view of the Arab

world was a serious flaw. But while the report did have several short-comings, it did briefly discuss some of the structural problems associated with a comprehensive peace and ways to minimize them. For example, it recognized that "a general conference might simply reproduce a polemical, UN type of general debate," which would "quickly deadlock."²⁰ To get around this problem, the report suggested holding multilateral meetings or a more informal conference to discuss some of the problems before the formal discussions. It also recommended dividing the conference into separate committees, each "charged with negotiating each of the main issues."²¹ The objective, as one of the authors wrote, was to prevent a break-down in one area from creating a domino effect which would stale-mate the conference. For this reason the report recommended putting off difficult issues such as PLO participation to a later point in the conference. In addition, it suggested that as the "process proceeds, new and unexpected interim steps may become feasible," while it stressed that the entire process would require patience and a great deal of time.²²

The report was thus imprecise on the question of implementation and left several options open. As Spiegel notes, "because of its studied ambiguity...the importance of the report for later policy depended entirely on the people who were charged with implementing ideas that had been developed between October 1973 and November 1976."²³ Whether Spiegel exaggerates by suggesting that the report's importance depended "entirely" on those who would implement it is an issue we will take up later, but he is correct in as much as the report offered some general guidelines or a framework which would require considerable fleshing out later.

The report then was very much a two-headed beast. One head saw crisis everywhere and called for a quick dash into the thicket without much consideration of the terrain. The other head urged caution and more reflection. Which portion of the beast Carter would emphasize was very much up to him. As we shall see, the new administration believed itself even more constrained by time than the previous one, a perception which paved the way for the "Carter approach."

Brzezinski and the Trilateralists

We have suggested that the events of the 1973 war and the subsequent growth of the oil producing nations' power created a sense of urgency which induced the Nixon and Ford administrations to pursue a more ambitious Arab-Israeli policy. Yet while Kissinger's actions during the Ford administration pointed towards a more comprehensive approach, an approach based on the premise that a continuation of the conflict would threaten American interests, his actions lacked a broader theoretical framework within which Mideast policy could be analyzed and a more coherent approach devised. The Carter administration had just such a framework which reflected the views of its Advisor on National Security and Chairman of the National Security Council, Zbigniew Brzezinski. It is to his views that we now turn, in order to understand the way in which the administration implemented the Brookings Report.

Brzezinski was primarily concerned with the increasing importance of global interdependence, a subject which was receiving greater attention by the modernist school of international relations during the early seventies.²⁴ In his book, Between Two

Ages, America's Role in the Technetronic Age, and in several articles,²⁵ Brzezinski outlined his views of what he believed to be a changing international system. Invoking the language of "interdependence," he argued that the world's "revolution," in communications and technology, and a high degree of economic interdependence, had created a kind of "global city," a "new pattern of international politics," in which "the world is ceasing to be an arena" of "relatively self-contained sovereign nations."²⁶ This development, he warned, contained the seeds of a "contagious spread of global anarchy,"²⁷ of "international chaos,"²⁸ and "crisis."²⁹

This crisis stemmed from the growing importance of economic issues and their politicization, both in the Third World and in the West. In the developing countries, Brzezinski argued, an increasing emphasis on economic welfare had confronted leaders not simply with a "revolution of rising expectations," but the "specter of insatiable aspirations."³⁰ These aspirations were fed by global advancements in communication and education which made Third World peoples only more aware of the possibilities of economic advancement and thus increased their sense of "psychological deprivation."³¹ These developments would have several outcomes. First, Third World peoples would make increasing demands on their leaders, demands which would express themselves in revolutionary movements to topple the status quo and in a general wave of political instability. This in turn would generate regional instability in areas such as the Middle East or the Horn of Africa, which Brzezinski warned "could have the same effect on American-Soviet relations as the Balkan conflicts had on the

European order prior to World War I.³² Finally, Brzezinski believed that Third World leaders would have no choice but to respond to the needs of their peoples by demanding from the industrialized countries a more equitable distribution of the world's wealth.

The West's response to an increasingly unstable Third World depended, Brzezinski suggested, on its ability to first put its own house in order. But the industrialized nations' growing economic interdependence exacerbated problems among the allies and made cooperation difficult. Increasing trade and capital movements had made individual domestic economies highly sensitive to other national economies, a development which had led to a rise in protectionism and what Brzezinski viewed as a dangerous revival of nationalism.³³ With some amount of exaggeration he wrote that the industrialized countries had to "terminate the civil war that has dominated international relations among the developed nations for the last one hundred and fifty years."³⁴ Otherwise, he warned, the "advanced nations may themselves become the victims of an increasingly widespread social anomie, while alliance relations could even atrophy."³⁵

The events of the 1973 war -- the specter of super-power confrontation, the oil embargo and the subsequent quadrupling of oil prices -- seemed to confirm Brzezinski's worst fears. Most importantly, the embargo reinforced his impression that the nature of the international system itself was changing. Power, traditionally conceived in terms of military might, was now challenged by new forms of economic power which could be used for political purposes. Thus Brzezinski warned that America's "emerging vul-

nerability to resource shortages in several areas of key importance," and the Third World's demand for a "New International Economic Order (NIEO)," tabled in the United Nations in 1973, pointed towards one conclusion -- that the "global distribution of power (is) beginning to favor" the Third World.³⁶ "The American system," he wrote, "is compelled gradually to accommodate itself to this emerging international context,"³⁷ lest it become "isolated" in a "hostile world."³⁸ The year 1973 was then in Brzezinski's eyes the beginning of a new era in international relations:

1973 was the year in which for the first time the new nations -- the Afro-Asian nations... inflicted a political reversal on the advanced world... In some respects, if 1945 was the beginning of the existing international system, 1973 marked the beginning of its end and hopefully the beginning of its renovations and readjustment.³⁹

How would the United States respond to the Third World challenge? Brzezinski had several recommendations. First, the U. S. had to take a more pragmatic view of revolutionary change regardless of the "radical" or Marxist ideology that accompanied it. The U. S. would have to move away from supporting the status quo to supporting more progressive forces, in such a way as to channel "change"...in constructive directions...To shape... change, in directions that preserve our interests."⁴⁰ Second, Brzezinski stressed that the U. S. should take an active role in resolving regional conflicts before they escalated to a point where the super-powers might be drawn into a confrontation. Seizing upon the lesson of the 1973 war, he urged that regional conflicts be "preempted" -- through negotiation with the Soviets --

before they took on global significance. Third, Brzezinski argued that the U. S. had to continue a policy of detente with the Soviet Union in order to reach agreements on areas of common interest, such as strategic arms limitations. But American policy would have to abandon its exclusive concern with Soviet-American or bi-polar relations and emphasize instead the diverse issues in the new international environment.⁴² "The real danger," he explained, "is not Soviet domination but anarchy."⁴³ It was necessary to deal with all sources of world instability -- world hunger, economic interdependence, environmental problems -- to shape what became known in academic and policy circles as a "world order policy."⁴⁴

In order to develop such a policy and give it an institutionalized basis, Brzezinski proposed the creation of an international organization in which Western Europe (particularly Germany), Japan and the United States would cooperate in an endeavor to resolve problems among themselves and to deal with the challenges and problems from the Third World.⁴⁵ In 1973 Brzezinski and David Rockefeller, president of Chase Manhattan Bank, made Brzezinski's dream a reality with the establishment of the Tri-lateral Commission in New York City, which Brzezinski directed from 1973-1976. Its membership included diplomats, lawyers, academics and a large number of businessmen, underlining the organization's stress on economic issues.⁴⁶ But of all the issues it dealt with, energy and oil were the most important ones, the focus of the commission's attention. In order to secure a steady flow of oil and to prevent further destabilization of the western economic system, the commission emphasized the need to cooperate with,

rather than oppose, who Brzezinski called the "new influentials" -- the oil producing nations.⁴⁷ The objective, wrote Tom Farer (who later became special assistant to the assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs at State in the Carter administration) in 1975, was to co-opt the OPEC leaders, particularly those in Saudi Arabia, into the western economic and financial system.⁴⁸ By doing so, argued Charles Maynes, who also joined the Carter administration, the West would assure that the moderates rather than the radicals in the Third World would prevail.⁴⁹

The long-term objective of cooperation with the OPEC nations was to involve them to such a degree in the West's economic system that they would eventually develop a stake in its stability. By recycling the massive amount of petro-dollar surpluses through portfolio investments in private banks and government securities, direct investments in western companies, and through an increasing volume of trade, it was hoped that the OPEC nations would avoid inflationary price hikes which would only weaken the value of their investments and increase the costs of their purchases.⁵⁰ This was of particular importance to Saudi Arabia, the largest oil producer, which by 1975 was launching ambitious development plans.⁵¹

The extent to which the intertwining of OPEC and OECD economies would discourage the producing nations from using their oil as a political weapon is not completely clear. The question bears on the more general controversy over the degree to which pricing and production practices may be explained by economic or political factors. Some analysts such as Douglas Feith argue that OPEC nations are guided first and foremost by

economic concerns. The Saudis, he believes, support relatively moderate price increases for reasons of price leadership policy and revenue requirements.⁵² Willian Quandt offers a more complex argument, suggesting that both economic and political factors play a role. The importance of each must be judged according to the specific decision or policy one is examining.⁵³ For

our purposes two points must be kept in mind. First, whatever the specific motivations behind a given decision on oil production and price levels, the growing role of the OPEC countries in the economic and financial affairs of the West takes place in a political context. It is impossible to divorce completely political issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict from financial or business affairs. Second, regardless of whether the expanding interdependence of OPEC and OECD economies would temper the use of the oil weapon as was hoped, the Trilateral Commission viewed the possibility of another oil embargo or further inflation-generating price hikes with alarm.⁵⁵ In part, this was due to the West's increasing dependence on Middle Eastern oil. From 1973 to 1976, for example, Western European imports from the Middle East rose from 41% of their total resources to 61%.⁵⁶ The U. S., although less dependent than Western Europe or Japan, also experienced a rise in Mideast imports from 8% in 1973 to 15% in 1976,⁵⁷ while Saudi oil alone accounted for 23% of Mideast imports in 1976.⁵⁸ At the same time, OPEC crude prices rose from \$2.65 a barrel in 1973 to \$11.77 in 1977,⁵⁹ which provided \$16.5 billion in payments to Mideast oil producers by the close of 1977.⁶⁰

The West's increasing dependence and the rising oil prices seemed to assure that any quick solution to the world's economic

ills during the mid-seventies would be elusive. Price hikes created a serious inflation-stagnation problem and helped generate a recession in the industrialized countries in 1975. They also destabilized currency rates and complicated the search for an agreed upon set of rules to guide a monetary system based on floating exchange rates.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the high cost of oil produced massive deficits in the Third World and forced developing countries to borrow large sums of money. Most of this was furnished by the Euro-Currency market, which borrowed "short" from the oil producer to lend "long" to the developing world. Such lending practices, which were not regulated by government, involved huge transfers of capital during a period of world-wide inflation, a process which increased world inflation and helped destabilize the international monetary system.⁶³

Taking into account these developments, it is understandable that an organization which viewed economics as the fundamental concern of the international system, which saw political and economic stability as intertwined, which sought to relieve the economic difficulties among the allies and between the developing and industrialized world, and which emphasized cooperation with the oil producers, should see disaster in another Mideast war, an oil embargo, or further price increases in oil. And as both Brzezinski and Fred Bergsten, who took the position of Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs in the Carter Administration, warned, further embargoes or cartels in other raw materials or strategic metals would pose an additional threat to Western economic health.⁶⁴ All these considerations pointed in one direction. In the words of the Trilateral Report, Energy;

A Strategy for International Action:⁶⁵

The Trilateral countries have to recognize that the question of the supply of oil cannot be separated from the existence of political conflict in the Middle East. The prospect that a new crisis would bring a new reduction or cut-off of Arab oil and again drive the consuming nations apart highlights the need for an early settlement and for an agreed American-European-Japanese approach to it.

The fear the Arab-Israeli conflict would jeopardize the West's economic stability was, of course, a common concern among policy makers following the 1973 war, and was the central premise of the Brookings Report. But Brzezinski's concept of Trilateralism took the Arab-Israeli conflict out of the realm of the mere pragmatic and centered it in a theoretical framework which magnified its significance. An analogy might be made with a man who, having drunk several glasses of wine, then proceeds to eat some sugar which quickly intensifies the effect. Thus while the Brookings Report warned that the continuation of the dispute might "further frustrate" the West's attempt to "manage growing economic interdependence," Brzezinski went a step further by stating that a settlement would "create the kind of confidence on which the resolution of some of the monetary problems with the oil producers depends."⁶⁶ "It is impossible," he wrote, "to seek a resolution of the energy problem without tackling head on, and...in an urgent fashion...the Arab-Israeli conflict. Without a settlement...in the near future, any stable arrangement in the energy area is simply not possible" (emphasis mine).⁶⁷

The logic of this thinking cannot be underemphasized: The stability of the international system depends on a resolution of economic problems. This in turn depends on a solution to energy

issues which in turn depend on a rapid solution of the Arab-Israeli dispute. An Arab-Israeli settlement and international stability are thus one, they are completely equated. For this reason Brzezinski argued that a solution "must attempt to treat the whole problem and not simply bits of the infection."⁶⁸ And this infection had to be cured as quickly as possible, lest it spread disease to the entire framework of American-Western security interests. For this reason Brzezinski, contrary to the more "careful" aspects of the Brookings Report, argued that the negotiations had to deal with all the issues at once, including the Palestinian question. Furthermore, the outline of such an agreement had to arrived at in the beginning of the conference, to assure its success. And if some of the parties resisted, the U.S., he argued, had a "legitimate right to exercise its own leverage,"⁶⁹ "in other words to impose a solution which would secure American security interests.

The imposition of a solution desgined to protect international stability highlighted the globalist concerns inherent in Brzezinski's concept of "Trilateralism." By simplifying the world into a set of abstract theoretical concerns, this concept blurred the emprical regional particularities of international politics so germain to the creation of sound policy. When added to what Brzezinski himself called the "undifferentiated" aspect of the Brookings Report, Brzezinski's views prepared the way for a policy which would both ignore the complexities of inter-Arab politics and produce a rushed and simpolistic implementation of the Brookings peace formula.

Carter Joins the Trilateral School

As a former governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter approached the candidacy for president of the United States with relatively little

experience in foreign affairs. He was very much "a man in search of a paradigm," a framework within which he could understand international politics. The views he adopted and made an integral part of his presidency -- especially during the first year -- were those of Brzezinski, his Advisor on National Security Affairs. Carter met Brzezinski through the Trilateral Commission in early 1976, and as an active member of the organization and with Brzezinski taking on the role of his foreign policy teacher or mentor, he soon found a home in the Trilateral school.⁷⁰ Using Trilateral sources and speeches written for him by Brzezinski, Carter preached World Order politics during his candidacy. He thus rebuked Ford during the national televised debates for the Republican administration's "continuation of so-called balance of power politics, where everything is looked on as a struggle between us on the one side and the Soviet Union on the other."⁷¹ "We must replace balance of power politics with world order politics," he told the New York Times in June 1976. "It is likely in the near future that issues of war and peace will be more a function of economic and social problems than of the military-security problems which have dominated international relations since World War II."⁷²

As president, Carter outlined his foreign policy agenda at the University of Notre Dame's Commencement Exercises in May 1977.²² In his speech, which was very likely written by Brzezinski, Carter invoked the Trilateralist themes of his foreign policy advisor, while adding a theme that was very much his own -- human rights.⁷³ "We are now free," he told the graduating class, "of the inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us...We can no longer separate the tradi-

tional issues of war and peace from the global question of justice, equality and human rights...We can no longer have a policy solely for the industrialized nations as the foundation of global stability." And this stability, he warned in Brzezinski's familiar logic, was linked to an Arab-Israeli settlement. For a continuation of the conflict "could mean disaster not only for the Middle East but perhaps for the international political and economic order as well."

Carter, however, brought more than a world view with him to the White House. He also brought with him a host of academics and officials who shared his views and who were leading members of the Trilateral Commission itself. There is nothing unusual, as Thomas Dye has pointed out,⁷⁴ about a new administration seeking to fill positions with men and women from elite institutions such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institute and the Trilateral Commission; and often membership in these institutions overlap. But it is striking that Carter brought with him no less than 26 members of the Trilateral Commission,⁷⁵ who included besides Brzezinski, Vice President Walter Mondale, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal and Ambassador to the U. N. Andrew Young. Such staffing underlined the president's commitment to his recently adopted view of international affairs.

Oil Questions and a Further "Sense of Urgency"

The concept of "Trilateralism" and Carter's concerns with economic issues provided the general climate of urgency with which the new president approached Mideast questions. But there was another related issue of a more immediate and timely concern which

sharpened the sense of urgency and encouraged Carter to take a hurried and somewhat simplistic view of the conflict. This was the question of Saudi-American relations and the problem of oil prices.

Brzezinski's concept of Trilateralism, it will be recalled, emphasized cooperation with the "new influences" -- the oil producers. This boiled down to a closer relationship with the largest oil producer -- Saudi Arabia. In December 1976 the OPEC nations met in Doha, Qatar to establish some agreement on pricing and production. At this meeting, the Saudis pushed for a 5% price increase, while smaller producers, or those countries whose revenue requirements demanded higher prices, pushed for a 10%-15% increase. The attempt to agree on a common price was not successful, and the meeting broke up in an acrimonious mood, with Saudi Arabia and The United Arab Emirates posting a 5% increase and the other members posting a 10% increase.⁷⁶

During the meeting the Saudis had listed a combination of both economic and political factors for supporting a moderate price hike. But after the meeting, they made a point of stressing the political nature of their decision. The Saudis suggested that the moderate price increase was taken as a gesture of good will towards the new incoming administration. In the coming months the Saudi Oil Minister, Ahmad Yamani, and other Saudi officials made periodic statements which linked oil prices to rapid progress on an Arab-Israeli settlement and a resolution of the Palestinian problem. Typical of these statements was the following warning, made by Yamani following the Doha meeting:⁷⁷

We expect the West, especially the U. S., to appreciate our stand. This should be reflected in ...the Arab-Israeli conflict. There must be peace in the Middle East as a gesture of appreciation for our stand.⁷⁷

The Carter administration took such statements seriously. Quandt, as he indicates in his recent book on Saudi Arabia, believed the Saudis had posted the relatively moderate price hike for political reasons.⁷⁸ More importantly, according to Quandt, Carter also believed the Saudis were "doing the U. S. a favor."⁷⁹ But the president's attitude went beyond the question of oil prices. According to Quandt, Carter had a "special fascination for the Saudis." He believed, as did Brzezinski, that the Saudis were becoming a regional power of considerable political influence and that the Saudis could help in moderating the PLO's stand toward Israel. He also believed that the Saudis were taking into account Western financial interests by moderating price hikes and that they were playing an important and constructive role in international monetary affairs. Carter thus had a sense of admiration for the Saudis. On the other hand he feared that they would use the oil weapon again if a settlement was not quickly brought about. Statements such as the one attributed to Crown Prince Fahd before he visited Washington in May 1977, in which Fahd warned that "we have taken the initiative in the question of oil prices and the U. S. should now embark on a similar initiative"⁸⁰ were taken in earnest by the president. They added, in Quandt's words, "a sense of urgency" to the entire process and encouraged the administration to move quickly.

Of course Carter did not indicate publicly his fears about Saudi oil pressure, but his public statements illustrate well both

his "fascination" with the Saudis and his concern with their economic prowess. A good example of this is the following exaggerated statement by Carter made in a toast to Crown Prince Fahd on the Prince's visit to Washington in May 1977:⁸¹

I've said several times since I've been President of our country that I don't believe there is any other nation with whom we've had better friendship and a deeper sense of cooperation than we've found in Saudi Arabia... Their supplies of energy are crucial to the well-being of the people in many nations. They produce their own oil for world consumption beyond the level which perhaps would be best for them... This responsible and unselfish action has saved the entire economic structure of the world from disruption and has alleviated the fears that did exist when the price of oil was raised in 1973. Saudi Arabia has about \$60 billion invested in our own country, and they are one of our largest customers since we sell them about \$3½ billion worth of U. S. produced goods each year... I think it is accurate to say that the future of Saudi Arabia and the future of the U. S. are tied together very closely in an irrevocable way. (Emphasis mine.)

It is possible that we are being unfair to Mr. Carter? Did his concern with Middle East peace and the Palestinians flow from an exclusive preoccupation with the issue of "realpolitik"? This is doubtful. His concern with "Human Rights" was genuine and strongly felt. But like every president, he first took into account those issues of national interest which most sharply effected the welfare of his nation. In the scheme of things, moral questions played a secondary role to those of national interest.

Carter Adopts a Hasty Approach

With the conviction that an Arab-Israeli settlement "means to a great degree a possibility of peace throughout the world,"⁸²

and fearful that the Saudis would use the oil weapon, the Carter administration advocated a settlement which would resolve the conflict as quickly as possible. The principles of such a settlement were those of the Brookings Report, although Carter did not announce that the report had been officially chosen as policy. But since the principles he outlined were those of the report, and since Brzezinski and his assistant in the N. S. C. on Mideast issues, William Quandt, had both contributed to the report, there was little doubt that the report was the foundation of Carter's policy. However, it was not so much the principles, which we shall outline below, which were crucial to the Carter administration's policy; rather it was the way in which these elements were implemented which troubled the Carter approach. Working under a perceived time constraint, and preoccupied with American security interests, the administration implemented the Brookings settlement in a simplistic-globalist fashion.

The elements of Carter's policy were as follows: Israel, in accordance with an interpretation of S. C. Resolution 242 which was close to that of the Arab states (see page 26), would be required to withdraw to the pre-June 1967 borders, with only minor adjustments of the lines.⁸³ Carter added a degree of flexibility to such a withdrawal by suggesting that there be a distinction between "defensible borders" and actual "legal borders"; the idea being that Israel would be able to maintain security forces along the "defensible borders" for an unspecified amount of time, after which it would withdraw to the "legal borders." In return, the Arab states would establish a con-

tractual peace treaty with the Israelis which would provide for diplomatic relations, open borders, free trade, travel and cultural exchanges. It is worth noting that Carter was the first president to advocate publicly a complete normalization of relations as a basis for peace, a concept which greatly impressed the Israelis. However, the other basis for peace the Israelis did not find so appealing. This was the establishment of what Carter called a "homeland" for the Palestinian refugees, for which he announced his support during a nationally televised "Town Meeting" on March 1977.⁸⁴ Although he did not specify at the time where such a homeland would be created, there was little doubt that the West Bank of Jordan, which the Israelis had occupied during the 1967 war, was intended to be that homeland.

This was the outline of a settlement which Carter expected to be negotiated at a U. N. sponsored Geneva conference, to be co-chaired by the U. S. and the Soviet Union. The question of Soviet participation was as controversial as that of the Palestinian issue, but because it was not raised publicly during the first few months of the Carter presidency, it did not generate the kind of controversy which surrounded Carter's announcement of support for a "Palestinian homeland." Before we discuss this issue, which we shall approach within a general discussion of the manner in which the administration implemented the Brookings scheme, it is necessary to outline Carter's policy towards the question of Soviet participation. For this policy did eventually generate a good deal of disagreement when it became public later in the process, as we shall describe in

Part Three of this paper.

It will be recalled that the Brookings Report called for Soviet participation as a way of minimizing Soviet obstructionism. This was viewed as the lesser of two evils, because outside of the negotiations it was feared the Soviets might push their clients, such as Syria and the PLO, to make unacceptable demands of Israel. However, the Israelis feared the Soviets would not act differently even if they were "coopted" into the talks. And President Sadat of Egypt, as we shall see, was also fearful that the Soviets would disrupt the conference.

Brzezinski, although aware of these problems, still maintained -- as he had during the meetings of the Brookings group -- that the best way to minimize the influence of the Soviet Union was to bring it into the talks.⁸⁵ The idea was to involve the Soviets on a limited basis, on what Quandt called a "symbolic level,"⁸⁶ while the U. S. would use the period leading up to the Geneva conference and the period of the conference itself to establish better relationships with parties traditionally hostile to the U. S. Little by little, it was hoped, the U. S. would win more influence over parties such as Syria and the PLO, while the Soviets would be, in Brzezinski's words, "frozen out" of the process. Soviet participation was a clever "device," in this example of the administration's brand of realpolitik.

Soviet participation, however, did not become an issue until October 1977. Rather, it was the Palestinian question, and the problem of how the Palestinians were to be represented at Geneva, which plagued the process from the very beginning.

This issue was part of the broader question of how best to implement the Brookings peace plan. In dealing with this question, it will be recalled, the Brookings Report urged caution. It suggested postponing the more difficult questions, such as PLO participation, to a later date, and isolating the various issues from each other so that a breakdown in one area would not deadlock the entire process.

It was difficult, however, for the administration to implement the Brookings plan in a prudent manner. For the "sense of urgency," as Quandt described it, with which the administration approached Middle East matters dictated a very rapid solution. This in turn required two things: First, that the characteristics of the Middle East environment which might complicate a rapid approach be either ignored or minimized in the administration's planning. This was manifested in its narrowing of options to "procedural matters," and a simplistic view of the Arab world. Second, since the White House attached top priority to a quick solution, a small, cohesive and presidentially controlled policy-making team would have to over-see all decision making. This would guarantee maximum coherency of policy and efficiency of implementation. Taken together, these requirements -- the limiting of options, the emphasis on coherence, the centralization of decision-making, presidential control and the simplification of issues -- offered a picture of crisis decision making, the characteristics of which we shall now describe in more detail.⁸⁷

The Limiting of Options and the Domination of Global Concerns

To understand how the administration's sense that it was facing a crisis contributed to a narrowing of options, one must

keep in mind the premises underlining the entire approach: Only a comprehensive peace, it was argued, which would take into account the concerns of all the parties could insure Mideast stability; and since world stability was said to depend on a settlement, a conference would have to be convened as soon as possible. The objective of the conference would be, according to the administration's logic, to produce a speedy and global settlement. Since the essential elements of the Brookings plan provided for just such a settlement, the administration decided, in two crucial N. S. C. "Policy Review Memorandum," the first in February 1977 and the second a month later, that no policy alternatives to the Brookings approach would be considered.⁸⁸

No contingency plans were drawn up and no thought was given to the possibility that things would proceed in such a way as to require serious consideration of policy options. Rather than considering any alternatives to the basic game plan, the administration limited its planning to what it considered to be "procedural matters" -- to getting an agreement on the ground-rules for the Geneva conference.

The most important and difficult procedural issue was how the Palestinians were to be represented. Here there were several possibilities: A PLO delegation, providing it would recognize SC Resolution 242 and Israel's right to exist; a Jordanian delegation and/or West Bank delegation or some other combination of these. Considering these options, the administration, in its two N. S. C. Policy Review Memorandum in February and March 1977, decided on the following: First, since any successful comprehensive negotiation would have to involve the Palestinians,

and since the PLO had been chosen as the sole representative of the Palestinians by the Rabat conference in 1974, the administration would have to try to get the PLO involved in the conference. Thus it was decided to publicly encourage the PLO to accept Israel's right to exist and to accept SC Resolution 242. This policy had its first manifestation in January 1977 when Secretary of State Vance announced that the administration would support PLO participation at Geneva providing that it would change those parts of its National Covenant which called for Israel's destruction.⁸⁹

Second, it was decided to push for some minimal agreement among all the parties -- Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Israel, on the make-up of a Palestinian delegation. Here it was assumed that the Arab states would agree on one position vis à vis Palestinian participation whatever the circumstances. There was some reason, it must be said, to believe so. Saudi Arabia had hosted what appeared to be a successful Egyptian-Syrian reconciliation meeting in October 1976. With these two parties no longer at each other's throats, the administration could pursue its policy, it was believed, with little concern over inter-Arab differences.

Whether this assumption was indeed true required considerable reflection and analysis of the respective positions and goals of each of the Arab parties, as well as their relationships. However, like the Brookings Report before it, the administration, believing it was pressured for time, did not undertake such an analysis in the two NSC papers in early 1977. Instead, it took a simplistic and monolithic view of the Arab

world in which it was assumed that Arab states, whatever their respective circumstances and needs, would remain united on the question of Palestinian representation and on their general attitude towards the peace process. Thus, like the Brookings Report (see page 47), the administration focused not on the complexities of the region, but on a solution which, it was thought, would produce the most rapid results. The outcome of this thinking, as we shall see, was that the administration either ignored or was unaware of the differences among the Arab states when implementing its policy.

This globalist view was reinforced by the administration's decision-making style. Facing what it believed was a crisis-like situation, the White House sought to coordinate decision-making in the most efficient and responsive way possible. It was therefore decided to side-step the normal inconveniences of bureaucratic policy and inter-agency bargaining and rely instead on a small, cohesive group which worked closely with the President. Carter's Mideast policy group was thus limited to five top officials: Brzezinski, Chairman of the N.S.C., William Quandt, Brzezinski's assistant on Mideast matters; Secretary of State Cyrus Vance; and Vance's two assistants in the State Department, Alfred Atherton, assistant secretary for the Near East, and Harold Saunders, director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

The background and views of these men illustrated the kind of cohesiveness sought by the Carter administration. All of them agreed with the basis of the Carter approach -- the Brookings plan, and the premises underlining this plan. Two of them -- Brzezinski and Quandt, had contributed to the report and ad-

vocated its adoption as policy. This unanimity of views, it should be pointed out, turned out to be quite unique in the Carter administration. For although the "Trilateral approach" offered a generally agreed upon foundation for policy, there were still a great many differences and disagreements in the administration on specific policy issues. Such diversity was not present when it came to Middle East policy.⁹⁰

The make-up of the decision-making group also illustrated well another theme of this study -- the effect of perceived changes in the international environment on the bureaucratic policy realm. Both Quandt and Saunders, it will be recalled, as State Department officials in the Ford administration, had advocated a more comprehensive policy that would put greater emphasis on the Palestinian issue. (See pages 33-34). They also argued that the PLO's largest faction, al-Fatah, was moderate and susceptible to American influence. Since Kissinger, perceiving that another Arab-Israeli war would threaten U. S. interests, had decided to move towards a more comprehensive policy, both Quandt and Saunders began to have a greater impact on policy. This was demonstrated by the events surrounding Saunderson's testimony on the Palestinian issue. (See page 32). However, it was not until the Carter administration, which placed an Arab-Israeli settlement at the center of its concerns over U. S. and Western interests, that these two men rose to top level positions and became members of the Presidential policy team. For their views coincided with the overall Mideast policy of the Carter administration, while their position on PLO "moderation" suggested that the much sought after comprehensive settlement

that Carter advocated might indeed be possible. Their views, furthermore, on PLO moderation were either shared, or adopted, by their colleagues--Atherton, Vance, and Brzezinski--which contributed another important element to the group's cohesiveness.

Conformity, however, was assured not only by the views of these decision-makers, but by the method of decision-making itself. Carter, as soon as he took office, dismantled Kissinger's elaborate and complicated system of N.S.C. and State Department committees, and replaced them with a much more simplified and informal system. Its center was two N.S.C. committees, the Policy Review Committee and the Special Coordination Committee, both of which worked, according to Carter's preference, in a highly informal and collegial system.⁹² In such a system, as Steven Spiegel points out, where the primary emphasis is placed on personal loyalty, and where personnel and professional views are not easily distinguishable, "there are no dissenters from the primary focus... of policy. Indeed, since there is less disagreement over Arab-Israeli issues than over other primary foreign policy question... the consensus... reinforces the sense within the team that its policy is correct."⁹³ The result, he goes on to say, is that the policy-making group is unwilling to change its policy, even when faced by evidence that alterations or changes are required.

The leading role of the N.S.C. underscored the most important aspect of the policy-making process--its presidential character. It was the N.S.C.'s Policy Review Committee on the Middle East which produced policy-papers or "Policy Review Memorandum" for presidential review.

and which was primarily responsible for setting the tone of Mideast policy. Although the PRC Committee which handled Mideast policy was chaired by Secretary of State Vance, this did not imply that the State Department had a role in tempering presidential control over policy. Indeed, since Vance sat on a White House committee which was responsible to the President and whose recommendations had to be cleared with the President's Advisor on National Security, Mr. Brzezinski, Secretary Vance was first and foremost part of the presidential team. This meant that regional or country experts in the State Department did not have much say in policy.

Presidential policy making entailed more than N. S. C. leadership -- it also involved the personal commitment and engagement of the President in promoting the White House's view of a settlement. This commitment discouraged dissent, as it made policy conformity a matter of loyalty and commitment to the President. As Spiegel put it: "It is comparatively more difficult to accept different views on any issue in which the President is so personally and directly engaged."⁹⁴

The weight of the decision-making system thus tipped the balance towards unanimity and against dissent; it also reduced the likelihood that regional or country experts might have been brought in to correct the administration's simplistic view of the Arab world. However, was it possible that such experts might have been brought in during the implementation of the policy, to evaluate its success and add to the process a more detailed picture of the Middle East? This was unlikely, since Carter's Mideast policy group was responsible for both devising

and carrying out its policies. In such a system, it is very unlikely that the policy-makers will have the time, or the will, to objectively evaluate their own decisions. This fusion of decision-making and "operationalization" differed from other areas of NSC policy making, where those who made policy were different from those who carried it out. This often produced a lack of coordination and incoherency.⁹⁷ None of this, however, was apparent in the Middle East policy, which was designed to be as coherent as possible. The outcome, as we shall now see, of this decision-making system was a policy that was unresponsive to regional issues and so inflexible that it could not adapt to the unpredictable and complex nature of inter-Arab politics.

Footnotes - Part Two --

1. The following people made up the Brookings Study Group: Monroe Berger, Robert R. Bowie, Zbigniew Brzezinski, John Campbell, Najeeb Halaby, Rita Hauser, Roger W. Heyns, Alan Horton, Malcolm Kerr, Fred Khouri, Philip Klutznick, William Quandt, Nadav Safran, Stephen Spiegel, A. L. Udovitch, and Charles Yost. I interviewed Brzezinski, Hauser and Quandt. Berger, Bowie, Heyns, Kerr, and Khouri provided me with written answers to questions I submitted to them.

2. Brookings Report Correspondence (BRC).

3. BRC.

4. BRC.

5. Brookings Report, pp. 1 and 19-20.

6. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

7. Ibid., p. 2.

8. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

9. Ibid., pp. 21 and 8-9.

10. Ibid., p. 21.

11. Ibid., p. 5.

12. These five points are listed on pp. 5-6 of the report.

13. We will discuss economic questions, with particular reference to oil, later on.

14. Ibid., p. 1.

15. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

16. Ibid., p. 16.

17. See Elie Kedourie's "How to (And How Not To) Seek Peace in the Middle East," Encounter (May 1978) Vol. 1. no. 5. pp. 44-52. Kedourie's main criticism is that the report advocates holding a general conference, which, like the London conference of 1939 which the British held to discuss the Palestine issue, would be complicated by the presence of all the Arab states. He writes, "Implicit in British policy was the assumption that because the Arab states were deeply concerned about their brethren in Palestine...therefore it followed that they would all be of one mind in seeking a settlement. The very opposite was in fact true....Inter-Arab conflict did not alleviate but, on the contrary, tremendously complicated and envenomed the Palestine conflict." (p. 46) Mr. Kedourie fails, however,

to point out that by 1973, and much earlier of course, the Arab states were very much a party to the conflict, while in 1939 this was not the case.

18. Halperin and Allison (1972) p. 55.

19. Quoted in Kegley and Wittkopf (1979) p. 338. From James Rosenau, The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy (New York: Free Press) pp. 260-251.

20. Brookings Report, p. 19.

21. Brookings Report, p. 19.

22. Brookings Report, p. 20.

23. Steven Spiegel, "The Carter Approach to the Arab-Israeli Problem" in Shaked and Rabinovich (1980) p. 103.

24. See Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Power and Interdependence World Politics in Transition (Boston: Little Brown and Company 1977). And Edward Morse, Modernization and the Transformation of International Relations (New York: Free Press 1976).

25. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Between Two Ages, America's Role in the Technetronic Era (New York: Viking Press 1971). And his "Half Past Nixon" in Foreign Policy, No. 3 Summer 1971 pp. 3-21. His later articles repeated similar themes. See "America in a Hostile World." Foreign Policy No. 3 Summer 1976. pp. 65-92.

26. Brzezinski, Between Two Ages (1971) pp. 3-9.

27. Brzezinski, Foreign Policy (1971) p. 12.

28. Brzezinski, Between Two Ages (1971) p. 52.

29. Brzezinski, Foreign Policy (1976) p. 91. His book and articles are filled with words like "anarchy," "chaos," "crisis," etc...He gives us a picture of a world coming apart at the seams. This picture is exaggerated and very inaccurate. Our purpose here however, is not to go into an extensive criticism of his views, but rather to understand their general thrust, and how they effected Carter's Mideast policy.

30. Brzezinski, Between Two Ages (1971) p. 35.

31. Ibid., p. 35.

32. Ibid., p. 53.

33. Ibid., p. 294. Brzezinski was particularly concerned with

the rise of nationalism in Japan, which, he warned, if it turned to "ideological radicalism," might "seriously threaten the highly tenuous structure of peace in the Pacific." p. 294.

34. Ibid., p. 295.

35. Brzezinski, Foreign Policy (1971), p. 12.

36. Brzezinski, Foreign Policy (1976), pp. 77-78 and 65.

37. Ibid., p. 80.

38. Brzezinski -- The title and theme of his 1976 article in Foreign Policy.

39. Holly Sklar, "Trilateralism Managing Dependence and Democracy -- An Overview," in Trilateralism, The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Management. H. Sklar (Ed.) (Boston: South End Press 1980) p. 7. Quoted from Z. Brzezinski, "Trilateral Relations in a Global Context," Dialogue 7 (Summer 1975) p. 11.

40. See Brzezinski's speech given before the Trilateral Commission in Bonn, October 30, 1977. "American Policy and Global Change," found in American Foreign Relations 1977 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations 1978) pp. 454 and 456.

41. See Elizabeth Drew's piece, "A Reporter at Large: Brzezinski" New Yorker, 1 May 1978, p. 210.

42. See Brzezinski's speech, "American Policy and Global Change" (1977) p. 465.

43. Elizabeth Drew, "Brzezinski" (1978) p. 208.

44. This is the general name given to the kind of policy stressed by the Modernist school of international relations. Brzezinski did not refer to this policy by name although he does speak of the need to build a sound "world order." Carter adopted the "world order" label during the campaign to distinguish his policy from that of his opponent, Gerald Ford.

45. Brzezinski originally outlined the case for such an organization in his book Between Two Ages. See the sub-chapter "A Community of the Developed Nations," pp. 293-309.

46. See "Who's Who on the Trilateral Commission," by Holly Sklar and Ros Everdell in Trilateralism (Sklar, ed. 1980), pp. 91-134. About 1/3 of the members were in banking and business of the total membership between 1973 and 1979. (p. 99).

47. Interview with Brzezinski, . . . 1981.

48. Tom Farer, "The United States and the Third World," Foreign Affairs, October 1975. See Kai Bird, "Co-opting the

Third World: Trilateralism and Saudi Arabia," in Sklar (1980) p. 342.

49. William Maynes, Foreign Affairs, 1976, cited in Kai Bird, "Co-opting Third World Elites" (1980) p. 343. No title given. Maynes became assistant secretary for international organization at State in 1977. Neither Farer nor Maynes were members of the Commission, although their views generally reflected the Trilateral view that the oil producers should be accorded "a place in the international economic councils commensurate with their increased economic status," "Energy: The Imperative for a Trilateral Approach," in Trilateral Commission: Task Force Report 1-7 A Compilation of Reports from the First Two Years of the Trilateral Commission (New York: New York University Press 1977) p. 177. Cited in Bird (1980) p. 346.

50. The rise in oil prices led to a jump in the oil revenues of OPEC countries of some \$75 billion, from about \$33 billion in 1973 to about \$108 billion in 1974. The rise in oil prices shifted the current balance of payments of the OPEC states from an estimated surplus of about \$4 billion in 1973 to a surplus of \$56 billion in 1974. In 1974 alone, OPEC countries are estimated to have invested about \$11 billion in the U. S., and \$23 billion in the Euro-currency markets. See Robert Solomon, The International Monetary System, 1945-1976. (New York: Harper and Row 1977), pp. 294-298. By 1980 the OPEC nations had invested some \$40 billion dollars in American, British, German and Japanese Government Securities; some \$160 billion in private bank deposits in the U. S., UK and other countries, and direct investments of some \$60 billion in U. S. and UK. See Alan Stoga, Philip Bennet, "The OPEC Surplus Revisited," The Banker, September 1981.

As for trade, during the period from 1974-1977, the U. S. alone sold more than \$70 billion in goods and services to the OPEC countries. (See Kai Bird, p. 346. In Sklar 1980). Bird cites from Harry Magdoff, "The U. S. Dollar, Petrodollar and U. S. Imperialism," Monthly Review January 1979 p. 9. From 1974-1976 the Arab oil producers purchased some \$122 billion in goods and services from the industrialized countries, of which the U. S. accounted for about 11%. See Gilbar, "The Economics of Interdependence: The United States and the Arab World 1973-1977," in The Middle East and the United States (Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich (Eds.) (New Brunswick: Transaction Books 1980), p. 236. Gilbar's source is the IMF Direction of Trade Annual 1970-1976, 1977.

51. The Saudi Five Year Plan called for an overall expenditure of \$142 billion from 1975-1980. These plans opened up new areas for trade and explain the increase in U. S. exports to the Arab states from \$1.2 billion in 1972 to \$7.1 billion in 1976 and to \$8.2 billion in 1977. U. S. exports to Saudi Arabia increased from \$.3 billion in 1972 to \$2.8 billion in 1976. See Gilbar, "The Economics of Interdependence" (1980) p. 212. A "U. S.-Saudi Joint Commission" was founded in 1974 to provide the Kingdom technical and managerial advice. By 1979 it was

directly administering nearly \$800 million worth of development projects in the country. See Bird, "Coopting the Third World Elites" (1980) p. 345.

52. See Douglas Feith, "The Oil Weapon De-Mystified," Policy Review, no. 15 (Winter 1981). Feith does not exclude the fact that oil is used as a political weapon, but believes that while the Saudis claim that their decisions on pricing are linked to political questions -- a claim that is often directed towards the West -- their "real" motivations are economic.

53. See William Quandt, Saudi Arabia in the 1980s Foreign Policy, Security, and Oil (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution 1981) pp. 123-235.

54. A Mobil oil executive explained during a seminar at the University of Chicago in 1980 that although he well understood that the primary reasoning behind OPEC oil decisions, and particularly Saudi oil decisions, was economic, he still felt that a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict would make relations between the producers and the consumers much smoother.

55. This fact is evident in Trilateral documents, one of which is quoted on p. 58 of this paper.

56. See Gilbar, "The Economics of Interdependence" (1980) p. 234. His figures are taken from U. S. Department of Energy 1977, Department of Mines.

57. Ibid., p. 230.

58. See Bird, "Coopting the Third World Elites" (1980) p. 345.

59. See Joan Edelman Spero, The Politics of International Economic Relations (New York: St. Martin's Press 1981) p. 264. Her source is the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, The Real Price of Oil, March 19, 1980 (Washington D. C. Department of State Report No. 1345.)

60. See Gilbar, "The Economics of Interdependence" (1980) p. 211.

61. See Solomon (1977) p. 283. It was not until January 1976 that the industrialized nations wound up their negotiations and came to a final agreement on the shape of the international monetary system. Except for some interim agreements, the industrialized nations had been without a firm set of long-range agreements on exchange rates, gold, liquidity and adjustments policies since August 1971.

62. The non-oil developing countries shifted from a deficit of \$9 billion in 1973 to \$25 billion in 1974. By 1975 the non-oil producers had a deficit of \$35 billion. In 1974 OPEC countries invested \$11 billion in the U. S. and \$23 billion in the Euro-currency markets. During the same year U. S. banks loaned more than \$13 billion to foreign countries, of which more

than \$3.5 billion went to Latin America, \$5.5 billion to Japan, and more than \$2 billion to countries in Asia and Africa. The Euro-currency banks during that year lent \$7 billion to Japan, more than \$5 billion to Latin American countries, and about \$1.5 billion to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. See Solomon (1977) pp. 295-296 and p. 300.

Since offshore banks were not under any restriction to hold some of their assets idle as reserves, OPEC countries and other nations in surplus increasingly deposited their money in Euro-currency accounts during the late 1970's. By this time, the Euro-currency banks were the largest financiers of the non-oil producing nation's deficits. See Charles Lipson's "The International Organization of Third World Debt," in International Organization, Vol. 34. No. 4, Autumn 1981 pp. 603-631.

63. See Lipson (1981) pp. 603-615.

64. Several months before the outbreak of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Fred Bergsten warned of the possibility that the Third World might hold the West hostage by withholding strategic metals and much needed raw materials. See "The Threat from the Third World," Foreign Policy, Summer 1973.

65. See Kai Bird, "Co-opting the Third World Elites" (1980) p. 346. Quoted from "Energy, A Strategy for International Action" (1974), Task Force Report 6, contained in Trilateral Commission Task Force Reports 1-7 p. 145.

66. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Unmanifest Destiny: Where Do We Go from Here?" New York, 3 March 1975 p. 53. Cited in Steven L. Spiegel's "The Carter Approach to the Arab-Israeli Dispute," in Haim Shaked (Ed.) The Middle East and the U. S. p. 105.

67. Brzezinski, "Recognizing the Crisis" Foreign Policy Winter 1975. Cited in Spiegel (1980) p. 104.

68. Brzezinski, "Beyond Step-by-Step: Action Proposals" Foreign Policy No. 19 (Summer 1975) p. 9.

69. See Spiegel, p 112. In Shaked and Rabinovich (Eds) (1980). Spiegel does not cite source for the quote.

70. Laurence H. Shoup, "Jimmy Carter and the Trilateralists: Presidential Roots," in Trilateralism (Sklar, Ed.) (1980). pp. 199-212. For other discussions of the relationship between Carter and Brzezinski see Tad Szulc's "Washington Dateline: Springtime for Carter" Foreign Policy, No. 27 (Summer 1977) pp. 178-191. Szulc writes, "Brzezinski, long Carter's foreign policy mentor, plays a major role, his ease of access being one of the elements of influence." (p. 190). See also, Simon Serfaty's "Brzezinski: Play it Again, Zbig" Foreign Policy No. 32 (Fall 1980) pp. 3-21.

71. This debate took place on October 6, 1976 in San Francisco. The transcripts of this and the other 3 debates may be found in

Lloyd Bitzer and Theodore Rueter's Carter Vs. Ford, The Counterfeit Debates of 1976. (Madison: University of Madison Press 1980). For above quote see p. 306. It should be noted that Carter had nothing but praise for Israel in the debates and did not give any indication of his coming push for a comprehensive settlement.

72. New York Times, June 1976. Quote in R. Barnet's Real Security (New York: Simon and Schuster 1981) p. 41.

73. Jimmy Carter, Presidential Papers, Administration of Jimmy Carter (Washington D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office 1978) pp. 954-963.

74. See Thomas R. Dye, "Oligarchic Tendencies in National Policy-Making: The Role of the Private Policy-Planning Organizations," Journal of Politics Vol. 40, No. 2. (May 1978) pp. 309-331.

75. Trilateralists in the Carter Administration: Lucy Wilson Benson, Undersecretary of State for Security Assistance; C. Fred Bergsten, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs; W. Michael Blumenthal, Secretary of the Treasury; Robert R. Bowie, Deputy to the Director of Central Intelligence for National Intelligence; Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense; Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Jimmy Carter, President; Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State; Richard N. Cooper, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs; Lloyd N. Cutler, White House Counsel; Hedley Donovan, Senior Advisor Domestic and Foreign Policy and Media Relations; Richard N. Gardner, Ambassador to Italy; Richard Halbroke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; Samuel P. Huntington, Coordinator National Security, N. S. C.; Sol Linowitz, Special Mid East Negotiator; Walter Mondale, Vice President; Henry Owen, U. S. Ambassador at Large; Elliot L. Richardson, U. S. Ambassador at Large; John Sawhill, Deputy Secretary of Energy; Gerard C. Smith, U. S. Ambassador at Large; Anthony M. Solomon, Undersecretary of State; Paul C. Warnke, Director, U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; Leonard Woodcock, Ambassador to Peking; Andrew Young, Ambassador to the U. N.; Paul A. Volcker, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board.

76. See Quandt (1981) pp. 129-130.

77. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Department of Commerce, Middle East and North Africa 75-245. December 20, 1976. (QNA 17 December 1976). Yamani and other Saudi officials continued to make similar statements throughout the year. See: FBIS 77-1 January 3, 1977 (Der Spiegel Interview 3 January 1977); FBIS 77-110 January 19, 1977 (Riyadh Domestic Service January 13, 1977); FBIS 77-31 February 15, 1977 (Doha QNA February 15, 1977); FBIS 77-77 April 21, 1977 (Kuwait "As-Siyasah interview with Fahd April 16, 1977); FBIS 77-98 May 20, 1977 (Cairo Domestic Service 20 May 1977); FBIS 77-176 September 12, 1977 (Kuwait Domestic Service September 11, 1977).

78. See Quandt (1981) pp. 129-130.
79. Interview with Quandt.
80. See Reports in the New York Times, May 25, 1977.
81. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Administration of Jimmy Carter 1977, U. S. Government Printing Office Washington D. C. 1978 pp. 1006-1007.
82. Ibid. Carter made this statement during his toast to Crown Prince Fahd.
83. See Steven L. Spiegel, "Carter and Israel," Commentary July 1977, pp. 35-40.
84. Carter made the statement during a "town hall" meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts, March 16, 1977. See Lester A. Sobel, (Ed.) Peace Making in the Middle East (New York: Facts on File 1980) p. 136.
85. Interview with Brzezinski.
86. Interview with Quandt.
87. Charles Hermann suggests that a foreign policy crisis may be thought of as a "situation that (1) threatens high priority goals of the decision-making units... (2) restricts the amount of time available for response before the decision is transformed, and (3) surprises the members of the decision-making unit by its occurrence." His first two points do fit the perceptions of the Carter administration, although the third characteristic -- surprise -- was not an element of the "crisis atmosphere" in which the Carter administration was working. For a discussion of crisis see Hermann's "Some Issues in the Study of International Crisi" p. 3017, in Charles Hermann (Ed.), International Crisis Insights from Behavioral Research (New York: Free Press, 1972).
88. Interview with Quandt and Brzezinski.
89. Quandt indicated that this and other public announcements that followed were part of the administration's plan to encourage the PLO to change its positions on Israel and join the negotiations.
90. Elizabeth Drew makes this point in her article, "A Reporter at Large Brzezinski," The New Yorker Magazine, May 1, 1978.
91. Both Quandt and Saunders pointed out in my interview with them in December 1977 that the view that the PLO was moderate, or that one element within it was moderate, was a view shared by everyone in the administration.
92. See Lawrence Korb's discussion of Carter's NSC system in "National Security Organization and Process in the Carter Admin-

istration," in Sam Sarkesian's (Ed.) Defense Policy and the Presidency (Boulder: West View Press 1980) pp. 111-134.

93. Steven Spiegel, "The Carter Approach," in Haim Shaek and Itamar Rabinovich, The Middle East and the U. S. (New Brunswick 1980), p. 101.

PART THREE

The Carter Approach in Action

Introduction-A Short Survey of Middle East States

We have suggested above that the Carter administration did not go to any great lengths to analyze the differences among the Arab states when preparing to implement its policy. Since we will argue that this failing contributed to many of the problems the administration encountered, it is important to outline the main differences among the Arab states and between the Palestinians and Israel. Following this, we will examine how the administration's determination to gain a quick comprehensive agreement put the initiative in Syria's hand and frustrated Sadat's attempt to reach an agreement with Israel.

The differences among the states in the Middle East were rooted in their respective political and economic situations, their strategic interests, and the traditional rivalries among them. It is impossible to provide a detailed analysis of these differences here, so we shall only outline their essential components. We shall begin with Egypt, and then move on to Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians and lastly Israel.

The largest Arab state, Egypt, was in early 1977 in desperate need of peace. Its economy was in chaos, and its population, which totalled some 40 million, was growing by about 1 million a year. Since coming to power, and particularly since 1974, President Anwar Sadat had placed his hopes for economic improvement on reducing the scale of the public sector and attracting Western private investment. The policy of "Infitah,"¹ however, enabled a new class to reap huge benefit, and increased the income gap between rich and poor. Structural changes were required, but this was difficult. Rioting in Cairo and other

cities that followed the lifting of bread subsidies in mid-January 1977 brought home to Sadat that such measures could not be adopted without creating unrest. He could only hope that large amounts of European, Saudi and American aid could lift Egypt out of its miseries -- but this required at the very least a peace-time economy.

Related to Egypt's economic and demographic problems was the rising influence of Islamic fundamentalist groups, such as Al-Takfir wa Al-Hijra² offered Egypt's young -- which made up a disproportionate share of the population -- a vehicle of protest. In early July 1977 this organization kidnapped and murdered a former minister of religious affairs -- an event which drew much attention.

Sadat was quick to blame the Soviet Union for the riots in January and the activities of the Muslim fundamentalists.³ It was unlikely the Soviets had a direct role in these disturbances, but Sadat was genuinely suspicious of them. Soviet-Egyptian relations had been deteriorating since July 1972, when Sadat expelled all Soviet advisors and military officials from Egypt. They grew worse following the 1973 war, when Sadat, angered by a Soviet arms embargo and determined to maintain Egypt's independence, began to seek American support. In doing so, he sought political as well as economic support, since he was convinced that the Americans could induce Israel to make significant territorial concessions for peace.⁴ In the ensuing years, Sadat openly pursued a pro-Western line. On occasion he warned against what he called America's "Vietnam complex" which, he suggested, had contributed to Soviet inroads in Angola, Ethiopia and South Yemen.⁵

Sadat's global concerns intersected with his regional interests when it came to his relationship with Syria and Libya. Egypt and Syria had been competing for leadership in the Arab world for several decades. Sadat viewed the Syrians and their Soviet supporters with a suspicion that turned to hostility when Syria and the Soviet Union attacked him for signing the 1975 Interim Agreement with Israel. In the case of Libya, Colonel Mua'mmar al Qaddhafi, who took power in 1969, was openly supported by the Soviets and hostile towards Egypt, with whom he competed for leadership in the Arab world and in Africa. Things came to a head in mid-July 1977, when Sadat, acting on a tip from Israeli intelligence, arrested a Libyan-trained team of assassins sent to kill him, and then engaged Libya in a brief border war. Sadat, it should be noted, often blamed the Soviets and the Libyans for stirring up trouble in Egypt.

A final issue, very much related to those above, was the growing sense of Egyptian nationalism and distinctiveness from the Arab world, which Sadat fostered following the 1973 war.⁶ The stress on Egyptian national interests, together with its serious economic and social problems, assured that Egypt would put a premium on a peace treaty with Israel. Without one, it would be impossible for Egypt to even begin to remedy its many troubles.

Syria's position, as we have alluded to above, was quite different from that of Egypt. Its pan-Arab "Baathist" ideology and its growing relationship with the Soviet Union contributed to Syrian hostility towards the West, and openly threatened Sadat's quest to reduce Soviet influence. And unlike Sadat's Egypt, where Egyptian-nationalist feeling was an important motivating force,

Syria's pan-Arab ideology demanded that it take a hard line on Israel and the Palestinian issue, lest it appear to be abandoning the chief Arab cause. Syria's president, Hafez Asad, was particularly sensitive to charges of ignoring the Palestinians. He and most of the ruling elite in Syria came from the minority Alawite community, which was coming under increasing attack by Syria's Sunni majority and a growing indigenous fundamentalist movement.⁷ The Asad regime was thus less likely to take a compromising position on an Arab-Israeli peace, while Syria's stable economy did not require it to move towards peace as in the case of Egypt.

There was one regional conflict which might have prompted Asad to make peace with Israel, the civil war in Lebanon. The war, touched off by the presence of some 400,000 Palestinians and their associated guerrilla groups, threatened to drag Syria and Israel into a war that might escalate into a full Arab-Israeli confrontation. By November 1976, when Syrian troops managed to crush Palestinian armed activity, Asad was able to enforce an uneasy armistice in Lebanon.⁸ The likelihood of a Syrian-Israeli war was reduced and thus Syria was not in any rush to make a peace agreement with Israel.

It should be noted that Syria's crushing of the Palestinians towards the end of the Lebanese civil war also enabled the Asad regime to bring the PLO, particularly its largest faction, al-Fatah, under Syrian control. In doing so, Syria was continuing a traditional policy of influencing political developments in the Levant, where for years it had entertained dreams of a "Greater Syria."⁹ Syrian control over the PLO and Lebanon also meant a victory over Egyptian interests. As we shall see, Sadat was keenly

aware of this and sought to compete with Syrian influence.

Like Syria, Jordan did not face the kinds of internal or external problems which might have compelled it to make peace with Israel. There was a growing fundamentalist movement -- but for the most part Jordan's political and economic situation was stable in early 1977. King Hussein's central concern, and the issue which might most easily effect his ability to maintain power, was his relationship with his own Palestinian subjects, who made up a majority of Jordanians, and his relationship with the broader Palestinian community. Many Palestinians, especially those in the refugee community and in the guerrilla groups, resented Hashemite rule and were prepared to challenge it openly. King Hussein put an end to such hopes when he crushed the PLO in September 1970, following its open bid for power. He was determined not only to maintain his control of Jordan, but also to reassert control over any territory on the West Bank that Israel might relinquish. However, following the 1974 Rabat decision to grant the PLO negotiating authority for the Palestinians, Hussein, with notable reluctance,¹⁰ agreed that the PLO could represent the Palestinians on the West Bank. However, it is worth noting that Hussein never lost his desire to reassert Hashemite control over the West Bank, and on occasion stated publicly that he would consider a close relationship between the West Bank and Jordan if the Palestinians on the West Bank evinced such an interest.¹¹

Had the Palestinians on the West Bank and/or Jordan been permitted to send their own delegates to negotiate with Israel, talks between Israel and the Palestinians would have presented fewer problems. For the Palestinians on the West Bank had an

interest in negotiations with Israel. Their main objective -- independence -- could be achieved by Israeli withdrawal and co-existence with the Jewish state. However, the Palestinians living in Lebanon, who numbered some 400,000, were not in an analagous position. They sought return not to the West Bank -- whose absorptive capacity was limited -- but to what was formerly Palestine and is today Israel.¹² Thus the P. L. O., which most directly represents their interests, and whose leaders come from what is today Israel, maintains that the refugees must be given the right to return to their former homes and that the existence of a Jewish state is unacceptable. This uncompromising position was reinforced by the fact that the PLO was made up of a coalition of different groups, all of which were united by a single common factor -- the conviction that Palestine belongs to the Arabs.¹³ Any challenge by one of the PLO's constituent groups to this basic credo, any suggestion of moderation towards Israel, is thus a threat to the unity and existence of the group itself and is therefore unacceptable. For this reason the PLO has maintained since its inception in 1964, and continued to maintain in early 1977,¹⁴ that Israel as a Jewish state must eventually disappear.

The PLO's uncompromising position was originally spelled out in the 1968 Palestine National Covenant,¹⁴ which called for the "liberation of Palestine" and the return of all refugees who fled their homes during the 1948 hostilities. As years passed, the Covenant was interpreted by successive Palestine National Conferences of the PLO and its meaning somewhat modified. By 1974 the 12th Congress called for the establishment of an "independent fighting authority on every part of Palestinian land to be liber-

ated."¹⁵ Following this, the Congress resolved, the "Palestinian national authority...will struggle for the sake of completing the liberation of all Palestinian soil." This, explained Farouk Kaddoumi (the PLO's spokesman on foreign affairs) in March 1977, was the "policy of stages," which held that Israel would first return to the 1967 borders, then the 1948 borders, and finally the state would be dissolved to be replaced by a "democratic state of Palestine."¹⁶ And this goal, the PLO insisted, could only be achieved by the return of all Palestinian refugees to their former property. For this reason, SC Resolution 242 was unacceptable, as it did not provide for the return of Palestinian refugees, or for the establishment of a Palestinian state.¹⁷ In its place, the PLO supported various U. N. General Assembly Resolutions tabled in the UN starting in 1974, which called for the return of refugees, or, if they so chose, compensation. The PLO, it should be noted, did not accept compensation as a solution of the Palestinian problem. It insisted upon the right of Palestinians to return to Israel, which was tantamount to the destruction of Israel, or as the PLO viewed it, as the "liberation of Palestine."¹⁸

Because the PLO, at least on a public level, stated that the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza was to serve as a first step towards Israel's removal, both of Israel's main coalition parties -- the Labor Alignment, which ruled during the first four months of 1977, and the Likud, which took power on June 21 -- insisted that the PLO not be permitted to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians. And they both objected to any independent Palestinian or PLO delegation, which, they

insisted, would serve as a prelude to an independent Palestinian and PLO-ruled state on the West Bank. However, there were important differences between the two parties. The Labor Party had traditionally sought a territorial compromise with Jordan over the West Bank. It was prepared to return territories to King Hussein's control in return for peace, as its main interest was security. In pursuit of this goal, it had established a number of settlements on the West Bank, whose combined population reached some 6000 in early 1977. Unlike the Labor Party, the Likud government, under the leadership of Menachem Begin, insisted for both security and "historical" reasons that the West Bank was part of biblical "Eretz Yisrael" (The Land of Israel), and that Israel should have a right to settle the territory with a view to eventual sovereignty. However, when Begin became Prime Minister towards the end of June, he agreed with his pragmatic foreign minister Moshe Dayan that his government, although it would maintain its claim to the West Bank (referred to by Begin in biblical terms as Judea and Samaria), would not annex the territory during negotiations.

The above considerations contributed to significant differences concerning what each party was prepared to do in order to achieve a settlement. Egypt's interests inclined it towards a peace settlement, although its rivalry with Syria, its desire to minimize Soviet power, and its support for a conservative Jordanian-oriented solution to the Palestinian problem, suggested that it would not support a comprehensive settlement at the expense of its interests. Israel, although by no means as desperate for a settlement as Egypt, was willing to give up the Sinai for

an Egyptian-Israeli agreement, since it did not attach as much historic and military value to this area as it accorded to the West Bank and the Golan Heights. These two territories were central to its defense, and thus Israel was unwilling to agree to any settlement that involved their loss. Jordan's King Hussein was in a precarious position. His interests dictated that he control the West Bank, but he could not publicly pursue this end lest he lose his throne. His best alternative was to wait and see what developed, while avoiding any complete renunciation of his claim to that territory. Syria's internal situation did not incline it towards peace, and her regional goals dictated that it accept no settlement other than a Palestinian state under its control. Finally, the PLO, because its legitimacy rested on maintaining publicly the goal of destroying Israel, would not come to the peace table unless it received a guarantee of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel. This made its participation very unlikely.

In sum, these differences contributed to several possible combinations and permutations as to a final settlement. One was a comprehensive peace with PLO participation, which was very unlikely. Another was a similar arrangement with a conservative-Jordanian solution to the Palestinian issue, somewhat more realistic, but still unlikely. Another possibility was the negotiation of what amounted to separate bilateral agreements in the framework of a U. N. sponsored "comprehensive" negotiation. This might permit the conservative Jordanian/Egyptian axis more room to maneuver and minimize the influence of the Soviets and the Syrians. Still another possibility was actual separate arrangements, par-

ticularly between Egypt and Israel.

Arab "Consensus" and the Carter Administration - The First 4 Months

Towards the end of 1976, the Arab states that were to negotiate at Geneva attempted to coordinate policy on the Arab-Israeli dispute and more specifically on the Palestinian issue. Efforts, as noted above, began with an Egyptian-Syrian reconciliation meeting in Saudi Arabia in October 1976. It concluded with an agreement to establish a Unified Political Command under the chairmanship of the Egyptian War Minister.¹⁹ In the ensuing months, efforts continued to unify policy. Towards this end Sadat, Hussein and Asad met a number of times in December 1976 and January 1977. The general policy line which emerged from these meetings was that the Arab states would push for an early reconvening of the Geneva conference; that they would encourage the PLO to modify its stand on Israel so that it could enter negotiations; and that the PLO would negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians, while some role for Jordan would be reserved as well.²⁰

The agreements that were struck in the beginning of 1977 were, as Itamar Rabinovich has observed -- illusory.²¹ Only a month after the general outline of a unified Arab approach had emerged, Egypt began to pursue a different tactic. This surfaced on Secretary of State Vance's trip to the Middle East in mid-February, when Sadat publicly announced that he would support a clear and established link between any Palestinian entity and Jordan. And such a link, he insisted, had to be established before the Geneva conference was convened.²²

Sadat's reasons for establishing a Palestinian-Jordanian link reflected Egypt's particular interests and strategic goals.

By proposing a link, Sadat hoped to over-come Israel's objection to a Palestinian presence at Geneva. The Labor party, under the leadership of Prime Minister Rabin, rejected any separate Palestinian delegation, for it feared that this would lead to the establishment of an independent PLO state on the West Bank. Sadat's proposal was more in line with the Labor party's traditional view that any negotiations on the Palestinian issue would have to be carried out with Jordan, in order to assure that the conservative monarch would regain control of any territory relinquished to the Arabs. But the concept of a Palestinian-Jordanian link encompassed objectives that went beyond Sadat's desire to compromise with the Israelis in order to keep negotiations on a productive course. Previous to the 1974 Rabat decision, Sadat had openly supported King Hussein's quest to regain control of the West Bank. Such control would limit the chances that a Soviet-dominated PLO state be formed in the territory, and would also limit Syria's influence over any Palestinian entity. Thus Sadat's linkage proposals reflected Egypt's concerns about Syrian and Soviet influence.

Asad's response, which came several months later,²³ was predictable. He rejected the establishment of any Palestinian-Jordanian link previous to the negotiations. The Palestinians, he insisted, could consider such a link only after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Such a Palestinian state would be more likely to serve Syrian interests, because it would be ruled by the Syrian "controlled" PLO.

Sadat's linkage proposal -- which according to some reports surprised the Carter administration²² -- might have prompted the

White House Middle East team to examine more closely the positions and interests of the Arab states. Such an examination might have prepared the administration for the possibility that the agreements struck in December 1976 and January 1977 might not have held up under the weight of the diverse interests of each party. The administration, however, as we noted towards the end of Part Two, was not in any mood to examine such differences -- differences which might have implied that the rapid comprehensive agreement which it sought was not as easily obtainable as had been originally imagined. Nor was the White House team, in its rush to gain an agreement, willing to take the time for a more sustained analysis. Instead, the administration let itself be seduced by the superficial appearance of unity. It would push, come what may, for an agreement on Palestinian participation agreeable to all the Arab states. And since Syria refused to attend the conference unless the PLO was invited as a separate delegation, the administration decided that it would have to undertake a major and public effort to induce the PLO to change its position towards Israel and join the negotiations.

There was a danger implicit in a PLO-oriented policy, one that had manifested itself to some extent in early February with Sadat's announcement of his linkage proposal. It rested on the possibility that if Syria were the only party to insist on PLO representation, other parties such as Egypt and Israel, which might be willing to compromise on Palestinian representation, would be constantly frustrated by Syria's objections. And at the same time, the U. S. would find itself hostage to Syrian demands that might be contrary to the interests of other parties. But

since the administration assumed that the Arab states agreed on Palestinian representation, and since it was not attuned to the subtle differences in interests and goals of the Arab states, there was no reason to believe that the Arab states might disagree, or that the administration might be pursuing a policy that worked more to the advantage of one Arab state than another.

Unaware of the dangers implicit in its policies, or unwilling to recognize them, the administration immediately began pursuing its policy to bring the PLO into negotiations, a policy which had its first manifestation when Secretary of State Vance announced in January that the administration would consider PLO participation at Geneva if the organization would alter those positions of its Covenant which called for Israel's elimination.²⁵ Carter's public announcement of support for a Palestinian homeland in March was part and parcel of this plan to encourage the PLO to put its trust in the administration. But the PLO resolved at its 13th annual Palestine National Conference that it would not alter its charter, and that the "strategic goal of the PLO is the liberation of Palestine from the...Zionist occupation and making it into a homeland for the people of Palestine."²⁶ Nor was any acceptance of SC Resolution 242 acceptable, as it did not provide for a Palestinian home or the return of refugees to Israel.

The reaction in Israel, both in the national press and in government circles of the ruling Labor party, was that the Palestinian conference had demonstrated once again that the PLO would not make peace with Israel.²⁷ Sadat, aware of Israel's objection to the PLO, and determined to keep the process moving, attempted to moderate his position on Palestinian representation

on his visit to Washington in April. At a news conference at the State Department, he reportedly eliminated the term Palestinian "national rights" in his prepared text and substituted the words "normal rights," a gesture of flexibility towards the Israelis, who claimed that the term "national rights" was a PLO code-word for a PLO state on the West Bank. Sadat also reaffirmed publicly his call for a Jordanian-Palestinian link, consistent with his strategic interests and desire to keep the peace process moving.²⁸

Sadat's own flexibility, the PLO's refusal to change its policy towards Israel or to recognize Resolution 242, and Israel's sharp reaction to the PLO's policy might well have indicated to the administration that its decision to adopt a PLO-oriented policy might require some reconsideration. But Carter obdurately pursued his policy. Thus on May 9 during Asad's visit to Washington, Carter repeated his support for a Palestinian "homeland." Several days later at a press conference he again repeated it.²⁹ Two weeks later, on May 26, the president suggested during a press conference that an Arab-Israeli peace had to be based on several "binding policies," established in a number of UN resolutions, which, Carter stated, established "the right of the Palestinians to have a homeland...They do include the withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories."³⁰ Later the State Department issued a clarifying statement, which stated that Carter had been referring to UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 1948, which called for the return of Palestinians to their homes in Israel or compensation, and to General Assembly Resolution 181 of November 1947, which called for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab states.

It must be noted that Carter was incorrect to suggest that these two resolutions were binding on any of the parties. The only agreed upon and binding resolution was SC Resolution 242, which did not provide for a Palestinian state or the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. Vance, in a statement meant to calm Israeli fears, announced that 242 was the only acceptable basis for a settlement. But Carter's announcement helped to give the impression that the U. S. was moving towards a position that was more to the liking of the PLO than of Israel.

The importance of Carter's repeated calls for a Palestinian homeland, his references to the UN General Assembly resolutions and his gestures to the PLO must be emphasized. The administration had several possible solutions for Palestinian representation to choose from. One was a PLO delegation or a separate Palestinian delegation. Another was a Jordanian delegation with Palestinian participants, or some combination of these solutions. The choice, however, was not, as the administration maintained, a procedural matter. Nor could one maintain, as Quandt did, that it was possible to distinguish between the kind of Palestinian representation that would be accepted at Geneva and the kind of solution to the Palestinian question that would eventually emerge.³¹ As Rita Hauser pointed out in an article in the New York Times,³² the issue of Geneva Palestinian representation and a solution to the Palestinian question were tightly linked. If a PLO delegation attended Geneva, this would most likely lead to the creation of an independent Palestinian state, while a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation would be more closely linked with a Hashemite controlled entity. "Procedure," she pointed out, "makes substance." Thus

by emphasizing the PLO, the administration, whether it was aware of it or not, was in fact supporting an independent Palestinian state rather than a solution involving a leading role for Jordan.

Carter was not oblivious to the different solutions of the Palestinian problem. As he noted during his press conference on April 8, and as he repeated later to a group of American Jewish leaders, the administration was against an "independent Palestinian state"³³ and supported a Jordanian-Palestinian link. But Carter was apparently not aware of the contradiction between his support for a Jordanian oriented solution and the implications of his statements directed towards ^{the} PLO; nor was he aware of the strong link between the procedural and substantive aspects of the Palestinian question.

What explains the administration's continued gestures to the PLO? One explanation is that Carter was simply not completely informed about the Palestinian issue and the complexities of its negotiations. An additional and important explanation was that the policy-making system did not provide for a breathing space in which to evaluate policy. Nor was dissent to the essential lines of the Carter policy permissible. The decision making system, as Brzezinski indicated, was rigidly coherent: "Every action we've taken...was part of a plan for the first 90 days of the administration...that was carried out very systematically."³⁴ Thus the administration, having decided in March to try to involve the PLO in negotiations, continued its attempts to do so regardless of the problems inherent in pursuing the PLO, and regardless of its clear rejection of peace with Israel. Indeed, between March and the end of June, when a new hard-line Israeli government took office, the

Policy Review Committee on the Middle East did not produce one Policy Review Memorandum in which progress could be evaluated. In fact, no such review was undertaken after the second PRM in March, leaving the decisions made in that month as the basic policy guidelines for the rest of the year! This situation, although unfortunate, was also unavoidable; given that the N. S. C.'s Mideast Policy Review Committee was made up of the president's leading advisors on Mideast policy -- Vance, Quandt, and Atherton -- there was no one in a position to evaluate objectively the policy. With no feed-back mechanism, policy-making became dangerously rigid.

The Egyptian-Syrian Gap Widens - July-September 1977

The confusion over the question of Palestinian representation continued during the summer of 1977 and into September, with the administration attempting to reconcile an emerging agreement between Egypt and Israel over Palestinian representation with Syria's insistence that the PLO be represented formally at Geneva. Syria also insisted that the Arab states negotiate with Israel in a unified Arab block -- a clear attempt to impose its will on the conference and prevent the occurrence of separate negotiations. Although the administration did give some support to the Egyptian-Israeli areas of agreement, its attempt at the same time to satisfy Syrian interests eventually threatened both Egyptian and Israeli objectives.

The outline of a compromise over Palestinian representation began to emerge with Begin's visit to Washington in July, during which he unveiled his plans for dealing with the Palestinian issue. They entailed offering functional autonomy to the inhabitants

of the West Bank and Gaza, that is, a form of local control over administrative affairs, while Israeli would maintain security functions.³⁵ As to the question of Palestinian representation, Begin insisted that Israel would only negotiate with Jordan, although according to Dayan he also accepted that Palestinians would be present in the Jordanian delegation, and that their "credentials would not be checked."³⁶ The implication was that the Palestinians could have some kind of affiliation with the PLO, although not on an official or formal level. Begin also insisted that Israel would not negotiate a peace treaty with a unified Arab block, but would only negotiate on a bilateral basis with each Arab state -- a condition that would prevent Syria from holding a veto over the actions of other Arab states.

Sadat was intent on responding to Begin's plans. In an attempt to keep the process moving he accepted on July 4th Begin's suggestion that the Geneva conference be reconvened on October 10th.³⁷ Two weeks later, Sadat, again trying to encourage progress and demonstrate some flexibility, suggested that, "if Israel wants peace...Palestinian representation will not be a problem...Alternatives can be found."³⁸ In order to underline this point, Sadat, in the presence of Vance, who was making his second trip through the Middle East during the first week of August, reiterated his support for a Jordanian-Palestinian link. Vance publicly accepted this proposal, as well as another proposal that Sadat had made during the beginning of July -- that the Arab states and Israel meet informally in New York during the first few weeks of September in order to prepare the groundwork for Geneva.³⁹ It was absolutely necessary, Sadat insisted, that the

conference be well prepared, lest the participants "sit there for ten years" without making any progress.⁴⁰

The Americans were not oblivious to Sadat's show of moderation. Vance, as we noted, endorsed his call for a Jordanian-Palestinian link. On July 12, Carter repeated his support of the idea during a press conference: "We have never tried," he told a reporter, "to define the geographic boundaries of a so-called Palestinian entity. My own preference (is)...that it would be tied in with Jordan and not be independent. But I don't have the authority...to try to impose that preference on the parties that will negotiate."⁴¹

Carter's statement was strange, if not somewhat misleading. How was one to distinguish between his "own" publicly expressed "preference" and official U. S. Policy? More importantly, Carter's statements in the following weeks suggested that he in fact supported some kind of PLO-dominated Palestinian state, as well as the right of Palestinians to return to Israel. And as they were expressed in a public fashion, they indicated some willingness on his part to "impose" a solution, despite his declaration that he had no such intention. Thus on August 8th, the president reached out to the PLO by suggesting that its recognition of Resolution 242 would "open up an avenue" for its participation at Geneva.⁴² In addition, Carter stated that he would accept a qualified PLO endorsement of 242. The idea, Carter explained, was that the PLO could recognize 242 but at the same time state that the Palestinians had an "additional status other than just refugees." Six weeks later Carter repeated a similar offer and also suggested that PLO acceptance of 242 would open up the possibility

for PLO-American talks.⁴³

Carter's invitation, however, was completely rejected by the PLO. The organization, explained Farouk Khaddoumi, rejects "242 because that resolution...implies recognition of Israel within secure borders...The PLO will not recognize Israel, even if a resolution recognizing the national rights of the Palestinians is passed."⁴⁴ Underscoring this statement, the PLO's Central Council met on August 25 and resolved that 242 was completely unacceptable. Only a new resolution, along the lines of UN General Assembly Resolution 3262, which called for the return of Palestinians to Israel -- would be an acceptable basis for peace.⁴⁵ This was consistent with the PLO's insistence that Israel permit all Palestinian refugees to return to Israel who so chose -- a demand that was completely unacceptable to Israel because it implied the very disappearance of the state.

The unfortunate effect of Carter's pronouncements was that they suggested the United States supported a PLO -- rather than a Jordanian -- oriented solution to the Palestinian question. They could thus only encourage the Syrians to take a hard line and demand a formal PLO presence at Geneva. For if the U.S. indicated some interest in this idea, why should Syria demand anything less?⁴⁶ Accordingly, Asad maintained his stand on the preparatory meeting in September between the Arabs and the Israelis. Asad well knew that such a meeting might lead to separate Arab-Israeli agreements. In a veiled warning to Egypt, he stated that "Syria ...(is)...opposed to partial or unilateral agreements" with Israel.⁴⁷

Syria's suspicions of Egypt's motives highlighted the growing differences between the two countries, both of which began to

pressure the PLO to adopt their respective positions on Palestinian representation during August and September. Egypt, in a bid to have the PLO accept, at least unofficially, some compromise, convened the "Higher Egyptian Palestinian Committee" in Cairo, of which Yasir Arafat was a member. Sadat met with Arafat during the months of August, September and October hoping to work out some kind of arrangement, but his efforts did not appear to be successful. Syria, meanwhile, attempted to maintain its control over the PLO, and insisted that "there shall be no links between the (Palestinian) state and Jordan before the Geneva conference ...; moreover, any links with Jordan later on should be in the form of a federation between Syria, Palestine and Jordan."⁴⁸ Clearly, the Syrians were intent on assuring that their influence would predominate in any final solution of the Palestinian issue.

The U. S.-Israel Working Papers and the Joint Communiqué

By the beginning of September 1977 the haggling and disagreements over the question of Palestinian representation seemed to assure that there would be no reconvening of the Geneva conference in October as Israel and Egypt had hoped. Meanwhile, the internal situation in Egypt continued to deteriorate. July had seen the kidnapping and murder of a former minister of religious affairs by an Islamic fundamentalist group. The arrests of many of its members continued during July and August. In mid-July as well, Sadat, as we noted earlier, arrested a Libyan-trained group of assassins sent to kill him, and then engaged Libya in a brief and bloody border war. In these circumstances, Sadat began to feel concern about his own ability to remain in office unless some dramatic sign of progress towards peace were made. It was not

fortuitous, then, that Sadat, upon learning from Rumania's president Ceausescu in August that Begin was serious about making peace with Egypt,⁴⁹ decided it was time to move. The occasion for an arrangement with Israel arose when King Hassan of Morocco suggested that the two sides meet secretly in his country to explore the possibilities of an agreement. Israel and Egypt readily agreed, and on October 16, Israel's foreign minister, Moshe Dayan, and Egypt's deputy minister and close friend of Sadat, Hassan Tuhami, met in Tangiers.

The agreement that resulted from this meeting,⁵⁰ according to Dayan, was that the two sides would meet again in the following weeks to agree on the terms of a peace treaty. Following this, the two sides, Tuhami suggested, would go to Geneva "merely to affix our signatures" to the treaty. Egypt and Israel were to submit a fait accompli at Geneva, using the conference to give a guise of "comprehensive peace" to what was in fact a separate agreement!

Following the conclusion of this historic arrangement, Dayan flew on to Washington, where he met with American officials in order to agree to the procedures for the Geneva conference. At a series of meetings, which were attended by Quandt, Atherton, Brzezinski and the president himself, the Americans pressured Dayan to accept a formula--presented in an "American-Israeli Working-Paper"--according to which Israel would negotiate with one unified Arab block throughout the conference. Such an agreement would have put an end to Egypt's and Israel's plans because a unified Arab block would prevent Egypt from signing an agreement with Israel! And since, as Dayan and Quandt both note ⁵¹ the Americans were aware of the Egyptian-Israelis meetings and plans,

one can only assume that the United States, bending to Syrian insistence on a unified delegation, was prepared to frustrate the Israeli-Egyptian plan for the sake of the Carter administration's comprehensive treaty!

Dayan was determined to prevent the Syrians from blocking his path. He insisted, as he had in July, that the unified Arab delegation could meet only in the opening ceremonial session, and that following this it would divide into separate countries which would negotiate with Israel on a bilateral basis. As to Palestinian representation, Dayan agreed -- reluctantly -- to the formula offered by Begin in July, according to which Israel would negotiate with Jordan, and that the Jordanian delegation would include Palestinians who were not members of the PLO, but whose credentials would nevertheless "not be checked."⁵²

Whether the Americans agreed completely with Dayan's conditions is not clear. The Israeli government, at least, was under the impression that the conditions were acceptable to the U.S., and on Sept. 25, it informed American officials that the arrangement was agreeable to Israel.⁵³ The Americans, however, were not happy with the provisions for separate geographical committees and the exclusion of the PLO. Syria, as Sadat later told Dayan,⁵⁴ insisted on a unified delegation and threatened to walk out on the entire process if its demands were not met. Thus on September 29, the Americans presented Dayan with another proposal, in the form of a second "Israel-American Working Paper." It stated that Israel would submit at the end of the conference all peace agreements to the United Arab Delegation for its approval. To make matters worse, Syria, with Russian support, insisted that the committees

be organized according to function, that is, that the committees should deal with subjects such as the nature of peace, borders, etc., instead of being organized according to country. This would place both the Syrians and the Soviets, who were to be co-chairmen of the conference, in every committee, and provide them with the opportunity to block an Egyptian-Israeli agreement.

On the same day that the United States submitted its second Working Paper to Dayan, it also gave him an advanced copy of a joint Soviet-U. S. communiqué on Geneva to be issued on October 1st. In the communiqué, which was issued by Secretary of State Vance and Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs A. A. Gromyko, the U. S. and the Soviet Union called for "the resolution of the Palestinian question including insuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; termination of the state of war and establishment of normal peaceful relations."⁵⁵ They also affirmed "their intention through joint efforts and in their contacts with the parties concerned to facilitate in every way the resumption of the work of the conference not later than December 1977."

Dayan well understood the important relationship between the second American Working Paper and the communiqué. As he saw it, the Americans were trying to please the Soviets and the Arabs, in particular Syria.⁵⁶ From his perspective, the communiqué was meant to underline and reinforce the emerging procedures favored by the U. S. This is not to say that by itself the communiqué was not objectionable to the Israelis. They objected to the use of the term "legitimate rights" of the Palestinian People,⁵⁷ for the term had always been used by the PLO as a code word for a PLO state and the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel.⁵⁸

Dayan and his counterparts, including the Prime Minister, noted the related absence of any mention of Resolution 242 or reference to a peace treaty. Thus the weight of the communiqué suggested a return to a PLO-orientation once again! But its central significance, as far as Dayan was concerned, was that it would permit the Soviets to be in a central position to support radical Arab claims and frustrate Egyptian-Israeli plans. "We will be confronted with a singleminded Soviet-American fortress," he warned.⁵⁹ The communique "granted the Soviet Union renewed power in the conflict...the Arabs will accept the hint that from now on the Soviet Union is an equal partner and will solicit its help."

The reader will not be surprised to learn that Sadat was no more pleased with the communiqué than the Israelis! Previously, in August, Sadat had publicly warned against involving the Soviets in the negotiating process at too early a stage. Answering a reporter's question as to whether the Soviets should be brought into Sadat's proposed informal working groups (that Sadat had suggested should meet in September), the president replied: "No, not at the beginning. However, since (they)...are cochairmen of the Geneva conference, naturally...the Soviet Union will be completely informed of matters as part of this operation."⁶⁰ "Informed," yes! But at a distance! Sadat was afraid that the Soviets would make trouble for him at the conference by spurring the Arabs on to make unreasonable demands that would prevent him from consummating his plans for an Egyptian-Israeli agreement. As he explained to a Congressional delegation which visited Cairo in mid-November: "When we arrive in Geneva, it is certain that my relations with the Soviet Union will be tense...I hope the Soviet

Union will not adopt a stand...and that they will...not try to create difficulties."⁵¹ And in a public statement in which he indirectly complained about the communiqué, he said:

You must have heard of the communiqué that was issued by the Soviet Union and the U. S. before the convening of the Geneva conference...My relations with the Soviets are strained and it appears that whatever I do does not go to their liking at all. I fear the same attitude could be adopted ⁵² in Geneva -- and they are one of the cosponsors.

Like Dayan, Sadat also understood the relationship between the communiqué and the demands Syria was making as to a unified Arab delegation. Sadat made his objections clear to President Carter on this matter, but as he later told Dayan, Carter "urged me to accept Asad's proposals."⁵³ Thus American pressure was taking the initiative out of Sadat's hands and putting it into the hands of his competitors -- the Syrians. This was unacceptable. "I am optimistic," Sadat told a group of Jordanian journalists, "As long as I hold the initiative, I am optimistic. Why? Because I hold the initiative."⁵⁴ With the issuing of the communiqué and the administration's support for a unified Arab delegation, Sadat's optimism over Geneva began to evaporate.

In the week following the issuing of the communique, Dayan and his American counterparts attempted to salvage some agreement on Geneva. On October 5 an agreement was reached. According to the new agreement, which Dayan made public on October 13, the Arabs would be represented in a unified Arab bloc during the opening ceremonies, and then, as Israel had previously insisted, the Arabs and the Israelis would negotiate in separate bilateral country committees. In a further attempt to show some flexibility

on the Palestinian question, Dayan agreed that the West Bank and Gaza "issues will be discussed in a working group to consist of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Arabs." Dayan refused, however, as he had done in the past, to permit the presence of any official PLO members. Finally, the agreement noted that Resolution 242 remains "the agreed basis for negotiations at Geneva," a statement Israel insisted on as a correction to the communique.

This agreement was important for several reasons. As Dayan pointed out, it was the first time ever that Israel had agreed to negotiate over the West Bank and Gaza in a separate committee, not as part of a Jordanian committee.⁶⁶ Yet, consistent with Israel's interests, Jordan was to be part of the West Bank committee and would have some say in a solution. Furthermore, as Sadat noted during a press conference, Egypt was also to sit on the committee.⁶⁷ This provision was consistent with Egypt's desire to insure that any Palestinian solution or Palestinian entity would be more closely linked with its interests than those of Syria, which was notably excluded from the West Bank committee.

But no sooner had the U. S. and Israel agreed on a new working paper than several stories appeared in the Israeli and American press strongly conveying the impression that the U. S. was still pushing for functional committees, committees which were to be chaired by all the Arab states, as well as the Soviets.⁶⁸ In addition, American diplomats contradicted Dayan's public statements following the agreement that no PLO members would be present at the negotiations.⁶⁹

At the time, Sadat was lobbying hard to convince the PLO to accept a compromise on Palestinian representation, but Arafat, pressured by

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Syria, did not agree. Syria insisted on having its way. To underline this point, it sent an envoy to Cairo who demanded that Sadat accept functional committees and that he reject any notion of bilateral geographical negotiations.⁷¹ For Sadat, this appears to have been too much; the Syrians, he later told the Israelis, "are not serious about making peace."⁷² It was at this point, Sadat indicates in his memoirs, fearing that "we were about to be caught up in another vicious circle of formal procedures,"⁷³ that he decided upon his trip to Jerusalem.

One must emphasize, however, that Sadat did not go to Jerusalem simply to "break the psychological barrier," as he often said. Nor did he go merely to get around procedural issues, which he claimed did not interest him. Indeed, far from being prepared to accept "any procedures whatsoever," as he told the People's Assembly on November 8,⁷⁴ Sadat opposed the procedures that Syria insisted upon and that the U. S. at least tacitly supported. His trip to Jerusalem was thus the only "procedure" left open to him by the close of 1977.

The Limits of Coherency and the Need for Policy Options

John Badeau, a former American diplomat with long experience in the Middle East, has written that the "Arab world" is a "nebulous term (that) does not correspond to a political entity with which diplomatic relations can be maintained."⁷⁵ This observation serves as a useful lesson to the Carter administration, which treated the "Arab World" as a monolithic entity. The problem was readily apparent in the Brookings Report, which both Brzezinski and Quandt recognized in my interviews with them, as "undifferentiated." But there was nothing stopping the administra-

tion from filling in those areas of the report that required more depth. Nothing, that is, except the belief that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict had to be found as quickly as possible, and at a global level that served presidential interests. This required simplification of the complex elements of the Mideast environment, or at least it demanded ignoring those elements which might have suggested that a quick and comprehensive solution was not as easily obtainable as the administration originally supposed. As is often the case when global concerns play a central role in policy-making, the administration focused not on the complexities of the region but on a solution that served presidential interests by rapidly resolving a putative threat to American national interests.

The administration thus decided in Spring 1977 to pursue a solution to the question of Palestinian representation which it assumed would be acceptable to all the Arab parties. It did not stop to reconsider this policy or to undertake another NSC Policy Memorandum during the rest of the year, despite the many indications that a policy review was necessary. We do not mean to maintain here that the U. S. was solely responsible for the breakdown of the pre-Geneva talks. Certainly Syria's intransigence, as well as Israel's steadfast refusal to accept the PLO at the negotiations, made things difficult. But Israel at a few key points was ready to compromise, and Egypt, although by no means in complete agreement with Israel, was also ready to find a solution to the sticky problem of Palestinian representation. The administration, viewing the opportunities for compromise, could have pressured the Syrians to alter their position instead of constantly

trying to satisfy their demands. That the administration did not want to pressure the Syrians was a tribute to its determination to gain a comprehensive solution, for if it pressed too hard, the Syrians might have simply jumped ship.

The administration also can not be blamed for failing to foresee Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. It is always easier with the benefit of hindsight to claim -- as Elie Kedourie does -- that the U. S. should have done so.⁷⁶ But no government, no matter how skilled, is equipped with the diplomatic crystal ball necessary to predict such a remarkable step. Yet the administration was responsible, as we have illustrated, for frustrating Sadat's aims and for not being sensitive to his own particular needs and problems.

Despite a certain measure of responsibility for the failure of the Geneva process, Quandt still maintains that the administration was in no way responsible for encouraging Sadat to abandon the Geneva boat!⁷⁷ After all, he points out, Sadat agreed on the terms of a comprehensive peace; he agreed publicly and unofficially to PLO participation -- and he knew that the Soviets would eventually be involved in the negotiations. Thus the communiqué, Quandt insists, did not play a role in Sadat's decision to go to Jerusalem. Quandt is half-right; Sadat did accept the original plan. But as his own situation changed, he had to adjust his decisions to the needs of his country. What was acceptable at one point was no longer acceptable at another. As to Soviet involvement, it is also true that Sadat knew the Soviets would be participants in the process. But he expected their involvement to be minimal, and, as Quandt suggested, "symbolic." However,

American support for Soviet involvement in functional negotiating committees, and the joint Soviet-American communiqué, suggested that the Soviets would play a substantive role. Far from being "frozen out" of the process, as Brzezinski maintained they would be, the Soviets were melted right into it!

That the administration plowed ahead with its policies, despite the many problems they created, and despite the indications that the assumptions underlining them were shallow, had a lot to do with the nature of the policy-making system itself. Based on a small and cohesive group, there was little chance that the administration would evaluate the effectiveness of its decisions. In many ways, the characteristics of the decision-making team illustrated well Irving Janis's concept of "group think,"⁷⁸ according to which the dynamic of small group interaction, particularly during a period of crisis, encourages a very high and disfunctional level of unanimity. This then produces an unwillingness to accept information which contradicts the agreed upon policy, leading to decisions which are based on a misperception of reality.

Another characteristic of the administration's decision-making style, strongly related to the one above, was its presidential character. By "presidential" we mean a system in which the president is highly involved in decision-making and the carrying out of policy; and a system in which a small group of White House officials, or officials linked strongly to the White House, make decisions without the benefit of regional experts in the State Department. As the Rudolchs put it, reflecting on Nixon's 1971 policy towards India and Pakistan:⁷⁹

Presidential preferences for closely held decisions and/or personal control of plans and operations blocked non-presidential, line officials from knowledge of operative assumptions relevant for related policy arenas and, in turn, cut off presidential level actors from information, arguments and options relevant to the closely held decisions or operations.

The limitations of presidential involvement are illustrated by Carter's own participation in the Mideast policy-making process. He did not command the expertise of Mideast politics or the complexities of the Palestinian question required for his deep personal involvement in policy. Thus when Vance presented him with a copy of the joint Soviet-American communiqué of October 1, 1977, he was not in a position to understand the significance of diplomatic code-words such as "legitimate rights" versus "legitimate interests." The adoption of the first term indicated a subtle, yet significant, shift towards a more pro-Palestinian position, but Carter was apparently not fully aware of this and thus could not understand why the Israelis were so upset over the communiqué.⁸⁰ On a more general level, his many public statements as to Palestinian and PLO participation only helped freeze the positions of the various parties at a very early stage in negotiations. Diplomacy is best carried out in a relatively quiet manner, secluded from the public eye. Presidential involvement, which by its very nature is bound to be public, makes the business of diplomacy difficult.

What can be said for the president can also be said for his advisors. The White House policy team could have benefited from the periodic input of regional and country experts at the State Department, which could have assisted in evaluating progress. It

can rightly be pointed out that the NSC's Mideast Policy Review Committee was in a sense an "interdepartmental committee," as it included State Department experts such as Atherton and Saunders, as well as Quandt, an Arabist who originally worked in the State Department. But these men were part of the presidential team, in charge of carrying out policy. As such, they provided "effectiveness," without the objectivity necessary to accomplish the goals of their policies. Furthermore, their roles as members of the presidential team, and their constant involvement in carrying out policy, assured that their attention and preferences remained close to the president's global interests. As the Rudolphs note:⁸¹

When the fundamental purpose of an interdepartmental committee is to serve the president's will and preferences then hierarchical behavior will govern discussion, procedure and outcomes, and membership will reflect presidential pleasure... So long as the interdepartmental committee system is dominated by the presidentially oriented National Security Council it remains susceptible to presidential influence and manipulation.

This did not mean that the State Department had no role in Carter's Mideast policy. Indeed, State was very supportive of it, and several times issued statements to push the process forward. And the belief in the Near East Bureau that the PLO's largest faction, al-Fatah, was moderate and would eventually recognize Israel, lent strong support to the administration's gestures to the PLO. It may be, therefore, that in the case of PLO participation, or more generally in regards to Palestinian involvement in negotiations, the State Department would have simply agreed with the administration. But on other issues, regional or country experts could have made an important contribution.

The issuing of the joint Soviet-American communique is a good example of this. The American officials involved in its formulation were limited to Vance and Atherton; no one else was contacted in the State Department to offer advice. Country experts on Egypt might have provided some useful insights into the effect of the communique and could have informed Vance of Sadat's severe mistrust of the Soviets. Officials at the Israel desk might have pointed out some of the pitfalls as far as Israeli sensitivities were concerned. But the presidential system excluded such possibilities, or at least made them very unlikely.

The sum total of the Carter approach to the Middle East points towards three things. First, it is critically important, especially in relation to a region that is as unpredictable as the Middle East, that every administration have some way of generating policy options. Dissent must be fostered in order to test policy options and to prepare for change. Whether the system is a highly centralized one such as the "Formal Options System"⁶⁴ found in the Nixon-Kissinger White House, or a more loosely organized "Multiple Advocacy System" does not concern us here; what is important is that options be generated in a system that meets the tastes of a given president and his administration. Second, although a clear-cut separation between policy analysis, choice and operations is neither wise nor realistic, it is important to have some outside objective analysis that will make some distinction between these three divisions of policy-making. Finally, such analysis should come from outside the White House, from institutions that are sensitive to regional issues. Regional input that balances global views offers the prospect of a more

viable policy output. Furthermore, since presidents and their aids must respond to day to day events, there is little opportunity for long range planning and analysis. Career diplomats and analysts in the State Department can provide the kind of "deliberative coordination" that the White House, because it must respond to the "imperatives" of the moment, cannot provide.

Footnotes-Part Three--

1. Literally "Openness" Policy.
2. "Atonement and Return," (Hijra).
3. Sadat, in the many speeches he made during this period often blamed the Libyans and the Soviets for the disturbances in his country.
4. "There is nobody other than the U.S.," Sadat stated, "who can exert pressure on Israel because the Americans supply it with everything from a loaf of bread to Phantom aircraft... The U.S. constitutes Israel's lifeline." See FBIS Reports 77-177 June 17, 1977. (Sadat interview with London ITV June 16).
5. Sadat told a group of U.S. Congressmen in July: "I wonder why you are like this, I mean so extreme. Either you go to Vietnam with 750,000 soldiers, spend 150 billion dollars and lose 50,000 or you stand idly by and let the Soviet Union have a free hand in Africa." FBIS 77-135 July 14, 1977 (Cairo MENA 13 July).
6. For a discussion of this issue see Fouad Ajami's The Arab Predicament, Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1981). Especially pages 77-122.
7. There were terrorist incidences in Syria as well in 1977, organized and carried out by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and related groups.
8. The Syrians had originally entered the war on the side of the Christians, but once the PLO began to get the upper hand and challenged Syrian authority in Lebanon, Syria moved to crush the Palestinians.
9. The extent to which Syria seriously intends or desires to actually annex these territories is a matter of dispute. It is more likely that it seeks to exercise as much political influence as it can in the area, rather than incorporate countries such as Lebanon into its boundaries.
10. Speaking at the Southern Council on International and Public Affairs in Atlanta in April 1977, Hussein complained: "The Rabat Arab Summit denied the Palestinian people the right to self-determination. We were told we have no right to speak for the Palestinians; the PLO imposes itself on the Palestinian people." (From Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, "Let Them Speak for Themselves", 1978).
11. For an interesting look at Hussein and his relationship with the Palestinians of the West Bank, see Aaron S. Kleiman's Israel, Jordan Palestine: The Search for a Durable Peace. (Washington D.C.: Sage Publications The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown Univ. 1981).
12. Studies suggest that many Palestinian refugees continue to desire what they consider a basic right--the right to return to their former homes in what was Palestine. See for example "Palestinian Refugees: Two Surveys of Uprootedness," by Halim Barakat and Peter Dodd, in Sidney S. Alexander and Paul Hammond's Political Dynamics in the Middle East, (New York: American Elsevier Press 1972). pp 225-245.

See also Don Peretz's "The Palestine Arabs," in the same volume, pp 267-317. Finally, for an interesting look at the Palestinian desire to return, see Yehoshafat Markabi's article, "The Palestinians in the Fifties and Their Awakening as Reflected in Their Literature," in Moshe Ma'oz (Ed.) Palestinian Arab Politics, (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press 1975).

13. See Y. Markabi, Palestinians and Israels, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing Company 1974); William Quandt, Fuad Jabber, Ann Mosely Lesch (Eds.), (Berkeley: University of California Press 1974); and Fawaz Turki, The Disinherited, Journal of a Palestinian Exile, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).
14. See Resolutions of the 13th Palestinian National Council, in Palestine PLO Information Bulletin (Beirut, PLO). April 1977.
15. See Karkabi (1974) "The Debate at the Twelfth Palestinian Council, June 1974," pp 281-282.
16. Newsweek interview, March 1977.
17. The right of return is a basic demand made by the PLO as a precondition of peace. See interview with Khaddoumi in Newsweek, Jan 5, 1975. The PLO explained in May 1977 that it would accept a new resolution to replace 242 which would provide for the "stopping of immigration to Israel and the Repatriation of the Palestinians expelled in 1948." The demand for return is not consistent with the continued existence of Israel as a Jewish state. See New York Times, May 5, 1977 p 5 for the PLO statement.
18. The PLO indicated it would accept General Assembly Resolution 3236 (XXIX) of Nov. 22, 1974, which affirmed the right of Palestinians "to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted." The document can be found in John Norton Moore, The Arab Israeli Conflict, (Princeton; Princeton Univ. Press 1977) pl203.
19. See Itamar Rabinovich, "The Challenge of Diversity: American Policy and the System of Inter-Arab Relations 1973-1977," in Shaked and Rabinovich (1980) p 191.
20. Ibid p 191.
21. Ibid p 191.
22. See Facts on File (1980) p 132.
23. See Itamar Rabinovich (1980) p 193.
24. See Facts on File (1980) p 132. It should be noted here that Sadat did not object to a PLO presence at Geneva itself, but rather he aimed for a Palestinian-PLO presence that would be part of or linked to a Jordanian delegation. He hoped that by such an arrangement, he would be assured that any future Palestinian entity would be linked more with the conservative Jordanian regime than with the Syrians and the Soviets. Later Sadat, in August, tried to convince the PLO to accept some compromise on Palestinian representation, one that involved a Jordanian link.

25. Interview with Quandt.
26. See Palestine PLO Information Bulletin, (Beirut: PLO) April 1, 1977 p. 10.
27. See FBIS Reports of March and April 1977 for Israeli reactions.
28. See Facts on File (1980) p 136.
29. Ibid p 138. And Presidential Papers of James Carter, News Conference, May 12, p 860.
30. Facts on File, p 140.
31. Interview with Quandt.
32. See Rita Hauser, "Carter and the PLO" New York Times, October 5, 1977. Mrs. Hauser repeated the same point to me in our interview. She pointed out that a separate PLO delegation at the Geneva conference would be tantamount to giving the PLO de jure recognition, while Palestinian representatives would not be considered as representatives of a state.
33. Carter's Presidential Papers, p 601.
34. Quoted from U.S. News and World Report, May 1970; in Simon Serfaty's "Brzezinski: Play it Again, Zbig," Foreign Policy (Fall 1978) No 32.
35. Facts on File (1980) p 146.
36. See Dayan's revealing account of American-Israeli talks in: Breakthrough A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israeli Negotiations (New York: Knopf 1981) p 71. In fact Begin, according to Dayan, agreed to the participation of "not known PLO members;" an agreement which did not please Dayan. See Dayan (1981) p 71.
37. Facts on File (1980) p 146.
38. FBIS 77-143 July 26, 1977. (Sadat interview Cairo MENA July 24, 1977).
39. Facts on File p 151.
40. Sadat repeated this point throughout July and August. He simply could not afford a failure at Geneva. See for example Al Usbou al-Arabi interview with Sadat in FBIS 77-128, July 5, 1977) Cairo MENA July 2'77.
41. Presidential Papers p 1236.
42. Ibid p 1459.
43. Ibid p 1623.
44. FBIS 77-175 Aug. 15, 1977. (In interview with paper, Monday Morning, Aug. 14, 1977.
45. Facts on File (1980). p 154.
46. This problem continued through the period, as Carter persisted in his attempts to satisfy Syrian interests.

47. Facts on File (1980). p 143.
48. See Rabinovich (1980) p 193.
49. See Eitan Haber, Zeev Schiff and Ehud Yaari, The Year of the Dove, (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1979) pp 2-21.
50. Dayan (1981) p 48.
51. Quandt interview. Also see Dayan (1981) p 53.
52. Dayan (1981) p. 71. Also see New York Times report Sept 27, 1977.
53. FBIS 77-185. September 26, 1977. (Jerusalem Domestic Service Sept. 25, 1977).
54. Dayan (1981) p 29. Dayan's account, according to which the Americans insisted on functional committees and on Soviet involvement were consistent with various press reports at the time, as we shall note below.
55. See text of communique in Facts on File (1980) p 160.
56. Dayan (1981) pp 65-66.
57. See Dayan interview in FBIS 77-192 Oct. 4, 1977 (Yedi-ot Aharanot, 3 Oct. 1977). Dayan noted that in previous joint Soviet-American communiqués, the American had used the term "legitimate interests," rather than "legitimate rights." It is notable that the Egyptians were aware of the significance in the change of language. Cairo Radio broadcast the following: "This expression (legitimate rights) represent a move forward of the U.S. positions because U.S. diplomacy previously used the expression "legitimate interests." FBIS 77-191 Oct. 3, 1977. (Cairo Domestic Service Oct 2, 1977).
58. The PLO defines "legitimate national rights," or "self-determination" as the "right of liberating the entire homeland and the establishment of the national Palestinian state." See "Popular Congress and the 10th Extraordinary Council April 1972" in Harkabi (1974) p 105.
59. FBIS 77-192 Oct 4, 1977. (Tel Aviv Yedi-ot Aharanot 3 Oct. '77).
60. FBIS 77-149 Aug. 3, 1977 (Cairo Domestic Service Aug. 2, 1977).
61. FBIS 77-220 Nov. 16, 1977. (Cairo MENA Nov. 15, 1977).
62. FBIS 77-222 Nov. 17 (Interview with Canadian Television Nov. 16, 1977).
63. Dayan (1981) p 88.
64. 77-200 Oct. 17, 1977 (Cairo Domestic Service 15 Oct. 1977).
65. See agreement in Facts on File p 162.
66. Dayan (1981) p 71.
67. FBIS 77-215 Nov. 5, 1977 (Cairo MENA Nov 4, 1977).
68. See reports in Jerusalem Post Oct. 3, 1977. Also FBIS 77-192 Oct. 5,

- FBIS 77-197 Oct. 9, 1977. Bernard Gwertzman reported in the New York Times on Oct. 6, 1977 that the working-paper provided for both "bilateral" negotiating teams and "multilateral" teams which would deal with issues such as the "future of the Israeli-occupied West Bank." This arrangement would also enable the Syrians to frustrate Egyptian-Israeli plans by permitting the Syrians to advance solutions to the Palestinian issue which ran counter to Egyptian-Israeli positions.
69. See Facts on File p 163.
70. Broadcasts from Egypt during September, October and November indicated that Sadat was trying to convince the PLO to accept some compromise on Palestinian representation. See the FBIS reports for this period.
71. Sadat revealed this in his speech to the People's Assembly after returning from his trip to Jerusalem. FBIS 77-228, Nov. 27, 1977. (Cairo Domestic Service 26 Nov. 1977). Sadat also blamed the Syrians for "pushing and pressuring the Palestinians" during his speech. And he warned that behind the Syrians stood the Soviets who, he suggested, were causing all the problems.
72. This Sadat told to Israeli officials, according to Pinchus Lavi, an Israeli diplomat who was an assistant to Dayan at the time. According to Lavi, Sadat also complained about the issuing of the communique and what he considered to be the untimely entrance of the Soviets into the negotiating process. Lavi's information, is, as we have noted above, in accordance with Sadat's own public statements.
73. Anwar el-Sadat: In Search of Identity (New York: Harper & Row 1978) p. 302.
74. FBIS 77-217 Nov. 10, 1977 (Cairo Domestic Service Nov. 8, 1977).
75. John Badeau, The American Approach to the Arab World, (New York: Harper and Row 1968) p 16.
76. Elie Kedourie, "How to (And how not to) Seek Peace in the Middle East) Encounter (May 1978) Vol 1, No. 5 pp 44-45.
77. Interview with Quandt.
78. Irving Janis, Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign Policy Decisions and Fiascoes. (Boston, Houghton Mifflin).
79. See The Rudolphs (1980) p 36.
80. The joint Soviet-American communique of 1973 and 1974, spoke of "legitimate interests" rather than "legitimate rights," as we noted above.
81. See Rudolphs (1980) pp 20-21.

CONCLUSION

The logic of comprehensive peace

Conclusion

A good deal of the debate over the proper theoretical approach to adopt when analyzing foreign policy has pitted traditional "rationalist" theories against more recent pluralist or "bureaucratic" theories. As the study of Carter's Mideast policy suggests, neither explanation by itself suffices. To treat the decision-making process as a "black-box" in which a group of officials make rational decisions in the interests of "national security" leaves out the political dimension involved in and among bureaucracies. However to simply treat foreign policy as a bureaucratic bargaining game of "pulling and hauling" suggests that policy-makers do not make what they believe to be rational decisions in response to events in the international environment. Each explanation leaves gaps in the analysis, gaps which we have suggested can be filled by understanding how the two realms interact. Our model focuses on how a set of international events can, by identifying a particular issue with American security interests, transfer the locus of decision-making over the issue from the bureaucratic realm of the State Department to the "rationalist" realm of the White House.

The growing hostilities between Israel and Egypt during the 1969-1973 period were the first events to thrust Kissinger and the Nixon White House into Mideast policy. But as their attention was erratic, the State Department remained to compete with the White House for control over policy. It was the 1973 Mideast war and the subsequent quadrupling of oil prices which finally brought the Arab-Israeli conflict to the full attention of the White House. Kissinger, concerned with the rising price of oil, the possibility of another embargo, and the threat of an American-Soviet confrontation, began to pursue a solution to the conflict. And as oil prices shot up and OPEC power increased, so the notion grew that a comprehensive peace was necessary. Although Kissinger never stated openly that his objective was a global settlement, his actions pointed in that direction.

White House involvement in Mideast policy however, did not mean that the State Department was without influence. With the Ford White House increasingly interested in a settlement, men like William Quandt and Harold Saunders, who had for some time advocated a comprehensive settlement, now found their influence on the rise. So when the Carter administration placed an Arab-Israeli agreement at the center of its policy concerns, these men were brought into the White House team. The White House then took charge of Mideast policy, with the N.S.C. playing the lead role. From this process an important lesson emerges: One cannot explain the centralization of Mideast policy in the Carter White House merely by analyzing the decision-making process as it took shape during the early days of the administration. Rather, one must look at a series of events over several years prior to the administration, during which international factors slowly acted upon the bureaucratic realm to bring Mideast policy under the purview of the president.

The centralization of Mideast policy in the White House and the determination with which Carter pursued an Arab-Israeli settlement demonstrated that the administration's policies fitted well into the traditional foreign policies American presidents have pursued since the close of World War Two. Perceiving a major crisis which might draw the superpowers into conflict, ruin international economic stability and bring the Third World and industrialized countries to loggerheads, Carter moved boldly to secure international stability. This has been the persistent theme of presidents since Roosevelt--the prevention of an outburst of war or some other form of international conflict which might produce another major world war. In the late forties and fifties policy was focused on the "containment" of Soviet influence and to a lesser degree on the securing of Western economic stability. In the late sixties and during the early seventies, emphasis was placed on reaching

mutual understandings with the Soviets through the policy of "detente," In the mid-seventies, as the Third World began to demand a more equitable sharing of the world's wealth, and as economic problems began to shake the Western alliance, economic issues became an increasingly important element of American foreign policy.

Like other presidents before him, Carter believed that the chief executive had to play a leading role in dramatizing the new challenges and encouraging the foreign policy bureaucracy to deal with them. To do this, he needed a persuasive theme that would unite the foreign policy bureaucracy behind him and legitimate his leadership. Thirty years before him, President Truman had furnished an example of how to accomplish this. Aware that financial chaos in the West could lead to Soviet intervention or worse a superpower confrontation, he decided to seek the support of Congress for the Marshall Plan, and most importantly, for American financial backing of a new international monetary and trade system. Faced by the opposition of business interests in Congress and the federal bureaucracy to this policy, Truman emphasized the themes of "containment" and "Soviet imperialism" to garner support. Three decades later however, the theme of containment had worn thin, while new problems of economic interdependence and energy shortages were appearing on the international stage. Aware of the growing importance attached to these issues by leaders in business and academic circles, Carter seized upon the concepts of "Trilateralism" and "World Order Policy" to meet the new threats to international stability. Brzezinski and other leading members of the Trilateral Commission were brought in, and Carter announced the end of the age of balance of power diplomacy and the beginning of a new era of cooperation and World Order Policy.

To some, Carter's apparent renunciation of "balance of power" politics in favor of "World Order Policy" and Brzezinski's theme of a changing international system suggested that the administration had relinquished traditional American foreign policy goals of forceful leadership, globalism and most of all the containment of Soviet power. However a close inspection of both the words and actions of the Carter administration suggest that the new themes were more a means towards achieving traditional American policy ends than a real change in policy itself. The notion of "Trilateralism" was a globalist concept in which abstract generalizations about diverse political and economic changes in the Industrialized and Third World were made with a view towards securing the interests of the leading industrialized nations. Although the concept spoke of "multilateralism" there was, as one critic noted,³ much in it that implied a leading American role aimed at protecting American interests. Brzezinski himself argued that the U.S. "must channel change in ways that protect our interests."⁴ "American power," he wrote, "remains central to global stability and progress... The economic dislocations suffered by the advanced industrialized societies make the U.S. more pivotal than it has been for almost twenty years."⁵ Finally, while Trilateralism emphasized that the Soviet-American relationship should be treated as just one of many issues in the international arena, its stress on North-South cooperations was chiefly aimed at resolving important economic and political problems before they became fertile ground for Soviet meddling. "Preempting conflict," as Brzezinski called it, was another form of containment. In short, "Real issues" concerns were not absent in the Carter administration. Rather, they were addressed in terms thought more appropriate to the challenges and problems faced by the United States during the decade of the seventies.

What is true of the Carter administration's general approach to foreign policy was equally true of its Mideast policy. While the concept of Trilateralism provided the administrations's philosophical approach to the world, its Mideast policy focused this approach on one problem, whose resolution Carter hoped, would lead to a solution of many of the world's pressing economic and political problems. The centering of Mideast policy in the circle of the administration's global concerns was foreshadowed by the Brookings Report, which focused first and foremost on protecting American security interests rather than on the unique attributes of the Middle East environment. This emphasis fitted well into the traditional policy plans and reports of other administrations, which often have treated regional factors as secondary considerations.⁶ More importantly, the report's globalist orientation paved the way for the administration's approach to Middle East policy. Concerned above all with the economic stability of the West, the administration ignored the complexities of inter-Arab politics in its rush to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The administration's concern with guaranteeing a stable supply of Mideast oil, and hence Western economic stability, was matched by its desire to limit Soviet influence in the Middle East. Franz Schurmann has observed the "logic" implicit in the accommodations reached by the two superpowers which reduce the potential of nuclear war and protect their respective spheres of influence.⁷ Kissinger's attempted to gain such Soviet-American understandings within the framework of detente. The joint Soviet-American communique of 1973 and 1974 which spoke of the legitimate "interests of the Palestinians" demonstrated the degree to which the superpowers were interested in reaching some agreement on Mideast issues. The Brookings Report followed in this tradition by recommending that Soviet Mideast interests be recognized and that the Soviets

be brought into the negotiating process lest they sabotage it from without. However the report's emphasis on America's leading role during the negotiations and most significantly Brzezinski's plan to "freeze the Soviets" out of the conference demonstrated that the acceptance of Soviet participation was a tactic for the preservation of American interests.

Ironically, an extreme emphasis on protecting American security interests and securing world stability often proves detrimental to the devising and execution of policy. When an administration gears up to meet a perceived crisis, as the Carter administration did, policy-making is designed to be as coherent as possible. But as Destler recognizes, coherency taken to its limits becomes counterproductive. A decision making system based on a small group of men, attached to the White House and devoted to one policy plan, easily becomes rigid and unresponsive to the changing international environment.

But it is not enough to attribute the failure of Carter comprehensive Mideast policy to "policy rigidity" or insufficient emphasis on regional factors. Rather, we must recognize the close relationship between the policy-making system and the interests and role of the modern American presidency. Given the president's leading role in the preservation of American security and international stability, it has logically followed that he and his advisers focus on global issues and on methods of resolving conflicts which threaten global security. Furthermore, the president's role, by definition, requires that he be actively and publicly involved in the negotiation and resolution of international problems. Indeed his success in doing so increases his popularity and strengthens his position as chief executive. As Morton Halperin puts it, the president's popularity can be increased, "by

demonstrating that he is a man of peace willing to take whatever steps short of appeasement...to reduce world tensions." ⁹

If the interests of the president push him towards activism in the international arena, for reasons of both securing international stability and increasing his own popularity, a president must design a decision-making system which will serve these interests. A small group of men, loyal to the president and his policies, offers a president three things: First, a group of advisers who, because they are attuned to presidential interests and needs, will focus their attention on global issues and on involving the president publicly in international negotiations, summits etc... Two, a system which eliminates or minimizes bureaucratic bargaining in order to assure coherency and efficient design and execution of policy. Finally, a policy-making system in which the president himself takes a leading role and in which he is visibly active. Presidential interests thus generate a system in which emphasis is put upon global issues and in which policy can easily become inflexible, given that decisions are limited to a few decision-makers tied closely to the president. The structure of the policy-making system in turn reinforces the original presidential interests and values, creating a closed circle in which presidential interests and the policy-making system feed off one another.

The interaction of presidential interests and a presidential policy making system was apparent through 1977, during which Carter attempted to put together a comprehensive settlement. Determined to prevent another outbreak of war from endangering world peace, and eager to demonstrate successful statesmanship, Carter took charge of Mideast policy. Policy was centralized in the White House, and the administration launched a major effort to obtain a peace treaty in as little time as possible. Speed, and the overwhelming concern with protecting American security interests, pushed the administration to ignore those regional factors

which might have stood in the way of achieving rapid results. The complexities of inter-Arab politics were given little attention, because they might have suggested that the comprehensive settlement the administration so desired was not possible, or at least not as rapidly obtainable as it had hoped. Having given scant attention to regional factors, the administration then found itself misunderstanding or misjudging the interests and needs of various Mideast actors. But with presidential advisers loyal to the president's policy and unwilling to offer alternatives, there was no mechanism for correcting the path which had been chosen during the ~~first~~ few months of the administration.

The power of presidential interests is best illustrated by the administration's attitude toward Israel's and Egypt's attempt to arrange a separate peace agreement within the framework of the "comprehensive" talks. These plans were knowingly and consciously frustrated because they stood in the way of the kind of agreement the president of the United States had determined was best for American interests. These plans were also frustrated because they threatened the more dramatic, comprehensive agreement that the president wanted to achieve for himself and for his administration. That this intentional blocking of the Egyptian-Israeli plans in turn generated President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem and Carter's subsequent successful mediation of the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks in 1978, should not obscure the fact that it was largely the administration's own mistakes which produced Sadat's initiative. It was, to put it differently, the logic of Mideast politics, rather than the logic of presidential interests, which dictated Carter's actions following Sadat's trip to Jerusalem.

With presidential interests pointing towards quick and dramatic resolutions of international conflict, the logic of a comprehensive

Arab-Israeli peace emerges. Presidents, Destler observes, in their desire to achieve spectacular results in the international arena, "tend to press too hard for immediate gains visible during the current term, neglecting the frequent need for patience in waiting until 'the time is ripe,' or in allowing broad trends and forces to have their gradual effects."¹⁰

The Arab-Israeli conflict, as it stood in 1976, was not at the stage where all its many complex elements could be resolved in one fell swoop. Carter, haunted by Brzezinski's warning of "international chaos," and eager to demonstrate presidential success, attempted to resolve all of the conflict's outstanding problems more or less simultaneously. The Brookings Report, to its credit, had warned against taking such a hasty approach. It recommended the use of separate committees and postponing difficult issues such as Palestinian representation to a later stage in the negotiations. It would seem that Carter, by ignoring these recommendations, was largely responsible for the failure of his administration's policy. But even had a more skillful administration implemented the main elements of the Brookings Report, the events surrounding Carter's attempt to gain a comprehensive settlement illustrate that the concept of "comprehensive peace" is itself inherently flawed. Even, for example, if one separated the negotiating parties into separate geographical committees, it is likely that the most extreme party would exercise a veto over the actions of more moderate negotiating parties. More important, the idea that one can resolve extremely complicated and deeply seated conflicts through a well planned series of conferences or negotiations is innately simplistic. But the belief that one can do so, as William Quandt writes, is deeply rooted in the traditions of American pragmatism:

The American temper of pragmatism and liberalism has at times led policy-makers to seek total "solutions" to problems of the Middle East. Such solutions contain an element of large-scale engineering, based as they are on a belief that political problems can be approached by means of "economic development," or more recently, "nuclear desalination." American policies in the Middle East tend at times to follow these rather simplistic lines.¹¹

Simplicity has its attractiveness. To leaders hoping for quick gains it offers the illusion that even the most intractable problems can be easily disposed of. But the more laborious and at times frustrating approach of isolating those elements of the Arab-Israeli conflict most amenable to a solution has thus far proven the surest method of eventually gaining a peace which will "comprehend" Israel and all her neighbors. The Egyptian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreements of 1974 and 1975, and most significantly the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979, attests to this fact. And we may hope that by focusing on a resolution of issues such as the status of the West Bank and the Palestinians who live there, we may eventually achieve a fair solution of the Palestinian problem.

The process however, will be long and difficult. It will continue to involve and reflect the complex differences between Israel and the Arab states, and among the Arab states themselves. As progress is made, the level of tension between the Arab states will rise as each pursues its respective interests. The Soviet Union will also create problems which will frustrate the process. If excluded from negotiations it will encourage its clients--Syria and the Palestinians--to make unnegotiable demands. If included however, it may do the same. The best solution is to involve the Soviets towards the end of any specific negotiations; to give them the satisfaction that their status as a superpower has at least been recognized on some minimal, if even symbolic, level. Finally, the entire process will demand a good deal of patience and time. To try to do too much at once has the ironic effect of postponing a solution even further into the future.

Separate agreements do not have the spectacular, dramatic quality that comprehensive agreements can offer. But they have the advantage of realism, and as the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement demonstrated, they are no small achievement in of themselves. They require the active role of the president of the United States, and as Jimmy Carter learned, they are not without their share of history and glory for a president who participates in their achievement. But a president and his assistants cannot act alone. They require the continuous input of professional diplomats and Middle East experts whose judgments and deliberations are not strictly tied to presidential interests and world views. By tempering the White House's global perspective with regional expertise, presidents will shape sound policies for the future.

Footnotes

1. Originally, American plans for the post-World War II international economy held that the United States would play a passive role in international economic affairs. It was with the onset of the Cold War that the Truman Administration decided the United States had to play a leading role by bankrolling a new international monetary system and by using trade concessions to encourage the adoption of a free trading system. See Robert Gilpin's "The Politics of Transnational Economic Relations," International Organization, XXV (Summer 1971). And C. Maier's "The Politics of Productivity; Foundations of American International Economic Policy After World War II," International Organization, XXI (Autumn 1977). Also see Franz Schurmann's The Logic of World Power, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).
2. See for example Carl Gershman's "The Rise & Fall of the New Foreign Policy Establishment," Commentary Number 1, (July 1980), pp 13-25.
3. See Richard Ullman's "Trilateralism: 'Partnership' for What?" Foreign Affairs, (October 1976).
4. See Brzezinski's speech "American Policy and Global Change," in American Foreign Relations, (Stebbins and Adams Editors); (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1980), pp 454-464.
5. Brzezinski, "America in a Hostile World," Foreign Policy, (Summer 1976) pp 92-95.
6. The most dramatic example of this was the "Bay of Pigs" affair, in which Kennedy's White House organized an invasion of Cuba with little or no advice from career diplomats. See John Franklin Campbell, The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory, (New York, Basic Books 1971), pp 51-54.
7. See Schurmann, (1974) p 381.
8. See I.M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy, (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1974) p 6.
9. See Morton H. Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy, (Washington D.C. Brookings Institution, 1974) p68.
10. See Destler (1974) p 87.
11. William B. Quandt, "United States Policy in the Middle East: Constraints and Choices," in Paul Hammond and Sidney Alexander Political Dynamics in the Middle East, (New York: American Elsevier Press, 1972) p 527.

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