

**U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS JEWISH SETTLEMENTS
ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP DURING
REAGAN ADMINISTRATION**

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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1991



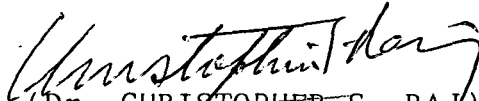
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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled "US FOREIGN POLICY
TOWARDS JEWISH SETTLEMENTS ON WEST BANK AND GAZA ^{Strip} DURING
REAGAN ADMINISTRATION" by Mr. Ashutosh Baranwal for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy is an original work and has
not been previously submitted for any other degree of this
or any other University.

We recommend this dissertation to be placed before
the examiners for evaluation.


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely thankful to Dr. Christopher S. Raj my guide for M.Phil dissertation, who has been the motivating force by his humane understandings of my personal problems and by his incisive and scholastic insight has made this work possible.

I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Walter Anderson, a senior diplomat in the US Embassy, New Delhi, for introducing me to wonderful world of American Studies at JNU; to Prof. V.B. Amar (Retd.) and to Mrs. Prema Srivastava for her blessings for this work.

I am deeply indebted to my friend Binod Mishra for allowing me to intrude his room in hostel and allowing me to work there. I am really obliged to Anshuman Upadhyay for forgiving my absence from his much awaited marriage, due to work pressure. Many Many thanks to Subrat, Ram Upendra and Abhayankar - all Das!

I am extremely thankful to Mr. Sanjay Kumar for bearing with my written draft writing and typing a flawless text. And lastly I am at a loss of words to acknowledge my gratitude for Papa and Ma. I specially remember my sisters Priyanka, Kanupriya and Deepshikha. **I dedicate this work to my grandmother late Shmt. Gayatri Devi.**

19th July '91
JNU


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PREFACE

The study of U.S. Policy towards the Jewish settlements during Reagan administration is significant because the Jewish settlements in the Israeli occupied Arab land had become a major obstacle to the peace process in West Asia. Since 1976, the role of the U.S. in the search for a West Bank and Gaza Strip solution has expanded steadily. By virtue of close U.S. -Israeli ties and the Arab perception that these ties give the U.S. substantial influence over Israel, the U.S. became an indispensable crucial mediator in West Asian peace negotiations and future of West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Successful negotiation of the problem required the ongoing commitment of U.S. political, economic and diplomatic resources. Moreover, in view of the importance of the West Bank in the broader peace process, the U.S. could not afford a passive stance. The nature and extent of the U.S. commitment became critical; the role of mediator required vitality in the expression of new ideas and creativity in the accommodation of conflicting interests.

Reagan administration's peace initiative came in the wake of 1982 Lebanon invasion by Israel. His call for the 'settlement freeze' went beyond the Carter

administration's understanding of an unwritten agreement reached at Camp David, whereby no new Israeli settlements would be established after the accords were signed, and the issue of additional settlements would be resolved during negotiations. The 'freeze' envisioned by the Reagan plan applied to the expansion of existing settlements as well as the creation of new settlements.

As expected, Israel rejected settlement freeze and affirmed that settlements form Jewish inalienable right and an integral part of its security. Israel further took advantage of U.S. predicament in Lebanon crisis and went on with its settlement programme.

Jordan had a major role in the scheme of Reagan Peace Plan due to her historic, cultural, link with the West Bank. But as the PLO - Jordan dialogue failed, Jordan expressed inability to take part in the peace negotiations. This made all the talk of 'fresh start' stale, and relieved Israel government which went ahead with its settlement programs in the West Bank.

Reagan's second term foreign policy can be rightly described as the 'term' of missed opportunities. This was due to the U.S. obstinancy on PLO and her zeal to keep USSR out of the middle east peace negotiations. A new policy of

'improving the quality of life' of the Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza was followed. Intifada ('Shaking off') movement in December 1987, saw U.S. administration realizing that mistake. The dynamics of intifada compelled Secretary of State Shultz to take essential steps for resolving the Palestinian issue. But Shultz's efforts came to an impasse due to shrewd calculation of the Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. In mid-December 1988 Mr. Yasir Arafat Chairman of PLO in his Geneva Press Conference accepted all the three conditions of U.S. - recognising UNSCR 242, 338 and Israel's right to exist. He also renounced the use of terrorism. By then a new occupant of White House was to be the Vice-President in Reagan's years - Mr. George Bush.

The first chapter deals with the origin of Jewish settlements, emergence of Gush Emunim, differences between Labor and Likud on settlement patterns, ideology and politics of settlements. Thrust of the chapter is on the changes in the political process from Ben-Gurion to the advent of Likud Party in May 1977, and changes in the external environment of Israel and their total impact on the Jewish settlement.

The second chapter deals with the Camp David framework for West Bank and Gaza. It shows that President Carter's and President Anwar Sadat's bold steps were

countered by Israeli premier Menachim Begin who did not adhere even to this own 'three months settlement freeze'.

The third chapter after outlining the Reagan administration initial concern about Soviet role in middle east, deals in detail with the Reagan peace initiative of 1st Sept., 1982 with special reference to West Bank and Gaza Jewish settlements and the reactions to it by Israel & Arab World, and causes of its failure.

The fourth chapter shows that the settlements issue was overshadowed by the broader Palestinian - Israeli problem, much due to the missed opportunities by U.S. The new policy of 'improving the quality of life' of West Bankers and Gaza is discussed in detail. With a reference to intifada, chapter analyzes Shultz Plan and for the first time high level diplomatic shuttles between U.S. and Middle East. It ends with the historic acceptance of Israel and rejection of terrorism Arafat and U.S. announcement to hold diplomatic contact with PLO.

The last chapter concludes with the finding that the Reagan administration could not pressurise Israel to see reason and freeze the Jewish settlements on West Bank and Gaza.

CHAPTER 1

ORIGIN OF SETTLEMENT

Introduction

A brief history of West Bank and Gaza, and its occupation

The Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank of the Jordan river, and all of Syria were ruled by the Ottoman Empire before World War I. The peace settlements at the end of that War transferred these territories, other than Sinai which was a part of Egypt, to the five Principal Allied and Associated powers, which thereupon included the territories in mandates conferred upon France and the U.K. Syria was included in the French mandate and later achieved full independence. The West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza strip were included in the mandaté for Palestine given to the U.K. The area of Palestine east of the Jordan river was subsequently given independence by the mandatory power under the name of Trans-Jordan and later became the Kingdom of Jordan. The remainder of Palestine continued under U.K. mandate until May 15, 1948.

After World War II, following consultations between the United Nations and the United Kingdom and studies by UN Commission, the UN General Assembly recommended termination of the Palestine mandate under the

partition plan, according to which there would be formed a Jewish state in some parts of Palestine and an Arab state in other parts, with Jerusalem becoming an internationalized city. This plan was never fully accepted and was not put into effect by the mandatory power because of great controversy over the plan and serious civil disturbances in Palestine, in substantial part directed against the British administration. The U.K. in effect abandoned the mandate and withdraw from Palestine in May 1948, leaving the contending parties to fight it out, which they then proceeded to do.

A provisional government of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the Jewish state on May 15, 1948 and the armies of neighbouring Arab countries proceeded to invade and occupy parts of Palestine. A long series of UN Security Council debates and resolutions succeeded in halting the hostilities in the early summer of 1948. At the end of the fighting, the new state of Israel was in occupation of large portions of the territory of Palestine, while Egypt occupied the Gaza strip and Jordan occupied the area that has come to be known as the West Bank. The lines of demarcation on the ground did not follow the lines drawn in the UN partition plans. Armistice agreements were subsequently concluded between Israel and the Arab states,

but there has been no definitive peace settlement during the last 43 years.

After the armistice, Egypt pursued a highly restrictive policy on the transit of Israeli shipping and cargoes through the Suez Canal, and in 1956, Egypt nationalised the canal. Following upon these events, Israel, France and the U.K. invaded Egypt in October 1956. These hostilities were brought to an end under pressure from the UN, which was strongly supported by the US. The armistice regime was restored, with the addition of a UN force to be stationed at Sharm El-Sheikh to protect Israeli access to the Gulf of Aquaba and the port of Eilat.

The situation remained in this posture for over 10 years. Then, in 1967, Egypt terminated its consent for stationing of the UN forces at Sharm El-Sheikh, and UN Secretary General U Thant proceeded to withdraw that force on his own responsibility, without consulting the General Assembly which had placed it there. These actions created a new crisis, and in June 1967 Israel launched the so-called Six-Day's War. In the course of it, Israeli forces occupied the Gaza strip and seized Sinai peninsula, which was Egyptian territory. Next, Israel inflicted a military defeat on Jordan, which had entered the war on the side of Egypt, and Israel then occupied the territory of the West

Bank. At the end of the week in which the Six Days War occurred, Israel undertook military occupations against Syria and occupied the area of the Golan Heights. Israel's pre-1967 area is 20, 255 sq.km. of land. The area of the occupied and annexed territories total 7,407 sq. km. comprising the West Bank (5,879), Gaza (378), East Jerusalem (70), and the Golan Heights (1,150).

From the perspective of international law, with the exception of Sinai,(returned to Egypt) these all remain occupied territories subject to the provisions of international law as found primarily in the Geneva conventions.

During the Labor government, there was no clear policy with regard to the West Bank. Limited self rule was instituted and elections for the local municipalities were allowed in 1972 and 1976. Israel's settlement policy followed roughly the Allon Plan, which emphasized the primary of security considerations.

Under the Labor government, an ordinance No. 25 made, it illegal for Jews to buy land in the West Bank and Gaza. Yet the progressively weakened Labor governments were subject to pressure from Gush Emunim and other elements, who viewed the West Bank as part of the historical-religious heritage of Israel. The map of the 27 settlements which

were built between 1967 and 1977 reflects all these considerations. Seventeen settlements were built in the Jordan Rift Valley and near the Dead Sea, and five in the Gush Etzion area, as stipulated by the Allon Plan. One was built in the Latrun region, to be included within the Roger's Plan of minor territorial adjustment. The remaining three, and most notably Kiryot Araba near Hebron, were located in the heavily populated areas of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) as a result of Gush Emunin pressure¹.

At this point it is necessary to go into the complex Israeli political process and trace the origin of Gush Emunim and the fall of Labor Party out of power, which had a tremendous spurt in settlement activity on West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Origin of Settlement - Israeli Justification

After Israel's birth as a state and immediate victory in the 1948 war, David Ben - Gurion (Mapai Party) became the prime minister of Israel. Mapai, later became a major element of the Labor coalition which ruled Israel until its decline May 1977.

1. MERI Report-Israel, Middle East Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania, (Croom Helm, Sydney, Australia, 1985) pp. 15-18.

Mapai's dominance of the Israeli political system was to a large extent the result of the political strategy of Ben-Gurion the first Prime Minister of Israel. His strategy applied political pragmatism to both foreign and domestic policies. In foreign affairs, he found King Abdullah to be a reliable and tacit ally who, although had his own aspirations for the West Bank of the Jordan river, opposed the Palestinians and their radical leadership. Similarly, Ben Gurion sought potential domestic allies who, although belonging to other camps enabled him to rule Israel without achieving an absolute majority². The most important consequence of this strategy perhaps was the decline of the antipartition forces both on the foreign scene and on the domestic scene.

In both foreign and domestic affairs, he took advantage of conflicts among his opposition. Comprehensive attempts were made to exploit the conflicting interests of Egypt and Jordan in order to enable the Israel Defence forces to strike freely against Egypt while negotiations were going on with Jordan concerning the West Bank³ Early

2. The Traditional Division of the Israeli Political and Ideological system is into three camps: Labor, Civil, Religious.

3. On these negotiations see Golda Meir, My Life, (Tel-Aviv: Ma'ariv, 1975).

on, the Israelis tried to persuade King Abdullah to stay out of the fighting. His cooperation would be repaid with territories in the West Bank. Though these negotiations failed, he did avoid a major confrontation with the Jordanian region. When Jordanian forces took over the Hebron mountain area from the Egyptians on October 25, 1948, Israel did not try to take the area despite the fact that the conquering forces were relatively small⁴. At the sametime, a major attack in the north was postponed until a decisive victory had been achieved in the south. Following an Egyptian defeat, the central Galilee and a part or Lebanon were conquered. Only afterwards was Ben-Gurion ready to turn to the eastern front. Abdullah was forced to relinquish certain portions in diplomatic negotiations, and Israel took over Eilat with no confrontation⁵.

Despite the temptation to complete the liberation of the rest of land of Israel after defeating the invading armies in the south and the north, Ben Gurion stopped himself. His realistic instincts overcame his idealism. In retrospect, this inaction established a tacit alliance between Israel and Jordan. By letting Abdullah occupy the

4. Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion, A Political Biography, Part II (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1977), p.852.

5. Ibid., pp. 853-867.

West Bank of the Jordan River, Ben-Gurion helped the expansion of a country and the reinforcement of a regime that in the future would also have an inherent interest in maintaining the status quo. By creating this common interest, moreover, he helped to secure his eastern border and to concentrate the defense efforts of the newly established state against the antagonistic forces in the south and north.

This pragmatic policy also complemented two other principles Ben-Gurion strongly believed in one was that Israel should try to avoid a confrontation with the great powers, particularly the Western powers⁶. The second was that the Jewish state should avoid governing substantial numbers of Arab inhabitants. The common interest with Jordan advanced both goals. The pro-western orientation of the Hashemite Kingdom that now ruled over areas heavily populated with Arabs coincided with this tacit partnership.

In the period between 1948 and 1967 this framework of relationship was basically maintained, despite foreign and domestic pressures. Terrorist actions from Jordan were countered by an Israeli policy of controlled

6. Michael Brechern, The Foreign Polciy System of Israel, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp.265-169.

retaliation. Moreover, despite the terrorist attacks from Israel's eastern neighbour, Ben-Gurion confined the Sinai campaign in 1956 to the Egyptian front. Israel and Jordan cooperated with respect to the Jordan-Yarmuk River system and against the internationalization of Jerusalem⁷. Most important was Israel's declaration with regard to the preservation of the status quo on the West Bank⁸. Israel warned that control of the Jordan "bulge" by a state or a united command other than Amman would be an automatic casus belli.

In domestic affairs, Ben Gurion^o chose his partners from the moderate left and right. Thus, though, Mapai controlled only a plurality, it had a majority in foreign and defense policies. A contributing factor was the cooperation of the National Religious Party (NRP).

One aspect of the relationship between Mapai and the NRP was a trade off between religion and foreign and economic policies⁹ --- Mapai controlling foreign, defense and economic policy; NRP controlling religious institutions,

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. A better understanding of this relationship can be had from Amitai Etzioni's, "The Decline of Neo-Feudalism: The Case of Israel", (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 70-87.

and maintaining status quo in relations between religion and state. With the help of the Progressive party, which had no independent line on foreign policy, Ben-Gurion enjoyed a built-in majority that enabled him to form a government without the need to compromise with dissenting figures. This special relationship, despite occasional ups and downs on religious issues, persisted after Ben-Gurion's retirement until it started to decline in the early 1970s.

Changes after Ben-Gurion

The ^sneeds of change were planted in the coalitions formed after the elections of 1961. Ahdut hd-Avodah, was chosen over the Liberal party¹⁰ as a partner in the new government. This laid the foundations for the establishment of alignments within the Labor and Civil camps - alliances Ben-Gurion had avoided throughout his political life. The chief negotiator of the new coalition was Levi Eshkol, an indication of Ben-Gurion's decline in the party.

Though Levi Eshkol won the 1965 elections, the political map had been transformed. The multipolar system preserved by Ben -Gurion was replaced by two contending alliances on the Left and Right. Although the coalition

10. Liberal party was a new party created by merger between the Progressive party and General Zionists (both of Civil camp).

system was not terminated, the Israeli voter was in fact offered, for the first time, an alternative to the rule of Mapai.

Changes were also visible on the international front. Throughout the year of 1966 Fatah terrorist actions, were launched from Jordan and Lebanon against Israel. Some of these were planned and controlled by the new leftist Junta in Damascus. The Eshkol government, focused its reprisal against Jordan at Samua. The move was intended to force Jordan to cease the forays from its territory, as well as to warn Syria without actually attacking it. Unlike the raids during Ben-Gurion's time, the Samua raid was executed in broad daylight by an armored force. The internal reactions to this raid within Jordan were very dramatic; the Hashemite regime almost toppled¹¹. One of the conclusions apparently drawn by Hussain was that his alliance with the West and his shared interest with Israel provided him with no immunity from retaliation.

Occupation of the West Bank and its aftermath: The separation of the West Bank from Jordan weakened the common interest that had existed for almost two decades between the

11. The rationale and the ramifications of the Samua reprisal operation are discussed in David Kimche and Dan Bowey, The Sandstorm, (London: Sadler and Worsburg, 1968), ch.4.

two governments. At the same time, the dramatic experience of the period proceeding June 5, 1967, transformed the security perceptions of the Israeli policy-makers. Israelis were convinced that the West Bank was strategically too important to be left in hostile hands.

The acquisition of the new territories aroused new emotions within Israeli society toward Judea and Samaria. Ideas and aspirations that had previously been limited to the Revisionists were now revived not only by Menachem Begin's supporters but also by a wide cross-section of traditional political elements¹².

The war brought about the creation of the National Unity government in which Begin was a senior member, a fact that undoubtedly assisted in the political legitimization of Herut's leader.

A significant transformation also tookplace in the relations between Labor and the NRP. On the ideological level, the attitudes of the NRP, as a religious Zionist movement was affected by the liberation of ancient Jewish territories. The feelings were dormant until the death of

12. A study of this phenomenon can be made from Rael Jean Issac: Israel Divided: Ideological Politics in the Jewish State, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), ch.3, 5, 6.

M.H. Shapira in 1970 the NRP leader whose style of leadership was close to that of Ben-Gurion. The Youth Circles, a new contender for the leadership of the party in a bid to outclass the veteran leadership, tried to take advantage of the new nationalistic attitudes among the party's members and supporters. They also questioned the traditional partnership with Labor. Labor Party, also under internal pressures started to retreat from its support of the religious status quo.

The younger leadership within NRP asserted that their party supplied Labor with the necessary power to govern and in exchange image of a party interested only in power received shaky support for religious priorities accompanied by public image of a party interested only in power, without any ideology or independent line in foreign policy. The territories issue was the perfect cause under which they could continue political and ideological independence¹³. Labor now had a opposition party within its coalitions apart from right wing opposition.

13. Shmuel Sandler and Hillel Frisch, Israel, The Palestinians and the West Bank, (Lexington Books: Toronto, 1983), p. 115-116.

Labor's decline and the Emergence of a New Majority

The above changes did not come abruptly. However the stage was set for a transition; what was needed a major crisis to launch it. The Yom Kippur War (1973) served that function.

Elections after 1973 War saw the power of the Alignment (Labor and Mapai) declining from 56 to 51 seats in the Knesset, and that of Likened (parties of the center and the Right) increasing from 32 to 39 seats¹⁴. Labor still enjoying the majority was torn between the right and the left wings, another irony being that the traditional Mapai failed to sustain its rule through the process of unification. After PM Golda Meir's resignation in April 1974, Mapai no longer controlled the three senior positions in the government. Although NRP joined the government, its positions on foreign policy were more those of an opposition party. The traditional framework of autonomy in foreign policy in exchange for religious concessions finally collapsed. With a strong parliamentary opposition on the outside and opposition within the government, accomplished by a struggle between PM Rabin and Defense Minister Peres, decisive leadership in a foreign policy was inconceivable. The Labor party suffered its unexpected defeat in the May

14. Ibid.

1977 elections because of salient issues such as inflation, corruption and failures in foreign policy. With the appearance of a new party in the center-the Democratic Movement for change (DMC), the Socialist camp came into the opposition for the first time in Israel's history. The election upset of May 1977, seen from an international perspective, heralded a significant change in the approaches and relationships that had dominated the political scene in Palestine-Eretz Yisrael for more than four decades. Mapai - Labor was now replaced by a coalition that was opposed to the repartition of the Land of Israel.

The main partners in this new coalition were Herut- the major force in Likud and heir of the Revisionist movement - and the NRP which for all practical purposes was a non-partition party. The character of the Likud government was essentially a religious nationalist coalition rather than a Center-Right one, despite DMC's decision to join the government.

The coalition that emerged from the 1981 elections presented a new majority composed of three main elements: hawks, religious voters and oriental Jews. Thus, traditional coalition that ruled Israel (composed of moderate religious and center parties dominated by the Labor Camp) was replaced by a new coalition composed of more

radical, religious and hawkish forces dominated by the heirs of the Revisionist movement. Within this new coalition, the antipartition forces have nearly attained total freedom in implementing their policies on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Emergence of Gush Emunim: Internal and External Factors

The only movement that could legitimate the application of traditional Zionist values to the new territories was the new national religious ideology. Having cooperated with Labor for most of the previous period, the national religious movement was already involved in such ideals as settlement and pioneering. It had an institutional network that was breeding ideology, and an idealistic youth movement, B'nei Akiva, that had participated with Labor's youth movement in nation-building enterprises such as combining military service and pioneering. But unlike their secular partners, the religious Zionists were not affected by the general decline of Labor value. It was no coincidence that Gush Emunim started to come to the fore following the Yom Kippur War, when Israeli society was going through a deep crisis of self-identity and doubt regarding the future of Zionism. Followers of B'nei Akiva and Merkaz ha-Rav felt that it was their duty to pull Israeli society out of its despair and return to the fundamental ideas of Zionism. They

felt that they could accomplish this task because they possessed an element that the secular camp lacked: the religious conviction that the Almighty was accompanying his people and that the return to Zion was an integral part of the redemption process¹⁵. Thus, while conceiving of themselves as the heirs of genuine Zionism they also saw themselves as a better and more idealistic element of the Zionist movement.

It was this self-perceived role that also dictated their approach to the territories captured in the 1967 war. While the Labor youth movements were bound by their parent party's policy of strategic settlement and the eventual return of most of the newly acquired territories to their previous owners in exchange for peace, the Gush Emunim's attitude was that Judea and Samaria constitute an integral part of the Land of Israel and therefore a Jewish government was not allowed to return them to the control of non-Jews¹⁶. In accordance with this belief they pressured the government to start the settlement in the heart land of Judea and Samaria, volunteering to be the first settlers. By doing so they provided, in their perception, not merely a new vigour

15. Mordechai Nisan, "Gush Emunim and Israel's National Interest", Jerusalem Letter, (January 1980),p. 5-6.

16. Ibid.

but also a new challenge to modern Zionism. Rather than conceptualizing settlements as security outposts they presented the nation with a new vision - the settlement of the whole land of Israel. Instead of stating with complacency that Zionism had essentially accomplished its main goal through the establishment of the state of Israel and that the only aim left was Arab recognition of the state, Gush Emunim challenged the people to take upon themselves a new task - the task of Zionism in the 1970s¹⁷.

The settlement of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and other parts of historic Eretz Israel was perceived by Gush Emunim, and by many of its outside supporters, not as a revolution of Zionist ideas but rather as a continuation of normative Zionism.

Indeed, despite the clear dividing line between a socialist-secular and a national religious movement, Gush Emunim saw itself as continuing the Zionist revolution rather than presenting a new radical interpretation of Zionism¹⁸.

17. Mordechai Nisan, "Gush Emunim: A Rational Perspective", Forum, No 36, (fall/Winter 1979), pp. 15-23.

18. Ibid.

External Factors

The Six Day War brought in its wake the strengthening of Palestinian identity in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and abroad. This new Palestinian nationalism was especially evident following the Yom Kippur War as the PLO became prominent in the international scene and its influence on the West Bank was taking root. To many Israelis who might not have agreed with Gush claims over the West Bank under normal circumstance, it seemed important to advance a more positive Israeli claim in light of the Palestinian ideological claims which were finding sympathizers in Israeli leftist circles.

A second development was the growing isolation of Israel on the world scene. In the weeks preceding the six day war when the Jewish state suddenly found itself facing a hostile Arab coalition declaring explicitly its intentions of destroying Israel, the unwillingness of the international community to come to Israel's aid, despite previous promises regarding free navigation, only strengthened Israeli distrust of other nations and their international guarantees. The condemnation of Zionism as racism, following Yom Kippur war, and the pressures that were put on Israel by the United States, without considering the fact that early Arab victories resulted from Israel's delay in mobilizing

its forces and refusal to mount pre-emptive strikes, served to further strengthen Israeli feelings of betrayal. These feelings not only contributed to the emergence of Gush Emunim but also served to legitimize Gush views in the eyes of Israel's nonreligious society. In such a climate, the Gush Emunim policy of settlements in the West Bank seemed the right response to the world's hypocrisy and betrayal.

"Gush Emunim represented a recrystallization of attitudes, a resolute stance around certain ideas, and a reconstruction of social solidarity in face of the anomie, experienced after Yom Kippur War"¹⁹.

GUSH EMUNIM-A VANGUARD

Gush Emunim was not really supported by a majority of Israeli society or the religious camp. As a matter of fact, the Gush has many opponents in Israel and its emergence was counteracted by other organized groups such as the largely secular Peace Now Movement and OZ VE- Shalom (Courage and Peace) in the national religious camp. Yet on the macro-level of impact upon government policies, Gush Emunim was the most effective. From time to time, public-

19. Jonet O'Dea, "Gush Emunim: Roots and Ambiguities, The Perspective of the Sociology of Religion", Forum, No.2(25), 1976, pp.39-50.

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opinion polls indicate that Gush settlement policies received substantial support from the public. The fact that Likud use the settlements it established during its tenure as a principle campaign issue in 1981 elections and increased its power there is another indication of public support on this issue. The historic cooperation between Labor and the national religious movements infused the latter with a system of symbols and references which Gush Emunim would use later on in portraying itself as the guardian of the spirit of pioneering-self-attainment and redemption of the Land of Israel²⁰. By using these symbols, Gush Emunim was able to legitimize other ideas which might otherwise have had negative association of Zionist-socialism and the embracing of certain traditional Jewish values facilitated the population of Gush Emunim. Foreign pressures, to a certain extent, also triggered support for a response that seemed appropriate to both the religious and non-religious public.

Thus, by the time the Israeli polity was ready for a shift from a Labor partition-oriented government to a right-wing religious coalition, a viable settlement movement was already in existence. By May 1977, it had already established a substantial number of settlements in Judea and Samaria. The transformation seemed complete; not only was

20. Ibid.

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there a broad settlement movement but the new government that came into power was an antipartition government which perceived the new territories acquired in June 1967 as an integral part of the state of Israel.

Jewish Settlement Patterns on the West Bank

Labor's Pattern of Settlements

Labor's West Bank settlement drive took place in three regions: Gush Etzion, Jerusalem, and the Jordan Valley. The prime rationale was strategic. The necessary conditions for success were regional planning, human resources, and initial investment capital. Though strategic needs were taken into account, the settlements were established near cultivable land and were divided among the various settlement movements that were ready to provide settlers. Early members of these settlements were youth from paramilitary units. Industry and tourism were expected to supplement income during slack seasons. Dependence on urban centers within Israel proper was limited to services, not employment. The cluster of villages was designed to become an independent economic and social unit²¹.

Gush Emunim Settlement Patterns

While Labor concentrated its efforts in the relatively unpopulated eastern portion of the West Bank,

21. Sandler and Frisch, n. 13, pp. 134-140.

Gush Emunim pressed for settlements in the heart of Judea and Samaria, usually in densely populated areas. In accordance with its ideological conception that settling Judea and Samaria was not only a necessity for survival but also a religious obligation, the Gush rejected the notion of justifying settlements in the area for security reasons.

In contrast to the settlements in the Jordan Valley, the settlements in the middle of the Arab population that came into being under the Likud government were established in places without favourable agricultural conditions. These "spot" settlements, were limited in the amount of land available to them since most of the nearby land was occupied and cultivated by Arab farmers. These settlements did not constitute an integrated regional cluster like that established by Labor in the Jordan River Valley. Gush Emunim tried to overcome these difficulties in several ways. One was the development of commercial settlements, socially of rural nature but urban in terms of employment and economics. This required the paving of roads and highways that would connect the region with the Israeli economic centers. Secondly, the settlements in Judea and Samaria signed a covenant that became the founding document of Gush Emunim. In addition, they formed a Representative Council that would voice the collective needs of the

settlements in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. This was designed to articulate the interests of the settlements, voice them before the government, and influence the public in Israel and the diaspora.

Sharon's Approach

While both Gush Emunim and Sharon saw Judea and Samaria as an integral part of Israel's security, Sharon conceptualized the spot settlement into a strategic framework²². The chain of settlement was located on the Samarian Mountains overlooking the coastal plain - the most populated region in Israel. The second component in Sharon's strategy was the establishment of settlements along the trans-Samaria road which was designed to cut across Samaria and to connect the Jordan Valley with the coastal plain. The third component was to surround Jerusalem with four clusters of settlements and towns.

Sharon not only expanded the territorial component of his strategic demands but he also broadened the socioeconomic base of the settling population. Labor limited its settlement needs, in accordance with the Allon Plan, to a strip of land eight to twelve miles wide along the Jordan River and to the agricultural sector which involves about

22. Ibid.

six percent of the Israeli population. The new types of settlements whose economic base was industry and services opened settlement to the two largest sectors in the Israeli economy. The suburban nature of several of the settlement was also designed to attract a large population which aspired to leave the cities only for residential purposes.

Politics and Ideology of Settlement

The settlement issue was, from the beginning, both a political and ideological question. Labor and Likud shared the view that the West Bank should be strategically controlled by Israel. Where they disagreed was in the details of what strategic control meant. Labor, was loyal to its partition orientation and wanted to reach a modus vivendi with the Hashemite regime regarding repartition of Palestine. Settlement patterns were therefore limited in their scope to a well defined area sparse in its Arab population. Likud's nonpartition orientation dictated a new settlement pattern that Ariel Sharon, as agriculture minister, developed and implemented. But while Sharon supplied the strategic framework and the resources, it was Gush Emunim that provided the enthusiasm and the manpower upon which the whole enterprise developed²³. Without the transformation of the Israeli polity and the legitimacy it

23. Ibid.

received from the Israeli public Gush Emunim might have remained a protest movement with no ability to transform its ideology into a realistic enterprise.

Likud's goals in establishing as many settlements as possible and the location chosen for those settlements were inspired by domestic political issues. These were meant to establish facts which would make it difficult for any government to withdraw from the West Bank. The West Bank was carved up by settlement in such a disparate fashion that it would be impossible to reach a partition agreement with Jordan that would not require the removal of many established settlements. At the same time, the accelerated rate at which these settlements were erected affected their economic base. Many of the settlers resided in temporary housing and continued to find employment within Israel proper.

Strengthening the Political Control in the West Bank: Likud Policy

Thus, the transformation of Israeli polity which began following the 1967 war and which was translated into political reality ten years later, provided new realities in the West Bank during the first Likud administration. At the end of four years, the heartland of the West Bank - Judea

and Samaria - was spotted with settlement and divided by roads which provided a basis for strategic territories control of the region and its population. The next step was to strengthen the political control in the West Bank. The policy started with the second Likud administration. The coordinated strategy, adopted by Sharon, the new Defense Minister and Menachem Milson (appointed by Sharon to administer the West Bank) was composed of three elements: the promotion of the village leagues as a potential alternative leadership to the mayor; the dismissal of pro-PLO mayors; and the application of pressures on other national institutions in the West Bank.

Village Leagues

The military government faced with the growing power of pro-PLO mayors, discovered that side by side with the towns in the West Bank there existed a population which had lived in underdeveloped villages. They constituted around 70 percent of the inhabitants. Under Israeli rule the mayor of the cities and towns in effect became representatives of and responsible for the villages of the district. Each village head (Mukhtar) in every district held great power in his hands because all official documents, permissions, and personal requests had to be channeled

through his²⁴. The integration of villages into the central administration complemented other developments of political modernization in reducing the status of mukhtar. It was this structure, that the military government now wanted to change.

The promotion of the village leagues started to gain momentum with the appointment of Milson as head of Civil Administration in November 1981. Apart from Hebron-district village league, six more leagues emerged in the districts of Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jenin, Nablus, and Qabatiya and in the village of Habba²⁵. Following their establishment, funds for village development become available. Requests for family reunions received special treatment if presented through the leagues. Licenses for summer visits from Arab countries to the West Bank, which had been previously submitted through the municipalities, were now handled by the leagues.

The Municipalities

Civil Administration institution was designed to separate military and civilian functions in the West Bank.

24. Gabriel Baer, "The Economic and Social Position of the Village Mukhtar in Palestine", in Gabriel Ben-Dor, ed., The Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict, p.112.

25. Michael Oren, Spokesman of Civil Administration, in Jerusalem Post, Interview, March 15, 1982.

For the mayors, this also implied a shift from military occupation to a more permanent situation.

Within the system of Civil Administration, a tacit agreement was reached in which functions were divided between the various parties. High-policy matters were decided by Israel, and local affairs decided by elected officials. The new policy involved more direct intervention by the civil administration - a process of managing the towns through Israeli officials.

The strategic goal of the Second Likud administration was the destruction of the relationship between the West Bank and their diaspora (centre). Thus, Israel also struck at other power centres of the PLO in the West Bank.

Other Power Centres

By November 1981, efforts to wipe out other centres had already started. Following two days of rioting, Bir-Zeit University was closed on November 4, 1981 for two months. This came in the wake of several other measures which included the temporary closure of Al-Fajr, (newspaper) restrictions on the movement of several leaders suspected of instigating disruption, and the ban of monetary transfer from the PLO to institutions and individuals in the West Bank.

The military government and the Civil Administration decided to regulate other lines of communication between West Bank leadership and external influences. In the summer of 1981, the military government of the West Bank decided to implement an order existing since 1968 which forbade any encounters between a West Bank inhabitant who was abroad and an organization hostile to Israel. Towards the summer of 1982, the policy of open bridges between Israel and Jordan was being reviewed by the Civil Administration and officers of the military government²⁶. As a result, the procedure for crossing the bridges into Jordan was prolonged, giving the Civil Administration more control. Similarly, the procedure for summer visits to Israel was changed; instead of the municipalities controlling the requests, authority was transferred to the village leagues.

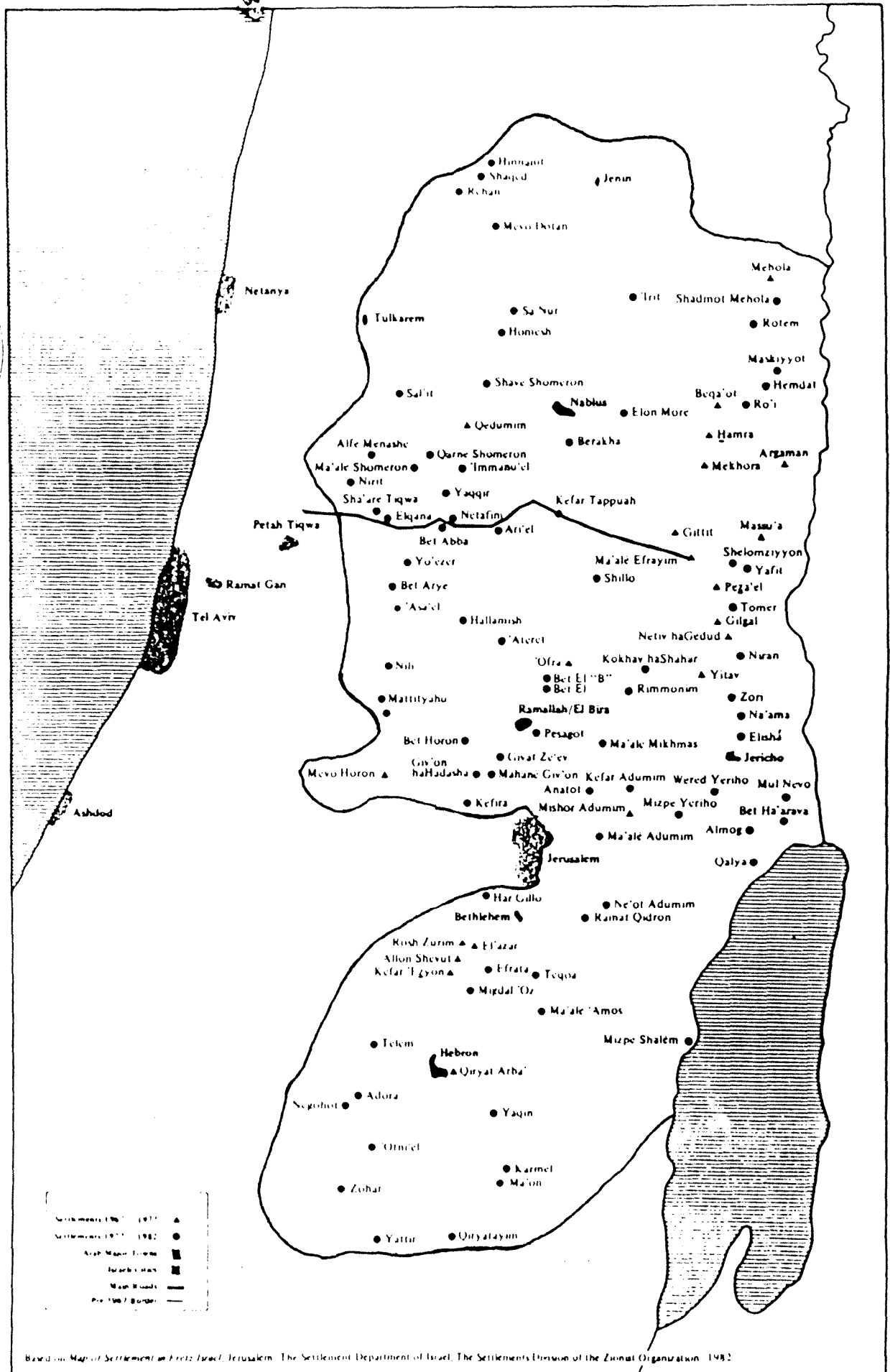
The Peace for the Galilee operation that started on June 6, 1982, must be understood in the context of the Likud's policies towards the West Bank. The pretext for the war was the threat in the north originating from a PLO military building in Lebanon. In 1956, and in 1967, Israel

26. Milton Viorst, "Report from the West Bank", Columbia Journalism Review, (November/December 1982), pp.43-44.

acted out of the fear that in action might endanger its existence, whether in the future or in the short term. In 1982, the PLO did not present an immediate threat to Israel's existence, neither did it present a potential threat to the balance of power. The real aim of the war was to destroy the military and political infrastructure of the PLO in Lebanon in anticipation that this accomplishment would have an impact on the other components of the Palestinian communal structure.

The attack on the PLO in Lebanon was another stage in the Likud's campaign not to relinquish any part of Judea and Samaria. It was directly linked to the new settlement policy adopted during the first Likud administration and to attempt to destroy PLO influence in the West Bank which was launched during the second Likud administration.

Jewish Settlements in West Bank (1967-82)



Based on: Map of Settlement in Eretz Israel, Jerusalem: The Settlement Department of Israel, The Settlements Division of the Zionist Organization, 1982

CAMP DAVID AND JEWISH SETTLEMENTS

When President Anwar Sadat of Egypt went to Jerusalem in November 1977 to breach the "psychological barrier". Jews and Arabs were galvanized for the moment into an awareness, hitherto suppressed, of each other's humanity. "He had come", Sadat said, to "get rid of the psychological barrier which in my idea was more than 70 percent of the whole conflict...."

In the weeks and months that followed, the initial effects of President Sadat's "electric shock" diplomacy wore off and old antagonists rediscovered what they had disliked and feared in each other. Communication became more difficult, and the parties found themselves sending message once again through their momentarily side tracked American intermediary. Ten months of tortuous, acrimonious diplomacy was required, after President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, to produce the Camp David accords of September 1978, and another six months to produce the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of March 1979¹.

The American initiated Camp David Summit between US and the West Asian adversaries Egypt-Israel in September 1978 was a landmark in Arab Israeli conflict.

1. Seth P. Tillman, The United States in the Middle East-Interests and Obstacles, (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1985) p.1.

The summit resulted in two "frame works" of peace - one outlining a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the other defining procedures for the establishment of a "self governing authority" for the West Bank and Gaza².

The former called for the phased withdrawal of Israeli forces from all of Sinai over a three year period and the restoration of the entire territory to Egypt; the establishment of security zones, limitations on national forces, and the stationing of United Nations forces in the evacuated territory; and the establishment, after a peace treaty was signed of "normal" diplomatic, economic and cultural relations between Israel and Egypt.

The latter called for negotiations among Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and "the representatives of Palestinian people" to resolve "the Palestinian problem in all its aspects". For a transition period of five years, an elected "self governing authority", its powers to be spelled out in negotiations, would replace the Israeli military government; Israeli forces would be reduced and those remaining redeployed in specified security locations. During the period of the transition regime negotiations would be

2. "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel", September 17, 1978. Quoted in Don Peretz, The West Bank: History, Politics, Society, and Economy, (Westview Press: Boulder and London, 1986) pp. 143-145.

conducted among the parties to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian refugees might be admitted to the territories during the transition period by unanimous agreement of a special committee representing Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the self governing authority³.

- More specifically, the frame work for full autonomy" for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip provided for:
- An elected self governing authority (SGA) in the occupied territories;
 - An end of the Israeli civilian control over the territories;
 - A partial withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the territories; and
 - A series of negotiations during a five year transition period.

Israel, Egypt, Jordan and/or representatives of the West Bank/Gaza Palestinian Arabs to take part in various aspects of the negotiations to determine:

- The power and authority of SGA;
- External and internal security arrangements for the territories;
- A Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty; and

3. Ibid.

-- The future status of the territories at the end of the five year transition⁴.

Suspending Jewish Settlements: In the weeks following Camp David, euphoria gave way to pessimism and recrimination. Disputes arose as to what had been agreed upon: Carter and Sadat left Camp David convinced that Begin had agreed to suspend Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza for the entire five year transition period; Begin, however, insisted that he had agreed only to three months suspension of settlement while Egypt and Israel negotiated their peace treaty, and he adhered to that view despite angry Egyptian and American protests resuming Israel's settlements policy after a three months gap. The PLO excluded from any role denounced the Camp David accords. However it was hoped that Palestinian leaders in the West Bank and Gaza would cooperate under prodding from Saudi Arabia and Jordan. These moderate Arab nations, not only refused to prod the Palestinians but also joined more radical Arab states in active opposition to Camp David while the West Bank - Gaza Palestinians under threat from or in shared conviction with the PLO, or both--firmly refused to play the roles assigned

4. Janice J. (Terry), "The Carter Administration and the Palestinians", Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol.12, No. 1 & 2, Winter/Spring 1990, p. 154.

to them or in any way to co-operate under the Camp David "framework".

Thus, immediately after the conclusion of the Camp David accords in September 1978 the Framework for Peace began to come unstuck over the questions of Jewish settlements, the retention of Israeli forces, and Israeli claims to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza. Begin interpreted the framework, which authorized "all necessary security measures..... during the transitional period and beyond"⁵ as thereby sanctioning the retention of Israeli troops in the West Bank beyond the five year interim period. Speaking to members of Congress on September 19, two days after the signing of the Camp David accords Begin said, "I believe with all my heart that the Jewish people have a right to sovereignty over Judea and Samaria". "The source of that right" he said, "were the "books of the Bible"⁶. On the following day Begin spoke to Jewish leaders in New York, "I hereby declare the Israeli defence forces will stay in Judea, Samaria and Gaza ship to defend our

5. Quoted in, Ibid., p.156.

6. Jim Hoagland in "Dispute on Israeli Settlements Snags Accord", Washington Post, September 20, 1978, pp. A1, A11.

people and make sure Jewish blood is not shed again. I hereby declare they will stay beyond five years"⁷.

In an introductory address to his staff on June 22, 1977, The new minister of foreign affairs, Moshe Dayan, said that the new government would seek a solution for the West Bank, "not by dividing it into two parts, one of which would belong to Israel and the other to an Arab State, but by finding a way to co-exist there, without annexing any part to Jordan, without handing over any part of the West Bank or of the Gaza Strip to the rule of another government"⁸.

Dayan reiterated the tough Israeli position on the PLO on September 25, 1977 stating that Israel would not negotiate with the PLO even if the United States did, or even if it amended the Palestinian charter, accepted Security Council Resolution 242, and recognized the existence of Israel⁹.

The United States has a historic commitment to the principle of self determination, a commitment that, in

7. Quoted in "Sadat Begin Taut Accords before Friendly Audiences", Washington Post, September 21, 1978.

8. Tillman, n.1, p.135.

9. Ibid.

the present view, qualifies as a national interest. Begin had this to say on self determination. "To us self determination means a palestinian state, and we are not going to agree to any such mortal danger to Israel"¹⁰.

Reversing Settlement Understanding: When Prime Minister Begin and his principal associates quickly reverted to these themes in the wake of the Camp David accords, American officials although dismayed, took hope in the hypothesis that Begin was protecting his flanks against domestic criticism. Supporters of Camp David agreement asserted that Begin was fighting a rearguard action against an inevitable Arab "destiny" for the West Bank, which he or his some successor would ultimately be compelled to accept. The "rearguard action" after Camp David was vigorously prosecuted. There "will be no plebiscite" in the West Bank and Gaza. Begin declared in a debate in the Knesset on September 25, 1978, "and there is no and will not be under any conditions or in any circumstances a Palestinian State". Furthermore declared the Prime Minister, "The murderers' organization known as the PLO is not and will not be a factor in the negotiations" Begin also reiterated that contrary to President Carter's understanding, he had promised to suspend the emplacement of new Jewish settlement

10. Ibid.

on the West Bank only for the projected three months negotiating period with Egypt, and that even during this period Israel would reserve the right to expand existing Jewish settlements¹¹. A month later, following the visit to the West Bank of US Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders, in which the American official suggested to the Palestinians that the status of the Israeli settlement after the five year transition period would be subject to negotiation, Israeli officials emphatically denied any such commitment and reaffirmed their intention to retain Jewish settlements. Moreover, Prime Minister Begin announced on October 25 that Israel intended to enlarge its West Bank settlement as soon as possible¹². Foreign Minister Dayan made the same point even more emphatically the next day by stating, "This is our policy, whether other people like it or not"¹³.

So confused was the situation in mid-winter 1978 as to what Israel had or had not promised with respect to

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11. William Claiborne, "Begin Urges Acceptance of Accords", Washington Post, 26 September, 1978, pp. A1, A12.
 12. W. Claiborne, "West Bank, Golan Settlement to be Enlarged, Begin Says", Washington Post, 26 October, 1978, p. A27.
 13. W. Claiborne, "Israel Stresses Claims to Occupied Territories", Washington Post, 27 October, 1978, p. A1.

the settlements that the New York Times, although frequently sympathetic to Israeli policy, commented that the effect of Israeli's various explanations of its settlements policy was to "portray Israel's leaders as tricksters determined to drive huge tractors through the loopholes of solemn policy declarations"¹⁴. The Washington Post found Begin's policy "provocative and devious", and commented, "a policy of sneaking new settlements in between the lines of assurance to the United States is offensive to the US, and to Jimmy Carter personally".¹⁵

Confusion as to what had or had not been promised to the United States continued, but there seemed little basis for doubt that the Begin government was committed to a policy of continuing Jewish settlements and land acquisitions on the occupied West Bank. Controversies arose between West Bank Palestinians and the occupation authorities with respect to land titles and acquisitions, and in some instances seizures of land were restrained by court orders, and in others the Israeli government backed down"¹⁶. On August 14, 1978 in the wake of foreign and

14. "Those Creeping Israeli Settlement", New York Times, 2 February, 1978, p.A28.

15. "Settlements or Settlement?" Washington Post, 2 February, 1978, p.A.18.

16. Tillman, n.1, p. 164.

domestic criticism the Cabinet shelved plans for the five settlements until after the forthcoming summit meeting at Camp David¹⁷.

Differing view on Settlements --Carter and Begin: The Camp David summit meeting of September 1978 was followed immediately by another rancorous American-Israeli disagreement as to what in fact had been agreed with respect to settlement. In his triumphant address to a joint meeting of Congress on September 18, President Carter announced that "Israel has agreed that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people will be recognized. After the signing of this framework and during the negotiations concerning Palestinian self-government, no new Israeli settlements will be established in this area. The issue of future settlements will be decided among the negotiating parties"¹⁸.

Differing sharply with the President, PM Begin, as has been noted, insisted in the days after Camp David that he had not agreed to a suspension of Israeli settlements for the projected five-year negotiating period on Palestinian rights, but only to a moratorium for the three months within

17. Ibid.

18. Text of President Carter's Address to Congress"; Impossible Dream Now Becomes a Real Possibility"; Washington Post, 19 September, 1978, p.A14.

which Egypt and Israel were to try to conclude a treaty.¹⁹

As a result of this disagreement a planned exchange of letters among the three Camp David parties regarding the suspension of new settlements never took place. While, Begin, back in Israel after the Camp David meeting, reiterated his firm stand on the settlements,²⁰ President Carter insisted on September 27, 1978, that he had "a very clear understanding" with Begin that there would be no new settlements during the five-year period of negotiations on the permanent status of the West Bank and Gaza and the President warned that "a very serious problem", would arise if Begin persisted in his contention that he had agreed only, in effect, to a three month moratorium.²¹ Testifying before a House subcommittee the next day, Assistant Secretary of the State department, Saunders said, "The understanding we have is that as long as serious negotiations are going on there would be no new settlements"²².

19. Jim Hoagland, "Dispute Over Settlement Puts Pact in Limbo", Washington Post, 21 September, 1978, pp.A1, A14.

20. Tillman, n.1, p.136 and 165.

21. Edward Walsh, "Carter Disputes Begin on West Bank Settlement", Washington Post, 28 September, 1978, p.A25.

22. Terry, n.4, pp.155-156.

Carter Mellows: President Carter, however, appeared on September 28, to view the matter less seriously than he had the day before, saying at his news conference that his disagreement with Begin regarding the settlements - was "an honest difference of opinion and it would certainly not be an obstacle to the progress toward peace".²³

The United States thereafter reverted to its traditional policy of verbal disapproval of the settlements while Israel, apparently convinced that the United States would not or could not back its protests with either action or sanctions, adhered to its policy of expanding the settlements and ignoring protests. "Settlements", Begin declared in the Knesset on March 20, 1979, "are part of the security set up of the state of Israel", and the security of Israel is the center of our lives".²⁴

On March 22, 1979, the UN Security council voted to establish a three-member panel to "examine the situation relating to settlements in the occupied territories". The US abstained on the vote, and Israel made it known that the panel would not be admitted to the occupied territories.²⁵

23. Ibid.

24. William Claiborne, "Begin Rules Out Palestinian State on West Bank", Washington Post, 21 March, 1979, p.A1.

25. Kathleen Teltsch, "UN Group to Study Israeli Settlement", New York Times, 23 March, 1979, p.12.

The Israeli Cabinet on April 22 approved the creation of two new settlements, one of which, Shiloh was actually over a year old but was now, in effect, legitimized.

While the settlements grew larger and more numerous, American policy grew more ineffectual. On March 1, 1980 the United States joined in voting for a unanimously adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution condemning the settlements as illegal and calling on Israel to cease building new settlements and to dismantle the existing ones.

The American vote provoked angry protests from Israel and its American supporters. On March 3, President Carter announced that the American vote had been a mistake, the result of an error in the transmission of his instructions to US ambassador to the UN, Donald F. Mac Henry, and the United States should have abstained.

Whatever its other effects, the SCR of March 1, 1980 had no effect on Israeli settlement policy. Israel in early 1980 authorized Jewish civilians to settle in the occupied Palestinian city of Hebron. In March additional Arab-owned lands were expropriated in East Jerusalem for a Jewish housing project. The United States deplored the action, which it feared might disrupt or prejudice the

outcome of the "delicate negotiation" then still in progress on Palestinian autonomy²⁶.

Debate in Senate: American policy toward the Israeli settlements was debated in the Senate on June 17, 1980. On that occasion Senator Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois offered an amendment to foreign aid bill purporting to withhold \$ 150 million from the almost \$ 2.2 billion earmarked for Israel for fiscal year 1981, until the President determined that Israel had ceased the expansion of its settlement and also ceased planning new settlements in the occupied territories. Stevenson pointed out that \$ 150 million he proposed to withhold represented an estimate of what Israel was spending annually on the West Bank settlements. No other Senator spoke in support of the Stevenson amendment²⁷.

Israel Annexes Jerusalem: Israel, since annexing the Arab sector of Jerusalem after the 1967 war, had steadfastly maintained that East Jerusalem was henceforth to be distinguished from the occupied West Bank. On July 30, 1980 the Israeli Knesset enacted a law declaring United Jerusalem to be the permanent capital of Israel.

26. B.Gwertzman, "US assails Israeli for Seizure of Land Outside Jerusalem", New York Times, 13 March, 1980, pp. A19, A10.

27. Congressional Record - Senate, 17 June, 1980, pp. 57161-4.

The US position with respect to Jerusalem, had been spelled out in a statement before the United Nations Security Council by US representative Charles W. Yost on July 1, 1969: "The United States considers that the part of Jerusalem that came under the control of Israel in the June 1967 war, like other areas occupied by Israel, is occupied territory and hence subject to the provisions of international law governing the rights and obligations of an occupying power. Among the provisions of international law which bind Israel, as they would bind any occupier, are the provisions that the occupier has no right to make changes in laws or in administration other than those which are temporarily necessitated by his security interests, and that an occupier may not confiscate or destroy private property.....[Under international law] the occupier must maintain the occupied area as intact and unaltered as possible, without interfering with the customary life of the area, and any changes must be necessitated by the immediate needs of the occupation²⁸.

The Carter administration neither repudiated nor reaffirmed this position in the summer of 1980. The US abstained when the Security Council on August 20, by a vote

28. United Nations Security Council Official Records, 1483rd, Meeting, 1 July, 1969, Quoted in Tillman, n.1, p.169.

of 14 to 0, censured Israel for its formal annexation of East Jerusalem and called on those countries maintaining embassies in Jerusalem to remove them to another place. The resolution would not in any case affect the US, which maintained its embassy in Tel Aviv. Nevertheless, Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, addressing the Security Council, denounced the call for removing the embassies from Jerusalem.

While the US, under the Carter administration maintained its position against Israeli settlements, Israel continued to alter the landscape of the occupied West Bank. The architect of Israel's settlements policy, agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon explained in 1980 the strategy of settlements: "You just can't do anything about it any more. That is why it is impossible any more to talk about the Jordanian option or territorial compromise. We are going to leave an entirely different map of the country that it will be impossible to ignore. I don't see any way any government will be able to dismantle the settlements of Judea and Samaria²⁹.

One may wonder as to why was Carter unable to make headway on the West Bank and Gaza Jewish settlements.

29. Ibid., p.172.

Why did he seem to care less about those areas than he did about Sinai? First, Egypt and Israel were talking to each other and were ready to make decisions. The other Arabs were either opposed to the process or were sitting on the sidelines to see what would be offered to them. Carter felt more of an obligation to Sadat because Sadat had taken risks for peace. Second the chance for successful negotiation between Egypt and Israel was much greater than between Israel and any of the other Arab parties. Two disengagement agreements, had already been signed in 1974 and 1975. Direct talks between the parties had shown that the distance between them on bilateral issues was not large. Carter's involvement would plausibly help bridge the remaining gap. Third, Egypt was the most powerful Arab country. Peace between Egypt and Israel would not make war impossible in the Middle East, but it would dramatically change its nature. The danger of US, Soviet confrontation would be reduced as well. On these grounds even a separate peace had immense strategic value for the United States.

Finally, one must frankly admit that, the American political system makes it difficult for a president to tackle a problem like that of the Palestinian effectively in all its dimensions because it is circumscribed by political realities. Moreover, the Palestinian question has proved to

be so controversial that most presidents have been reluctant to get deeply involved in it. Sadat, who was genuinely popular with the American public, was, in Carter's view, worth a candidate to support in resolving the West Asian problem. But the Palestinians had no US domestic constituency, and when Sadat seemed less concerned about their fate than about Sinai, Carter found it impossible to be more demanding than the leader of the largest Arab country.

Begin, of all the participants in the negotiations, seemed to have understood the constraints on Carter best. He had an uncanny sense for timing, realizing better than most that the longer the negotiations went on, the less appetite Carter would have for a confrontation with Israel over the Palestinian issue. In the fall of 1978, Begin was convinced that by the following spring the realities of the coming election year would make themselves felt and Carter would do little to push Israel for concessions in the talks on the West Bank and Gaza.

While examining the Camp David negotiation process it is revealing that although the negotiating parties have acknowledged that a verbal agreement regarding future Israeli settlements was reached at Camp David, they disagree over terms of that agreement. Carter has continued to

maintain that Begin promised not to build any new settlements during the time the talks leading to the implementation of a three-month freeze; at any rate, Begin did not even adhere to his own interpretation of the agreement, approving new settlements only weeks after signing the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. As there is nothing in writing and the framework does not even mention this crucial issue, both sides were free to make their own interpretations.

The building of new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories became one of the major points of contention among the parties to the settlement; the failure to deal directly and clearly with this issue was one of the major failures of the Camp David agreement. Why Carter, knowing the crucial importance of this issue, failed to the supposed agreement on settlement in writing remains more than a bit perplexing. It is probable that Carter and Sadat knew that Begin would refuse to sign an agreement calling for the freeze on new settlements; pressing the issue might well have caused the negotiations to collapse. By negotiating at Camp David, both Carter and Sadat had taken considerable political risks and they needed an agreement. For both leaders, a weak agreement, even with obvious omissions and ambiguities, was better than nothing.

Consequently, the central issue of the settlements was left purposefully vague. Subsequently, Carter admitted this omission had been his biggest mistake in the negotiations³⁰. The failure to resolve the settlement issue meant that basic Palestinian rights continued to be contravened and made Arab acceptance of the framework and the separate peace even more impossible.

30. Terry, n.4, p. 159.

CHAPTER - 3

REAGAN PEACE PLAN AND JEWISH SETTLEMENTS

Reagan assumed the presidency in 1981 with a clear, overriding, preoccupation with the Soviet Union. Local conflicts in Asia, Africa, Latin America were perceived as manifestations of the global Soviet threat. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of the Shah in Iran were seen to heighten the risks for the West in the vital Persian Gulf. Moscow's arms supplies to Syria and Libya and access to Syrian ports were cited as proof of the vulnerability of the eastern Mediterranean to Soviet penetration. Therefore, Secretary of State, Alexander Haig made his primary objectives of explaining the nature of Soviet threat to US West Asian allies during a trip to that region in April 1981¹. He urged the leaders of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to develop a "Strategic Consensus" that would lead to an informal military alliance blocking Moscow's effort to control oil resources and routes. Haig's views were a throwback to the approach of John Foster Dulles in the 1950s, who assumed that Israel and the Arab states shared Washington's preoccupation with

1. Juliana S. Peck, The Reagan Administration and the Palestinian Question: The first Thousand Days, (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984), p. 15.

Soviet designs and would set aside their differences in pursuit of that common purpose.

The Arab regimes along the Persian Gulf were anxious to receive American military assistance to ward off any potential Iranian subversion and attack, but they did not see Moscow as a direct threat. Moreover, they were disturbed by the military imbalance in the Arab. Israeli equation caused by Egypt's withdrawal from the Arab front. Heightened tension on the Israeli-Syrian lines in Lebanon and the Israeli air strike against the Iraqi nuclear plant in June 1981 led Jordan and Saudi Arabia to seek weapons to ward off a potential Israeli attack. The Arab regimes hesitancy to embrace Haig's approach, in turn, reinforced the secretary of state's proclivity to view Israel as the linkage of American strategy in the region². Ariel Sharon, Israel's Defence minister in mid - 1981, welcomed the role of policeman in the middle east.

Haig assumed that establishing firm American - Israeli strategic relations would encourage Israel to take further steps towards peace. The administration reaffirmed its support for the Camp David process, but focused on finalizing the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai rather than

2. Ibid., p. 20.

reinvigorating the autonomy talks. Egyptian-Israeli negotiations concerning the West bank and Gaza strip had been ended abruptly by Anwar Sadat in mid-1980 when the Israeli government declared all of Jerusalem its eternal capital. The Reagan administration appeared to tilt toward Israel's interpretation of autonomy, particularly when Reagan stated that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories were not illegal.

On 26 January 1981, within one week of Reagan's inauguration, the Israeli cabinet approved plans for proceeding with three new West Bank settlements. President Reagan's response in a news conference the following weeks was :

"As to the West Bank, I believe the settlements there - I disagreed when the previous administration referred to them as illegal, they are not illegal. Not under the UN resolution that leaves the West Bank open to all people - Arab and Israeli alike, Christian alike"³. It is unclear to what United Nations resolution Reagan might have been referring. Actually his statement was thought to be based on a legal argument set forth by Eugene Rostow. Rostow's theory was that the terms of the Palestine Mandate were still in force, and the West Bank and Gaza remained

3. House Committee of Foreign Affairs, Documents and Statements on Middle East Peace, 1979-82.

Unallocated parts of its. Therefore, "Jewish rights of immigration and close settlement in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, established by the Mandate, have never been qualified"⁴. But the 1947 General Assembly partition resolution did allocate all the Palestine, and the West Bank and Gaza were included in the portion allocated to the Palestinians. Therefore Israel was an occupying power and its settlements illegal under the fourth Geneva convention.

Reagan's statement, his first pronouncement on the Palestinian problem since assuming office, was a devastating blow to the Palestinians. It was perceived in Israel and elsewhere as a clear signal that the U.S. would not interfere with the Begin government's settlements policies in the West Bank. In all fairness it must be noted that Reagan did, in the same statement, criticise Israel's timing of the new settlements as "unnecessarily provocative", this was scarcely noticed as the legal aspect appeared to the convincing.

The State Department was no more critical of the new settlements than Reagan himself. Its official response was only that, "we do not consider the carrying out of these

4. L. Dean Brown, Middle East Problem Paper No.23: The Land of Palestine: West Bank Not East Bank, (Washington D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1982).

plans to be helpful"⁵. And during the next few months there was an absence of any comment by the administration about settlements policy.

With Reagan's visit to the United States coming up in September, there was speculation in the American press that the administration, would pressure Begin on withdrawal from the West Bank⁶. However, drawing from later testimony in congressional hearings, it would appear that there was very little pressure put on Mr. Begin for any movement on the West Bank situation⁷. The president himself never brought up the subject of settlements at all in his talks with Begin.

Later in October the Jewish Agency announced plans for building twelve to eighteen settlements and increasing the Jewish population from 20,00 to 1,20,000 in the West Bank within the next four years. Within thirty years, it said, the Jewish population on the West Bank should total one million⁸. On 4 October, 1981, the Israeli cabinet

5. New York Times, 27 January, 1981, p.3.

6. "A Fresh Look at the Middle East", Newsweek, 10 August, 1981, p.31.

7. US Congress 97, Session 1, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, Persian Gulf Situation, Washington D.C. 1981) p.27.

8. Peck, n.1, p.34.

approved Defence Minister Sharon's plan to reorganize the military governments in the West Bank and the Gaza strip and give more authority to a civilian administration, a move which was seen by Palestinians living in the occupied territories as a step toward annexation⁹.

On 6th October 81, Anwar Sadat was assassinated, in its wake secretary Haig was asked at a press conference if the US had obtained any commitment from Israel on holding off as new West Bank settlements during the Egyptian government's transition period. Haig answered in negative - the US had not sought that kind of commitment. He did say that the administration had made it clear, it hoped there would be no further "enlarging of the West Bank Settlements" during the newly resumed autonomy talks¹⁰.

In October, Assistant Secretary of State Veliotes appeared before the House subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East and was asked about the American position regarding settlements. Veliotes stated that the position was that "they are harmful", and that "we have not commented really on the legality in this administration. We have put

9. Ibid.

10. Department of State, Press Release, 347, 13 October 1981.

our focus on the political aspects of settlement.¹¹ In February 82, Veliotos back before the committee admitted that the president had said that "he did not view the settlements as illegal". But said Veliotos, "it would be a very grave mistake to consider the President's statement on legality or illegality as an encouragement or an endorsement of new settlement activity because of the fact that they are a very significant negative factor in the peace process"¹².

Following Veliotos October appearance, the subcommittee had submitted a long list of additional questions in writing to the State Department, in order to obtain clear and considered statements of policy for the record. There were two questions regarding settlements. The first concerned the impact of settlements on the autonomy process. The answer was:

We have long urged restraint by all parties in order that the atmosphere in the occupied territories remain stable and conducive to the peace process.

Our view on Israeli settlements policy is well known. Continuing settlement activity in the occupational

11. US Congress 97, Session 1, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings, US Policy Toward the Middle East-1981, (Washington D.C. 1981) pp.20-21.

12. US Congress 98, Session 2, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings Developments in the Middle East, (Washington D.C. 1982), pp.30-31.

territories is unhelpful to our current efforts to negotiable and implement as called for in the Camp David framework¹³.

And in response to a second question concerning the Jewish population in the West Bank, the State Department letter reiterated that the establishment of new settlements was "unhelpful to the peace process and we have made this view known to the Israeli Government"¹⁴.

Beginning with Reagan's statement that Israeli Settlements in the West Bank were not illegal, and continuing through a policy of ignoring the whole issue at first and then suggesting that the establishment of new settlements was "unhelpful" or a "negative factor", the administration did little to dampen the Begin government's enthusiasm for tightening its control over the West Bank. Thus when the final Syria withdrawal took place in April 1982 and Defence Minister Sharon pledged a new drive to expand West Bank and Gaza settlements,¹⁵ there was no reason for his government to worry about how the United States might react.

13. Ibid., p. 45.

14. Ibid.

15. David K. Shipler, New York Times, 26 April 1982, p.10.

Israeli Invasion of Lebanon

In June 1982, following an attempt by non-PLO Palestinians to assassinate the Israeli ambassador in London and a subsequent two-day artillery exchange between the IDF and the PLO, Israel invaded Lebanon. The major force behind this decision was Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, who overcame the initial resistance of the government. There were two major assumptions underlying the Israeli move. First, that the political power of the PLO and its influence on the West Bank could be eradicated if its territorial bases in Lebanon were destroyed. As a result, the Palestinians were expected to be more receptive to the defects annexation of the West Bank. Second, that Israel's active intervention would help the Maronite Phalangists preserve hegemony over the more numerous Lebanese Muslim population. Such a Phalangist government, dependent on Israel for its continued existence, was expected to sign a peace treaty with Israel.

The war in Lebanon had a major effect on president Reagan's perceptions of the problems in the Middle East. After Alexander Haig's resignation on 25 June, George Shultz was nominated to be the new secretary of state. President Reagan, instructed Shultz to place high priority on addressing the underlying Arab-Israeli dispute, especially

the Palestinian issues'. After developing a set of proposals, the administration sent a diplomatic mission to Jordan to discuss them confidentially with King Hussein in order to ascertain his reaction. On Hussein's indication of his regarding the proposals serious, the administration decided to proceed with the discussions with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel.

President Reagan sent Prime Minister Begin a letter on August 31, outlining several proposals for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. Reagan asked for a freeze on Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and suggested that these territories ultimately be linked in a confederation with Jordan. The president specifically wanted that Israel should not annex the occupied areas. The proposals were placed in the context of a comprehensive plan for the next phase of negotiations under the Camp David formula. Reagan also reiterated his opposition to an independent Palestinian state or a negotiating role for the PLO.

But since the major objective of the Israeli campaign had been to ensure final and permanent Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, the Israeli government considered the president's proposals preposterous and rejected them out of hand. Shamir issued a statement

claiming that Reagan's suggestions contradicted the Camp David accords. Meanwhile Begin cancelled a vacation to convene an emergency session of the cabinet in order to devise a strategy for defeating the American plan. Several members of Begin's party demanded that the prime minister create many new settlements immediately; other members passed the contents of the letter to Israel Radio, having to rouse the public to derail the initiative¹⁶. To counter Israeli opposition, Reagan decided to appear on television to explain the proposal to the American public.

Reagan Peace Plan: President Reagan's televised speech on September 1 was billed as a "fresh start", and a "new initiative", for peace in the middle East. The answer to reconciling "Israel's legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians", he said, "can only come at the negotiating table". The Camp David agreement remained the foundation of United States policy. Reagan retained the Camp David concept of a five-year transitional period of Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza. The United States was not to support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transition period. "Indeed" Reagan said, "immediate adoption of a settlement freeze by Israel, more than any other

16. David K. Shipler, New York Times, 2 September 1982, p. 3.

action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in the talks"¹⁷.

The president went beyond any other American action taken since the Camp David accords had been signed, by outlining a clear United States position on the outcome of the negotiations for final status of the West Bank and Gaza:

"Beyond the transition period, as we look to the future of the West Bank and Gaza, it is clear to me that peace cannot be achieved by the formation of an independent Palestinian state in these territories. Nor is it achievable on the basis of Israeli sovereignty or permanent control over the West Bank and Gaza.

So the United States will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and we will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel.

There is, however, another way to peace. The final status of these lands must, of course, be reached through the give-and-take of negotiations. But it is the firm view of the United States that self-government by the

17. AIPAC Papers on US-Israel Relations, Washington D.C., The Reagan Administration and Israel, Key Statements, p.18.

Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace"¹⁸.

As for final borders, Reagan reaffirmed American support of UN resolution 242, which called for an exchange of territory for peace, and he said, "The extent to which Israel should be asked to give up territory will be heavily affected by the extent of true peace and normalization and the security arrangements offered in return"¹⁹. However, in a passage which Reagan inserted in his speech at the last moment, he made clear that he would not support a full return to the 1967 borders. Pointing out that in the pre-1967 borders "the bulk of Israel's nation lived within artillery range of hostile Arab armies", Reagan declared, "I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again"²⁰.

Finally, Reagan indicated that the United States would play an active role in the negotiation, supporting fair positions and reasonable compromises and putting forward American proposals where they could be helpful.

Reagan Peace Plan: West Bank and Gaza During the transitional period, the United States would support:

- 18. Peck, n.1, p.85.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.

----- The decision of full autonomy as giving the Palestinian inhabitants real authority over themselves, the land and its resources, subject to fair safeguards on water.
----- Economic, commercial, social and cultural ties between the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan.
----- Participation by the Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem in the election of the West Bank - Gaza authority.
----- Real settlement freeze²¹.

The US would oppose the dismantlement of the existing settlement during the transitional period, however.

Beyond the transitional period, the United States would not support Israeli sovereignty or a Palestinian state. The outcome, however, must be determined by negotiations.

The status of Jewish settlement after the transitional period expired should be resolved in the course of negotiations. However, "We will not support their continuation as extraterritorial outposts"²². Secretary of State Shultz later elaborated further on this subject to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, saying, "neither will we support efforts to deny Jews the opportunity to live in

21. New York Times, 9 September 1982, page. 10.

22. Ibid.

West Bank and Gaza under the duly constituted government authority there as Arabs now live in Israel"²³.

General principles stated in the "talking points" were: First, that the United States would maintain its commitment to Camp David; second, "We will maintain our commitment to the conditions we require for recognition of and negotiations with the PLO", and third, "We can offer guarantees of the position we will adopt in negotiations. We will not be able, however, to guarantee in advance the results of these negotiations"²⁴.

Analysis of the Proposals

The Reagan peace plan was highly important both for its content and for its significance as a renewed commitment of the United States government to finding a solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Obviously both the "talking points" and Reagan's speech were worded with the utmost care, and the positions set forth should be read not only for what they clearly specified but also for what they left unsaid or ambiguous

Reagan emphasized both in his speech and in the talking points that the Camp David agreement would remain

23. Ibid.

24. New York Times, 9 September 1982, page 10.

the foundation of his plan. Certainly the framework was that of Camp David, providing for a five-year transitional period during which the final status of the West Bank and Gaza would be negotiated between Arabs and Israelis, and calling for Jordanian and Palestinian participation in the negotiations. Former president Jimmy Carter, no admirer of Ronald Reagan, publicly supported the proposals as "absolutely compatible with the Camp David agreement"²⁵. The proposals did not go beyond Camp David in terms of comprehensiveness. The Golan Heights issue was not mentioned, for instance. Nor did Reagan deviate from the United States position of not negotiating with or recognizing the PLO until the organisation accepted Resolution 242 and 338 and Israel's right to exist.

The questions on compatibility with Camp David came about because of the fact that the US govt. was expressing its position on certain issues rather than remaining silent. But Camp David provided only a framework, a process without substance. The Reagan proposals gave shape to the framework but did not alter it. US repeatedly stated that in supporting certain positions it was not guaranteeing the outcome of Arab-Israeli negotiations (though it could reasonably be assumed but the United States would wield considerable influence in this respect).

25. Peck, n.1, p. 86.

The fact that the US committed itself to positions on specific issues was, however, a major change in American policy since the Camp David accords were signed. The three biggest sticking points in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations on West Bank - Gaza autonomy had been the definition of autonomy, the status of East Jerusalem Arabs in elections for the self-governing authority, and Jewish settlements. On all three, the Reagan plan favored the Arab-interpretation. Autonomy would include Palestinian authority over the land and its resources, the East Jerusalem Arabs should participate in elections, and settlement activity should be frozen during the transitional period.

Reagan's call for a settlement freeze was a particularly major shift for him. While he had not reversed himself on the question of legality, he had come a long way from his one-time public support of the Jewish right to establish settlement in the West Bank. The freeze would also go beyond the Carter administration's understanding of an unwritten agreement reached at Camp David, whereby no new Israeli settlement would be established after the accords were signed, and the issue of additional settlement would be resolved during negotiation²⁶.

26. Jimmy Carter, Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President, (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 397.

The taking of positions on issues concerning the transitional period was clearly a way of encouraging broader Arab participation in the negotiation process and an attempt to overcome the deadlock between the Egyptian and Israeli positions. More significant in the long run was the setting forth by the administration of its position on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. While still maintaining that the outcome would be determined solely through negotiation, and thereby not precluding an outcome other than that supported by the US, the Reagan plan strongly opposed both an independent Palestinian state and Israeli sovereignty, calling for West Bank-Gaza self government in association with Jordan.

Reactions to the Reagan Peace Plan

Israel - Israel's reaction to the proposal was a swift and emphatic rejection. The cabinet met the next day after Reagan's speech and issued a communique denouncing seven aspects of the proposals as contradicting or inconsistent with the Camp David agreements. Israel objected to the provisions regarding.

- (1) Participation of East Jerusalem Arabs in elections ("No mention whatsoever is made in the Camp David agreement of such a voting right").

- (2) Palestinian responsibility for internal security (In the Camp David agreement no distinction is made between internal and external security).
- (3) Settlement freeze ("Such settlement is a Jewish inalienable right and an integral part of our national security");
- (4) Full autonomy ("At Camp David it was made absolutely clear that the autonomy applies not to the territory but to the inhabitants").
- (5) Economic, commercial and cultural ties between the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan, ("In all the clauses of the Camp David agreement there is no reference whatsoever to such ties")
- (6) Israeli sovereignty ("There is nothing in the Camp David agreement that precludes the application of Israeli sovereignty over Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district following the transitional period").
- (7) Palestinian State ("There would be nothing to prevent King Hussein from inviting his new-found friend, Yasir Arafat, to come to Nablus and hand the rule over to him").

The administration's reaction to the rejection of the plan by Israel was calm. Shultz tried to put a positive light on it by suggesting that it was a way of staking out a negotiating position²⁷. He consistently rejected any suggestion of putting pressure on Israel, emphasizing instead the positive motivation to all parties generated by the possibility of peace.

On 5 September, four days after Reagan's speech and his call for a settlement freeze, the government of Israel announced the allocation of \$ 18.5 million to build three new settlements in the West Bank and the approval for construction of seven others. The White House, promptly issued a statement calling the Israeli announcement "most unwelcome".

Interestingly, former secretary of state, Alexander Haig, attacked Reagan Plan vehemently. The call for a settlement freeze, he said, was a "very serious mistake". Furthermore, the future of the West Bank was a "thing for the local nations to decide, not the US to dictate"²⁸.

27. AIPAC Papers, n.17, page 67.

28. Haig's Speech at the meeting of the United Jewish Appeal at New York, quoted in New York Times, 15 September, 1982, p. 10.

Arabs Reaction to the Plan

Unlike Israel the Arab world did not reject the Reagan plan outright. There was quite a mixed response, because of the incoming Arab summit meeting to be held at Fez, Morocco. The Palestinian mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, wrote a letter to President Reagan on 5 September expressing his town's support for the plan and desire for peace. A week later King Hussein of Jordan called the plan "the most courageous stand taken by an American administration ever since 1956", "very constructive and a very positive move" which he wanted to see "continue and evolve"²⁹.

Elsewhere, Riyadh radio was reported to have called the plan a "break through" on 3 September. Egypt's President Mubarak termed it "positive and constructive". However, a Syrian newspaper editorial said on 6 September that the plan did not respond to Arab interests and would not achieve a just and lasting peace³⁰.

On 6 September 1982, the Arab League convened its summit conference at Fez, attended by all members except Libya and three days later issued a declaration of

29. Ibid.

30. FBIS Daily Report, Middle East and Africa, 7 September 1982, p.A 17-A18.

principles for the establishment of peace³¹. The final statement from Fez, which included the declaration of peace principles, made no mention of the Reagan peace plan.

US Aid to Israel: A Lever for Freezing Settlements?

Following Israel's swift and scathing rejection of the Reagan peace proposals, relations with Israel, were strained, but there was little public criticism of Israel's rejection except for occasional mild protests about its continuing settlements program. On 3 November Israel announced that five more settlements would be established in the West Bank, and two days later a World Zionist Organisation spokesman said that Israel would push ahead with its plans to settle 400,000 Jews in the West Bank, in five years and 1.4 million in thirty years. The State Department Spokesman Alan Romberg responded, "The United States regards this latest announcement of Israel's intention to begin work on additional settlements as most unwelcome"³². President Reagan called it "a hindrance to what we are trying to accomplish in the peace movement"³³. Asked if he would consider sanctions to force a change in

31. Ibid.

32. New York Times, 25 November, 1983, p. 7.

33. Ibid.

Israeli policy, Reagan took a leaf out of George Shultz's book by holding up peace as the ultimate incentive.

Meanwhile, in late October Israeli military officials issued a directive calling for dismissal of and pressure on "extremist mayors", and other Palestinian nationalists in the West Bank, "neutralization" of pro-Jordanian leaders, and massive support for the Village Leagues and Palestinian bureaucrats in the occupation government³⁴.

In spite of public statements disavowing sanctions, the administration did lobby hard in the Congress in a futile effort to prevent committee approval of an increase in aid to Israel for fiscal year 1983 over both President Reagan's request and the 1982 level. On 30 November the president met with a House Subcommittee to oppose increased aid, and on the same day Senator Mark Hatfield said that he had received a note from National Security Adviser Clark saying that additional aid would undercut the administration's peace efforts. Nevertheless the appropriation committee on 2 December approved a \$ 125 million increase in economic aid over Reagan's request of \$ 785 million. The Continuing Resolution passed by both Houses

34. New York Times, 24 November, 1982, p. 15.

of Congress on 20 December and signed by the President the following day resorted to the \$ 785 million figure, however.

A few days later the Israeli government approved the establishment of four new settlements south of Hebron, while Deputy PM David Levi announced that a massive building program was being undertaken at existing settlements.

Meanwhile, the troop-withdrawal talks began in Lebanon at the end of December and the Reagan administration found itself concentrating its dealings with Israel on securing a withdrawal from Lebanon rather than in promoting Israeli cooperation with the broader peace process. But Israel could only reap advantages by involving the US on the withdrawal negotiation in Lebanon so that it could not be pressed on the West Bank. Consequently, major settlement expansion could continue while American attention was diverted to the issue of withdrawal from Lebanon.

Jordan's Importance in Reagan Peace Plan

The Reagan peace plan gave quite a lot of importance to Jordanian monarch King Hussein. This was due to the plan's support for Palestinian self-government in association with Jordan and its call for Jordanian participation in negotiations. After King Hussein's arrival in Washington on 21 December 1982, the two leaders held

meetings. Hussein was reported to have emphasized that he would not be able to persuade any Palestinians or other Arabs to enter peace talks while Israel continued to build settlements on the West Bank^{35a}. However, President Reagan and King Hussein expressed lot of optimism after their second round of talks. Apparently, Hussein was secretly promised that conditional on Jordan entering peace talks, the US would try to halt Israeli settlement construction^{35b}. Reagan said, "You will not be pressed to join negotiations on transition arrangements until there is a freeze on new Israeli settlement activity"^{35c}.

Jordanian Inability to Enter the Peace Plan

But surely, the Palestinians did not believe Reagan. They were certainly not to be blamed. America was proving to be unable to secure an Israeli troop withdrawal from Lebanon - a pointer to United States' promises lacking credibility. The Palestinian National Council meeting started in Algeria on 14 February. On the Reagan plan the declaration adopted a much stronger condemnation. However King Hussein and Chairman Arafat started serious negotiation in March 82 through intermediaries on American proposals. In

35.a. Wall Street Journal, 14 April, 1983, p.1.

35.b. Ibid.

35.c. Ibid.

mid-March, King Hussein publicly urged the US to pressure the Israelis on withdrawal from Lebanon and cessation of West Bank settlement activity. This, Hussein thought would restore American credibility and provide a start toward a broaden agreement³⁶. In a secret letter to King Hussein, President Reagan urged him to quickly enter peace talks and promised to press the Saudis to give Hussein support³⁷.

While the Hussein-Arafat talks were taking place, American officials had stepped up diplomatic activity on behalf of the peace plan, urging other Arab leaders to press the PLO to agree to Hussein's participation. An unidentified White House official said: "We are aware that trying to bring about a settlement freeze will pose serious problems with Israel and its friends, but the president is willing to do it if Hussein says "yes" in an unambiguous way"³⁸.

The event of Arafat's departure from the talks and his deputing two representatives with a new draft, killed any possibility of Hussein's entering peace talks. Subsequently on 10 April the Jordanian cabinet expressed its inability to enter the talks on the basis of the Reagan plan.

36. Boston Globe, 20 March 1983, pp.1,16.

37. Wall Street Journal, 15 April 1983, p.1.

38. New York Times, 9 April 1983, p.4.

More Jewish Settlements

The Israeli government was openly relieved by King Hussein's decision not to enter talks on the basis of the Reagan peace initiative, and responded by announcing on 12 April, 83 that 68 settlements in the West Bank would be expanded to increase the Jewish population there by 20,000 in the next eighteen months. On the same day the Israeli chief of staff, Rafael Eytan, told a Knesset Committee, "When we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged roaches in a bottle"³⁹. In US the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East voted to increase economic aid to Israel by \$ 65 million over president Reagan's request for the 1984 fiscal year. In contrast to its lobbying in December against fiscal year 1983 increases, the administration made no visible effort to block this increase.

Back to Square One

A year later, Washington forgot the Reagan plan and reaffirmed the strategic alliance with Israel. Reagan forcefully reasserted the anti-Soviet theme and the role that Israel could play in containing communism. In a speech on 27 October 1983, he argued:

39. Peck, n.1, p. 102.

[The Middle East is] key to the economic and political life of the West. If that key should fall into the hands of power or powers hostile to the free world, there would be a direct threat to the US and to our allies....The events in Lebanon and Grenada [which the US invaded on 25 October], though occur apart, are closely related. Not only has Moscow assisted and encouraged the violence in both countries, but it provides direct support through a network of surrogates and terrorists [citing Syria, in particular] ... Israel shares our democratic values and is a formidable force an invader of the Middle East would have to reckon with⁴⁰.

Juliana Peck, in analyzing the speech, notes that Reagan referred to his 1982 peace plan but placed primary emphasis on "Soviet proxies" against whom he might "unleash" Israel: "his speech was characterized by a return to the old Reagan view of all problems everywhere being caused by the Soviet Union, and by an explicit polarization of the conflict between East and West, between Syria and Israel"⁴¹. The Palestinians, once again, were perceived as terrorist bands, destabilizing the region.

40. Ibid., pp. 113-14.

41. Ann. M. Lesch, "US Policy Toward the Palestinians in the 1980s", ARab Studies Quarterly, Volume 12, No. 1 & 2 Winter/Spring 1990, p. 173.

Causes of the Administration's Shift from the Peace Plan

Reagan and Shultz's frustration over the lack of resolution of the problems in Lebanon and the dangerous entanglement of US forces there were major reasons for the shift. Substantive Israeli-Lebanese talks had not begun until January 1983. They yielded a treaty in May that allowed Israeli troops to remain in southern Lebanon and normalized diplomatic relations. The United States and Israel agreed, however, that implementation was contingent upon Syria's also leaving Lebanon. Since president Hafez al-Assad had already rejected anything less than full Israeli withdrawal and opposed the normalization of Israeli-Lebanese relations, the situation on the ground remained stalemated. Shultz blamed the impasse on Assad instead of a faulty American negotiation⁴². And Reagan looked for the Soviet hand behind Syria's stance.

Moreover, Syrian-supported splits in the PLO weakened the cohesiveness of the Palestinian movement, Assad's concern at his exclusion from negotiation on the Lebanese and Palestinian troops encouraged him to underwrite dissident Palestinians as well as Lebanese groups that chafed at the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. In addition, as Israeli forces withdrew from the central sector

42. Ibid.

during the summer of 1983, the US marines lost their neutral status as peacekeepers. They became directly involved in confrontations by the Lebanese army with Syrian-supported Druze and Shiite militia, a fatal shift that led to the devastating attack on the marine barrack in October and the total withdrawal of the American peacekeeping contingents in February 1984. The Israeli-Lebanese treaty sank in their wake.

All through this while the Reagan administration was concentrating its attention to the situation in Lebanon, events were occurring in the West Bank which seemed scarcely to draw its notice. In the month of July particularly, Hebron, which was in the occupied West Bank, witnessed a series of violent incidents between Arab inhabitants and the armed Jewish settlers of near by Qiryat Arba. The violence in Hebron followed the expropriation act of buildings in the thick of the town by the Jews. After some controversy and opposition within Israel to the Jewish settlement activity in Arab Hebron, the weekly cabinet meeting cleared the way to go ahead with the decision to restore the old Jewish quarter there.

In a customary pattern the State Department said, "We do not consider plans to build settlements in Hebron to

be helpful in achieving an atmosphere on the West Bank conducive to the peace process"⁴³.

The past incidents in the occupied territories in general and the recent ones in particular had their echo in the Security Council. After four days of meetings, on 2 August, 83 a draft resolution introduced by Jordan was vetoed by the US. Zaire abstained: the other members voted in favour. The draft resolution affirmed that Israeli settlement policies constituted a major obstacle to efforts towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, had no legal validity, and were in contravention of the Geneva Convention of 1949; called on Israel to abide by that convention and asked Israel not to transfer its own civilian population into the occupied territories or free transfers of Arab populations from those territories; called on Israel to dismantle the existing settlements, desist from enlarging them, and cease the planning and establishment of new settlements; rejected "arbitrary and illegal" actions by Israel that resulted in the expulsion of Arab population, and condemned the recent attacks against Arab population; and called on all states not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories⁴⁴.

43. Peck, n.1. p. 107.

44. UN Monthly Chronicle, 20 October 1983, pp. 3-11.

New Prime Minister in Israel

Within Israel, a momentous political change took place when on 28 August Menachen Begin informed his cabinet that he intended to resign as prime minister, on the grounds of poor health. The President of Israel requested Mr. Yitzhak Shamir (Foreign Minister) who was elected as leader of Herut Party, to form a new government. Shamir was then confronted by a demand of six members of the Knesset that in exchange for their support he must give the Labour Party veto power over decisions on new West Bank settlements. However, Shamir was able to get the necessary majority in the Knesset without giving in on the settlement issue.

During the new Prime Minister's visit to Washington on 29 November 1983, President Reagan in the departure statement pointed out towards - "the broader goal of peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours"^{45a}. Here he reaffirmed his commitment to the September 1 initiative as the best way to realize the promise of Camp David and the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 upon which it was built^{45b}. However, President Reagan clearly said: "A main focus of our meeting was the agony of Lebanon and the threats there to our common interest"^{45c}. The two leaders agreed to increase their cooperation in political-military

45.(a,b,c) AIPAC Papers, n.17, pp.25-27.

arena, and for this purpose a joint political-military group was agreed upon. Once again "Soviet involvement in middle east" overshadowed the settlement issue and the peace process in West Asia. The statement ended by noting: "We have also discussed some issues on which we do not see eye-to-eye, but disagreements between good friends do not alter the unique and sturdy foundation of our relationship"^{45d}.

It is not very difficult to conclude from this statement that although US and Israel naturally had disagreement over Jewish settlement issue/ Israeli practices in the occupied territories issue, still these were not to alter the status quo between Israel and America.

On 13 March, 1984 President Reagan in an address to the Young Leadership Conference of the United Jewish Appeal, Washington D.C., once again spoke about his concern over settlements:

....Now, we hope that the government of Israel will understand that continued settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza will make the peace process more difficult. Peace can only come about through the give-and-take of direct negotiations. These negotiations will deal with many issues, including the status of Jerusalem, voting

45.d. Ibid.

rights, land use and security. If there's to be any hope for these negotiations, however, we must preserve our credibility as a fair-minded broker seeking a comprehensive solution⁴⁶. Moreover Reagan once again assured the US Jews, as did other past US Presidents that: "I will be blunt: If Israel is ever forced to walk out of the UN. The United States and Israel will walk out together"⁴⁷.

Certain basic observation emerges from the foregoing account of Reagan plan and settlements. It appears that the Reagan administration while was sincere in words for bringing out a justiciable peace in the middle east, was not prepared to use its levers of influence over Israel in settlement freeze - the major hurdle in the peace process. Rather than being harsh on Israel US seemed to have developed new relationship. This was evident by the 29 November 1983 strategic cooperation accord between Shamir and Reagan. The accord went well beyond the agreement initiated in late 1981. Three joint groups were set up: political - military, economic development, and, in 1986, security assistance planning, by 1987 more than twenty-four military technical agreements were made⁴⁸. Moreover, Israel was designated a major non-NATO ally, which codified its

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Lesch, n.41, p. 174.

de-facto status and opened up greater possibilities for Israel to sell military equipment to the United States. In addition to high-level strategic coordination in the eastern Mediterranean and middle east, Israel covertly assisted the Reagan administration's policies elsewhere. This constrained US in exercising pressure on Israel to freeze Jewish settlements. Israel played a central role in the arms-for-hostage drama exposed in the Iran-contra affair. Moreover, Middle East Report documented Israeli involvement in providing arms directly to the contras after May 1983; the Department of Defense paid \$ 10 million for arms and ammunition in the form of weapons that Israel had captured from the PLO in 1982⁴⁹. When the Boland Amendment banned American aid to the Contras in mid 1984, the administration continued to pay through Israel to arm them in return for which Washington agreed to be flexible and supportive toward Israel's military and economic requirements. Such arms deals continued through 1986, despite the strains caused by the Pollard Spy case, which revealed that a US government employee had provided vital information on Arab Military sites to Israel's intelligence service. The close relationship between the United States and Israel was seen by the Arabs "as a force multiplier for Israel". That, in

49. Ibid.

turn, meant the Arab doubts increased about Washington's prospective role as a mediator on such critical regional issues as the Palestine problem.

CHAPTER 4
ISRAEL-PALESTINE DILEMMA OVERSHADOWS JEWISH
SETTLEMENT CONCERNS IN U.S.

Reagan was heading for a landslide victory in the presidential election of November 1984. Elections in Israel in July 1984 had led to the formation of a National Unity Government in which Shimon Peres would be prime minister until October 1986. King Hussein sought to test the American commitment to the peace process. Hussein viewed Peres as potentially flexible on the issues of negotiating with Palestinian representatives and withdrawing not only from Lebanon but also from land occupied in 1967. Besides, a second-term Reagan presidency would be relatively free of political pressures on an American President in the first term, when he wants to contest for the second term in the White House. Therefore, the timing appeared propitious for a renewed peace drive.

Hussein maneuvered to establish a favourable context by restoring diplomatic relations with Egypt in September 1984 and hosting the Palestinian National Council meeting in November. The formation of a moderate Arab front was crystallized by his accord with Arafat on 11 February, 1985, which called for:

1. Total withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 for comprehensive peace as established in UN Security Council resolutions.

2. Right of self-determination for the Palestinian people...within the context of the formation of the proposed federated Arab state of Jordan and Palestine.....
3. Peace negotiations [to] be conducted under the auspices of an international conference in which the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict [would] participate, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestine people, within a joint (Jordanian, Palestinian) delegation¹.

For the first time, Arafat explicitly affirmed the land-for-peace formula at the core of Resolution 242. Moreover, he accepted the concept of a confederation with Jordan rather than a fully independent Palestinian state and agreed to Palestinian participation in a joint delegation with Jordan. Hussein and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak viewed the accord as a major breakthrough and expected a comparable response from Washington. Instead, the United States seized on the problem on the international conference: the Soviet Union would be included in the conference as a permanent member of the Security Council,

1. Ronald J. Young, Missed Opportunities for Peace: US Middle East Policy 1981-86 (Philadelphia: American Friends Service Committee, 1987).

and Reagan wanted to exclude Moscow from any peace negotiations on the Middle East. Thus, even though Mr. Shimon Peres was cautiously positive toward an international conference, if only as a cover for direct negotiation, the United States dug in its heels and insisted on retaining the Camp David framework. Moreover, Washington did not see the Hussein-Arafat accord as fully committing the PLO to Resolution 242 and therefore demanded additional statement from Arafat. Arafat responded on May 14 by saying that the PLO would publicly accept Resolution 242 if the US would endorse the Palestinians' right of self determination². There appeared to be a breakthrough that month after Shultz visited the region and pursued the possibility of a meeting between an American diplomat and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation³.

The PLO submitted seven names, noting that some could be deleted if the US objected to them. Washington did object to three high-ranking PLO officials on the list and prospects were almost torpedoed when the Israeli press leaked the names. Nonetheless, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy prepared to meet with the remaining four, including two persons from the West Bank and Gaza.

2. Ibid., p. 146.

3. Ibid., pp.146-49 and 153.

The session, scheduled for August, was abruptly canceled even though Murphy and the Palestinians were present simultaneously in Amman. The circumstances surrounding the cancellation remain obscure, but the United States apparently made new demands. It had been anticipated that the Palestinian would join the Jordanians in a statement affirming Resolution 242 after the meeting; if Murphy was sufficiently forthcoming in the confidential session; but Washington suddenly requested that the Palestinians affirm Resolution 242 prior to the meeting, a step they were unwilling to take since they did not know yet what Murphy would offer. The cancellation of the meeting dealt a hard blow to both Hussein and Arafat. It reinforced arguments that the United States was not serious in its pursuit of negotiations. It also accelerated the renewal of violence in the fall and winter of 1985-86.

In rapid succession the Palestinian assassination of three Israelis at Larnaca, the Israeli bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis, the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship and later on an Egyptian plane, and attacks at the Rome and Frankfurt airports dashed the prospects of negotiations. In a last ditch effort in early 1986, Hussain and Peres sought from Washington reluctant approval of the concept of an international conference. Moreover, Arafat issued a declaration from Cairo in November 1985 renouncing

terrorist tactics and the use of violence outside the occupied territories. But the PLO would not formally adhere to Resolution 242 without U.S. acceptance of Self-determination through Palestine-Jordan confederation. The Hussain-Arafat accord collapsed amid recriminations on all sides.

Thus, even though Israel withdrew its troops from most of Lebanon in June 1985 and Egyptian-Israeli relations were restored to ambassadorial level in September 1986, the atmosphere was too sour for negotiations to be initiated. In Israel, Shamir replaced Peres as Prime Minister in October 1986. Shamir blocked any moves toward an international conference and talks with Hussein. Washington had contributed to the stalemate by failing to seize the diplomatic opportunities in 1984-85. Subsequently, the United States acquiesced to the impasse by muting reference to a political settlement and talking, instead, about improving the "quality of life" of the Palestinians living on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Additional U.S. aid funds were allocated for the territories even though Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's "iron-fist" policy, instituted in August 1985, had a sharply negative impact on the very quality of life that Washington sought to improve.

The focus on the 'quality of life' of the Palestinian inhabitants of West Bank and Gaza can be seen in the prepared statement of Assistant Secretary of State Mr. Richard W. Murphy, presented before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East (Committee of Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives:

.....U.S. Policy toward the West Bank and Gaza has two major objectives. First, we support a resolution of the status of these territories in the context of a lasting peace to be achieved through direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. And, second, we want to improve the quality of Palestinian life in the territories. These two objectives are complementary. An active peace process gives both Israelis and Palestinians in the territories the promise of an end to strife, genuine security, and a brighter future for themselves and their children.

..... practical measures to improve the daily lives of Palestinians will help to reinforce efforts towards a comprehensive political settlement while reducing the frustrations that are one cause of extremism and violence. Active efforts for peace and improvements in the quality of life are therefore essential to sustain each other⁴.

4. US Congress, 100, Session 1, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing, US Policy Toward the West Bank and Gaza (Washington D.C.: 14 December, 1987). pp. 4-11.

The Assistant Secretary of State noted in the hearings before the Subcommittee that the situation in the occupied territories was clearly unsatisfactory to both Palestinians and Israelis. Against this background, the United States, while continuing to encourage Israel and her Arab neighbours to find a way to the negotiating table, pursued a three part policy toward the West Bank and Gaza:

- condemn violence and extremism in all forms, and from all sides;
- support programmes to improve economic and social conditions for the Palestinians; and
- encourage Israel to assure that its occupation practices are consistent with accepted international standards and the legitimate needs of maintaining security⁵.

Later a question was put to the Assistant Secretary of State by a member of the House of Representatives Mr. Dymally - "Are we making an assumption here that we taken it for granted that the occupation is a never ending situation? Is that the assumption in (this)?"⁶

The Assistant Secretary's reply was : "No, not at all Sir. We work for the end of occupation through the

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 16.

peace process with our goal of having a general comprehensive peace settlement in the region between Israel and its Arab neighbours. We don't assure, nor does any Israeli assume, the endless continuation of occupation. There is no one in that country, in Israel, that would argue that this is stable and perpetual situation, but no one has found the key to the door yet to walk through and negotiate that general settlement"⁷.

During his speech Murphy noted that long-term economic development in the West Bank and Gaza was supported, in principle, by both Israel and Jordan, and certain policies had been adopted by both the governments to support growth. However, although the standard of living rose, the potential of these areas was far from being realized because of the unresolved status of the territories and by various constraints and protectionist policies imposed by Israel and Jordan. Social problems in the West Bank and Gaza were viewed by Reagan administration in the context of the continuing occupation, the lack of economic development and the absence of local public institutions. Social services in West Bank and Gaza, including secondary health care, sanitation, vocational training, and care of the elderly and handicapped were largely undertaken by non-

7. Ibid.

governmental groups. The administration found that their funding was often precarious and their activities were subject to control by the occupation authorities. The problem was especially acute in Gaza, where the very rapid population growth rate made it one of the most densely populated areas in the world and thus significantly increased the demand for social services⁸.

U.S. Assistance Programs: U.S. assistance programs to the West Bank and Gaza responded to these economic and social problems. The assistance flowed through separate but mutually reinforcing channels: the direct program, Jordan's development program, and UNRWA, which provided assistance to over 2 million Palestinian refugees, of whom over 800,000 resided in the West Bank and Gaza.

United States provided over \$76 million to fund projects of Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) in the West Bank and Gaza since 1975. Apart from health and social services, US increasingly directed her aid toward longer term development needs, particularly employment creation. The Assistant Secretary in the hearing said that a major impediment to further PVO activities was the inability to fund the program adequately. For fiscal year 1987, the administration requested the Congress \$ 18 million as aid

8. -----
Ibid., pp.4-11.

to PVOs in West Bank and Gaza for their projects, but were granted only \$ 8.5 million. For 1988, taking into account U.S. budget stringencies, the administration requested \$12 million⁹. 'Richard Murphy confessed', "if funding remains at the 1987 level it will be very difficult to undertake new projects"¹⁰.

In 1986, King Hussein announced an important new economic development program for the occupied territories. It focused on infrastructure development, education, and agriculture in the territories. U.S. provided \$ 18.5 million since September, 1986 to December, 1987 for King Hussein's initiative. To have a major impact, however, Jordan's program needed substantial additional fundings. The U.S. State Department through the President requested the Congress, an additional \$23 million in 1987 (in 1988 Financial Year it was \$7 million only)¹¹.

UNRWA also made efforts to sustain decent conditions in the refugee camps. In 1987, UNRWA's expenditures in the territories were approximately \$82 million. The U.S. contributed \$867 million to UNRWA's \$200

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

million budget for activities in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, West Bank and Gaza¹².

Before we come to the obvious looking conclusions after reading the above paragraphs ___ of Israel ruling indefinitely over the West Bank and Gaza Strip and expanding new Jewish settlements there and its strong ally United States believing that cosmetic improvements were the most that would be expected, it will be important to consider Assistant Secretary Murphy's statement before the Subcommittee on Eurpore and Middle East of House Foreign Affairs Committee, made on 8 October, 1986: ".....the assistance we provide to Jordan for developing the West Bank is an inexpenxive investment in regional peace..... The struggle for a comprehensive, fair and just Middle East peace will not be won by the opening of a bank or the completion of a Water Project. But the context in which the peace process works cannot but be affected by the quality of life on the West Bank¹³.

However, later events in the West Bank and Gaza point out that "improving quality of life", policy of the West Bankers and Gazans was not the real solution, to the problems faced by local Arabs at the hands of Jewish settlers and Israel government.

12. Ibid.

13. Deparement of State Bulletin, December 1986, p.70.

Shultz Plan: American complacency was shattered by the intifada, which burst onto the international scene in December, 1987. It was not just a spasmodic outbreak of demonstrations and strikes, as had occurred frequently over the two decades of military occupation, the uprising gained momentum and acquired a structure that has sustained it for more than three and a half years. In July, 1988, Murphy confessed: "We have no doubt that the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza was caused, in large part, by a sense that the peace process had stalled"¹⁴.

The intifada compelled Washington to address the Palestine question, despite the administration's preference for avoiding that contentious problem. Mubarak, Hussein, and even Peres prodded Shultz into personally leading the American diplomatic effort. From late February until early June, 1988, Shultz traveled four times to the region, the only sustained high-level shuttle attempted during the eight years of Reagan's presidency. Shultz did not merely listen to the views of the parties to the conflict. He presented a

14. Richard W. Murphy, "Review of U.S. Policy in the Middle East", Current Policy, no.1097, (Washington D.C.: Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 27 July, 1988) p.4, For an analysis of the causes and demands of the intifada, see Ann M. Lesch, "Anatomy of an Uprising", in Peter F. Krogh and Mary C. McDavid, eds. Palestinian Under Occupation: Prospects for the Future (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1989), pp.87-110.

coherent plan that went beyond Camp David Framework and included substantive elements sought by Mubarak and Hussein. He also set deadlines in an effort to both inject a sense of urgency into the discussions and stress the linkage among the different elements of the plan. As sketched prior to the first trip, the proposal involved:

(1) The convening of an international conference by mid-April as an "event" to open negotiations, with the participation of Israel, Egypt, Syria, a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, and the five permanent members of the Security Council;

(2) By May 1, the start of six-month's negotiations for an interim phase of self-administration on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including the election of an administrative council by the Palestinians;

(3) By December, 1988, the initiation of talks between Israel and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on the final status of the territories. Those talks would conclude within one year and the final status would take effect three years after the beginning of the interim phase. Final status negotiations would begin in December even if no accord had been reached on the interim phase¹⁵.

15. New York Times, 10 March 1988, text of Shultz to Shamir; a similar letter was to King Hussein.

Shultz explicitly linked the interim and final phases. He knew that the Arab Parties would hesitate to participate if only an interim phase was stressed; but he also risked an Israeli boycott by insisting that the interim stage could not stand above. Shultz tried to pacify Israel by presenting the international conference as merely an opening ceremony without the authority to negotiate - much less impose - a settlement. Importantly, he fudged the issue of Palestinian representation.

Shultz soon discovered that he had underestimated both the intensity with which Shamir would oppose the plan and Shamir's effectiveness in checkmating Peres. The Israeli Prime Minister blocked a Cabinet vote on the proposals in early March and brusquely rejected the plan: "the only word in the Shultz plan I accept is his signature. Apart from that, the document does not serve the cause of Peace." The proposal obligates me to resist (it) with all my power," he added. "And my power to resist is very great"¹⁶. Shamir argued that the requirement in Resolution 242 for Israel to withdraw from territory occupied in 1967 had been satisfied by the withdrawal from Sinai and that retaining the West Bank and Gaza was essential for Israel on the grounds of security, history, and national identity. He

16. Ibid., 12 March 1988.

rejected an international conference, which he felt would not only put Israel at a disadvantage numerically but also give Moscow a decisive role. Solving the question of Soviet Jewry and restoring diplomatic relations were necessary before any Soviet presence could be contemplated.

Although Shultz was miffed at his language, Washington granted Shamir the valuable substantive measures that he sought: a new Memorandum of Agreement on joint political, security, and economic cooperation, and accelerated delivery of seventy-five F-16 fighters. The United States wanted to emphasize the strategic relationship, in part to counter potential Congressional criticism of the Shultz plan and in part to reassure Israel that the loss of the West Bank and Gaza would not undermine its security. But the latter message was lost. Instead, an Israeli journalist commented, the message received was: "One may say no to America and still get a bonus"¹⁷.

Thus Shamir felt safe in ignoring the assertions Shultz made during his third and fourth trips on the need for Israel to rethink its concept of security. Shultz argued

17. Yoel Marcus in Haaretz, 7 April 1988, quoted in Journal of Palestine Studies (Summer 1988), 68:152, The best of the Memorandum of Agreement is provided in fall in Journal of Palestine Studies (Autumn 1988), 69: 300-2.

that prior concepts of defense based on territory were outdated: "The location of borders is less significant today in ensuring security than the political relations between neighbours. Peace is the real answer to the problems of security"¹⁸. He also raised the issue of "the ticking demographic time bomb"¹⁹ of a Palestinian population living under Israeli occupation, disenfranchised and hostile to Israeli rule. Such arguments were irrelevant to Shamir.

However, Washington sent confused signals by seeming to support the measures Israel took to put down the uprising. In March, Shultz commented that Israel, "has the duty to maintain order....with firmness and authority and in as humane a way as is possible"²⁰. Likewise, Murphy spoke of "brutal casualties on both sides," in the violence in the territories²¹. They ignored the reality that the uprising was occurring in response to the kind of "order" that Israel had maintained on West Bank and Gaza and that the casualties were overwhelmingly among the Palestinians and caused by Israeli soldiers. Such statements reassured Shamir that

18. Ann M. Lesch, "U.S. Policy Toward the Palestinian in the 1980s" Arab Studies Quarterly, Volume 12, Nos. 1 & 2, Winter/spring 1990, p.175.

19. New York Times, 11 March 1988.

20. Lesch, n.18, pp. 179-180.

21. Ibid.

Washington would not object to the measures that the army was taking to subdue the intifada.

Palestinian Representation: Shultz's plan adhered to the long-term U.S. posture that Palestinians should express their views through a joint delegation with Jordan. He did not refer to the PLO and did not mention whether Palestinians living outside the West Bank and Gaza would be included at any stage.

In March, 1988, Arafat emphasized that the PLO must be represented in peace talks. A joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation was no longer acceptable. Arafat criticized Shultz for selecting the Palestinians with whom he would meet: "He hasn't the right to chose the Palestinian delegation. It is a matter of dignify and integrity. Can I choose the American representative? ok I'll deal with Mr. Jesse Jackson, who accepts self-determination for the Palestinian people. I have not the right to do so"²².

Arafat chided Shultz for treating the Palestinians as children, but also offered positive inducement for talks. He stated that he accepted Israeli existence by accepting "all UN resolutions" including 242 and 338 and noted that,

22. New York Times, 12 March 1988.

at the Palestine National Council in 1984, "we said land for peace". He concluded: with whom am I going to make peace at an international conference? With my enemies, with the Israeli government²³.

By late March, Shultz began to respond to the demand to include Palestinians living outside the occupied territories in the scope of his talks. Assistant Secretary of State Murphy stressed in a public address: "Palestinians must be represented in every phase of the negotiating process. Exactly how Palestinians will be represented remains an outstanding issue. But the Palestinians must be involved- who are both acceptable and credible"²⁴.

Deadlock: Shultz had initially set a deadline of 16 March for the parties to respond to his plan. No one answered except Shamir, who flatly rejected it. Shultz concluded that nonresponse meant that the plan had not been rejected by the Arab States. Nevertheless Murphy's statements in April employed the cliches that signal a faltering diplomatic effort: one should not talk of a "breakthrough" but "momentum" and "continuing efforts", he opined. The United States was trying "to create an opportunity for progress" and the Shultz plan was "the only game in town"²⁵.

23. Ibid.

24. Lesch, n.18, p.180.

25. Ibid., p.182.

As Shultz started his fourth - and last- trip he argued: "It is not my initiative or the US initiative that's in trouble. It's the region that's in trouble. That's why I keeping coming back". But he sounded discouraged at the end of the shuttle when he commented in Cairo: "The US will remain heavily involved", in close touch with the parties to help shape opportunities and encourage accommodation²⁶. Washington used increasingly astringent language toward Shamir. He must "set aside outdated rhetoric and illusions" and "not reject every new idea"²⁷. By refusing to relinquish any territory, Shultz added, Israel guarantees that no Arab will agree to negotiate on his arrival in Tel-Aviv in June, Shultz asserted bluntly: "The continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the frustration of Palestinian rights is a dead-end street. The belief that this can continue is an illusion"²⁸. By September, Shultz was directly blaming Shamir for the failure of negotiations to get off the ground. He criticized Israel for its actions to suppress the intifada, arguing that Israel must maintain law and order, but must also find a way to respond to expressions of Palestinian grievances. According to Shultz

26. Shultz T.V. interview, 20 May 1988, Documents and Statements: US Policy in the Middle East (Amman: American Centre, June 1988), n.p.

27. Lesch, n.18, p.182.

28. Arrival Statement in Israel, 5 June, 1988, n.26.

Israel, cannot claim there is no one to talk to while suppressing political expression and arresting or deporting those who speak out - even those who speak in moderate terms²⁹.

Murphy was even more blunt: "Force is not the answer. Intimidation is not the answer. Deportation of Palestinians is not the answer"³⁰. He particularly criticized Israel for closing schools and universities, arguing that such measures disrupt lives and increase bitterness rather than promote peace. Former government officials candidly expressed their concern that Israeli measures in the territories would erode American support and weaken the foundations for the strategic relationship³¹.

Such statements denoted Washington's frustration at Shamir's ability to stonewall. Shultz's precise dates and linked interim and final status negotiations never had a chance to be taken seriously and carried out.

Shamir would not alter his position and the United States explicitly renounced the use of financial or military leverage against him. The one unilateral step that

29. Al-Fajr, 2 October, 1988.

30. Al-Fajr, 11 September, 1988.

31. Ibid.

Washington could take that would alter the diplomatic dynamics and open up new prospects for the incoming president was to address the US-PLO relationship. Such a move would be less risky for a still-popular lameduck administration than for a new president. Nonetheless, Shultz vigorously resisted taking that final step.

A new breakthrough came on 14 December 1988, when Secretary of State George Shultz announced that the US government would open a "substantive dialogue" with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) that would be conducted by the American ambassador in Tunisia³². Earlier that day, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Yasir Arafat, had met all the strict conditions for talks imposed by Washington. At a press conference in Geneva, Arafat affirmed:

....."the right of all parties concerned in the Middle East conflict to exist in peace and security ... including the state of Palestine, Israel and other neighbours, according to the Resolution 242 and 338. As for terrorism, I renounced it yesterday [at the UN General Assembly] in no uncertain terms and yet I repeat for the record that we totally and absolutely renounce all forms of

32. New York Times, 15 December, 1988.

terrorism, including individual, group, and state terrorism
.... we want peace. We are committed to peace³³.

The statement met the three conditions imposed by the United States. In a secret American-Israeli Memorandum of Understanding that was attached to the second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement accord of 1975, Washington pledged that "it will not recognize or negotiate with the PLO so long as the PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council resolution 242 and 338"³⁴. The Reagan administration added a third condition: the PLO must renounce the use of terror before the US would talk with its leaders.

Arafat's remarks were accepted as such, an authoritative statement. Mr. Ronald Reagan, who was nearing the last month as President, added to Shultz's announcement: "We view this development as one more step toward the beginning of direct negotiations between the parties, which alone can lead to a [comprehensive] peace"³⁵.

The American policy shift was not simply the result of Arafat's issuing a statement that met the US

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid, 18 September, 1975, quoted in Lesch, n.18, p.167.

35. Ibid, 15 Decemember, 1988.

conditions to open up dialogue with the PLO. The shift also indicated an evolution in Washington. The intifada ("shaking off") launched by Palestinians in the Gaza strip and the West Bank in December, 1987 compelled the Reagan administration to reassess its assumptions about Israel's capacity to maintain its security through territorial control. Intifada, the Palestinian national movement, was in a course of time, to achieve an importance rivaling the Six-Day and Yom Kippur Wars, the Camp David Accords (and the peace treaty with Egypt) and the Lebanon War. Shultz perhaps foresaw that importance of intifada, and that is why he undertook the only intensive diplomatic effort to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dilemma during the eight years of Reagan's administration. Earlier initiatives had been half-hearted and had generally been conducted at a lower than secretarial level. Palestinian diplomatic moves that resulted from the intifada finally convinced Washington that the Palestinian movement had met the conditions that the United States had imposed. Thus the intifada not only crystallized Palestinians political thinking but also altered American policy.

Nevertheless, Washington would not promise to support the key Palestinian aspirations for self-determination and statehood. Nor would it promise to press Israel to open a similar dialogue. Shultz stated emphatically at his press conference on 14th December 1988:

"Nothing here may be taken to imply an acceptance or recognition by the United States of an independent Palestinian State"³⁶. Shultz maintained that negotiations rather than unilateral acts or declarations were the appropriate means for determining the status of the West Bank and Gaza strip. The United States would neither endorse Israeli calls for annexation nor Palestinian demands for statehood.

Opening a dialogue was necessary first step toward including the PLO in negotiations, even if it did not guarantee that outcome. Moreover, it eased the burden on the incoming administration led by the then Vice-President George Bush.

Summary Reagan's second term of presidency saw Arafat affirming the land-for-peace formula, and accepting the concept of confederation with Jordan rather than a fully independent Palestinian State. But President Reagan did not want Moscow to have any say in the peace negotiations on the Middle East. In May 1985, a possible meeting between an American representative and joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation got bogged down due to American obstinacy on

36. Ibid.

insisting the Palestinians affirming UNSCR 242 before the meeting. Once again when peaceful negotiations broke, violence increased. In Israel Mr. Yitzhak Shamir replaced Shimon Peres as the Prime Minister, who was known for his hawkish stand on the occupied territories and the Arabs. The US instead of taking steps towards freezing Jewish settlements in West Bank and Gaza and make Israeli government see reason started talking about improving the quality of life for the Palestinians living on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was intifada which showed the futility of such cosmetic improvements. The uprising of the Palestinians in the West Bank, saw Shultz - coming up with his Shultz Plan. But, PM Yitzhak Shamir of Israel, checkmated Shultz's efforts and diplomacy in the Middle East. The dynamics of intifada also compelled Mr. Yasir Arafat to take some historical steps at Geneva in a Press Conference in December 1988. It were also the last days of Reagan administration.

CONCLUSION

Labor's Role: Uncertain Policies

During the first decade of Israeli control of the West Bank, the Labor Alignment was in power. It had no clear cut or decisive policy toward the region, although it did enact legislation making Jerusalem part of Israel. Divisiveness within Labor, international pressures, and concern about integrating a large Arab population within the Jewish state restrained movement toward annexation. However, Labor did renounce a return to the pre-1967 frontiers: A new situation was created by the 1967 war in which Israel's security would be give paramount consideration as part of a peace settlement. With security as the foundation of its policy, Labor encouraged limited Jewish settlement in the West Bank, in regions approved by the government, took control of scarce resources such as water and land, and began to integrate the economic infrastructure of the region with Israel. To facilitate normalization of life for the Arab population, the West Bank was permitted access to Jordan, through the "Open Bridges" policy, assistance was given in restoration of economic activity and public functions at the municipal level, but region-wise political activity was banned. There was strict enforcement of military government control over the Arab inhabitants.

Labor's ambiguous policies in the West Bank encouraged militant groups such as Gush Emunim (Block of Faithfuls) to establish illicit settlement which the government found difficult to remove or control. When Labor left office in 1977, the role of the West Bank as a bargaining card for peace negotiations had diminished.

Likud's Role : Rapid Integration

Likud policy from 1977 until 1984 was clear-cut and decisive, with emphasis on integrating the West Bank as an integral part of Israel. This policy was motivated as much by Herut ideology, emphasizing territorial unification of the Land of Israel, as by security considerations. To hasten unification, Jewish settlement was given great encouragement and assistance by the government, by Zionist institutions, and through the private sector. There were no restrictions on areas within the West Bank where Jews could settle since the whole region was considered to be an integral part of the Jewish state. Measures to integrate West Bank infrastructure such as water systems, the electricity grid and the road network with Israel were hastened. Priority in the use of land and water was given to Jewish settlements in all parts of the West Bank where they were located. Arab opposition to Jewish settlements and plans for political absorption were dealt with more

severely than under Labour and attempts were made to sever all ties between West Bank inhabitants and the Palestinian nationalist movement, especially the PLO. An attempt was made to replace Arab attraction to the PLO with establishment of rural-based village leagues opposed to the PLO oriented urban leadership.

President Reagan occupied the White House with a strong "Soviet threat to US interests" perceptions. In the initial months the Arab world was sold the phobia of Soviet threat. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 made it clear to Reagan administration that a peaceful solution to Arab-Israel problem was a must, otherwise Soviet Union, America's antagonist, would exploit the situation of conflict and increase Soviet intervention in Middle East. Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in Reagan administration's view was a major obstacle in achieving of peace in the region.

In his televised speech of September 1, 1982, the President made it clear that United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the proposed 5 year period of transition which would begin after free elections for a self-governing Palestine authority. Reagan thought that, the immediate adoption of settlement freeze by Israel more than any other

action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation of Arab nations in the peace talks. According to President Reagan, the settlement activity was in no way necessary for the security of Israel and it only diminished the confidence of the Arabs that a final outcome could be freely and fairly negotiated.

Israel, which was pleased by President Reagan's earlier description of the settlements as not being illegal this time swiftly and emphatically rejected the Peace Plan. Reagan's call for Jewish settlement freeze applied to the expansion of existing as well as future settlements. Israel affirmed that settlements from Jewish inalienable right and were an integral part of its security needs. In fact, four days after Reagan's speech the Israeli government announced the allocation of \$ 18.5 million to build three new settlements in the West Bank. It also approved construction of seven other settlements. The White House promptly issued a statement calling the Israeli announcement "most unwelcome". Taking advantage of US predicament in Lebanon crisis, Israel went ahead with the settlements programme.

Jordan because of social, cultural and historic ties with West Bank had a crucial role in Reagan Peace Plan. Reagan had stated that self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan was

"The best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace". Reagan Peace Plan was silent on PLO participation in the peace negotiations when the talks between Jordan and PLO failed over Reagan Peace Plan proposals, Israel was once again openly relieved by King Hussein's decision not to enter peace talks. On April 12, 1983, Israeli government announced the expansion of 68 settlements in the West Bank to include 20,000 Jewish settlers in next eighteen months.

Earlier in November 1983, President Reagan and his administration had lobbied in the Congress against increasing US aid to Israel, saying that the Congressional proposed increased aid would go to finance the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Eventually, the administration requested amount was passed by Congress. But with the announcement of Jordanian inability to participate in peace talks, Reagan administration did not lobby against the increased aid to Israel in 1984 financial year.

Once again a peace proposal was forgotten by the White House and the strategic alliance with Israel was reaffirmed. Israel was designated a major non-NATO ally and a strategic cooperation accord was signed between Reagan and Shamir. Israel also play a central role in the arms-for-hostage drama exposed later in Iran-Contra affair. It also provided arms to contras at Reagan administration's behest when Boland Amendment banned US aid to contras in 1984.

These all covert assistances by Israel constrained Reagan administration morally in exercising pressure on Israel to freeze the settlements. Secondly, due to historic strong and friendly relations of US with Israel Reagan administration could not dictate terms as a superpower to Israel on settlements issue. Thirdly, due to the presence of a very active Israeli lobby in US, it was certainly hard to pressure Israel to give up settlements and thus enter peace talks. Fourthly, the Likud government in Israel headed by Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, was hard nut to crack on "settlements freeze" issue, even if President Reagan had used political, diplomatic and economic levers against Israel.

The second Reagan term in the White House was initially an epitome of missed opportunities for finding a peaceful solution to the Middle East. The slogan for second term of Reagan administration with respect to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza was "improving the quality of life". The administration very well understood that opening up of a Bank or the completion of a Water Project would not give a solution to the struggle for a comprehensive, fair and just Middle East Peace. But, in the context of peace process works, quality of life improvement in the West Bank and Gaza, was essential in the administration's view.

Once again the overall Arab-Israeli peace negotiations caught the attention of President Reagan, in which there was scant attention towards 'Jewish settlements in West Bank and Gaza' - issue. Intifada launched by the Arabs of West Bank in December 1987, forced the administration to pay more attention towards West Bank and Gaza. It resulted in the Shultz plan, but Shamir blocked all the roads towards peaceful negotiations. President Reagan's second and last term was coming to an end, and there was an evident helplessness and anger at Israel's obstinacy, in Reagan administration.

One can conclude that but for September 1, 1982, 'fresh start' speech Reagan administration could not do much to stop Jewish settlements in West Bank and Gaza, and Israel totally ignoring protests of US went on increasing resettlements from over 100 settlements in June 1981, with 30,000 Jewish settlers to over 140 settlements having over 50,000 Jewish settlers by the end of December 1988.

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