RESTRAINING ISRAEL

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Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June, like the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor and the bombing of Beirut in the summer of 1981, demonstrated the capacity of a client state to act autonomously of its patron superpower. These acts, all contrary to American policy and interests in the Middle East, reevoked in more pressing form an old dilemma for Washington: how does one escape responsibility for the actions of a state seen by much of the world as an American dependency? How and under what conditions can a patron utilize the leverage it supposedly enjoys? These questions demand attention, because the patron-client relationship itself is a fixture of American as well as Israeli policy. Israel needs American help and protection, and the United States needs for its own moral well being to insure Israel's survival as a Jewish state.

Israeli dependence on the United States is both vital and unhealthy. To say as does George Ball that Israel has become a ward-- kind of welfare dependent exaggerates the state of affairs,[1] but only stringent measures would save the Israeli economy, if American public assistance were withdrawn. And the Israel efense orce would lack regional superiority without American equipment and financial backing. Now, more so than twenty or even ten years ago, the health of Israeli society depends on the United States. But the increasing level of dependence has introduced unhealthy elements into the relationship between the two countries.[2] Where power enters, love flees.[3] Patronage brings legitimate claims to influence over policy and understandable resentment in the client when power is indeed exercised. The relationship seesaws between patron's frustration and client's resentment.

Rising levels of dependence and a changing context of international relations make a mutually satisfactory equilibrium virtually inconceivable.

In the long run, restoration of a healthy, friction-free relationship between the United States and Israel must await diminution of Israel's dependence. Only a generalized peace agreement in the Middle East could reduce Israel's military needs and produce such a reduction in external dependence, but such an agreement still appears far off. Until then Washington and Jerusalem must manage the tensions inherent in a patron-client relationship. Jerusalem must consistently harp on the identity of interests between the two states in hopes of securing American endorsement for its projects, while Washington has the unhappy task of reminding its client of the divergence of interests, the distinction between the role of a superpower and that of a regional actor, and the link between a patron's health and its clients security. Only if there were complete agreement on the future shape of the Middle East, would full Israeli autonomy be theoretically consistent with American interests. But the two countries continue, as they have since 1967, to differ about the status of the West Bank and Gaza, the role of the Palestinians and the good faith of states such as Saudi Arabia. Thus, the United States and Israel must live with the tensions of patron-client relations for the foreseeable future. For Washington that means an effort to exercise the "rights" of a patron conscious of its world-wide responsibilities. For Jerusalem that means redoubled efforts to combat Washington's pressure. My concern will be the view from Washington.

I. The Development of Dependence

Both Israelis and Americans have come to speak of the "special relationship" between their countries. That special relationship, essentially moral in nature, has served as the basis for increasing American military and economic aid. But the flow of money and weapons has neither enhanced nor diminished the special qualities of American-Israeli relations. The interactions of patron and client overlie common sentiments that have linked the two states since 1948.

What has distinguished Israel from being just another friendly state[4] is its history, which evokes at a number of points the American experience. American Jews and non-Jews alike have identified with the survivors of the Holocaust, the victims of East European persecution, the immigrant pioneers who sought to create a new society, the tough, courageous founders who declared independence despite the known risks of decimation, the Jews who rediscovered their Biblical homeland and the democrats who tolerate a wide spectrum of viewpoints even in difficult circumstances.[5] Each theme has induced empathy in a portion of the American public, and the result, as evidenced by the periodic surveys of opinion, has been steady support for the state of Israel.[6] Political leaders starting with President Truman have responded to these strong bonds by endorsing the creation and preservation of the state. Congressional support for Israel has remained stronger by several times than either the strength of Jewish constituencies or the effectiveness of pro-Israel lobbies would lead one to expect.[7] American money, both public and private, has helped sustain the Israeli enterprise from the beginning.

Yet Israel retained other patrons. Although the British, still the principal protectors in 1948, bore the brunt of Israeli resentments for having

tried to reconcile the idealism of their commitments to a Jewish homeland with their sense of fair play to the Arab community, Israel sought British as well as French cover for its attack on Egypt in the fall of 1956. While the British and Americans enforced limitations on the sale of arms to the Middle East, the French became the principal source of weapons in the period prior to the 1967 war. Not until the early 1960s, partly as a result of U. S. efforts to slow the development of nuclear weapons in Israel, did Washington agree to sell arms. By 1967 the United States had funded some $1.5 billion in aid, including $440 million for arms. Calculated on a per capita basis, this put Israel at the top of the list of nations receiving U.S. assistance in this period.[8] But in retrospect the sums appear small, even translated into 1982 dollars.

The 1967 war produced a qualitative shift in relations between the two countries. President de Gaulle's decision to suspend the sale of French weapons to Israel forced Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to seek resupply in the United States. At that point the United States became Israel's principal patron. From 1967 to 1974, military aid reached $3.8 billion. And as dependence mounted, so did disagreement. The Rogers Plan for a general settlement in the Middle East raised Israeli hackles because it smacked, in their eyes, of an imposed solution. Israel felt, resented and resisted the new American leverage.

The 1973 war betrayed the extent of Israeli dependence on the United States. For the first time, Israel called upon the United States for assistance during a war, and President Nixon permitted supplies to be flown directly to Israel in American military airplanes. This direct American involvement matched Soviet support of Egypt and Syria. The Soviets suffered attacks by Israel's air force while delivering supplies to Syria.[9] The Americans were more fortunate but no less committed. The subsequent American economic aid, bolstered by

American promises to compensate Israel for concessions in signing the Sinai II and the Camp David agreements, have further augmented the American stake in Israel's domestic and military condition. American aid of about $2 billion in 1980, not counting the $3.2 billion allowance to defray expenses of moving out of Sinai, constitutes about 10 per cent of Israel's gross national product.[9a] The additional Sinai assistance may have made the proportion as much as 50 per cent higher. Aronson writes that Israel, after 1973, was "now totally dependent on American financial aid."[10] George Ball describes Israeli dependence as reaching the "point of totality."[11] While the degree of dependence has grown to significance, nothing suggests that Israel would disintegrate if American aid were withdrawn. The word "total" hence seems much too strong.

II. The Divergence of Interests

Far from representing a convergence of American and Israel foreign policy objectives, the heightened dependence of the smaller country on the larger has occurred, in part, as a result of American efforts to soften the differences by sweetening incentives for Israeli cooperation. The 1967 war, which produced the Israeli need for large-scale military aid, also produced a set of circumstances that divided American from Israeli interests and continues to divide them now. From the outset the United States has insisted that any peace agreement should mean return of most of the occupied territories--Sinai, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, Gaza--and a special arrangement for Jerusalem. Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and its settlement policies in the occupied territories have evoked protest from Washington because they render virtually impossible subsequent withdrawal from areas other than Sinai.[12]

The American view, held with remarkable consistency by five administrations,[13] reflects American needs for a stable regional system in the Middle East as a component of global stability.[14] Western access to Middle East oil depend on such stability, and the control of nuclear weapons depends on superpower efforts to reduce and contain regional conflict. The United States has continued to contend publicly and privately that a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian problem would engender a relaxation of regional tensions and lead toward the achievement of these American goals.

Israel's perspective is that of a power that has found the international system, of which the United States is a principal benefactor and protector, disadvantageous and even hostile. Far from feeling responsible for that system, it feels isolated and resentful. The system failed to protect Israel's rights after 1956, failed to open the Straits of Tiran and prevent war in 1967, and fails to stigmatize the Palestinians as well as Israelis for the continuing violence in Lebanon and the West Bank. Israel needs to cultivate good relations with its new partner in peace, Egypt, but feels no guilt in reciprocating the hostility heaped upon it by other Middle Eastern states.

More consistently than previous leaders, Prime Minister Begin has argued that a U.S.-Israel alliance would assure containment of the Soviet Union in the Middle East and hence contribute to the stability of the world system. But the argument is flawed. To contain the Soviet Union by direct alliance with Israel would mean neglecting the Arab world and accepting the Israeli view of the Palestinian problem. To do those things would surely exacerbate disorder, tension and the chances for direct confrontation between the two superpowers over Middle Eastern questions. Israel helped the United States militarily in the Jordanian crisis of 1970, and it might be able to do so again in another context. But the availability of force can only be a part of U. S. concern.[15]

A policy of containment cannot be based on force alone or on Israel alone. Even on the issue of deterring Soviet influence, American and Israeli interests are as likely as not to diverge.

The patron-client relationship itself has become another source of divergence. Israel's actions hinge upon American tools and resources. If Israel embarked upon a war it could not win, the United States would be inevitably drawn in, whether or not the Israeli heartland were jeopardized. Worse yet, if Israeli actions against Soviet clients went beyond the "red line" where the Soviets themselves felt obliged to intervene, the United States would face difficult decisions--of the sort that produced the 1973 Red Alert. In short, as a result of Israeli dependence, the American interest has come to require a measure of control over Israeli policy. As O'Brien puts it, "Apprehension over the possibility of U. S. involvement in a major war engendered by Israeli actions, taken with American weapons without any consultation or coordination with the American government, is the most critical issue in U.S.-Israeli relations."[16]

The other side of the coin is the Israeli fear of a peace settlement in the Middle East imposed by the United States. Perlmutter writes: "Israel's greatest fear is an imposed settlement, a plan conceived either without consultation with Israel or in spite of it."[17] Such fears naturally increase as dependence escalates, especially since the American interest in avoiding war requires movement toward peace.[18] The mere assertion of American views about how the peace process should proceed or how the United States would envision a permanent set of territorial adjustments, as in the era of the Rogers Plan or in the first year of the Carter administration, elicit the expression of such Israeli fears.

The patron-client relationship has also contributed to Israel's distrust of American relations with the so-called "moderate" Arab states,

especially Saudi Arabia. The distrust arises from American efforts to show even handedness by balancing its aid to Israel with commitments in the Arab world. Perhaps because American assistance to Egypt helped bring President Sadat to the peace table and because the Camp David accords provided for the further enhancement of Egyptian-American relations, Israel has expressed few objections to American help for the Egyptian army.[19] But Israel has protested in the strongest terms about American sales of high-performance fighter planes and radar warning systems to Saudi Arabia. Since the Saudis subsidize the PLO and have not joined the peace process initiated at Camp David, the Israeli government does not see them as moderates. Pro-Israel writers seek to show that Saudi Arabia is unstable, authoritarian, unreliable and immoderate in its attitudes toward Israel; hence it is, by that view, an unworthy ally of the United States.[20] Such writers try to demonstrate that the U.S. needs only one ally in the Middle East.

Much as Israel worries about the effects of American assistance to potential enemies, however, it also frets that American leverage in Israel exceeds American influence with the Arab states; as a consequence the United States will be able to extract more concessions from Israel than from the Arabs in bargaining situation.[21] A stronger American position in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan would be advantageous to Israel in this light, at least in times of making peace. But in times of making war, American support for an enemy would be costly for Israel. From the American perspective it would be even more costly to deny cooperation to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, decreasing their incentive to participate in the peace process and reinforcing any inclinations they might have to seek military help from the Soviet Union. The Egyptians, in particular, have cultivated good relations with the U.S. to profit from the American leverage on Israel.

III. The Exercise of American Influence

Growing Israeli dependence on the United States in circumstances of divergent interests has produced the need and potential for American influence over Israeli foreign policy. On occasion, American influence has been apparent and even acknowledged. Yet the number of such occasions is small. One would expect an increase in Israeli dependence to result in an accrual of American leverage. The question is why this has not been so.

Three instances of effective American pressure on Israel stand out in the history of the last 34 years: the Eisenhower insistence on Israeli withdrawal before negotiation in 1956; the Kissinger-Nixon-Ford efforts to prevent Israel from destroying Egypt's Third Army and then to proceed with disengagement on both Egyptian and Syrian fronts, from November 1973 until September, 1975; and the period of the Camp David negotiations in September, 1978. In each case American pressure seems to have been an important factor in Israeli decisions.

In 1956 the Eisenhower administration reacted with somewhat greater sympathy to Israel's invasion of Egypt than to the actions of its British and French allies, who intervened under the guise of separating Egypt and Israel. The United States invoked the U. N. Charter against its friends and sought U. N. support for quick withdrawal of invading forces, including Israel's. The administration acknowledged Israel's need to curb guerrilla raids and to obtain access to Eilat through the Straits of Tiran but nonetheless insisted on Israeli withdrawal without negotiation. The Israelis came away disappointed with the American failure to endorse their wish to modify, in effect, the Armistice Agreement of 1949 by preventing any future Egyptian return to Gaza.

The Soviet attitude may have been critical in forcing the initial Israel acceptance of the principle of withdrawal.[22] Explicit Soviet threats to destroy Israel with missiles or to send in "volunteers" to enforce withdrawal alarmed Prime Minister Ben Gurion and others, especially since the United States declined to renew its commitment to the protection of the Jewish state. Britain and France, also recipients of menacing Soviet notes, did receive American reassurances. One may wonder whether American pressure, even coupled with Eisenhower's threats to cut off both private and public aid would have been successful with Israel if the Soviets had not injected their warnings. But it is highly doubtful that the Soviet threats would have moved Israeli leaders if the United States had not simultaneously been applying all available leverage.[23] Unremitting U. S. pressure, together with U. N. efforts, nudged Israel toward its March 1, 1957, announcement that it would pull out of the last piece of occupied territory, the Gaza Strip.

The pressures exerted on Israel from 1973 to 1975 were intermittent and perhaps less intense. A combination of Soviet threats and American pressures brought Israel up short of finishing off the Egyptian Third Army at the end of the October war. The exercise of "substantial U. S. pressure" caused Israel to permit resupply of that army.[24] Moshe Dayan said afterwards that the cabinet had taken that decision not from humanitarian concern "but because we had no choice--or more precisely, because the alternatives to our permitting the food convoy were worse, to the best of our judgment."[25]

From that moment until the approval of Sinai II, the second disengagement agreement with Egypt in the fall of 1975, Secretary of State Kissinger issued a continual stream of exhortations, praise, threats and pleas to Israel to advance his conception of step-by-step peace. After the disengagement with Syria, Prime Minister Golda Meir said: "I will not deny that in our

decision . . . we also took account of the advice or the policy of the United States, which has shown a fruitful political activity in the interest of having tranquility and peace in the region."[26]

Kissinger apparently turned the screws hard to get Israel to return all of Kuneitra and one village to Syria and thus assure Syrian acceptance of disengagement.[27] Then in 1975, when the step-by-step process seemed stuck, Kissinger and Ford heaped public blame on the Israelis and announced a "reassessment" of U. S. policy in the Middle East. Everyone understood the menace to Israel, and Jerusalem clearly felt the pressure. As one analyst has put it:

> Increasingly for Israel, the question became not the extent of withdrawals and appropriate Egyptian responses but the extent and lengths to which Israel would go to avoid a major clash with the U. S. The American position, whether formally characterized as a ultimatum, clearly represented a major dilemma for Israel.[28]

In the fall, Kissinger undertook a new shuttle mission that led to the Sinai II agreement, precursor of the Camp David accords and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty.

The third instance of effective American pressure in Israel, this one perhaps more debatable than the other two, is Camp David. Upon his arrival in office, President Carter rearticulated American policy toward the Middle East to include Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories with only "minor adjustments to the pre-1967 boundaries," complete normalization of relations between Arabs and Israelis, and creation of a Palestinian homeland. He proposed a resumption of the Geneva conference and sought Soviet support for initiative. A joint Soviet-American statement on the "legitimate rights" of Palestinians brought the Israelis further discomfiture. The President Sadat's surprise visit to Jerusalem added to the pressure on Israel, which accepted Carter's invitation to a summit meeting with President Sadat at Camp David in September, 1978. Even at the outset of the meeting observers expressed doubts anything could be achieved.[29] But Carter had put himself and the Presidency on the line

with his invitation. Both parties made concessions and reached an agreement in this pressure cooker of American fabrication.

It is possible that the administration, as Ambassador Eilts has argued, in its desire for a positive outcome, needlessly succumbed to Israeli efforts to keep the peace treaty separate from the document on the Palestinian question. He says President Carter could and should have insisted on stronger links.[30] It may be that the Israelis had conceded somewhat less than the Americans thought they had, or that the administration ignored small but significant Israeli changes in the text, despite the advice of its own experts.[31] It is also true that both parties stood to gain from the peace treaty. But it is difficult to conceive that any accords would have been signed in September, 1978, and a peace treaty concluded six months later, without the application of American inducements for and pressures on Israel as well as Egypt.

IV. Explaining Variations in American Influence

It would be foolish to suggest that the American government has influenced the leadership of Israel in only these three instances. It would be equally foolish to argue that American influence outweighed all other considerations in even these three sets of circumstances. The impact of American attitudes on Israel does appear to have been considerable on these occasions, less in others. It seems to have been more decisive in 1956 than in the 1970s, despite a significant increase in the level of Israeli dependence. The question is not how to account for the fact that a superpower shapes policy of a client state but rather how to understand the variation in American influence and the apparent absence of American suasion at many critical junctures.

The Israel Lobby

The most commonly proposed explanation for American incapacity to exercise as much control over Israeli policy as the position of patron would seem to make available is the Israel lobby in Washington. By this line of reasoning, the President cannot make demands on Israel without encountering opposition in the Congress; Congressmen cannot oppose Israel without facing the wrath of the Israel lobby, which stands ready to mobilize Jewish groups and constituents to defeat Israel's detractors at election time. Thus the growing strength of the Israel lobby, especially since the tenure of Itzak Rabin as ambassador in the early 1970s, has prevented dependence from becoming subservience.

Plausible in some measure, the explanation nonetheless falters on several pieces of evidence. The strength of the Israel lobby through AIPAC and other groups doubtless softens Israel's dependency, but it did not ward off supply of either F-15s or the AWACS to Saudi Arabia, and it does not explain why the Nixon administration, which flailed helplessly at Israel with the Rogers Plan, suddenly found itself influential in Jerusalem after the 1973 war. Jimmy Carter managed to win the Presidency in 1976 despite his known views about the need for a general peace settlement and despite forthright Israeli preference for President Ford.

High levels of support for Israel in the Congress and among the public make the Israel lobby a natural focus of attention. The Arab world has long cited this and purported Jewish control of American media as primary reasons for U. S. backing of Israel. But one study found Senate support of Israel varied little with the Jewishness of constituencies or with the frequency of Senators' contact with Jewish groups.[32] Another assessment of the Israel lobby

concluded that the power of pressure groups in Washington could not compete with the impact of events in the Middle East in impact on Congressional behavior.[33]

Does Israel manipulate Congress via the Jewish community in the United States and public opinion more generally? Trice's work casts doubt on that thesis by showing the relative stability of American attitudes toward Israel and the Arab world. He notes that support for Israel tumbled in 1970 and again in 1975, apparently as a result of Presidential attitudes and actions.[34] The Israel lobby may help sustain levels of support, but it did not prevent President Sadat from gaining greater popularity in this country than Prime Minister Begin enjoyed or prevent Americans from believing that Israelis should be more accommodating about the West Bank.[35] The efforts of the Israel lobby to reinforce the general American tendency to support Israel must buffer the costs of Israeli dependence, but it does not suffice to explain varying American effectiveness in influencing its client state.

Self-Confidence in Israel

A second sort of explanation would hinge on the receptivity of Israeli decision makers to American advice and demands. That is, at any given level of material dependence, Israeli leaders must assess the urgency of compliance with American wishes, in the light of their views of Israel's underlying strengths and vulnerabilities. For example, the first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, acted boldly but harbored doubts about his nation's strength. Following the hallowed wisdom of the Zionist movement and its reknowned former leader, Chaim Weizmann,he believed Israel needed a patron.[36] In a victory speech after the 1956 invasion of Egypt, he suggested Sinai should not go back to Egypt. Later he admitted he had been swept away in the thrill of

victory; Israel could not afford to defy the international system, he decided. Until his death, Ben Burion remained pessimistic about the capabilities of a mini-state such as Israel and therefore fundamentally cautious underneath his facade of confidence and agressiveness.

Menachem Begin epitomizes the shift in the self-image of the Israeli leadership since Ben Gurion, but the shift toward greater self-confidence began long before 1977. Ben Gurion's own protégé, Moshe Dayan, believed Israel could go to war without foreign protection, if it could do so without provoking the Soviet Union. As Aronson puts it, Dayan believed "American counterbalance should be sought without accepting a decisive American say in Israeli affairs."[37] Dayan pushed the Eshkol cabinet toward a pre-emptive strike in 1967, American cautions notwithstanding, and he influenced the style and substance of Israeli foreign policy for more than a decade thereafter.

The "new Israelis" deemed it necessary to retain occupied territories, whatever the objections of the world community, until the Arabs made concessions. When Ben Gurion spoke up in favor of returning them, his countrymen saw him as "the fallen old leader who envied Eshkol's achievements."[38] And when, in his efforts to obtain a second disengagement agreement between Egypt and Israel, Henry Kissinger sought to persuade Israel of its weakness and vulnerability in a world of superpowers--an argument to which Ben Gurion would have been sensitive--the Israeli leadership found him inappropriately pessimistic. Success in three wars had transformed the self-image of the Israeli polity and, as a consequence, its propensity to seek protection and advice from extra-regional powers. The accession to power of the inveterate leader of the opposition, Menachem Begin, accentuated the trend. He believed in the "new Jews"--"proud, magnanimous, militant."[39] The inclusion of Dayan, as well as Sharon and Weizmann, in his first government demonstrated his commitment to the assertive, self-confident, autonomous style.

A shift in policy accompanied the evolution of style. From the days of the Yishuv, deeply beholden to the British patron, to the early days of independence, when it fought for legitimacy in the eyes of the world community, Israel became disillusioned with the beneficence of great powers and international organizations. The British had walked out without providing for defense of the Jewish state, the United States had forced withdrawal in 1956 before Israel could get full satisfaction, the United Nations had failed to deter Egyptian agressiveness in 1967, and the French had abandoned Israel at a critical moment. While events had shoved Israel into the arms of the United States in the 1970s, Israeli wariness of any and all patrons tempered the effects of the new dependence. The Israelis of the 1970s were more confident in themselves, less deferential before external authority. Dependence generated neither awe nor unqualified respect.

Together with the strength of the Israel lobby, such changes in the decision-making environment in Israel have diminished the American ability to influence Israeli policy. But the self-confidence thesis, like an explanation based on the Israel lobby, has limited value in explaining variations in American leverage. Together these hypotheses may account for the relative susceptibility of Israel to American pressure in 1956. The maturing self-image of Israel, in particular, may contribute to an understanding of the growing difficulties, despite the distribution of resources and power between the two countries, of getting the American viewpoint accepted in Jerusalem. But self-confidence, no more than the Israel lobby, explains Kissinger's moments of success or Carter's effectiveness at Camp David.

U.S. Attention

The amount and quality of attention Washington gives Middle Eastern policy must figure in a more complete understanding of American influence.

When the United States looks elsewhere, Israel goes its own way. When war or the price of oil rivets American attention on the Israel-Palestinian problem, Israel finds its autonomy restricted.

The great distraction for the United States from 1964 until 1973 was, of course, the war in Vietnam. The Johnson administration's lack of imagination and flexibility in coping with the threat of war in May, 1967, must be attributed, in part, to such distractions. The administration became stuck with a phrase, "Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go alone," a phrase that Israeli decision makers, in their greater self-confidence, came to believe stopped short of prohibition. When the idea of a multinational force to open the straits fizzled, Washington had nothing new to propose.[40] After the Israeli victory, Presidents Johnson and Nixon both acquiesced in Israeli insistence on keeping occupied territory until the Arabs made concessions. The Rogers Plan represented fresh American thinking, but it always suffered from its identification with the Secretary of State, who seemed to be the President's secondary adviser on foreign policy, while Henry Kissinger concerned himself with the big issues, China and Vietnam.

The combination of war and oil embargo in 1973 convinced Kissinger that he must immerse himself in Middle Eastern affairs. The subsequent oil shortage and resulting lines at the gas pumps emphasized the direct American and European stake in a reduction of tensions. While the heightened worry about access to oil scarcely led to an American break with Israel, as some analysts said it would, it did augment the leverage Kissinger could bring to bear on the Israelis in his efforts to achieve disengagement.

Energy policy also drove Jimmy Carter toward his preoccupation with Middle Eastern peace. The price of oil continued to take its toll on the American economy and to provoke demands for a coherent American response.

Civil war in Lebanon added urgency to the search for a new regional equilibrium and then President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in December, 1977, opened new possibilities. At Camp David the personal attention of the President for two weeks generated enormous force, driving the parties toward an agreement.

In contrast, as Israel hinted broadly all spring that it intended to invade Lebanon, the Reagan administration found itself diverted by the Falklands war and by the continuing controversy about the control of nuclear weapons. The President had always shown, moreover, a marked preference for domestic policy. As he and his advisers approached foreign policy in the early days of the administration, it was to augment American military preparedness and to sharpen the free world's sense of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Secretary of State Haig, on his first trip to the Middle East, tried to persuade regional powers that these themes outweighed local issues in importance. Haig left instead the impression, apparently correct, that the administration had not yet penetrated Middle East problems.

American influence on Israel has been pronounced when American presidents or, in the case of Kissinger, a Secretary of State seen as the President's deputy, have committed the attention and authority of the American government to the shaping of regional events. To be sure, the mere involvement of a President has been no guarantee of sway in Jerusalem. But when the President has conveyed an image of informed interest and determination, he has carried American public opinion with him, and the Israelis have felt the pinch. When the President has been diverted by domestic or other foreign concerns, when Middle East policy has been delegated to a lesser official who does not unequivocally represent Presidential will, American efficacy with Israel has been less impressive. In the end, as in so many other questions of foreign affairs, perception may matter as much as reality. If the Israeli leadership believes

its actions undergo careful American scrutiny, it seems inclined to give greater weight to American advice.

Divergence of World Views

Effective influence is not simply a matter of attention, however. If the United States and Israel agree with Israel on the shape of international problems, the nature of regional threats and a desirable course for future actions, the need for careful American scrutiny of Israeli decision making is diminished. Jerusalem can from its vantage point proceed on the assumption its choices will meet Washington's approval, if it believes its actions can be rationalized in terms consistent with the prevailing American philosophy. Even verbal threats and close attention from the United States can be safely ignored, if Israel's policies appear to further American goals or to parallel American actions, themselves inconsistent with pronounced American policy. When Israel senses sharp differences with Washington on the shape of world politics, it must be more cautious.

For example, when American policy veers toward confrontation with the Soviet Union and designates international Communism as the enemy, Israel quite properly sees itself as a member of the American team. Such was the situation in 1967, as the United States sought to prove it could rescue Vietnam from Communist tentacles. Washington intoned almost daily its litany about standing firm with American force to prevent the dominoes from falling in Southeast Asia. When, in the midst of that fray, President Johnson urged Israel to postpone the use of force in its confrontation with President Nasser, his advice must have seemed strangely inharmonious with his actions. The Israelis were, after all, confronting Soviet clients armed with Soviet weapons. Could the United States have offered serious objection to a pre-emptive strike under these conditions? It is not surprising that Israel found ambiguities in the Johnson admonitions.

Similarly, in the polarized atmosphere of the Middle East after the 1967 war, with the Nixon administration pursuing the war in Asia with as much vigor as Johnson had, the Rogers Plan clashed with the general tenor of American policy. Israel continued to insist that force would eventually bring the enemy to the bargaining table, which was precisely the American position on Vietnam. The general convergence of perspectives undermined the American efforts to win Israeli acceptance for the Rogers Plan.

The American move toward China, the end of the Vietnam war and the pursuit of détente transformed the American view of world affairs. The use of force receded in importance as a tool of American policy; public support for foreign military intervention touched new lows. Without this change in American attitude, it is by no means certain that Secretary Kissinger would have been so quick to seize the opportunities offered by the 1973 war. By summoning a Geneva conference and letting it founder briefly and by re-establishing American ties to Egypt, Kissinger managed to ease the Soviet Union from the field. By doing so he deprived Israel of its shield as a member of the Western, anti-Soviet alliance. Israel found itself talking a language of strength and confrontation that the Nixon-Kissinger team had left behind. The resulting tension caused anguish in Jerusalem but produced movement and negotiation.

In 1977, Israel veered toward the confrontationist position with the success of the Likud coalition, while the United States inched further toward détente, delinkage and deemphasis of force in foreign affairs with the inauguration of Jimmy Carter. Far from assuming its every act would win approval in Washington, Israel felt necessarily cautious and uncertain. Sadat's rising popularity in the United States in the wake of his visit to Jerusalem magnified Israel's doubts. The Camp David accords were born in that atmosphere--a product, in part, of the Israeli need to accommodate the American viewpoint.

Yet, as a result of misunderstandings about Camp David, the tension did not dissipate until Ronald Reagan took office.

Reagan has long spoken the language of confrontation, force, anti-Communism, the need to bolster American prestige in the world. The idea of military alliance with Israel fit easily into the framework. The administration's purposeful intervention in Central America underscored its determination to exert force where necessary to restrain Soviet influence. This view of the world coincided much more closely than had Carter's with that of Menachem Begin. Strongly anti-communist, wary of negotiating with enemies, committed to the defense of freedom and liberty as Reagan understands those words, Begin needed no prior consultation with Washington to know that he would not be severely reprimanded for attacks on Bagdad or Beirut or even for a general invasion of Lebanon. Presented with faits accomplis, Washington could scarcely offer more than token rebukes without rethinking and revising its own approach to global politics. The convergence of approach between Reagan and Begin provided the Israelis with de facto autonomy even against the backdrop of increasing Israeli dependence.

It is tempting, though more speculative, to relate convergence of divergence of world views to patterns of partisan politics in the two countries. While the dramatically different electoral and party systems of Israel and the United States render comparisons between political formations treacherous, the working class constituency of Israel's Labor Party, its emphasis on state authority and its identification with the welfare state make it more like the American Democratic Party than the Republican. The Likud coalition shares with the Republican Party, despite notable differences, a commitment to private enterprise, emphasis on military strength and a pronounced antipathy to socialism and communism. One would thus describe a situation of Republican

administration in the United States and Likud government in Israel as convergence, as would be a time when a Democrat held the American Presidency and the Labor Party dominated a governing coalition in Israel.

By the hypothesis advanced here, American control would be greatest in times of partisan divergence. In such a situation, Israel would be least able to proceed with the autonomous elaboration of policy, confident of American support. It would be uncertain of a sympathetic hearing in Washington as a result of differing ideological outlooks as well as differing perspectives in world affairs. Washington would, in this instance, feel somewhat less empathy for the Israel leadership and somewhat less compunction in advancing the American viewpoint with the Israelis. An American President would feel greater freedom against an Israeli government based on principles more akin to those of the opposition party in the United States. Conversely, Israel would be able to exercise greater liberty of action under conditions of ideological convergence.

The evidence for such a hypothesis is circumstantial rather than direct. The three instances of American effectiveness discussed here all fit the pattern; two occurred when Republicans held power in Washington and Labor governed Israel; the third, Camp David, took place under the direction of a Democratic President and involved a Likud Prime Minister. In each case partisan tension between the governing parties may have enhanced American leverage. The American President may have felt marginally freeer to oppose Israeli demands, and the Israeli leadership may have felt marginally less confident about American support. But three cases do not significance make. Moreover, I am not aware of either primary or secondary sources that lend substantiation to such a hypothesis. The hypothesis helps to account for differences in world view, but world view remains a more useful idea for understanding American effectiveness.

For example, a shift in American world view with the end of the Vietnamese war would seem useful in explaining the Nixon administration's initial frustrations with Israel over the Rogers Plan and its subsequent successes after the 1973 war. Partisan divergence between Republicans and the Labor Party remained a constant in that period.

It follows that Israel would enjoy autonomy if Israel and the United States shared a world view oriented more toward respect for sovereignty, negotiation of differing interests, security based on international legitimacy as well as force, cooperation even among nations of differing ideologies. In such a situation one can imagine an equally large margin for Israeli maneuver, especially since the need for dependence on the United States would be diminished. Israeli actions still might not be entirely congruent with the wishes of the United States, but the patron would doubtless find independence less alarming. If dependence declined, the United States could even dissociate itself from Israeli policy without risk for world peace or the underlying rapport of the two countries.[41]

V. From the Patron's Perspective

It seems likely that Israel will remain heavily dependent on the United States in at least the short run and that the two countries will continue to define their interests differently. For the United States the issue is how a certain tension conducive to the protection of interests can be sustained without jeopardizing an important element of its interests, the welfare of Israel. To forego influence over Israel would be to permit American foreign policy to be made in Jerusalem. To utilize all available leverage in Israel is simply to exercise the patron's right. The United States cannot protect Israel without guarding its overall position in the region and reconciling that protection with world responsibilities. However disturbing the idea may be

to Israelis, the welfare of Israel depends in some measure on the welfare of the United States and, as a result, on the American view of what is good for Israel. But because the idea is disturbing, Israelis will continue to fight for their autonomy even as a client.

Of the factors that appear to affect the flow of influence between patron and client, two lie within reach of Israel, two in the domain of the United States. But of the two available to Israel, self-image is scarcely susceptible to short-term manipulation, and it is difficult to imagine an Israel lobby more effective than it has been. As one analyst put it, "Congress is Israel's to lose." The potential for stouter defense against the patron's claims seems limited.

The United States disposes of greater potential for imposing firmer restraints on Israeli policy. American attention has been sporadic, and the American world view has but intermittently departed from a focus on superpower tensions to identify the reduction of Middle East hostilities as vital to American interests. Yet neither of these variables lends itself to voluntary manipulation, either.

The President enjoys limited freedom in directing the attention of the American government toward a problem area, domestic or foreign. The media help fashion his agenda by defining what affects public consciousness. Some events require Presidential attention whether or not the media elevate them to prominence with the public. The President cannot, moreover, ignore the preoccupations of Congress or his own decisions of yesterday, which necessitate followup today. Having spent two weeks at Camp David, President Carter felt annoyed as the fallout from those accords ensnared him in subsequent months. He could not disengage himself. It was doubtless unrealistic of Carter to expect Israelis and Egyptians to move from the Camp David accords to a peace

treaty without further expenditure of Presidential time and effort.[42] But it is equally unrealistic to suggest that an American President always give top priority to Middle Eastern matters.

The President cannot devote himself exclusively to supervision of Israel, and the American world view cannot be fashioned only to serve American interests in the Middle East. In the second half of the Carter presidency, the Soviet Union made it difficult to avoid a hardening of attitude and a drift toward confrontation, however great Carter's penchant for détente and negotiation. Now, two years into the Reagan administration, one detects a gradual movement away from confrontation again as a response to the flow of international events. At some moments the Soviet Union has obliged American leaders to see the Middle East in Cold War terms; at other moments Soviet-American rivalry recedes in salience. Such fluctuations in the international atmosphere do not reflect unilateral American actions, but they nonetheless affect the ability of the United States to exert leverage on Israel. As polarization sharpens, the United States sacrifices influence with Israel; Israeli actions tend to alienate American friends in the Arab world; Western oil supplies become less secure, as a result, and the probability of regional conflict is magnified. The risks of escalation can never be neglected.

The American President has some discretion. Eisenhower, Kissinger and Carter all responded to events with a quality of attention and a viewpoint that enhanced American influence. Each separated the Arab-Israel struggle from the conflict with the Soviet Union. Each defined American interests in terms of regional stability, broadly understood. Each exercised the power of a patron, with great respect for the client, in the conviction that the United States must define and protect American interests. As long as a relationship of dependence persists, Americans must exercise that responsibility.

Naturally, Israel must define what is good for Israel. No American leverage described here can cause Israel to deviate in any substantial way from that definition. The American power remains that of persuasion, which means in this case enticing Israel to want to do what the United States wants done. The United States must not cease to engage in such persuasion, not for Israel's sake but for its own, bearing in mind that a strong, secure, independent Israel, bastion of many values Americans hold dear, remains an essential part of the American interest in the Middle East.

Notes

1. George W. Ball, "The Coming Crisis in Israeli-American Relations," Foreign Affairs 58:2 (Winter, 1979/80), p. 246.

2. Harvey Sicherman, "The United States and Israel: A Strategic Divide?" Orbis 24:2 (Summer, 1980), p. 393.

3. Hans Morgenthau, The Restoration of American Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), Chap. 1.

4. Ball says the United States treated Israel "almost" like any other friendly country before 1956. The "almost" is nonetheless an important qualifier. Ball, p. 233.

5. Nadav Safran, Israel: Embattled Ally (Cambridge: Harvard, 1978), 571-2.

6. Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Polls on the Middle East," Middle East Review, Fall, 1978, p. 25; Robert H. Trice, "Foreign Policy Interest Groups, Mass Public Opinion and the Arab-Israeli Dispute," Western Political Quarterly, 246, 249.

7. Robert H. Trice, "Congress and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," Political Science Quarterly, 92:3 (Fall, 1977), p. 447.

8. Safran, p. 576.

9. Shlomo Aronson, Conflict and Bargaining in the Middle East: An Israeli Perspective (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978), p. 195.

9a. U. S. Embassy, "Economic Trends," August, 1981, pp. 2-3; State of Israel, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Advising Authority, "Main Economic Indicators of Israel, 1973-1980," July, 1981, p. 7.

10. Aronson, p. 247.

11. Ball, p. 246.

12. See Ian Lustick, "Saving Camp David: Kill the Autonomy Talks, Foreign Policy, 41 (Winter, 1980-81), p. 42.

13. Ball, p. 248.

14. Bernard Reich, Quest for Peace (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1977), p. 393.

15. William B. Quandt, "The Middle East Crises," Foreign Affairs 58:3 (1979), p. 562.

16. William V. O'Brien, "Reflections on the Future of American-Israeli Relations," The Jerusalem Quarterly, 22, p. 95.

17. Amos Perlmutter, "Begin's Strategy and Dayan's Tactics: The Conduct of Israeli Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 56:2 (January, 1978), p. 370.

18. Reich, p. 379.

19. An exception would be Joseph Churba, "The Eroding Security Balance in the Middle East," Orbis, 24:2 (Summer, 1980), p. 359, who depreciates the American relationship with Egypt because "Egypt is still part of the Arab world"--hence unstable, weak, undependable, etc.

20. See, for example, O'Brien, p. 87; Herbert Lasky, "Saudi Arabia: A Short History of an Immoderate State," Middle East Review, 11:1(Fall, 1978), pp. 13-17; Alexander Bligh and Steven E. Plaut, "Saudi Moderation in Oil and Foreign Policies in the Post-AWACS-Sale Period," Middle East Review, 14:3-4 (Spring, Summer, 1982), pp. 24-32.

21. Perlmutter, p. 370.

22. Michael Brecher, Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy (New Haven: Yale, 1975), p. 284.

23. John C. Campbell, Defense of the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1960), p. 117.

24. Reich, p. 248.

25. Ibid.

26. Reich, p. 268.

27. Aronson, p. 241.

28. Reich, p. 321.

29. Steven L. Spiegel, "Camp David Diplomacy," The Center Magazine 12 (May-June, 1979), pp. 12-14.

30. Hermann Frederick Eilts, "Saving Camp David: Improve the Framework," Foreign Policy 41 (Winter, 1980-81), p. 5.

31. Eilts, p. 4.

32. Trice, "Congress," p. 461.

33. Bill Keller, "Supporters of Israel, Arabs Vie for Friends and Influence in Congress, at White House," Congressional Quarterly, Aug. 22, 1981, p. 1523.

34. Trice, "Foreign Policy Interest Groups," p. 251.

35. Lipset, p. 29.

36. Aronson, p. 16.

37. Aronson, p. 78.

38. Aronson, p. 80.

39. Perlmutter, p. 362.

40. William B. Quandt, Decade of Decisions (Berkeley: California, 1977), pp. 53-56.

41. To advocate dissociation under conditions of dependence as Lustick does strikes me as impracticable. Such efforts might make Americans feel better but would carry little weight in world politics.

42. Spiegel, p. 19.

37. Aronson, p. 78.

38. Aronson, p. 80.

39. Perlmutter, p. 362.

40. William B. Quandt, Decade of Decisions (Berkeley: California, 1977), pp. 53-56.

41. To advocate dissociation under conditions of dependence as Lustick does strikes me as impracticable. Such efforts might make Americans feel better but would carry little weight in world politics.

42. Spiegel, p. 19.