

PEACE AND SECURITY  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST AFTER LEBANON

The 36th Annual Conference  
of  
The Middle East Institute

Washington, D.C.

October 1-2, 1982

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PEACE AND SECURITY  
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A Summary Record

October 1-2, 1982

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PEACE AND SECURITY  
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36th Annual Conference of The Middle East Institute

The Mayflower Hotel  
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PROGRAM

Friday, October 1

- 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. Registration
- 9:45 a.m. Opening Remarks  
*L. Dean Brown*  
*President, The Middle East Institute*
- 10:00 a.m. Keynote Address  
*William B. Quandt*  
*Senior Research Fellow,*  
*The Brookings Institution*
- 11:00 a.m. Plenary Panel  
Panel I  
NO END TO CRISES?  
Presiding: *Philip Geyelin, Editor in*  
*Residence, Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy*  
*Institute*  
*Michael C. Hudson, Seif Gobash Professor*  
*of International Relations, Georgetown*  
*University*

*Walid Khalidi, Director of Research,  
Center for Middle Eastern Studies,  
Harvard University*

*Aaron D. Miller, Analyst, PLO and Leba-  
non, Bureau of Intelligence and Research,  
Department of State*

12:45 p.m.

Adjournment for Lunch

2:00 p.m.

Plenary Panel

Panel II

EGYPT'S ROLE

*Presiding: Samuel F. Wells, Jr., Secre-  
tary, International Security Studies Pro-  
gram, Woodrow Wilson International Center  
for Scholars, Smithsonian Institution*

*Raymond W. Baker, Associate Professor,  
Williams College and Adjunct Associate  
Professor, American University in Cairo*

*Tahseen Basheer, Ambassador to Canada,  
Arab Republic of Egypt*

*Donald S. Brown, Former Director AID,  
Egypt*

3:45 to 5:15 p.m.

Plenary Panel

Panel III

THE GULF: COOPERATION OR CONFLICT?

*Presiding: Rouhollah K. Ramazani, Edward  
R. Stettinius Professor of Government and  
Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia*

*Anthony H. Cordesman, Contributing Editor,  
Armed Forces Journal*

*David E. Long, Chief, Near Eastern Division, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State*

*Ragaei El-Mallakh, Director, International Research Center for Energy and Economic Development, University of Colorado*

8:00 p.m.

Banquet Address, "Reflections on a Troubled Region"

*Richard B. Parker, Director of Publications and Editor, The Middle East Journal*

Saturday, October 2

10:00 a.m.

Concurrent Panels

Panel IV

THE UNITED STATES: INTERESTS WITHOUT POLICY?

Presiding: *Murray J. Gart, Research Associate, Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute*

*Bruce Kuniholm, Assistant Professor, Public Policy Sciences and History, Duke University*

*Harold H. Saunders, Resident Fellow, American Enterprise Institute*

*Seth Tillman, Research Professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University*

PANEL V

SOVIET AIMS: STABILITY OR SUBVERSION?

Presiding: *Daniel Southerland, Diplomatic Correspondent, The Christian Science Monitor*

*William G. Hyland, Senior Associate,  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

*Itamar Rabinovich, Professor and Head of  
Shiloah Center, Tel Aviv University;  
Visiting Professor, Cornell University*

*Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Professor, Department  
of Political Science, University of  
Pennsylvania*

12:00 p.m.

Summation

*Michael E. Sterner, Managing Director,  
International Relations Consultants, Inc.*

12:45 p.m.

Adjournment of the Conference

*L. Dean Brown*

3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Open House at The Middle East Institute

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*William B. Quandt*

Thank you, Dean. It's a great tribute to Ambassador Brown and to the Middle East Institute that so many of you have been prepared to come today to a conference dealing with a topic -- "Peace and Security in the Middle East" -- that seems so far from reality. Unfortunately, we have been through a period in recent weeks and months and in the last years where the reality seems to be one much more of war, tension, bloodshed, and massacres. It is that vivid memory in our minds that perhaps makes it particularly appropriate that we spend time today and tomorrow, in this conference, trying to think about the future in somewhat more hopeful terms -- not in terms of the continuation of war and tragedies in the Middle East, but looking seriously at whether there are some prospects, out of all the horrors that we have recently witnessed, for peace and for security.

I think that in trying to make a realistic assessment of what the prospects for peace are in the Middle East, we need to try to avoid two kinds of extremes. One is the extreme of cynicism and despair which says that there really is no chance at all, given the history of this region, for the peoples of the Middle East to find peace and security. This view holds that those in the Middle East, and those of us who care about the Middle East outside the region, are all in some sense victims of historical forces that will insure that the future looks like the past, and that we will see more bloodshed and violence. The other extreme that we must try to avoid is the unwarranted optimism that says that because peace is so necessary to the peoples of the Middle East it will come, more or less by itself.

Both of these beliefs lead to a kind of passive expectancy: on the one hand, the expectancy of war, on the other, of peace. But both of them have the same characteristic: leaving active participation, the active search for peace, to others. I think that for those of us who really do care about the Middle East, this kind of passivity is the greatest guarantee that the future will resemble the past. We need to try to look realistically at the prospects for peace without excessive cynicism or excessive optimism.

As observers and historians of the Middle East, we have every right to be somewhat skeptical, perhaps even pessimistic, about the prospects for peace. After all, the bulk of evidence is strongly in favor of the hypothesis that peace will remain a distant hope. And yet, as friends of the people in the Middle East, and as Americans concerned with what our own national interest requires, we must seek every possible opportunity to lay foundations for a more peaceful Middle East. So with that in mind I would like to start with what I hope will be a realistic assessment of where we are and then discuss where things might head in the near future.

First, if we start with the events of 1982, we must recognize that this has been a very bloody year in the Middle East. It has probably been the worst year since 1973 for the peoples of the area. Two major wars have raged: one between Iran and Iraq which has received less attention in the press, but which has had enormous human costs, enormous economic dislocations and many, many tragedies that have gone unreported; and, of course more vivid in our own minds, is the recent war in Lebanon.

As bad as all of this has been, I suppose we should take some slight consolation in the fact that it could have been worse. Neither of the wars that we have seen this year, despite their enormous devastation and costs in human and economic terms, spread beyond the original participants in the fighting. The Gulf war did, after all, remain confined to Iran and Iraq. Many of us had feared that it might spread beyond that original context. Again, as bad as the war in Lebanon was, and I think it was really quite appalling, it did not turn into a broader Arab-Israeli war. And neither war led to the intervention of the super-powers with all of the dangers that that might have held for peace in the Middle East and peace in the world.

Another point worth making about the wars of this year in the Middle East -- the Gulf war and the Lebanon war -- is that none of the warring parties, neither Iran, nor Iraq, nor Israel, nor the Palestinians, nor the Syrians, nor the various Lebanese factions, has managed through force of arms to achieve their major political goals. And perhaps there's some lesson in that as well: that wars in the Middle East may achieve certain purposes, strategic or security objectives, but they have not succeeded in achieving political goals. So perhaps it is appropriate to ask, having seen the futility of these wars in achieving the goals that the participants have ostensibly sought, whether diplomacy will have a better chance of leading to peace and security in the Middle East.

I suppose that for those who are looking for a hopeful and



somewhat encouraging analogy, one might note that one previous war in the Middle East did seem to open the way for peace: the October War of 1973. At least it opened the way toward a partial peace between Egypt and Israel. And one can ask whether there is at least some chance that the Lebanon war might lead to the same result down the road, perhaps years hence, in terms of peace between Lebanon and Israel and peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Early on in the Lebanon conflict, within the first few weeks, there was a very determined effort to portray the war in Lebanon as a contribution to peace in the Middle East. At the time I thought this was an exercise in wishful thinking, an ahistorical, non-historical, view of the Middle East; but the argument is worth spelling out if only to remind us how misguided some of its assumptions now seem to be three months later. The notion was that with an Israeli victory over the PLO in Lebanon, the PLO and its Syrian supporters, backed by the Soviet Union, would be less of an obstacle to peacemaking in the future. With their demise, or at least the lessening of their influence, the so-called moderate forces in the Middle East could raise their heads and start to talk about peace. The underlying assumption, of course, was that the main obstacle to peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors was the radicalism of the Palestinians and their Arab backers, along with the Soviet Union.

About the same time, the Iran-Iraq war was evolving in a way that seemed to demonstrate that neither side was about to score a definitive victory. Iraq had managed to stop the Iranian armies at the frontier. This same school of thought argued that, with the crushing of the radical forces in Lebanon and the stalemate in the Gulf, the "moderate" Arab regimes would feel emboldened to step forward and make peace with Israel. The United States would find its prestige enhanced, and the Soviet Union would find its prestige tarnished. Part of this would be due to the victory of American arms over Soviet arms. This was always an excessively simplistic view of a complex Middle East reality.

Let's look then, just for a moment, at what the reality, at least as I see it, was in the spring of 1982 before the war in Lebanon began, and then we can try to make some assessment of how Lebanon may have changed the situation. In May of 1982, in the Arab-Israeli arena, the Camp David peace talks were essentially at a stalemate. The major preoccupation of the preceding months had been the smooth implementation of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty, and the return of the Sinai. And that went, more or less, without a hitch. But progress on the autonomy talks had been stalled, not just for months, but really for years. There had been some technical

progress, but no serious political breakthrough was in sight. When President Sadat was assassinated in October 1981, the Egyptian determination to reaching an agreement with Israel under the Camp David Accords on autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza was clearly weakened. So Egypt and Israel were at a stalemate concerning autonomy. Egypt was not prepared to make detailed commitments on behalf of the Palestinians concerning autonomy, and Israel showed no inclination toward changing its well-known positions on a rather narrow definition of autonomy. Meanwhile, the Israeli government was well into a somewhat new strategy that had been launched the previous year of trying to create new facts in the West Bank and Gaza at an accelerated pace. Settlements were being expanded. For those of you who have not been to the West Bank recently, it is quite striking to see how rapidly the landscape is being changed.

The political landscape was also being changed. Up until last fall, Israel had tried to deal with the elected mayors in the various municipalities as the spokesmen for the local Palestinian population. But a change took place last year, and a determined effort was made by Israelis to undermine the political infrastructure of the Palestinian nationalist movement in the West Bank. It was aimed at uprooting any influence of the PLO in the occupied territories. Mayors who had been elected in relatively free elections years earlier were deposed if they refused to cooperate with the new civilian administration in the West Bank. In place of the elected municipal leaders, Village Leagues were being encouraged by the Israelis as spokesmen for the bulk of the population, the so-called "silent majority." A determined and announced campaign to uproot PLO influence in the West Bank was underway. So, as of last May, the prospects for a negotiated solution under Camp David concerning the West Bank and Gaza was virtually nil. It is important to recognize that this was not, at least in my judgment, due to the radicalism of the PLO. The PLO was rather remote from the issues that were causing the stalemate. The stalemate was between Egypt and Israel at this point. Neither party was willing to budge and I do not believe that the Egyptian position was being significantly influenced by Palestinian radicalism.

Nor was the failure to make progress due to the fact that King Hussein of Jordan had not joined the negotiations. It's hard to imagine, given the substantive gap that existed, what Jordan's participation would have meant. Would Israel have become more forthcoming when King Hussein presented himself at the table? If you listen to the Defense Minister of Israel, it's hard to imagine that he would welcome King Hussein's participation. After all, from his point of view, King Hussein is an interloper. He is the only

foreigner in Jordan. The Hashemites should go and allow the Palestinians their state on the East Bank. So it seems to me that the situation that prevailed last May before the Lebanon war was not one conducive to an early achievement of an agreement on autonomy between Israel and Egypt. That prognosis would not have changed if, by some miracle, Jordan had joined the negotiations.

One of the striking features of the situation as of last May, before the Lebanon conflict, was that the United States was not very deeply involved in trying to shape the negotiations. There had been a distance on the part of the Reagan administration, as there had been in the last years of the Carter administration. Instead of playing an active role in trying to define the key issues in the negotiations, the stated role of the United States was that we would be a mediator. We would convene negotiations, but we would not put forward ideas of our own.

Another striking element of the situation as of last spring was that even though most Arab countries disliked the Camp David approach, there was no real consensus on an alternative. There had been an attempt the previous fall, in November 1981 at Fez, to forge a limited degree of consensus around the Saudi eight-point proposal, but that effort had failed when both Syria and the PLO refused to go along with the other Arab countries. So Camp David was stalled; there was no Arab alternative in sight; and the American role seemed to be rather aloof.

Turning to the situation in Lebanon as it existed before the outbreak of war, the situation was actually quite fragile, even though there had not been very much fighting in the previous year. A cease-fire was more or less intact, and there had not been much in the way of hostilities across the Lebanese-Israeli border, but almost everyone expected hostilities sometime in the near future. In April there were at least two false alerts, and in May again we saw the foreshadowing of the war that came in June: the alerts; the reports of mobilization and so forth. Although there was a precarious cease-fire, no one really expected it to last. The Palestinians didn't expect it to last; the Israelis didn't expect it to last; and, I believe, the Americans did not expect it to last.

Inside Lebanon, there was a de facto partition of the country. The Lebanese government was perhaps the least strong of the forces in the country. Israel controlled the zone in the south with its allies; Syria controlled a good part of the country; Palestinian armed elements controlled a significant area in the south and around Beirut. UN forces were present. About the only thing one could not

find was evidence of a strong, functioning central government. In some sense, this was a situation which clearly could not last indefinitely. Among Lebanese one had begun to discern a very strong emerging consensus that the Syrians and the Palestinians both had to reduce their role of intervention in Lebanese affairs, and this consensus began to spread across communal lines. So the situation in Lebanon was clearly very volatile and no one, I believe, expected it to last for long.

I will briefly turn to the Iran-Iraq war. The situation had changed dramatically in the months preceding the outbreak of the war in Lebanon. The Iranians had regained a degree of momentum on the ground and had recovered most of the territory that had been lost in the previous year and a half, but in their two or three major attempts to make a breakthrough across the Iraqi border and to cross into southern Iraq and seize Basra, the Iranians had been stopped by a very determined Iraqi defensive posture that inflicted enormous casualties on the attacking Iranian troops. A stalemate seemed to be in the making, but no one was sure how long it would last. Nor were the prospects on the political front very encouraging. The war did not seem to be going anywhere, but neither did the peace efforts. Mediation attempts were frequently mentioned, but no one seemed to believe that they would work. The Gulf war seemed to be stuck in a stalemate.

Let us briefly think about what has changed because of the war in Lebanon -- are there now some new elements to work with, or has the obvious disruption and destruction of the war in Lebanon left us even further from peace and security?

At the outset I want to speculate a bit about the Israeli strategy behind the decision to go into Lebanon, because I think it was a very complex strategy that had both military and political objectives. The easiest part of the strategy to understand was the announced objective of trying to destroy the PLO as a military and political force. This was consistent with the strategy being carried out on the West Bank and in Gaza: to uproot the PLO as a political factor in the Middle East. I think that, from the outset, the major military objective of the Israelis was to inflict a major blow to the PLO military and political infrastructure. The idea of course was that with the defeat of the PLO in Lebanon, it would be easier for Israel to proceed with its own strategy for dealing with the future of the West Bank and Gaza. Presumably a weakened PLO would no longer command the loyalties of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. This would make it easier to promote an alternative leadership, the so-called Village Leagues, and to lay the groundwork for an Israeli version of autonomy which had been quite carefully spelled out in the Israeli negotiating position as it had evolved in the talks with

Egypt: a very limited notion of turning over some administrative responsibilities to the local Palestinian population, but keeping security, land, and water in the hands of Israel indefinitely. Now, note that the objective of the Israelis of going to war in Lebanon was not to destroy the PLO so that a more moderate Arab party, namely Jordan, could step forward and negotiate with Israel about the future of the West Bank and Gaza. That may be the American hope -- that Jordan will join the negotiations -- but I'm convinced that this is not something that the Israeli government, and particularly Defense Minister Sharon, ever hoped would come out of the Lebanon operation. Jordan is viewed, certainly from Mr. Sharon's perspective, as an illegitimate contender for sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza, a view that I believe is shared by Prime Minister Begin.

So one of the objectives in Lebanon, from the Israeli point of view, was the destruction of the PLO. But this was not accompanied by a hope that Jordan would emerge as the logical negotiating party on behalf of the Palestinians. If anything, it was hoped that the relatively tame Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, without loyalties to the PLO, would step forward and work out practical accommodations in the name of autonomy and co-existence in the West Bank.

Apart from these political goals concerning the Palestinians within Lebanon itself, I think the Israelis did seek a security zone in the south that would be quite extensive. They already controlled a zone some six miles wide, and perhaps a bit beyond that, but I believe that among their objectives was the creation of a larger security zone in the south. In addition, there was the objective of removing the Syrian missiles that had been emplaced in the Beka'a Valley in the spring of 1981.

On the political front, the Israelis had the objective of trying to create circumstances in which their Lebanese allies, the Phalangist Party, would have a chance of coming to power in the upcoming elections scheduled for sometime before September of this year. The Israelis had invested heavily in a political relationship with the Phalange, and particularly with Bashir Gemayel.

The other objective that the Israelis may have had in Lebanon concerning the Syrians is a little bit harder to define. It may be that the Israelis hoped to drive the Syrians out of Lebanon, to humiliate the Asad government and to weaken it in order to demonstrate the futility of its Soviet connection. There is another school of thought, though, that has to be taken seriously: namely, that Israel did not intend to challenge the Syrian position in Lebanon and that there was more of an intention of trying to reach a modus vivendi with Syria in Lebanon. The basis of this would be a tacit

understanding that Syria had a sphere of influence in the Beka'a Valley and in northern Lebanon that Israel would not challenge, provided that Syria would not challenge an Israeli sphere of influence in southern Lebanon. I'm not sure which of these alternative perspectives makes more sense, but I see some logic in the latter if one looks at the way the war was fought. It is hard to believe that Syria was a main objective of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

In addition to these objectives concerning the Palestinians, Lebanon and the Syrians, there were other elements that may have been part of the Israeli strategy. But this is more speculative. Nonetheless, I think one needs to mention them simply as hypotheses. First there was undoubtedly concern in Israel about pressures on Egypt to rejoin the Arab fold. It is not implausible that the Israelis had in mind, as they went to war in Lebanon, that this would complicate Egypt's rapprochement with the other Arabs, because Egypt would obviously have to sit by and observe the treaty that it had signed with Israel while Israel was making war against other Arabs. That would make the charge that had always been levelled at Egypt for making peace with Israel -- namely, that this would free Israel to attack other Arabs -- a more plausible accusation.

Perhaps this was also a time to test the strength of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty which was still in its infancy. Perhaps this was also a time to deflect the United States from its oft-announced new initiatives for Middle East peace. Perhaps it was also an opportunity to build political support within Israel for the Begin-Sharon coalition. This is all speculative, but we live in a political world where politicians tend to think of such things.

Now let us look at what was achieved out of this long list of Israeli objectives. Some of the military goals were achieved. A very heavy military defeat was inflicted on the PLO. Vast quantities of arms were captured or destroyed, large numbers of Palestinian fighters were killed or captured, and the PLO was routed from Lebanon with only a small toe-hold left in the north. That probably is the most clear-cut achievement of the Israeli invasion. But with this military victory, it is hard to say that the Israelis achieved most of their political goals, because they have not been successful in eliminating the Palestinian movement or Palestinian nationalism, or even the PLO as a political movement, although I think the PLO faces a very difficult political future.

Concerning their goals towards a new Lebanese government, Israel came very close to achieving what they had hoped for, namely, the election of Bashir Gemayel, and his inauguration as a President

willing to either make formal peace with Israel or at least a tacit peace. But in the Middle East one cannot count on the best-laid of strategies to work out. And the assassination of Bashir Gemayel a short time after his election to the Presidency was no doubt a setback to the Israeli objective of encouraging the formation of a Lebanese government that would make peace and collaborate with Israel. That prospect now seems further off than it was a month ago, or two months ago, or even when the war began. The new Lebanese government, while certainly attentive to Israeli security concerns, is not going to rush into making a peace treaty with Israel. Nor will the new Lebanese government find it easy to reestablish its authority over the entire country. Nor will it be easy for the new Lebanese government to reconcile the various political groups within Lebanon. I think the Israelis will have to accept much less in Lebanon than they set out to achieve. They are not going to have a strong pro-Israeli government in power in Beirut.

In addition, I think the Israelis will have to recognize that, after being an occupying power for several months in Lebanon, they are rapidly drawing down on whatever goodwill may have existed among some Lebanese groups when Israel first went in. This is a bad omen for the future of peace between Lebanon and Israel.

Another important political cost of the war in Lebanon is the damage done to Israel's relations with Egypt, the only Arab country with which Israel has a peaceful relationship and a formal peace treaty. There may have been strains already apparent in the Egyptian-Israeli relationship, last year and early this year after the Sinai evacuation, but the strains today are much worse. Whatever mass support there may have been in Egypt for the idea of peace with Israel has been damaged by the events of the last three months. If one of the prices paid by Israel for its war in Lebanon has been to compromise or jeopardize its peace with Egypt, that is a very heavy cost indeed.

Another cost that the Israelis have paid in the war in Lebanon is a strong reaction in world opinion, including American, against the use of force to achieve the goals that the Israelis set for themselves. The war simply went on too long. It was too present in our lives every night on television. It involved too many tragedies that could in some way be traced to the Israeli presence in Lebanon. And Israel has paid a very, very heavy price in American support and international opinion. Finally, within Israel itself, there is more upheaval today, more dissent, and more criticism of the current government than there was three or four months ago.

Now if that is the balance sheet, more or less, of some

military gains, many political uncertainties, and most political goals not achieved, one has to ask what the Israelis have achieved given the cost of this war. And it was a very costly war. Over 350 Israelis were killed and thousands were wounded. That's at least half the number of casualties of the 1967 war. Many thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese were killed, tens of thousands were wounded. Who knows how many were displaced, how many lost their homes, or how many new refugees there were? Immense economic costs were inflicted on Lebanon and the physical destruction was enormous. World opinion, including American, was turned against Israel more than we have ever seen before. And even Ronald Reagan became irritated at Menachim Begin, and that took quite a bit of doing.

Now, let me pick up on this last point. The war did have an impact on American thinking, including the President's, and it led to the President's bold initiative on September 1 of this year. In an attempt to reassert American leadership, to demonstrate that we were not going to be simply dragged around by events in the Middle East, that we were not prepared to be accomplices indefinitely in a strategy that relied entirely on force to achieve political goals, President Reagan's proposals of September 1 tried to reassert American leadership and tried to reassert the primacy of diplomacy over force of arms. What, briefly stated, was the basic concept behind the Reagan approach? It is a rather simple concept, and it is a rather traditional one for American-Middle East diplomacy. It is firmly rooted in UN Resolution 242 which envisaged an exchange of territory occupied by Israel in the 1967 War in return for Arab recognition of Israel and adequate security arrangements that would insure that future wars would not occur. It is that concept which the United States had clung to from 1967 up until the present, although there had been interludes when our commitment to that basic exchange, territory for peace, had been somewhat in question.

The other conceptual change in the Reagan proposals, and it is a very important change, was a shift from believing that Egypt could speak for the Palestinians concerning autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. It was not that Egypt was somehow a less valued ally of the United States, but we simply reached the conclusion that Egypt was not able to reach an agreement on autonomy for the Palestinians and make it stick. First, they probably would not reach an agreement with Israel, and even if they did there was some question as to whether it could be implemented. Perhaps the most important shift in the Reagan proposals was the shift away from Egypt as the centerpiece of our strategy on the Arab side toward Jordan and the Palestinians as the negotiator, both for an interim step of autonomy and for the final step of the exchange of territory for peace, recognition and



security. The other change of emphasis on the part of President Reagan and his proposals was to address both the issues of the interim period, the five-year transitional period, and the questions of the final status of the West Bank and Gaza more or less in the same context.

In launching these proposals I believe that President Reagan had three audiences in mind. Let me say a word about the strategy as it is directed toward each of these audiences.

First, there was clearly a domestic American audience. The President wanted broad public support for a new try at American leadership for peace in the Middle East. I think he sensed that the American public was fed up with the spectacle of war. Lebanon had an impact on public thinking and there was likely to be a strong and positive reaction to an American commitment to leadership in the search for peace. The speech was well crafted, well delivered, and quite successful, in my judgment, in winning American popular support, public opinion, the press and Congress. This is not at all an insignificant achievement, because without a strong domestic base of support no president can continue indefinitely with the difficult and inevitably controversial task of peacemaking. So one positive sign on the horizon is that the President has staked his reputation on a strategy for peace in the Middle East and the American public has responded, I believe, quite favorably.

The second audience of the Reagan proposals was clearly the Arab world. Not all of it, but very important parts of it: Jordan, the Palestinians and the Saudis, first and foremost, and a number of other Arab leaders and states that have a commitment to see some kind of peace and security established in the eastern Mediterranean. The most important Arab party, no doubt, was Jordan and those Palestinians who are prepared to accept Israel's existence and to recognize that fact. The hope was that we could elicit a positive Arab reaction to the Reagan proposals, that the rejectionist stance which had prevailed since Camp David on the part of all Arabs except for Egypt would dissolve and there would be a predisposition to engage in dialogue, not so much with Israel at the outset, but with the United States. And I think the administration should be pleased with the initial response. There is no longer a rejectionist bloc in the Arab world. There are different degrees of enthusiasm or lack of enthusiasm for the Reagan proposals, but there is no longer a division between those who are more or less well-disposed to engage in a dialogue with the United States and those who adamantly reject it. Only Libya is completely beyond the pale. They refused to participate in the Fez conference.

Generally those Arab parties about whom we are most concerned in the peacemaking process -- Jordan, the Palestinians, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt -- are now prepared to talk about the Reagan proposals, even though they are still based on Camp David. It is a remarkable change. By changing the name, all of a sudden it becomes permissible to talk about the Reagan proposals. There is still a long way to go for the Reagan administration in its strategy of eliciting a more favorable Arab response. Fez was not a big step in the right direction, but I think it was a small one. The PLO remains very evasive when it comes to stating its willingness to recognize Israel. There is no reason to believe that a US-PLO dialogue is anywhere in the offing. For the moment the emphasis will be, I think, on Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and perhaps to some extent, Syria.

Let's turn to the third audience of the Reagan proposals: Israel. I find it hard to believe, reading President Reagan's speech and looking at the evolution of the American position, that this is a strategy designed to change Menachem Begin's mind and to make him alter his life-long views about Israel's right to the West Bank and Gaza. It is, however, a speech aimed at an Israeli audience that is prepared to consider the trade of territory for peace. If that is what was understood by the Reagan administration, it suggests a rather ambitious and perhaps risky strategy. This is not a strategy designed to persuade Menachem Begin to be more reasonable, to be more forthcoming or more flexible (words which do not automatically spring to mind in talking about Mr. Begin), but rather it is a strategy designed to appeal to the Israeli opposition. This has led to the accusation by Minister Sharon -- in fact he seems fixated by the idea -- that the Americans are out to do in the Begin-Sharon government and to bring into power the Labor party. I doubt if bitter tears would be wept anywhere in Washington if that were to take place. But I do not think it is an active part of the current American strategy. There may be some hope that the Israelis themselves will bring about such a change, but the behavior of the American government today is one of extraordinary caution in order to defend against the charge of direct intervention in Israeli affairs. But, no doubt, the American government hopes that a debate will begin in Israel over the long-suppressed question of what price Israel will be prepared to pay with her eastern Arab neighbors. To make that debate more credible the United States hopes, I believe, to create and encourage an Arab coalition -- not simply Egypt, but Jordan and the Palestinians backed by Saudi Arabia -- which is clearly committed to recognition and peace for Israel in return for territory and the right of Palestinian self-determination.

One month into the Reagan administration's new policy in the

Middle East, a healthy debate has begun in the United States, in the Arab World and in Israel. That is not bad for one month. We've gone for years without such a debate. We should not expect early results. But I, at least, feel that we are somewhat better off today than we were in late August of this year.

The hard tests, however, all lie ahead. Can the United States really encourage the creation of an Arab coalition prepared to talk seriously about peace with Israel? Is there a chance that Jordan, and the Palestinians, with Saudi backing, and perhaps even Syria, will step forward to play a role that they have been hesitant to play in the past? Are we overestimating the so-called Arab moderates? We are putting a very heavy burden on some rather vulnerable and weak regimes.

The second question that obviously needs to be raised is whether we are prepared to stay the course for the long period that this strategy requires. Can we stick with it over the long haul? There will always be diversions. Something will happen somewhere in the world that will seem more urgent and more compelling. Perhaps it will be in Lebanon, perhaps there will be some future Falklands crisis. Can we keep the Middle East at the center of our concerns? And can we convince Prime Minister Begin that total defiance and total rejection of President Reagan's proposals will incur penalties and costs?

Let us quickly look at the prospects for peace and security in the Middle East in light of this assessment. I think we have to be realistic and say that peace between Israel and the Arabs, and between Iran and Iraq, is still far off. Just to mention again the Gulf conflict, it seems to me that the prospects there of any real breakthrough to peace are very slim indeed, but there is some chance that a precarious balance of power may emerge in which neither side succeeds in imposing its will on the other. Peace in the sense of non-belligerency may be the best we can hope for in the Gulf for now.

In the Arab-Israeli zone, however, more than balance-of-power politics is necessary. The United States now has a very major stake in diplomatic progress, both in Lebanon and on the Palestinian problem. If we revert to the kind of passivity that marked our actions in the period 1971-73, and again from 1979 to 1982, it seems to me that we will see tensions increase and wars ensue. It is perhaps a sad commentary on American diplomacy that it has taken crises such as the 1973 War and the Lebanon war of this year to bring the United States into a more active diplomatic role as peacemaker.

Based on the past, we should expect nothing less than continued presidential involvement and a strong role for the Secretary of State will move things forward. If we are not prepared to engage all of our power in this effort, it is almost axiomatic that it will fail.

Before President Reagan gave his speech on September 1, one official in the administration told me that there was a new initiative being planned. I asked him what that initiative would be, and he said, "There aren't really any new ideas. You've heard every conceivable argument, so has anyone else following the Middle East, but there may be a new determination to make some of the old ideas work." And I think that is what we have to look for today. We cannot expect any act of magic to come up with an idea that none of us has ever thought of before that will bridge the gap between Israel and the Arabs. It is not so much imagination that has been lacking, it is the political will to carry out the formula that holds the best prospect for peace. And that formula remains, I believe, the exchange of territory occupied in 1967 for peace, recognition and security. Those goals may be attainable, but they will not be attained if we simply leave events to take their own natural course.

The United States has, I think, a special responsibility. We are deeply implicated in what happens in the Middle East; we are deeply affected by it; and we do have some influence. But ultimately we cannot force Israelis or Arabs to make peace. If they are wedded to their own vision of a future in which they are prepared to fight each other indefinitely, we cannot force them to change. What we can try to do is to reinforce those political inclinations which call for some kind of historic compromise. This may well be one of the last chances we are going to see for a negotiated peace between Israel and the Palestinians and the other Arab parties. And I do not say that in an apocalyptic sense, but I do think that events on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza are moving forward at a pace that makes it extremely difficult to imagine that several years hence there will still be an opportunity for a compromise peace. If events continue at the pace of the last few years, we will not be talking about a negotiated peace between Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan. We will instead be talking about how Israel will be able to live with a very large Palestinian minority in its midst.

The crises and wars of this year should leave us with one very strong impression: that the political problems of the Middle East require diplomatic and political solutions. We should also remember that when the Middle East is at war, American interests are most threatened. We will do best, as will the people of the Middle East, if we can get on with the peacemaking. But history also

reminds us that peace in the Middle East has more often been a dream than a reality. Certainly nothing that has happened in the past three months during the war in Lebanon will make peace a reality unless determined diplomatic efforts are made to break the deadlock. President Reagan has shown in his September 1 speech that he can be a statesman and that he can transcend the narrowness of his own early views. The challenge now is to see if other Middle East leaders can do likewise.

Thank you.

## NO END TO CRISES?

*Rapporteur: Ruth Baacke*

What is the political prognosis for Lebanon after the Israeli invasion? Since the National Pact of 1943, the Lebanese political system has been a delicate institution: an electoral system allowing for flexibility to changing circumstances. Historically, loads on this system grew faster than the system could bear, and the Civil War of 1975-77 deepened rather than resolved the inherent weaknesses of the system, creating crises of authority, identity and redistribution of wealth, resources, opportunities, and patrimony.

Currently, the most fundamental change in Lebanon resulting from the Israeli invasion is the destruction of the Lebanese Left by the departure of the PLO; the Rightists have won the civil war. Amin Gemayel seems to have won the support of the elitist factions of Shi'a and Sunni Muslims and may be more able than his brother, Bashir, to exert legitimate authority over a broader spectrum of the Lebanese population. But for Gemayel to be successful, a quick withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon is imperative. If he can assert authority in the short run, the birth of a third Lebanese Republic could occur; probably not the old liberal republic, but a Phalangist one-party state, stronger but less democratic, with an opportunity to enact reforms. Given traditional Phalangist ideology, reform is unlikely. Without reform in the long run, however, the historical problems of Lebanese politics will reassert themselves: Shi'a down-troddenness, social problems, and the old problems of national identity. This is especially true if Islamic reaction spreads and there is no resolution of the Palestinian question.

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As for the Palestinians, how does the current situation in Lebanon apply to their aspirations? There is an inadequacy of words to describe the events of Beirut this past summer; nothing new can be uttered to elucidate the situation of the Palestinian and Lebanese

victims. Perhaps the only consolation, in homage to these victims, is a renewed emphasis on the old platitudes underscoring the need to resolve the Palestinian situation.

The horror of Beirut has led to an inkling of reality finally reaching the Western media. It is a first step in breaking through traditional Zionist categories of thought, coined to rationalize their actions to Western audiences. Israel has had tremendous success in creating a buffer between realities in the Middle East and the perception of that reality by the West. For example, the Western press is still fudging on the number of casualties of the war. Even so, this war has placed the law of proportionality before the world, with an actual retaliation ratio somewhat higher than the 1:35 (Israelis to Palestinians) cited as "acceptable" by Israeli General Eytan before the invasion. Although for the Palestinians the enormity of what has happened is new, the terms and treatment of Beirut are only the latest in a long list of events constituting their view of the quintessence of Zionism such as the land grab, whose victims are civilians. Palestinians and other Arabs have long been aware of this; the West is seeing it for the first time.

Begin's revisionist policies illustrate the historical intra-Zionist conflict over the methodology used to achieve the ultimate land grab. Pre-holocaust Revisionism, the essence of the philosophy of Begin's mentor, Vladimir Jabotinsky, calls for the taking of "both banks of the Jordan by force." The use of force created tension from the beginning in Zionism between the Revisionists and Labor followers and is evident today in the Israeli outcry against Begin's actions in Beirut.

For the Palestinians there are certain essential ingredients for the settlement of the Palestinian problem: this settlement must be between Palestinians and Israelis; it must be on Palestinian territory between the Jordan River and the sea -- most obviously by using the 1967 boundaries of Israel; there must be sovereignty and self-determination for all Palestinians, not only the inhabitants of the occupied territories, for this territory is the patrimony of all Palestinians, and the PLO must play the legitimizing role.

As the Palestinians and other Arabs see it, the US has a moral responsibility not only for what took place in Lebanon but to the Palestinians no less than to the Israelis. The US had assumed responsibility for two cease-fire agreements in Lebanon negotiated by Philip Habib in July 1981 and August 1982. In a broader context the US responsibility to the Palestinians is in symbiotic relationship to that of its moral responsibility to Israel, and this behooves

the US to induce restraint, not only in the Israelis, but in the US support for Israel.

The Israeli invasion was motivated by the fact that the PLO was becoming more politically pragmatic and diplomatic and less belligerent -- as were all the Arab governments except Libya. This is the ultimate tragedy of the war. If Middle East peace is ever to be achieved, it is imperative that the US cut through the Zionist constraints of thought and summon the political will to move in the right direction toward a just solution for the Palestinians.

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The Israeli invasion paradoxically has created new realities that may provide opportunities for movement toward a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is a glimmer of hope for the political future of Lebanon, and there has been a first step toward comprehension of the true reality of the Palestinian situation. The Reagan peace initiative also may lead to some new gains.

But there is little cause for further optimism. Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab states still operate under dangerous illusions which impede progress toward a resolution. Israel under Begin has disregarded the previous Labor assumption that territory would be returned in exchange for peace. The Begin government's obsession with security at the expense of peace and force as the means of maintaining this security, combined with the concept of "eternal anti-semitism," are illusions which ultimately have backfired: the invasion of Lebanon has only served to heighten world sympathy for the Palestinians and has forced the US to take an active role in solving the Palestinian problem.

Arab illusions remain as well. First is the question of Israel's "right to exist," which must be resolved before serious negotiations can begin. Second is their differing concept of peace from that of the Israelis. A transitional framework for peace is required which will provide for treaties and normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab states in exchange for territory. Third is their illusion of a return to the status quo before June 4, 1967, for it is improbable that Israel would ever agree to such a demand.

But if old illusions are destroyed and current realities



directly faced, to allow new opportunities to be seized by Lebanon, Israel, the Palestinians, the Arab states, as well as the US and the USSR, then there is hope for a resolution of this conflict. All conflicts must have resolutions. Or do they?

## EGYPT'S ROLE

*Rapporteur: Sally Ann Baynard*

The current situation in the Middle East and the war in Lebanon have raised questions about the role that Egypt can play in the changing regional environment and about the effect of Egypt's peace policy on its domestic politics and economy. The death of Sadat over one year ago at the hand of Muslim fundamentalists brought to the fore questions about Egyptian morale and the cumulative result of the eventful decade of the 1970s.

The deep malaise which can be sensed in Egyptian domestic politics is being articulated increasingly in the powerful language of Islam. President Sadat's policies brought about gains in Egypt's balance of payments and national economic growth, but it raised expectations which could not be met and opened Egypt to the charge of complicity in Israeli policy. Sadat was made vulnerable by Egyptian perception that no compromise could deflect Israeli determination to alter irreversibly the political geography of the Middle East. Testimony to the force of the turbulent experience of the 1970s in Egypt was the incredible calm which greeted Sadat's passing. But there was more at work here than simple disillusionment with the Sadat decade. For both Nasser's Arab Socialism and Sadat's Open Door had shared an enthrallment with the West -- and a notion of meeting the challenge of the West on Western terms, with modernization.

There have always been groups in Egypt that have argued that the attack of the West can only be met by a revival of traditional Islamic culture. It is this tradition which came forward in earlier times and it was from its ranks that there emerged the men who killed Anwar al-Sadat. Hosni Mubarak faces the threat not only of fanatical groups which would return Egypt to the seventh century, but even more of being overwhelmed by those who reject the broad Westernization of Nasser and Sadat and reassert the Islamic alternative.

A healthy Egyptian economy is obviously critical to Egypt's broader role in Middle East issues, and there are a number of very positive aspects of the Egyptian economy today. There has been a

sharp growth in foreign exchange earnings since 1975 from petroleum exports, the Suez Canal, remittances of Egyptians overseas, and tourism. While improvements are still needed, Egypt's agricultural sector has yields per acre which are among the highest in the world; there is also a solid industrial base as well as effective banking and commercial services. Egypt has a strong pool of human resources and, despite problems, physical infrastructure and social services are within the reach of most Egyptians.

In spite of these positive features, management of the Egyptian economy over the past decade has not capitalized as well as it should have on the strengths within that society. Most of the distortions in the Egyptian economy emanate from efforts to assure equitable treatment of all Egyptians: subsidies, price controls, expensive "low cost" housing, and provision of services at "affordable" prices. Some distortions in the economy come from the conflicting demands of social welfare, efficiency and full employment made on industrial managers in the public sector. Other distortions in the economy arise from the implementation of grandiose schemes carried out with inadequate economic and social planning. Egyptian policymakers must grapple with a number of key issues in the economy in coming years: appropriate domestic energy pricing, growth and efficiency of the industrial sector, modernization of agriculture, targeting of subsidy programs, and high population growth rates.

Peace with Israel has brought Egypt both economic gains and losses. The recovery of the Sinai brought vastly increased oil revenues and earnings from a re-opened Suez Canal; tourism has boomed since the peace treaty and now approaches a billion dollars a year in revenue. But there have also been costs in the peace process. Most obvious was the loss of official Arab economic and military assistance. Some foreign investors have been reluctant to enter Egypt because of concern about their ability to export Egyptian products into other Arab markets. Even the recovery of the Sinai has had high costs in terms of resettlement, expansion of social services and infrastructure rehabilitation.

Another cost of the peace process has been that it has become more difficult to deal with some deep economic policy issues because of the possibly destabilizing impact they could have on a population already subjected to radical changes in regional politics. Neither Sadat nor, so far, Mubarak, has been able to undertake more than marginal first steps toward dealing with many of the key economic problems. Without needed reform, there is a serious question as to whether Egypt's economic prospects can sustain past growth levels in the near future, yet the very strains on political cohesion

involved in the peace process make it difficult for leadership to be willing to deal with the risky business of economic reform.

The Egyptian government remains committed to peace and is convinced that peace is its only option. It is attempting to create a new Arab and Israeli constituency for peace; the thousands of Israelis who recently demonstrated against Israeli actions in Lebanon are viewed by the Egyptians as their partners in peace. The fact that Egypt has not abandoned the peace process even after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon shows the depth of the Egyptian commitment, even the necessity of Egypt's policy. It was Egypt which pressed the American government when the chips were down in Beirut. It is Egypt which has, albeit with qualifications, supported the Reagan Plan. Egypt feels that it has proved that the peace which survived Sadat's death, the return of Sinai and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon can make possible things which have never before been possible in the Middle East.

## THE GULF: COOPERATION OR CONFLICT?

*Rapporteur: Eric Hooglund*

Since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the preoccupation with the Arab-Israeli conflict has removed the spotlight of attention away from the situation in the Gulf region. Nevertheless, developments in the Gulf continue to be significant because of their impact upon overall problems in the Middle East. For this reason it is essential to have an informed understanding of the strategic, political, and economic issues which presently affect the countries of the Gulf.

The major preoccupation of the Gulf, at least for its Arab side, has been the continuing turmoil in Iran since the fall of the Shah in 1979. Since then the Ayatollah Khomeini has been preaching a revolutionary Islamic world order which is threatening to the Arab states. It was partly to contain this radical ideology that Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980. The resulting war in the upper Gulf has produced considerable tension among the states of the lower Gulf, since the shaykhdoms fear both the potential of the war's spreading and its implications. The formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was in fact one response by these states to deal with the consequences of the war in a political and economic way.

The war between Iran and Iraq has made security a vital issue for the Gulf States. Already there is an arms race underway which dwarfs the large defense spending of the 1970s. However, the Gulf states seem to be aware that their purchases of sophisticated military hardware will not be of much practical value if any one of them were to be attacked by a more powerful neighbor such as Iran. Thus, the GCC countries look to the United States for their ultimate security. But cooperation between the US and the GCC states is severely hampered due to differences over Israel.

President Reagan's peace initiatives have been perceived by the GCC states as a helpful start to making the prospect of wider cooperation with the US in security matters more attractive. However, it is prudent to keep in mind that initiatives are not the same as peace. Accordingly, the GCC countries are cautiously

waiting to see if the US can really address the issue of the Palestinians. The success or failure of the US to resolve the Palestine problem is critical. In the GCC countries half of the total population is under the age of 15. These youth are being raised and educated to identify with the Palestinian cause. Thus for the long-term the US cannot hope to cooperate with the GCC in providing effective security in the Gulf unless it can help to provide an equitable resolution for the grievances of the Palestinians.

Political developments, in contrast to the military situation, seem very quiet. This quiescence, however, is deceptive because under the surface is considerable fear and frustration. There is a pervasive feeling in the GCC countries that something bad is going to happen, but no one knows what or when. This feeling is closely related to the perception of a power vacuum in the Gulf. Throughout the 1970s there had existed a political balance which had benefited the smaller states of the Gulf. There had been a balance of conservative versus radical forces, there had been a balance of Persians versus Arabs, and there had been an international political balance due to the absence of US, USSR, and British rivalries in the Gulf. Since the revolution in Iran all of these balances have been upset. Consequently, there has been an increase in tension locally and uncertainty about the future.

The GCC states are looking outward for signs of what may happen in the Gulf in the future. Both the Iran-Iraq war and the war in Lebanon have been very frightening developments. The rulers are totally preoccupied with the implications of the Gulf war, the intentions of Ayatollah Khomeini, and the impact of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. At the same time they feel powerless to influence the course of events that may occur internally in response to these developments. Their traditional reliance upon the protection of the US no longer affords reassurance. The example of the fall of the Shah of Iran is perceived by the rulers as evidence that the US cannot be trusted to provide help when it is needed.

The political atmosphere in the lower Gulf presently resembles that of Iran in the mid-1970s. The general sense that some political disaster is looming on the horizon creates the conditions under which a leader who can articulate the fears of the people could emerge to challenge the status quo. Such a leader would be from the right of the political spectrum and adept at manipulating religious symbols, although he would not necessarily be a religious leader. Such a person would be very dangerous to the current regimes and might succeed in outflanking the rulers. It would be ironic if such a situation developed since the major concern of the US in the Gulf is

that the GCC countries' principal threat comes from the left of the political spectrum.

The prevailing political climate in the lower Gulf may explain why so few concrete measures have been adopted to further the goal of economic integration. Economic cooperation was a primary motivation for the formation of the GCC in 1981. Already certain steps to help achieve this aim have been taken. For example, there has been coordination among the six GCC members in their developmental plans. However, most of the cooperation among the GCC states has not been in the area of economics, but in matters of military defense and security. Thus, the overriding concern of the Gulf states remains the conflict between Iran and Iraq, and most of the cooperative measures among the six GCC states have been motivated by concerns to minimize the impact of that war upon their own societies.

## BANQUET ADDRESS

### REFLECTIONS ON A TROUBLED REGION

*Richard B. Parker*

My instructions are not to say anything that is going to interfere with your digestion of the gourmet meal the Mayflower has just provided you. This is very hard to do in the region of our concern, which extends from Mauritania to Afghanistan. It is a deeply troubled region. This morning Bill Quandt spoke of two wars in the Near East. If we take the region as a whole, the region that we in the Institute follow, and include Somalia and Ethiopia, as we should, there are five wars going on in this region, or in the process of resolution: Afghanistan, Iraq-Iran, Somalia, Lebanon and the Sahara. Our media are full of reports of massacres and bombings, our consciences are deeply troubled and there are enough unpleasant facts about any one of these conflicts to make all of us reach for the Pepto-Bismol. So I don't think I'm going to be able to follow my instructions. If you do get indigestion, it's not my fault, it's the subject.

The title of my speech is "Reflections on a Troubled Region." That is just what I'm going to do. I am going to set down some of the reflections that came to me this morning as I listened to the various speakers. There is little I can do, little I can say, to a group this distinguished, about the area and its problems that would be new. But perhaps I can leave you with a few things to mull over.

First of all, as Ambassador Brown said this morning, my wife and I have just returned from a trip to North Africa where I was gathering material for a book. I am not going to talk long about North Africa, but feel I must say something about it. This is a region which is not much in the headlines here and yet is one of great strategic importance. It lies along the Mediterranean corridor which flanks Western Europe. It is the gateway to Africa from Europe. It is an area of important petroleum and mineral resources. It is very important to the security of Europe and the Near East that this region not be controlled by hostile powers. I don't think that is likely to



happen. But we cannot take the independence and continued stability of the countries of that region for granted. They have their problems and interests just as we do, and they must make their own choices, which often do not coincide with our own.

While there are many aspects of North Africa I'd like to talk about, and I can go on at some length, time will permit me to mention only two. The first of these is Libya. I had managed to convince the Department of State to let me go to Libya, but the Libyans would not give me a visa. I don't know whether to be complimented or offended. To a certain extent, however, the problem of Libya is one of our own making. I don't mean to defend Qadhafi or to deny his talent for causing trouble. But we chose to make an issue of him. We didn't have to do it. We made a deliberate choice to do so. None of our European allies has followed suit. They all say that it is our business what we do with Qadhafi, and maybe we're right, but they think it would be a mistake to close the door on him and to drive him into the arms of the Soviets.

As an article in the latest issue\* of the Middle East Journal, by Lisa Anderson, explains, Qadhafi has alienated so many Libyans that his power base is very narrow. Sooner or later his opponents are going to unseat him. We must reflect carefully on the position our policies will put us in when that occurs.

The second problem is the Sahara. The Moroccans seem to have the military situation stabilized for the time being. But neither the Moroccans nor the Sahrawis have the capacity to impose a military solution. The only way out is a political settlement. The basic question remains, as I noted last year, whether or not the Sahrawis will be permitted to have a meaningful exercise in self-determination. All of us, including the Moroccans, are on record at the UN and elsewhere as supporting self-determination for the Sahrawis. Yet most of us have conspired, either by affirmation or silence, to deny them that right. As someone remarked this morning, "there is no perfect justice," and any compromise which is workable will be disagreeable to both parties. But compromise based on injustice will not work, or will not work for long.

For most Americans this problem does not even exist. But it will have serious consequences for stability in North Africa and the region as a whole if it is not solved. I am providing no solution this evening. I do not know what the answer is. But I do

\* Middle East Journal, Volume 36, Number 4 (Autumn 1982)

suggest a couple of rules of thumb. One is that we should make every effort to push the parties towards compromise, and the second is that we should not take sides. I don't think Secretary [of State] Haig subscribed to either of these. I hope Secretary Shultz does.

Indeed, I take great heart from his remarks to the UN General Assembly yesterday as reported in the New York Times this morning. I hope you all read it. It is the first literate speech by a Secretary of State since Thomas Jefferson. The Secretary of State's speeches usually read as though written by a committee of coneheads who otherwise are unemployable. This one is a very refreshing change. I commend it to you.

Let me read briefly from the account in the New York Times.

. . . If we are to change the world, we must first understand it. We must face reality with all its anguish and all its opportunities . . . . Our era needs those who, as Pericles said, have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and notwithstanding go out to meet it.

These are noble words. Taken with his subsequent remarks about the undeniable Palestinian claim to a place with which they can truly identify and about President Reagan's September 1 speech, it bespeaks a determination to press ahead for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli problem.

That will require a superhuman quantity of realism, however -- realism for everybody. This morning's speakers gave some indication of the need for everyone to rise above his illusions about each other and to face the realities. The same point is made every year at about this time at this conference. At our annual tribal gathering we always talk about the need for realism and the need for everybody to understand each other. I did it myself in my summation last year, and I must say that progress since then has been rather erratic.

If I had to write up a balance sheet today, however, I would say that we're ahead of where we were last year. Certainly the Reagan administration has gotten off the dime at last. And that is progress. You may recall that last year speaker after speaker spoke about the absence of attention to this problem on the part of the Reagan administration. Well, finally, the area has gotten their attention. As for the Arabs at Fez, they put their toes cautiously into the water and that is progress. Not as much as we wanted, not

as much as is needed, but it is still better than a year ago.

As for the Israelis, Begin and Sharon certainly do not give the impression that they have seen the light. Far from it. But there is a healthy debate going on in Israel today, and what is almost as important is that there is one going on in the United States at about the same time. It seems possible that at last the US government will take cognizance of the fact that Begin's maximalist position is not all that popular and that Israeli society is not monolithic.

It is important that this moment not be lost, that we not be distracted by secondary concerns, and that we follow through with our plans. It is impossible to predict what will happen if we don't, but I think we can be sure that the results will be unpleasant.

One of the problems of prediction which Walid Khalidi mentioned this morning is that of the rather slow reaction time of the Arabs. Although we all see how quickly they can react in anger, Arab governments incline to caution when facing the unknown. Our own attention span is so short -- after all, we have a coup d'etat every four years and we cannot be expected to look at the long term -- that we take the absence of an immediate response as meaning that there won't be any.

Once back in 1968, I was told to write a memorandum in conjunction with another man, John Root, to Secretary Rogers forecasting the adverse consequences of the sale of F-4 Phantoms to Israel. I drafted something and then Dave Newsom made me take out all the adjectives. I took out all the adjectives, and the result was a very bland piece of paper that said nothing, and was therefore bureaucratically acceptable and had absolutely no impact. The truth was that we did not know what the Arabs were going to do. All we knew was that the Phantoms would represent an escalation of an arms relationship which was already unhealthy and that it would eventually damage our interests in the region. We didn't know how. In the event, we delivered the Phantoms, and the Arabs did nothing. But 15 months later Soviet pilots were flying defensive patrols over Egypt, much to the distress of the Israelis and the Nixon administration. And that came about almost directly because of the Phantoms.

Similarly, we know that resort to violence is bad -- bad because it violates principles, bad because it unleashes forces in ways which cannot be predicted, but we can't prove it until long after the fact. Walid Khalidi spoke this morning of our moral responsibility for what happened in Lebanon. Certainly we have some.

In particular we have some for acquiescing for six years in Israel's continuous violation of Lebanese sovereignty, and for promoting what has become a separate peace between Israel and Egypt, although that was not our intention. Certainly Camp David was a magnificent achievement, but it was flawed from the beginning and overcast with the pall of expediency. Early on in the process it was clear that what we were headed for was an agreement between Israel and Egypt, with some lip service to the idea of a comprehensive treaty which would be based on autonomy for the West Bank. But the autonomy the Israelis had in mind was a Bantustan. It had been hoped that the dynamic of peace would prove irresistible to the other Arabs. That it would not was predictable, and predicted, once Begin's views on autonomy became clear.

But most of us chose not to face that reality, and to hope that something would turn up. Well, it hasn't. Unless you consider that Lebanon is it, and that President Reagan and George Shultz's speeches are proof that it is an ill wind that blows no good.

But think what could have been avoided if President Johnson had been prepared to make the Reagan speech back in 1967 or 1968, as some of us urged. Or if Nixon had been prepared to make it, or if Nixon had been prepared to support the Rogers Plan of 1969, of which the Reagan plan is essentially an update. If we had faced the realities of the Middle East ourselves fifteen, or even ten years ago, think how many lives would have been spared, both Jewish and Arab. Think how many dollars would have been saved the American taxpayer. Think how much time we would have had for more profitable pursuits if Henry Kissinger had had a clue about the Near East before 1973.

Today we have a chance for a new realism. Or is it a new chance for realism? I am not sure which. In any event, the United States has a key role to play. Our role is going to determine whether or not we have peace in the Middle East. The question is, will we play it, and how well? Let's hope President Reagan and George Shultz mean what they say and that they have the strength to see it through.

Thank you.

## THE UNITED STATES: INTERESTS WITHOUT POLICY?

*Rapporteur: C. Darald Thomas*

Recently much has been written and said about the passivity of American policy toward the entire Middle East region. When it is focused on the region, United States attention tends to be confined to the conflict in Lebanon, while others, such as the one in the Persian Gulf, get pushed aside and ignored in terms of policy formulation.

The autonomy talks of 1979, which at least had the appearance of active diplomacy, were suspended during the 1980 political season and were never revived as an active concern of the new administration. With fanfare Secretary of State Alexander Haig issued a call for the development of a "strategic consensus" among US allies in the region. In reality, this was more a description of the state of affairs than a true policy initiative. In any event, with the resignation of Secretary Haig, there seems to have been an end of this policy for the foreseeable future. Philip Habib's labor, while appreciated, has more the appearance of damage control than of policy initiative. The extremely difficult negotiations that have been associated with the Lebanese fighting point out the limitations of US means to bring about a settlement in that conflict. Any success that was achieved was made possible with incredible difficulty despite the resources the American government brought to bear. The uproar which accompanied the withdrawal of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from Beirut is testimony to the confusion existing in the US government and the American media, which viewed the effort expended to achieve any agreement as an indicator of the significance of that agreement.

The Israeli-Palestinian war of 1982 has caused the US to put Israeli-Palestinian peace at the top of its policy agenda. If there ever was any doubt, there is none now that the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict is at the heart of the problem. By going to war to destroy the PLO, the Israeli government affirmed that the issue is between Israel and the Palestinian people. This war, furthermore, demonstrated that the Palestinian question cannot be resolved by unilateral Israeli action on the West Bank and Gaza.

By attempting to demonstrate the impotence of the US to influence how the Palestine issue will be resolved, the Israeli government forced President Reagan to recognize and restate sharply the view that the broader interests of the US in the Middle East required resolution of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict along the lines of UN Resolution 242, which in no way can be interpreted to include Israeli sovereignty over all the land west of the Jordan River. The fact that the President put his personal prestige behind this policy statement at the end of the summer's developments (September 1, 1982) demonstrates his recognition that American interests could no longer tolerate continued rapid erosion of the American position in the Middle East as a result of the continuing Arab-Israeli-Palestinian stalemate.

The 1982 war in Lebanon further demonstrated that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could not be resolved by force in the short term. With the organized Palestinian movement intact outside the occupied territories, completion of Israel's stated intentions to annex the West Bank and Gaza will close the option of a negotiated settlement and leave only one dangerous option, a military and/or negotiated settlement in a more distant future when the balance of power has been more nearly equalized by nuclear weapons. The 1982 war has thus again faced both parties with a stark choice between a negotiated solution now or a long-term strategy of confrontation until a changed military balance reopens the options for a negotiated or imposed settlement.

Among the issues that Israel will have to reconsider in its present national self-examination in the wake of the Beirut massacre is whether its vision of the Israeli state is one of domination of all of Palestine and its inhabitants, or one of sharing the land peacefully with its Palestinian neighbors living with their own identity and dignity. It is worth noting on the other hand that the deep-seated Israeli consensus on the unacceptability of Palestinian self-determination that embraces the entire society and political community (from Begin's "autonomy" to the Labor Party's Allon Plan) has been shaken but shows no signs of cracking. The Palestinians for their part must decide between a negotiated peace with Israel now or life as an unfulfilled ethnic minority for the indefinite future.

Since the fall of the Shah in 1979, the US has been attempting to restructure its political and military approaches to issues and problems faced in the entire region. To focus American policy solely or even primarily on the threat of Soviet penetration has been criticized as being wrong-headed, not because one should not be

cautious of the Soviet Union, but because this strategy is often based on "worst-case assessment" of the Soviet threat and is inattentive to the geo-political factors that have governed great power attitudes and policies toward this region since the 19th century. To formulate US policy in reaction to Soviet actions is not the approach that will work in the Middle East.

One approach that is worth considering would be to attempt to nurture a strategic balance between the Soviets and Americans. The central component of this approach would be the eventual evolution of a *de facto* buffer zone between the great powers, a zone for which there is a historic precedent. Such developments would make it easier for both the US and the Soviet Union to accommodate political change within the states of the region (i.e.: Iran and Afghanistan) and to avoid entanglements in the region. By becoming sensitive to regional conditions and by acknowledging that both East and West have legitimate security concerns in this buffer zone, the superpowers may be able to avoid the repetition of their experiences in formerly friendly states, such as Libya, Ethiopia and Iran for the United States and Egypt and Somalia for the Russians. Such a strategy could aptly be described as "strength through respect."

The creation of the Rapid Deployment Force which relies on the rapid arrival of air and sea-borne forces from outside the region is a very useful military tool, but until this military capability is matched to an appropriate political strategy for the Persian Gulf region, it is not only worse than useless, it is provocative. US military forces properly deployed coupled with a Western political strategy, requiring the active cooperation of US allies in Western Europe and Japan, may very well stimulate regional cooperation and impede regional venturism.

The US has had several Middle East policies, but they have not measurably advanced American interests. Some agreement exists as to what American interests in the Middle East are, but there are differences over priorities and emphasis. With the interconnection between complex regional issues, how America addresses any set of partial issues will determine how other American interests will be affected in the Middle East. Thus it is all the more important that a cohesive strategy be developed that takes into account US interests in the entire region rather than developing isolated policies to meet the areas' problems.

## SOVIET AIMS: STABILITY OR SUBVERSION?

*Rapporteur: George Smalley*

Moscow's decreasing influence in the Middle East was made apparent by its inability to play an active role during the war in Lebanon in late spring and summer of 1982. Soviet desires to maintain the status quo in Lebanon were shattered by Israel's June 6 invasion. Moscow reacted cautiously and decided early on that the costs of supporting Hafez al-Asad with more than rhetoric were too high. It was not until after Soviet-supplied weapons had been humiliated in the hands of the Syrians and a ceasefire had been put into place between Syria and Israel that Moscow took its first serious step -- a blunt warning to Israel on June 14 that Moscow's political and security interests were affected by the invasion. But this government statement did not specify retaliatory measures and was relatively mild when compared with Moscow's record of intervening either directly or indirectly during previous Arab-Israeli confrontations. Tangible Soviet assistance did come later, however, in the form of replacing weapons -- jet aircraft, tanks, missiles and guns -- that the Israelis had destroyed. But this was only after the major fighting between Israel and Syria had ceased.

Moscow's seemingly limited options during the Lebanon war and its meager support for President Asad (as well as for the PLO) have led to controversy over the future of Soviet-Syrian relations, with some observers concluding that Moscow is in the process of writing off its Syrian client. Historically, the two countries are linked by a treaty of friendship and cooperation signed in 1980. But the Kremlin has only limited control over decisions made in Damascus and considers the Asad regime to be shaky. The interest President Asad has shown -- particularly since the spring of 1981 -- in opening a dialogue with Washington can also be viewed as evidence of weakening Soviet-Syrian ties. The USSR would also be reluctant, according to some analysts, to offer Syria an explicit pledge to come to its defense even if it was perceived in Moscow that Syria was moving closer diplomatically to Washington.

What is clearer than the future of Soviet-Syrian relations is Moscow's attempts to improve ties with countries in the Gulf



region, particularly Iran, which some analysts consider Moscow's strategic prize. Despite its patience, Moscow cannot be considered an insider with the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini. Nonetheless, the Kremlin appears content with a policy of turning its diplomatic cheek to short-term setbacks in the hope of long-range gains. In concrete terms, there have been government-supported propaganda attacks in Iran against the Soviet Union and demonstrations at the Soviet embassy. Tehran has also refused to resume natural gas exports to Russia at agreed upon prices. The Khomeini regime has also been unhappy over Moscow's failure to openly support it in its war with Iraq and by the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan. Khomeini is also suspicious of the Tudeh party in Iran and of Soviet intentions in general.

The USSR also hopes to improve relations with states in the lower Gulf, using its friendly relations and formal diplomatic ties with Kuwait as a model. Although the Soviets have sold Kuwait weapons, there has apparently not been an exchange of military personnel to go with the hardware. For its part, Kuwait opened a press office in Moscow in early 1982 and has issued conciliatory statements regarding the USSR. Ultimately, the Kremlin would like to achieve normal diplomatic relations with Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and especially Saudi Arabia, which the Soviets view as central to improving relations with the others. But the Saudis have been unresponsive to Soviet overtures because of the Saudi monarchy's strong opposition to Russia's military occupation of Afghanistan and its suspicions that Moscow is trying to destabilize it, among other reasons.

The future of Soviet policy toward the Middle East will be affected by an expected change in leadership. The Brezhnev era is ending but the question of who will replace the aging President is unclear. It seems likely, however, that the successor will be about as old as Mr. Brezhnev and equally conservative. Consequently, Soviet policymakers are not likely to take risks or bold initiatives in the next two to three years. The six-point Soviet peace proposal announced in September of this year -- which contained no new ideas -- may prefigure Moscow's cautious course in the short term.

With Soviet leaders engrossed by the problems of Poland on its western border, and increasingly concerned with achieving better relations with China to the south, the Kremlin may find less and less time to devote to the Middle East. But Soviet policies are geared to the long term so that its lessening influence on Middle East leaders should not be misinterpreted. Moscow is in the region to

stay. It is likely to continue exploiting internal breakdowns, as in Afghanistan, to better its strategic footing.

The Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan perhaps dealt the fatal blow to US-Soviet détente. Relations between the two super-powers have been rapidly deteriorating ever since and are likely to worsen, given Washington's tough response to Moscow's crackdown in Poland and the Soviet Union's attempts to derail President Reagan's peace initiative.

## SUMMATION

*Michael E. Sterner*

Thank you, Dean. As an old Middle East conference goer, I think I sense what the mood of this audience is. So avid is your desire to be further enlightened on the mysterious and troubled Middle East that you are prepared to put off rejoining your families on this lovely fall weekend to hear yet another speaker on the subject. In case I'm mistaken about that I'll try to be brief. Relatively brief anyway.

It's impossible to pick up all of the strands, much as I might like to, that have been put out by the many interesting talks that we have had in the course of this day and a half. But on a very eclectic basis, let me try to pick up a few of them and return to the idea of some kind of balance sheet. Are we somewhat nearer, about equidistant, or maybe farther away from the desired objective of trying to move some of the conflicts in the Middle East toward a more peaceful condition? It seems to me that as we've listened to the various speakers who have talked about different aspects of the Middle East, we've heard both some notes of optimism and some notes, if not quite of pessimism, at least of caution about being overly optimistic.

Michael Hudson's crystal ball on Lebanon suggests that in the short and medium term there may be some real hope for greater stability. But at the same time, he cautioned that unless the government of Lebanon and the people supporting that government turn to the long-term agenda of the secularization and democratization of Lebanon, the same divisive tendencies that in the past have torn Lebanon apart are likely to arise again.

In the Gulf it seems to me encouraging that, despite the news of the past couple of days that Iraq is again being assaulted by new Iranian attacks, the overall sense is of a conflict that is winding down. Barring a complete collapse of the Iraqi forces, you get the feeling that both sides are beginning to tire of the conflict. Certainly they must be running out of resources of one kind or another. If that doesn't necessarily mean that there will be

immediate recourse to the negotiating table, this lower intensity of conflict nevertheless serves American interests and serves the broader purposes of trying to bring the conflict under some kind of control.

On the Arab-Israeli front we've also heard both notes of relative optimism and of caution. All the speakers we've heard seem encouraged by the step that President Reagan took on September 1 in setting out a new United States commitment to a more active role in the Middle East. But there were also some expressions of concern. Bill Quandt reminded us that there is the question of whether the United States can follow up effectively. He also asked -- and a very good question it was too -- whether our policy does not expect too much of the Arab moderates. Mr. Aaron Miller spoke eloquently of the illusions that are harbored by both sides -- illusions that need to be dispelled if we are to close the gap and move toward the negotiating table.

I hope it is not entirely my imagination or that I am injecting too much of a personal view, but it seems to me that the overall mood of this conference was more upbeat than several I've attended in the recent past. There appear to be two basic reasons for this. First, a sense that in Lebanon, in spite of all the tragedy, the loss of life and the destruction, the recent events at least have had the merit of sweeping away the impasse that seemed to frustrate every diplomatic effort on that front for the past several years. There is a new opportunity that can be exploited in spite of the tremendous obstacles that everybody recognizes. The second is the more active United States role that the President has outlined on the Arab-Israeli agenda. I must say that on a personal basis I tend to share this mood of cautious optimism. I agree with Bill Quandt's caution that in the final analysis there is just so much that the United States can do. In the long run if the Arabs and the Israelis are determined to continue to slaughter each other at regular intervals, that is going to be the condition that prevails. Nevertheless, short of that, I believe there is a constituency for peace on both sides of this negotiating equation and that a vigorous United States role is essential to activating that constituency. Even if a stronger United States role does not succeed in immediately bringing together the two sides to the negotiating table, it nevertheless has an important impact in terms of strengthening moderate forces throughout the area. Even looking at it only one month after the President's speech, we are already seeing these effects.

For my own money the Reagan speech was right on target. The President had complicated choices to make in that always very difficult task of deciding what should be said and what should be left

unsaid in a policy speech about the Middle East. I think the end result was very good. It is too bad that it was just so late in coming. I don't think this was entirely the fault of any one administration. The Carter administration was remiss in letting the grasp it had on Arab-Israeli affairs slip from our hands in the last year of the administration. This administration was also remiss in taking so long, first of all to recognize the centrality of the Arab-Israeli issue in the pursuit of our other interests in the area, and secondly to realize that some public expression of United States policy was absolutely essential to doing something about this problem. We are going to pay a price for that loss of time. Not only have unnecessary lives been lost as a result of our lack of attention to this issue, but unfortunately underlying attitudes within Arab councils and in Israel have hardened. It is going to take that much more effort by the United States now to try to uncongeal these attitudes and bring back a moderate consensus.

We nevertheless have to give a lot of credit to the President and his new Secretary of State, George Shultz, for realizing that when the time came to bite this bullet, halfway measures would no longer suffice. It was no longer sufficient to address merely issues within the autonomy scheme. You could no longer bring Jordan and the Palestinians into the negotiations by merely supporting a settlements freeze, or by some incremental motion forward in US support for a formulation on Palestinian self-determination. Indeed, you had to go beyond Camp David and talk to a certain extent about where autonomy itself was headed and where it was not headed. I believe, as I said earlier, that the tactical choices were very accurate, when the speech finally came, and that it served the precise purpose that the speech was designed for: to create a debate within the three audiences that Dick Parker identified last night in his talk -- within Arab councils, within Israel and, perhaps as important as any of them, within the United States. That debate must force decisions in each of these political arenas as to what is required to move off the battlefield and to the negotiating table.

Now, it seems to me, the task is for the United States to stick to its guns, and to continue skillful but definite pressure on both sides to develop that moderate consensus further and to translate it into positions that begin to be negotiable. The problem in the past with United States policymaking has not been policy error so much as a lack of staying power. As one of my colleagues once said to me when I was still in the government, "You know, I don't really care what American policy is in the Middle East, but I sure wish we'd stick to it for a period of time."

I'd like to conclude with something that Bill Quandt said at the very beginning of his talk. It is essential, he said, for everybody to avoid either excessive optimism or excessive pessimism because either of these leads to a condition of "passive expectation." It is a good phrase, and it probably represents our worst enemy in the present situation -- the feeling that now that things are beginning to go a little bit for you, all you have to do is sit back and wait for others to deliver the goods. It really takes three to tango on this Arab-Israeli problem, and it's going to take a great deal of hard work and tenacity on the part of all three to make negotiations succeed.

Thank you.