

The Roots of the U.S.-Israel Relationship: How the Cold War
Tensions Played A Role in U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

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Senior Thesis

Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Honors in the Department of History

UNION COLLEGE

June, 2013

Abstract

Today the relationship between the United States and Israel includes multiple bi-lateral initiatives in the military, industrial, and private sectors. Israel is Americas most established ally in the Middle East and the two countries are known to possess a “special relationship” highly valued by the United States. Although diplomatic relations between the two countries drive both American and Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East today, following the establishment of the State of Israel the United States originally did not advance major aid and benefits to the new state. While current foreign policy focuses on preserving the strong relationship with the only democratic nation in the Middle East, Israel, during the Cold War era the United States global foreign policy focused on combating Soviet Influence and containing the spread of communism.

The early relationship between the United States and Israel was contrived around United States Cold War strategies that dominated U.S. foreign policy for the greater part of the 20th Century. All the presidents ranging from Woodrow Wilson to Harry Truman all supported the proposition of a Jewish national home in the Middle East. American support for Israel was not engineered by domestic lobbies or the American Jewish population, but emerged as a strategic relationship during the Cold War era. American support for Israel was originally predicated upon early commitments the United States upheld including the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and United Nations Resolution 181 (1947) which both dictated a form of a Jewish home in the area known as Palestine. In order to maintain an image of American credibility, and out maneuver the Soviet Union, the United States became the first nation to extend de facto recognition of the State of Israel on May 14, 1949. The United States policy during the first decade of Israel’s existence was reflexive of greater global U.S. foreign policy focused on combating Communist expansion. In its early years, Israel originally adopted a policy of non-alignment with both the Western and Soviet Powers in order for the state to receive opportunities available from both blocks. The United States took a hesitant approach towards Israel and focused on building relationships with the Arab states in the Middle East. American Cold War policy dictated American policy towards Israel. The origins of the American affiliation with Israel derive from Israel’s commitment to anti-communism following Arab alignment and arms cooperation with the Soviet block in the 1950’s. In order to maintain a balance of Western and Soviet power in the Middle East the United States shifted its attitude towards Israel and sought to strengthen the two countries relationship. The sale of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles marked the turning point in the U.S.-Israel relationship and led to the bi-national military collaborations the two countries are known for today.

Introduction

Today the relationship between the United States and Israel includes multiple bi-lateral initiatives in the military, industrial, and private sectors. Israel is Americas most established ally in the Middle East and the two countries are known to possess a “special relationship” highly valued by the United States. Although diplomatic relations between the two countries drive both American and Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East today, following the establishment of the State of Israel the United States originally did not advance major aid and benefits to the new state. America did not always consider Israel the United State’s closest ally in the Middle East. While current foreign policy focuses on preserving the strong relationship with the only democratic nation in the Middle East, during the Cold War era the United States global foreign policy focused on combating Soviet Influence and containing the spread of communism.

All the presidents ranging from Woodrow Wilson to Harry Truman all supported the proposition of a Jewish national home in the Middle East. American support for Israel was not engineered by domestic lobbies or the American Jewish population, but emerged as a strategic relationship during the Cold War era. American support for Israel was originally predicated upon early commitments the United States upheld including the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and United Nations Resolution 181 (1947) which both dictated a form of a Jewish home in the area known as Palestine. In order to maintain an image of American credibility, and out maneuver the Soviet Union, the United States became the first nation to extend de facto recognition of the State of Israel on May 14, 1949. Following the creation of

the State of Israel the U.S. State Department advocated for policy options that gave preference to Arab nations over Israel in order to maintain a dominant American presence in the Middle East. Under the Eisenhower Administration U.S. policy towards Israel replicated recommendations from the State Department that aimed at keeping Soviet Influence at bay in the Middle East by maintaining a positive rapport with Arab nations.

The State Department strategy included awarding Arab nations with generous American financial aid while criticizing Israeli policy and withholding arms and financial assistance. At the end of the 1950's State Department policy failed to deter the Arab states, most notably Egypt, from maintaining relationships with the Soviet bloc and resulted in a shift in America's preference towards Israel. American policy on the Middle East continued to reflect what would come as a result of what would be. Many people are led to believe that the American Jewish community and the Pro-Israel lobby forced U.S. support for Israel, but the reality is that during the first decade of Israel's existence the support of the state was predicated on the fact that it would serve greater U.S. national interests.

Chapter 1: United States and Palestine

Before the Jewish State was established in May 1948 there had already been over six decades of cooperation between the United States and Israel. Under the presidency of President Woodrow Wilson, the United States supported the British Balfour Declaration. Lord Balfour wrote this declaration in 1917 in an open letter to Lord Rothschild, the president of the British Zionist Federation. The declaration endorsed a Jewish national home in Palestine, affirming that the British Government would ensure the establishment of the Jewish national home.¹ Lord Balfour wrote in his correspondence to Lord Rothschild that:

His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.²

The statement was later officially incorporated in the British Mandate for Palestine, thus becoming an official part of British policy. Although President Woodrow Wilson was initially hesitant to publically affirm his support for the Zionist cause, for fear of losing "Arab good will and access to Middle Eastern oil"³ he decided that his

¹ Robert John, "Behind the Balfour Declaration: Britain's Great War Pledge to Lord Rothschild," *The Journal of Historical Review* 6, no. 4 (Winter 1985-1986, 1985)395.

² Lord Arthur James Balfour, Balfour Declaration, 12/2/1917.

³ Henry D. Fetter, "'Showdown in the Oval Office': 12 may 1948 in History," *Israel Affairs* 14, no. 3 (July 2008, 2008)1.

endorsement of the Zionist cause would not hinder political developments in other parts of the Middle East.⁴

In July 1922, the Council of the League of Nations gave control over the Palestinian territory to the British. This is known as the British Mandate. On June 30, 1922 the United States Congress passed a resolution, "favouring the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."⁵ In April 1922 the House Foreign Affairs Committee stated, in a hearing, that:

The Jews of America are profoundly interested in establishing a National Home in the ancient land for their race. Indeed, this is the ideal of the Jewish people, everywhere, for, despite their dispersion, Palestine has been the object of their veneration since they were expelled by the Romans. For generations they have prayed for the return to Zion. During the past century this prayer has assumed practical form.⁶

President Wilson established a precedent for the U.S. Presidency to support the proposed Jewish national home in Palestine. His successors including President Warren Harding and President Calvin Coolidge both supported the Balfour Declaration.⁷ On September 21, 1922, the incumbent President Warren G. Harding signed a joint resolution, approving the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine.⁸ President Herbert Hoover also supported the proposed Jewish National

⁴ John, *Behind the Balfour Declaration: Britain's Great War Pledge to Lord Rothschild*, 389-450

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 2nd sess., 1922, 1-174.

⁷ Dennis Brian, *The Elected and the Chosen: Why American Presidents have Supported Jews and Israel : From George Washington to Barack Obama*, 2012th ed. (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2012)192.

⁸ Jonathan J. Pierce, "Coalition Stability and Belief Change: Advocacy Coalitions in U.S. Foreign Policy and the Creation of Israel, 1922?44," *Policy Studies Journal* 39, no. 3 (2011) 416.

home in Palestine. In a letter written in 1932 to Emanuel Neumann, a representative of the Zionist Organization of America, President Hoover wrote that he was “in favor of the age-old aspirations of the Jewish people for the restoration of their national homeland.”⁹

Franklin Delano Roosevelt openly expressed support for a Jewish National home, but was later criticized for secret assurances he made the King of Saudi Arabia Ibn Saud. President Roosevelt condemned the British White Paper, which weakened the prospect of a Jewish National Home.¹⁰ In the years following, Ibn Saud became skeptical of the American’s position toward a Jewish National Home, leading President Roosevelt to covertly change his attitude about the Jews in Palestine.¹¹ While Roosevelt confided in Saud that the United States would honor the interest of its Arab friends, publically he assured the Jews that he would aid them in creating a home for them in Palestine.¹²

President Harry Truman also expressed his support for a Jewish national home before he became president. Truman was initially introduced to the question of a Jewish national home while serving as a Senator of Missouri from 1935 to 1945.¹³ As a Senator he expressed his support of House Resolution 360 from 1922. This resolution supported the establishment of a Jewish National home. Furthermore, this endorsement came in light of Truman’s critique of the 1939

⁹ Brian, *The Elected and the Chosen: Why American Presidents have Supported Jews and Israel : From George Washington to Barack Obama* 201

¹⁰ Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, 1983rd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1983)138.

¹¹ Ibid. 143.

¹² Ibid. 146.

¹³ *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*, 39, directed by John Snetsinger (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1974)

British White Paper on Palestine, a paper that essentially opposed the establishment of a Jewish National home.¹⁴¹⁵ On May 25, 1939 Truman, inserted an article in the Congressional Record critiquing the White Paper and criticizing Britain's repudiation of its obligation to satisfy the proposals set out in the Balfour Declaration.¹⁶ Although Truman initially supported the establishment of a Jewish National home, he changed his attitude towards a partition of Palestine in order to maintain a strong relationship with Arab nations.¹⁷ For Truman the question of a Jewish national home depended on how it affected U.S. interest.

¹⁴ Ibid. 17.

¹⁵ Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1949 to the Present*, Vol. 1st (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2008), 626.

The British White Paper did not explicitly prohibit the establishment of a Jewish National Home, but implicitly did so by restricting Jewish immigration to the Palestine. Under the conditions of the White Paper the plans for a Jewish national home were impossible because there was no way under the quotas that enough Jews could immigrate to Palestine to sustain a stable population

¹⁶ Joseph Michael Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)44-45.

¹⁷ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*17

Chapter 2: The Relationship Following World War II

World War II introduced a complication to the question of the Jewish State. Following the defeat of Germany in May 1945, hundreds of thousands of Jews who survived the Holocaust in Europe became refugees. The original but temporary solution was to place Jewish refugees in Displaced Person's camps throughout Austria, Italy, and Germany.¹⁸ In the months following, Truman urged the British government to address the problem of the Jewish refugees, appealing to the assurances of the Balfour Declaration.

Truman framed this recommendation as response to the testimony in the *Harrison Report*. The *Harrison Report* was a report written by Earl G. Harrison, the Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, former Commissioner of Immigration, and American envoy to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees.¹⁹ In his letter to the President on August 24, 1945, Harrison, as a representative of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, harshly criticized the treatment of Jewish refugees in Germany by Allied forces and U.S. Army soldiers.²⁰ In response to the *Harrison Report*, Truman wrote to British Prime Minister Clement Attlee urging him to allow a reasonable number of Jews into Palestine under the British Mandate.²¹ It was then, when Truman sympathized with the displaced Jews in Europe, that he made a motion in congress to support a Jewish

¹⁸ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Displaced Persons," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=100054622013>).

¹⁹ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*17

²⁰ Earl G. Harrison, *Harrison Report* (London, England: ,[1945]).

²¹ Michael J. Devine, Robert P. Watson and Robert J. Wolz, *Israel and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008)97.

home in Palestine. The State Department held an opposing opinion, and recommended to the President not to support any policy involving Jewish immigration that could anger Arabs in the Middle East.²²

President Truman was met with two conflicting opinions within his own administration while considering the "Palestine Problem".²³ The State Department led the group contesting U.S. policy that would recognize the Jewish State. The State Department and its allies believed that it would be reckless to risk American strategic and economic postwar interest with Arab countries in the Middle East for the sake of a Jewish State. President Truman's personal staff and close aides persuaded the President that the recognition of the Jewish State was as a political necessity.²⁴ Truman factored both national interest and the importance of a consistent official policy on the Jewish State when making considerations of Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Truman base his policies in order to placate the American Zionist or win the Jewish vote in his upcoming election, but dealt with the question of Israel carefully with the intention of not interfering with other Middle Eastern Interest.²⁵ For example, in 1945 the American Zionists felt that Truman did not push British Prime Minister Clement Attlee as much as he was capable of.²⁶

²² Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*17

²³ Ibid..

²⁴ Ibid.,11-12.

²⁵ Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*205.

²⁶ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*18, 18.

Even though Arab leaders expressed dissatisfaction with Truman's support of Jewish immigration, Truman did not isolate Arab leaders and remained consistent on his policies.²⁷

The State Department further criticized President Truman's policy on the immigration of Jews following the formation of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in November 1945. The committee investigated Britain's policy regarding Jewish immigration into Palestine in early 1946. Following the committee's investigation, the Taft-Wagner Resolution was introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives. This resolution urged the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine.²⁸

Truman considered the opinions of American Zionists, but did not submit to their requests for American support for the Jews in Palestine. Truman waited for the official report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in May 1946 before writing again to Prime Minister Attlee expressing the expectation that Britain would revoke the barriers on Jewish immigration to Palestine.²⁹ While Truman expressed his wish to improve the situation of the Jewish immigrants in Palestine, he refrained from commenting on the idea of a permanent solution in the form of a Jewish sovereign state.³⁰

After Truman made his support for the Committee Report public, the State Department conveyed their disapproval of the report to the President. In a *Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum* the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee warned

²⁷ Ibid., 19.

²⁸ Cohen, *Truman and Israel* 46-47.

²⁹ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel* 27.

³⁰ Michelle Mart, *Eye on Israel :How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006) 34.

President Truman of the cost of involving U.S. armed forces in the conflict in Palestine.³¹

The motivation behind the State Department's opposition to U.S. involvement was connected to the brewing conflict with the Soviet Union. In the period between World War II and the Cold War Era, tensions increased between the United States and the Soviet Union.³² The State Department felt that the Soviet Union, determined to increase its sphere of influence, might be able to increase its power in the region if the United States isolated itself through its Palestine Policy. There was a strong push from the State Department disengage from the Yishuv – the Jewish settlements in Palestine - in order to prevent the United States from entering conflict in the Middle East and maintain relations with the Arab countries.³³ The State Department, caught up in Cold War tensions, wanted to maintain positive relationships with Arab countries in the Middle East in order to prevent the Arab countries from building relations with communist Russia.³⁴

The State Department carried out a number of policies in an attempt to shrink the communist sphere of influence and prevent Soviet authority from spreading. According to the State Department, if the United States supported a close affiliation with the Yishuv, then the Arab states would distance themselves with the democratic U.S. and look towards the communist Soviet Union for support.

³¹ The Joint Chiefs of Staff Washington, D.C., "Joint Chiefs of Staff to State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee" (Memorandum, President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers, The Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, Independence, MO, 1946).

³² William B. Quandt, "America and the Middle East: A Fifty-Year Overview," in *Diplomacy in the Middle East: The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers*, ed. Carl L. Brown (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001)59.

³³ Fetter, *Showdown in the Oval Office: 12 may 1948 in History*499

³⁴ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*83

Following World War II, the Soviet Union emerged as a world power. Consequently there was a power struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States to maintain influence over existing and developing states. In the United States, the Cold War manifested itself through the Red Scare as well as a general anti-communist sentiment. This sentiment reached its zenith in the 1950's.³⁵

Anti-communist sentiment erupted following the U.S. use of the first Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and the intensifying of the atomic race. Americans believed that there was an impending threat of atomic war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. This belief ushered in an era of anxiety and antipathy towards the communist and their affiliates. Consequently U.S. officials and citizens turned against countries and people who posed a threat to democracy and United States authority.³⁶

As the Cold War began Western leaders watched the Soviets establish regimes sympathetic to communism in Poland, the Baltic States, Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria. During the winter of 1946 to 1947 it appeared that the Soviets were setting up a separate regime in eastern Germany.³⁷ As countries continued to suffer economically while rebuilding infrastructure following World War II the Soviets supported communist parties and factions to establish greater Soviet influence. Communist parties in Italy and France were large, well supported, and acquired mass popularity. As the Soviets attempted to lay communist roots surrounding the western occupation zones in Germany, the U.S. began to fear that

³⁵ "Ideological Foundations of the Cold War."The Harry S. Truman Library, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/index.php2013).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

the entire continent was beginning to orient itself with the Soviet Union.³⁸ The Soviet Union disregarded the terms it agreed upon at the Yalta Conference and its assurance to allow free nations in Europe to hold free elections. Stalin reneged on guarantees concerning Eastern Europe following elections in Poland.³⁹ The United States wanted to diminish the power of the Soviets and prevent ceding the Middle East, like Eastern Europe, to the Soviets.⁴⁰

Beginning with the Truman administration the United States adopted policies protecting Cold War interest. The U.S. was apprehensive to begin a relationship with Israel because thought that it would not serve Cold War diplomacy.⁴¹ The Truman administration made great attempts to contain Soviet influence and spread democratic values through foreign policy. Numerous State Department officials expressed concern for the growing communist threat.⁴² George Kennan, a career State Department official stationed in Moscow, strongly supported containment. He conveyed what he recommended for U.S. policy in "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," in July 1947. He believed that the United States needed to implement a policy of caution for regions, like the Middle East, that are at risk of Soviet growth. He comments, "the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant

³⁸ David Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)59.

³⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "**The Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East, A Message to Congress, January 5, 1957**," XXXV1, no. 917 (1957b), 83-87.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Mart, *Eye on Israel :How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally*⁴⁴

⁴² "Ideological Foundations of the Cold War.", 1

containment of Russian expansive tendencies."⁴³ He understood that the Soviets possessed the power to pressure nations to associate themselves with the communist cause. He continues saying;

...the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.⁴⁴

According to Kennan, the United States needed to take measures to thwart Soviet developments in areas where communism was beginning to appear. In the Middle East, the State Department would later campaign to maintain relationships with Arab countries, at the cost of a rapport with Israel, in order to prevent them from falling under Soviet pressures.⁴⁵

The United States containment policy caused the United States to enact what was known as the "Truman Doctrine" with regard to established and forming countries, like Israel. A year before the establishment of the State of Israel President Harry Truman addressed a joint session of U.S. Congress to present allocations for the new U.S. foreign policy.⁴⁶ Following Kennan's recommendations from Moscow, President Truman established U.S. policy that would last throughout the Cold War until the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. Truman called on the U.S. to support pro-

⁴³ George Kennan, "The Policy of Containment: "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," July 1947," in *The United States since 1945: A Documentary Reader*, eds. Robert P. Ingalls and David K. Johnson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009)17.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*83

⁴⁶ Harry S. Truman, "The Truman Doctrine: Harry S. Truman Address, March 12, 1947," in *The United States since 1945: A Documentary Reader* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 21-23.

democratic nations with “financial and economic assistance.”⁴⁷ Truman recommended to congress that the U.S. take sweeping global measures to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining stronger global influence. The focus of the Truman Doctrine was to protect U.S. “national security”.⁴⁸ Truman stated in his March 12, 1947 speech to Congress stated that:

...one of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion...We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon the totalitarian regimes.⁴⁹

President Truman wanted the U.S. to become increasingly involved in foreign politics to stop “aggressive movements” from the Soviet Union, from burgeoning in areas where communism was not previously prevalent. Truman argued that the way to help nations “maintain their free institutions,” was by “economic and financial aid” to provide “economic stability and orderly political processes”.⁵⁰

In addition to financial aid, President Truman requested that Congress be granted the authority to intervene in countries with, “American civilian and military personnel.” The “Truman Doctrine” became the standard upon which the U.S. would conduct its foreign policy. The United States became known, “to support free peoples who [resisted] attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside

⁴⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 22.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 23.

pressures”.⁵¹ Truman believed that national safety was not only dependent on securing U.S. borders but also establishing a pro-American presence overseas. When the State Department, Congress, and the President had to establish a policy towards what was expected to be the Jewish State in early 1948 there was dissonance between the branches of the U.S. government regarding how Israel fit within the terms of the Truman Policy.

Following the “Truman Doctrine” the United States made a commitment to stop the spread of communist backed governments. Even though Congress would pass the National Security Act of 1947, reorganizing the national military establishment, the State Department did not want to establish new areas of conflict between the Soviet Union and the U.S. ⁵² The National Security Act resulted in a major reorganization of the foreign policy and military establishments of the U.S. by creating a Department of Defense out of the War Department, and the Central Intelligence Agency.⁵³ The Joint Chief’s of Staff were also formed to serve as the core governing body for the Department of Defense and became an institution defending the expansion of the Cold War into the Middle East. President Truman wanted the U.S. military to intervene in the internal conflicts in Greece and Turkey in order to prevent similar communist insurrections from spreading to the Middle East. ⁵⁴

The United States was unsure whether the Jewish State would align its domestic and foreign policies with those of the Soviet Union or the United States. The State Department suggested that Israel could not receive support from the U.S.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*84

⁵³ U.S. Office of the Historian, "**National Security Act of 1947**," <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NationalSecurityAct>2013).

⁵⁴ Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*253.

for multiple reasons, including that the country's allegiance did not lie strictly with the United States.⁵⁵ During the late 1940's the United States established a network of countries known to support U.S. democratic principles and free trade. George Kennan formed what would be the United States policy of containment for the duration of the Cold War.

In an anonymous article published in a 1947 journal, *Foreign Affairs*, George Kennan expanded upon his propositions for the containment of Soviet communist he recommended in his Long Telegram from Moscow. Kennan's recommendations, published in what would be come to known as the "X-Article", called for the United States to take concerted diplomatic efforts to block soviet influence from spreading to free, un-communist, and independent governments. Kennan argued that, "The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."⁵⁶ To effectively stop the Soviets from expanding their influence Kennan stated that the U.S. must apply, "adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy."⁵⁷ U.S. foreign policy, Kennan wrote, would then result in "the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."⁵⁸ In his article he encouraged the U.S. to counter the efforts of the Soviet Union and its Communist allies whenever and wherever they

⁵⁵ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel* 83.

⁵⁶ "Kennan and Containment, 1947." <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/Kennan>

⁵⁷ George "X" Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (July 1947, 1947), 566-582.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

threatened to gain influence. President Truman adopted Kennan's policy and increased economic and military efforts to effectively contain the spread of communism. In the Middle East Truman would adopt Kennan's policy and plan to increase economic and military efforts to effectively contain the spread of communism in an area of high value, because of oil, for the United States.⁵⁹ The question for the Truman administration would be how to react to the "shifts and maneuvers of Soviet Policy" in the Middle East because it was not clear for the administration if and with which country, including the Jewish State, Soviet influence would take root.⁶⁰ When the United States established that Soviet influence was encroaching upon the Middle East different factions within the U.S. government debated where, and with which governments, the U.S. should apply counter pressures.

The Marshall plan was also integrated into American policy towards combating soviet encroachment. The Marshall Plan formulated in 1948 by Secretary of State George Marshall, outlined a foreign policy program in which the United States would gain influence in post World War II Europe, in order to drive out communist pressures, through economic support. In a speech given to Harvard College's graduating class on June 5, 1947, Marshall stated that those countries who needed financial support were the most vulnerable to Soviet influence. He argued that internal and external communist pressures threatened countries still recovering from World War II.⁶¹ Countries affected by the redistribution of power

⁵⁹ Kennan, The Policy of Containment: "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," July 1947 19

⁶⁰ Kennan, **The Sources of Soviet Conduct**, 566-582

⁶¹ George C. Marshall, **The "Marshall Plan" Speech at Harvard University**, George C. Marshall, Speech, 1947 .

and a change in their organization of government needed to be supported by the United States in order to deter countries in need from turning to the Soviets for assistance. The State Department took into great consideration whether or not to give foreign aid to Israel, to show support, when deciding how the U.S. would conduct itself with Israel in 1949.⁶² According to the Marshall Plan countries that ally their ideals with the U.S. should benefit with U.S. foreign aid. Many State Department officials claimed that the U.S. should withhold all foreign aid in the form of military support, and loans and because the Jewish Agency's affiliation with Soviet communist allies indicated that Israel was already oriented towards a Soviet alliance.⁶³

The Jewish Agency, the leading authority for the Yishuv in Palestine, was also hesitant to commit to communist or anti-communist diplomatic relationships leading up to and continuing after Israeli Independence.⁶⁴ The Jewish Agency did not decide whether to solely align itself with the United States or Soviet Union because it was open to receive multiple forms of aid to support the central Jewish fighting force the Hagana.⁶⁵ The leaders of the Yishuv understood the multiple challenges that the new government would have to confront following the states establishment, including an imminent attack from the surrounding Arab nations, the question of Arabs in the State territory, and the need to build a significant Jewish

⁶² Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel* 88

⁶³ Marshall, *The "Marshall Plan" Speech at Harvard University*

⁶⁴ Mart, *Eye on Israel :How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally* 72

⁶⁵ Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, Vol. 1st (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45.

population through immigration.⁶⁶ The government leaders felt it would be most prudent to not isolate either power and solicit support, diplomatically and fiscally, from both. Prior to the declaration of the Jewish State, the leaders of the Yishuv depended on the Soviets for support against the British.⁶⁷ While fighting the British mandate in Palestine leaders of the Jewish Settlements and the heads of the Hagana, the principle group of Jewish armed forces, sought weapons from the Soviets. The leaders including Ben Gurion, who would be the first prime minister of Israel, also understood the reality that without American support the new Jewish State would not survive an attack from the surrounding Arab states.

The Soviet Union, under Joseph Stalin, aided the Yishuv by defying the embargo placed on the Jews by the U.S. in March of 1948.⁶⁸ Stalin supported the Yishuv war efforts by exporting Czechoslovakian goods and weapons to the Jewish authorities.⁶⁹ Czechoslovakia received aid from the Soviet Union and following no financial assistance from the U.S. under the Marshall Plan. The Czechs, under Soviet Control, supplied Israel with, "50,000 rifles, 6,000 machine guns, and 90 million bullets," as well as uniforms, following an agreement signed in January of 1948.⁷⁰ The U.S. State Department believed that the Yishuv would become a base of Soviet activity in the Middle East. They saw the transfer of Czech weapons to the Hagana, as the organized Jewish military forces in Palestine, as a indicator of the Yishuv's

⁶⁶ Zeev Sharef, "Meeting of the National Administration and the Formation of a Provisional Government of Israel: Memoir," in *Israeli in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*, eds. Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008), 63-70.

⁶⁷ Mart, *Eye on Israel :How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally*, 74.

⁶⁸ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel*, 60.

⁶⁹ Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, 47.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

socialist affiliations. The Czech Coup d'état by Czech communist exacerbated the belief of the State Department that the Jews in Palestine should not receive support from the United States because of their socialist attributes and affiliations.⁷¹

The State Department attested that Israel's relationship with the Soviet Union and its affiliated nations was further proof that Israel, when faced with the choice between the opposing powers would choose to ally with the Soviet Union. The State Department also assumed that the creation of the Jewish State would give the Communist more power in the Middle East "Such operatives are already at work within the Jewish community and their influences will be enhanced so long as a condition of internal strife continues, and their numbers will be increased if the Jewish State is established."⁷² Members of the State Department improperly linked the Jewish People with Communist ideology.

Furthermore, not only did the Jewish State's foreign policy not correspond with the United States Cold War policy, but according to the U.S. State Department complicated other U.S. Middle East initiatives.⁷³ Secretary of State Marshall aimed to avoid opening up an additional Cold War theater in the Middle East. The State Department predicted that the successful establishment of a Jewish State would inevitably lead to war in the region, eventually leading to U.S. involvement.

As the end of Great Britain's Mandate on Palestine approached the United States had to decide the nature of the relationship they wanted with the Jewish State. After the Arab and Jewish authorities failed to reach an agreement based upon

⁷¹ Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, 272.

⁷² United States State Department, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine" (CF, Truman Papers, Truman Library, 1948).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1.

U.N. Resolution 181, the U.S. State Department proposed the plan to place Palestine under a United Nations trusteeship.⁷⁴ The trusteeship plan included placing limits on Jewish immigration and a separation of Palestine into divided Jewish and Arab provinces.⁷⁵ The provinces would not have the sovereignty of an independent state and the United Nations would serve as the autonomous body until both sides reached a resolution.⁷⁶

The State Department, concerned about the possibility of an increasing Soviet role in the Arab world and the potential for restriction by Arab oil producing nations of oil supplies to the United States, advised against U.S. intervention on behalf of the Jews.⁷⁷ Later, as the date for British departure from Palestine drew near, the Department of State grew concerned about the possibility of an all-out war in Palestine as Arab states threatened to attack almost as soon as the UN passed the partition resolution.⁷⁸

The United Nations assumed a large role, following the British, in determining the outcome of Palestine following the Partition. After the British Government relinquished its claims over Palestine, it presented “the Palestinian Question” to the United Nations General Assembly. The General Assembly was charged with the task of judging new terms of the Mandate.⁷⁹ The General Assembly commissioned a group of representatives from eleven countries to form the United

⁷⁴ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel*, 85.

⁷⁵ United States State Department, *The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine* 9, 9.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 9.

⁷⁷ Robert Owen Freedman, *Israel and the United States :Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2012) 25.

⁷⁸ United States State Department, *The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine* 5.

⁷⁹ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel* 51.

Nations Special Committee on Palestine, or UNSCOP.⁸⁰ After UNSCOP evaluated the situation in Palestine and filed a report at the end of August 1947, a new plan for the Mandate was created involving two separate states and an international zone.⁸¹ The resolution adopted by the United Nations, and accepted by the United States, on November 29, 1947, known United Nations Resolution 181, achieved a majority for a two-state solution. The Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish people would control two separate sovereign states, and, because of its religious importance, Jerusalem would remain a *corpus separatum* under international control of the United Nations.⁸² The United States supported the Partition despite the fact that the State Department continued its support of Arab interest in the Middle East and again addressed the President. Loy Henderson, the head of the Near East Division, along with George Kennan, the champion of U.S. containment policy, supported its case against partition citing that it would go against greater U.S. strategy and national security.⁸³ While the Jewish Agency supported the plans overall, the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab countries surrounding Palestine condemned the terms of the resolution.

Soon after President Truman took office on April 2, 1945 the State Department expressed its opinion on how the President should conduct affairs in Palestine. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius briefed Truman on the Jewish Agency's push to form a Jewish State. As standard for the State Department's view, Stettinius recommended to Truman to keep American interest in the Middle East a

⁸⁰ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel* 5352.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 52.

⁸² United Nations General Assembly, "Resolution 181," in *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*, eds. Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2009) 61.

⁸³ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel* 56

high priority when managing U.S. policy towards Palestine.⁸⁴ Truman accepted the State Department advice in the initial months of his administration. Under the recommendation of the Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew, President Truman wrote a letter to Arab leaders assuring them that, “no decision should be taken respecting the basic situation in Palestine without full consultation with both Arabs and Jews.”⁸⁵ In a letter to King Saud in 1946 President Truman expressed his wish to honor the previous U.S. commitments to a Jewish national home in Palestine, as agreed upon in the Balfour Declaration, but also maintain the established friendship between Saudi Arabia and the United States. While writing to King Saud that all, “should be prepared for self-government and also that a national home for the Jewish people,” Truman also assured him saying that the United States, “Government, in outlining its attitude on Palestine, has given assurances that it would not take any action which might prove hostile to the Arab people, and also that in its view there should be no decision with respect to the basic situation in Palestine without prior consultation with both Arabs and Jews.”⁸⁶ The State Department advised President Truman to take an increasingly cautious approach towards the Palestinian issue following the beginning of the Arab revolts in Palestine and increased disapproval from Arab leaders in the region.⁸⁷

While President Truman upheld the terms of the Balfour Declaration without much question, when the United Nation moved to establish two separate sovereign entities for the Jews and the Arabs, the United States had to resolve a conflict of

⁸⁴ Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel* 16.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Harry S. Truman, Message to the King of Saudi Arabia Concerning Palestine, 1946.

⁸⁷ Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, 89.

interest between the two parties. United Nations resolution 181 changed the nature of the Jewish national home, as a territory where Jewish people could find refuge, to an actual state with authority given to the Jewish leaders to determine their own sovereignty.⁸⁸ The issue continued to become more complex as violence broke out in the region due to Arab opposition.

President Roosevelt publically praised the American Palestinian Committee, a pro-Zionist group in the U.S., and endorsed the group's efforts to form a Jewish State. While Roosevelt expressed his support to Robert Wagner, the co-Chairman of the American Palestine Committee, during May of 1942, he also communicated with Arab leaders supposedly committing the U.S. to act in the interest of the Arab States.⁸⁹ Concurrently, Roosevelt supposedly offered secret assurances to King Ibn Saud saying that he would work to prevent a Jewish State from forming. Word of the secret assurances from Roosevelt promised to King Ibn Saud would be revealed during Presidents Truman's presidency and cause conflict during Presidents decision to promote a Jewish State.⁹⁰ Later revealed publically, President Roosevelt sent a letter to King Ibn Saud in 1945 stating that, "the attitude of the American Government toward Palestine" had the desire, "that no decision be taken with respect to the basic situation in that country without full consultation with both Arabs and Jews."⁹¹ To Saud, Roosevelt strove to secure the United States interest within the Arab states and in his letter said, "I assured you that I would take no

⁸⁸ United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 181*, 61-63.

⁸⁹ Richard B. Miller, "The Moral and Political Burdens of Memory," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 37, no. 3 (09, 2009)244.

⁹⁰ By C.L. SULZBERGER By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES., "INDEPENDENT LIBYA IS ARABS' DEMAND," *New York Times (1923-Current File)* Oct 5, 1945, 1945.

⁹¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Letter From President Roosevelt to King Ibn Saud, April 5, 1945, April 5, 1945, 1945.

action, in my capacity as Chief of the Executive Branch of this Government, which might prove hostile to the Arab people.”⁹²

In early 1948 following the incompleteness of U.N. resolution 181 and building tensions with the Soviet Union, the United States sought to keep relationships with the Arab States positive and open. The State Department urged President Truman to remain on good terms with the Arab leaders not only to protect U.S. oil interest, but to prevent the Arab states from attaching themselves to the Soviet Union. War to the Soviet Union was a realistic fear and Britain’s mandate was set to expire in months, giving the U.N. and the U.S. little time and options to solve the Palestine issue. In an attempt to resolve the Palestinian issue and establish America’s position the State Department, under direction of Secretary of State Marshall, prepared a position paper on Palestine. The draft of the position paper prepared for President Truman titled, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine", written February 17, 1948, outlines multiple options in regard to handling the end of the British Mandate. The position paper also included a relation to the Soviet Union in the Middle East.⁹³ "Unrestricted access to the oil resources of the Middle East [that] is essential to the complete economy of the United States and to the economic recovery of Europe under the ERP."⁹⁴ The State Department worried that if the United States offended Arab leaders including King Ibn Saud, then the United States main supply of oil would be restricted, thus hindering their anti-communist operations abroad. As war with the Soviet Union became more of a potential reality,

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President" (OF, Truman Papers, Truman Library, 1948b).

⁹⁴ United States State Department, *The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine*, 2.

the State Department believed that, “the oil and certain strategic areas of the Middle East will figure prominently in the successful prosecution of such a war by the United States.”⁹⁵ In the opinion of the State Department, in order for the United States to be prepared for a possible war with the Soviet Union it was necessary for the U.S. to continue, “a friendly or at least a neutral attitude by the Arab peoples toward the US and its interest is requisite to the procurement of adequate quantities of oil for the purposes as stated and to the utilization of strategic areas without prohibitive cost in the event of war.”⁹⁶ To the State Department, stability in the Middle East depended on unrestricted oil access and an assurance that the Soviet Union would not gain a foothold in the region.

The State Department worried that the inadequacy of the U.N. Resolution 181 Partition Plan without another proposed solution would lead to security risks for the United States. As outlined in the position paper, the Joint Chiefs of Staff felt that the United States must effectively contain the Middle East from Communism. They, “emphasized their view that, of all the possible eventualities in the Palestine situation, the most unfavorable in the security interest of the United States would be the intrusion of Soviet forces and, second only to that the introduction of US troops in opposition to possible Arab resistance.”⁹⁷ Both the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff felt that Communist operatives were already operating and setting groundwork for the Soviet Union to infiltrate the Middle East. The position paper stated that the Soviet Union had plans to, “exploit the situation in Palestine to its

⁹⁵ Truman, *Statement by the President*.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ United States State Department, *The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine*

advantage [and that] the USSR can most easily gain a lodgment in the Palestine to its advantage... by introduction of Soviet or Soviet-controlled forces under the guise of some UN section, or by infiltration of a considerable number of Communist operatives.”⁹⁸ The United States would then be at a disadvantage following the isolation of the Arab States by the United States leading them to, “be nurtured by ... operatives to the advantage of the USSR and to the disadvantage of the US.”⁹⁹ The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that the United States should not take any action that had potential to orient the people of the Middle East away from the Western Powers and the United States.

After the State Department established that the timetable for executing the Partition Plan would be impossible to implement, they proposed a number of alternative plans for Palestine. The first plan was to continue to support the Partition Plan, as detailed in Resolution 181, but to do so using United Nations armed forces. The State Department outlined that if the Partition Plan would resume as scheduled then the Jewish State would inevitably come under attack by Arabs in Palestine, surrounding Arab States, and other Moslem countries. If the United States would support the Jewish State with arms, then, the State Department warned, then the U.S. would, “Alienate the Moslem world with the resultant threat of: 1. Suspension or cancellation of US air base rights and commercial concessions including oil, and drastic curtailment of US trade in the area. 2. Loss of access to British air, military and naval facilities in the area, affecting [the United States] strategic position in the Middle East and Mediterranean.” 3. Supplementary

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

critiques for the plan included that it would, "Provide a vehicle for Soviet expansion into an area vital to [United States] security interest," and cause a deployment of, "U.S. troops in a situation where there is high probability of loss of American lives and which might result in war." (United States State Department 1948, 1-14) After the State Department concluded that the Partition Plan could not be accomplished with force, except at the expense of the United States, they developed the alternative plan that the U.S. would propose to the United Nations.

The State Department proposed a plan to reevaluate the Palestine situation and appoint trusteeship of the area to the United Nations until further resolutions were prepared. Outlined under plan D of "The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine", the recommendation was for the United States to, "call for a special session of the General Assembly to reconsider the situation," and, "propose that while working for such conciliation or arbitration, a special session of the General Assembly be called to consider a new solution in the form of (1) An international trusteeship."¹⁰⁰

President Truman supported the State Department's recommendation to the United Nations Security Council, but did not want the trusteeship proposal to be interpreted as a change from the position in favor of partition that the United States. The United Nations Special Commission on Palestine met March 18, 1948 and reported to the United Nations Security Council that it had unsuccessfully to coordinate any compromise between Jews and Arabs for the Partition Plan.¹⁰¹ The UNSOP recommended to the Security Council that the United Nations assume a

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Action on the General Assembly's Resolution and Draft of Proposed Remarks by Ambassador Austin." (PSF, Truman Papers, Truman Library, 1948).

temporary trusteeship for Palestine in order to retain order in the region.¹⁰² The following day, United States representative to the United Nations Warren Austin concurred with the UNSOP's conclusions and stated to the United Nations Security Council that the United States opinion is that the partition of Palestine is no longer a feasible option.

Secretary of State Marshall endorsed Warren Austin's United Nations testimony on March 20, stating that temporary United Nations trusteeship for Palestine would allow the United Nations to effectively address the situation in Palestine. President Truman initially subscribed to the State Departments plan to grant the U.N. trusteeship over Palestine. In a released statement on Palestine, President Truman stated, during a press conference on March 25, 1948, that even though the U.S. originally supported the UNSCOP plan for partition, "it has become clear that the partition plan cannot be carried out at this time by peaceful means."¹⁰³ President Truman then asserted that, "The United States has proposed to the Security Council as temporary United Nations Trusteeship for Palestine to provide a government to keep the peace."¹⁰⁴ He hoped for the United Nations Security Council to call upon leaders of the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine to arrange a truce in order to prevent widespread violence following the end of the British Mandate on May 15. The trusteeship would be a temporary means to keep the peace in Palestine until political settlements were agreed upon and established.

The United Nations released a report declining the recommendations of the

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Harry S. Truman, "Memo Supporting a Statement by Truman Recognizing Israel" (PSF, Truman Papers, Truman Library, 1948a).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

trusteeship resolution previously proposed by United States representative to the United Nations, Warren Austin. The Security Council denied the Trusteeship Plan on April 19, 1948 and suggested that U.N. Resolution 181 be amended, suspended, or withdrawn altogether.¹⁰⁵ Following the failure of the Trustee Plan, President Truman reoriented his position on Palestine and the probable establishment of a Jewish State. While the State Department continued to be concerned with U.S. security and Cold War interests, key State Department officials pressured President Truman to not recognize the Jewish State that was expected to form.

In the weeks before the British Mandate was scheduled to end the State Department attempted to pressure President Truman to stay involved in the Jewish state. President Truman had to consider statements and assurances made by the U.S. to both the Arabs and the Jews, while taking in consideration how the American policy towards a Jewish State United States standing in the Middle East. Truman was unable to bridge a solution that would please both sides.

On May 9, less than a week before the British Mandate was scheduled to end President Truman released a statement outlining the benefits and issues for the United States in recognizing the state of Israel. President Truman understood that the division of Palestine would most likely be based on the Partition lines from Resolution 181. President Truman wanted to keep an edge and realized that the Soviet Union and its satellites were planning on recognizing Israel and he did not want to isolate the United States.¹⁰⁶ Truman was in competition with the Soviet Union for recognizing the Jewish State driving him to proclaim that if a State were to

¹⁰⁵ "Action on the General Assembly's Resolution and Draft of Proposed Remarks by Ambassador Austin.", 1-14.

¹⁰⁶ Truman, *Memo Supporting a Statement by Truman Recognizing Israel*, 1-5

be created it would receive United States recognition. In the President's statement he said that, "the Soviet Union and its satellites, "might even announce their intention to [recognize the Jewish State] in advance."¹⁰⁷ To the President, "Once [the Soviet Union has] already recognized the Jewish State, any similar action on [the United States] part will seem begrudging."¹⁰⁸ The United States not only wanted to recognize the Jewish State, but recognize it before the Soviet Union. Allowing the Soviet Union to recognize the Jewish State before the U.S. was viewed as a "diplomatic defeat."¹⁰⁹

President Truman wanted to maintain his promises in the Balfour declaration and solve the Jewish Refugee problem in Europe following World War II. On May 12, President Truman met with representatives from his own White House Staff along with State Department officials. Secretary of State George Marshall, Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett, and assistant and Council to the President Clark Clifford attended the meeting in the Oval Office to discuss how the United States should handle Palestine.¹¹⁰ The State Department and the Department of Defense believed that official U.S. acknowledgment of a Jewish State would hinder U.S. interests. A central concern for the State Department was American oil enterprises in the Middle East.¹¹¹ Fundamentally opposed to a founding of a Jewish State, the State Department argued that recognizing Israel would block America's goals in the Middle East. One of the main goals, as cited by the State Department,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁰ Walter Russell Mead, "The New Israel and the Old," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 4 (Jul/Aug 2008, 2008)1.

¹¹¹ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel*, 57.

was to secure access to Saudi Arabia's oil reserve and control oil prices.¹¹² Not only would oil be in question, but also the State Department believed that a Jewish State would lead to Arab extremism and a wave of violence and conflict in the Middle East.¹¹³ The Arabs, according to Secretary of State George Marshall, would turn away from the United States giving the Soviet Union a base of influence in the whole region. Secretary of State Marshall, so opposed to the proposed U.S. official recognition of a Jewish State, directly threatened his own commander-in-chief openly during the famous May 12, 1948 "Showdown in the Oval Office" stating that if President Truman decided to support a new Jewish State that he would lose Marshall's support altogether. Marshall stated that he would abandon his party lines and his administration 'If [Truman] followed [Clark] Clifford's advice," to recognize the Jewish State that, "if [he was] to vote in the election, [he] would vote against [Truman]."¹¹⁴

In opposition to the State Department's findings, President Truman's close advisors believed that the U.S. must recognize a Jewish State in the Middle East. Clark Clifford, Truman's domestic and previously campaign advisor, stood directly in opposition to the State Department's claims. According to Clifford, as expressed in his March 1948 memorandum to President Truman, not recognizing a Jewish State would go against established U.S. policy.¹¹⁵ On May 14, 1948 Israel declared its

¹¹² Freedman, *Israel and the United States :Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*25

¹¹³ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel*57

¹¹⁴ Clifford and Holbrooke, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, 736.

¹¹⁵ Mead, *The New Isreal and the Old*, 1.

independence and the United States was the first nation to grant de facto recognition to the new Jewish State—11 minutes after the proclamation.¹¹⁶

The intimate relationship between the United States and Israel did not develop instantly following the establishment of the State of Israel. The “special relationship” that many characterize the two countries possessing took decades to fully cultivate following multiple contentious events between the two nations. Both nations took time to adhere to the diplomatic covenant the two countries are known to follow today. Initially, the United States felt that an allegiance with Israel possessed the potential to impair American foreign and Cold War policy objectives in the Middle East. Eventually, the U.S.-Israel affiliation would lead to bi-lateral relations unparalleled with any other country allied with the U.S..

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3: Following the Establishment of the Jewish State

President Truman decided to recognize Israel in 1948 not to mollify domestic pressures from the American Zionist community, but to American foreign interests. The United States reputation diminished within the United Nations following the failure of the trusteeship plan. Truman felt it was beneficial to cause less controversy and adhering to pre-existing policies the United States agreed to. The preexisting agreements included the terms of the original partition plan as described in U.N. Resolution 181 and the Balfour Declaration for a Jewish National Home. Recognizing the Jewish State fulfilled the United States commitment to both doctrines.¹¹⁷

Some argue that President Truman decided to recognize Israel in 1948 because of domestic pressures from the American Zionist community. Truman made that decision, in that case, to recognize Israel in order to satisfy the American Jewish community that supported Israel in order to gain their vote in the upcoming election.¹¹⁸ President Truman only met with Chaim Weizman, the President of the Zionist Organization and the first President of Israel, only after Eddie Jacobson, the president's long time friend, urged him multiple times. David Niles, one of President Truman's close assistant and political advisors, also pressed the President to meet with Zionist leaders and assist the Zionist cause. Mounting domestic demands from the Jews in the United States who wanted a Jewish State, and held considerable voting power for the Democratic Party, President Truman decided to recognize the

¹¹⁷ Clifford and Holbrooke, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, 736

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Jewish State for reasons apart from the appeals of his personal friends and pressure from American Jews.

Two days before the President would recognize Israel Clark Clifford, counsel to the President, argued that, “In an area as unstable as the Middle East, where there is not now and never has been any tradition of democratic government, it is important for the long-range security of our country, and indeed the world, that a nation committed to the democratic system be established there, one on which we can rely. The new Jewish state can be such a place. We should strengthen it in its infancy by prompt recognition.”¹¹⁹ Clifford made the point to the President that by recognizing Israel the United States had potential to obtain a democratic ally in the Middle East. Clifford also claimed that recognition would restore the President’s firm position in encouraging of the partition of Palestine into two states. Clifford told the President, “such a move should be taken quickly, before the Soviet Union or any other nation recognizes the Jewish state.”¹²⁰

The United States recognized Israel of a de facto basis eleven minutes after David Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, proclaimed the Jewish State. Eliahu Epstein as representative of the Provisional Government of Israel wrote to President Truman:

to notify [him] you that the state of Israel has been proclaimed as an independent republic within frontiers approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its Resolution of November 29, 1947, and that a provisional government has been charged to assume the rights and duties of government for preserving law and order within the boundaries of Israel, for defending the state against external aggression, and for discharging the obligations of Israel to the other nations of the world in accordance with international law. The Act of

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Independence will become effective at one minute after six o'clock on the evening of 14 May 1948, Washington time.¹²¹

The White House released an official statement that read, "This Government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the State of Israel."¹²²

President Truman received a lot of criticism for his decision from members within his own administration. United States representative to the United Nations Warren Austin, who pushed the U.N. Trusteeship Plan for Palestine, left his office at the United Nations in protest of the White Houses declaration. Even though he himself was opposed to the decision of the President, Secretary of State Marshall sent a State Department official to the United Nations to prevent the entire United States delegation from resigning.

The United States, understood that the Soviet Union planned to recognize the new Jewish State after its declaration. President Truman, in competition with the Soviet Union, wanted to demonstrate the United States support before the Soviet Union would recognize the Jewish State. On May 18, 1948 Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov notified Israel of the USSR's decision to grant full de jure recognition.¹²³ He asserted that the "Soviet Government hopes that the

¹²¹ Eliahu Epstein, Correspondence between Eliahu Epstein, Chaim Weizmann, and Harry S. Truman, with related material, August 22, 1949, 1949.

¹²² "Statement from President Truman Recognizing Israel." <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/photos/israel.jpg>, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/photos/israel.jpg>

¹²³ L. Carl Brown, *Diplomacy in the Middle East :The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers*, Vol. 18 (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001)81.

establishment of the sovereign independent state by the Jewish People will serve to strengthen peace and security in Palestine and the Near East, and it expresses its faith in the development of friendly relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the State of Israel."¹²⁴ The Soviet Union was the first superpower to extend de jure. Although Washington preceded Moscow in endorsing the Jewish State, it had only accorded de facto recognition over de jure recognition that would acknowledge legal legitimacy to the new state.¹²⁵

The Jewish Agency of Palestine, the governing body of the Yishuv that would form into the first Israeli government, in the Proclamation of the State of Israel declared the new state and defined the goals of the new country. Immigration and the growth of new countries population was a main goal described in the proclamation of the new state, now officially named Israel. The declaration stated that, "The State of Israel [would] be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion."¹²⁶ In order to build a sustainable country that would survive its infancy against its surrounding enemies and pending attack the new government aimed at attracting, "the Jewish people all over the world to rally to [Israel's] side in the task of immigration and to stand by [it] in the great struggle for the fulfillment," of a Jewish state."¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Binyamin Pinkus, "Change and Continuity in Soviet Policy Towards Soviet Jewry and Israel, may-December 1948," *Israel Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2005, 2005), 96-123.

¹²⁵ Mart, *Eye on Israel :How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally*300

¹²⁶ Jewish Agency Executive, "Proclamation of the State of Israel," in *Israel in the Middle East Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*, eds. Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 1948), 73.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*73.

Following the establishment of the Jewish State and its recognition by both the United States and the Soviet Union the Provisional Government was tasked with the challenge of defining the character of the new government. Israel would implicitly isolate or embrace the United States by defining the internal characteristics of what would become the Israeli government. The United States would not have received the new government as agreeably if it decided to possess more socialistic policies and tend to center around Soviet politics. The ideological rift between the more socialistic factions of the provisional government and the more progressive democratic parties caused debates among the leaders of the new government.

At its establishment; it was ambiguous how Israel would orient itself in relation to the two major world powers. The contention between ideological factions within the provisional government of Israel forced the government to make critical decisions that would affect relations with the Soviet Union and the United States. Israel needed aid and support in order to ensure its survival and provide the means necessary to defend itself from surrounding enemies and obtain influence in the international arena. External support was necessary, but domestic political parties argued with which nation Israel should appeal to for support.

With the onset of the Cold War it was impossible for Israel to maintain beneficial relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union, even though both recognized Israel. Officially, Israel adopted a policy of non-identification with the both powers. Previous to its establishment, the Jewish State relied on Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe for arms and needed to maintain a supply of arms to combat its regional enemies during the War of Independence. The United States,

alternatively, potentially could support Israel with economic aid as it did with other nations under the conditions of the Marshall Plan.

An ideological division existed within the group of Israel's founding fathers. Soviet and Eastern European Marxist ideology influenced a portion of Israel's leaders. Many of them came from Eastern Europe and formed the Israeli communist party and Mapam, the Israeli Marxist-Zionist party. Even the more moderate Mapai, Israel's labor party, sought guidance from the Soviet Union. Mapam consisted of two parties both with socialist roots. Achdut Ha'avodah led by Yitzah Tabenkin believed in Marxist Zionism and campaigned for, "maximalist borders and a struggle against Arab reactionaries."¹²⁸ The second party Hashomer Hatzair had a "much more concillitory" policy "towards the prospect of a return" of Jewish immigrants "and a renewed Jewish-Arab solidarity."¹²⁹

Israel's first foreign minister, Moshe Sharett pushed for Israel not to align or identify with either of the opposing powers in order to keep all diplomatic options available for the new state. He felt that if the new state expressed exclusivity towards one power prematurely, then the country would lose other opportunities risking the survival of the Israel. Israel upheld a policy of non-alignment until 1956 following the Suez Crisis.

Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion did not retain his leftist ideology he championed before 1948. Ben-Gurion separated himself from the political parties on the far left and opposed Mapam.¹³⁰ Prior to the first parliamentary elections multiple leftist and moderate factions debated the content

¹²⁸ Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, 47.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 47.

¹³⁰ Mart, *Eye on Israel :How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally*, 71.

of Israel's constitution. The fundamental ideological differences between the states leaders caused the drafting of a state constitution a lengthy process. The various parties held conflicting opinions in matters of religion, politics, and the country's foreign affairs. Socialist and antisocialist parties disagreed on what principles that would define Israeli society should be included in the constitution. Mapam representative Yisrael Bar-Yehuda argued that the, "basic rules [that] should be formulated, which will obligate everyone,...[should include] the ingathering of exiles-the process of transferring masses of Jews to Eretz Israel, and that not only from the geographical aspect but also with the intention of turning them into citizens and workers in our country."¹³¹. He used Communist rhetoric in propositions for the Israeli constitution and believed in a "national revolution"¹³². Mapam at its founding conference stated it would establish, "A workers regime...a classless socialist society and a world of international fraternity," while supporting a, "firm alliance between the workers of the world and the Soviet Union, the first workers' state...and fulfilling the historic mission of the October revolution." CITE 'The Unity Programme of Mapam in Peretz Marchav, *The Israeli Left* (London, 1980) p.115

Israel held its first Knesset elections in January 1949 and defined the nature of the new nation. The largest majority would form a government led by the Prime Minister.¹³³ In the first Israeli election twenty-one parties struggles for recognition

¹³¹ Israel First Knesset, "The Debate on a Constitution," in *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*, eds. Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz, 2nd ed. (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008)100.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 100.

¹³³ Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, 66.

including the Israeli Communist Party and the social democratic party Mapai.¹³⁴

Even though Mapai won a majority of the parliamentary seats, followed by Mapam, Prime Minister Ben Gurion chose not to form a coalition between the two parties.

Rather than make a coalition with a strong majority within parliament Ben Gurion chose not to form a “narrow socialist coalition but a broader coalition which included the Religious and the Progressives.”¹³⁵ Ben Gurion stayed consistent in his policy of non-alignment and did not want to form a coalition with pro-Soviet Mapam. Even though Ben Gurion previously held a belief in Zionism that contained Marxist-Leninist foundations, he did not want to pursue a strong attachment to the Soviet Union so early in the Cold War. ¹³⁶ By not choosing to align with Mapam and alienate either superpower Ben Gurion received promise of a 100 million dollar loan guarantee from the United States. Mapam gained only two ministerial positions, thus solidifying Ben Gurions commitment to anti-Communism.¹³⁷

The United States did not extend de Jure recognition of Israel until January 31, 1949. The United States withheld de Jure recognition of Israel until Israel formed a permanent governing body, as it has done on October 24, 1948. It was only after the first Israeli government elections took place on January 25, and a non-socialist coalition was formed, did President Truman release press statement legally recognizing the state.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 67.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 67.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 70.

¹³⁸ White House Press Release, "**International** Recognition of Israel:
United States Grants De-Jure Recognition," Abstract. (January 31, 1949, 1949).

On February 14, 1949 the first Israeli Knesset Election took place and resulted in a parliament orientated towards the American ideology. Mapai formed the majority coalition with the religious party Shas leaving the socialist Mapam without significant influence. Coalition government signified a shift movement away from the Communist qualities associated with the early Jewish State. David Ben-Gurion promoted democratic state.¹³⁹ During February of 1949, Israel released a number of domestic reports citing the increasing relations with the United States among the country's main goals.¹⁴⁰

Israel also oriented itself away from the Soviet Union following the Soviet Unions shift away from Israel and its limitation of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. In February 1949 the Soviet Union legally denounced Zionism and prohibited the emigration of Jews to Palestine. Out of the 2 million Jews in the Soviet Union only a small portion were allowed to immigrate to Israel at the cost of the Israeli government.¹⁴¹

The surrounding Arab countries condemned the establishment of the State of Israel and launched an attack on the new state the same day of its declaration. One of the biggest consequences of The Israeli War for Independence that caused the first major discord between the United States and Israel was the displacement of Palestinian Arabs following the war. In the months after Israel's declaration of independence international attention was drawn to the problem of Palestinian refugees who fled the battle areas. The displaced Palestinian refugees did not

¹³⁹ Jewish Agency Executive, *Proclamation of the State of Israel*92.

¹⁴⁰ Rabinovich and Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1949 to the Present*96.

¹⁴¹ Kenen, *Israel's Defense Line :Her Friends and Foes in Washington*, 94.

receive asylum from the surrounding Arab countries and did not accept the terms of U.N. resolution 181 to form their own state.¹⁴² Hundreds of thousands of refugees fled Arab establishments in Israel for multiple reasons including evacuation of behalf of Arab leaders and the encroaching war on Israeli territory.

International concern for the situation grew as the number of Arab refugees increased. This led to the commission of a U.N. special envoy led by Folke Bernadotte to examine the situation and propose a solution for the refugees. Bernadotte recommended repatriation for the refugees.¹⁴³ The United Nations proposed and implemented United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 on December 11, 1948. The Resolution called for a return of the Palestinian refugees to Israel and the establishment of a “Conciliation Commission” consisting of France, Turkey, and the United States to conduct the coordinate the resolution on both sides. The Resolution resolved that, “the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return.”¹⁴⁴ The Resolution also defined the objectives of the “Conciliation Commission” as, “to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*49.

¹⁴³ Rabinovich and Reinhartz, *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1949 to the Present*89.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations General Assembly, "Resolution 194," in *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 1948)91.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 191.

The United States agreed with the terms of U.N. resolution 194 and urged Israel to accept the resolutions conditions. The Israeli Provisional government did not agree with the terms of repatriation because they aimed at increasing Jewish immigration to build a strong Jewish presence in the new state.¹⁴⁶ Immigration was one of the new states main goals, along with securing the countries borders, and Israeli leaders felt that the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel threatened both goals. Israel did not accept the right of return for the Palestinian refugees.

Previous to U.N. Resolution 194 Moshe Sharett expressed his concerns with the 300,000 Arab refugees. In a letter to Folke Bernadotte Sharett exclaimed that the Arab refugees could not be readmitted into Israel until the conflict between Israel and its neighbors ended.¹⁴⁷ Sharett wrote:

The Palestinian Arab exodus of 1948 is one of those cataclysmic phenomena which, according to the experience of other countries, changed the course of history. It is too early to say exactly how and in what measure the exodus will affect the future of Israel and the neighboring countries.

Sharett worried for Israel's security and felt that the refugees would become militants against Israel from within the state itself if readmitted. Chaim Weitzman, the first President of Isreal, concurred with Sharett and felt that the displaced Arabs should not be readmitted and that Israel must maintain its Jewish majority.¹⁴⁸

The United States urged Israel to readmit refugees despite the Israeli governments stance against it. At the Lausanne Conference in April 1949 the United States met with the Palestinian refugee delegation and compelled Israel to readmit

¹⁴⁶ Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*49.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

250,000 refugees.¹⁴⁹ During the summer of 1949 the United States convinced Israel, though reluctant, to agree to a refugee solution that repatriated 100,000 Arab refugees in a general settlement in August of that year, but was ultimately condemned by the Arabs outside of Israel.¹⁵⁰ Following a lack of progress between the parties a stalemate left the issue unresolved during the next decade.

The Tripartite Declaration was agreed upon on 25 May, 1950 by the United States, Britain and France. The joint declaration was issued to regulate the supply of weapons into the Middle East in order to keep Western control in the region. The Western powers aimed to monopolize the over the supply of arms in order to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining a foothold.¹⁵¹ Israeli leaders felt that the Tripartite Declaration was unfavorable towards Israel because it limited Canadian weapons from reaching Israel.¹⁵² Prime Minister Ben-Gurion stated to the Knesset on 31 May 1950 that the Western powers aimed at facilitating a stabile arms program in the Middle East.

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 introduced a new relationship between Israel and the U.S. prompted or at least enabled Israel to abandon the policy of non-identification.¹⁵³ The decision was made easier for Israel by the fact that the Soviet Union was allied to the North Korean aggressors whereas the United States fought under the banner of the United Nations to repel the aggression and

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁵⁰ Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel*72.

¹⁵¹ . *Tripartite Declaration regarding the Armistice Borders : Statement by the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, may 25, 1950* (New Haven, CT: The Avalon Project at Yale Law School,[2008]).

¹⁵² Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy :America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007)509.

¹⁵³ Young Sam Ma, "Israel's Role in the UN during the Korean 81," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* IV, no. 3 (2010)81.

restore the status quo ante. In the Knesset, on July 4, 1950, Ben-Gurion presented Israel's vote for the resolution condemning the North Korean aggression as a vote for the United Nations and for the principles it embodied. He rejected the suggestion of left-wing members of the Knesset that Israel should abstain, arguing that Israel was a fully-fledged member of the community of nations with a duty to make a stand, on this as on any other international issue, based on the dictates of its conscience. His government, however, did not offer to send troops to fight under the U.N. banner in Korea. The real significance of its stand in the Korean conflict therefore was that it marked the decisive break at the declaratory level with the policy of non-identification.

Following the outbreak of the Korean War, Israel moved towards de facto alignment with the West. Israel's move towards the U.S. "was catalyzed by the need for arms and economic aid, rationalized by the perception of renewed Soviet hostility, and eased by the indifference of the Third World."¹⁵⁴

Three factors motivated Ben-Gurion's tilt from East to West. First, was the diminished number of immigrants from Eastern Europe to Israel. These immigrants tended to vote for Mapai.¹⁵⁵ Once immigration from the Eastern bloc slowed down to a trickle, the Soviet Union became less supportive of Israel. Second, Ben-Gurion wanted to gain the support from the U.S. following Israel's dwindling support from the Soviet Union. Third, Ben-Gurion sought reparations from the Federal Republic of Germany for the crimes that Nazi Germany had committed against the Jewish

¹⁵⁴ Uri Bialer, *Between East and West: Israel's Foreign Policy Orientation, 1948-1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 304.

¹⁵⁵ Avi Shlaim, "Between East and West: Israel's Foreign Policy Orientation 1948-1956," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 4 (November 2004, 2004), 657-673.

people.¹⁵⁶ He understood that there was essentially no chance of success in this controversial venture without American backing. Once Ben-Gurion shifted away from the policy of non-identification he approached the United States for arms and for economic assistance in meeting the cost of absorbing the immigrants who arrived in large numbers from Eastern Europe and from the Arab countries. He also dropped heavy hints that Israel would like to be included in any military alliances that the Western powers might develop with the anti-communist forces in the Middle East.¹⁵⁷

Ben-Gurion decided to make an effort to move Israel towards the western powers after Israel's departure from socialist based ties. The new Israeli government championed democratic policies but still remained on shaky terms with the U.S. In 1952 Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Truman rejected an Israeli request for \$150 Million in fiscal year 1952 as part of U.S. foreign Aid. On April 7, 1952 a report to the National Security Council by The Executive Secretary on United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Arab States and Israel was released and gave policy recommendations to the President on the Middle East.¹⁵⁸ American policy was focused around policy guidelines:

to prevent instability within these countries which threatens Western Interest. To prevent the extension of Soviet Influence in the area. To insure that the resources of the area are still available to the United States and its allies for use in strengthening the free world. To strengthen the will and ability of these countries to resist possible future aggression by the Soviet Union. To establish within the

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ The Executive Secretary, *A Report to the National Security Council on the United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Arab States and Israel* (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1952)1.

community of nations a new relationship with the states of the area that recognizes their desire to achieve status and respect for their sovereign equality.¹⁵⁹

At the end of the Truman administration Israel began to establish its unequivocal preference towards America. The United States did not immediately accept Israel's advance towards the West, and continued to withhold aid and focus on maintaining relationships with Arab countries. Israel was forced in some cases to comply with the unfavorable foreign policies of the United States in order to build a good rapport. Israel was not viewed as a favorable ally for the west until later in the decade. Despite Israel's support of the United States in the Korean War and the country's deliberate move away from its association with the Soviet Union the United States still criticized Israel for the Arab refugee crisis and administered weapon restrictions on the Middle East. The United States under President Eisenhower continued to stall developing substantial commitments between America and Israel. President Eisenhower endorsed many of the policies recommended by the State Department as Cold War concerns increased. In contrast to President Truman, President Eisenhower acted in accordance with the policy recommendations of the State Department and pursued Secretary of State John Foster Dulles proposals for the Middle East and the Soviet Union.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 4: Eisenhower and America's Shift Towards the Liberation Policy

President Eisenhower came to office January 20, 1953 and immediately began to form policies in the Middle East. Eisenhower's policies consistently focused on advancing the American relations with Arab countries in the Middle East. The president demonstrated his pro-Arab tendencies during the Middle East's pivotal event of the decade, the Suez Crisis, during which Eisenhower demanded Israel relinquish territory gained in favor of Egypt. By the end of the decade though pro-Western sentiment diminished within Arab leadership and Arab nations sought more advantageous relations with the Soviet Union. As Soviet influence in the region increased, the United States established deeper ties to democratic Israel.

Corresponding with American Middle East policy during the Truman administration, the main interest in the Middle East for Eisenhower was to uphold positive relationships with Arab countries in order to repel Soviet influence. As Egyptian nationalism grew and Gamal Abdel Nasser rose to power, the United States opposed colonialism and kept relations with Israel distant. The United States would immediately recognize Nasser following he gained control of Egypt on July 23, 1952.¹⁶⁰ President Eisenhower closely followed the advice of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and they together formed the Liberation Policy during the first month of Eisenhower's administration.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles would essentially define American foreign policy in the Middle East during Eisenhower's eight-year administration.

¹⁶⁰ Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy :America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*509.

Dulles considered the Middle East as a crucial region to contain in order to win the Cold War.¹⁶¹ In order to protect American national security Dulles created multiple plans with hopes to construct an alliance between American and the Middle East against Communism. For Dulles, the way to do so would be to focus on alignment with the Arab states over developing a deeper relationship with Israel.

Dulles pushed for U.S. policy to take a more involved role against communism and argued that the U.S. must endeavor to help the "liberation of captive peoples" living under communist rule. Dulles strove to take a more active approach than Truman's containment policy. He hoped to actively reverse the influence of communism while making an effort to inhibit any further expansion of the Soviet Union. Dulles states that the United States, "shall never have a secure peace or a happy world so long as Soviet communism dominates one-third of all of the peoples."¹⁶² In January, following Eisenhower's inauguration, Congress backed the president's position on Communism and using the Liberation Policy to combat Soviet threats.¹⁶³

Following the sale of arms to Israel on February 27, 1952, the United States denied selling any further arms to Israel.¹⁶⁴ Israel sought to obtain arms from the United States, but the U.S. ignored Israel's request and focused on selling weapons to Egypt. America continued to conduct affairs strategically with Israel so not to agitate Arab leaders. The United States did not want to act in any way that would alter and

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 510.

¹⁶² John Foster Dulles, *Statement on Liberation Policy* (Ashbrook Center, 1953).

¹⁶³ *Joining with the President of the United States in a Declaration regarding the Subjugation of Free Peoples by the Soviet Union*, H.R. Res. 200, 1st sess. sess., DP Reel 26, Box 70., (January 1953, 1953): .

¹⁶⁴ Kenen, *Israel's Defense Line :Her Friends and Foes in Washington*123.

impede Arab relations with the U.S.. American leaders believed, as part of their anti-Communist ideology, that by arming Nasser and Egypt they could successfully keep the Arabs disaffiliated with the Soviet Union. Concurrently, some American leaders wanted Arab nations to explicitly align themselves with the United States by agreeing to arms deals in exchange for endorsing anti-Communist ideology.¹⁶⁵

John Foster Dulles went on a fact finding mission to the Middle East in May 11, 1953 in order to broker agreements and retain ties with mainly Egypt, but also Israel.¹⁶⁶ In July of that year the National Security Council published a memorandum outlining, “United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East. In the document it was proposed to “progressively reduce the amount of economic aid furnished to Israel, so as to bring it into impartial relationship to aid to others in the area.”¹⁶⁷ America viewed the Middle East as an area, “of great strategic, political and economic importance to the free world. The area contains the greatest petroleum resources in the world; essential locations for strategic military bases in any world conflict against communism; the Suez Canal; and natural defensive barriers.”¹⁶⁸ Following Dulles’ opinion the National Security Council believed that, “Inclusion of Israel” in American arms relations, “at this time would result in Arab refusal to cooperate.”¹⁶⁹ The plan for Israel was to, “progressively reducing the amount of economic aid furnished to Israel, so as to bring it into impartial relationship to aid

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 124.

¹⁶⁶ Simon C. Smith, *Reassessing Suez 1956: New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008)44.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 4.

others in the area.”¹⁷⁰ For the Arabs, in contrast, the plan was to, “continue economic and technical aid...facilitating the resettlement of Arab refugees.”¹⁷¹

“From the mid 1950’s onward, the rise of pan-Arabism and the growing influence of Egypt’s Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser posed particular dilemmas for American policy makers,”¹⁷² who needed to retain Egypt as a ally while Egypt was gaining its own power. With more power Egypt was able to leverage more deals from both the United States and the Soviet Union. Both the United States and the Soviet Union understood that diplomatic ties with Egypt would provide an outlet to influence the whole Arab Middle East connected to the Pan-Arab movement.

While Israel hoped to gain a loan guarantee from the United States, Dulles ultimately went against any plans. Israeli Ambassador Abba Eban opened the conversation by writing to the State Department on May 10, 1955 and stating that he felt that good progress was being made in developing a relationship between the U.S. and Israel. The Ambassador referred to the letter of May 4, sent by Prime Minister Sharett to the Secretary Dulles commenting, “The letter could be summarized briefly in that Israel wished a formal security association with the United States and also was willing to cooperate in measures to relieve tensions in the area.”¹⁷³ While Moshe Sharett made forming an arms deal between the United States and Israel, Dulles introduced the Alpha Plan. Both Dulles’ Alpha Plan to fins a

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁷² Brown, *Diplomacy in the Middle East :The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers*63.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

resolution for peace by settling issues such as refugees, Arab territories, and Jerusalem and Sharrett's push for an American arms deal failed.¹⁷⁴

Late 1954 and early 1955 had enormous implications for Soviet foreign policy on the Middle East as Nikita Krushchev led the Soviet Union. Krushchev intensified the Soviet Union's Cold War rivalry with the United States and increased diplomatic permeation and relationship building in the Arab world.¹⁷⁵ Dulles responded by keeping relations with Israel cold. In a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Moshe Sharett on April 16, 1955 Dulles stated that "No formal treaty guarantee of Israel or her neighbors would meet with the approval of the United States Senate or the American people unless there was a reasonable chance of stability in the area."¹⁷⁶

Even when Nasser formed an arms deal with the Soviet Union during September 1955 the United States maintained a good rapport with Egypt.¹⁷⁷ In 1955 Egypt and the Soviet Union formed the Czech arms deal, thus supplying Egypt with more than \$250 Million worth of Soviet weapons. Egypt turned to the Soviet Union after Eisenhower failed to receive approval from Congress to sell weapons to Egypt. Eisenhower, despite fearing a Middle Eastern arms race, continued plans to help fund Nasser's plans for the Aswan High Dam, a long time ambition and engineering feat for the Egyptian people. Eisenhower hoped that by committing U.S.

¹⁷⁴ Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy :America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*254.

¹⁷⁵ Brown, *Diplomacy in the Middle East :The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers*8.

¹⁷⁶ John Foster Dulles, **Letter From Secretary of State Dulles to Prime Minister Sharett**, April 16, 1955, 1955.

¹⁷⁷ Dennis Ross and David Makovsky, *Myths, Illusions, and Peace :Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East* (New York: Viking, 2009a)39.

funds to aid Egypt in building the High Dam Nasser would reduce the amount of weapons Egypt purchased from the Soviet Union.

The Operations Coordinating Board on behalf of the President met in Washington, D.C. on October 11, 1955 and published a, "Memorandum for the Board Assistants From QCB Secretariat Staff." It detailed the development of affairs in the Middle east and outlined future U.S. plans. The United States would, "assist in counteracting the Soviet cultural offensive in Egypt, funds have been allotted for a bi-national cultural center in Cairo and negotiation of an agreement with the Egyptian Government for the Center's establishment in progress."¹⁷⁸

After Israel's appeals to the United States received little reciprocity the country turned to the second most powerful western nations. Great Britain and France. On October 29, 1956, Israel along with France and Great Britain launched a joint attack and successfully invaded Egypt. Israel attacked Egypt through the Sinai Peninsula while Great Britain and France bombed Egyptian air bases. Britain and France landed paratroopers at Port Said and together with Israel occupied the northern half of the Suez Canal.

The Suez Crisis generated U.S. criticism of Israel and a demand from President Eisenhower to remove all Israeli forces from Egypt without question. The United States, through the U.N. forced the withdrawal of not only Israeli forces, but also French and British. The United States, in its constant effort to abate the Arab nations, chose to alienate France, Britain, and Israel and support the Arabs fight against colonial powers in the Middle East. Israel, wanting to build U.S.-Israel

¹⁷⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East, A Message to Congress, January 5, 1957* (Washington, D.C.: The Department of State Bulletin XXXV1,[1957a]).

relations, ceded to the United States demands even after Eisenhower's public criticism.¹⁷⁹

Although the United States expended great efforts to improve relationships with Arab countries, America's commitments ended up ineffective as the Arabs fell under the Soviet sphere of influence. In May of 1956 America detached itself from Egypt by canceling U.S. funding for the High Dam in response to Egypt's recognition of Communist China.¹⁸⁰ Secretary of State Dulles, despite Egypt's move towards the Soviets, gave Egypt \$30 million worth of economic assistance in 1956.¹⁸¹

In the fight against Soviet Influence the Arab states appeared to be a more advantageous ally than Israel. In Dulles' opinion, Israel's size and strength did not compare to the Arab states making them in a better position to keep Soviet influence at bay. Israel's population of 1.7 million could not stand up to the 32 million Arabs that surrounded it.¹⁸² It was imperative, according to Dulles, to keep the 32 million Arabs from not making deals with the Soviet block.¹⁸³ According to Dulles, "the preservation of the state of Israel," was what he regarded, "as one of the central goals of the U.S. foreign policy."¹⁸⁴ Nonetheless he stated, "it is not [America's] only goal. And [America has] to combine the search for that result with the achievement of other results," like arms deals with Arab nations, "which are also important."¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Dennis Ross and David Makovsky, *Myths, Illusions, and Peace :Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East* (New York: Viking, 2009b)42.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁸¹ Kenen, *Israel's Defense Line :Her Friends and Foes in Washington*125.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

The Eisenhower Doctrine of January 1957 aimed at continuing to contain Soviet Influence. It offered \$120 million in economic and military assistance to all states that pledged to help thwart Soviet threats.¹⁸⁶ The United States established the policy of assisting any nation in the Middle East that endorsed its own independence and separation from the Soviets.¹⁸⁷ Israel did not receive many immediate benefits from the Eisenhower Doctrine, even with the country's need for funding to help Israel's influx of immigrants. The United Nations placement in the Gulf of Aqaba did benefit Israel.

Through out the decade American aid to Israel was continuously reduced leading to an American grant aid in the amount of \$7.5 million in 1958. The following year U.S. aid to Israel was reduced to nothing. The Liberation Policy defined American involvement in the Middle East during the Eisenhower Administration. Under Truman, the policy of the United States was to "contain" communism within its boundaries, preventing it from spreading elsewhere insofar as it was possible. Liberation went a step further, seeking to actually roll back communism, but failed following the strengthening of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt. By the end of the decade Israel completely identified itself as a Western ally and opened up airspace to British and U.S. paratroopers during the 1958 Middle East Crisis in order to aid King Hussein of Jordan. While Eisenhower and building a relationship with Arab nations during his presidency, by the 1960's the Arabs, led by Egypt and Nasser, chose to identify and cooperate with the Soviet Union. Israel then emerged as an ally of the West leading to the "special

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East, A Message to Congress, January 5, 1957*, 83-87.

relationship” between the United States and Israel that would develop in the 1960’s and define America’s foreign policy in the Middle East for the rest of the twenty first century.

Conclusion: Kennedy's Arms Sale and the Beginning of the "Special Relationship"

Under President John F. Kennedy the United States coordinated its first major arms deal with Israel. Kennedy's decision to sell arms to Israel signified the beginning of military cooperation and collaboration between Israel and United States. Israel's relationship greatly improved following the sale of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to Israel.¹⁸⁸ While the U.S. continued to criticize Israel for its nuclear developments, it was evident that the United States extended preference towards Israel over the Arab nations.

The sale of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles followed the Soviet Unions sale of long-range bombers to Egypt. Prior to obtaining the Presidency Kennedy demonstrated pro-Israel sentiment. When the Soviet Union made the Czech Arms Deal with Egypt Kennedy favored supplying Israel with arms in order to create an arms balance in the Middle East. While Kennedy also supported supplying Arab nations with weapons he criticized both the Tripartite Agreement and the Eisenhower Doctrine.¹⁸⁹ Kennedy did not see the benefit of having the Arab states as the major Cold War ally to the West in the Middle East as Eisenhower and Dulles did. Kennedy's arms deal with Israel in 1962 marked the first large scale arms sale to Israel. The sale of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles gave Israel its first qualitative advantage in the Middle East.

As Israeli and American policy became more congruous during the 1950's the

¹⁸⁸ Freedman, *Israel and the United States :Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*254.

¹⁸⁹ Kenen, *Israel's Defense Line :Her Friends and Foes in Washington*, 156.

United States attitude towards Israel shifted. The sources of the “special” U.S.-Israel relationship did not form from Domestic pressures from the American Jewish community, but emerged following the Arab states departure from their association with the Western bloc. While originally, a relationship with the new State of Israel was seen in some cases to hinder U.S. security during the first decade of the Jewish states existence, America developed a close relationship with Israel up to the present. During the Cold War, Israel aided the United States in containing Soviet infiltration of the Middle East.

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The Roots of the U.S.-Israel Relationship: How the Cold War Tensions Played A Role in U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

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Abstract

Today the relationship between the United States and Israel includes multiple bi-lateral initiatives in the military, industrial, and private sectors. Israel is Americas most established ally in the Middle East and the two countries are known to possess a “special relationship” highly valued by the United States. Although diplomatic relations between the two countries drive both American and Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East today, following the establishment of the State of Israel the United States originally did not advance major aid and benefits to the new state. While current foreign policy focuses on preserving the strong relationship with the only democratic nation in the Middle East, Israel, during the Cold War era the United States global foreign policy focused on combating Soviet Influence and containing the spread of communism.

The early relationship between the United States and Israel was contrived around United States Cold War strategies that dominated U.S. foreign policy for the greater part of the 20th Century. All the presidents ranging from Woodrow Wilson to Harry Truman all supported the proposition of a Jewish national home in the Middle East. American support for Israel was not engineered by domestic lobbies or the American Jewish population, but emerged as a strategic relationship during the Cold War era. American support for Israel was originally predicated upon early commitments the United States upheld including the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and United Nations Resolution 181 (1947) which both dictated a form of a Jewish home in the area known as Palestine. In order to maintain an image of American credibility, and out maneuver the Soviet Union, the United States became the first nation to extend de facto recognition of the State of Israel on May 14, 1949. The United States policy during the first decade of Israel’s existence was reflexive of greater global U.S. foreign policy focused on combating Communist expansion. In its early years, Israel originally adopted a policy of non-alignment with both the Western and Soviet Powers in order for the state to receive opportunities available from both blocks. The United States took a hesitant approach towards Israel and focused on building relationships with the Arab states in the Middle East. American Cold War policy dictated American policy towards Israel. The origins of the American affiliation with Israel derive from Israel’s commitment to anti-communism following Arab alignment and arms cooperation with the Soviet block in the 1950’s. In order to maintain a balance of Western and Soviet power in the Middle East the United States shifted its attitude towards Israel and sought to strengthen the two countries relationship. The sale of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles marked the turning point in the U.S.-Israel relationship and led to the bi-national military collaborations the two countries are known for today.