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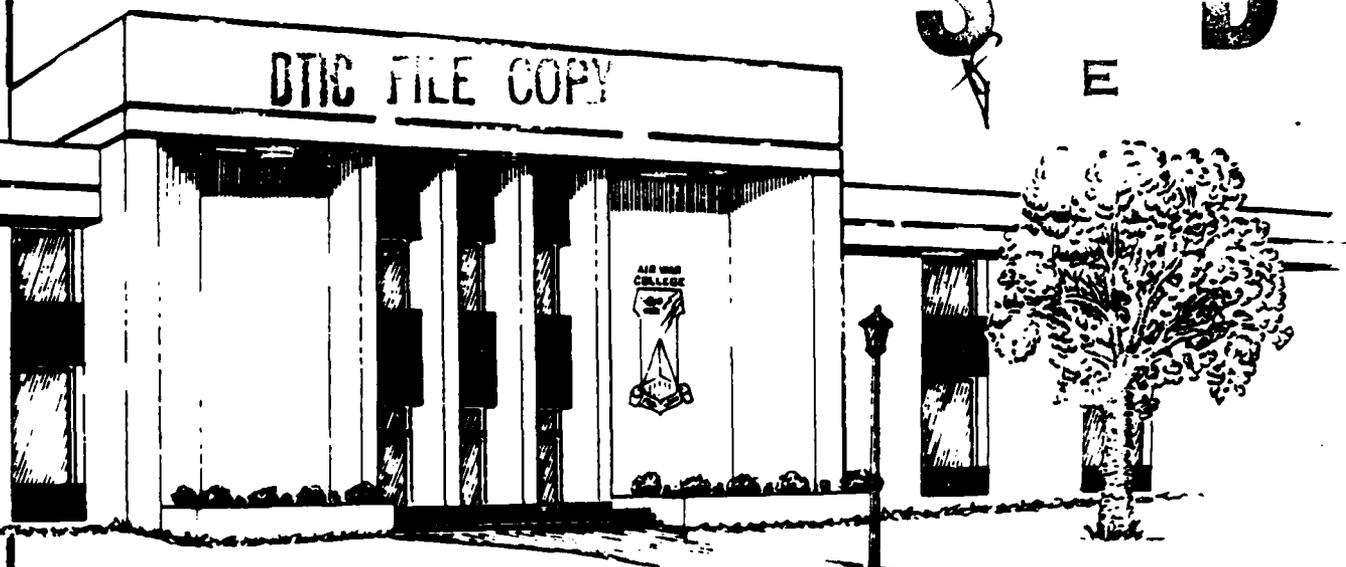
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UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH

REQUIREMENT

RESEARCH ADVISOR: Lieutenant Colonel Harry Johnson

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

March 1986

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: United States Foreign Policy in the Middle East

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Historical background about the Middle East and how both super powers regard the important region. A description of recent Middle Eastern changes none of which can be considered in the United States interest. Those changes reflect the continuing growth of threats to American national interests in the Middle East. They indicate the absence of effective American foreign policy that fits for the complexities and uncertainties of the region. Those changes, however, emphasize the need to revise the current American foreign policy in the Middle East. Such revision should aim at designing a new policy able to secure American and allied interests in the region. It should be based on the real world. Most important, it should concentrate on the realities that drive the region. Current American foreign policy in the Middle East contributes to the growth of both external and internal threats to United States interests. American foreign policy in the Middle East, as suggested by the author, should involve effective American participation in developing the region's military and economic capabilities that promote political stability necessary to preserving United States, allies and friendly nation's interests in the region.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Hani M. Dorgham was enlisted in the Royal Jordanian Air Force in 1964. He was commissioned in 1966 after attending a fighter controller course at RAF Bawdsey, England. Beside controlling fighters, he served as a Commander of many different radar sites in Jordan. Hani was appointed as Chief Controller in the Jordanian Air Force Air Defense Operations Center then he became the Chief responsible for that center. Colonel Hani is a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB, Class of 1981. He has also been awarded a diploma in 1978 for completing the National Security Management Course conducted by the National Defense University.

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US POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

American involvement in the First and Second World Wars, had broken the United States traditional policy of isolation. The end of World War II, however, ended practically the Colonial era. Britain and France left their colonies in the Middle East, with a set of unsolved problems. The people looked, with hope, to the newly emerged Superpower to help them solve those problems. Instead the people of the Middle East became the battleground of the cold war. The United States and the Soviet Union, each with different sets of values, therefore different sets of interests and policies, were trying to secure their own interests in a highly complicated region. The Soviet Union regarded the nearby Middle East as an extension to the Soviet security belt around its borders. The United States regarded the same region as a remote region. Until the late 1940s, when the United States became more interested in the Middle East with the application of the Truman Doctrine which included support for the creation of the State of Israel and to Turkey.¹ When the British position declined in the Middle East, the region witnessed the rise of Arab nationalism and the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948. Ever since, the Arab-Israeli Conflict dominated the region, and it has become the predominant

(non-East-West) element of international relations between nations outside the region. Both the United States and the Soviet Union found themselves deeply involved in the Middle Eastern affairs. It soon became difficult for either of them to retreat.

The Middle East region stretches from Pakistan and Afghanistan in the East to include Turkey and Egypt in the west. This region is inhabited by nearly two hundred million people. It contains the largest concentration of oil reserves in the world, and it controls the important air, land and sea lanes between the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Although American policy makers continue to debate the importance of the Middle East to the American national interests, the turbulent region is, explicitly, forcing itself onto the list of the American priorities. President Jimmy Carter said in his State of the Union message in January 1980: "...the Persian Gulf region is a vital US interest and would be protected by American arms if necessary."² President Reagan also stressed the importance of the Middle East when he said on September 1, 1982:

"Our involvement in the search for peace in the Middle East is not a matter of preference, it is a moral imperative. The strategic importance of the region is well known."³

During the last ten years, the Middle East has witnessed many changes, which made it seem to be out of control. The Iranian revolution in January 1979, the Soviet invasion

of neighboring Afghanistan in December 1979, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982, the Iran-Iraq war in September 1979 and the rise of anti-Americanism involving hostile actions against American citizens in various parts of the world. Anti-Americanism, however, became the dominant sentiment in the Middle East. Everything the United States does is closely examined with suspicion and has a profound impact on the area.⁴ Unfortunately, none of the above mentioned changes can be considered in the United State's interests. On the contrary, they reflect the absence of effective American foreign policy in the Middle East. Instead of examining and acting according to what is really happening on the ground of the Middle East, successive American administrations have usually based their positions on what they think the public or the media or the lobbyist would prefer and consider reasonable. The result has been a decisionmaking process which is incapable of dealing with the real world, because of an inordinate preoccupation with popularity.⁵ US policy in the Middle East has been highly influenced by the Israeli element. This factor, obscures the American political vision, and the US ability to understand many of the realities that exist in the region. The US was unable to anticipate correctly, events in the region and therefore unable to prevent or influence their outcome. Instead US policy in the Middle East was a series of reactions to events and surprises

not of its own design.⁶ The result has been, loss of United States credibility, less stability and more exposure and vulnerability to additional Soviet influence.

CHAPTER II

THREATS TO US NATIONAL INTERESTS

The United States interests in the Middle East include; preventing the Soviet influence from achieving predominant influence in the region. Ensuring US and allies access to the region's oil. Preserving and protecting states in the region from aggression and subversion and creating favorable stability to secure those interests. In fact stability is the most important factor, it enables the US to secure other interests. Since instability is the element that the Soviet Union exploits to undermine western interests in the region.

The challenging threats that confront United States foreign policy in the Middle East can be identified as two types.

First: The internal threat which consists of local conflicts between indigenous countries. Conflicts between the oil producing countries, or a major change in the political structure in one of them, could cause major reduction in oil exports. This reduction could be just to a level sufficient to the producer's needs. In mid 1980, Iran produced no more than 800,000 barrels per day from a prerevolutionary average of 5.9 million barrels in 1978.⁷ An increase in oil prices to unbearable levels, could cause economic catastrophe in the industrialized world. Nations at war, like Iran and Iraq,

are likely to destroy each others oil facilities, or mutually disturb each others oil exports to a level even below their own needs. The Iraqi air attacks against Kharg Island in Iran were able to destroy some oil facilities and disturb the Iranian oil shipments. A radical government, like the one in Iran, wouldn't care much beyond its own needs whether the industrialized world receives adequate amounts of oil or not. The Arab oil embargo in 1973 was a good example of radical political changes. It was also a good example that the Arab-Israeli conflict can disturb and threaten the oil flow from the Middle East. The Iranian religious style can spread, easily throughout the Middle East. The world has already seen how much power can be unleashed when a personality like Ayatollah Khomini comes to power in a Moslem Country. Internal sabotage actions by frustrated groups, can create problems to the vulnerable oil wells and facilities as well as the political stability in a Middle Eastern country.

Second: The Soviet threat. To the Soviets, the Middle East countries, especially those located on its borders, have been the object of sustained Interests.⁸ Currently the turbulent Middle East provides the opportunity for further extension of Soviet influence. A Soviets domination of the Middle East could provide them with many advantages. Among those advantages, is the fact that they can "strangle" the economic and military well-being of the

Western allies and Japan, at a much cheaper price than going to war against them. As an oil exporter, the Soviet Union has a minor interest in the Persian Gulf oil. But this interest is becoming greater as their own oil reserves said to be: "declining." The Soviets are in fact, more interested in boosting up the oil prices. For many reasons among which, they can sell their own oil at higher prices. Higher prices that would drain the western economy as well as the Japanese one. In addition to that, higher prices might cause an energy crisis which would encourage western countries and Japan to help in developing the vast Siberian oil reserves.⁹ The most difficult Soviet threat to counter in the Middle East, is the type that involves legitimacy, like their presence in Syria and South Yemen. Once they are called upon, the Soviets start generous military and economic development in the host country in an attempt to deepen their influence to the level of influencing the political decisions in that country. Such legitimate presence is normally achieved through exploiting conflicts in the region of the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the American commitments to support Israel, have been largely responsible for the present Soviet influence in the Middle East. The American withdrawal of the agreement that was to build the Aswan High Dam in Egypt in 1956 is an example to the short sighted US foreign policy in the Middle East. American miscalculations in not anticipating President

Nasser's strong reaction¹⁰ and the inability to recognize his influence throughout the Arab world, provided the Russians with a golden opportunity to leapfrog Turkey and enjoy effective influence throughout many important Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. In April 1971, for instance, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko averred: "Today there is no question of any significance which can be decided without the Soviet Union or in opposition to it."¹¹ Later on, and since the incident of the Aswan Dam, the Soviets continue to exploit the Arab-Israeli conflict to enhance their influence and to aggravate the anti-western sentiment.¹² The problem of the Soviet influence in the Middle East becomes more severe if they become able to influence the political decision in a frustrated country. Because in such a case, this would involve long term presence to include permanent bases like in Aden.

Another type of a Soviet threat to the Middle East, is the military invasion. Although such invasion is unlikely to happen, at least in the near future, the importance of the location and its oil can start a war or be associated with a war elsewhere, make the deterrence of Soviet intentions in the Middle East of crucial importance to the United States and its allies. The strategic importance of the Middle East has been emphasized in the two World Wars. It is very difficult to imagine a war in Europe that does not include the Middle

East and the Mediterranean, especially with today's fast sophisticated weapons. The Persian Gulf, for example, is threatened by the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. The Soviets are only 300 miles away from the Persian Gulf waters.¹³ Within a few hours, a rapid Soviet air assault against oil establishments in the Persian Gulf can cripple the western military machine for quite some time. The weakness of the indigenous nations of the Middle East and the western neglect of the region, would encourage the close-by Soviet Union to take military action against the region. The Soviets have obvious, but not inevitable, military advantages, necessitating less reliance on sea power or on allies.¹⁴ Unless there is a more adequate and serious defense arrangements between the Western alliance and the friendly nations in the Middle East, the Soviet threat will not be deterred and will always exist.

What should be done

The United States and its allies should design an effective security policy for the Middle East region in order to secure their interests. Such policy should consider the complexity of interacting threats, tensions, surprises and conflicts. It must be based on understanding the socio-political dynamics and the realities that drive the region. Also, it should revise and examine carefully, all reasons behind the setbacks that the US has suffered recently in the

region. A determined policy must strictly deny indigenous actions that seek to exhaust US political energy and efforts. Such intended actions, divert US attention from the central issues, to engage it in episodic crisis¹⁵ that satisfy only the interests of these actions inventors. In other words, the US must be able to influence actions in the Middle East rather than being influenced by individual actions in the region.

Perhaps it is worth while to point out some of the facts to be considered in formulating a US security policy for the Middle East. The Islamic faith that dominates the region rejects totally, the ideology of Communism.¹⁶ Saudi Arabia for example does not, so far, recognize the Soviet state. This is not to say that the Middle East does not mind US domination or westernization; in fact, the region sees itself out of the struggle between the east and the west.¹⁷ Despite the "marginal" conflicts that appear every now and then between the Arab governments, Arab nationalism is still alive in the subconscious of the Arab people. This fact is not clearly understood even by the neighboring Soviets. In 1978, Mohommed Heikal, the editor of the ciro newspaper Al-Ahram, from 1957 to 1977, said: "The Russians were unable to comprehend the dominating role of nationalism in the Arab world."¹⁸

Conflict in priorities between those of the US and those of the local nations of the Middle East, stand as an impeding factor against effective US foreign policy in the region. The US considers the expulsion of the Soviets from the Middle East as its highest priority, while the Arab countries rank such priority as second to the Palestinian issue. The Arabs fear is centered around Israeli expansionism and not around countering Communism.¹⁹ They consider Soviet influence in the region as a by-product of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They also evaluate their international relations based upon other country's positions from the Palestinian issue. Israel, however, is concerned about its own security more than anything else in the region. All of these facts should be considered when building a successful US foreign policy for the Middle East.

US foreign policy in the Middle East should focus on building a strategic, political, economic and military structure able to deter various types of threats to its security interests. Such a structure, however, cannot be built in a highly unstable environment. Stabilizing the region then, is the fundamental challenge that represents the leveling of the ground before building the house. While helping the Middle Eastern countries to develop the region and settling their conflicts, the US should use its political skills, including cooperation, to deny any Soviet exploitation of the superpower

vacuum that exists in the region. In fact, conflicts are the source of the nightmares that the US faces in the Middle East. Because conflicts, invite and open the doors for Soviet influence, and they threaten the security of the oil flow from the region. The Arab-Israeli conflict has been the core problem that threatened the region's stability. The core of that conflict is the Palestinian issue, which has expanded since the 1967 war, beyond the traditional borders of Palestine to include parts from Egypt, Syria and later on Lebanon. No doubt that the US recognizes very well the importance of stability in the Middle East. In 1977, President Carter called for a comprehensive peace plan for the Arab-Israeli conflict.²⁰ In 1978-79, the Camp David agreement solved the Sinai question between Israel and Egypt. Another event however, soon, complicated the situation. That complicater was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. This however, is a good proof that partial solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot work and stresses the necessity for a "determined, serious" comprehensive peaceful settlement, that insures the security of all parties involved. The argument concerning the Palestinian problem is that those four million Palestinians have to have their own Palestinian entity; otherwise, there will be no stability in the Middle East. Failure to confront the Palestinian problem, will continue to keep the Palestinians as a source of unrest to

both Israel and the surrounding Arab countries.²¹ The US position concerning the Palestinian issue, endorsed the idea of establishing a Palestinian entity in Gaza and the West Bank. On the 1st of September 1982, President Reagan stated,

" . . . it is the firm view of the United States that self government by the Palestinian of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best choice of durable, just, and lasting peace."²²

Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization responded positively to the Reagan peace plan. Robert G. Neumann wrote in January 1984 that:

King Hussein of Jordan saw the opportunity in the Reagan plan. So with some reservation, did PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. In several protracted meetings, they sought a negotiation formula that they could accept and that would support the Reagan plan. Unfortunately, the entire energy and resources of the American diplomacy became concentrated on the need to evacuate all foreign forces, Israeli, Syrian and PLO from Lebanon. The rest of the Reagan initiative was not implemented. In personal letters to King Hussein, President Reagan had promised that he would do everything he could to bring about negotiations on the Palestinian problem. But, in effect, Hussein and Arafat were left alone.²³

King Hussein expressed his commitment in looking for peace, when he was interviewed by Newsweek magazine in September, 1985. He then said:

I will continue to take risks without any hesitation. Existence itself is not an objective. Our objective is that we will be remembered long after we are gone, by generations living in this area in peace and security.²⁴

The Israeli reaction on the other hand, came so fast on September 2, the Israeli cabinet rejected the Reagan plan,²⁵ while Jordan and the PLO agreed to move towards peace

through a joint delegation. Arafat took a significant step forward when he called for direct talks with Israel under the UN auspices.²⁶ But, the United States is not willing to include PLO members in the combined Jordanian Palestinian delegation, unless the PLO recognizes Israeli's right to exist, and accepts United Nations' resolutions 242 and 338.²⁷ This hard precondition is unlikely to work because it involves the PLO renouncing the Palestinian National Covenant of 1964. That covenant includes the formulation of the PLO itself in terms of armed struggle against Israel.²⁸ In other words, the US wants the PLO to reject its own existence and abandon its principles in order to be acceptable to sit with the other participants in the peace process. In such a complicated situation, the US could accept the presence of some PLO members within the combined delegation. Such acceptance can be based on the logic that the PLO is the crucial actor in the conflict, and it is recognized by more than 100 nations including most of US allies. Also it is represented in the United Nations. Also, the US deals with the PLO through other nations and through unofficial contacts.²⁹ PLO participation in peace negotiations with Israel is necessary. It can be pre-conditioned publicly. The US can assure no commitments that might antagonize the Israelis. It can preserve the right to reject PLO legitimacy in participation at any time during the process. Also, the US can use such participation

as a message bound to be endorsed and promoted if Israel does not show the required flexibility in her rigid positions. And it will encourage the PLO to adjust and modify its policies and goals. Finally, is peace worth accepting some PLO presence? After all, the problem is called the Palestinian problem and nobody else's. Toward this problem, the US should continue its efforts, with more determination and fairness, to achieve the peaceful co-existence between Israel and its neighbors. Perhaps it is time to exploit the willingness of the parties to achieve peace in the Middle East before further complications evolve. The wisdom and courage of the United States should not let theoretical pretenses impede peace.

The Syrian participation in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict is crucial to the success of achieving stability in the Middle East. After the Lebanese crisis, Syria emerged as a key player in the region's affairs. Syria recognized the United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. She is committed to a comprehensive peaceful solution for the conflict. But the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights, the unpopular Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which isolated Egypt from the rest of the Arab world, and the election of the Syrian forces in Lebanon to play the role of US enemy, to justify US active engagement in Lebanon,³⁰ have left the Syrian pride with no option except to impose negative efforts against any partial solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Through its strong

position, Syria was able to undermine the US sponsored Lebanese-Israeli agreement of May 17, 1983. Such lessons should be noted by both Jordan and the PLO under Arafat. The Syrian present strong position in the Middle East meets their belief to negotiate from a strong position with Israel. At this time Syria can be drawn to a constructive role in the peace process. This is especially true with the weak Israeli position after the Lebanese crisis in which Syria was the only winner.³¹

The Soviets also, should be drawn to participate in a positive role in preserving the agreements between the Arabs and the Israelis. In an interview with Newsweek magazine, King Hussein said:

I believe that the Soviets cannot be ignored. They are involved in the area, they have very strong ties and connections and some relations in this part of the world. They have the right to be there. Denying their right would create obstacles to any peace process.³²

As guidance from the United States is sought because of its friendly relations with many parties to the dispute, it must be also understood that peace cannot be concluded without taking into consideration the influence of the Soviet Union on Syria and their connections with the Palestinians. Thus it would be important to include the USSR in any negotiations involving US intentions to enforce a comprehensive peace agreement.³³

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

US neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war does not serve any purpose except making the conflict more vulnerable to the Soviet exploitation. This conflict is threatening friendly countries to the west. In February, 1986, Iran launched a massive attack against Iraqi forces hoping to break the stalemate in the endless Persian Gulf war. This offensive came within sight of the Kuwaiti Island of Babiyan. It strongly raised the possibility that Iran-Iraq war might suddenly spill over into pro-western Kuwait, and it alarmed Washington, as well as the oil-rich countries in the Persian Gulf.³⁴ The US and its western allies should encourage a peaceful solution to the Iran-Iraq conflict. This conflict, in fact is a practical test for western countries including the US and Japan's will to protect the Persian Gulf war. US neutrality and in "general" western neglect of this war encourages the Soviets to exploit it to their benefit and increase their influence.

In recent years the Iraqi's have shown positive signs toward improving relations with the west. In 1984, Iraq resumed diplomatic relations with the US after the breakage of those relations in 1967. In the late seventies, Iraq, broke the Russian domination of arming its forces, and started buying arms from western countries, like France. Also the

Iraqi attitude concerning a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict has changed. It became more moderate, after being one of the most extremist nations in the Arab world. This change came when Iraq announced its support for any solution for the Palestinian problem that is acceptable to the PLO under Arafat. In any case, these positive signs on the part of Iraq, should be met with positive and encouraging attitude from the US. Because Iraq, and its oil is one of the key countries in the Middle East. If US neutrality toward the Iran-Iraq dispute is based on the assumption that Iran might come back to the western sphere, such assumption is unlikely to happen, at least in the near future. Even with Khomeini's death, the Iranian people, and their leadership, are not expected to welcome western influence after their experience under the US man in the region - the Shah.

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Along with US efforts to clean up hostilities in the Middle Eastern environment, the US should launch political, economic and military development programs in the region. These programs should attempt to reduce the need of Middle Eastern societies to become dependent on the Soviet help for their security and stability. Soviet influence will be reduced significantly when these societies secure their national self-confidence and political stability. Under this approach, US policies should be oriented toward country and regional developments. When these countries achieve the required result of their relationship with the US, the containment of Soviet influence and oil security will be a by product of that relationship. This is true, because the Soviets are unable to match US capabilities in developing the region. The aim of developing the region should be centered around the prosperity of the people and should not be identified as tools for new colonization. Also, the US should not require the recipient countries to sacrifice their entity in return for such development. On the contrary, the US can exploit this approach as a means for large scale mutual cultural understanding. The comprehension of the region's culture, language, traditions, and religion is very important in dealing with the Middle East. Such comprehension is necessary

to enable the US to monitor the people's attitudes, feelings and aspirations so as to be able to adjust its policies and stay on top of events. However, developing the Middle Eastern countries requires some time. Pressures to speed up the desired outcomes will end in adverse results because development programs will soon be identified as closely connected to westernizing the region at the expense of its socio-political nature and realities. In addition to that and knowing the dangers of pressuring their people, the Middle Eastern governments might resist such pressures and end up in the Soviet camp for economic and technological assistance even at lower standards.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURE OF DEVELOPING THE MIDDLE EAST

These analyses stress the fact that developing the Middle Eastern friendly countries must come gradual and natural. It requires a high level of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the regions culture and faith. The Iranian lesson should not be forgotten in dealing with any Moslem country. That type event can still happen anywhere in the Middle East. In any case developing the Middle East cannot work in absence of stability. The US should cultivate its friendly relations with some of the Middle Eastern countries to understand more about the region and help these countries to sustain their political and social stability. On the other hand US domestic policy should focus on pointing out to the American public, the importance of the Middle East to US national interests. It should encourage cultural and educational exchange with the region for better understanding of the region and its people. Such domestic policy is necessary in a democratic country like the US, to justify the funds and programs used to develop the region.

On the military side, the military balance in the Middle East is very often, disrupted by arms transfers from the industrial nations. Causing local arms race in the region. US arms supply policy in the Middle East has been largely influenced by Israel's security. Managing US military

sales or aid, so as to satisfy various US interests in the Middle East, continues to be more difficult with the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 1981, the Israeli's protested the arms package sold to Saudi Arabia. In response to the Israeli protest, the US tried to get guarantees from the Saudis that arms would not be used against Israel. The Saudis retreated, angrily, considering the American request as an infringement to their sovereignty. The Reagan administration responded to the Israeli desire by signing a memorandum of "Strategic Understanding."³⁵ This "Strategic Understanding" is only one example out of many which tend to force the most moderate Arab states into the opposite Soviet camp.³⁶ The US should use its arms sales or aids as a tool to serve its political efforts in settling down the Middle Eastern conflicts. That should be the case instead of responding blindly to the endless Israeli desires on the expense of own US national interests and credibility in the region. Despite President Reagan's assurance that stinger Missile sales to Jordan, serves the strategic interests of both the US and Israel,³⁷ the recent Congressional rejection to transferring a worth of 1.9 billion dollars, including the Stingers, to Jordan is not a promising way of dealing with the friendly Arab countries in the Middle East. Such policies are often followed by the US foreign policy toward Arab countries of the Middle East. The formula became: Complete positive

response to the Israeli desires versus negative one toward friendly Arabs.

US arms sales policy should seek to make the Middle East most dependent on the American arms. Although such a policy will upset the Israeli's, it will contribute to a future strategic alliance. An alliance in the Middle East requires a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, so as to integrate Israel in the future, and to remove constraints on American arms transfer to the region. Arming friendly nations in the region is necessary to enable indigenous countries to counter the Soviet threat and defend their region.

Security agreements, even within a framework of strategic consensus, between the US and individual local nations of the Middle East will not work. But even if it does work, such consensus will be so fragile, because each of the Israeli and the Arabs would still regard one another as his enemy. Such outcome would reinforce the difference that already exists between US priority to limit the Soviet influence and that of the Arabs and the Israelis regarding one another. In addition, US individual agreements with the local nations of the Middle East would stimulate an endless request for arms. In this case the US is not ready to let down Israeli arms requests, thus putting its agreements with the Arab states at stake.

CHAPTER VI

US POWER PROJECTION

Solution to the Soviet threat to the Middle East requires the ability of the United States to project substantial power in time of crisis. Because US effective military capability in the Middle East will cause the Soviets to reevaluate their intentions in the region. The presence and effectiveness of US power in the Middle East requires the approval and the cooperation of the indigenous countries. Therefore, the US should approach the friendly local countries to develop adequate sites, systems and facilities, that are able to accommodate effective US forces in cases of emergency. These developments, however, should be used normally by local forces during peace time and be ready to use by US upon invitations by local countries. Conducting combined exercises with local forces is necessary to update and maintain those military assets as well as having continuous orientation with the area. Such exercises along with arming the local forces, tend to ensure that the US is not creating bases and is not identified as a new colonial power. Security assistance to friendly countries in the Middle East is very important, even to small countries who do not have the required strategic importance to be eligible for US security assistance, merely to keep the Soviets away from creating bases in the region.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

It is a critical task for any nation's leadership to assess correctly, its external security interests, and when those interests are in jeopardy. This is fairly true, when such interests exist in a complex, turbulent, and uncertain region like the Middle East. This important region has recently captured the attention of US political and public channels. It calls for a new US approach that understands its realities and nature. No area in the world offers as much promise of success to the neighboring Soviets, more than the vulnerable Middle East does. In the Middle East however, indigenous nations are not strong enough to counter the Soviet intentions. On the contrary, the region's conflicts are erasing the barriers in the face of Soviet threats. The US, in order to preserve its national interests, must sponsor a comprehensive peaceful solution to the Middle Eastern conflicts. These conflicts have been, and still are, inviting the Soviet influence and threatening the oil flow out of the Persian Gulf. American policy in the Middle East forced many countries in the Middle East to cheer for Soviet help when offered. The preference of the Soviets in the region is not ideological compatibility but practical necessity. The US can only contain Soviet influence by removing the causes of that influence. Stability is the key to a successful US

policy of containment. It is also the key that secures other US national interests in the region. Israel must understand that nothing serves her security better than peace and stability. The US should concentrate its political efforts to secure peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict according to the United Nations resolutions that secure all parties involved in the dispute. The US should stand firm against those who impede peace and try to diffuse US attention from the core issues. The US should strengthen the regional economic and military potentials and work through, cooperation, with the local nations to create a strong region able to strangle any Soviet military or political influence. Meanwhile US military presence should be in the outskirts of the region ready to intervene at any stage, because the region is not accessible to the presence of substantial military power due to political reasons.

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