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**TWO WARS IN THE
MIDDLE EAST:
IRAN VS. IRAQ
AND THE LEBANON**

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Both Middle Eastern crises, the Iran-Iraq war and the Arab-Israeli conflict, escalated during 1982.¹ The former is potentially the more dangerous to western interests, for were Iran decisively to defeat Iraq, the stability of the Gulf Arab oil states would be immediately and gravely endangered. The latter, however, has actually had so far more immediate and important results. Both encourage radical, anti-western Islamic fundamentalism. They thus endanger what is left of stability in the Middle East.

The Iran-Iraq War²

¹This essay takes up where my last one on the Middle East left off: William E. Griffith, "The Middle East, 1982: Politics, Revolutionary Islam, and American Policy," (MIT/CIS, C/82-1, mimeo., Jan. 1982.) For another survey also written before the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon, see Fouad Ajami, "The Arab Road," Foreign Policy, Summer 1982. I am grateful to The Reader's Digest and to its editor-in-chief, Edward T. Thompson, for sponsoring my trip to the Middle East in June 1982, upon which this essay is primarily based.

²For Iran since the Shah fell, see Sepehr Zabih, Iran Since the Revolution (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1982); Shaul Bakhash, The Politics of Oil and Revolution in Iran (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1982); and Nikki R. Keddie and Eric Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1982), the proceedings of a May 1982 conference. Press coverage and analysis of the Iran-Iraq war has been far from adequate. The main exceptions are the excellent analyses by Stephen R. Grummon, The Iran-Iraq War, The Washington Papers, no. 92 (N.Y.: Praeger, 1982) and Shahram Chubin, "La guerre irano-iraquienne: paradoxes et particularités," Politique étrangère, June 1982 (JPRS 81787, Sept. 16, 1982.) For post-revolutionary Iran, see especially James A. Bill, "Power and Religion in Revolutionary Iran," Middle Eastern Journal, Winter 1982, and also Zabih, Iran Since the Revolution, op. cit. For Iraq, see Hanna

Contrary to most western theories of political development, which have maintained that secularization and westernization will be natural and inevitable results of modernization,³ Khomeini has carried out in Iran a sextuple revolution:

a. of pan-Islamic theocratic religious fanaticism, whose foreign policy aims to replace all Arab regimes with fundamentalist Muslim theocracies under Khomeini's hegemony;

b. of Iranian national, imperial renaissance, committed to avenge the seventh century Arab defeat of the Persians at Qadissiyya and, in effect, to rebuild the Persian Empire- although ideologically, unlike most other leaders in the Iranian revolution, he rejects Iranian nationalism in favor of pan-Islamism.

c. of social revolution, which has deposed the Shah's westernized oligarchy, and most of the intelligentsia, to the benefit

Batatu, The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978) and "Iraq's Underground Shi'a Movements: Characteristics, Causes and Prospects," Middle Eastern Journal, Autumn 1981. For Khomeini's pan-Islamism, see David Menashri, "Shi'ite Leadership: In the Shadow of Conflicting Ideologies," Iranian Studies, XIII, 1-4, 1980 and "The Shah and Khomeini: Conflicting Nationalisms," Crossroads, Winter-Spring 1982. For post-revolutionary Iran, see also Merip Reports, March-April 1982. See also the excellent analyses by Arnold Hottinger from Khorramshahr, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, June 9 and 20/21, 1982, of the Iranian victory there; for Iranian internal developments, his articles of June 27/28, 1982 (from Tehran) and July 28, 1982 in *ibid*; and his analysis of the war in *ibid.*, Oct. 10/11, 1982. In October 1982 the New York Times and the Christian Science Monitor had correspondents there. For a documentary collection with brief introductory analysis, see Tareq Y. Ismael, Iran and Iraq. Roots of Conflict (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1982.)

³ E.g., Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1978), pp. 14-22. For, in my view, a

of the clergy and the lower classes;

d. of anti-westernism, especially against the United States (Khomeini's "great Satan") and the Soviet Union;

e. of a revolutionary army, which combines what is left of the Shah's army and air force (less the generals and some colonels) with the fanatical teen-age Pasdaran ("Revolutionary Guards"), whose human waves storm machine gun emplacements, and the Bassij volunteers -- an army which, like Carnot's and Napoleon's, has helped consolidate Khomeini's revolutionary regime by military victory; and

f. of the recovery of Muslim dignity. Khomeini does not preach only, or even primarily, a Shi'a revolution against the Sunnis. He demands the establishment of Islamic fundamentalist theocracies throughout the Muslim world and the liberation of Jerusalem from the Jews.

Iraq began the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 with a foolhardy attack on Iran. Iraq's aims were to reverse the concessions it had felt compelled to make to Iran in 1975 with respect to the Shatt al-Arab, and to profit from Egypt's post-Camp David isolation to replace it, by defeating Iran, as the leader of the Arab world. Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, thought that this would be easier because of what he wrongly saw as Iran's weakness and of the U.S. involvement against Iran and the Soviet involvement with Afghanistan, which made inter-

devastating criticism of this view, see Cheryl Benard and Zalmay Khalilzad, "Secularization, Industrialization, and Khomeini's Islamic Republic," Political Science Quarterly, Summer 1979.

vention by either or both unlikely.

Iraqi strategy and tactics were unsuccessful. In 1982 Iran drove the Iraqi forces back to their borders. Iran's recapture of Khorramshahr frightened the Arab oil-rich Gulf sheikhdoms, and thus raised the danger of "self-Finlandization" (i.e. preemptive capitulation) or successful radical Islamic fundamentalist coups in some of them (notably in Kuwait and perhaps even more in Bahrein, where an Iranian-inspired coup attempt failed in December 1981.) It therefore highlighted the western, Saudi, and Egyptian need to reinforce their stability. It also helped to return Egypt to the inter-Arab scene, because Egypt and Pakistan are the only major Islamic military powers, except Iran, near the Gulf.

Iraq at first beat back several Iranian attempts to invade its territory. However, spurred on by Iraqi air-raids on the principal Iranian oil export installation, Kharg Island, Iran attacked again in early October 1982, and in November pushed a short way inside Iraq. But by the end of 1982 Iraq had beaten back several Iranian attacks, and a stalemate seemed more likely than an Iranian victory. (An Iraqi victory seemed even more unlikely.) Khomeini's aim remains to overthrow Saddam Hussein and to establish a radical Islamic fundamentalist theocracy there. (His more conservative supporters in the conservative "Hujati" groups are less enthusiastic about the war but Khomeini continues to push it.) Iran is also sabotaging OPEC's attempts to combat the oil glut by fixing upper limits on production quotas

-- the first time that OPEC has seriously split on political lines.⁴ Iran and Iraq have so far not suffered major domestic repercussions from the war, but they will if one or the other scores a decisive victory. Meanwhile, the Iranian army has fought well enough so that although it is still busy at the front, it will probably become an important political factor after Khomeini leaves the scene.

Several lessons can already be drawn from the war. Unlike the various Arab-Israeli wars, it has continued for a longer period. Both sides have been able to use, cannibalize, and profit from what military technology they had acquired and to buy weapons abroad. The war has not spread, albeit in part because of western warnings. The world petroleum price has fallen, because of the production glut and recession- and conservation-caused decline in consumption, despite the cutback in Iraqi and Iranian production. For the first time OPEC has split on a political issue: Iran has unsuccessfully demanded a much larger production quota in order to fight the war.⁵

For the Arabs, except for Iran's allies Syria, South Yemen, and Libya, a decisive Iranian victory would be a disaster worse than the overwhelming victories of Israel in the 1967 war and in the Lebanon.

⁴ Financial Times, July 13, 1982, p. 12.

⁵ For a brief summary, see Cristine A. Haus in Technology Review, Oct. 1982, p. 29. For the best recent analysis of the interaction of Middle Eastern politics and petroleum, see Nazli Choucri, "Power and Politics in World Oil," *ibid.*, pp. 24-36. See also William B. Quandt, Saudi Arabia's Oil Policy (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1982.)

It is especially dangerous to most Arab rulers, because Khomeini wants to overthrow them, and therefore to the U.S. (Conversely, Israel, which has sold Iran U.S. spare parts, has profited from preoccupation and Iraq's defeats, including its raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor, and from Iran's threat to the Arab Gulf states.) No matter who wins, Iran-Iraq hostility will long poison the regional atmosphere. Finally, the weakness of the Arab Gulf states vis-à-vis the Iranian threat strengthens the regional role of Egypt and the United States.

Moscow and Washington remain neutral in the war. Neither one wants either an Iranian victory nor a total Iranian defeat, for the former would further Islamic fundamentalism, a danger to both, and gravely endanger the stability of the Arab Gulf, while each fears that the latter might tempt the other to intervene in a post-Khomeini Iran. Internationally, neither the Soviet Union nor the United States profited vis-à-vis either belligerent from its policy of neutrality. The United States did little or nothing to help either side and gained little from either. However, the other Arab Gulf states, menaced by an Iranian victory, had all the more reason to want U.S. help if it occurred. (As will be seen below, this sense of greater dependence on the U.S. was further strengthened by the outcome of the Lebanon War.)

The Soviet Union, like the United States, preferred a stalemate to victory by either side and hoped to gain influence with both. It was more active, but even less successful, than Washington. Moscow's

relations with Iraq had worsened before the war, because Iraq's nationalization of its petroleum resources enabled it to buy western technology, which it preferred. Moreover, Saddam Hussein who, contrary to some western views, never had been and never intended to be a Soviet satellite, suspected the Iraqi communists of plotting against him. He therefore executed some of their leaders, drove the rest into emigration in Moscow, and the party into the underground. That the Soviet Union, when the war began, did not initially support Saddam Hussein with arms made him even more suspicious. But when Iran drove Iraq back to its border, the Soviets, probably fearful that Islamic fundamentalist Iran would win, and annoyed by Tehran's increasingly anti-Soviet attitude, resumed some arms shipments to Iraq, thus antagonizing Iran even more.

With Iran, conversely, Soviet relations have sharply worsened during 1982. This seems to have begun around the time of an unsuccessful trip of an Iranian minister to Moscow to discuss the resumption of Iranian natural gas shipments to the USSR. Thereafter Soviet and Iranian propaganda began to attack each other; Iran rerouted a natural gas pipeline through Turkey, rather than the USSR; it cracked down on the Tudeh, arresting some and closing its newspaper; and it attacked Soviet policy in Afghanistan. Conversely, the Soviets attacked the Iranian slaughter of the Mojahedin.⁶

⁶The worsening of Soviet-Iranian relations is analysed in Karen Dawisha, "The USSR in the Middle East: Superpower in Eclipse?," Foreign Affairs, Winter 1982/83, at pp. 446-448 and Muriel Atkin, "The Islamic

Iran bought most of its arms from North Korea (according to one report, some \$800 million worth.)⁷ Most North Korean arms come from the Soviet Union but some come from China. Even so, it is difficult to imagine that so many North Korean arms could have been sold to Iran without Soviet agreement. However, if Moscow did agree, it did not stop the deterioration of Soviet-Iranian relations. Iran also bought some U.S. spare parts from Israel.

Thus by the end of 1982 Soviet-Iranian relations were tense indeed, hardly less so than Iranian-U.S. ones. Nor did major change in this respect seem likely as long as Khomeini remained in power.

The Arab-Israeli Dispute and the
Israeli Invasion of the Lebanon ⁸

Republic and the Soviet Union" in Keddie and Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic, op. cit., pp. 140-150. One can easily trace the worsening of relations in Soviet and Iranian articles and radio broadcasts. Contrast, for example, the very favorable article by A. Akhmedzyanov, "Strengthening Independence," Izvestiya, Feb. 11, 1982 (FBIS/SOV/ Mar. 8, 1982/H2-4), just before a visit of the Iranian Energy Minister to Moscow, with the critical article by Pavel Demchenko in Pravda (FBIS/SOV/ Mar. 9, 1982/H1-2.) Thereafter Soviet and Iranian attacks on each other increased. For Iranian ones, see, e.g. Moadab in Kayhan International, June 27, 1982 (JPRS 81327, July 21, 1982) and an analysis by Iran Press Service (London), July 1, 1982 (JPRS 81363, July 26, 1982.) For other analyses, see R.W. Apple, Jr., from Teheran, "Soviet Influence in Iran Shows a Sharp Decline," The New York Times, Nov. 14, 1982, p. A22; Ali Nuri Zadeh, "Khomeyni's Battle with the Communists," Al-Dustur (London), Aug. 2, 1982 (JPRS 81812, Sept. 21, 1982, pp. 39-41); Tehran Times, Aug. 24, 1982 (JPRS 81855, Sept. 27, 1982.)

⁷ The New York Times, Dec. 19, 1982, p. 1 (citing U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Francis West.)

⁸ The best press coverage has been in Le Monde. By far the best analysis of the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon and its consequences is Arnold

In June 1982, after the United States twice prevented Begin from doing so, Israel invaded the Lebanon. Begin aimed to crush the PLO, defeat Syria, make the Lebanon a pro-Israeli, Maronite-ruled buffer state, distract the U.S. from the Palestinian autonomy negotiations while he pursued the annexation of the West Bank (his "Judea and Samaria"), and last but perhaps most important, break the PLO's influence in the West Bank. (His pretexts for invasion, PLO shelling of northern Israel and the assassination attempt on his ambassador in London, were just that: PLO shelling had been much smaller than in previous periods and the PLO probably did not try to kill the ambassador.)

Begin carried out a successful multiple deception operation first against his own cabinet, and then against his opposition, the Israeli people, the Arabs, and the United States. His initial military moves were also very successful. His forces rapidly drove to and encircled Beirut, destroying PLO camps in their wake. Then, however, his fear of Israeli casualties and U.S. pressure held him back from destroying the PLO forces in West Beirut. They were finally evacuated, under protection of a U.S.-French-Italian multinational force, to other Arab states, after brilliant diplomacy by the U.S. special envoy Philip Habib.

In the early stage of the Israeli invasion the Israeli air force scored a crushing victory over the Syrians--the most remarkable example

Hottinger's "Die israelische Kriegsaktion in Libanon. Eine vorläufige Bilanz," Europa Archiv, Nov. 10, 1982. See also the articles by Fouad Ajami and Adam Zagorin in Foreign Policy, Autumn 1982. For pro-Arab articles, see the Journal of Palestine Studies, Summer/Fall 1982 and Merip Reports, Sept.-Oct. 1982.

to date of "electronic battlefield management." (The Falklands war was a decade behind in technological sophistication.) In a few hours the Israeli air force shot down some 80 Syrian MIG-21s and -23s, destroyed all 26 SAM-6 missile sites and, then and later, some 100 T-72 tanks, all with very minor Israeli losses. The victory was the result of U.S. equipment, notably Hawkeye, F-15 and -16, and electronics intelligence (ELINT) and counter-measures (ECM), Israeli improvements on them, and superb Israeli training and morale. Israel thus demonstrated the inferiority of Soviet equipment and Syrian training.⁹ It immobilized Syria, where Asad remains challenged by the Muslim Brotherhood, which he has so far managed to suppress in blood.¹⁰ It intimidated

⁹ For general surveys, see "New Lessons From Combat," Aviation Week & Space Technology, July 19, 1982 and de, "Der Krieg in Südlibanon als Experimentierfeld der Waffentechnik," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, June 20/21, 1982. For more specific analyses, see Clarence A. Robinson, Jr., "Surveillance Integration Pivotal in Israeli Successes," Aviation Week & Space Technology, July 5, 1982 and Philip J. Klass, "Israel Demonstrates Mini-RPV Utility," ibid., Oct. 4, 1982. For an earlier report, see "EW drone unveiled by Israel," Electronic Warfare Defense Electronics, Sept. 1978. For an Israeli analysis, see an interview with Prof. Yuval Ne'eman in Ma'ariv, June 18, 1982 (JPRS 81555, Aug. 17, 1982.) For general treatment of electronic warfare, see a series of articles in Air Force Magazine, July 1982; "Killer Electronic Weaponry," Business Week, Sept. 20, 1982; William J. Perry and Cynthia A. Roberts, "Winning Through Sophistication: How to Meet the Soviet Military Challenge," Technology Review, July 1982.

¹⁰ Hanna Batatu, "Some Observations on the Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Military Group and the Causes for its Dominance," Middle East Journal, Summer 1981 and "Syria's Muslim Brethren," Merip Reports, Nov.-Dec. 1982; conversations with Prof. Batatu, Dec. 9, 1982; A.H. [Arnold Hottinger] from Damascus, "Syrien nach den Verlusten in Libanon," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Nov. 13, 1982; and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "The Islamic Movement in Syria: Sectarian Conflict and Urban Rebellion in an Authoritarian-Populist Regime" in Ali E. Hillel Dessouki, eds., Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World (N.Y.: Praeger, 1982), pp. 138-169.

the other Arab states and convinced them, and Israel, that Israel enjoyed overwhelming military superiority.

Throughout the invasion, the Arab states (except, briefly and unsuccessfully, Syria) neither intervened militarily nor tried to use the "oil weapon" against Israel, but only appealed to the United States to stop Begin. The Arabs were so divided; they so feared an Iranian victory over Iraq; Israel was militarily so strong; and the world oil market was so glutted that they saw no other alternative.

This was the first time that the Arab states had been so inactive since the foundation of Israel. Why? The Palestinians seemed dangerous to most conservative Arab states, especially those in the Gulf where so many Palestinians lived. Jordan and Syria did not want a powerful, independent PLO, lest it threaten them, and they therefore did not too much regret the PLO's loss of its independent base in the Lebanon. Rather, they and the Arab Gulf states wanted a weak Palestinian "entity" on the West Bank to which some of the Palestinians in the Gulf could go. The demonstration of overwhelming Israeli military power and the Camp David-induced split between Egypt and the rest of the Arab world helped make the Arabs feel impotent in the crisis. The split between Arab rich and poor further weakened the Arab world. The Arab fear, especially among the Gulf states, of an Iranian victory and thus the triumph of Khomeini's Islamic fanaticism further inhibited them from aiding the PLO and made them feel that they needed U.S. support. They were the more attracted to the U.S. once, during the Lebanese crisis,

Reagan moved away from near-total support for Israel. The oil glut and the massive Arab investments in the U.S. made the Arabs even less likely to try seriously to put Washington under pressure, for an oil embargo would probably not work and, to the extent that it did, would damage Arab investments in the U.S.¹¹

But while U.S. influence among most Arab states was for the time being greater, among much of the Arab intelligentsia and students frustration and fury reached new heights. They believed they had suffered an intolerable disaster -- a new, greater naqsa than 1967. They despised their rulers as totally de-legitimatized men who had stood by while an Arab capital, Beirut, was bombarded and the PLO defeated by the hated Israelis, with, they thought, the tolerance if not the encouragement of Washington. Thereafter, they believed, the U.S. had stood by, despite its pledge to safeguard them, while Israel's Christian Phalange allies, with Israeli encouragement, Palestinian women and children. During all this, they believed, their rulers had sat by, did not even meet, and had even forbidden any pro-PLO demonstrations.

Thus much of the Arab intelligentsia saw no other way to recover their dignity, punish the United States, and carry out whatever reforms

¹¹ Paul Balta, "La surprenante paralysie du monde arabe," Le Monde, July 22, 1982; Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Oil's Use as a Political Weapon Dead, U.S. Executives, Arab Ministers Agree," Wall Street Journal, Oct. 1, 1982, p. 34; Eric Rouleau, "Le Diaspora palestinienne du Golfe," Le Monde, June 15, 16, 17, 1982; S. Fred Singer, "Saudi Arabia's Oil Crisis," Policy Review, Summer 1982.

necessary (even democracy!) to prepare the Arabs to turn again on the Israelis, unless they first overthrew their own rulers.

By 1982 this Arab radicalism tended toward Islamic fundamentalism, not toward the secular left, which had also been discredited in the Lebanon. Islamic fundamentalism has arisen in part because the Arab regimes have not fulfilled their promises for prosperity, independence, and victory for the Palestinian cause. Israel's victory in the Lebanon has been a great blow to the credibility of the Arab regimes vis-a-vis their own young radicals. If they show no successes soon, some of them may be swept away by radicals -- likely, one must add, to be no more successful than they.¹²

¹² John Waterbury, "Arabs on Edge," The New York Times, Nov. 9, 1982, p. A31; Thomas Friedman (from Kuwait), "After Lebanon: The Arab World in Crisis," The New York Times, Nov. 22, 1982. I have also profited from a seminar by Eric Rouleau of Le Monde at the Harvard Center for International Affairs, Nov. 10, 1982. For a less pessimistic view, see the interview with Henry Kissinger in The Economist, Nov. 13-19, 1982. The Israeli destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, an earnest of Israel's determination to preempt any Arab acquisition of nuclear weapons, had already intensified the Arabs' despair. See Shai Feldman, "The Bombing of Osiraq-Revisited," International Security, Fall 1982 and Said Eddin Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order. A Study of the Social Impact of Oil Wealth (London: Croom Helm and Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982). For Islamic fundamentalism, see my "The Revival of Islamic Fundamentalism: The Case of Iran," International Security, Summer 1979 and my "The Middle East 1982: Politics, Revolutionary Islam and American Policy," op. cit. (cited in ftn 1, supra); Mohammed Ayoub, "The Revolutionary Thrust of Islamic Political Tradition," Third World Quarterly, April 1981; Abd al-Monein, Said Aly and Manfred W. Werner, "Modern Islamic Reform Movements: the Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt" and the review article by John L. Esposito, "Islam and Politics," Middle East Journal, Summer 1982; and especially Dessouki, Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World, op. cit.

These new destabilizing factors in the Arab world only make worse these already unstable societies. For the past two hundred years the Arab world has been steadily destabilized by the impact of modernity and the West. The latest major episode in this, with so far more far-reaching effects than the Lebanese war, was the impact of the oil boom. This has intensified tensions in Arab society, for it has increased the lower middle class and the urban lumpenproletariat. But it has not increased social equity, democratization in politics or cultural authenticity; rather, it has decreased them. The oil boom and the Lebanese war have intensified Arab societal and political instability, helped to de-legitimatize the Arab regimes, and furthered Islamic fundamentalism.¹³

If Iran were to defeat Iraq, coups, at least in the Gulf, would become more likely. With or without it, coups may not come. The completeness of the Israeli victory over the Syrians and the inaction of the Soviets have combined frustration with impotence, fury with resignation and if coups do come, like assassinations, they may not succeed. Whether they do will more often be determined by accident or folly than by design.

¹³Said Eddin Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order, op. cit. Moreover, the always present egalitarian and revolutionary strands in Islam, and the modern radical version of them in, for example, the thought of the Iranian sociologist²Ali Shari'ati, so influential in the Iranian Revolution, made Islamic fundamentalism an attractive response to these social tensions.

The PLO used its six-week hold-out in West Beirut, in contrast to Arab inaction, to try to create another heroic myth -- and what else have Arabs recently had to live by? -- that the PLO had not been defeated militarily and had won politically. The former was false, for the Israelis destroyed the PLO's military power. The latter will probably also turn out to be false. The war probably increased support for the Palestinian cause. But the PLO's military defeat brought political defeat in its train, for it lost its last independent base; its unity, such as it was, was further strained; its relations with Syria worsened; and its official new headquarters, Tunis, was too far away for effective operations.

Arafat has been talking with Hussein and Hussein has been considering negotiating for, or about, the Palestinians. This occurred because the Reagan plan seemed more attractive to them than the previous U.S. position, the PLO had been defeated, and many Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have increasingly felt that the PLO should recognize the PLO in order to push the Reagan plan. The increase in Israeli settlements has made the West Bank Palestinians move in this direction.¹⁴ There are differing views within the PLO about this. Arafat fears a split, with his opponents going over to various Arab states, whose influence over the PLO he wants to lower. These

¹⁴See the op-ed piece by Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem in the New York Times, Dec. 20, 1982.

factors have so far kept him from making such a proposal (although King Hussein has publicly suggested that he should.) Arafat and Hussein, however, are reportedly negotiating the framework of a pre-agreed confederal arrangement between Jordan and an independent Palestinian state.¹⁵

The Lebanese war shifted U.S. policy further away from Israel toward the Arab position. The Reagan administration began as the most pro-Israeli administration ever. By late 1982, however, U.S.-Israeli relations were seriously strained.

At first Reagan tolerated the Israeli invasion, and a minority of officials in Washington probably encouraged or at least were pleased by it. Moreover, he did not stop the Israelis from invading West Beirut after its evacuation by the PLO military.

The massacre of Palestinian civilians that followed was triggered by the assassination of the Maronite Phalange leader Bashir Jemayyel shortly after he had been elected President of the Lebanon. Israeli troops then occupied West Beirut. The Israeli forces allowed, and helped to transport, Phalange militia into the refugee camps. They knew that the massacre was going on for at least a day before they stopped it. They were thus accessories before and during the fact. The worldwide storm of indignation which followed led President Reagan to agree to

¹⁵ See the best recent analyses, A.H. [Arnold Hottinger] from Amman in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Nov. 2, 1982; Eric Rouleau, "Les Palestiniens en quête de survie," Le Monde, Nov. 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 1982; and The Economist, Dec. 18, 1982, pp. 62-63.

an Italian suggestion that the U.S. -French-Italian force return to Beirut, and to "demand" that Israel evacuate the city, which, under strong U.S. pressure, it did.

Before that, the invasion and the replacement of (pro-Israeli) Alexander Haig by George Shultz as U.S. Secretary of State had led Reagan to announce an American plan for an Arab-Israeli settlement. Some of its main points tilted toward Israel: (1) the U.S. again renewed its commitment to Israel's security, (2) the future of Jerusalem should be "negotiated" (i.e. Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem should not necessarily be abandoned), (3) Israel should not exist again with boundaries only 11 miles away from the Mediterranean, and (4) no independent Palestinian state should be established. Other points tilted toward the Arabs: (1) Reagan rejected Israeli annexation of the West Bank and (2) he proposed a Palestinian "entity" there linked with Jordan. Most important, this was the first time that an American president committed himself to so detailed a plan.

Begin rejected Reagan's plan totally. The Arab reaction was more nuanced. The unanimous Fez Arab summit communiqué reiterated the long-term Arab demand for a Palestinian state and for U.S. recognition of the PLO, plus a guarantee -- probably to satisfy the Syrians -- of the region's boundaries by the U.N. Security Council (i.e. including the Soviet Union.) Even so, for the first time an Arab summit had implicitly accepted the Saudi "Fahd Plan," which had endorsed the existence, legitimacy, and security of "all states in the region" (i.e. including Israel.) The PLO later rejected the plan but did not break off its

attempts to influence U.S. policy.

Begin's multiple deceptions and the Beirut massacre reportedly made Reagan no longer trust him. The news of the massacre triggered a storm of criticism in Israel against Begin, made worse by Begin's initial flat refusal to accept an independent judicial inquiry about it. Israeli and world protests, including some by American Jewish intellectuals, grew rapidly. A protest meeting of some 400,000 Israelis in Tel Aviv at the end of September demanded that Begin and Sharon resign.¹⁶ Begin then accepted an independent judicial inquiry.

Israel had crushed the PLO militarily and weakened it politically. But the Palestinian cause enjoyed more sympathy than before and the PLO was still strong in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel seemed likely eventually to evacuate the Lebanon in return for some security guarantees. However, the Lebanon may well thereafter be more under American than Israeli influence. Moreover, the continued internal fighting there boded ill for domestic peace. Israel's position abroad had been seriously weakened, most importantly in the United States. Its domestic policy was split, more perhaps than ever before. The report of the investigating commission was hanging over the heads of Begin and Sharon, but Begin's public support continued sufficiently high to keep him in office. Instead of improving Israel's overall position, Begin's military victory turned into a partial political defeat.

¹⁶ For a sympathetic account of leftist, anti-Begin Israeli sentiment during the war, see Ellen Cantarow, "Eternal War," Mother Jones, Sept. 1982.

The size and intensity of the Israeli protests repaired somewhat the global erosion of Israel's moral prestige. But polls showed that it had been great in the U.S., which was so important for Israel; while in July 1981 49% of all Americans sympathized with Israel and only 10% with the Arabs, in September 1982, after the massacre, the figures were 32% and 28% respectively (with a 5% margin of error.)¹⁷

However, public memory fades. The November 1982 Congressional elections improved the position in the House of Representatives of the usually pro-Israeli Democrats. Begin's Knesset majority has not been eroded. Indeed, polls showed that Begin lost little Israeli support after the massacre and soon recouped his losses.¹⁸ The organized U.S. Jewish community continued to support Israeli government policy¹⁹ and in December 1982 again demonstrated its strength by persuading the Senate Appropriations Committee to add \$400 million to the Israeli aid appropriation. At the end of 1982 Washington had made some progress in trying to get the Israelis (and the Syrians and the PLO) out of the Lebanon. However, Washington's attempt to relaunch the Palestinian autonomy negotiations remained stalled because of Begin's intransigence, Arafat's reluctance to accept the Reagan plan lest the PLO split, and

¹⁷ Newsweek, Oct. 4, 1982, p. 23 (from a Gallup Poll.)

¹⁸ Jerusalem Post, Oct. 1, 1982 (FBIS/MEA/Oct. 1, 1982/I 8-9) and *ibid.*, Nov. 2, 1982 (FBIS/MEA/Nov. 4, 1982/I 13.)

¹⁹ Earl Raab, "Is the Jewish Community Split?," Commentary, Nov. 1982.

King Hussein's refusal to become involved in the negotiations, at least unless and until Arafat would do so as well and Israel stopped establishing settlements on the West Bank.²⁰

Internationally, the Lebanese crisis had two important results. The Soviet Union during the Lebanese War, and indeed in the Iran-Iraq war as well, was uniquely inactive -- much more so than at any time since 1955. This inaction, plus the decisive Israeli victory over the Syrians in June 1982, led to a striking decline in Soviet influence and prestige in the area and to a rise of U.S. influence among Arab governments.

Moscow confined itself during the Lebanon war to warning against an Israeli ground invasion of Syria and to rearming Syria after its defeat. Its support of the PLO was lacking in vigor or action. Its attempt to be neutral between Iran and Iraq worsened its relations with the former and did not significantly restore their decline with the latter.

During and after the Lebanese war Moscow deplored Arab inaction to help Syria and the PLO. The Soviets ascribed this to Arab disunity, the decline of radical, usually Nasserist pan-Arabism, the rising power of the conservative Arab states, and the Arab ability to buy arms from the West rather than from the Soviet Union. (All in all, quite

²⁰ The December 1982 visit of King Hussein to Washington was inconclusive (The New York Times, Dec. 22, 1982.)

an accurate analysis!) Moreover, Moscow believed that the PLO had disastrously overplayed its hand in the Lebanon and thereby endangered Asad, whom it was committed to guarantee.

More generally, Moscow was globally overcommitted and absorbed in the succession to Brezhnev. The Soviets could hope that Reagan would not "stay the course" in the Middle East. This might eventually lead to some more radical, less pro-U.S. Arab governments, but these were more likely to be Islamic fundamentalist than secularist and leftist -- a prospect which Moscow found almost as dangerous as Washington did. Thus Moscow was more than ever reduced to a peripheral Middle Eastern strategy, based on Afghanistan, South Yemen, and the Horn.

(Qadhafi was also furious at the Soviet abandonment of the PLO.)²¹

Egypt's position also improved, for Mubarek skillfully maneuvered against both Israel and his own Muslim fundamentalists and profited from the discrediting of the conservative Arab regimes and from their fear of Khomeini.²² The U.S., France, and Italy cooperated in three multinational forces, in Sinai and twice in Beirut, thus somewhat easing U.S.-West European tensions over the Middle East.

²¹The above treatment of the Soviet Middle Eastern position is primarily based on Dawisha, "The USSR in the Middle East," op. cit. I also profited from conversations in Moscow in Sept. 1982. For an authoritative review of recent scholarly studies on Soviet Middle Eastern policy, see John C. Campbell, "Soviet Policies in the Middle East: Western Views," Studies in Comparative Communism, Summer/Autumn 1981.

²²A.H. [Arnold Hottinger], "Wachsende Spannungen zwischen Kairo und Jerusalem," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Oct. 20, 1982.

By the end of 1982 it remained unclear to what extent, and how rapidly, Reagan would push his plan, and what effect the report of the Israeli commission investigating the Beirut massacre would have on Begin. All the Arab regimes, radical or conservative, have suffered a disaster. Unless Reagan successfully shores up some of the conservative ones, overcomes Begin's intransigence, thereby moves effectively toward a Palestinian settlement, and builds up U.S. deterrent credibility in the Gulf, he is in for worse storms ahead.